

# 44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties

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## Foreword

As a ground crewman in the 67th Squadron for most of the time the 44th Bomb Group was at war in England, I watched most of the 44th Bomb Group planes, heavily laden with bombs, ammunition, fuel, and crewmen take off, headed for action against the enemy. I was there, too, when the formations returned, too often learning that not all of them came back. The emotions were always present; at times elated with a successful attack, but upset when one aborted and very depressed when we had losses.

If I had worked on a plane that was missing, I, along with my crew buddies, felt a personal responsibility for the loss. There was always that nagging doubt inside us that I seldom ever voiced that asked, "Could I have been responsible for this loss? Could I, or should I, have done something that would have brought this plane and crew back? Are these crewmen now dead because I failed them?" Several of these brave men were close and personal buddies making the situation worse. But those questions were never answered during the war. The Germans didn't say, of course, and our men that survived to become prisoners, could not say. Evadees did return occasionally, but I saw only a very few. When that terrible war in Europe finally ended, the Group was quickly ordered back to the U.S. to prepare for the final assault on Japan. But once in the U.S. the 44th BG was demobilized, we were split up, and reassigned. Nothing was available to me and I assume most of us, so those burning questions were never answered. Instead, they were pushed back deep inside, but not forgotten.

It was 1972 before I learned that the English had completed the American Room in the new Central Library in Norwich, England and 1976 before I saw the 2nd Air Division Roll Of Honor on display there. Although the Roll of Honor was impressively prepared and presented for all to view with all of the names it contains (now nearly 7,000), it immediately struck me with its inadequacy. I think this was because of my involvement with so many of them. Certainly it honored all of those men who are listed, but I continued to feel that surely we, or at least I, owed them more than a mere listing of names. They had earned far more than that.

With deepened interest, I began my search for information concerning the events that took the lives of these brave men of the 44th Bomb Group. My desire was to supplement this Roll Of Honor with as much data as possible relating to the missions they flew the day they were lost so that all of us could better appreciate their heroism and their sacrifices.

After many years of research, hundreds of letters and phone calls, and assistance from so many (including two other 44th Bomb Group historians: Webb Todd, 68th Squadron, and Norman Kiefer, 506th Squadron), I published a book entitled the "44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties" in 1987. Since then I have continued to search for answers. The result is this revised volume. This memorial book is my attempt to make information available to the public about our casualties so that if they read the names of our 44th Bomb Group men killed in action, they can learn more about the circumstances of their deaths and about their crewmates. This book documents the Hell our men suffered while making their attacks against our formidable enemy. I



think that this book will be especially valuable for those who visit the new American Memorial Room in the great new Forum building in Norwich, England.

*Note: The entire Central Library building was destroyed by fire on 1 August 1994. It has since been replaced by the new Forum building.*

May their bravery and sacrifices be learned and remembered, not only about the men who gave their lives, but also for the other combat buddies who flew with them and shared their many hardships, wounds and pains, those that crash-landed, those that evaded, POWs, those that escaped, those that gave so much.

Due to the dearth of official material available to me, as well as the length of time since the events occurred, there probably are many instances of injury and wounds that have been overlooked. Every effort has been made to locate and obtain as much information as possible whenever records indicate that men were wounded, but it is a certainty that many injuries have not been included in this book. For these omissions I apologize and am truly sorry. However, I am reasonably sure that most, if not all, 44th Bomb Group men killed in action have been identified here.

May the actions and deeds of these 44th Bomb Group combat men be appreciated and long remembered.

Will Lundy

# Background Information

## Setting the Stage

After the Allies had won World War #1, THE WAR TO END ALL WARS, the U.S. seemed to adopt the position that they would no longer get involved in the disputes among the countries of Europe. We were strong enough to defend ourselves, had huge oceans on both sides of our country, and with a powerful Navy, we could stand alone. War in the air could hardly be considered due to these same oceans.

Even when Hitler rose in power in the 1930s and was rattling his swords, little attention was given to him, or his neighbor in Italy – Mussolini. Japan, after many centuries of peaceful development, took up arms, invaded China. But it was not considered a threat, being 6000 miles away in the Pacific, and our Navy could and would protect us.

However, when Hitler began his program to conquer his neighbors and quickly most of Europe, and stood on the shores of the English Channel planning how to invade England, America awoke enough to start the drafting of men to increase our military might. That was in 1940, a program designed to take a year. On January 15, 1941, at MacDill Field in Florida, the 44th BG was activated with personnel from the 2nd and 29th Bombs Groups. In early February 1942, the 44th BG moved to Barksdale Field, near Shreveport, Louisiana.

Meanwhile, the Draft was producing a rapid flow of personnel through the multitude of military schools to train these men for the military forces now found to be woefully short. The 44th Bomb Group was designated as an OPU – Operational Training Unit – at Barksdale Field and quickly split not once but twice to form both the 98th Bomb Group and then the 90th Bomb Group. Finally the 93rd Bomb Group was formed and split from the 44th as well. In late July the 44th was removed from OPU status, transferred to Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, and within a month was ordered overseas to England.

At Will Rogers, the 44th began training for war, but there were too few combat men and B-24s with which to learn the art of war in the air. Even when ordered overseas and the Air Echelon moved to New Hampshire, they were short airplanes and crewmen. Within a month, new B-24s arrived, crews were assembled, but not in time for any crew to practice flying at high altitude let alone learn how to fly in formation at high altitudes. In early October, the three squadrons of the 44th the 66, 67th, 68th were at Shipdham, England, still short of combat personnel. They were also short one squadron, the 404th, which was diverted from Will Rogers to Alaska to help stop the advances of Japan into Alaska. A replacement squadron, the 506th, did not arrive until March 1943, so they flew combat for nearly six months before getting to normal strength.

The 93rd Bomb Group, the last “offspring” from the 44th Bomb Group, had arrived in England and had flown one combat mission. But the situation in North Africa and elsewhere was so bad

that three of the four 93rd Bomb Group's squadrons were rushed there to help stem the tide of Germans in Africa. So things were very tough for the Liberator airmen, flying in a newly designed and built Liberator that was untried in combat and unmodified for combat at very high altitudes. The flak guns used by the Germans were accurate even at altitudes above 20,000 feet, and their fighter aircraft were excellent, their pilots veterans.

Before the 44th Bomb Group could really and actively begin combat operations it was obvious that we must convert our systems to those of the British. Consequently, many Royal Air Force (RAF) personnel joined us to teach us their systems, communications, flight aids, radar, etc. We had to install "friend or foe" to prevent being shot down by their air defense systems.

Due to the necessity to convert to RAF protocol, modify our Liberators, and adjust to the difficult flying weather, the formations were small, and 'aborts' were too numerous. As our targets were in German-occupied countries, we could not bomb unless the target was clearly visible. Day after day, missions were scheduled and cancelled due to the weather, or if take-off was made, we had to salvo our bombs into the North Sea or the English Channel. As our pilots had not flown practice high-altitude flights, far too many early returns (aborts) occurred. There were many causes for these aborts due to failure of machine guns to fire, frozen oxygen masks, cramped or pinched oxygen supply hoses, misfiring of engines due to improper manipulation of the throttle and the supercharger controls, etc.

Without any Allied fighter protection, losses were far too great for continued actions against the enemy until more planes and crews arrived, so it was all too obvious that these airmen would not possibly complete their tour of duty of 25 missions. Nevertheless, they accepted the situation and vowed to do the best they could. Very few of the "pioneers" managed to complete their tour, but they went down fighting.

Thanks to the learning process, the extreme courage of our airmen, and modifications to the Liberator, they managed to stem the advance of the Nazis into England. Actually, the Allies were losing the war in Europe almost up to "D-Day." Finally, when the Allies won the war in the air, it was then possible to win it on the ground. These men were truly heroes and should be recognized for their feats. All of them continued on when their efforts appeared hopeless, and certain death before they could reach their 25 assigned missions. Though the risks lessened somewhat later in the war, thanks to our Little Friends in their great fighters, the increases in flak guns still made these missions quite hazardous.

**Table 1: 44th Bomb Group Timeline During World War II**

<i>When</i>	<i>What Happened</i>	<i>Where</i>
15 January 1941	Activated from the 29th Bombardment Group with four officers and approximately 110 men. By the end of the year there were 80 officers and 929 enlisted men.	MacDill Field, Florida
7 February 1942	Left MacDill Field	In transit
10 February 1942	Arrived at Barksdale Field	Barksdale Field, Louisiana
March to May 1942	Acted as Operational Training Unit (OPU) providing personnel to the 90th, 92nd, 93rd, and 98th Bomb Groups. Also participated in anti-submarine patrols over the Gulf of Mexico	Barksdale Field, Louisiana
July 25-26, 1942	Shifted operations to Will Rogers Field	Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma
28 August 1942 to 11 September 1942	Ground echelon left by train for Fort Dix in New Jersey, arriving 1 September 1942. Sailed on Queen Mary on 4 September 1942, arriving in Clyde Scotland 11 September 1942.	In transit
30 August 1942 to late September 1942	Air echelon left for Grenier Field and stayed there until late September when the first aircraft departed for the United Kingdom.	Grenier Field, New Hampshire
11 September 1942 to 9 October 1942	Temporary base	Cheddington, England
10 October 1942 to 15 June 1945	Main base during World War II (temporary stations in North Africa: Benina Main, Libya from 28 June to 25 August 1943 and Ounda No.1, Tunis from 19 September 1943 to 4 October 1943)	Shipdham, England
May/June 1945	First aircraft left 22 May 1945. Ground echelon sailed on Queen Mary 15 June arriving 20 June.	In transit

## A Bit About the Liberator

In the following text there are many references to mechanical problems or enemy inflicted damages to the B-24 aircraft that contributed to the eventual loss of the planes and crews. For the many who were not mechanically involved over fifty years ago as well as those not familiar with engines and mechanics, perhaps a few non-technical words concerning this aircraft would be appropriate.

The D model of the B-24s that our original 27 crews obtained shortly before their planned flight by the northern route from the U.S. to England were fresh from the factory, with few test flights to correct problems. The Liberator itself was untried in battle, designed to peacetime specifications, with the newly designed Davis wing to place it ahead of the older B-17 Fortress. The major amount of technology, however, was not improved from that on the B-17s.

The oxygen system used the old masks with the rubber bladder with oxygen supplied on constant delivery through very small, flexible rubber tubes. These tubes were easily crimped, shutting off the supply to the airman, often not realized, resulting in an unconscious man and, if unnoticed, death occurred. The bladder mechanism dangled under the chin, filled with moisture from the breath, and froze from the very low, minus zero temperatures. Bladders had to be squeezed to break the ice, or be replaced often to keep the oxygen flowing. Even command pilots, in charge of missions passed out when their supply line crimped!

The solution was the new demand-type system, in which oxygen flowed only when the wearer took a breath. The supply line was a heavy, corrugated hose, longer and quite flexible, which did not crimp. The mask itself was improved for better fit and comfort.

Designed and supplied at many stations of the airplane was the new 'walk-around' bottle. Whenever any airman found it necessary to leave his assigned position for whatever reason, the walk-around was available. He would plug his mask hose to it and be safe for many minutes away from the main oxygen system. Repairs could be made, wounded crewmen given aid, etc. without endangering this man away from vital oxygen.

Heavy wool and leather suits proved to be unsuitable at the altitude that the German super 88 flak guns forced our formations to fly at. Designed for bombing altitudes less than 15,000 feet, the men were very uncomfortable at altitudes above 20,000 feet. Frostbite was all too common. Many airmen, particularly gunners at the waist windows open to the elements, suffered severe frostbite to face, hands, and fingers, even death. Gloves removed to work on balky machine guns resulted in skin frozen to metal, and painful injuries.

Electric suits, including gloves, eventually were supplied, reducing the injuries, but often produced severe burns when they shorted out. High altitude temperatures were in the -35 to -45 degree range. The Liberator was a drafty aircraft, especially in later models when the nose turret was installed.

The D model, as originally supplied, had no protective armor at all. First the pilot and co-pilot had to have protection from bullets and flak, so exterior metal plates were installed on each side of the cockpit. Spent .50 caliber cartridges from gunners on other aircraft frequently fell through the formation, breaking the thin Plexiglas in front of the pilots, injuring them with the flying shards, and exposing them to the full force of a nearly 200-mph wind. These were replaced much later by thick glass or Plexiglas as were the small movable side windows of the two pilots.

Armor plating was placed behind the two pilot's seats, and even armored seats were installed in later models. Later, too, flak suits were designed and made available to most airmen.

The heavy .50 caliber machine guns as well as the two or three smaller .30 caliber machine guns on the first D models operated well at low altitudes and warmer temperatures, however, they failed miserably at the colder temperatures of high altitude flying and in the first winter. It was necessary to test fire all guns every few minutes during the assembly formation and all the way

across the North Sea. Even then, many guns had serious slowing down of the rate of fire, or froze up completely. It was foolhardy for these aircraft to continue on against the hordes of fighters with few to no guns firing for defense. Aborts had to be made, lessening the firepower of those continuing. Exasperated pilots, fed up with the continuing aborts made necessary by failed guns, obtained Thompson sub-machine guns, placed tracers in the belts, and the waist gunners would use these in an attempt to hold off the attacking fighters with a show of tracers.

A non-freezing buffer oil was eventually developed and ended this often fatal failure of the machine guns. It did not come soon enough.

One other modification was to the .50 caliber bullets' supply belts. At first, these belts were loaded in strings of 50 or so, and left loose. They were quickly used up with each burst from the gun even before the enemy fighters attacked. By December 1942, the catwalk down to the center of the bomb bay was loaded with boxes containing belts of ammunition to be retrieved by the gunners as their first box load was used.

The solution came from the RAF bombers: long sections of flexible supports along the fuselage on which long strings of cartridge belts could be stored and supplied directly to the guns, with no interruption of defense away from each gun.

The B-24's Pratt & Whitney engines were designed for high altitude flying (20 to 30 thousand feet). In the rarified atmosphere at this altitude, it was necessary to attain full power through the use of a supercharger to compress the air being sent to the cylinders. To compress the air, the exhaust gases were duct back to the compressor (supercharger) located in the nacelle behind each engine so that the hot gases could be used to spin a "bucket wheel" which, in turn, compressed the intake air and forced it, under pressure, forward to the engine.

At first, the pilots would over-advance the supercharger controls. Then, when they pulled back the throttle controls to slow down in formation, the supercharger would ram in too much air, and the engines would be starved for fuel. They would seem to cut out momentarily, catch, and then the power would surge back again. The impression was that the engines were malfunctioning, and aborts were often made. When the lesson was learned, this problem was greatly reduced, but the superchargers continued to misbehave until new, electric supercharger controls were developed.

Whenever a "loss of power" is referred to in the text, it often meant that a problem occurred somewhere in these two duct systems. Flak or bullets that damaged either the intake or exhaust ducting would probably result in an immediate lessening of power from that engine. Similarly, damage to the controls to the supercharger or the engine could give the same results. Of course, physical damage to the engine itself would lessen the horsepower output as well. But many engines continued to function with a cylinder head pushed completely off the engine block!

The three-bladed propellers were adjustable to "pitch" or the degree of bite that it could take through the air. The pilot regulated this angle according to his power setting all during the flight. In the case of damages to an engine and it could no longer provide sufficient pulling power, the pilots would hit a "feathering" button which would turn the blades sideways into the airstream to prevent the propellers from "wind-milling." Failure to feather means that the propeller would be turned by the wind flowing past and would hold the plane back and severely reduce speed and complicate handling.

Smoke or fire in the engine section could be the result of damages to the inlet fuel lines, a rupture of the 28-gallon oil tank in that area onto the hot exhaust system, or actual damage to the engine itself. Even a wind-milling propeller could cause severe overheating and possible fire erupting.

Fire in the bomb bay section was quite common as that area was very vulnerable due to the number of inflammable fluid lines passing through it. (Not to mention the gas-filled wing immediately above it.) In addition to the very high octane fuel, there was a large hydraulic oil reservoir that provided hydraulic fluid to operate the landing gear, the flaps, turrets, tail surface controls, etc. Immediately in front of the bomb bay and under the rear edge of the flight deck was an emergency power unit that also had a reservoir of gasoline. Batteries were located here, too, with their acid. All of these items could contribute to the eruption of flames if damaged.

The elements alone were a formidable enemy long before the German activities occurred! Formation of ice at take off, (and beyond) thick fog and clouds during assembly, flying through high weather fronts while in formation, all took their toll. I am still haunted by the memories of those original airmen when they tried to exit the airplane, barely able to walk, faces covered with ice hanging down from those miserable oxygen masks. Close formation flying, itself, was dangerous, causing too many collisions, too many deaths. But our brave men fought their way through all of this, persevered, won!

## Notes on Aircraft Numbering and Lettering

Each aircraft has a number and a letter associated with it. The very first aircraft in 1942 all had one letter (from A to Z, with only a few that had bars above or below) over a series of numbers. This was adequate until March of 1943 when the 506th Squadron arrived, at which point there were too many aircraft for 26 letters, so they had to change it. They then started to put a horizontal line (or bar) either below the letter or on top of the letter (in the case of the 506th). The 67th Squadron was normally identified by a bar below the letter, but for a short period the 506th Squadron aircraft also had the bar below the letter. And, after April of 1944 the 66th Squadron had a plus (+) in front of the letter. These were PFF aircraft. The 68th Squadron generally had just the letter itself, with some exceptions until August 1943 where aircraft had bars above the letters. As time went by, the bar was used to identify the Squadron as follows.

**Table 2: 44th Bomb Group Squadron Markings**

	66th	67th	68th	506th
Squadron Marking	Plus sign	Bar below (i.e., A-Bar, <u>A</u> )	Just the letter	Bar above (i.e., Bar-A)

## American Cemeteries and Walls of Memory

Many of the loss tables include a reference to American cemeteries or Walls of Memory (WOM). There are many such sites. The ones where 44th Bomb Group members are either buried or memorialized are shown below. The far right column shows how many 44th Bomb Group members are buried or memorialized in each location.

**Table 3: American Cemeteries**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Location (s)</i>	<i>National Cemetery Name</i>	<i>44th</i>
Belgium	Neupre Henri-Chapelle	Ardennes National Cemetery	103
		Henri-Chapelle National Cemetery	3
England	Cambridge	Cambridge American Cemetery	163
Italy	Florence Anzio (Nettuno)	Florence American Cemetery	14
		Sicily/Rome American Cemetery	13
France	St. James	Brittany American Cemetery	1
	Epinal	Epinal American Cemetery	8
	St. Laurent-sur-Mer	Lorraine American Cemetery	27
	Normandy	Normandy American Cemetery	29
	Draguignan (Var)	Rhone American Cemetery	5
Luxembourg	Luxembourg City	Luxembourg American Cemetery	2
Netherlands	Margraten	Netherlands American Cemetery	80
Tunisia	Carthage	North African American Cemetery	15
			463

*Note: The Ardennes National Cemetery in Neupre, Belgium is sometimes referred to as Neuville-en-Condroz.*

## POW Camps

Members of the 44th Bomb Group were held in many different German prisoner of war camps. These included camps specifically for airmen as well as some other camps where many 44th Bomb Group ended up for one reason or another (for example, Stalag VII A).

Airmen were often brought first to Dulag Luft for interrogation and then transferred later to other camps. 44th Bomb Group airmen also spent time in Italian or other POW camps.



**Table 4: POW Camps**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>General Location</i>
Luft I	Barth	Northern Germany near the Baltic Sea, northeast of Rostock
Luft III	Sagan	Eastern Germany between Berlin and Breslau
Luft IV	Grosstychow	Northern Poland near the Baltic Sea, east of Barth
Luft VII	Bankau	West of Breslau
Stalag XVII B	Krems/Gneixendorf	Northeast Austria
Dulag Luft	Wetzlar	Western Germany, northeast of Frankfurt
Stalag VII A	Moosburg	North of Munich
Wauwilermoos	Lucerne	Switzerland

## Acronyms and Contractions

Many acronyms and contractions are used in this book, particularly in the loss tables. Most will be familiar to readers, but just in case, here is a list of common ones.

**Table 5: Common Acronyms**

<i>A/C</i>	Aircraft	<i>MPI</i>	Mean Point of Impact
<i>ASN</i>	Army Serial Number	<i>NMI</i>	No Middle Initial
<i>Capt.</i>	Captain	<i>PFF</i>	Path Finder Force
<i>Eng.</i>	Engineer	<i>POW</i>	Prisoner of War
<i>ETO</i>	European Theater of Operations	<i>Radio Op.</i>	Radio Operator
<i>F/O</i>	Flight Officer	<i>RAF</i>	Royal Air Force
<i>FW 190</i>	Focke-Wulf 190 (German fighter)	<i>RW</i>	Right Waist (gunner)
<i>GEE</i>	A British navigational device	<i>Sgt.</i>	Sergeant
<i>KIA</i>	Killed in Action	<i>S/Sgt.</i>	Staff Sergeant
<i>Lt.</i>	Lieutenant	<i>T/Sgt.</i>	Technical Sergeant
<i>LW</i>	Left Waist (gunner)	<i>UG</i>	Underground
<i>MACR</i>	Missing Air Crew Report	<i>WOM</i>	Wall of Memory
<i>Me 109</i>	Messerschmitt 109 (German fighter)	<i>ZOI</i>	Zone of Interior

## Medals

The following is a list of the medals (not necessarily in order of importance) which were awarded to personnel in the 8th Air Force from 17 August 1942 to 15 May 1945.

**Table 6: Medals**

Medal of Honor	14
Distinguished Service Cross	220
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Cross	6
Distinguished Service Medal	11
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal	1
Legion of Merit	207
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Legion of Merit	2
Silver Star	817
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star	47
Distinguished Flying Cross	41,497
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross	4,480
Soldier's Medal	478
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Soldier's Medal	2
Purple Heart	7,945
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart	188
Air Medal	122,705
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal	319,595
Bronze Star	2,972
Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star	12
Unit Citation	27
Meritorious Service Unit Plaque	19

A medal was given only once. Ribbons matching the medal were given at the same time. They represented the medal and were worn in rows above the left breast pocket. A 'cluster' was a small emblem worn on the ribbon of a decoration already received. An Oak Leaf Cluster was awarded for an act meriting an award identical to the first one. A Bronze Leaf Cluster was awarded for each additional honor. A silver Oak Leaf Cluster was awarded when five additional

awards were earned. Medals such as the Victory Medals, Prisoner of War medals, and Good Conduct Medals were also awarded but are not listed in the table above.

An individual also received an award or certificate when an award was made to his unit. Individual groups were also awarded decorations for exceptional service within that group.

According to a May 1944 letter from the War Department, the Purple Heart was originally established by General George Washington in August of 1782. It was revived by the War Department in February of 1932 on the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth. It is awarded to persons who while serving in the Army are wounded in action. After 6 December 1941 it was also awarded to those who are killed in action or who die as a direct result of wounds received in action.

## Acknowledgments

The basic listing of casualties incurred was obtained from the microfilm records of the 44th Bombardment Group as provided by the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Missing Air Crew Reports (MACR) were loaned to me by Major David Klaus from his extensive files. David also supplied technical assistance with format and suggestions. "Ploesti" written by Dugan and Stewart, was utilized for the accounts involved with the low-level attack on 1 August 43 rather than to again subject these men to additional writing about their experiences. Assistance with aircraft names and numbers were supplied by Tom Brittan and Tony North of England, as well as Webb Todd, John R. Beitling and David Klaus. Webb Todd assisted with many of the Army Serial Numbers (ASNs) of the 68th Squadron men as well as other data. Malcolm Cullen, south Wales, located considerable information concerning the 3 January 1943 crash-landings in Wales.

My most grateful thanks go to the many combat men who were kind enough to send me their recollections even though so many of those memories were so sad and full of emotions. But, difficult as it was, so many of them cooperated fully in this effort to recall their sacrifices, especially for those men who did not return. To those that did not return, we all owe an obligation to read and remember – and much more.

So many crewmen have contributed to this book that I have chosen to acknowledge them in the text, rather than in this brief summary. I'm positive that there are many others that should be included on this page and I'm sorry for the oversight. I do thank you one and all even though your names do not appear here as they should. Too, middle initials for several men are still in doubt, but are as accurate as my records permit. For the errors still existing, I do apologize. I'd like to also thank the next of kin for their assistance in several instances. Mothers, nieces, brothers, sisters and in-laws have cooperated when all other avenues had failed.

Jan van der Veer, historian and friend from the Netherlands, is to be thanked for his exceptionally complete files on our planes and crews downed in Friesland.

For this new edition, Jim Hamilton has made it all possible. Without his strong encouragement it would not have been completed. In addition he provided the knowledge and skills necessary to format and data entry. He donated his time, his skills to format, and technical assistance, proofing, and materials. There is no doubt, it could not have been accomplished without him!

Of course, this book would not have been possible, either, without the loving support and assistance of my wonderful wife, Irene. For years she did so many of my "chores" around the house, and then spent so many evenings alone while I sat in my "War" room working to put this book together.

Will Lundy

## How to Use this Book

To locate an individual, refer to the alphabetical index at the back of the book. If the individual is not mentioned on the specific page referenced, please check the surrounding pages.

The accounts in this book are organized by date, beginning with the first missions in 1942 and continuing through 1945. The page headings allow the reader to flip through the book and find the desired date. In addition:

- The table of contents entries provide a comprehensive listing that includes the following information (where available): squadron number, aircraft number, pilot's name, aircraft name, and missing air crew report (MACR) number.
- If more than one incident occurred on any single date, the accounts are placed in Squadron order – 66th, 67th, 68th, and 506th. In some cases, descriptions of aircraft that returned with wounded crewmembers are placed after those aircraft that were lost.
- If more than one crew or incident occurred in the same Squadron on that same date, the crews are shown in alphabetical order by pilot's name in that Squadron.
- Data concerning each mission's target is covered only at the beginning of each date, prior to the incidents.
- The crew tables include the crewmembers' names and ranks and where available crew position, home town, and ASN.

The editor's comments are either in notes or in the case of comments within a quote in square brackets. Misspellings have been corrected and usage of common terms (i.e., crash-land, co-pilot, FW 190, etc.) has been standardized in quotes.

The information is believed to be correct, but in any undertaking of this kind, there will certainly be errors. The MACR numbers are an example. These were copied from paper records and there may be some errors. Anyone sending a request to the government for an MACR should specify the pilot's name and the mission date when requesting an MACR, rather than relying on the accuracy of these numbers.

## Other References

In addition to the original Roll of Honor (published in 1987) military data from MACRs, there are some other important sources for anyone who is interested in the 44th Bomb Group:

- History of the 67th Bombardment Squadron, 44th Bomb Group, The Flying Eight-Balls, by Will Lundy, originally published in 1982, re-written in 1984, re-printed in 1987
- Webb Todd's History of the 68th Squadron
- Norman Kiefer's The Green-Nosed Flying 8-Balls
- Ursel P. Harvell's 44th Liberators Over Europe, 1946
- The 44th Bomb Group in World War II: The Flying Eight-Balls Over Europe in the B-24, By Ron Mackay and Steve Adams, Schiffer Books
- 44th Bomb Group: The Flying Eightballs, Turner Publishing Company, Paducah Kentucky, 1997
- Mighty Eighth War Diary, by Roger A. Freeman, Janes Publishing, London and New York, 1981
- Ploesti: The Great Ground-Air Battle of 1 August 1943, by James Dugan and Carol Stewart, Random House, New York, 1962
- 8 Ball Tails: Journal of the 44th Bomb Group Veterans Association (Volume 1, Issue 1 published in 1998)
- The Journal: Official Publication of the Second Air Division Association
- 8th AF News: Magazine of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society

There is a web site dedicated to the 44th Bomb Group at [www.44thbombgroup.com](http://www.44thbombgroup.com). This web site contains more details on a database of 44th Bomb Group information that is available on CD and which has been used in this work to confirm information related to individuals crews. Another source for information on this database can be found at [www.8thairforce.com](http://www.8thairforce.com).

Some members of the 44th have published their recollections in books. These include:

- Archie Barlow Jr.'s "Pursuit in the Pyrenees"
- Forrest Clark's "Innocence and Death in Enemy Skies"
- Dan Culler's "Black Hole of Wauwilermoos" (Circle of Thorns Press, 1995)
- Joseph E. Milliner's "An Angel and the Eagle"
- Eddie Picardo's "Tales of a Tail Gunner" (Hara Publishing, 1996)
- Keith C. Schuyler's "Elusive Horizons" and "Sweet Eloise"

- Ted L. Weaver's "The Twenty-Third Mission"
- Hartley A. "Hap" Westbrook's "An Iowa Pilot Named Hap" (McMillen Publishing, 2001)

And of course there have been many other shorter accounts and diaries. As an example, Capt. Howard F. Adams (KIA, 26 February 1943) kept a diary that survived the war.

Other books with 44th missions as a central theme include:

- Jim Hamilton's "The Writing 69th" (Green Harbor Publications, 1999)
- Ian McLachlan and Russell Zorn's "Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories" (Patrick Stephens, Ltd., 1991) – This book includes an account of the 506th Squadron's Bolin crew crash on 2 February 1944.
- Kevin Watson's "Ruth-Less and Far from Home" (2000)

# 1942

## Stateside

18 May 1942

### Submarine Patrol, Gulf of Mexico

Although generally overlooked, the 44th Bomb Group was in action against German U-boats even before leaving the U.S. It was patrolling the Gulf of Mexico regularly, even during the operational training of our crews. In fact, one 66th Squadron crew was credited with damaging and probably sinking one of these submarines. (See more on this below.)

However, on the morning of 18 May 1942, another 66th Squadron aircraft was lost shortly after takeoff en route to its assigned patrol.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-1117, Frawley Crashed after takeoff

66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA		
FRAWLEY, HERBERT W.	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	
EVERHART, JAMES H.	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Unknown
TATE, AUGUSTUS H.	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	
CRABTREE, MANSFIELD	Bombardier KIA	Sgt.	Meadowview, Virginia
HEPLER, LEWIS J.	Engineer KIA	Sgt.	Valley View, Pennsylvania
WARLEY, ARLO V.	Radio Oper. KIA	Sgt.	
McJUNKINS, RUDOLPH	Asst. Eng. KIA	Pvt.	
SANNEMAN, HERMAN R.	Asst. Radio KIA	Pvt.	Creston, Iowa
ANDREWS, STANLEY C.	Gunner KIA	Cpl.	Elba, New York

The Technical Report of Aircraft Accident includes the information that the B-24D crashed at 0525 hours approximately one and one half miles south of Barksdale Field, Louisiana. At that time there was a ceiling of 3,000 feet with visibility of about five miles. A moderate rain was



falling and a thunderstorm was in effect with considerable lightning northwest of the field. The plane was carrying depth charges and ammunition in case the enemy was sighted. The plane went down a few minutes after takeoff, exploded and burned, with no one having time to exit the aircraft. All were killed.

These were the first 44th BG casualties of World War II, as these men were attempting to defend the shores of the United States of America while still in the training phase and not fully operational.

In May of 2001, the wreckage of a German submarine was found by an underwater robot off the Louisiana coast about 45 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi River. It is believed to be the only German submarine sunk in the northern Gulf of Mexico during World War II. Known as the U-166, it was found during surveying for a planned underwater pipeline route by the oil companies BP Amoco and Shell Oil. The spot where the submarine was found is not far from the wreckage of the American passenger freighter S.S. Robert E. Lee, which the U-166 sank on July 30, 1942. The U-166 was sunk shortly after that attack by the Robert E. Lee's sub chaser escort, although that fact only became clear decades later when the wreck was found. A Coast Guard plane had previously claimed the kill on August 1, 1942, but this claim probably refers to another U-boat (U-171) that was in the vicinity at the time, but which was not sunk. Records show that the 44th Bomb Group claimed a sunken U-boat on July 10, 1942, but there is no record of another U-boat being sunk in the Gulf of Mexico.

## Operations from Shipdham

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6 December 1942

Abbeville-Drucat Airdrome, Abbeville, France

Due to a recall of the mission which the 68th Squadron crews did not receive, only six 68th planes continued on to attack this airfield, while the other 13 planes returned to base.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., 41-23786 B, Du Bard

MACR #2920

68th Squadron Crew:

Entire crew KIA

DU BARD, JAMES D. Jr.  
ASN 0-410225

Pilot  
KIA, WOM Ardennes

1st Lt.

Marked Tree,  
Arkansas

KAITALA, HENRY B.  
ASN 0-727999

Co-pilot  
KIA, WOM Ardennes

2nd Lt.

Minnesota

SOMERVILLE, RICHARD V.  
ASN 0-727054

Navigator  
KIA, WOM Ardennes

2nd Lt.

Aliceville,  
Alabama

CRAWFORD, GEORGE A.  
ASN 0-727320

Bombardier  
KIA, WOM Cambridge

2nd Lt.

Bisbee,  
Arizona

DICK, CHARLES S.  
ASN 31033519

Engineer  
KIA, WOM Ardennes

Sgt.

Ashland,  
Kentucky

MEARS, WILLIAM G.  
ASN 31020279

Radio Oper.  
KIA, WOM Ardennes

Sgt.

Ashland,  
Kentucky

BEVERLY, PAUL E. ASN 18045226	Asst. Eng. KIA, WOM Ardennes	S/Sgt.	Wilcox, Arizona
RIZZO, ANTHONY F. ASN 35292580	Asst. Radio KIA, WOM Ardennes	Sgt.	Lancaster, Ohio
LILLEY, ROBERT F. ASN 17035867	Hatch Gun KIA, WOM Ardennes	Sgt.	Belcourt, North Dakota
SMITH, DONALD M. ASN 39094553	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Ardennes	Sgt.	Seattle, Washington

*Note: Crawford is listed on the WOM in Cambridge. The other nine men are on the WOM in Ardennes.*

En route to the target the 66th and 67th Squadrons received radio orders to return to base, but the leading 68th Squadron failed to intercept these orders and continued on with their six aircraft. All six bombed their target and were returning when approximately thirty FW 190s, in waves of two or three, made attacks from 12 o'clock, straight on. Very early in the encounter, aircraft #786 had #4 engine (right out-board) knocked out and #3 was damaged. The pilots valiantly fought to keep in formation due to the inherent dangers a single plane would surely encounter. But due to the lack of power, the aircraft pulled off to the right and was losing altitude. The enemy fighters then proceeded to withdraw from the attack on the main formation and concentrated their attacks on aircraft #786.

After several attacks that also proved damaging to three FW 190s (two shot down and one damaged), two of the enemy aircraft again attacked from dead astern of the aircraft. The tail turret guns were seen to stop firing and pieces of the ship in that area were shot away, and the airplane nosed down toward the sea. The two pilots continued to fight for control as the nose was seen to pull up on several occasions. However, when the plane eventually hit the water, the nose was down, causing the ship to break into pieces and catch fire, quickly sinking. None of the crew attempted to parachute out, electing to stay with their craft and take as many of their enemy with them as possible. For such bravery and gallant action, the entire crew was awarded the Silver Star posthumously.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23813	VICTORY SHIP	Returned to base
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#### 68th Squadron Crew:

HOLMES, WALTER T.	Pilot Wounded	1st Lt.	
AGER, ROBERT L. ASN 0-727956	Co-pilot Wounded	2nd Lt.	Port Blakely, Washington
STINE, ROBERT J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
KLEKAR, HOWARD R.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
HILL, ALBERT E.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.	
METSA, TAUNO I.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
CROSS, FRANK E.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
DEBERRY, SAM H.	LW Gunner	Sgt.	
GREEN, GEORGE L.	Tail Turret	Sgt.	
BOWDEN, EDWARD F.	Rear Hatch Gun.	Sgt.	

*Note: Ager returned to duty and became a POW on 21 January 1944. Victory Ship also went down that day.*

A pilot and co-pilot were injured on VICTORY SHIP. The pilot, Walter T. (Tom) Holmes, wrote the following account:

“This was our third raid. We had been in England less than two months, becoming operational on Nov. 6, 1942. Most pilots in the squadron were promoted to first lieutenants on Oct. 6. Our first raid was on Nov. 7 and two days later we made our second raid, on the submarine pens at St. Nazaire, on the west coast of France. It was here that we encountered our first antiaircraft fire (flak). It was similar to lightning; as long as you can see it, it’s harmless.

“Now we get to the third raid in which I participated. We were briefed at 7 a.m. leaving the field two hours later. Our group put up 18 planes. The 68th led the raid on Abbeville/Drucat Airdrome. The 66th and 67th squadrons received orders to turn back and did so. We did not receive the orders and proceeded on, accurately dropping 111 bombs on the target and jettisoning 20 others over the target.

“About the time we crossed the coast of France, opposite the white cliffs of Dover, we ran into trouble. We were attacked by 30 Focke-Wulf 190 fighter planes. These were the yellow-nose fighters, the Herman Goering Group, one of Germany’s most seasoned groups. They flew in two to three at a time from dead ahead. To increase our firepower, our six B-24 bombers were in a very tight formation, as we had been instructed.

“We had three guns on the nose, fired by the navigator and bombardier, but only one could fire dead ahead. [Editor’s note: The 50-caliber was pointed straight ahead. Two 30-caliber guns were installed on each side of the nose at the edge of the plexiglass and were flexible enough to fire to the side.] We also had twin 50s in the top turret, our most effective firepower ahead, as long as the target (or bandit) was above the nose of the plane. The first flight was led by Capt. Tommy Cramer, number 800, with my crew in number 813 on the left wing and number 786, Lieutenant James Du Bard, on the right wing.

“Early in the encounter, Lieutenant Du Bard’s plane was hit, knocking out number three and four engines. Then engine number two lost power and the ship pulled off to the right and lost altitude. Once separated from the rest, many of the German fighters withdrew and concentrated on the crippled plane. All guns on Du Bard’s plane were seen to be firing and three enemy fighters were downed.

“Rather than bail out, the crew stayed on their guns and were still firing when the plane hit the water. Only one engine was running when the plane hit and exploded. This was the first loss in the 68th squadron. Lieutenant Du Bard was from Marked Tree, Arkansas. All on board were awarded the Silver Star. This crew, in their vain attempt to return their aircraft to friendly territory, achieved a notable victory and displayed outstanding courage and spirit, to their ultimate destruction.

“I was unaware that most of this was happening, although I did see the plane leave the formation. We held a very tight and steady formation, about 15 to 30 feet apart, as we felt we could be more effective this way, concentrating our firepower. I noticed an FW 190 some 200-300 yards out at 11 o’clock high firing directly at our plane. We were looking directly down his gun barrels and I thought to myself, “He is going to hit us.” At that time three 20-mm cannon shells hit us at once.

“There was a loud bang, yellow smoke and a flash filled the cockpit. The shell exploded about a foot over my head and I was knocked unconscious for a period of time. My co-pilot, Lt. Robert Ager, was also knocked out and shell fragments struck the legs of the top gunner, Sergeant DeBerry. The first shell hit our number two engine just to my left, causing it to lose power. The third shell exploded into the oxygen bottles just aft of the main cabin.

“There was no way to know how long I was unconscious; however, when I came to, I looked up and saw the water. Realizing we were upside down, I righted the plane and began to look for more fighters. There were none, because we were by then halfway across the English Channel and the FWs had returned to France, probably because of British fighters, although the only planes I saw were four of my own squadron just crossing the coastline some 10-15 miles ahead.

“I was told by the rest of the crew that although our plane had been barrel rolling to the left and diving steeply, the crew were staying on the guns, though some told me later they were unable to bail out because of centrifugal force. We were out of control and really in the Lord’s hands for some six to eight minutes - time enough to fall 6,000 feet. There was a lot of damage in the cockpit - broken instruments, radios and material hanging from the top of the cockpit. The hole in the top was causing a lot of wind and noise.

“Lieutenant Ager, the co-pilot, was slumped down and still unconscious. The bombardier, Lieutenant Klekar, came up from the nose with our emergency kit and gave him a shot of morphine. He offered me one, but since I was now conscious and felt I could fly us home I refused it. Had I taken the shot we would never have got back; the morphine would have knocked me out again.

“The side of my head was stinging and I was uneasy about removing my leather helmet. I really thought the side of my head might come off, so I kept the helmet on and flew for an hour and a half back home. When we arrived at Shipdham, our home base, visibility was about one third of a mile with fog and light rain. Our navigator, Lt. Bob Stine, led us directly to the base. We fired a red-red flare, a symbol of wounded aboard, made a very tight landing pattern, rolled into the first available dispersal site on the taxiway. We were met by the ambulance but had to wait several minutes while they tried to remove the 180-pound unconscious co-pilot from the plane.

“Because my infantry helmet had kept falling over my eyes, I had pulled it off just a couple of minutes before the shell hit. Had I left it on I probably would not have been so badly wounded. As it was, I had bled a lot from the numerous scalp wounds and others across my hands and arms, was weak, and had quite a headache. Three weeks later I was flying again and eventually made over 30 other missions.

“For this raid, I was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, British DEC and the French Croix de Guerre. The greatest reward was from God as He got us all home. Had He not awakened me a priceless ten-man crew would have perished along with an expensive B-24 bomber: the Victory Ship. This bomber, on its 50th mission a year later, was finally shot down.

“Though some were later wounded, though none seriously, every member of this crew lived throughout the war. After a recuperation period of ten months, Lieutenant Ager, the co-pilot, returned to duty, only to be shot down on his third mission.

"I was scared numerous times later, but when I looked down a fighter's gun barrels, I tried to move someplace else in a hurry. We were hit many times later but never again was I hit personally.

"War is truly Hell and it is such a shame that our youngest and best are always involved. Many others like Lieutenant Du Bard and his crew paid the supreme price, which makes our freedom so costly. We owe them our eternal gratitude."

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## 12 December 1942

### Abbeville-Drucat Airdrome, Abbeville, France

There were no aircraft lost on this mission, but Pershing Rolfe reports that George Delacy had severe frostbite and later it was necessary to amputate his left arm at the elbow.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23778, Kahl	JENNY/LADY LUCK	Returned to base
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#### 66th Squadron Crew:

KAHL, JAMES W.	1st Lieutenant	Pilot
KEY, ALGENE E.	Co-pilot	Capt.
MIKOLOSKI, EDWARD K.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
BRENNAN, EDWARD C.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
BALSLEY, LUCIUS M.	Gunner	S/Sgt.
SAMUELIAN, HAROLD	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
COLL, WILLIAM F.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
SATTERFIELD, CHANNING N.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
PATRICK, WALTER M.	Belly Gunner	Sgt.
HAZELTON, WALTER L.	Gunner	S/Sgt.
DELACY, GEORGE W.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.
	Severe frostbite	

*Note: Balsley, Coll, and Satterfield were killed in action on 1 August 1943.*

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## 20 December 1942

### Romilly-Sur-Seine, France (primary); Villacoublay, France (secondary)

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23788, Key	AVENGER	Aircraft Returned
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#### 66th Squadron Crew (partial):

LUND, HILMER G. ASN 37138610	Asst. Eng./Belly gun KIA	S/Sgt.	Independence, Missouri
CUNNINGHAM, CHARLES E. ASN 39826843	Asst. Radio/RW Gun. Seriously Wounded	S/Sgt.	Spring Glen, Utah
STEERS, FRANK B.	Tail Turret Seriously Wounded	Sgt.	Los Angeles, California

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The 44th scheduled 21 aircraft for this mission but there were only twelve of them in the final bombing formation. These twelve, enroute to the target, were attacked by FW 190s just after crossing the French coast. Then, just prior to reaching the target area, a second attack occurred with both FW 190s and Me 109s enemy aircraft, but these too were driven off. The plane piloted by Captain Algene E. Key, the 66th's Squadron Commander, was badly hit even though he took evasive action when facing a head-on attack by FW 190s. Despite these maneuvers, enemy fire of 20-mm cannon struck the rear fuselage, mortally wounding the right waist gunner, Hilmer G. Lund, and seriously wounding both S/Sgt. Charles E. Cunningham and Sgt. Frank B. Steers. Capt. Key continued to the target, bombed and returned safely to base even though the crippled bomber was difficult to fly.

Several enemy aircraft were claimed as destroyed or damaged.

# 1943

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## 3 January 1943

### Submarine Pens, St. Nazaire, France

The primary target at St. Nazaire was the submarine pens and their stores. Thirteen of the 44th's aircraft were scheduled and took off but only eight managed to complete the formation and bomb the target. Our ships were following the B-17 formations, bombed, and continued following them out over the ocean and back towards England. However, the B-17s erred in their navigation, mistaking the Irish Sea for the English Channel, and extended the briefed time aloft. As our aircraft had not completely filled their fuel tanks, anticipating a short flight, our planes began running dangerously low on fuel. So our planes abandoned the B-17s and quickly sought airfields in southern Wales for emergency landings. Three of our crews were forced to crash-land before safe refuge could be found. The following aircraft and crews were involved in these crash-landings:

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23771 E, Hilliard

MACR #3301

66th Squadron Crew:

HILLIARD, RAY L. ASN 0-431193	Pilot Hospitalized until 7 Jan.	1st Lt.	
CANFIELD, DALE K. ASN 0-727170	Co-pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (D-2-27)	2nd Lt.	Chapman, Kansas
AUSTON, WILLIAM T. ASN 0-726975	Navigator Hospitalized until 6 Jan.	2nd Lt.	Houston, Texas
FRIES, LOUIS A. ASN 0-727329	Bombardier Hospitalized until 2 Feb.	2nd Lt.	
SCHWEYER, RALPH ASN 12038908	Engineer Badly shaken up	T/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
ERNST, RALPH C. ASN 6863975	Radio Oper. Hospitalized until 6 Jan.	T/Sgt.	Enderlin, North Dakota
TRITSCHLER, PHILLIP H.	Asst. Eng. Badly shaken up	Sgt.	Nashville, Tennessee
ROMEO, JOHN A. ASN 35376275	Asst. Radio Hospitalized until 6 Jan.	S/Sgt.	Shinnston, West Virginia
MALONE, HUGH J. ASN 15062923	Gunner Badly shaken up	Sgt.	Muncie, Indiana
YOUNG, JAMES F. ASN 14000162	Gunner Hospitalized until 6 Jan.	Sgt.	Lynchburgh, Virginia

DUCOTE, CLARENCE J.  
ASN 34235546

Tail Turret  
Hosp. until 6 Jan.

S/Sgt.

Cottonport,  
Louisiana

*Note: Hugh Malone was killed in action on 1 August 1943.*

This aircraft crashed near the crossroads two miles south of Puncteston, Wales.

A Mr. Lewis, of New House Farm, remembered this crash, "I saw this aircraft just before it crashed. It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and I was on my way for tea. It was to the west of the farm, flying south and very low. I then thought that it might have been in trouble because it was so low. About an hour later, I was travelling along my road when I saw an aircraft crashed at the crossroads south of my farm. I did not see anyone around this aircraft but it was blocking the roads. Later a guard was placed on the site. The plane remained there for about three days. The front part of the aircraft was badly damaged where it had crashed through the hedgerow."

S/Sgt. John A. Romeo, waist gunner, recalled that, "Major Key led this mission as we flew along the coastline on our return from St. Nazaire. It became apparent from conversations on the intercom that reaching our home base was impossible, and even getting to a friendly airfield was in grave doubt. All of us were running out of fuel. By the time we swung in over the coastline, #4 engine had stopped – out of fuel.

"We were all looking for a place to set down. The Welsh countryside looked like it was made up of small square plots of land that appeared to be separated from each other by hedges or shrubbery of some sort. Lt. Hilliard finally picked out a spot to set our plane down on its belly, and about that time #3 engine conked out. Lts. Hilliard and Canfield brought her in with two engines out on one side – a most difficult task, to say the least. The fuselage was pointed at a gate in one of the plots, the last that I saw.

"Then we hit the ground, hard, and for a little while, I guess I was knocked out. When I came to, the plane was split wide open and fragments of it were all over the place. I got up and walked out of the plane, half stunned, and laid down, away from the plane. I remember that I couldn't move once I had laid down.

"After that, there was really nothing but confusion because many planes had crashed and ambulances were all over the place. Bombardier Fries, navigator Auston, pilots Hilliard and Canfield and myself were all hurt, were picked up and taken to a Welsh hospital (in Havorfordwest). I don't recall much about the others, but I am sure that some died and others were hurt. Lt. Canfield died in a bed next to me sometime during the night."

Another crew that crash-landed was a 68th Squadron aircraft piloted by Lt. Roy Erwin. The co-pilot, Lt. Clark Swanson died immediately. The pilot (Erwin) and navigator (Lt. Thomas Deavenport) died days later. All of the rest of the crew suffered injuries.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23806 Z, Erwin	BAT OUTA HELL	Crash-landed
68th Squadron Crew:		
ERWIN, ROY B. Jr. ASN 0-437436	Pilot KIA, died 5 January in hospital	1st Lt. Shreveport, Louisiana
SWANSON, CLARK E. ASN 0-728034	Co-pilot KIA, died instantly	2nd Lt. Burns, Oregon



DEAVENPORT, THOMAS G. ASN 0-443161	Navigator KIA, died 8 January in hospital	2nd Lt.	Dallas, Texas
GAVIN, JOHN J. ASN 0-727332	Bombardier Hospitalized, returned to U.S.	2nd Lt.	
SIMMONS, HYLAN V. ASN 12029962	Engineer Hospitalized, transferred to St. Athan	S/Sgt.	Hornell, New York
LASKOWSKI, THOMAS A. ASN 6853902	Radio Oper. Hospitalized, transferred to St. Athan	S/Sgt.	Scranton Pennsylvania
PERRY, DELBERT O. ASN 6252795	Asst. Eng. Hospitalized, transferred to Talbenny	Sgt.	Muskogee Oklahoma
McCARTY, LANVILLE O. ASN 35278030	Asst. Radio Hospitalized, transferred to St. Athan	Sgt.	Barboursville, West Virginia
KELSEY, GEORGE L. ASN 18053366	Hatch Hospitalized, transferred to Talbenny	Gunner Sgt.	Bokchito, Oklahoma
REASONER, ROBERT J. ASN 34242418	Tail Turret Hospitalized, transferred to Talbenny	Sgt.	St. Petersburg, Florida

Individual injuries included: Laskowski awakened in the hospital with two broken arms, a concussion, loss of two wisdom teeth and assorted lacerations and contusions. Sgt. McCarty was thrown out of the top turret. His arm was broken, he had a brain concussion, and he had lacerations on his face. Lt. Deavenport never regained consciousness, while Lt. Gavin suffered injuries so severe he was in the hospital for four months and finally was returned to the States. Sgt. Simmons was in the bomb bay when the plane crashed, received a broken ankle, fractured ribs and was trapped. So rescuers eventually had to dig him out. Sgt. Reasoner was separated from his shoes by the force of the impact although the laces were still tied, and had a bone chip in his heel.

*Note: Sgt. Reasoner's name appears twice more in this book. He became a POW after the 1 October 1943 mission.*

The crash site was southwest of Haverfordwest. One observer states: "I was walking in the fields, heard an aircraft and saw a Liberator flying towards me (west), very low, and beginning to turn south, when it suddenly crashed. The aircraft was on its nose with its tail bent down to the ground when I found it, in a field next to a road. An engine was about 100 yards away; wreckage all over the place. One man got out without a scratch – even his flying suit was not torn. He was walking about in a daze. The pilot and co-pilot were still in the wreckage and had to be got out. Other crew members lay scattered on the field, some badly injured, some did not move. Others were in no condition to help themselves. The aircraft had crashed in a cabbage field and it appeared that it had dropped almost straight in. There was no fire."

*Note: The lack of fire is probably due to having very little fuel left*

T/Sgt. Laskowski confirms this report: "Lt. Erwin found a field off in the distance and headed for it. As soon as the ship was pointed at the field, #1 and #2 engines cut out. In the meantime, Lt. Erwin held the heavy side up, and the plane was going all right on two engines. Then #3 went out and the heavy side dropped; the plane went into a nose dive from about 600 feet."

According to the belly gunner, Sergeant George L. Kelsey, at 1515 hours ship #806 circled to the left to land at Talbenny. As it was circling, #1 and #2 engines cut out and it sideslipped to a crash landing on the left wing.

A 67th Squadron aircraft called “Texan” also crash-landed, but luckily no one was seriously injured during the crash-landing so ably performed by the pilots.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23808 P, Long	TEXAN	MACR #4697
67th Squadron Crew:	No injuries	
LONG, J. B.	Pilot	Lt.
McCORMICK, JOHN F.	Co-pilot	Lt.
FRAZIER, LEO O.	Navigator	Lt.
FRAZEE, WINTHROP T.	Bombardier	Lt.
McGINNIS, DONALD C.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
WINTER, LEROY R.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
LITTELL, CLYDE	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
CRIGGER, WILLIAM C.	Top Turret	S/Sgt.
WEISER, SAMUEL S.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
LAURENCE, RALPH C.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
HAMMOND, CHARLES P.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

*Note: Clyde Littell was killed in action on 15 February 1943. William Crigger, Winthrop Frazee, Ralph Laurence, J.B. Long, John McCormick, Donald McGinnis, and Samuel Weiser were all killed in action on 16 February 1943. Charles Hammond was killed in action on 22 March 1943.*

This aircraft also ran out of fuel. It crashed in a field near Aberporth airfield, several miles north and east of the others. Around 1510 hours one engine cut out and then the second engine cut out. The ship ran into an embankment, extensively damaging the fuselage, tearing four feet off the left wing tip, tearing off the left landing gear and caving in the left side of the ship. The aircraft had to be salvaged. No injuries were sustained by the personnel. Pilot Long made a very skillful landing under adverse conditions. All of the crew returned to duty when the weather eventually cleared to permit flying back to base.

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## 27 January 1943

### Target of Opportunity, Lemmer, Holland

The primary target as briefed was Wilhelmshaven, Germany, but due to severe weather and poor navigation, it was decided to hit a “target of opportunity” at Lemmer, Holland. But immediately after bombing the harbor facilities, the formation was hit by both Me 109s and FW 190s, numbering about 35.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23690 O, Cargile		MACR #15637
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
CARGILE, NOLAN B. ASN 0-427211	Pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	1st Lt. Tulsa, Oklahoma
MOORE, KENNETH H. ASN 0-727249	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt. Enid, Oklahoma

WILKENSON, OSCAR H. ASN 0-426964	Navigator KIA, buried Margraten (O-8-10)	Capt. Jackson, Mississippi
KEILMAN, PAUL H. ASN 0-727349	Bombardier KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt. Missoula, Montana
SUSKIND, SAUL ASN 6979809	Engineer KIA, buried Margraten (M-22-6)	T/Sgt. New York City, New York
GERIOK, MICHAEL ASN 33038923	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
STEWART, VERNE C. ASN 38148621	Asst. Radio KIA, buried Ardenne (D-2-49)	S/Sgt. Delta, Colorado
CRANE, PAUL M. ASN 13046804	Asst. Eng. KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt. Scranton, Pennsylvania
WISE, SOLOMON I. ASN 37135114	Asst. Radio KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt. Chicago, Illinois
VAN CLEEF, ARTHUR A. ASN 32385827	Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt. Roselle, New Jersey

A few minutes later at 1155 hours – a 68th Squadron aircraft severely damaged an attacking FW 190 and apparently killed the pilot. This enemy aircraft then crashed into the left wing tip of Lt. Cargile's plane, #41-23690, tearing off the left wing as well as the tail assembly. #690 went into a flat spin and crashed into the rather shallow Wadden Sea, as did the FW. No one was able to parachute from either stricken plane, and there were no survivors. Despite a large-scale search by both the Germans and Dutch, only the bodies of three American airman were found and identified.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23776, W Sullivan	SPIRIT OF '76	MACR #15459
68th Squadron Crew:		
SULLIVAN, MAXWELL W. Jr. ASN 0-204058	Pilot KIA, buried Margraten (P-22-4)	1st Lt. Washington, Dist. of Col.
NELSON, DUANE E. ASN 0-728017	Co-pilot KIA, buried Margraten (F-16-26)	2nd Lt. Deerfield, Wisconsin
LUNENFELD, RAYMOND C. ASN 0-789480	Navigator KIA	1st Lt. New York City, New York
GLASS, ALBERT W. ASN 0-727333	Bombardier POW, later repatriated	2nd Lt. Macon, Georgia
CLARK, FREDERICK W. ASN 11033143	Engineer KIA, buried Margraten (B-1-8)	S/Sgt. Handon, Connecticut
DUKE, BENJAMIN F. ASN 6376260	Radio Oper. KIA	M/Sgt. Clanton, Alabama
OTTMAN, HARRY L. ASN 36236878	Asst. Radio KIA	S/Sgt. Elmwood, Wisconsin
PIERSON, GLEN C. ASN 39117546	Waist Gun KIA	S/Sgt. Wallace, Idaho
CROOK, THOMAS W. Jr. ASN 13040353	Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	Sgt. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

BLOOMFIELD, PHILIP J. ASN 12067159	Tail Turret KIA, buried Margraten (A-3-26)	S/Sgt.	Troy, New York
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About 1205 hours this aircraft was attacked by three FW 190s, boring in from ahead and above. One or more 20-mm shells hit #776 in a vital spot and the bomber's #3 engine broke into flames and the airplane dropped out of formation. Shortly thereafter, three men were seen to bail out, and then came an explosion, ripping it apart in mid-air. The rear fuselage and tail units fell into the Terschelling Harbor; the rest was scattered over the Noordsvaarder shallows and Terschelling beach. The lifeboat, "Brandaris" was able to save only one man, 2nd Lt. Albert W. Glass. He was taken to Terschelling Harbor and a doctor was sent for immediately. Dr. Smit came a bit late due to a woman who was in childbirth, so it was necessary to amputate part of Lt. Glass' foot in order to save his life. Lt. Glass was the only survivor from both of these 68th Squadron crews. Much later he was repatriated back to the States.

Lt. Glass stated that when the plane exploded he was blown clear and somehow his chute opened. Later, Glass was sent to POW camp (around July 1943) where Capt. James O'Brien saw him.

But the battle was not yet over. As the bombers were heading a bit more to the west, filling in the openings in the formation, a FW 190 dove down almost vertically upon Captain O'Brien's aircraft, inflicting considerable damage to it, and hitting crew members as well.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23819 A-Bar, O'Brien	RUGGED BUGGY	Returned to base
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#### 68th Squadron Crew (partial):

O'BRIEN, JAMES E. ASN 0-435700	Pilot	Capt.	Monogahala, Pennsylvania
PERLOWIN, LEROY ASN 0-789499	Navigator Wounded by 20-mm shells	1st Lt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
GRANT, REGINALD D. ASN 0-727334	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Thomaston, Georgia
BILLMAN, ROBERT J.	Engineer		
DEAL, MANFORD S. ASN 36175723	Gunner KIA, buried Cambridge (C-0-50)	S/Sgt.	Williamsburg, Michigan
GUILFORD, GEORGE W. ASN 14035289	Gunner Wounded by bullets or shell fragments in leg	S/Sgt.	Hartford, Alabama

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*Note: Capt. O'Brien was flying as Command Pilot on May 14, 1943 when his aircraft shot down and he was taken prisoner.*

Bombardier Reginald D. Grant and navigator Lt. Leroy Perlowin had been hit by those 20-mm shells, killing Lt. Grant and seriously wounding Perlowin. Another shell hit the fuselage and gave S/Sgt. Guilford a leg injury. Sgt. Manford S. Deal was hit by a bullet and was killed almost immediately. The machine guns in the nose of the ship were destroyed by a 20-mm shell and the tail turret became inoperative, as was the radio equipment. Smoke was coming from the fuel cells behind #2 engine and this ship (#41-23819) quickly lost 5,000 feet, and was quite alone in the sky. Engineer Robert Billman probably saved the ship by quickly transferring the precious fuel

from the burning cells to others. The rubber cells were just a pile of ashes when they landed at Shipdham.

Lt. Diehl, pilot of #41-23816 X, broke formation and dropped down to protect this severely damaged ship, which by now was almost powerless to protect itself, and the two aircraft returned alone safely to base.

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### 3 February 1943

#### Engineering Test Flight, Shipdham, England

During the first three months of operations at Shipdham, all aircraft had experienced much difficulty with the buffer oil freezing because of the extreme cold at high altitude. In general the lubricating oil in the machine guns would freeze causing the guns to jam and not fire, or, fire very slowly.

A new type of oil was received and 68th Squadron's Major Robert Norsen was assigned to flight test immediately. Maj. Norsen and crew flew to the plane's absolute maximum altitude – reportedly about 40,000 feet – but something malfunctioned in the oxygen supply system and most of the men blacked out. The new oil proved to be satisfactory in this test, much to the delight of the combat men, but Sgt. Henry Krutsch never regained consciousness and died as the result of lack of oxygen. Later he was awarded, posthumously, the Purple Heart medal.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23699 Bar-P, Norsen	LEMON DROP		Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew (partial):			
NORSEN, ROBERT A.	Pilot	Major	Sarasota, Florida
MOTT, CHARLES M.			
WAITE, EDWARD R.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	
STRANDBERG, CLARENCE W.		T/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
BRZOZOWY, ADOLPH E.			
KRUTSCH, HENRY ASN 16067220	Observer DIED	Sgt.	

Dr. Charles M. Mott, who was on the flight, wrote the following:

“One of the more unusual flights I was on was in LEMON DROP checking guns and gun oils at high altitudes. We were going up to 28,000 feet to make the tests because the guns and oils were freezing up on the missions.

“The pilot went to the rear to supervise the tests and the co-pilot somehow got his oxygen hose disconnected. He passed out and fell with his head between the seats. The plane was on autopilot and in a steep climb. Before anyone knew it, we were up to 39,000 feet. I passed out trying to get to the flight deck without a walk-around bottle. The navigator didn't get as far as I did, in fact, by this time, only two, the pilot and a waist gunner were still conscious.

“This is just one of the incidents LEMON DROP was involved in while in service for the 68th Squadron. Everything did not go as we had been hoping for on this flight, but this and other flights helped us to figure out how to keep our guns from freezing while in combat.”

T/Sgt. Clarence W. Strandberg provides another perspective: “A few days after we arrived, I became part of Major Norsen’s crew that was going to fly up to an altitude of about 30,000 feet to test the viscosity of different oils on the nine 50-caliber machine guns that we carried. At that altitude the temperature can be anywhere from twenty to fifty degrees below zero and it would be suicide to have our guns freeze up and not be able to return the fire of enemy aircraft in combat. We had reached altitude and the performance of the machine guns was being tested. The oil on two of the guns became so heavy and sticky from the cold that they would not fire. We noted the type of oil used on the seven guns that fired and how well they performed.

“About this time, I had the urge to relieve myself and went over to the pee tube. I found that the air hose to my oxygen mask was too short to reach over there. Instead of finding and hooking up a portable oxygen bottle, I foolishly reasoned that I could hold my breath for two minutes. Well, the project took longer than two minutes and when I ran out of breath and inhaled, I fell forward in a heap. My good friend Adolf Brzozowy quickly reconnected my oxygen mask to the air supply house and then he straddled me as he pushed the mask firmly against my face. When I came to, I yelled, ‘What are you doing? You’re hurting me! Get off!’ As I looked up at him, the moisture from his breath had formed white hoar-frost around his helmet and oxygen mask and he looked like my guardian angel, which he was, for he saved my life.

“Our pilot, Major Robert Norsen had turned the controls of the plane over to his co-pilot with the instructions not to fly above 33,000 feet. Norsen was on a portable oxygen bottle in the rear of the plane with us monitoring the performance of the firing machine guns. When Norsen saw me collapse, he moved quickly back up front. There he found the co-pilot unconscious and the plane on automatic pilot with the ailerons trimmed up to gain altitude. When Norsen seated himself at the controls, the altimeter read 40,000 feet. He immediately dove the plane down at 10,000 feet per minute. We leveled out over an English airfield and since it was an emergency, put the plane down there.

“Later, when we were interrogated and asked how high we had flown, Norsen said, ‘40,000 feet.’ The interrogator said, ‘Are you sure? Because this plane is designed to go no higher than 33,000 feet.’ Norsen said, ‘All I know is that when I took over the controls, the altimeter read 40,000 feet.’ When asked how fast he dove the plane, he said, ‘10,000 feet per minute.’ The interrogator said, ‘Impossible, the wings would have fallen off.’ Norsen said, ‘According to the instruments, I know I dove the plane down at 10,000 feet per minute.’

“Eddie Waite (our engineer), the co-pilot, and I all passed out but were revived and survived. One of the two men in the nose of the plane could not be revived and died [Henry Krutsch]. If Mother Nature’s call hadn’t been so urgent, and if the pilot hadn’t been so quick and heroic, none of us would be alive to tell the story.”

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## 15 February 1943

### German Raider Togo, Dunkirk, France

The target for this hurried afternoon mission was a German Raider thought to be the Togo, which was found on the morning reconnaissance flight. It was thought that the ship was ready to slip out at any time to raid Allied shipping. Crews were hurriedly called and briefed, with 17 planes of the 44th BG soon airborne. They rendezvoused with aircraft of the 329th Squadron, 93rd BG, and were led by the 67th Squadron's Captain Cullen and the C.O. of the 67th Squadron, Major Donald W. MacDonald, as the formation's Command Pilot. Two aircraft were lost. A third crash-landed on the beach south of Ramsgate.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23783 M, Cullen

BETTY ANNE / GALLOPIN GHOST

#### 67th Squadron Crew:

CULLEN, ARTHUR V. ASN 0-403881	Pilot POW, wounded, repatriated	Capt.	Dallas, Texas
MacDONALD, DONALD W. ASN 0-22367	Command Pilot KIA	Major	Tampa, Florida
MACKEY, JOHN L. ASN 0-662351	Navigator KIA, buried Normandy (D-22-33)	1st Lt.	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
CALDWELL, PAUL D. ASN 0-727313	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Swarthmore, Pennsylvania
EMERY, ALBERT W. ASN 6245362	Engineer KIA, WOM Ardennes	T/Sgt.	Grand Island, Nebraska
WEISER, SAMUEL S. ASN 12033349	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
WOO, DAVID H. ASN 19060321	Asst. Radio POW	T/Sgt.	Seattle, Washington
McKINSEY, THOMAS E. ASN 18061219	Gunner KIA, WOM Ardennes	S/Sgt.	Houston, Texas
HILLEY, JAMES A. ASN 34117846	Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (C-31-4)	Sgt.	Elizabeth City, North Carolina
ARNOLD, CHARLES A.	Gunner POW, escapee, returned	Sgt.	Helena, Georgia
NORWOOD, JESSE M. ASN 38059081	Gunner POW	Sgt.	Wynnewood, Oklahoma

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The bomb run was exceptionally long in order to make certain of scoring hits, as this target required bombing of the utmost precision and accuracy. At approximately 1540 hours, on final approach to target, the Germans placed very accurate flak bursts on the formation. Immediately after releasing bombs, leading aircraft #783 was hit very hard by flak. #2 engine burst into flame and #3 was shot completely out of the wing. Captain Cullen states, "We were on the bomb run, Lt. Caldwell said he had the target in view. I flew P&I about 10 seconds and he made a big correction to the right about 8 to 10 degrees. We flew that about 10 seconds and I saw the bomb release light go on – and then everything flew to bits. it must have been a direct hit with 88 mm under the flight deck at about the nose wheel section. It stunned me for awhile and when I could

think reasonably, I looked around to see that we were in a dive, no ships were in sight, no roof on the cabin – just the windshield, numbers 2 & 3 were smoking and the cowling blown off both engines and very little control on the wheel. I couldn't try the rudder because my leg was broken. When I looked over at Major Mac, he made motions to bail out. I then noticed he had a serious wound in his stomach. By this time we quit fooling with the airplane as she was on her right side and going down. Major Mac unstrapped his belt and with lots of effort on his part (it must have been agony for him) and a little pushing on my part, he went through the roof – or rather where the roof used to be. He got down all right but he died on the operating table of a German Luftwaffe hospital in France. After Mac left, I went, but hit the tail of the ship, broke my leg in another place, and my arm. I heard from the Germans that Mackey was killed in the airplane.”

Sgt. David Woo adds that, “On that day I had three relief men in the rear of the plane so I was more or less in charge of making sure that they had their chutes on properly. We had just made our bomb run and dropped our bombs when I felt a jolt and a sudden quietness. We were hit! I called the Captain on intercom for orders but received no reply. So I thought I had better get out. At least three times I tried to crawl out the waist window but each time I was thrown back. The next thing I remember when I came to I was in the open, and I pulled my ripcord. I looked up in the sky and saw only pieces of our plane, but no chutes. So I must have been the last one to come down. I landed in the heart of downtown Dunkirk and there must have been a whole German Army waiting for me.”

Sgt. Charles Arnold normally flew with “Pappy” Hall but was called in to substitute this day as a waist gunner. “It was a beautiful day for flying! Approaching the target, flak was not too heavy. Then I heard a muffled explosion and a dull thud – was it front or belly? Our plane shudders, but flies straight and level for a few seconds, then flips over on its right wing and starts spinning. The radio was out; everything loose was flying all around. Jesse, David and I were all tangled up. I knew that we had had it. I tried to get out of the waist window but got hung up between the gun mount and window frame, so Jesse went out the other window. And, as I was struggling to get free, I saw someone from the front fly past me. I just got a glimpse of yellow “Mae West” and black hair, so I could not identify. I just couldn't see that much in just a flash.

“Finally I worked myself free and got out to fall free of the plane. My chute opened and I landed in the village of Dunkirk, right on top of a high barn. I got free of my harness and then fell off the roof into a pile of fresh cow manure! Quickly a German Field Artillery Sergeant picked me up. Woo, Norwood, and I were taken to Stalag Luft 8B & 7A. I escaped three times, was caught quickly the first two, but my third was successful and I came back through Russia.

“Just before takeoff, Capt. Cullen's regular waist gunner (Cecil D. Goddard), got clearance for flying by Dr. Hymie and wanted to take my place and for me to fly with Lt. Oliphant, but since I had already gotten my gear aboard, I asked to stay aboard and he flew with Oliphant on our right wing. After we got shot down, I thought “Heck! I should have flown with Lt. Oliphant and I'd probably be back at the base or in some English Pub now.” But later, I heard Oliphant's ship was shot down with no survivors...”

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Lt. Oliphant's aircraft was damaged by flak at almost the same time as Captain Arthur Cullen's. It was crippled, but kept on flying.



## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23794 Q, Oliphant	BOARDWALK FLYER	MACR #16003
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
OLIPHANT, RUFUS A. Jr. ASN 0-397270	Pilot 1st Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Chester, South Carolina
WILKES, CHARLES E. ASN 0-728042	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Ardennes	Nashville, Tennessee
FRANKLIN, CHARLES B. ASN 0-789463	Navigator 1st Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Elizabeth, New Jersey
BRYANT, CHARLES W. ASN 0-727309	Bombardier 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Freeport, Ohio
LITTELL, CLYDE ASN 16041884	Engineer T/Sgt. KIA, WOM Ardennes	Detroit, Michigan
BURNS, HARRY B. ASN 13044534	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Absecon, New Jersey
DOUTHIT, WILLIAM E. ASN 34261978	Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Ellijay, Georgia
FRYE, RICHARD E. ASN 39092033	Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Palo Alto, California
GODDARD, CECIL D. ASN 34265714	Asst. Eng. S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Atlanta, Georgia
BOUTIN, ALBERT L. Jr. ASN 20135511	Gunner Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Hartford, Connecticut
LAWLEY, WOODROW ASN 34198246	Gunner Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Underwood, Alabama

The following comments were filed by Major H. M. Light, "The airplane that I was on did not get any major flak damage and the pilot, Lt. John H. Diehl, spotted Lt. Oliphant and slowed up for him, as well as another ship piloted by Capt. Thomas Cramer, who a few minutes later managed to crash-land his plane on the British beach. Lt. Oliphant was slowly losing altitude when coming off the target. Then all of a sudden several FW 190s came out of the sun and started in on us. The sun blinded and hindered our gunners from firing. I operated my nose gun and only got about three bursts at them. My navigator, Lt. George Kelley, only got off about the same number of shots with his side nose gun. The Jerries did a good job because they had us completely bewildered. On the first pass they got one of Cramer's engines; on the second pass they got another of his engines and set fire to one of Oliphant's. Then, on subsequent passes, the enemy fighters got a third engine on Cramer's and another on Oliphant's. At about half way between France and England, while still over the Channel, I noticed the engines afire on the left side of Oliphant's aircraft, and I also saw the nose of that ship filled with swirling flames. Then it looked like the fire swept back to the cockpit. Next thing I saw was the ship going down towards the sea. I did not see the plane strike the water but our tail gunner, Sgt. Milford Spears, stated over the interphone that the plane exploded as it hit the water. I did not see any chutes.

"We protected Capt. Cramer on in to the beach so he could crash-land, and he did a magnificent job of it. Before he got to shore he told his crew that anyone could bail out that wanted to, so Lt. Robert Flynn, Lt. Poole and the engineer, Sgt. John Crump, did so, but at too-low an altitude, and

all three were killed. (See below.) Our ship had gotten through the battle with only a few flak and bullet holes when all “heck” broke loose as the British shore guns opened fire on us and we were almost shot down over the English coast. We had fair fighter protection some of the way, but they didn’t help very much because of the brilliant sun.”

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23800 Y, Cramer	THE CAPTAIN AND THE KIDS		Crash-landed
68th Squadron Crewmen Who Remained in the Aircraft			
CRAMER, THOMAS R. ASN 0-23925	Pilot	Capt.	
HUGHES, W. D.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
HOGAN, HARRY C.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
GATES, W. J.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
MacCAMMOND, JAMES A.	LW Gunner Slightly wounded	Sgt.	
CASTILLO, RICHARD M.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	
LAWSON, GERALD G.	Gunner	Sgt.	
McMACKIN, CHARLES G.	Gunner	Sgt.	
68th Squadron Crewmen Who Bailed Out:	All KIA		
POOLE, WILLIAM A. ASN 0-789500	Navigator KIA	1st Lt.	Fayettesville, North Carolina
FLYNN, ROBERT K. ASN 0-727327	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt.	Blair, Nebraska
CRUMP, JOHN W. ASN 36318179	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt.	Nashville, Tennessee

*Note: Three of the surviving crewmembers were later killed in action: Capt. Thomas Cramer (2 July 1943), T/Sgt. Harry Hogan (15 June 1943), and Sgt. Charles McMackin (1 August 1943).*

This aircraft, too, was damaged by the flak over Dunkirk at approximately 1540 hours, being hit in #4 engine, which was feathered immediately. The same hit also crippled the bomb release mechanism, the hydraulic system and portions of the oxygen system. Three FW 190s, reported as painted gray with yellow noses, attacked in a line from astern, from near nine o’clock. One of these enemy aircraft was claimed as destroyed by right waist gunner, Sgt. McMackin. During these attacks, some small holes, either from 20-mm shells or machine guns bullets, developed in the intake manifold of #2 engine. Too, about this same time, a 20-mm shell entered the cockpit, bursting just aft of the pilot, Captain T. R. Cramer, who was protected by the armor plated seat. Two more 20-mm shells entered the waist position, one of which slightly wounded Sgt. MacCammond.

A subsequent attack started a fire in #1 engine but this was extinguished temporarily, and #2 engine was feathered. About mid-channel, near 8,000 feet altitude, the third attack by three FW 190s, also gray with yellow noses, occurred from 9 o’clock, level. The left waist gunner returned fire at about 1,000 yards but the enemy aircraft continued to close until near 300 yards, and then broke off. These three fighters had just attempted to finish off Lt. Oliphant’s ship, which had been yawing badly. (This attack was not seen by Diehl’s crew.)

A few moments later #1 engine again caught fire and began to burn. At this same time Lt. Flynn, the bombardier, went out on the catwalk in the bomb bay and manually jettisoned the bombs. Then Lt. Flynn, Lt. Poole, and T/Sgt. Crump also bailed out by way of the open bomb bay. This sequence was observed by crewmembers in Lt. Diehl's aircraft.

At 1615 hours, it became apparent to Capt. Cramer that his ship could not make base so he headed for the beach area. He succeeded in crash-landing on the beach 10 to 15 yards from the water's edge. The landing was made without flaps or landing gear, but those on board were not injured seriously, and they soon managed to extinguish the fire in #1 engine. Site of crash was approximately one mile south of Ramsgate.

Two bodies (Poole and Flynn) were recovered immediately. Crump's body was never found.

## 16 February 1943

### Port Facilities, St. Nazaire, France

The 68th Squadron did not participate in this mission, so the effort was a small one: seven ships by the 66th and five by the 67th Squadrons. Of these planes, only six completed the mission, due in part to a most unfortunate collision between two of the Group's aircraft.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23818 R, Long	MISS MARCIA ANNE	MACR #4697
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
LONG, J. B. ASN 0-438007	Pilot 1st Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	May, Oklahoma
McCORMICK, JOHN F. ASN 0-728010	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Minnesota
COOK, HAROLD C. ASN 0-662333	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sterling, Illinois
FRAZEE, WINTHROP T. ASN 0-727328	Bombardier 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Buffalo, New York
STEPHENS, RAYMOND C. ASN 18074552	Engineer T/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Lakeview, Texas
COTTINGTON, ORNA E. ASN 20649538	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Reedsburgh, Wisconsin
McGINNIS, DONALD C. ASN 16039337	Asst. Rad. S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Kalamazoo, Michigan
PARKER, STEPHEN E. Jr. ASN 11045788	Asst. Eng. S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Brockton, Massachusetts
LAURENCE, RALPH C. ASN 36124604	Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Northville, Michigan
CRIGGER, WILLIAM C. ASN 16041926	Belly Gun S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Detroit, Michigan

At 1010 hours, which was soon after leaving the English coast off Selsey, Sussex, aircraft #354, piloted by Lt. Billings of the 66th Squadron, seemed to be having trouble maintaining its position in the formation. Slowing down, it lost its altitude rather rapidly, dipping the left wing at the

same time. The following aircraft in the formation, 67th's aircraft #41-23818 and piloted by Lt. Long, went under #354, and the pilot, seeing the danger, endeavored to wing away, down and to the right. However, in so doing, his left wing tip collided with the under part of the fuselage of Lieutenant Billings's ship and seemed to lock in that position. A small fire appeared almost immediately at that point of contact and within a few seconds an explosion took place, entirely disintegrating both ships, which fell in flaming pieces down through a formation of Fortresses. Apparently four men were thrown clear from both aircraft as four parachutes were seen to open and float down and into the water. RAF Sea-Rescue combed the area but without success and all were lost.

A 67th Squadron pilot and close friend of Lt. Long, entered this note in his diary after returning from that mission, "Billings ran into little J.B. Long over the Channel – the little man never had a chance. He went down burning, though some saw four chutes from the two planes. Doubt if J.B. got out – he was one swell guy!"

## 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq. #40-40354, Billings	SNAFU	MACR #5095
<i>Note: This aircraft was a modified gunship.</i>		
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, Cambridge	
BILLINGS, FRED M. Jr. ASN 0-411918	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt. San Diego, California
McCLOUD, MERWIN K. ASN 0-728009	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Minneapolis, Minnesota
HUTCHINSON, AMOS ASN 0-436139 (18th Weather Sta.)	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt. San Antonio, Texas
CHARLETTA, HENRY ASN 6890102	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	M/Sgt. McKees Rock, Pennsylvania
McARTOR, JOHN L. ASN 13023200	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Washington, Dist. of Col.
ASWELL, HAROLD L. ASN 14042027	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Dounsville, Louisiana
JEFSON, HAROLD E. ASN 38104143	Waist Gun KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt. Glenn, Nebraska
ZIMMER, FLOYD H. ASN 17029368	Waist Gun KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Russwell, Iowa
MAIKO, ANDREW ASN 11041425	Belly Gun KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt. Ansonia, Connecticut
GOLDMAN, CARL S. ASN 14046874	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Mayesville, South Carolina

*Note: Lt. Hutchinson volunteered as navigator to fill in a vacancy. His normal duty was with the 18th Weather Station.*

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## 20 February 1943

### Practice Flying, Shipdham, England

Lt. Bill McCoy and crew were performing practice flying when the aircraft and crew suddenly crashed in the vicinity of Watton, burning all of the men beyond recognition. As the crew was flying alone and because there were no survivors, very little was learned as to what caused the crash and the resulting disaster. A local English farmer said he heard the aircraft and saw it crash. The entire tail section had broken off.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23703 A, McCoy	SCRAPPIE'S PAPPY	MACR #14960
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew died	
McCOY, BILL ASN 0-418136	Pilot DIED	Capt. Los Angeles, California
HOOK, ROBERT D. ASN 0-789472	Navigator DIED, buried Cambridge (D-5-14)	1st Lt. Staten Island, New York
BROWN, JOHN C. ASN 0-727307	Bombardier DIED, buried Cambridge (D-1-14)	2nd Lt. Atlanta, Georgia
SMITH, ALLEN D. ASN 13038405	Crew Chief DIED	M/Sgt. McKeesport, Pennsylvania
JOHNSTON, DAVID W. Jr. ASN 18021146	Asst. Radio DIED, at Cambridge (D-7-44)	S/Sgt. Gordon, Texas
SIVERTSEN, KENNETH C. ASN 37109907	Passenger DIED, buried Cambridge (D-3-44)	Sgt. Clinton, Iowa
BERG, ALBERT H. ASN 19074373	Passenger DIED	Cpl. Seattle, Washington
BINIENDA, WALTER ASN 11032802	Passenger DIED	Cpl. Auburn, Massachusetts

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Lt. McCoy was one of the most popular pilots in the Group, and an excellent pilot as well, so this tragedy was a heavy blow to both the Squadron and the Group.

Howard Adams, who died only days later during the 26 February mission, wrote the following words in his diary about the loss of Bill McCoy:

“Last Saturday (February 20th) marked the tragic end of a very tragic week. On that afternoon Capt. Bill McCoy of the 66th took up Lt. Col. Snively to shoot some landings in Bill's B-24 SCRAPPIE'S PAPPY as he called it. After several landings they taxied back to the parking area to let the Col. out but Bill said he wanted to shoot some more landings with Jon C. Brown, a bombardier, acting as co-pilot. Twenty minutes after they had taken off the report came in that they had crashed. Hoping against hope that it wasn't serious, Bill Brandon and I rushed down to operations only to be crushed by the news that all of the crew, some eight men, had been killed including Bill McCoy, Brown, and Hook, a navigator for a long time in the 66th. Despite the fact that all of the fellows on the ship were swell fellows the lost Bill McCoy was perhaps the hardest blow yet suffered by the squadron or even the group. A big six foot two, 200 pounds with curly black hair and a smile a mile wide, 'Big Bill' or 'Wild Bill' as he was affectionately known, was liked and looked up to by everyone from the colonel to the lowliest private. As a flyer he took

second seat to nobody for he was noted for his ability to put a B-24 through its paces. On many of our raids Bill led the whole group and was by far the best of them all at it. On investigation of the accident it was found that the whole tail assembly had fallen off from Bill's plane while it was three or four thousand feet up and so it was impossible for even Bill to land her safely. Immediately on losing its tail the plane went into a flat spin and dove into the ground at a very high speed killing everyone on impact. After hitting the ground it burst into flames and so was completely demolished. This accident brought our total losses for the week up to six."

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## 26 February 1943

### Wilhelmshaven, Germany

Two 66th Squadron aircraft were lost on this mission. They both went down in the vicinity of Oldenburg, Germany as the formation turned from the primary target, Bremen (which was obscured by clouds), to attack the secondary target at Wilhelmshaven.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23777 H, Adams	MAISIE	MACR #16067
66th Squadron Crew:		
ADAMS, HOWARD F. ASN 0-023946	Pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (B-33-5)	Capt. Rutland, Vermont
McLEOD, STANLEY W. ASN 0-728012	Co-pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (B-33-10)	2nd Lt. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
GOTKE, WAYNE G. ASN 0-727007	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. San Antonio, Texas
HANNAN, WILLIAM J. ASN 0-727337	Bombardier KIA, buried Ardennes (B-33-8)	2nd Lt. Canton, New York
VOGT, ROBERT K. ASN 13030085	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Danville, Pennsylvania
JONES, LINWOOD F. ASN 34258309	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt. Greenville, South Carolina
BOWIE, DONALD R. ASN 11013585	Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (B-33-6)	S/Sgt. North Conway, New Hampshire
MIFFLIN, JAMES W. ASN 16054891	Asst. Radio POW	S/Sgt. E. St. Louis, Illinois
BREWER, SCOTT E. ASN 39826187	Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (B-33-7)	S/Sgt. Boise, Idaho
WELSH, WILLIAM F. ASN 11015413	Belly Gun KIA	Sgt. Loudon, New Hampshire
POST, ROBERT P. Civilian	New York Times war correspondent KIA, buried Ardennes (B-33-9)	New York City, New York

*Note: Positive identification of the body of Robert Post was not made immediately. His father, Waldron Kintzing Post, continued to search for his son's grave or official verification as to the disposition of Robert, until after the end of the war when his body was discovered in a cemetery in Bad Zwischenahn, German, where he and other crew members were buried.*

2nd Lt. Wayne G. Gotke, navigator, gave this account: “The only person I can be positive on detail during the flight was Bill Hannan the bombardier who was riding in the nose of the ship with me. I’m completely at a loss to understand his fate after the ship blew up. He was standing by me when (I believe) the ship blew up and was not injured at the time. He had passed out twice from lack of oxygen and I had replaced his mask and brought him back to normal.

“Our ship was under constant fighter attack from the time that we reached the Island of Texel until we were shot down. We had fought off the planes with very minor damage until we were almost to Oldenburg, then all hell broke loose. I spent most of this time with position reports trying to get short cuts filled into the flight to allow us to gain and catch the rest of the formation. However, I am reasonably sure no one was injured up to this point except for Sgt. Welsh, the belly gunner, who had passed out from lack of oxygen, and as far as I know never regained his senses. When we were almost to Oldenburg fighters hit us from all sides. Sgt. Vogt the engineer and top turret operator shot the first fighter down, and I shot down the next down however not until he had sent 20-mms. into the nose and cockpit. Sgt. Mifflin shot down the third from his waist gun position. At this point my left gun jammed and I know at least two planes made direct hits on nose and flight deck. Some one I’m sure was hurt on the flight deck and I was hit twice in the nose of the ship operating a jammed gun.

“Engines #3 and #4 had been hit and were on fire. I believe fire spread to the wing tank and caused the ship to explode. I was working on my guns when all at once it seemed someone pushed me from behind and all went black. I woke up falling through space and I pulled my ripcord and no results so I reached back and tore the back of my chute out. My last look at the altimeter showed 26,000 ft. and the Germans claim they saw my chute open at 5,000 ft. They picked me up after I had sat between two trees about 20 ft. in the air for about 25 minutes and took me to a first aid station for treatment of cuts around the head and 20-mm. wounds.

“It was here I saw Sgt. J. Mifflin. The co-pilot of the other ship shot down at the same time as us [Lt. Wockenfuss] said he saw Capt. Adam’s leather jacket and it appeared the man had been killed. The ship’s loading list was removed by the Germans from the jacket. The Germans asked me about your son [Robert P. Post, the New York Times War Correspondent] as they could not identify him from the loading list. I gave them no information whatsoever as my orders were to say nothing in hopes that if men were at large their chances of getting home would be better. The Germans asked questions about Bowie and Hannan, and from that I believe those two men could not be identified...I’m under the impression that all bodies were not found, or if found, could not be identified.”

*Note: This description comes from a letter that Wayne Gotke wrote to Robert Post’s father after the war. Post was part of a group of journalists called “The Writing 69th” whose members included Walter Cronkite and Andy Rooney. See Jim Hamilton’s book “The Writing 69th” for more details. Also, German pilot Heinz Knoke describes shooting down this B-24 in his book “I Flew for the Fuehrer.”*

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The other 66th Squadron aircraft shot down that day was Sad Sack (#41-23804).

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23804 J, McPhillamey

SAD SACK

MACR #16053

66th Squadron Crew:

McPHILLAMEY, ROBERT H. ASN 0-437598	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Sheridan, Wyoming
WOCKENFUSS, WILBUR E. ASN 0-437620	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Watertown, Wisconsin
LIPPERT, REXFORD W. ASN 0-662346	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Grand Rapids, Michigan
MOONEY, JOHN T. ASN 0-727368	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Ventnor, New Jersey
RUDIGER, EUGENE O. ASN 16022826	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Menomonie, Wisconsin
SANDERS, KENNETH R. ASN 37083209	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Campbell, Missouri
GARMON, ROBERT P. ASN 14098416	Waist Gun POW	S/Sgt.	Atlanta, Georgia
BEAMAN, HOWARD W. ASN 37711373	Waist Gun POW	Sgt.	Casey, Iowa
SALVO, ALBERTO O. ASN 11045878	Belly Gun POW, KIA	Sgt.	Dorchester, Massachusetts
MORSE, KENNETH R. ASN 17066897	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Eagle Grove, Iowa
STANLEY, LOUIE E.	Gunner POW	Sgt.	Atlanta, Georgia

Lt. McPhillamey stated, "The plan was that the 66th would be the third squadron in the group. The 44th was supposed to have been followed by the 93rd BG. In assembly, however, the 93rd cut in ahead and that left us as 'ass-end Charlie.' The B-17s were to lead the way and to fly 'stacked-up' and the B-24s were to fly over their top and fly 'stacked down.' The B-17s went up higher than their assigned altitude and caused the B-24s to have trouble in the thin air maintaining a position over the B-17 top elements.

"We were met over the North Sea west of the Heligoland island by a swarm of German fighters who continued to attack all the way to the target. Eventually, flying 'ass-end Charlie' and the lowest three in the groups of B-24s we hit the prop wash of the B-17s ahead and immediately dropped about 1,000 feet out of formation. The flight of three consisted of Capt. Hank Adams in the lead; Lt. Robert Miller on left wing; and I was on right wing. The three of us were instantly under attack by ME's and FW's – about 20 of them, or more – who constantly bore in from straight ahead.

"They picked me off shortly before we reached the I.P. Two engines were shot out and on fire; the oxygen was shot out and there was a fire in the bomb bays; controls, elevators, wings, etc. were shot up and became inoperable. Under those conditions I gave the order to 'bail out.'

"Shortly thereafter, Capt. Adams was shot down. I learned later that Miller was able to dive down and fly home with a group of B-17s. At the time that all of this was happening, we were flying near 30,000 feet, but couldn't go any higher to avoid the prop wash of the B-17s.

"I landed near a small village close to the town of Oldenburg, Germany, practically headed for the parade ground of a detachment of German soldiers. I was captured immediately after a couple



of shots were fired in my direction and was taken by streetcar to the police station at Oldenburg. There I ran into Mooney, Wockenfuss, and a couple others of the crew.

“We were then picked up by officers from the Luftwaffe and taken to a nearby airfield. I was put into a room by myself and during the afternoon several German fighter pilots stuck their head in the door and inquired if I was all right and also told me we had lost several planes (17s and 24s) on the raid and that they also had lost a number of fighters.

“I would say the main cause of loss of aircraft was our prop wash fallout and the large number of German fighters instantly attacking three stranded aircraft. Flak was not a factor. The primary target, the FW factory, was not hit because of cloud cover and the rest of the U.S. force turned at the IP point, which was Oldenburg, and attacked the secondary target of Wilhelmshaven.

“That evening six of us were put on a train (under guard) to Frankfurt, the main German interrogation center. At that point the three officers were separated from the rest of the crew and I never saw or heard from any of them again.

“Lippert was killed instantly in the plane by a 20-mm shell, decapitating him. Garmon was hit in the knees just as he bailed out. He was reported to have survived and was in a hospital. Salvo was hit in the shoulder and chest, and in several other places. Although he managed to bail out he died in a hospital shortly thereafter. Wayne Gotke saw him in the hospital and reported his death.” Salvo was buried May 31, 1943.

Lt. W. E. Wockenfuss, co-pilot, added, “We could see the coast of Sweden and opted to try for it. But it soon became apparent to all of us that it was hopeless, and the order to bail out was given. After the crew was out (I thought), I started to leave as well. But our engineer, Sgt. Rudiger had passed out from lack of oxygen and was blocking the exit. I must have beaten and abused him very badly when trying to get past him. I finally made it and was about to jump when something stopped me. I thought, ‘My God! I can’t leave the engineer.’ I reached back and grabbed him by the collar of his fur flying jacket and backed toward the bomb bay – falling out and dragging him with me. I saw him later on the ground and it looked like he had been through a meat grinder. I never did tell him that I had almost beaten him to death trying to get past him. I reasoned that he must have regained his consciousness on the way down and pulled the ripcord.

“I landed about 100 yards from the main gate of a German Army camp where I was met by dozens of excited soldiers. I said ‘Hello’ in my best German and one of the Germans responded, ‘Hello! For you the war is over.’ He had lived in Cleveland, Ohio, for 17 years. The Germans told us that the enlisted men from our crew had landed safely and were being interned.”

Sgt. Rudiger reported, “I was still shooting in the top turret when someone grabbed my leg and told me I had to get out. They said that I had passed out. I don’t necessarily agree to what they said but it could be. Everything happened so fast. I was unconscious when I hit the ground but I must have been conscious when I jumped out to pull the ripcord. I remember the plane being on fire and the top turret had gotten black with smoke. I think it was the engines that were on fire.

“This was the first mission that we had the new parachutes. We wore a strap and when we needed the parachute we just had to hook it onto this strap. Otherwise we had the old back type parachute and we threw them in the corner of the plane and we wouldn’t have had time to strap that thing on. But the new kind – all we had to do was strap the chute on when we needed it. I

don't know if I did or if one of the pilots snapped it on me. If you had the ripcord in your hand when you went out of the plane, the wind would move your hand and help pull the ripcord.

"I don't know where I landed because I had passed out and when I first came to the German soldiers had me. Actually, they thought I was dead at first. They were surprised when I came to."

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## 8 March 1943

### Targets of Opportunity near Rouen, France

The target was to have been the marshalling yards situated on the west bank of River Seine, south of Rouen. Only nine B-24s of the 44th BG departed the base at 1203 hours, rendezvoused with the 329th Squadron of the 93rd BG, and then proceeded to Beachy Head and entered the French coast over St. Valery. As the formation approached Rouen, they encountered a strong FW 190 formation of 30 to 40 aircraft, which attacked head-on. Spitfires and, for the first time, P-47 Thunderbolts flew air strikes against airfields ahead of our mission. Unfortunately the American fighters encountered heavy opposition, leaving the Liberators unprotected. Two 67th planes were lost.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #41-23784 T, Price	MISS DIANNE	MACR #15570
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#### 67th Squadron Crew:

PRICE, CLYDE E. ASN 0-398584	Pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (C-33-2)	Capt. San Antonio, Texas
FORREST, ROBERT E. ASN 0-727979	Co-pilot KIA, buried Normandy (A-8-16)	2nd Lt. Columbus, Ohio
AUGENSTENE, JACOB A. Jr. ASN 0-789432	Navigator KIA, buried Ardennes (C-25-9)	1st Lt. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
GROSS, MORTON P. ASN 0-727336	Bombardier KIA, buried Normandy (B-17-43)	2nd Lt. Denver, Colorado
SNELL, DALTON R. ASN 17032555	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Marked Tree, Arkansas
JESTER, DONALD E. ASN 17023590	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Ardennes (C-36-14)	T/Sgt. Ashtown, Arkansas
GOSLINE, ROY E. ASN 14069419	Asst. Eng. KIA	S/Sgt. Decator, Alabama
DEVARS, DEANE J. ASN 18035421	Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Orleans, Nebraska
WYER, IRIS C. Jr. ASN 35376277	Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Clarksburg, West Virginia
ERHARD, KENNETH L. ASN 13031247	Waist Gun POW	S/Sgt. Curwenville, Pennsylvania
FLESHMAN, LEWIS J. ASN 12035273	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (C-33-18)	S/Sgt. Albany, New York

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Captain James O'Brien, with Major Posey as Command Pilot, took off to lead the formation but were forced to abort as a crewmate, John Husselton, passed out in the rear of their plane. They

left the formation, radioed the base for an ambulance and landed. Husselton was unloaded and they took off again immediately with only nine men, and caught up to the formation as it was crossing the Channel. He joined the second element position.

67th Squadron ships took over the lead when Captain O'Brien was forced to abort and was looking for the P-47s to take over when Spitfires left their coverage. It was at this moment that the German's FW 190s chose to make their mass frontal attack, catching the American pilots by surprise as they thought the enemy were our P-47s arriving to protect them.

Captain Clyde Price, in the lead, and 1st Lt. Robert Blaine on his right wing, were blasted by a swath of cannon fire as the enemy cut through our formation – and both ships went down almost immediately.

Captain O'Brien states that the sight of all those enemy aircraft attacking so fiercely was enough to "empty the bladders" of every man in the formation. And with the two lead ships gone, it was "Cowboys and Indians" from then on to the target of opportunity, and back to the coast again.

S/Sgt. Kenneth L. Erhart, gunner on Capt. Price's ship, told his experiences: "We were hit by FW 190s as well as by flak, amidships. Needless to say, with oxygen and hydraulic lines damaged, fire was inevitable. The bail out bell was sounded, which by this time, the ship was well aflame. Due to the nose attack, the flight deck personnel did not make it out. I assisted Sgts. Iris Wyer and Duane Devars out the right waist window, and also checked on Sgt. Fleshman, but he was already dead. I bailed out of the right waist window, and, upon hitting the ground, saw Lt. Gross coming down. His whole abdomen was ripped open and he died in my arms, with the German soldiers looking on. Lt. Gross told me to take his watch and give it to his mother, but the Germans took the watch away from me.

"While descending from the burning ship, I was shot at by both FWs and Me 109s! All three of us survivors suffered flak or bullet wounds and burns. Devars and Wyer were captured a day or two later, being unsuccessful in finding help. I was a volunteer from the Armament Section and Roy Gosline was from the Engineering section. Upon being captured, and after Lt. Gross died, the German soldiers turned me over to the Luftwaffe and SS troops. I was taken to a lazarette for treatment of those flak-wounds and burns. Whatever the medication for burns was, I did not suffer scars. I was treated by French doctors and watched by German doctors. From there I was taken by train to Dulag Luft for interrogation, beat around a little, spent approximately ten days in solitary confinement. After that I was taken to Stalag VII-A, Moosberg, Bavaria."

*Note: Miss Dianne and some crewmen crashed in Villers-Ecalles. A stone monument engraved with the crew members' names was dedicated in 1997 in this city.*

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23988 E, Blaine	DOUBLE PLAYMATE		MACR #4401
67th Squadron Crew (with one exception):			
BLAINE, ROBERT W. ASN 0-423910	Pilot KIA, WOM Ardennes	1st Lt.	Plano, Texas
ROETTO, LAWRENCE J. ASN 0-727264	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Ronett, Unknown
FRAZIER, LEO O. ASN 0-659012	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Oakley, Utah

MAYEN, THOMAS C. ASN 0-726923	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	San Antonio, Texas
NORED, GEORGE L. ASN 14060975	Engineer KIA, WOM Ardennes	T/Sgt.	Mobile, Alabama
KREISSIG, OSCAR (66th Sq.) ASN 11010544	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Normandy (D-21-34)	T/Sgt.	New Britain, Connecticut
WILLIAMS, DON J. ASN 18037070	Belly Gun KIA	S/Sgt.	Amarillo, Texas
BRENISER, NORMAN A. ASN 39092835	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Gresham, Oregon
DORIA, FRANK N. ASN 12039389	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Shreveport, Louisiana
WHITE, BENJAMIN F. Jr. ASN 11027878	Hatch Gun KIA, buried Normandy (B-10-41)	Sgt.	Rockland, Maine
SUFKA, EDWARD ASN 37161475	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Hillman, Minnesota

*Note: Sgt. Kreissig was on loan from the 66th Sq.*

Lt. Blaine's aircraft was the second 67th Squadron ship to go down, several minutes after Capt. Price's. Lt. Leo O. Frazier, navigator on this aircraft, was the only survivor and he was, at first, also officially reported KIA. He said: "Due to the fact that we did not have a full crew at the morning briefing, we were not scheduled to go on this mission. However, we finally made up a crew and were assigned to go. And, as a make-up crew, we did not fly our regular position and were assigned to the fourth ship in the last formation. At that time it was called 'Coffin Corner', but it did not bother us as it looked like an easy mission with fighter protection. However, this did not turn out to be correct as we moved positions when the lead ship aborted and we were not met by our fighters, but the fighters of Goering's Flying Circus.

"On their initial attack, they shot down the lead plane and came on through and got our plane as well. I was the only survivor from our crew and when I landed on the ground I was met by a group of German soldiers and was captured. I served the duration in Stalag Luft III POW Camp.

"The reason that we went down is that we were hit by fighters from about 2 o'clock, high, with a cannon shell exploding in the cockpit. I am sure that the co-pilot, Lt. Roetto, was killed instantly, but the pilot lived long enough to press the bail out alarm button. I was the only one that bailed out. What happened to the others I am not sure about, but I was told the airplane (with one half of the tail knocked off) went into a flat spin that caused centrifugal force, preventing the others – if alive – from jumping. I saw the ship after I left the hospital and it had not exploded, even with the bombs still aboard."

This aircraft crashed at Le Plex, near Sierville. Lt. Cameron took over the formation lead, selected a target of opportunity (a railroad yard) and bombed it.

Jim O'Brien recalls this mission: "On the Rouen mission when Clyde Price and Bob Blaine went down in a hail of fire from those 35-40 FW 190s attacking head on, I think the fickle finger of fate interceded to take me out of that lead position. Jim Posey and I, in the "Rugged Buggy" were leading the Group and had just completed the assembly over Shipdham when S/Sgt. John Huselton, the waist gunner, fainted in the back of the ship. Posey and I decided to relinquish the

lead and take Husselton back to the base. We deposited Husselton to a waiting ambulance and took off again with the nine-crew members to catch the 44th just as they were crossing the Channel. From the rear end of the formation, we saw the carnage up front. We would have all gone down if it had not been for the Polish squadron of Spitfires that chased away the Germans.

“I had many odd experiences with the fickle finger of fate, but I always felt I owed Husselton something for taking us out of that lead position on the Rouen Raid although there was no joy in the loss of the two 67th crews. It was kind of a Russian roulette we played as stated by John Muirhead in ‘Those Who Fall.’ ”

## 18 March 1943

### Airfield, Vegesack, Germany

Major Howard Moore, replacing Major MacDonald, led the 44th BG on this historic raid to Vegesack. This raid decidedly proved the fire power of the unescorted Liberators and Fortresses. Only nine B-24s from the 44th BG, along with 15 others from the 93rd, followed the B-17s into Germany for a historic air battle in which the 44th BG did not lose a single plane, and managed to shoot down thirteen confirmed, six probables and eight damaged enemy aircraft. The 44th did not escape unscathed, unfortunately, as one crewman from the 66th Squadron was gravely wounded and died on March 29, 1943.

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23811 K, Miller	FASCINATIN' WITCH		
66th Squadron Crew:			
MILLER, ROBERT E.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
HODGE, DEXTER L.	Co-pilot	Capt.	
ZARUBA, LeROY E.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
LAPLACE, ROBERT B.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
McDONNELL, MARTIN J.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
MURPHY, WILLIAM J. Jr.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
LIGHT, EDWIN C.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.	
ROWLAND, DANIEL W.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
HAZELTON, WALTER L.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
DUCOTE, CLARENCE J.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	
BALSLEY, LUCIUS M.	Asst. Radio	S/Sgt.	Pierce,
ASN 39175097	KIA, buried Cambridge (D-6-69)		Idaho

*Note: Edwin Light was killed in action on 1 August 1943.*

After days of valiant struggling for life, Sgt. Balsley died from these injuries. Sgt. Hazelton adds, “He and I went to Vegesack as replacement gunners...Lucius was hit in the back over the target while performing as a well gunner in the rear of the ship. We gave him first aid – as much as we could at the time – as the fighters were thick all around us. We didn’t know how serious it was until we landed. He was taken to the hospital in Norwich, where he died several days later. The crew visited him on the second night – we all went over. I escorted the body to the cemetery

outside of London and was there when he was buried. A very sad day it was.” It was Balsley’s 12th mission.

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## 22 March 1943

### Wilhelmshaven, Germany

The Group put up 12 aircraft for this mission but only 10 of these successfully attacked the target. The airplanes were attacked by enemy aircraft both before and following the bombing. Two aircraft were lost. Three men in the 66th Squadron planes were wounded by these attacks, but survived. They were Lt. P. P. Phillips, Sgt. K. L. Morrison, and Lt. E. M. McEachin. (Phillips was killed in action on the 1 August 1943 mission.)

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23832 N, Warne	MAGGIE	MACR #15585
67th Squadron Crew:		
WARNE, GIDEON W. ASN 0-404099	Pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	Capt. Elburn, Illinois
BROWN, RICHARD C. ASN 0-727161	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt. Schenectady, New York
WALKER, ROBERT K. ASN 0-662399	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Newport Beach, California
RAWLS, MALCOLM ASN 0-661659	Bombardier KIA, buried Ardennes (A-39-35)	2nd Lt. Dozier, Alabama
GANDY, GUY E. ASN 18085234	Engineer KIA, WOM Margraten	T/Sgt. Davis, Oklahoma
JONES, NORMAN H. ASN 37049716	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt. St. Louis, Missouri
FALLS, CHARLES E. ASN 14055946	Top Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Birmingham, Alabama
HAMMOND, CHARLES P. ASN 7000408	Belly Gun KIA, buried Ardennes (C-16-10)	Sgt. Metairie, Louisiana
GRITSONIS, NICKOLAS C. ASN 16034619	Asst. Radio KIA, buried Ardennes (C-4-23)	S/Sgt. Chicago, Illinois
KLUG, LESTER G. ASN 14064706	Hatch Gun POW	S/Sgt. De Land, Florida
MARQUEZ, GABRIEL A. ASN 18029077	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Denver, Colorado

This 67th Squadron aircraft was damaged by flak over the target area and slowly lost altitude on the return and fell behind the formation. Lt. Robert J. Walker, navigator on Captain Gideon W. “Bucky” Warne’s crew, briefly explained, “We were coming home from Wilhelmshaven when the ship was badly shot up by German fighters. Shortly after several attacks on us, the ship was shot up so badly that we all had to bail out, in spite of the fact that we were out a bit over the North Sea. We all came down in the vicinity of Alte Mellum island, but into the water. Sgt. Klug and I were the first two picked up by a ship headed for Heligoland – and we were the only

survivors. Apparently all others drowned, or died from exposure in that frigid water before rescuers found them.”

Sgt. Klug reported that after coming down in the water, he found that the sea was very rough and visibility poor. He estimated that he had been in the water about a half-hour before he lost consciousness. He did not know how long it was before they found him and pulled him on board ship.

Later, he was taken to a hospital in German Heligoland, and about two days after that he was asked to identify the bodies of five of his crew members. They were: Malcolm Rawls, Nicolas Gritsonis, Charles Falls, Gabriel Marquez, and Charles Hammond. No crewmember had been wounded prior to bailing out.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-24191 X, Fouts	CACTUS		
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire Crew KIA		
FOUTS, VIRGIL R. ASN 0-437434	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt.	Los Angeles, California
NAVAS, FRANK ASN 0-730577	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt.	Scranton, Pennsylvania
SEAMAN, ROBERT H. ASN 0-663420	Navigator KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt.	Reading, Pennsylvania
BRENNER, JOSEPH L. ASN 0-727081	Bombardier KIA, initially buried in Wilhelmshaven	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
NORDQUIST, RICHARD K. ASN 16020714	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt.	San Antonio, Texas
RUSSELL, ELDO A. ASN 18070094	Top Turret KIA, WOM Margraten	T/Sgt.	Denver, Colorado
DOBBINS, MAURICE H. ASN 16055011	Asst. Eng./Hatch KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt.	Pekin, Illinois
KLOSE, KENNETH A. ASN 37276328	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt.	Buchanan, North Dakota
WIESER, JERRY H. ASN 39247916	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt.	Burbank, California
LINDAU, EDWARD W. ASN 36012770	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt.	Palatine, Illinois

*Note: Lt. Brenner's body was the only one recovered.*

On the same Wilhelmshaven mission this 506th Squadron crew, flying its first mission, as well as the 506th's first mission, was observed to be having a difficult time holding its position in the formation. Mission debriefing reports show that the aircraft was singled out for attack by FW 190s. Eye witness accounts stated: "During the first attack from enemy aircraft, ship #191 was hit in #4 engine, which caught fire and the ship began to lose altitude and leave the formation. Shortly afterwards, the #3 engine also caught fire and the ship headed for the Island of Baltrum, in the East Frisian group, off the coast of Germany in the North Sea."

Eye witnesses from the other crews in the formation reported seeing five chutes open from this aircraft prior to losing sight of this ship. This aircraft was last seen at approximately 10 miles northwest of Baltrum Island.

Grave registration investigations in 1948 pertaining to this crew and comments made in their service records indicate that “the temperature of the waters in the North Sea in March is such that, had the parachutes landed in the waters, life would not have been possible beyond a few hours immersion therein.”

It should be noted that the isolated grave of the bombardier 2nd Lt. Joseph L. Brenner was found after the war near Wilhelmshaven. The reports determined that “while no other bodies had been found, it is reasonable to conclude that the plane crashed in the water and that the men who parachuted from the airplane, as well as those who went down with it, were unable to reach land and that none of the crew survived beyond the date of their disappearance, 22 March 1943.”

Research done by Virgil Fouts’ nephew in German archives indicates that aircraft #191 was claimed as a victory by Lt. Hans Pancritius, a FW 190 Luftwaffe pilot of Staffel 8/JG1, flying out of Leeuwarden, Holland. Lt. Pancritius was killed by a B-17 gunner on 17 July 1943 in Yellow 12, FW 190A-5/U, #7366, 80 km north of Borkum Island in the North Sea. At the time he was 22 years old and Commander of 3/JG11. He had 10 kills to his credit.

While doing his research, Fouts’ nephew also discovered the pilot who shot down Capt. Warne’s B-24. It was Olt. Gerhard Sommer, Staffel 1/Gruppe 1 out of Leeuwarden.

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## 14 May 1943

### Kiel, Germany

The primary target area was the center of the Krupp Submarine Building Works at Kiel. We had 21 aircraft ordered to follow B-17 formations who were to drop high explosives and we were to bomb with both 100-lb. and 500-lb. cluster incendiaries or matchsticks, as they were called. The intent was to set fire to the rubble caused by the earlier bombs. This group had only 17 B-24s in their formation when it arrived at the target, following 109 Fortresses. It was the toughest test to date, with the following statistics: 21 enemy aircraft destroyed, 13 probables and 1 damaged. However, the 44th lost 5, 1 was abandoned, 9 damaged, and 12 men wounded and 51 MIA. For this successful mission, the Group was awarded its first of two unit citations.

*Note: In addition to the Kiel unit citation, the Group also received a unit citation for the 1 August 1943 Ploesti Oil Fields mission.*

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-24014 P	SCRAPPY	Destroyed
66th Squadron Crew	Entire crew survived, all but one returned to action	
REED, JOHN Y. ASN 0-660004	Pilot	1st Lt. Matamoras, Pennsylvania
WINGER, GEORGE W. ASN 0-662848	Co-pilot	1st Lt. Columbus, Ohio
PHILLIPS, PHILIP P. ASN 0-662366	Navigator	1st Lt. Minneapolis, Minnesota



McEACHIN, EUGENE M.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Salt Lake City, Utah
WYGONIK, ADAM C. ASN 36301495	Engineer POW, later repatriated	T/Sgt.	Cicero, Illinois
PERRY, ALAN B. ASN 12003178	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Rochester, New York
GREGORY, CHARLES C. ASN 35268646	Asst. Eng.	S/Sgt.	Dayton, Ohio
SASEK, CHARLES M.	Asst. Radio	Sgt.	Houston, Pennsylvania
BARNETT, THOMAS J. ASN 19079972	Gunner	Sgt.	Procktor, Oklahoma
STEERS, FRANK B.	Gunner	S/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
BENNETT, RAVELLE A.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Tampa, Florida

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*Note: Philip Phillips and George Winger were killed in action on 1 August 1943.*

1st Lt. John Y. Reed, pilot, relates his experiences: “On this Kiel mission the leading B-17s were assigned to fly at a higher altitude than the B-24s to balance out the relative speeds. The bombing run was further complicated when one of the B-17 outfits got out of position on the bomb run and ended up directly over the 44th’s formation. It dropped its load of high explosives right through the 44th’s planes! This was scary as Hell, but fortunately, to my knowledge, none of the 44th planes suffered any damage from the errant bombs.

“The particular incendiaries that we carried were packaged in strapped clusters as they hung in the bomb bay, but as soon as they were released, the clusters broke open, filling the sky with a myriad of individual, random altitude sticks of potential fire. Having had experience with the problem of this type bomb before, we flew a relatively loose formation so that the rear aircraft could avoid running into the masses of sticks from the lead planes.

“We came under very heavy fighter attacks in the target area and were quite vulnerable because of our spread-out bombing formation. Just prior to dropping our bombs, I saw an FW 190 peel off at us from about 1 o’clock and slightly high, and as the puffs of bursting 20-mm self-destroying ammo came toward us, it became apparent that the line of fire would put the successive bursts right into our cockpit. Purely reflex action alone caused me to hit the wheel in a dive to try to get below the line of fire, but unfortunately, the bursts did not quite clear the plane, but hit the top turret directly behind the cockpit. The resulting explosion tore the top turret canopy completely off, and the shrapnel severely wounded Sgt. Adam Wygonik about his head, neck and upper body. The inside of the turret and the gun barrels were pitted from the force of the shrapnel!

“Either the force of the explosion or Sgt. Wygonik must have reflexively dumped his seat lever as he immediately fell out onto the flight deck. Sgt. Alan Perry, radio operator, immediately sized up the situation, left his own oxygen supply, and attempted some first aid to Sgt. Wygonik, who was bleeding profusely from his head and body wounds – and no oxygen supply.

“Sgt. Perry snapped Wygonik’s chest pack onto his harness and put his hand around the ripcord ring, inasmuch as Sgt. Perry intuitively concluded that Sgt. Wygonik would die before we got back to England and medical attention. He intended to roll Wygonik out of the ship as we were still over the target area – and the possibility of immediate medical attention.

“At this point, however, Perry was suffering from lack of oxygen and returned to his oxygen supply to keep from blacking out. But when he was able to turn back to Wygonik, Adam was gone! Apparently either intentionally or otherwise, Adam had rolled off the flight deck, onto the catwalk in the open bomb bay. The bay doors were still open as we were on the bomb run. No one could say for sure that Adam’s chute had opened since all attention was on fighting off the attacking aircraft. We had no way of knowing whether Adam reached the ground dead or alive, though the odds seemed stacked against his survival due to the severity of his wounds and the resultant loss of blood, and the fact that he was without oxygen even longer than Sgt. Perry.

“The plane, as we came away from the target, was severely damaged, with one engine smoldering, loss of top portions of the left vertical stabilizer and rudder, multiple hits from 20-mm fire including the blown-away top turret canopy, and the left main landing gear dropped down. Unable to maintain position in our formation, I dove toward a group of B-17s that were ahead and below us in a shallow dive toward the coast, and managed to hold position behind and below their rear flight. This protected our top with their bottom and rear turrets. After the fighter attacks broke off, we flew pretty much alone back to England.

“When back over Shipdham, we circled and attempted to lower our landing gear using the manually operated crank-down procedure, due to the fact that the hydraulic lines had suffered hits. The gear started down but locked at about 45 degrees and at which point it could be neither lowered nor raised. We couldn’t attempt an emergency landing on the runway due to other activity there, and felt that an attempt to land in the grass would result in the partially down gear snagging and catapulting the plane.

“I bailed the crew out over the field except for my co-pilot, George Winger. We flew the plane back out toward the coast, where I set it on Automatic Pilot. George bailed out first and I was close behind. After SCRAPPY crossed the coast, it was shot down by a flight of Spitfires piloted by Polish escapees. George landed in a freshly plowed field and I came down in the midst of a searchlight anti-aircraft battery right on the coast.”

Yes, Sgt. Wygonik survived and here is his story: “We were on the bomb run, bomb bay doors open, when I received a direct hit from a 20-mm shell in the top turret from a FW 190. I was blown down to the flight deck badly wounded in face, head, neck, eyes, arms, and hands. Sgt. Perry hooked my parachute on my harness and shoved me out – probably saving my life as I don’t believe I could have survived the long time trip home and bailing out over England. I landed in Kiel city near the target area, was soon picked up by German troops and taken at once to a hospital where I was well-treated and confined as a patient for a few days; then sent to Sandbastel hospital just a few miles from Kiel, where I recuperated from most of my injuries. Later I had my right eye removed at a hospital in Vienna, Austria.”

Harvey Compton witnessed the attack and added these details: “Capt. Abernethy was leading. Lt. Reed was on Ab’s left wing and Lt. Kolliner was on Ab’s right wing. Lt. Reed was having a little trouble holding formation so Kolly and Reed switched positions. On the run in, Reed’s plane was hit in the top turret. Must have been a rocket or 30 or 40-mm shell.” He continued, “The plane

was also hit in the #2 engine and in the left vertical stabilizer. The top left half sheared off and the left main gear dropped. The plane fell off sharply to the right. I thought they were surely gone. After landing and debriefing, we heard he was coming in. The crew bailed out and were picked up. Reed had a new gunner from the armament shop. He came up to our C.O., Hodges, I believe, threw his parachute down and said, 'There's your blankity-blank receipt. I quit.' He went back to the armory."

John Reed and Alan Perry both were commended for their actions on this mission:

Reed received a DFC. Here is the citation: "John Young Reed, 0-660004, 1st Lieutenant, 44th Bombardment Group (H), Army Air Forces, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement while serving as pilot of a B-24 airplane on a bombardment mission over Germany, 14 May 1943. On reaching the German Coast, the formation was attacked by one of the largest enemy fighter plane forces encountered to date. During the bombing run, Lieutenant Reed's airplane suffered severe damage and on leaving the target enemy fighter planes attacked in force disabling three engines. Displaying great courage and skillful airmanship, Lieutenant Reed with only one engine of his airplane functioning properly dove into a cloud bank and by so doing evaded the attacking fighter planes. On reaching his home base, Lieutenant Reed ordered all members of the crew to bail out as the airplane was in such a condition that it could not be landed or crash landed. He and the co-pilot then flew their airplane to the coast where it could crash into the water without harm to anyone. On arriving at the coast, Lieutenant Reed set a seaward course for the airplane and then he and the co-pilot bailed out. The actions of Lieutenant Reed on this occasion were directly responsible for the safe return of all members of his crew and reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States."

Commenting on the citation, Reed wrote: "The write up for my DFC for the Kiel raid was a real comedy of errors, which no one in headquarters ever wanted to take credit for. To my recollection, there were no clouds in the area and, though I'd like to believe that I was a reasonably good pilot, neither I nor anyone else I know would ever claim that "with three disabled engines," a B-24 was flown from Germany to England."

Perry received a Silver Star. Here is the citation: "Alan B. Perry, 12003178, Technical Sergeant, 66th Bombardment Squadron (H), Army Air Forces, United States Army. For gallantry in action while serving as radio operator and gunner on a B-24 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany, 14 May 1943. Before reaching the target enemy fighter planes attacked in unusually large numbers rendering the top-turret useless and wounding the gunner, who slipped from his seat onto the catwalk over the open bomb bay which could not be closed due to damage. Displaying great bravery and skill Sergeant Perry, without waiting to make proper oxygen connections administered first aid and put a parachute pack on the injured gunner, placing his hand in the release handle. Having accomplished this and being too weak from lack of oxygen to render further assistance, Sergeant Perry was forced to return to his radio compartment for a supply of oxygen. When he returned to the bomb bay to give further aid, his comrade was not there. Sergeant Perry then entered the top-turret and attempted to fire the damaged guns thus preventing the enemy from realizing that this highly important position had been destroyed. The bravery, skill and devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Perry on this occasion reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States."

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-24278 Q, Brown	MISS DELORES	MACR #16558
67th Squadron Crew:		
BROWN, ROBERT I. ASN 0-727162	Pilot POW	1st Lt. Norwalk, California
WESTBROOK, HARTLEY A. ASN 0-728041	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt. Coon Rapids, Iowa
BISHOP, ROBERT H. ASN 0-353495	Navigator POW	Capt. Knoxville, Tennessee
HAYWOOD, HOLDEN R. ASN 0-727341	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt. Terra Haute, Indiana
WANDTKE, GILBERT A. ASN 16047953	Engineer POW	T/Sgt. Manawa, Wisconsin
SUSAN, JOHN L. ASN 6995427	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt. Llewellyn, Pennsylvania
ULLRICH, AUGUST ASN 342142804	Asst. Radio POW	S/Sgt. Brooklyn, New York
MILLHOUSEN, GEORGE R. ASN 37133211	Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt. St. Louis, Missouri
CATE, RICHARD E. ASN 20366318	Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	Sgt. Hampton, Virginia
KLINGLER, ROY L. ASN 39303276	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Portland, Oregon

*Note: It appears that Millhousen and Klingler stayed in the aircraft.*

This mission was a maximum effort but only three 67th crews could be scraped together. SUZY-Q was being repaired so the third crew was not only “patched” together, it was forced to fly a replacement aircraft named MISS DELORES. T/Sgt. John L. Susan relates his experiences aboard this ship on this mission: “We tried to overtake the B-17s and get above them but the chase was futile. We could not catch them even though we were faster. When we got to the target, we had reached a good altitude but the B-17s were still ahead and above us. The German gunners had a good track on the B-17s and the B-24s were coming in on the same track – and we took on a lot of flak.

“MISS DELORES took a hit and we started to fall behind, as one of our left-side engines was knocked out. 2nd Bombardment Wing had recently issued a directive that Radio Operators could not man the top turret, but should stay at his position on the flight deck. Sgt. “Gib” Wandtke was operating the top turret but the flak burst had also hit Gib, taking some metal in his knee, and he came tumbling down out of the top turret, which was almost directly above me. He motioned to me that I should get into the turret – and I did. But unknown to me was the fact that the flak bursts had also knocked out the Intercom! Everyone, therefore, was on his own.

“When I got into the top turret, we were already a sitting duck as we were falling behind the formation due to that lost engine. And my guns would not fire between the two vertical stabilizers for some reason. I kept cussing as I would bring the guns down to shoot at the six or more following Jerries who were taking pot shots at us from the rear. I don’t know if our tail

turret guns were functioning or not. [Editor's note: They were not.] Then our left wing started on fire – and it was time to start getting out.

“Just when I decided the situation was too precarious, our pilot, Lt. Brown, tried to give the signal to bail out, but he could not communicate with the crew to advise them. We had dropped our bombs and the bomb bay doors were still open. Gib Wandtke, wounded and all, fought his way back to the rear of the plane to warn the gunners back there to abandon ship. When he got back to the flight deck I had found my chest pack chute and was standing on the catwalk at the front of the bomb bay. So I tumbled out, and knowing that some Jerries would attack my chute, I delayed my opening for about sixty seconds.

“When I pulled the cord the altitude was about 8,000 feet and the feeling was very eerie – no sound whatever. A very, very quiet sensation, with only the wind through the shrouds that could be called only a whisper, and was the only sound that I could discern.

“Above, I could see the remaining planes on their way back from Kiel. Back over the bay, I could see many chutes on the way down, high above me. Below, I noticed some boats leaving their wake in the bay. Shortly thereafter, I took off my bail out bottle, my shoes, and loosened my harness as we had been instructed to do over water. Hanging onto the harness by my hands, I approached the water of Kiel Bay.

“There is one problem, however. How do you know how high you are off the water? You have no reference point on water to judge your altitude. Are the whitecaps you can see six inches high or 16 inches? When I thought I was 6 to 10 feet above the water I let go of my harness – but I had miscalculated! Just as I let go, my feet were already in the water, and the shroud lines came tumbling down over my head!

“As I entered the water I went on down possibly 10 feet, but being buoyant, popped right back up under my shroud lines. The parachute canopy also had dropped over my head and my fight to free myself began. I struggled with the shroud lines and the chute until I thought I would never get free. Just then a boat came by and a fisherman took his gaff and pulled the chute from my head. Then he gaffed me and pulled me out of the water like a big fish. He probably saved my life by being there. Other members of my crew, if they did not delay their opening, may have drowned by being blown out to the mouth of the Bay. The first words uttered by the boat crew were, ‘Für Sie das Krieg ist fertig’ – meaning, ‘For you the war is finished.’

“Later I learned that during the battle, Lt. Hayworth, our bombardier, after dropping the bombs, saw a cannon shell coming toward the front of the plane and covered his head with his hands. The shell exploded on the plexiglass nose section and shattered plexiglass blasted against him. When he became a POW, his hands and forehead were peppered with shrapnel and plexiglass. He no doubt saved his eyes by shielding them with his arms and hands. I did not realize that the last three original planes – all except SUZY-Q – in our Squadron had been hit and downed on this mission until the crew members of the other B-24s showed up in my prison camp.” S/Sgt. Susan spent most of his time in Stalag 17. Lt. Bishop was rescued from the bay by a Danish Trawler.

*Note: Bishop lived in England for many years after the war.*

## 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #42-40126 T, Roach	ANNIE OAKLEY...	MACR #2441
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*Note: Full name is ANNIE OAKLEY "CRACK SHOT"*

## 67th Squadron Crew:

ROACH, WILLIAM A. Jr. ASN 0-791505	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Lumberton, North Carolina
TENNEY, ROSS A. ASN 0-728767	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	San Diego, California
KISSINGER, LOUIS L. ASN 0-729632	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Rio Linda, California
KENNON, WYATT S. ASN 0-661636	Bombardier Evadee, later KIA, buried Ardennes (B-20-2)	1st Lt.	Virginia
GRAHAM, SIDNEY W. ASN 39381894	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Pullman, Washington
STEPTOE, THOMAS E. Jr. ASN 33133951	Radio Oper KIA, buried Ardennes (B-20-1)	T/Sgt.	Manaroneck, New York
LEWIS, CARL R. ASN 33185548	Well Gun KIA	S/Sgt.	Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania
ADAMS, RICHARD W. ASN 14120178	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Macon, Georgia
HOBBS, HERBERT J. Jr. ASN 34117537	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Salisbury, North Carolina
LANDRETH, CALVIN F. ASN 15104217	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (D-38-20)	S/Sgt.	Indianapolis, Indiana

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The second 67th Squadron plane lost this day was flown by the first replacement crew (1st Lt. William A. Roach's), which was on its second mission. Only two members from this crew appear to have bailed out successfully – the navigator, Lt. Louis L. Kissinger and bombardier Lt. Wyatt S. Kennon. Lt. Kissinger was captured and became a POW, while Lt. Kennon evaded capture for a period of time (not recorded) but was later killed. Six charred bodies were found at the crash site, four of whom were identified by their dog tags: Sidney Graham, Herbert Hobbs, Richard Adams, and Thomas Steptoe. Two bodies without tags were not identified.

The lone survivor, Lt. Kissinger, could not be located to obtain his account of his experiences that day.

## 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #41-23807 U, Phillips	LITTLE BEAVER	MACR #2748
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## 67th Squadron Crew:

PHILLIPS, CHESTER L. Jr. ASN 0-421129	Pilot KIA, Ardennes (D-12-2)	Capt.	Greenville, Texas
WILBORN, EVERETT W. Jr. ASN 0-729393	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Port Lavaca, Texas
BARTMESS, THOMAS E. ASN 0-726980	Navigator KIA, drowned	1st Lt.	Houston, Texas

HILL, WILLIAM E. ASN 0-727342	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	Louisville, Kentucky
DENNY, MICHAEL J. ASN 12055743	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Shortsville, New York
PRICE, GEORGE B. ASN 12034269	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Margraten	T/Sgt.	Oakhurst, New Jersey
HUBBARD, GAYLORD F. ASN 37120505	Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Blackton, Iowa
GLAUBITZ, DALE A. ASN 37087575	Asst. Eng. POW	S/Sgt.	Sidney, Nebraska
PHILLIPS, EDWARD W. ASN 18063461	Asst. Radio KIA, buried Ardennes (A-35-28)	S/Sgt.	Fort Worth, Texas
FOREHAND, CHARLES C. ASN 20443081	Waist Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Nashville, Tennessee
GRABOWSKI, BARNEY J. ASN 20641515	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan

The third of the three 67th Squadron aircraft and crews to go down this day was the one piloted by Captain Chester “George” Phillips. Sgt. Michael J. Denny, engineer on LITTLE BEAVER, wrote to 1st Sergeant Robert Ryan from his POW camp and he included this information: “Chubby Hill, Glaubitz, Forehand, and myself are the only ones who got out OK. Glaubitz was hit pretty badly, still in hospital in pretty bad shape...Lt. Roach went down before we did – all dead but Kissinger. Brown went down about the same time that we did – all OK but little Klingler, Millhousen, and some new boy (Cate).

“We were hit after we left the target. Two bursts in the back end, also knocked out one engine; then a burst in back of our navigator [Thomas E. Bartmess]. The entire inside of the flight deck was a mass of flames. It must have hit the hydraulic fluid in the accumulator positioned there. We went into a flat spin – had a Hell of a time standing on my feet and putting on my parachute. Tried to put out the fire, but was impossible. Could not get doors [bomb bay doors] open so I had to fight my way back to the rear windows to get out. Bailed out at about 800 feet. Was the last one to leave the plane, and saw it crash and burn.”

S/Sgt. Charles C. Forehand states, “I remember Tommy Bartmess well – he was a very good officer and navigator. He led us over enemy territory for 22 raids and back. We were looking forward to making the 25th mission soon and coming home. The day we were shot down, the anti-aircraft flak was very heavy and accurate, fighters were everywhere we looked. I was flying as waist gunner that day and we were hit by flak, were on fire. After that, things went so fast I don’t know what went on in the front of the plane. That night a German officer told me that three crew members survived, but I never saw any of them or heard from any of them. I was captured as soon as I hit the ground and was a POW for two years.”

Lt. William E. Hill, bombardier, included this bit in a letter dated 29 May 1943 that he sent home from his POW camp: “I suppose by this time you know I am a POW. Went on one mission too many this time. I am the only officer from my crew alive, plus three enlisted men – four out of ten! A 20-mm cannon shell exploded right in the nose of plane just behind me. I believe having a steel helmet on my head saved my life. Flames broke out immediately and the plane went into a flat spin. My navigator [Bartmess] was first to bail out and I followed. He landed in the water,

but was caught in shrouds of parachute and drowned. Fortunately, I stayed with the plane about 3 minutes longer and landed on the beach. Was almost knocked cold by a blow on my forehead as chute opened and again when I landed. However, came out of it all with only a scratch on forehead, sore spine for a few days and a little shock. Germans treat us fine and we have plenty to eat.”

Captain Phillips, the pilot, was killed by a flak burst, shortly after leaving the target. This was probably the same flak burst described by Lt. Hill. 1st Lt. Wilborn, co-pilot, was last seen standing on the flight deck, and could have had time to bail out, but he did not survive for reasons unknown.

With the loss of these three planes, the 67th Squadron was left with only one aircraft and it was being overhauled in Northern Ireland – and one make-shift crew!

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23819 A, Howell	RUGGED BUGGY	MACR #15509
68th Squadron Crew (with one exception):		
HOWELL, MALCOLM C. ASN 0-727992	Pilot KIA, parachute torn, Ardennes (B-37-28)	1st Lt. Topeka, Kansas
O'BRIEN, JAMES E. ASN 0-435700	Command Pilot POW	Major Monogahala, Pennsylvania
BLEDSON, JOHN D. ASN 0-726990	Navigator POW	1st Lt. Clinton, Massachusetts
CRISAN, NORIUS ASN 6994910	Bombardier POW	M/Sgt. Denver, Colorado
McCABE, KENNETH C. ASN 16001425	Engineer POW	S/Sgt. De Kalb, Illinois
ERNST, RALPH C. (From 66th Sq.) ASN 6863975	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt. Enderlin, North Dakota
VAN OYEN, HAROLD D. ASN 37144043	Well Gunner KIA, drowned	S/Sgt. Madison, Wisconsin
MacCAMMOND, JAMES A. ASN 11040993	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Darien, Connecticut
HUSSELTON, JOHN W.	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Fairfield, Illinois
CASTILLO, RICHARD M. ASN 35278673	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt. Springfield, Ohio

*Note: T/Sgt. Ralph C. Ernst was from the 66th Squadron.*

The 68th Squadron lost one aircraft and crew – that being the plane flown by 1st Lt. Malcolm C. Howell with Major James E. O'Brien in the right seat as Command Pilot. Major O'Brien has written a detailed account of this day, some of which follows, "The words came down one calm night of May 13th that the Group was to recall all crews for a maximum effort to Bordeaux, France. However, at 0200 hours the field order changed and to load up with 4,000 pounds of new-type incendiary clusters for Kiel, Germany. The obvious question was 'What good will incendiaries do at Kiel?' The explanation given at briefing at 0700 was that the B-17s were going



to bomb Hell out of the Sub Pens, Aircraft Factories and Seaport Facilities and the B-24s were to kindle the fires...but it was a long trip without fighter escort!

“With vacancies due to men on leave in London, Lt. Mac Howell would have to fly as first pilot. This seemed quite simple except that poor little Mac had never wanted to be a first pilot – he just wanted to go home to his dear, loving wife. As #41-23819 A (Bar A) taxied out, Mac said, ‘If I get back from this trip, I’m going to get stinkin’ drunk!’

“As we passed through 19,000 feet above the Frisian Islands, which we were to have avoided, we saw scattered puffs of flak smoke and responded with the usual appreciation of poor marksmanship from ground batteries. My attention was diverted momentarily to Tom Holmes’ ship which took a burst of flak and appeared to have some flames coming out of the bomb bay. All of a sudden our ship was rocked with two explosions. One real indication of trouble was the manifold pressure on two left engines, which dropped to 15 psi and there was a sudden drag to the left, which Howell and I struggled to correct. I had thoughts of feathering these two left engines but that would have been a sure give-away to German fighters waiting to come in for an easy kill. We lost communications with the five boys in the rear of the ship, too. The formation had leveled off onto the bomb run and we were still keeping up with them.

“The bomb bay doors opened and the 44th let go with their clusters of matchstick incendiaries, which added even more confusion. The clusters did not hold together for 200 feet before breaking up. As soon as they hit the slipstream they were all over the sky in a negative trajectory, flying back through the formation, bouncing off of wings and propellers. Nothing worked better for the Germans at this point as the formation scattered to avoid these missiles.

“Meanwhile, we had dropped our own clusters of bombs and had plenty of trouble. The cockpit smelled of gasoline and our unspoken thoughts as Howell and I looked at each other were fire and explosion. We had now separated from the formation after leaving the target and I noticed at least two other stragglers off to the right. One of them was from the 67th Squadron and the other was Captain Swede Swanson of the 506th Squadron, which had just joined our Group [in late March] back at Shipdham. There was plenty of company now joining us – FW 190s in formation off to the left and Me 109s off the right wing. “Mac” McCabe, in the top turret, kept yelling through his oxygen mask to dip the wing so he could hit them with a few .50s. Howell and I were just trying to keep the ship flying, not knowing what else to do. We had been through this before and somehow fate had brought us through. In the past we had outlasted German fighters until they turned back over the North Sea, but now we were practically standing still in a 70 mile-per-hour headwind, on a heading of 285 degrees, with lots of German soil still underneath us.

“There must have been at least two Jerrys sitting off our tail and pumping a steady flow of cannon and .30-caliber bullets into us. I heard several .30s zing into the cockpit and bounce off the armor plated seats. Mixed among these .30s were some incendiary bullets which made a good mixture with the intense gasoline fumes and pretty soon we had a roaring furnace in the bomb bay.

“My first knowledge of the fire was the intense heat all over the cockpit and I leaped out of the seat, breaking my oxygen hose. I pulled open the top hatch to get out, saw the whirling propellers and antenna wires. And I recall my steel GI helmet, which we wore before the invention of flak helmets, blowing right off into the wind as I stuck my head out of the hatch. If there was any time to take a second guess, it was here. I decided on some other exit. T/Sgt. Ralph Ernst, radio

operator, desperately kicked the bomb bay door open to make an opening large enough to exit, providing you could make it through the smoke and flame. In the rush, I was looking for my snap-on British-type chest pack and mistakenly snapped on a life raft dinghy! I threw the dinghy pack to the floor and found my chest pack in time to get into the nice quiet of the atmosphere. This final rush quickly ended in peaceful and quiet descent as I looked up to see the secure strings of a parachute canopy lowering me to Mother Earth. But not before the shock of pulling the ripcord and the patient wait for a jerk. But there was no jerk and I was sure the thing had failed, especially with the handle in my hands which had a little 12 inch wire dangling from it. I was sure something had broken. This experience for every novice parachutist can take a few years from his life expectancy!

“On my way down, I decided that I should have my back to the wind so I experimented with the shroud lines trying to turn the canopy so I was facing down wind. All this did was make a violent swing that almost spilled the canopy so that first experiment ended quickly.

“Shortly after I realized I had an open chute, I looked up to see another chute coming down beside me with one nylon panel torn open from bottom to top. I couldn’t determine who it was but on the ground I found Crisan, Bledsoe, McCabe, Ernst, Husselton, MacCammond, and Castillo (in a stretcher with his foot badly injured). With the very limited communications allowed, I was able to determine that Crisan, Bledsoe, Ernst, and McCabe did not have a bad chute as they were alive and uninjured. Howell didn’t show up, and the first indication of his fate was the first question thrown at me by an English speaking German medic. ‘Do you know a little man in a yellow suit? He is toten (dead).’

“One other casualty was Sgt. Harold Van Oyen, our assistant radio operator and waist gunner. He always had a fear of drowning, even with a Mae West life preserver. When we got our first burst of flak, it not only stopped the two left engines but it blew a hole in the tail end, knocking S/Sgt. Castillo out of his turret and injuring his foot. The other three boys in the rear sized up the situation as hopeless as we had no intercom, pushed Castillo out, pulling his ripcord for him and then bailed out themselves. Van Oyen landed in the Kiel Bay; a German ship picked him up, but he had already drowned in his life jacket.

“Sgt. Castillo was taken to a German hospital and the rest of us were put on a train to Frankfurt where the Germans interrogated all POWs – Dulag Luft I. After another three or four days, Bledsoe and I were sent to Stalag Luft III at Sagan and the NCOs were sent to Stalag 17 near Krems, Austria. For the next 23 months we were POWs.”

S/Sgt. Castillo later stated that the last thing he remembered was a couple of German fighters sitting 20 to 30 yards off the tail of the aircraft and systematically peppering the rudders and tail section with everything they had. He and his rear turret had been knocked out of commission by these German 7-mm and .30-caliber fire. His ammunition box near his right foot had been hit and wedged against his foot, which was badly mangled. The next thing he could remember was being picked up on the ground.

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A second 68th Squadron plane was also involved with casualties. This aircraft, piloted by Lt. George R. Jansen, had crew members seriously wounded. S/Sgt. McCrady was hit by a .30-caliber machine gun bullet in his stomach and died the next day from this wound. In addition, S/Sgt. Robert Reasoner, tail gunner, had a head injury from a .30 cal. bullet, his second combat

injury; M/Sgt. Robert M. Smith, right waist gunner had 20-mm shell fragments in his right leg; and S/Sgt. Butler was wounded in his right hand, right arm and chest from .30 cal. bullets. The plane was badly damaged as well, including a flat tire, but Lt. Jansen made a perfect landing to allow his men to receive immediate medical aid.

Tony Mastradone reported that McCrady was “put on a stand-by plane and flown to an American hospital somewhere in England. The late Capt. John Young [the Flight Surgeon for the 67th Squadron], Cpl. Clifford Hiess, and I were on the flight and everything possible was done, but to no avail.”

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-24009 W, Jansen	MARGARET ANN	Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew:		
JANSEN, GEORGE R.	Pilot	1st Lt.
GIRARD, LOUIS V.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.
VIKERY, EUGENE P.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
GUILFORD, GEORGE W.	Bombardier	S/Sgt.
STRANDBERG, CLARENCE W.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
HUFF, CORWIN C.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
McCRADY, LEO V. Jr. ASN 17056134	Gunner KIA, buried Cambridge (E-4-91)	Kansas City, Kansas
REASONER, ROBERT J. ASN 34242418	LW Gunner Slightly wounded	New Plymouth, Ohio
SMITH, ROBERT M. ASN 13027651	RW Gunner Slightly wounded	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
BUTLER, RICHARD J. ASN 13044499	Tail Turret Slightly wounded	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*Note: Louis Girard was killed in action on 1 August 1943. Robert Smith was killed in action on 1 October 1943.*

The tail gunner, Richard Butler, wrote the following: “It was a good day for a bombing mission as the sky was clear except for a few scattered clouds below us. Soon after we crossed the coastline and were over the continent, we began to have fighter attacks at irregular intervals before we reached the target city. As we reached the outskirts of Kiel, the fighter attacks intensified and became almost constant. At about that time I saw Captain O’Brien’s ship drop out of formation and lag behind. He was under heavy attack and the fighters were just swarming around them. I was unable to observe any parachutes drop from the plane because of the large number of fighters in the area.

“As we were nearing the target, we had become ‘tail-end Charlie’ because of the loss of Captain O’Brien’s ship. (I think we were flying #2 position and O’Brien was #3). Captain Jansen had called me over the intercom and said, ‘Let me know when the \_\_\_\_ are coming in!’ When I called and said, ‘Here they come!’ He then slipped up under the leadship of our formation and did such evasive action that the gunners of the lead ship said they could almost touch us. They were worried that Captain Jansen would cut the bottom out of their ship with his props.

“It seemed the fighters would never stop coming in on us. Most of the attacks were from 6 o’clock high and were mostly FW 190s that lined up one behind the other and came in. Their

tracer bullets coming at me appeared to be like little streaks of light that flashed on and off. On one attack, I suddenly found myself hanging on my back out of the tail turret. I didn't know what had happened until I got back in position in the turret. At that time, I saw a bullet hole in the turret Plexiglas at eye level just above the bulletproof glass on the rear of the turret. The bullet would have hit me in the center of the forehead, but I was saved because I was shooting at the right and when sighting through the gunsight, I had to bend forward and stoop slightly.

"The bullet had just broken the skin on my head. It felt just like a hard blow with a heavy club. The bullet had torn a slit in my helmet, clipped my headset, and continued on into the aircraft structure. My imagination took over and I could feel the blood seeping on my head. I didn't dare check then, but it turned out to be my imagination because the blood had remained in the area where the bullet struck me.

"Even after the bombardier had dropped our bombs, the fighters continued to attack in large numbers. It seemed they would never stop their attacks. By this time I had just about given up and wondered why Captain Jansen had not rung the bailout bell. I looked in the waist section to see if the other gunners were still there. I could see they were still firing their guns and it looked like they were up to their ankles in spent 50-caliber cartridges.

"As the fighters had begun their attacks rather slowly, they ended their attacks abruptly. I wondered why and looked around for a reason. The tail gunner is the last to know! There, below, was the coastline of the North Sea. The timing was perfect for us. My right gun was out of ammo and the left gun had a strip of ammo about 18 inches long.

"The safety from the fighters as we reached the North Sea gave us a chance to look around for the first time. When we saw all the holes in our plane, we thought of the new danger of the cold water below and how long we could survive if we had to bail out or crash-land in the water. Also, how long before we could expect to be picked up and would it be in time?

"Anyway, Captain Jansen kept MARGARET ANN going with her #3 engine feathered. All of us in the waist kept a sharp lookout for any other signs of failure, but none appeared and we arrived back at our base at Shipdham. The engineer shot a red flare indicating wounded aboard, and we were cleared to land immediately. Captain Jansen made a perfect landing – he held the plane on the left main landing wheel as the right tire had been flattened by a 20-mm armor piercing shell. When the plane slowed until he could not hold it off the right wheel any longer, he let it touch down and made a curve off the runway onto the beautiful green grass and soft earth of England. The exit of the crew from MARGARET ANN must have set some kind of a record.

"MARGARET ANN was riddled. The ground crew told us later that we had 250 major holes (1/2 inch or bigger) in our aircraft. Most of the fuel tanks had been punctured but luckily, the hits were above the gas line. There were three holes in the tail turret. The one that hit me on the head; one that came in at a slight angle and knocked the handle off the Plexiglas door behind me (an early modification to keep the cold air off the tail gunner); and one that came through the bottom of the turret and nearly cut the toes out of my G.I. shoes stored under the catwalk behind the turret. In the turret, I wore silk socks covered by wool socks and fleece-lined flying boots. The ground crew traced the bullet that hit me and presented me with the steel point of a 30-caliber armor-piercing bullet.

"I'm sure those of us that still survive will always remember the first American raid on Kiel. All of us in the rear of the plane had been slightly wounded. Besides me, the two waist gunners had been hit by 20-mm explosive shell fragments. The bottom gunner (McCrary) had received internal injuries and died the next day."

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Captain John W. "Swede" Swanson and crew also were lost on this mission. It was only the second aircraft and crew lost by the 506th Squadron since joining the 44th Bomb Group in March.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-24295 J, Swanson	WICKED WITCH		
506th Squadron Crew:			
SWANSON, JOHN W. ASN 0-431385	Pilot POW	Capt.	Warsaw, Missouri
MYERS, DOUGLAS B. ASN 0-730575	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Joplin, Missouri
SCHIEFELBUSCH, RICHARD L. ASN 0-663417	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Jasper, Missouri
BANK, SIDNEY W. ASN 0-727615	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Denver, Colorado
MEARS, WILLIAM J. ASN 37282895	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Knox, North Dakota
WOLF, FREDERICK T. ASN 36233230	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Ardennes (D-10-8)	T/Sgt.	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
CHRISTENSEN, GEORGE E. ASN 37281658	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (D-8-57)	S/Sgt.	Bisbee, North Dakota
DUNCAN, JOSEPH B. ASN 33281841	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Martins Ferry, Ohio
GLEMBOSKI, STANLEY W. ASN 36196961	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Magraten	S/Sgt.	Stanbaugh, Michigan

*Note: Apparently only a nine-man crew. Sgt. Mark Morris was assigned this day, not called out.*

Doctor Richard L. Schiefelbusch, navigator, gave me this account for this crew: "Sid Banks (bombardier) and I, in the nose of the plane, were aware at first of an order to bail out, which we did by going out through the nose door hatch. On the way down I saw two chutes, one on each side of me. The one between me and the coast line was Banks. I never knew who the other one was. I came down in the Baltic about 10 miles from shore. Later I found out that both Myers (co-pilot) and Swanson (pilot and last one out) came down on land.

"Our plane, of course, was somewhat out of formation as the planes swung around after bombing out over the Baltic preparing to head back to England. We were hit by fighters that queued up ahead of our bombers and came in at us head-on.

"Lts. Myers and Swanson stated that one engine was on fire and that the instrument panel had also been hit.

“I have always assumed that the five who died got out first, but because the plane was over the sea and heading back toward land, those out first had the least chance of being picked up. I estimate that I was picked up about 30 minutes later by a motorized fishing boat. The fishermen were probably volunteer air-sea rescuers who were informal members of a rescue service along the coast line. I suppose they spotted chutes and came out to find all the survivors they could.

“The only crew member I ever saw again (in addition to Myers, Banks and Swanson) was S/Sgt. Stanley W. Glemboski, tail gunner. They must have fished him out of the Baltic. He was simply a body placed in the truck that hauled us to prison from the fishing village. I am sure that there were only five enlisted men on our crew.”

2nd Lt. Douglas B. Myers, co-pilot, also adds, “I believe we had flak damage to the inner starboard engine (#2) which resulted in fire and loss of power. We remained in formation as best we could, to the target and salvoed our load. We were not able to remain in formation after turning west and when alone, were attacked by fighters. We took some machine gun fire in the nose and flight deck areas and cannon hits in the waist area. The controls became unresponsive and we were not able to maintain altitude. Because of the fighter attacks and the enlarging fire, it was determined to abandon our craft.

“Sgts. Mears and Wolfe, respectively the top turret gunner and radio operator, were on the flight deck. One of them entered the bomb bay and removed the empty cartridge casings so that he could open the bomb bay doors. Neither of them were wounded at the time that they jumped. I have no other knowledge concerning the gunners in the waist and tail area but have reasoned that they could have been wounded by cannon fire. I do not know if they were able to or did leave the ship.”

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Another 506th aircraft, RUTH-LESS piloted by Lt. Frank Slough suffered considerable damage but upon return to base and entering the landing pattern, could not determine if the tires were flat, so the control tower gave him orders to continue on to Northern Ireland where repairs could be made. There were too many ships in distress at the base to chance another crash-landing. RUTH-LESS landed without difficulty in northern Ireland.  
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For this mission, the first air battle of Kiel, the Group received its first official unit citation award from the War Department. This was the first awarded in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). Here is an excerpt from that citation:

“On this mission, a single group was, for the first time, fully loaded with incendiaries to be dropped after the lead groups had released their high explosive bombs. Because of the trial of the incendiaries, the 44th Bombardment Group (H), which had been assigned this task, was required to continue its bombing run for some two miles beyond the release point of the other groups in order to bomb effectively. To accomplish this, it was necessary to fly alone, without supporting fire power of other groups, over one of the most heavily defended areas in Germany with a formation considerably smaller than the minimum for mutual self-protection. The mission was undertaken with full knowledge of the extreme hazards involved. Its successful performance demanded the highest degree of bravery and skill.

“With only 19 B-24s, the 44th Bombardment Group (H) followed three B-17 groups to the target. Fierce and determined attacks by some 120 enemy fighters commenced at the German Coast and

continued until after leaving the coast on the return route. After the B-17s had reached their release point and turned away, the 44th Bombardment Group (H) proceeded alone in the face of continuous attacks by swarms of enemy fighters and increasingly concentrated flak. By opening its formation as required to clear the incendiaries of ships ahead, it was rendered particularly vulnerable to enemy attack. Five of its airplanes were shot down on the approach to and over the target. Despite these losses, the group held the necessary formation and continued on its run alone to its bomb release point. Bombing was extremely accurate and the target was blanketed with incendiaries. Widespread fires destroyed or damaged many enemy installations. One additional airplane was lost after leaving the target. This small force was officially credited with 23 enemy aircraft destroyed, 13 probably destroyed, and one damaged.

“The successful fulfillment of this highly dangerous mission was due to the extraordinary courage, skill, and devotion to duty of all concerned, which will always be worthy of emulation. Such heroism reflects the greatest credit on the Army Air Forces.”

*Note: For an excellent account of this mission, refer to the 2nd ADA Journals. See the article written by Lt. Col. Fisher in the June 1984 issue (pages 18-19) and continued in the September issue 1984 (page 10).*

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23813 V, Holmes	VICTORY SHIP	Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew (partial):		
HOLMES, TOM W. Jr.	Pilot	Capt.
WEANT, W. BAXTER	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
STINE, ROBERT J.	Navigator	1st Lt.
KLEKAR, HOWARD R.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
FLESHER, ISAAC A.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
DEBERRY, SAM H.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
CARLSON, EDWIN L.	Belly Gun	Sgt.
BOWDEN, EDWARD F.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
BALAZOVICH, MICHAEL J.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
GREEN, GEORGE L.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.
	Wounded	

*Note: Holmes mentions that several crewmembers were wounded, including the radio operator who is not named in the account but may be Isaac Flesher.*

In 1991, Lt. Col. Tom Holmes wrote the following account of the mission:

“The Kiel Raid took place May 14, 1943, and turned out to be the worst raid I ever made. Before it began, little did I realize how rough it would really be.

“Recently, while recuperating in Beaumont’s St. Elizabeth hospital from my second major surgery in four months, I looked out my hospital window overlooking the lawn and I could see Old Glory proudly waving in the spring breeze and, just beneath, our beautiful Texas flag. It is always with pride that I observe our flag. To see these flags waving there over the Land of the Free tells me it was worth all the effort back in May 1943, when we made the big raid on Kiel in Northern Germany.

“I had been in England approximately seven months and was a captain in the 68th Squadron, 44th Heavy Bomb Group, flying B-24-D Liberators in daylight raids over Germany and France. This raid was one of two Presidential Citation raids. The other was the Ploesti raid over the Rumanian oil fields which was made at treetop level and one in which we had some awfully heavy losses, about the same ratio as the Kiel raid.

“Awakened about 3 a.m. this particular morning, dressing in cold barracks, we put on winter flying clothes because at high altitude temperatures can be somewhere around 45-65 degrees below zero. No heaters were used in the aircraft because heat would fog the windshield and we could not see enemy fighters as clearly. After breakfast we went to the briefing room to get details on the raid we would make this day. Everything we needed to know including bomber formations, who was flying and in what positions, we wrote on rice paper. In case we should be captured we could eat this critical information so that the enemy would find no evidence of our plans or of how many aircraft was involved. Our group put up 21 airplanes that day, our squadron furnishing six. There were five to six other groups, both B-17s and B-24s making this raid

“We were to bomb the shipping yard and harbor in Kiel. I had no idea we would lose seven of 21 planes, including our new squadron commander of six weeks, Major Jim O’Brien. Jimmy was going along this day to check out his co-pilot Mack Howell, who would be a first pilot from then on. Mack was one of two of the smallest men in the outfit, men we nicknamed “dusty butts” because they had to sit on extra pillows to get up to the height of the controls.

“We took off about 7:30 a.m. The leader began to circle the field to allow all of us to get into the air and join the formation before starting across the English Channel. This was routine. Many times we had to go through clouds and it was pretty rough. Frequently we would circle and join on top of the clouds. We started across the North Sea, staying well off the coast of Holland and off the coast of Germany to avoid anti-aircraft guns.

“We flew well off the coast, past Heligoland, an island off the northern coast of Germany where we turned inland to go straight to the initial point. At this point the bombardier takes control and guides the plane to the bomb release point, one of the most dangerous parts of the mission since the plane has to go straight and level, directly toward the target, thus giving the anti-aircraft guns an easier target.

“This day we carried some new magnesium bombs, also called incendiaries (large clusters banded together in small individual packets). Our ordnance people thought these bombs would drop several hundred feet in a package, then break, and scatter, so they would thoroughly cover the target area. Though that proved not to be the case, they thought the extremely hot magnesium bombs would cause a great many things to burn. (More about that later.)

“Shortly after we turned in over the coast, we began to pick up fire from the German anti-aircraft guns, some of the best in the world. The 88-mm. guns were very effective. Though we were flying at 28,000 feet, which helped a lot, those shells can easily come to that height and explode on contact. Frequently they would explode on a pre-set time in order to scatter a lot of shrapnel into the sky which might bring down some planes.

“It took about an hour and 45 minutes from the coast of England to the coast of Germany and then towards the initial point. All eyes strained to catch a glimpse of German fighters that we knew would jump us anytime after we crossed inland. German fighters scarcely ever surprised us



since we could always see them 20-30 miles away. We would see the sun shining on their canopies or something bright that would always give them away.

“This time we were jumped by 125-130 German fighters (my estimate). Once we got to the initial point, we made a left turn toward the target: the ships and harbor at Kiel. Just as we started to open our bomb bay doors, we were hit from the ground by a big artillery shell and there was a loud explosion in the bomb bay, and we were unable to drop the bombs. The doors were pretty well blown off the belly of the airplane. We couldn’t drop the bombs and we couldn’t get rid of them, yet they did not burn. All of the hydraulic system was blown out, which disabled the brakes, flaps, and other controls dependent on the system. We’ll never know why the magnesium bombs did not burn us up. It had to be the intervention of the Good Lord.

“We started in to the target in formation with our other friends in order to protect each other from the German fighters. But a group of B-17s somehow got about 4,000 feet above us at approximately 32,000 feet. As we were on our bomb run I looked off to the left of the wing about 200 feet, and saw a whole string of thousand pound bombs sailing down past us, dropping from the B-17s above.

“This was pretty scary, but fortunately they didn’t hit us. We were just glad they were headed toward the target. When we got to the point of release, instead of our bombs dropping a few hundred feet and exploding, they came out like a basket of leaves and scattered the minute they came out of the bomb bay. We were flying a step-down trail formation and there was absolutely nothing to do but jump them because we didn’t want to run into them and set our plane on fire from our own bombs. Fortunately I had room to hop over them.

“Some of our planes were not that fortunate and ran into them. Some of the bombs lodged in the engines and other places but did not go off or ignite; this was all that saved those planes.

“After releasing the bombs we made a left turn to head back toward the ocean. We were a long way inland and had a bitter struggle with the German fighters as well as anti-aircraft shells that continuously harassed us as we withdrew.

“About that time there was a loud explosion on the right side of the cockpit and I thought my co-pilot, Willie Weant, one of our better co-pilots, was hit, but when I looked at him he gave me a big OK sign with his index finger and thumb, and a broad smile spread past his oxygen mask.

“Some fragments did get past him and hit the radio operator right in the middle of his forehead. There was a lot of bleeding and it looked like the boy was dying. I was awfully worried about him. Later I found the wounds were superficial and real shallow. Outside of being covered with blood he was all right.

“After taking evasive action, we retreated to the coastline. One fighter came in so close and so straight at us I couldn’t see how we could avoid running into him. Occasionally the fighter pilots would be shot and come in out of control, taking one or two bombers with them. But this fighter was coming directly at us from just slightly above and a little to our left. At the very last moment it looked as if there was no way to avoid a head-on collision and I ducked my head to get set for the collision which, miraculously, never took place.

“In a split second we were back on the job, grateful we had avoided the head-on crash. We fought these fighters for almost 45 minutes until we got back out to sea. By this time, they had diminished somewhat and we got back on our course back to England.

“Phil Phillips, an old friend of mine then and now, was flying the Lemon Drop on my right wing and we noticed a B-24 with two engines smoking rather badly. We figured he needed a little protection to get home, so we latched onto him and flew in number three position. Phil flew in number two on his right wing and we escorted him back to England. He was from another group and we never did learn just who he was, but we flew with him all the way back.

“We got in a little too close to the coast of Holland and picked up seven German fighter planes. Out of the seven, two were FW 190s, a single radial engine fighter plane, much like our P-47s. They were armed with 20-mm. cannons. When the leader of the two FWs made a pass at our three planes, one of our gunners nailed him. As he went down in flames his wingman quit and went back home.

“That left us with five Me 210s, twin-engine German Messerschmitts. As we were returning across the North Sea, the three of us were harassed by these fighters. As our tail guns were inoperable and our tail gunner wounded, though not seriously, he stayed at his position. One of the twin-engine fighters saw our tail guns weren't working and tried to make a run at us from the rear. Sgt. George Green, our tail gunner, told me about it on the intercom. I told him to call out the range and as soon as the Me 210 got close enough, I pulled the plane up into a steady climb, thus giving the top guns a shot and maybe we could get him.

“He called out 1,000 yards, 900, 800, 700, and when he called 600 yards, we figured he would start firing pretty soon, so I put the plane into a gentle climb at about a 25-degree angle...our engineer and top gunner [Sam DeBerry], was turned around, waiting. He fired two short bursts and the second one set the German's right engine on fire and he crashed in the sea. That left us with four Me 210s to fight, giving us a running battle all the way across the North Sea. Between the three of us we finally were able to shoot down three more German planes, making a total of five of the seven German bandits.

“We were still harassed by the fifth plane, but he seemed uneasy about coming too close and would sit off at long range and lob shells at us. Though he was ineffective we still were unable to shoot him down. He stayed with us until we were within sight of the English Coast. Fearing British fighter planes, he took off from whence he came, somewhere in Holland.

“In the meantime, Major O'Brien and Mack Howell were knocked out somewhere in the intensive fighting from the target area back to the coastline. I was leading the second element that day and, although they were flying in the number three position on my left wing, I was so busy I never really realized when they went down. It was much later that I learned they had bailed out. They lost two engines on one side and were surrounded by enemy planes. O'Brien, the last one out, just barely cleared the plane when it exploded and his face was badly burned and his eyebrows singed when he dived through the fire in the bomb bay. All the crew had to jump through the burning bomb bay, but I think they all made it safely down except little Mack Howell. I feel sure he was dead when he hit the ground.”

*Note: The crew, including O'Brien would spend two years in German Prisoner of War Camps. Because of malnutrition O'Brien lost all his teeth and a lot of weight. He died in his sleep at his Pittsburgh, Pa. home on July 25, 2001.*

“Once the last German fighter broke away, I asked our bombardier [Howard Klekar] what he could do to get rid of our bomb load. He got a pry bar and went back to the bomb bay where everything was in a shambles, but he was able pry the bombs out and get rid of our load before we got back to land.

“Once we released the bombs we began to worry about the landing. With our hydraulic system gone, nothing happened when we attempted to lower our gear. We had a backup cable system, so the flight engineer was able to wind the main gear and the nose gear down, but the left main wheel would not lock. It had a strut on it and a yellow indicator on the strut would show when it was locked. Initially, it was not locked.

“We worried with this gear for some 40-45 minutes before finally getting it to lock. We were kicking this gear in and out with the rudder trying to make the weight of the wheel pop it in and make the strut lock.

“Our worries were not over because we found three of the men were wounded, though not seriously. Our usual procedure was to bail out the crew over the field letting the pilot and co-pilot take the disabled bomber up to the wash about 20-25 miles northeast of our base and head it out to sea. They would then bail out and the British fighters would shoot the bomber down to keep it from flying across the channel or getting into the hands of the enemy.

“Since we had three wounded men we decided to make an attempt to land at our home field. Because of the failure of the hydraulic system, we had no flaps and no flap backup. We attempted to come in real low and I was going to try and land in a plowed field just before the end of our runway. Not accustomed to this procedure, I overshot a little and landed on the runway near the end and we landed fairly hot because we had no flaps to slow us down.

“I tried to zigzag the plane all the way down the 6,000-foot runway but unfortunately there was not much wind, and when we got to the end of the runway, we were still doing about 40 miles per hour. There was a taxi way on my right and directly in front about 150 yards out was a rural road and deep ditch. I knew if we went straight ahead into that ditch we would probably break up and burn. Getting out of a burning B-24 is no easy job, especially if it has crashed. So I did the only thing that occurred to me – put full power on number one and number two engines on the left side and turned it to the right. We made a smoking, screaming turn to the right and with the help of the Good Lord, we were able to head the plane up the taxi way, off the end of the runway.

“We later discovered 13 strands of a 16-strand rudder cable had been severed and all the time we had been kicking the rudder hard to get the gear down and locked and down the runway we were fishtailing back and forth trying to slow down, we never realized only three strands were holding. This was just another sort of miraculous happening.

“We were so grateful and so relieved after making the turn onto the taxiway that I reached down (we were still doing 20 miles per hour) and hit the master switches and killed all four engines. Once our engines began to die, I realized I had no brakes and no way to steer and we were heading toward a parked B-24 over on the first dispersal on the left. Watching us land were ground crewman standing around and others sitting on the parked B-24 and in nearby jeeps and I stuck my head out of the pilot’s side and yelled a warning that they should all run as we were coming through with no control. Again, the Lord was with us because the main gear, the one that was not locked, held up and survived the severe right turn, but we also ran off the perimeter to

the left and when we hit the soft dirt, it immediately spun the plane around, stopping us just 15-20 feet short of the other bomber, almost in perfect formation position with wings overlapping.

“We had cursed the ever-present mud at Shipdham. It had caused us much distress. In this case, however, “It is an ill wind that blows no good.” This day the mud was a lifesaver. I truly believe it saved our lives and two B-24s, ours and the one we were about hit and maybe many other men on the ground.

“We were so relieved to get stopped, we got out, and I immediately kissed the ground. I was so glad to get back. The wounded men were taken to the hospital by ambulance and the rest of us were loaded into a truck, to be taken to debriefing where we would try to summarize the raid’s results.

“The damage to the airplane was severe. We had taken one 88 mm. into the bomb bay, a second one had hit the left rudder on the tail, pretty well stripping it off at the hinges. We also counted twenty-seven 20-mm. cannon hits, direct into the plane, but none were vital and none set us afire. We had numerous flak holes and several strings of bullets from fighter planes laced the plane.

“There were several hundred holes in this old V VICTORY, our airplane that day. We had been extremely fortunate to get back at all. It had been a long day - seven and a half-hours - five and half hours engaged in battle.

“Now you can see why I sum this raid up as probably the worst I ever made.”

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## 17 May 1943

### Bordeaux, France

The Bordeaux submarine repair shops were the objective of the 44th bombs. This mission was made in two flights for several reasons. The assigned aircraft first flew to Davidstowe, England on the 16th to be closer to the target as well as to have complete secrecy from German spies as well as from their radar. On the morning of the 17th, the aircraft took off for the target, which was to be the longest mission in distance to this date and its execution demanded exacting work from all of the crew members, especially the navigators. It was necessary to fly west, out and around the Brest peninsula, and then back east to target.

The Germans were taken completely by surprise, the target was hit with excellent results, no enemy planes seen and only moderate flak. One of our 66th Squadron crews was forced to seek refuge in Spain, a neutral country.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-40130 H, Hilliard	AVENGER II	MACR #3301
66th Squadron Crew:	All men interned in Spain	
HILLIARD, RAY L. ASN 0-431193	Pilot Interned	1st Lt.
DAMRON, ALFRED C. ASN 0-431128	Co-pilot Interned	1st Lt. Alexandria, Virginia
AUSTON, WILLIAM T. ASN 0-726975	Navigator Interned	1st Lt. Houston, Texas

SCHWEYER, RALPH ASN 12038908	Engineer Interned	T/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
FELSECKER, ROBERT E.	Radio Oper. Interned	T/Sgt.	Calumet City, Illinois
GIBSON, CHESTER C. ASN 33074178	Belly Gun Interned	S/Sgt.	Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania
HOOPER, ROBERT L. Jr. ASN 18104567	Photographer Interned	S/Sgt.	San Antonio, Texas
TRITSCHLER, PHILLIP H.	LW Gunner Interned	S/Sgt.	Nashville, Tennessee
WHITLOCK, GEORGE E. ASN 11037527	Tail Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Concord, New Hampshire
CARSON, JOHN B. ASN 14043222	RW Gunner Interned	Sgt.	Highland Park, Tennessee

1st Lt. Ray L. Hilliard's aircraft developed engine trouble before reaching the target, but much too far away from England to attempt to return all that distance over water, so he elected to take his chances with a neutral country. This he was successful in doing, all men were interned. However, the entire crew later returned to the 8th Air Force on the eighth of August 1943, after a period of more than two months.

1st Lt. William T. Auston, navigator, added these words, "We had fuel problems caused by our malfunctioning engines and couldn't make the long trip back to England. (Back out and around the Brest peninsula) About our only choice was to go to a neutral country, with Spain being the obvious one. Approaching Spain, we were flying at a high altitude looking for a field and finally saw a fighter base way below us. We were losing altitude as we were down to one engine running and came in for a landing on their short runway. Lts. Hilliard and Damron had to set their brakes very hard and we skidded along on the runway because we saw a steam roller blocking our path at the end of the strip! No one was injured – a successful landing. The name of the airfield was Alhama de Aragon, which is located northwest of Saragossa and almost due south of the French coast.

"Later, our crew was loaded into an old bus and we were transported through several villages and cities like Seville and Madrid. Eventually we arrived at Gibraltar where they, at last, made arrangements to fly us back to England."

Sgt. George Whitlock, tail turret gunner, said, "This was my eighth mission. I remember that we were still out over the ocean when two of our props ran away, and we immediately dropped like a rock. We immediately salvoed our bombs and threw overboard everything we could get loose. The pilots got things back under control at about 2,000 feet, I'd guess, and we headed for Spain. We managed to gain some altitude on the way, and landed without any enemy action.

"After about two months, we made our way down to Gibraltar and were there for nearly two weeks – 3rd of August – when we were loaded into a C-47 and flown back to England. A few of us were reassigned to an anti-submarine patrol unit at Talbenny, Wales [the 479th], where we flew eight more missions out over the Bay of Biscay. That unit disbanded, so I was assigned to the 392nd BG until we were shot down in July 1944, and it was a POW Camp for me until the end of the war."

## 68th SQUADRON:

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66th Sq. Casualty	Capt. Diehl's aircraft	Returned to base
68th Squadron Crewman:		
HOGAN, HARRY C. ASN 37009698	Waist Gun/Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Springfield, Missouri

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On this Bordeaux mission, one of the more unfortunate accidents of the war took place. As Captain Diehl was heading his plane across the Bay of Biscay a mere twenty miles from the coast of France, he suddenly heard the excited voice of S/Sgt. Herbert H. Gentry, his engineer, who was manning the gun at the right waist window shouting, "We've lost Hogan out of the window!"

As they were nearly on the bomb run, there was little else to be done except man their stations. It was not until they had started back on the route for home that they discussed what happened. T/Sgt. Harry C. Hogan had been standing by the left waist window when somehow, his parachute accidentally opened and was immediately caught in the speeding air stream and was sucked outside through the open window. Hogan was pulled out through the window to his death, the parachute being torn and Hogan hit both the fuselage and tail assembly before falling clear and then down to the ocean below. He must have been seriously injured by the contacts with the aircraft, so there was little chance of surviving once into the cold water below.

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## 2 July 1943

### Ground Crew Incident, Cornwall, England

Shortly after the Air Echelon departed Shipdham on 26 June several of the Ground Echelon were moved to southwestern England to assist the Anti-Submarine Group personnel with their Liberators on patrol from there. Two men from the 68th Squadron were killed when making contact with a German land mine at Mawgen Porth Beach, near St. Eval Air Field, Cornwall.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq. Casualties			Killed by mine explosion
68th Squadron Ground Crew:			
CALVIN, WILLIAM A. ASN 7010352	Ground crew KIA, buried Cambridge (D-5-69)	S/Sgt.	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
CLOSSON, WILLIAM E. ASN31088145	Ground crew KIA, buried Cambridge (D-4-69)	Private	Milton, Massachusetts

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## 2 July 1943

### Airdrome, Lecce, Italy

On June 26th, the 44th BG departed Shipdham, having been placed on temporary duty in northern Africa, at Benina Main Airdrome, approximately 20 miles west of Benghazi, Libya. Most of the crews took two days en route. The first target while operating from this base was the Italian Airdrome at Lecce, Italy.

Twenty-four of our bombers departed base but only 19 of them reached the target and bombed, all with excellent results. However, one 68th aircraft was lost shortly before the target, and another one was forced to ditch in the Mediterranean.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-40094 Bar-E, Garrett	MISS VIRGINIA	MACR #21
68th Squadron Crew:		
GARRETT, WILMER J. ASN 0-727982	Pilot Eye injury	1st Lt. Fresno, California
LEHNHAUSEN, ROBERT J. ASN 0-728890	Co-pilot Cuts & bruises	1st Lt. Peoria, Illinois
JOHNSON, CARL E. ASN 0-730268	Navigator Broken ankle	1st Lt. Riverside, Rhode Island
LAFLEUR, ROBERT A. ASN 0-727351	Observer KIA, WOM North Africa	Capt. Waterville, Maine
TAYLOR, ORAN J. ASN 18062096	Bombardier KIA, WOM North Africa	T/Sgt. Raymondsville, Texas
WAITE, EDWARD R. ASN 13013601	Engineer Cuts & bruises	Sgt. Charerai, Pennsylvania
BRZOZOWY, ADOLPH E. ASN 11018046	Radio Oper. Cuts & bruises	T/Sgt. Turner Falls, Massachusetts
BERNSTEIN, DAVID G. ASN 39234569	Asst. Eng. KIA, WOM North Africa	S/Sgt. San Diego, California
TENOSKY, ANDY J. ASN 16072477	Waist Gun KIA, WOM North Africa	S/Sgt. Sesser, Illinois
COLE, MELVIN J. ASN 11012152	Hatch Gun Chest injury	S/Sgt. Waterbury, Connecticut
GARRARD, JAMES M. ASN 14070592	Tail Turret KIA, WOM North Africa	S/Sgt. Greenwood, Mississippi

This first 68th Squadron aircraft was damaged over the target by flak hits in the #1 and #2 engines, tearing a hole in the gas tanks between these two engines as well. The plane ran short of fuel on the return across the Mediterranean Sea and was forced to ditch in the water. When the plane struck the water, Lt. Lehnhausen, co-pilot, was thrown completely through the windshield. He swam back to the stricken craft and released a life raft, and then seeing that a number of the crew were having difficulty with the second raft, swam to it and found that a rope securing the raft had become fouled in the wreckage. All efforts to disentangle the rope failed and Lt. Lehnhausen, fearing that the sinking airplane would drag the raft and the injured men under, took the rope and managed to chew it in two, releasing the raft!

For this heroic deed and his gallant efforts beyond the call of duty, Lt. Lehnhausen was awarded the Soldier's Metal.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-40745 Bar-A, Peterson	MACR #22
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA

PETERSON, ROBERT E. ASN 0-421662	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	
CRAMER, THOMAS R. ASN 0-23925	Command Pilot KIA	Major	
TABOR, JAMES A. ASN 0-736908	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	
MONAHAN, EUGENE R. ASN 0-734485	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	
PHARIS, CHARLES W. ASN 34268115	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Douglas, Georgia
COONEY, WOODROW J. ASN 35307128	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
NIZNOK, STEVE ASN 35307431	Asst. Eng. KIA	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
HALL, CLIFTON C. ASN 18157469	Asst. Rad. KIA	S/Sgt.	Austin, Texas
SMITH, HARRY G. ASN 35370944	Waist Gun KIA	S/Sgt.	Sullivan, Indiana
YOAKUM, ARTHUR M. ASN 36068208	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Decatur, Illinois

The MACR has two versions of what occurred. One observer states that just as we crossed the coast of Italy, and before we reached the target, he looked back to see an Me 109 coming up from below at about 0730 o'clock. The Me 109 was firing at ship #42-40745 and was apparently hitting it from the bomb bay to the cockpit. Smoke was coming out of the left wing. The ship turned over on its back and started down in large circles. The next thing he saw was a flash at about the time of the crash. He did not see any of the crew bail out.

A second witness said, "I saw cannon shells bursting off of the right wing of ship #42-40745 and saw that #4 engine had been hit, and started smoking. Apparently the cockpit had been hit as the ship started down on its left wing, out of control. None of the crew bailed out."

Captain Lehnhausen stated that this was the first mission for Lt. Peterson and that Major Thomas R. Cramer, as per his usual procedure, flew as co-pilot to offer his experience to this new crew. Lt. Raymond Hamlyn, the regular co-pilot, did not fly that day. Colonel Leon Johnson later said that Thomas Cramer was a super person who had all the qualifications to become Chief of Staff. It was a tremendous loss!

In response to an inquiry to the Department of the Army, I received the following reply dated September 26, 2004: "Our official files reveal eye witness accounts, that airplane B-24D, #42-40745 assigned to the 44th Bombardment Group, 68th Bombardment Squadron departed Benina, Libya, on an operational mission to Lecce, Italy, at approximately 0931, July 2, 1943. The weather conditions were given as South, South West surface wind with unlimited visibility. Shortly after crossing the coast of Italy, the airplane was intercepted by a German fighter, an Me 109, and a running battle ensued. The intercepting aircraft riddled the bomber from its bomb bay to cockpit with machine gun and cannon fire. The fighter then proceeded to disable the already damaged plane by concentrating its attacks upon its wings and engines. Cannon shells damaged the right wing severely, number four engine was smoking, and smoke was coming from the left



wing. The cockpit of the bomber was hit and the plane turned over and went down out of control. None of the crew was seen to parachute from the plane during its descent. Immediately after the plane crashed to earth, it burst into flames and the flash was seen by other planes of the same formation flying high above.

“Members of the American Graves Registration Service recovered remains from a mass grave in Muro Leccesse Civilian Cemetery, and the Civilian Cemetery of Cavallino, Italy. These remains were reinterred in the United States Military Cemetery, Bari, Italy, with unknown designations, pending further investigations. Although the circumstances rendered individual identification impossible, sufficient evidence was present to determine that the unknown remains were those of the 10 service members of flight #42-40745 and to warrant a group identification of the remains.

“These group remains were interred in Zachary Taylor National Cemetery, located in Louisville, Kentucky, in accordance with the provisions of Public Law 383, 79th Congress, as amended by Section 3, Public Law 368, 80th Congress. Final internment in a National Cemetery in the United States where perpetual care will be given to the graves is fitting and proper. This particular National Cemetery was selected in order that no undue burden of travel would be placed on any one family wishing to attend the burial services.”

## 17 July 1943

### Naples, Italy

27 of the 29 aircraft dispatched bombed the target of Naples, Italy with good results. Defensive flak was quite heavy and there were several aircraft damaged. One of these was a 67th Squadron aircraft piloted by Lt. C.S. Griffin.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-63763 F, Griffin	LADY FIFINILLA	MACR #149
67th Squadron Crew:		
GRIFFIN, CURTIS S. ASN 0-727211	Pilot KIA, WOM Sicily/Rome	Capt. Kansas City, Missouri
POTTER, JOSEPH H. Jr. ASN 0-736345	Co-pilot KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (H-8-13)	2nd Lt. Fairhaven, Massachusetts
LEVINSON, SAMUEL E. ASN 0-795273	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Greenville, Kentucky
ROUSER, CHARLES L. ASN 0-734961	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt. Elwood City, Pennsylvania
CORCORAN, JAMES A. ASN 11037316	Engineer POW	T/Sgt. Brockton, Massachusetts
HARRINGTON, DAVID G. ASN 17037028	Radio Oper. POW, injured, repatriated	T/Sgt. St. Paul, Minnesota
SWANSON, ERNEST V. ASN 37211566	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Smolar, Kansas
GREATTINGER, GORDON J. ASN 16048131	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Caledonia, Wisconsin
NICHOLLS, ROBERT W. ASN 39678019	Hatch Gun Evadee, returned	S/Sgt. Mina, Nevada

TERABERRY, PHILLIP F.  
ASN 19101247

Tail Turret  
Evadee, returned

S/Sgt.

Malcom,  
Iowa

*Note: Lt. Levinson, navigator, was a substitute for Lt. Walter Sorenson. Lt. Levinson was from Lt. Worden Weaver's crew. And as fate would have it, Lt. Walter Sorenson was a member of Worden Weaver's crew that was lost over Ploesti. Both of the navigators managed to survive these mishaps!*

George L. Kelsey, who was in another aircraft, made these observations of the fate of LADY FIFINILLA: "When I first saw Lt. Griffin's ship, he was out by himself, heading in for the formation. There was smoke coming out from the wing at approximately the position of the #4 engine. There were two fighters coming in on the ship. One at about 2 o'clock high, and one at 6 o'clock low. There was one chute that came out by itself. The ship then looked to be out of control and sliding off to the left. The right wing broke off between #3 and #4 engines. At the same time, five other chutes came out. The last I saw of the ship it was headed down towards a bunch of white clouds. It looked like the ship might have been partially brought under control at this time."

Lt. Rouser, bombardier on this stricken aircraft, was an original member of the Leroy Hansen crew (see 13 November 1943), but was selected to fill the bombardier slot on Griffin's crew. As Rouser became a POW on 17 July, he never flew a combat mission with his regular crew. About this mission, Lt. Rouser stated, "We were hit by flak over the target and our controls were damaged. Approximately a dozen fighters – 4 or 5 Italian and the rest German – finished off our plane, setting two engines on fire (#3 & #4). Immediately after bailing out, I saw the wing of the plane hurtle past me, and then the plane itself spun past on the way to earth. Of the ten of us in the plane, 8 parachuted out – and one of these, the co-pilot Potter, was shot by the Italian soldiers as he hit the ground.

"Captain Griffin, the pilot, and one of the waist gunners [this could have been Greattinger] – did not get out and I heard from others of the crew later that they both had been wounded in the plane. Two of the men were hurt very badly while landing. One was the Radio Operator Harrington, who had a broken right hip (later repatriated) and another whose name I have since forgotten [believed to be Sgt. Corcoran], hit the top of a fence post with his face and it was terribly lacerated. He, too, was later repatriated to the States to have plastic surgery performed.

"I was the first one captured by the Italians, both civilians and military, and given pretty rough treatment. This began a very long experience for me of two years – in 13 different prison camps, an escape which lasted 7 months, etc..." Rouser's escape from the Italian mainland ended when he was recaptured while moving south through German lines. He was finally freed from his POW camp by General Patton's tanks in Moosberg, near Munich.

(Then) Lt. Cameron included this in his recollections: "On this day, for some odd reason I can't remember now, we had a seventh airplane flying under our box formation of six B-24s; i.e. two flights of three aircraft. This was a most vulnerable position as the fighters would attack this low aircraft staying away from our upper guns. It is quite probable that the fighter attacks which we came under were directed primarily at this aircraft piloted by Lt. Griffin, who was one of our best...At any rate, our crew blasted away at these enemy fighters for possibly a half hour or more. Unfortunately, though, we lost Lt. Griffin. Word came back later that Joe Potter, a member of that crew, was killed by Italian farmers after he had parachuted safely."

Phillip Teraberry, the tail gunner recalled: “We were bombing the docks and marshalling yards at Naples on the day that we bought the farm. We were at about 25,000 feet, I think, had dropped our load and were turning to haul out of there, when we got it in the #4 engine. We dropped out of formation to the right, then the fighters hopped on. The bell dinged to abandon ship and I got out of the turret, I unplugged heated suit, intercom, but left oxy tube plugged in. I figured I would suck oxygen until I got up to the back hatch. Well, I got there, had a hell of a time getting my chute pack hooked up. Had put it on a whole lot of times in practice, but that day it balked, finally managed. When I got to the hatch, Harrington was facing me on the front side, then I saw Nicholls go out the left waist window, about that time, the damn oxy hose came loose at the other end and hit me a wallop, I stepped back, ripped the mask off, and Harrington went out the hole, me right behind him. Greattinger was ready to jump, but never did, rode her down I guess. I saw the guys from up front out before we did.

“Anyhow the chute worked, thank God, and I saw Harrington and Nicholls below me, being a little guy, about 125 lbs., I guess I did not go down as fast as they did. The wind was blowing pretty good so I was drifting pretty smartly, I saw this little creek with trees on the banks, anyhow my chute caught in the trees and flipped me head first into the creek bank. I came to hanging about 4 feet off the ground, bleeding like a stuck pig. Nicholls, who landed about a block away came running up and poured sulfa on my face and wrapped me up. Boy, I smeared my nose all over the left side of my face.

“We started to walk, I don’t know where, but we could hear people crashing around in the brush around us, and here comes the paisano civilians, mad as hell. They had found Harrington who had hit a tree and broke his leg. I was wearing heated suit, fatigue pants, khaki shirt, flight coveralls, flight jacket, helmet and gloves. Well they stripped off the coveralls and then took our belts, I guess they figured we could not run because our pants would fall down. Anyway, that mob was damn ugly, finally a couple German soldiers showed up and ran them off. They had a litter and loaded Harrington up and took us to the local jail in a little town called Avellino. They had the rest of the surviving crew members there.

“From there Harrington and I were taken to the local hospital in Avellino, there they did set his leg, me nothing. After several days a guy from the International Red Cross showed up with a card we could send home, which my folks got, all they knew was MIA, so it was a great boost for them. This guy could speak English so I told him we would like to go to a POW camp where at least English was spoken. A couple of days later we were loaded on a train, and eventually landed in Sulmona POW camp.

“Harrington went to the infirmary, such as it was, and they made him as comfortable as they could. Myself, I had started to heal pretty good, but looked like hell, so they left good enough alone. Swanson, Nicholls and Corcoran were sent to another POW camp in Italy, and the officers were sent to Germany, or so I was told by Swanson and the others who I saw in London after we all managed to get out of Italy.”

After spending some time in an Italian POW camp, Teraberry escaped and headed south with a small group of POWs that was made up of Teraberry, two English Sgt. Hurricane pilots, a Sgt. Maj. Aussie, and Mike Siegle from Col. Kane’s 98th bomb group. After several days and nights of walking the group met up with some Canadian soldiers. Eventually, Teraberry and Siegle were

ordered to report to 12th Air Force Headquarters in Algiers. From there Teraberry went to 8th Air Force headquarters in Scotland and then he was sent home for reconstructive surgery on his face.

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## 1 August 1943

### Ploesti Oil Complex, Romania

The great ground-air battle of Ploesti has been told in numerous publications so there is no need to expand on it here. My intent is mainly to relate the stories of the individual aircraft and crews lost this day as well as those returning with dead or injured crewmembers. At the end of the accounts, I have included Tom Holmes' recollection of the entire mission.

Eleven aircraft and crews failed to return. Of those, two were interned in Turkey.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-40182 A, Gentry	FORKY II		MACR #2415
66th Squadron Crew:			
GENTRY, ROWLAND M. ASN 0-727983	Pilot KIA	Capt.	Miami, Florida
MOSS, BENJAMIN M. ASN 0-793818	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	New York City, New York
CHORZELSKI, MICHEL ASN T-190738	Navigator KIA	Flt. Of.	Laramie, Wyoming
AYERS, JOHN T. ASN 0-734779	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Plymouth, Pennsylvania
LIGHT, EDWIN C. ASN 38047888	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Dallas, Texas
GOODMAN, EARL E. ASN 11011586	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	So. Attleboro, Massachusetts
WILSON, STANLEY ASN 12060904	Asst. Eng. KIA	T/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
BRIDGES, CHARLES T. ASN 10601003	RW Gunner POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Anderson, Indiana
LEISINGER, WILLIAM L. Jr. ASN 37068883	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (C-12-23)	Sgt.	Yancopin, Arkansas

The last wave of aircraft over target "White Five" consisted of four airplanes led by Rowland M. Gentry in FORKY II. His orders were to bomb from 400 feet at the top of the stepped up formation that had been adopted for the five "Eight Ball" waves. The last wave was well exposed to the German gunners.

Gentry led a V-flight with a plane piloted by Charles Hughes and Spencer S. Hunn on his left and one piloted by George Winger on his right.

In the target smoke, explosions killed two gunners and set two of FORKY II's engines on fire. Sgt. E.C. Light, in the top turret, and the right waist gunner, Charles T. Bridges, remained in action.

On the other side of the target, three German fighters came up at them from the deck. Bridges, the veteran of 53 missions, many with the Royal Air Force, got in his last rounds of battle. The fighters left FORKY II burning in a cornfield with the nose buried in the ground and the tail standing. Bridges staggered out of the wreck as it exploded!

Sgt. Bridges added, "We attacked at low level, gun fire, explosions and all the horrors hidden in Hell were let loose. My crew was shot to bits. First it was Gentry, and then two others. We kept on going after bombing, but after attacks by enemy aircraft, we were shot down, too. My crew fought most valiantly against all odds, and died as men.

"I guess that Capt. Gentry tried to land the plane even though he was seriously wounded and near death himself. Wilson was lying on the floor by the left waist. He was hit by fragments. We were burning and I had to throw out our incendiaries as we were under attack. Just before I passed out, a terrific explosion took place in front of the plane.

"I was trained and in combat before the U.S. entered the war. I was first attached to crews of Royal Norway in Coastal Command. We all had been trained by Canadian and English instructors. Our main planes were Defiants and Hampdens, but later was transferred to Wellingtons of medium size. We were on the first 1,000 bomber raid against targets in the Ruhr area, with all British medium and heavy bombers – quite an event in its day!

"I was transferred to the USAAC in London with two other Americans – DeCrevel and Rastowitz...My back was broken twice – but I am still thankful."

*Note: Charles DeCrevel was in SAD SACK II.*

So it appears that when Bridges staggered out of that burning and wrecked plane, he did so with a broken back!

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-40777 N, Hughes	FLOSSIE FLIRT		
66th Squadron Crew:	All men interned in Turkey and returned to duty		
HUGHES, CHARLES E. ASN 0-662790	Pilot	1st Lt.	Oakdale, California
HUNN, SPENCER S. ASN 0-730500	Co-pilot	1st Lt.	Provo, Utah
HAUSE, MAURICE E. ASN 0-728480	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Cochranon, Pennsylvania
GOODNOW, EDWARD W. ASN 0-794123	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Hartford, Connecticut
LUCAS, HOWARD M. ASN 18063852	Engineer	S/Sgt.	Grand Saline, Texas
SHANLEY, EDWARD M. ASN 32230451	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	New Haven, Connecticut
NALIPA, STANLEY G. ASN 15324363	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Poland, Ohio
ALBINE, ROBERT L. ASN 13087450	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Connellsville, Pennsylvania

BLAGG, SHELDON N. ASN 35384230	Tail Turret Interned, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Canton, Ohio
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*Note: Three crewmembers were KIA on later missions: Lt. Goodnow (21 January 1944), S/Sgt. Albine (20 February 1944), and S/Sgt. Nalipa (7 July 1944).*

1st Lt. Hughes' aircraft, FLOSSIE FLIRT, managed to get through the hail of bullets and fire of Ploesti, leaving their two crashed sister ships behind them. They flew alongside some barracks from which soldiers ran out firing rifles, machine guns and pistols. The air gunners mowed them down in bloody windrows. FLOSSIE FLIRT was almost untouched or so it seemed, but when Hunn looked back in the fuselage, he was surprised how bright it was. Ground fire had turned it into a sieve.

1st Lt. Hunn said, "We looked for a plane to tack onto. We picked one and he was shot down. We picked another and he was knocked down, too. A fighter got on our tail – tracers were zooming above and around the cockpit. Hughes and I were giving it all the left rudder we could in evasive action. Our tail gunner reported the attacker suddenly hit the ground like a ton of bricks." Hughes sailed into the sanctuary of a cloud and surveyed the situation: not enough fuel to reach Libya, a large hole in the left stabilizer, a cable hanging by a thread, and both waist gunners, Stanley G. Nalipa and Robert L. Albine, were wounded. They headed for Turkey.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-24153 L, Lasco	SAD SACK II	MACR #2414
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66th Squadron Crew (with one exception):

LASCO, HENRY A. Jr. ASN 0-731886	Pilot POW, returned to duty	1st Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
KILL, JOSEPH F. ASN 0-735397	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
STENBORN, HARRY W. ASN 0-667449	Navigator KIA, buried Ardennes (B-24-4)	2nd Lt.	Wellington, Kansas
SCRIVEN, DALE R. ASN 0-733106	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Boulder, Colorado
RASPOTNIK, LEONARD L. (506th Sq.) ASN 17042564	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Des Moines, Iowa
SPIVEY, JOSEPH B. Jr. ASN 34303915	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Windsor, South Carolina
DECREVEL, CHARLES P. ASN 19061008	Asst. Eng. POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	San Francisco, California
SHAFFER, ALBERT L. ASN 19061944	Asst. Radio POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
WOOD, THOMAS M. ASN 18015826	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Ackerly, Texas

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*Note: Sgt. Raspotnik was from the 506th.*

1st Lt. Henry A. Lasco, Jr. was the pilot of the third 66th Squadron aircraft lost, flying as left wingman in the fourth wave. This crew was flying their seventh mission. Flying with them this day as left waist gunner was Charles DeCrevel, who had served in the RAF. This crew's story is more complete than for most of the crews and probably is typical for many.

DeCrevel stated that, "Other planes were riding on flak like trucks on a highway. We caught a hail of small-arms fire and something went through my thigh. I was strafing gun crews on a roof top and noted out of the corner of my eye that my interphone box vanished from the wall. I donned my parachute pack and stuck my head out the window. I noted a tree at eye level. I 'heroically' decided to stay with the ship."

Pilot Lasco: "Our target was on fire with very heavy black smoke and fire high in the sky. Colonel Johnson headed into this conflagration and we followed."

Co-pilot Kill: "I wasn't paying any attention to where we were going except to watch a couple of rivets on the lead airplane. I glanced up ahead and thought 'How in Christ's name can we get through that?' I can't push her down, so I hollered to Lasco to get on the controls with me."

The bombardier called for corrections for target, which was the boiler works and tool shed. The back end called that the tail gunner, Thomas M. Wood, was dead. And at 'bombs away' the navigator, Harry W. Stenborn, was badly shot through the chest. He somehow managed to crawl through the ship to the rear, where he collapsed and eventually died.

Lasco shouted, "Number two is out. She won't feather." And the aircraft plunged into the inferno – nothing but smoke and flames. After coming out, this ship joined a formation of six aircraft while the 88s were shooting at them at very short range. The top turret gunner, Leonard L. Raspotnik, and radio operator Joseph Spivey, were hit and the decision was made to head for Turkey.

DeCrevel then began to have grave doubts if anyone was alive on the flight deck. Wherever he looked he could see holes as big as his fist and the left wing was almost scraping the ground. SAD SACK II was vibrating badly and extremely rough to handle.

From seven to nine Me 109s were queuing up to take shots at them as they made level, dead astern attacks. DeCrevel shot down the first one and Al Shaffer, at the other waist position, and standing on one leg (the other almost completely shot off) scored hits on it. The interior of the plane was full of little white puffs, like firecrackers going off. Ammunition was exploding in the boxes and DeCrevel said that he could feel "fingers" plucking at his clothing. "I received shrapnel wounds in the back, head and knee, and was floored by a 13-mm in the butt. The parachute pack in that area saved me."

Lasco continued, "We were very low to the ground, probably fifty feet, when a Me 109 circled around us and came in very shallow at 10 o'clock on my side. I saw his wing light up and felt a tremendous sock on the jaw. I was shot through both cheeks and upper palate. I had no strength. I couldn't see anything."

Co-pilot Kill: "Lasco called for flaps – no flaps. I reached down and started pumping them by hand. We were headed for a cornfield. I glanced at Lasco. He was lying over the control column, all bloodied. I was coming to horizon level. We were left wing low, headed straight in. I kicked hard right rudder and picked up the wing."

DeCrevel continued, "The pilot must have cut all his engines to crash her in – then I heard a scream. The navigator was kneeling on the catwalk and holding on to the open door to the bomb bay. He looked like he had caught an 88 right in the chest. The flesh was stripped away and I could see the white ribs. I wanted to help him but there wasn't time. We were all dead, anyway. I

had made up my mind to shoot it out with that sonofabitch on our tail. I leaned out the window and swiveled the gun parallel to the fuselage and fired inside the fin and below the horizontal stabilizer. We hit the ground and my last view of aerial combat was of our left rudder disappearing in a puff of smoke. I tumbled head over heels in flame and tearing metal and hit the forward bulkhead with a sweet, black THUD. Then, immediate consciousness and a vision of green corn and blue sky from a bed of hot coals. No plane to speak of, just a pile of burning junk. I staggered out of it, trying to run. Looked back – no Shaffer. Go back, drag him out and dump him about fifty yards off.”

Kill: “Lasco was blindly thrashing around, pinned in his harness. All I could do was to tell him I couldn’t get out. Both of my legs were broken and the right foot was out of the socket at the ankle. Lasco somehow got loose and unfastened my legs from a tangle of wires and cables. He grabbed me under the arms and dragged me through a hole in the side of the fuselage ... Then he seemed to wander off.”

Lasco: “I went to look for aid for Joe’s legs which were bad, and my mouth was not in too good shape. I saw some peasants, but they ran away and then threw stones at me.”

Kill: “Two other peasants jumped me and tore off my watch and ring, emptied my pockets and then belted me a beauty. I guess they figured I was about gone, anyway, what with the legs, a cracked forehead and bad burns. Surprisingly, I didn’t go out, although I prayed for unconsciousness.”

DeCrevel: “I drug Shaffer a bit further; then stripped off my smoldering outer gear. Shaffer was hollering like hell. His leg looked like hamburger. No morphine. I gave him a cigarette, told him I’d go for help.”

SAD SACK II’s sergeants spent their time in captivity in the officers’ camp because Lt. Kill was sharp enough to list all of them as officers. Sgt. Raspotnik died on the way to the hospital; Spivey was hit in stomach and died in the aircraft.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-40375 G, Scrivner	SCRAPPY II	MACR #1646
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
SCRIVNER, THOMAS E. ASN 0-728030	Pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (D-10-38)	1st Lt. Carlsbad, New Mexico
ANDERSON, EVERETT P. ASN 0-885575	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt. Quincy, Illinois
PHILLIPS, PHILIP P. ASN 0-662366	Navigator KIA	1st Lt. Minneapolis, Minnesota
YOUNG, ROBERT E. ASN 0-734863	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt. Kansas City, Missouri
COLL, WILLIAM F. ASN 13051982	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. McAdoo, Pennsylvania
SATTERFIELD, CHANNING N. ASN 20631208	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt. Detroit, Michigan
MICKEY, MARVIN R. ASN 18037185	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt. Plainview, Texas



SCHAPPERT, THOMAS F. ASN 20317133	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
MALONE, HUGH J. ASN 15062923	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Bronx, New York

The fourth 66th aircraft lost was that piloted by Thomas E. Scrivner. K for King, commanded by Robert E. Miller, led the fourth wave into the dark and fiery target. On his wings were the aircraft of Lasco, as detailed above, and that of 1st Lt. Scrivner. But when Miller emerged from the target, neither of his wingmen were there. Several crews reported seeing this plane, along with two others, caught in a terrific explosion as they were approaching their target, and then not seeing any of the three ships later.

Thomas E. Scrivner's ship came out in flames with the pilots fighting for a crash-landing. They sledged into a wheat field, but before the slide was spent, the ship exploded into a hundred foot sphere of flame. None of the men that the pilots had so valiantly struggled to save managed to come out of it alive.

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66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-24015 R, Winger	WING DINGER	MACR #2410
66th Squadron Crew:		
WINGER, GEORGE W. ASN 0-662848	Pilot KIA, WOM Florence	1st Lt. Columbus, Ohio
BARNETT, EDWARD ASN 0-730337	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Florence	2nd Lt. Chicago, Illinois
PALMER, FREDERICK H. ASN 0-730291	Navigator KIA	1st Lt. Palo Alto, California
GRADWOHL, JACOB ASN 19005806	Bombardier KIA	Sgt. Portland, Oregon
KRETZER, HAROLD ASN 37116421	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Clarks Grove, Minnesota
GOTTS, HOWARD F. ASN 12055796	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Florence	Sgt. Stanley, New York
TRAUDT, BERNARD G. ASN 36228769	Asst. Eng. POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt. Milwaukee, Wisconsin
CICON, MICHAEL J. ASN 33345705	Asst. Radio POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt. Exeter, Pennsylvania
PHILLIPS, ELVIN L. ASN 19011888	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt. Salt Lake City Utah

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The last of the 66th aircraft lost on 1 August was that flown by Lt. George W. Winger, and whose position in the formation was on the right of Lt. Gentry. Lt. Winger was flying a B-24 that was mistakenly reported to be bright orange in color.

As this formation was on their bomb run, Winger's ship was knocked aside by an explosion, and crossed directly below Hughes' ship. On the other side of the target, Winger was still in the air but his aircraft was now an orange color because its Tokyo fuel tanks were aflame in the bomb bay. The pilots evidently knew that the end was near.

Lt. Hunn said, “Winger climbed steeply to about five hundred feet. It must have taken him and his co-pilot (Barnett) enormous effort to get her high enough for people to bail out.” And two men did jump out of the waist ports, and their parachutes opened as the ship crashed and exploded. Winger and his men had completed 27 missions and were legally “retired” but chose to go on one more mission as it was so important to the war effort.

The chutists, who had received the gift of life from their pilots, were gunners Michael J. Cicon and Bernard G. Traudt. Traudt was a seventeen year-old with a perpetual grin. He landed unhurt, concealed his chute, and crawled under some bushes and went to sleep. He had gotten no sleep the night before. Later he stated, “The other waist gunner, Michael Cicon, and I bailed out at approximately 500 feet, due to the fact that the plane was on fire and the bail out alarm rang. The plane hit the ground before we did, and we did not see any one else get out.”

Lt. John Harmonoski reported that he saw Lt. Winger salute him just before he pulled his airplane upwards!

67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #41-24024, Carpenter	On loan from 376 BG	MACR #15859
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*Note: Notation from Will Lundy reads: #41-24024 – 34 (Loan from 376 BG)*

67th Squadron Crew (with one exception):

CARPENTER, REGINALD L. ASN 0-665663	Pilot Rescued, returned to duty	1st Lt.	Ferndale, Michigan
RUMSEY, EDWIN L. Jr. ASN 0-736373	Co-pilot Wounded, to hospital	2nd Lt.	San Fernando, California
POWELL, JOHN E. (389th BG) ASN 0-16009853	Navigator Rescued, returned to duty	2nd Lt.	Huron, South Dakota
KULLMAN, MARTIN L. ASN 0-733324	Bombardier Rescued, returned to duty	2nd Lt.	Los Angeles California
HUENERBERG, VINCENT E. ASN 31104703	Engineer Rescued, returned to duty	T/Sgt.	Bridgeport, Connecticut
MANQUEN, JOSEPH F. ASN 36146811	Radio Oper. Wounded, to hospital	T/Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
LOOKER, ROLLIN C. ASN 37207413	LW Gunner Rescued, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Topeka, Kansas
BROWN, WALTER L. ASN 18063845	RW Gunner KIA, drowned, on WOM Sicily/Rome	S/Sgt.	Cooper, Texas
DURAND, FREDERICK W. ASN 16021949	Tail Turret KIA, drowned, on WOM Sicily/Rome	S/Sgt	Gile, Wisconsin

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*Note: Lt. Powell was on loan from the 389th BG, 415th Squadron.*

Lt. Carpenter’s aircraft suffered considerable damage over the target and several men were wounded. They were losing gasoline from a severed gas line, and then they encountered an enemy air attack as they approached the sea. An Me 109 had attacked other stragglers and, coming off one attack on them, managed to get in a shot at Carpenter, knocking out another engine. But they continued on out over the sea, losing altitude due to the loss of two engines now. Finally, a third ran out of gas and stopped. The pilots managed to start it again for a few minutes, but only long enough for them to feather all propellers – and they prepared to ditch.

*Note: The last name of the pilot of the Me 109 is believed to be Stahl-Burk. (Source: The Dugan/Stewart book on Ploesti)*

They hit the water easily the first time, but the plane glanced off of it and hit again some distance away. The ditching tore off the rear fuselage section just aft of the wing. All nine crewmembers were in the nose section as per instructions. Seven men got out of the plane and released the two life rafts. Neither Walter L. Brown nor Fred Durand got clear of the sinking ship. They drowned when it went down.

The survivors floated all night and most of the next day before being spotted by a Wellington of Air-Sea Rescue. This plane dropped them supplies and water, then circled them for nearly five hours until relieved by a second Wellington. Finally, that night at 1930 hours, they were picked up by a motor boat of Air-Sea Rescue Service.

As Radio Operator, Joseph Manquen was observing results of their bombing through the open bomb bay doors, when a shell exploded just below these doors, seriously wounding him. 2nd Lt. Rumsey, co-pilot, who suffered a broken leg, and Sgt. Manquen were hospitalized upon their return.

From a letter by Lt. R. Carpenter: "On the low level Ploesti mission, August 1, 1943, when we were forced to ditch in the Mediterranean Sea, Vincent was the first crewman to go out the top hatch. The aircraft's tail was torn off and it was sinking nose down very rapidly. Vincent swam to the left dingy hatch, which was now under water and attempted to deploy it, but the door was jammed and he could not open it. Rapidly, he swam over to the right dingy hatch and fortunately he was able to open it and deploy the dingy. When I finally got free of the cockpit and came to the surface the first thing I saw was Vincent standing in our one and only dingy pulling all the survivors into it. If it were not for his strength and determination to deploy that remaining dingy we would have all perished. All who survived owe their lives to Vincent E. Huenerberg, the best Engineer a pilot could have. Regrettably, S/Sgts. Walter Brown and Edward Durand were crushed on the flight deck when the top turret tore loose from the fuselage and they were unable to escape."

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-40780 H, Jones	AVAILABLE JONES		MACR #2411
67th Squadron Crew:			
JONES, FRED H. ASN 0-389988	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Century, Florida
DUKATE, ELBERT L. Jr. ASN 0-739924	Co-pilot POW, escapee, returned to base 31 July 44	2nd Lt.	New Orleans, Louisiana
SWEET, ADOLPHUS J. ASN 0-796622	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	East Northport, New York
BERNARD, ALBERT F. ASN 0-734871	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
SPANN, LEO G. ASN 34330466	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Chapman, Alabama
PAOLILLO, MICHAEL A. ASN 32403362	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Corona, L.I., New York

BECKER, ROBERT H. ASN 17077406	Asst. Eng. POW, wounded	S/Sgt.	Lincoln, Nebraska
SAVETTIERRE, ANTHONY J. ASN 32495641	Waist gun POW, wounded	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
SIGLE, MICHAEL P. ASN 32468414	Tail Turret POW, escapee	S/Sgt.	Clayton, New Jersey

1st Lt. Fred H. Jones' crew was the second 67th Squadron loss on 1 August 1943. T/Sgt. Leo Spann, engineer, described the mission: "We approached the target down the railroad track at a very low altitude of approximately 100 feet. Our target was already on fire as some other Group [the 93rd] had already bombed it. We went through the smoke and fire, dropping our bombs on our designated spot. We then went down on the deck as low as we could, as those picturesque hay stacks opened up and then revealed their guns – and these guns started giving us hell. They shot out the #4 engine and a shell exploded between the two waist gun positions, wounding both gunners in the legs. I was the engineer and operated the top turret and I had a complete view of what was going on. I saw one plane that had gone in with the wheels up in a field and all of that crew was outside of the plane.

"We broke one balloon cable and I was looking directly at it when we collided with it. I saw another B-24 climb straight up until it stalled, and just as it "fell out" I saw one parachute come out and open just before it hit the ground. I talked later to this boy (Bernard Traudt) as he came into the prison camp where I was.

"We lost speed and dropped out of formation, and the fighters jumped us. With the two waist gunners out, they came in so close to us it seemed we could almost touch them. We figured that we had shot down four of them, and they finally left us, but the #4 engine had frozen up and with a flat propeller, it caused a hellava drag. The propeller would not feather!

"We started trying to gain altitude to clear the mountains ahead. Threw out everything that wasn't tied down – all of the guns, ammunition, equipment, etc. When we finally arrived at the coast, our #3 engine was failing. The oil pressure was almost gone and the temperature was much too high. Lt. Jones asked me how long I thought it would last and I estimated about 30 minutes at the most. We decided to feather #3 engine and see if we could fly with the other two, but they were on the same side! If we couldn't fly, we were going to ditch it on the beach.

"I feathered the prop, Jones and Dukate got the plane leveled out, but we could not maintain our altitude. So we began making plans to ditch. We flew onward for approximately forty-five minutes before we were forced to ditch – the time was about 1840 – at least that is the time that my watch stopped. We all managed to get out of the plane and into our life rafts, even though the tail gunner and the navigator were slightly injured in the ditching.

"The next morning a German submarine came by, started to help us, changed their minds and took off, leaving us. Then, at approximately 1500 hours, a three-engined Italian seaplane sighted us, landed and picked us up and took us to Brindisi, Italy and to the hospital there.

"Later that same night, Jones, Dukate, Bernard, Paolillo and myself were put on a train and sent into the mountains – to an old monastery. Much later, both Sigle and Dukate managed to escape, with Sigle getting back to the States in about two months."

Fred Jones, the pilot, wrote: "We ditched 30 miles south of Corfu. All crew okay. Saw all crewmembers at Camp Lucky Strike May 1945, except co-pilot Dukate, who escaped and Sigle, who escaped in Italy, 1943.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-40267 N, Mitchell	HORSE FLY	MACR #8250
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned in Turkey	
MITCHELL, EDWARD R. ASN 0-728013	Pilot 1st Lt. Interned (later was KIA)	Sioux City, Iowa
DECKER, DONALD R. ASN 0-2044424	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. Interned (later was KIA)	Jamaica, New York
SALADIAC, JOHN ASN T-190780	Navigator Flt Of. Interned	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
KIPPLE, JAMES E. ASN 13044894	Bombardier S/Sgt. Interned	Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania
McADAMS, ROBERT C. ASN 14039719	Engineer T/Sgt. Interned (later was POW)	Ensley, Alabama
BRUMAGIN, DELOROS R. ASN 33112937	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. Interned	Wattsburg, Pennsylvania
CASTELLOTTI, JULIO G. ASN 39836622	Asst. Eng. S/Sgt. Interned	San Jose, California
COLLIE, DAVID T. ASN 34180386	Asst. Radio S/Sgt. Interned	Clifton, Tennessee
FLISTER, HENRY O. ASN 36232737	Tail Turret S/Sgt. Interned	Edgerton, Wisconsin

*Note: Lt. Mitchell was KIA on 18 November 1943, and Sgt. McAdams became a POW on 11 December 1943. Lt. Decker was KIA on 20 February 1944.*

Although seriously damaged, this plane made it to Turkey. All of these men returned to duty in September 1943.

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No additional details are available, however Lt. William P. Newbold noted that both Lts. John R. Huddle and Robert S. Schimke [Henderson's crew], were badly injured on this Ploesti mission. So Newbold and his bombardier, Henry R. Zwicker, filled in for them on the next big mission, Wiener Neustadt, on 1 October 1943. Lt. Newbold became a POW and Lt. Zwicker was KIA.

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## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-40371 Q, Reinhart	G.I. GAL	MACR #2412
67th Squadron Crew:		
REINHART, ELMER H. ASN 0-731899	Pilot 1st Lt. POW, returned to duty	Oakland, California
STARR, CHARLES L. ASN T-190606	Co-pilot Flt Of. KIA	Cashmere, Washington
TOTTEN, GARELD J. ASN 0-667456	Navigator 2nd Lt. POW, returned to duty	Sparta, Michigan

PENDLETON, RICHARD H. ASN 0-661022	Bombardier POW, returned to duty	1st Lt.	North Tonawanda, New York
GARRETT, FRANK D. ASN 14067723	Engineer POW, returned to duty	T/Sgt.	Lafayette, Alabama
HUNTLEY, RUSSELL D. ASN 10600904	Radio Oper. POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Concord, New Hampshire
WOLFE, ROBERT W. ASN 35273527	RW Gunner POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Canton, Ohio
MASH, ALFRED A. ASN 39314376	Asst. Eng. POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Portland, Oregon
VAN SON, GEORGE ASN 16109574	Tail Turret POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	St. Petersburg, Florida

1st Lt. Elmer H. Reinhart was the pilot of the fourth 67th Squadron ship lost. It was the last plane away from Blue Target. With part of a wing shot off, Elmer emerged into a crisscrossing of ships, was unable to catch up with any of the improvised formations ahead and so was a tempting target. The Me 109s pounced upon him and shot away most of the tail turret, but George Van Son later crawled out of the debris alive. The attackers incapacitated waist gunners Alfred A. Mash and Robert Wolfe. The radioman, Russell Huntley, gave them both first aid.

The fighters then left this bomber they had mangled but could not shoot down. Engineer Frank D. Garrett reported, "Gas was pouring out of a hole near #3 engine; the tunnel was a wreck; the tail turret was hanging by a thread. The left vertical and horizontal stabilizers were almost shot off; the left aileron was practically gone. And there was a big hole behind #1 with oil streaming out."

Elmer Reinhart said, "I realized that we could never get back to base so I tried to gain altitude." The crew put on their parachutes as the plane heaved and quivered from nose to tail. Reinhart managed to coax 3,500 feet from his struggling craft but disintegration was at hand. Eighty miles from the target, he turned on the automatic pilot and hit the bail out button. He stayed in his seat until the others had jumped, then went into the bomb bay and hurled himself out.

Lt. Reinhart landed in a field of six-foot corn and hid his parachute. The ground suddenly trembled and a black column of smoke climbed into the sky – his ship had crashed. He ran for a considerable distance through corn, wheat and alfalfa much like those at home. Later he was captured and became a POW.

When questioned about his co-pilot, Charles L. Starr, Elmer said, "After giving the bail out signal, I stayed at the controls until Starr was in the bomb bay. Then I went to the bay, too, but Starr was still there. I encouraged him to jump but he wanted me to go first. This I did." Later, Lt. Starr was reported KIA as his chute failed to open properly and was so badly torn up he asked to be shot – as one report goes. But he could have been beaten up first and then shot by the civilians. The truth is not known even now.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-63761 D, Weaver	LI'L ABNER	MACR #2413
67th Squadron Crew:		
WEAVER, WORDEN ASN 0-792187	Pilot POW, returned to duty	1st Lt. Theadore, Alabama

SNYDER, ROBERT R. Jr. ASN 0-736394	Co-pilot POW, returned to duty	2nd Lt.	Oakland, California
SORENSEN, WALTER M. ASN 0-667446	Navigator POW, returned to duty	2nd Lt.	Winslow, Arizona
REESE, WILLIAM L. Jr. ASN 0-733097	Bombardier POW, returned to duty	2nd Lt.	Columbus, Ohio
SCHETTLER, WILLIAM J. ASN 39092894	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (A-12-3)	T/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
HINELY, JESSE L. ASN 34258126	Radio Oper. POW, returned to duty	T/Sgt.	Savannah, Georgia
BRITTAIN, JAMES A. ASN 14123264	Asst. Eng. POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Black Mountain, North Carolina
BREEDLOVE, PAUL L. Jr. ASN 37223087	Asst. Radio POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Kansas City, Missouri
SUPONCIC, FRANK J. ASN 13025174	Tail Turret POW, returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio

Lt. Worden Weaver was the pilot of the fifth 67th Squadron plane lost. This airplane was leading the third flight following Col. Johnson into the smoke and flames over the target area. They came out of that crematory with three engines damaged and their controls shot away. Forty miles away from the target on the way back to base, Weaver could no longer hold his ship in the air. He belly-landed near Visnia-Dombovitsa, and a wing tip caught the ground during the skid.

LI'L ABNER came to a halt with the nose rolled under the fuselage, the bomb bay telescoped into the flight deck, and the engineer, William J. Schettler, crushed to death inside the fallen top turret. The wreck burst into flames in the bomb bay section, while six men managed to get out through the rear section, but the pilots and navigator were imprisoned on the flight deck. Lt. Weaver seized a crack in the windshield, forced open a hole and wriggled out. But as navigator Walter M. Sorenson followed, his chute harness fouled in the opening and he was stuck halfway out, with the co-pilot, Robert R. Snyder still trapped behind him. The flames spread forward.

One of the men who escaped from the rear, bombardier William L. Reese, Jr. went through the fire and exploding ammunition and cut away Sorenson's harness. Reese and radioman Jesse L. Hinely hauled both trapped men clear. The crew then split up and ran in several directions while a German fighter circled the area, evidently reporting their location and directions. Weaver obtained help from a Rumanian farm boy who led them to a village where some women dipped feathers into a homemade balm and gently brushed it on their seared flesh.

Lt. Weaver later explained that after dropping their bombs and escaping the attacking enemy aircraft, he went back to the rear of his ship to help put out a fire in the tail section, leaving Lt. Snyder alone to fight the controls to maintain altitude. When he returned, the plane was so low it hit the ground – and even as it crashed, Sgt. Schettler was still firing his top turret guns. The turret came loose in the crash and pinned him in it with no escape possible. He had shot down two enemy aircraft. Remarkably, he was the only man killed in action aboard this aircraft. Weaver said that the navigator, Sorenson, told Schettler to leave his top turret, but he stayed there firing at enemy aircraft until the crash.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-40995 Bar-C, Houston	MARGUERITE	MACR #2416 & #3147
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
HOUSTON, ROWLAND B. ASN 0-727991	Pilot KIA	Capt. San Andreas, California
GIRARD, LOUIS V. ASN 0-885283	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Florence	1st Lt. West, Texas
SCOTT, WILLIAM ASN 0-796608	Navigator KIA, WOM Florence	2nd Lt. Clifton, New Jersey
McMACKIN, CHARLES G. ASN 11047450	Bombardier KIA, WOM Florence	S/Sgt. Revere, Massachusetts
SCHOER, WALTER B. ASN 39826757	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (C-11-6)	S/Sgt. Holstein, Iowa
SEVICK, STEPHEN F. ASN 12044639	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
WARD, JOE F. ASN 34107345	Asst. Rad. KIA	T/Sgt. Slocomb, Alabama
CARLTON, CLYDE W. ASN 14037452	Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (C-6-29)	S/Sgt. Lexington, North Carolina
SPEARS, MILFORD L. ASN 37136575	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Springfield, Missouri

Captain Rowland B. Houston, flying with the first wave over Blue Target, joined the end of an assembling formation as the B-24s fought to give one another protection from the attacking enemy fighters. Luftwaffe pilot Willie Steinmann, who had shot down one Liberator at the opening of the battle, was flying one of the Me 109s that pursued him. The following quote is from “The Great Ground-Air Battle of 1 August 1943” by James Dugan and Carol Stewart:

“The German ace picked out Houston’s ship, which was ‘about a hundred fifty feet from the ground. I attacked him from the rear,’ said Steinmann. ‘I cut back on the throttle, slowed her with flaps, and gave the Liberator a good raking from wing tip to wing tip. I could see tracers walking across the width of the plane and flames coming out everywhere. The top turret man, [Walter B. Schoer] and the tail gunner [Milford L. Spears], particularly the man in the tail, were shooting me up. I closed to within seventy feet!’

“ ‘My engine caught fire and there was a tremendous quivering. My speed carried me under the left side of the bomber, which was going out of control. The Liberator and the ground were coming together fast and I was in between, with no control. I had an instant to consider what would happen. The best chance seemed being thrown free in the crash. I loosened my harness and opened the latch on my canopy. I don’t remember crashing.’

“ ‘The first thing I knew I was seated on the ground with my pants torn and cuts on my legs. Near me the two planes burned. I got up from the ground and walked away.’ No one walked away from Houston’s ship.”

It is believed that this plane is the one described as, “Aircraft skimmed over the top of woods and fell on the other side, and exploded.”



Lt. Houston volunteered for this mission even though he had completed his tour of operations. It was too important for the war effort to miss.

There were many men wounded on those aircraft that returned to base – but not all were recorded. Other than the two on Charles Hughes' aircraft, few others were identified. However, there was one fatality aboard an 68th Squadron aircraft piloted by Captain John H. Diehl.

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68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23813 V, Diehl	VICTORY SHIP	Returned
68th Squadron Crewman:		
DIEHL, JOHN H. Jr.,	Pilot	Capt.
POSEY, JAMES T.	Command Pilot	Lt. Col.
STINE, ROBERT J.	Navigator	1st Lt.
KLEKAR, HOWARD R.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
FLESHER, ISAAC A.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
METSA, TAUNO I.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
WILLIAMS, TRUITT H. ASN 18037355	Waist Gun KIA, buried North Africa (D-1-8)	Amarillo, Texas
BOWDEN, EDWARD F.	Waist Gun	S/Sgt.
GREEN, GEORGE L.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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Posey's lead aircraft, VICTORY SHIP, was piloted by a twenty-nine mission man, John H. Diehl. The first wave of five planes was formed like a spread "M". Following them were three more M-shaped waves of Liberators. Drumming closer to the target, Posey saw ribbons of artificial smoke dribbling across the refinery, but this was trivial compared to the inferno that he could glimpse over at White Five (Col. Johnson's target). Alongside the speeding column shells from a 37-mm. gun knocked off part of Posey's tail. They also killed Sgt. Truitt H. Williams, one of his waist gunners.

Two men were wounded on a 66th Squadron plane flown by Capt. Miller, according to a report written by Major Dexter Hodge.

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66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23811 K, Miller	FASCINATIN' WITCH	Returned
66th Squadron Crewmen:		
MILLER, ROBERT E.	Pilot	Capt.
HODGE, DEXTER L.	Co-pilot	Maj.
ZARUBA, LeROY E.	Navigator	1st Lt.
EDWARDS, ROBERT L.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
McDONNELL, MARTIN J. ASN 11036914	Radio Oper. Leg Wound	Providence, Rhode Island
MURPHY, WILLIAM J. Jr.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
ROWLAND, DANIEL W. ASN 16034838	Asst. Rad./RW Gun. Leg Wound	Alliance, Ohio

NEWMES, ROBERT G.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
DUCOTE, CLARENCE J.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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While over the target and under intense ground fire, Sgt. Daniel W. Rowland was hit by a bullet in his upper left leg, which almost tore it off, and the radio operator, Sgt. Martin J. McDonnell stopped two .30 caliber slugs in his leg. Sgt. Rowland was knocked down and yelled for Martin to throw him an oxygen mask so he could use it for a tourniquet. But Martin could not go to assist Daniel as the ship needed all the fire power it could muster to attempt to ward off the sheets of gunfire coming up at them. Until help arrived, Daniel was successful in stopping much of the flow of blood. About 20 minutes passed before the ship got sufficiently away from attacks to permit the bombardier, Lt. Robert L. Edwards, and the engineer, William J. Murphy, to help care for the two wounded men. By this time, Sgt. Rowland was quite weak from loss of blood, and McDonnell was having difficulty. So Captain Miller decided to try for Malta for a landing so that these two could get immediate medical attention – if his fuel supply could take them that far. It did, and these two were left in a good hospital, well cared for.

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The 44th BG sustained one more casualty during this August 1 raid on Ploesti, but it did not take place in a 44th BG aircraft. Instead, Sgt. Clarence C. Hood was on temporary duty with the 93rd Bomb Group to help fill vacancies in crews ill from dysentery – and he was a volunteer. The pilot of the crew which was interned in Turkey was that of 1st Lt. Claude A. Turner. At least part of this crew returned to duty, as Lt. Turner himself was Killed In Action on 13 November 1943.

68th SQUADRON:

93rd BG, Lt. Turner	Interned in Turkey with 68th Sq. volunteer
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68th Squadron Crewman:

HOOD, CLARENCE C.	Tail Turret Interned in Turkey	Sgt.	Rensselaer, New York
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Sgt. Hood remained with the 93rd BG after his internment and elected to continue combat flying with that Group until he completed his 16th (and last) mission with them.

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To close this overview of 44th Bomb Group losses at Ploesti, here is an account by 68th Bomb Squadron operations officer and pilot, Tom Holmes:

“Even before we left England in June 1943, we knew something big was going to happen that would involve low level flying. Since everything was top secret we were told only that we were going to Libya but we had no idea what a contrast in climate we would encounter and how very hot and desolate this land would be. The temperature would rise to 130 degrees and we would be assaulted by lots of hot wind, dirt, grasshoppers, and scorpions.

“While practicing in the desert we flew very low which we enjoyed but I am sure some of the crew were somewhat upset or nervous about flying into the ground. We did hit two hawks, one hitting the #2 engine prop governor, and a second hawk coming through the Plexiglas window in the nose and leaving blood, guts, and feathers through the entire airplane even to the tail. Luckily, no one in the nose was injured.

“Benina, our airfield, was a large base about 15 miles east of Benghazi where the remains of previous battles fought there were scattered all about: abandoned German planes, trucks, and armored vehicles along with thousands of oil drums everywhere from Cairo west across the desert. We lived in tents and were introduced to rations that we had not previously experienced (dehydrated foods) which were not particularly tasty.

“We continued to practice low level flying and in between flew about 14 missions over Sicily and Italy. We had no ice in the desert and took great pleasure in returning from these missions, drinking ice water frozen at altitude, eating K or C rations and listening to Axis Sally on the radio. To keep from perspiring so much, and to keep our clothes dry, we would remove them for takeoff and dress as we ascended. This may not have been Standard Operating Procedure but it kept us dry.

“To keep the sand from being drawn into the air scoops, we always had to be careful before takeoff to keep our engines at low rpm or turned sideways to the wind.

“We lost our third squadron CO, Tommy Cramer, on 2 July Lecce Airdrome, Italy. John Diehl was promoted to CO and I, operations officer. I had finished my missions and hence did not fly many of the missions while at Benina. I did fly a mission to Rome where we bombed the railroad marshaling yards with strict orders to bomb only our target.

“During the invasion of Sicily in mid-July 1943 we were assigned to bomb the communication center in Catania. As we flew over Sicily we saw the largest armada of naval vessels assembled just offshore that we had ever seen.

“When we were ordered to go to Ploesti the mission was of such importance that we needed every available plane and crew even though several crews had finished at least 25 missions. Capt. Roland B. Houston and crew would be doing #32.

“Even though he was recuperating from a traumatic crash at sea a few weeks earlier we needed pilots so badly that I had to ask Robert J. “Bob” Lehnhausen if he would fill out a crew. He replied that he did not care to fly, but would go if ordered. Because of his circumstances I would not order him to go but since I asked, he courageously consented. He made the round trip, and, at a later time, he, as a Lt. Col., served as Commanding Officer of the 68th Squadron. He survived the war, and returned to his home in Peoria, Ill. He served four years as mayor of that city, proving himself a born leader.

“On the morning of the raid on Ploesti we were up very early for breakfast and briefing and then to the planes for takeoff at 7 a.m. We were eager to get started on this exciting low-level raid after three months of practice and getting ready. All the planes got off okay and headed out over the Mediterranean Sea toward the Adriatic Sea just east of Italy and west of Yugoslavia.

“I observed a very strange event as we were flying at 8,000 to 10,000 just south of Italy over the Ionian Sea. A B-24 suddenly dived straight down into sea. Later we learned it was our lead plane for the entire mission. I could not imagine what could have gone wrong. As usual we were too busy to dwell very long on this unusual event and proceeded on with our mission. For various reasons we had 20 to 30 planes turn back [from the 178 that started]. Most were attributed to mechanical failures caused by the desert sand.

“We flew a loose formation over the water gradually climbing to about 11,000 or 12,000 feet and then turning on a heading of about 70 degrees across the mountains of Yugoslavia and clouds which gave us trouble, but didn’t stop us. Later, we began a slow descent down the east slope to the Blue Danube River, which was a muddy brown, I suppose from rains. As we flew lower we could see the countryside, cities, animals, people dressed in bright colors, as if we were out for a pleasant Sunday afternoon drive.

“Before we knew it we arrived at the IP (initial point) where we changed course and flew southeast for approximately 25 to 30 miles to the target. At this time we were flying very low, passing a downed B-24 on my right. It appeared to have landed wheels up but fairly well intact. The crew was standing beside the plane, waving as we flew by. How I did wish we could land and pick them up.

“Next we came upon a power line and I remember pulling up to get over it thinking of the planes on my wings. By this time the anti aircraft guns were in full swing and many shells were exploding all around us. This was the first time we had ever been this close to 88 mm. guns and the impressive thing was the rapid rate of fire and the flames and bright flashes which seemed to be 30 to 40 feet long out of the muzzle.

“We were now able to see many of the other targets burning. B-24s were coming back, over and through us. One plane, Bar D, flew directly over the top of our planes. I looked up about 100 feet and saw a hole about six feet across between #1 and #2 engines burning fiercely with the metal burning brilliantly around the outer edges. I’m sure he did not go far before crashing. The sky was full of B-24s returning from the other targets. They flew over the top of our planes as we were approaching the target flying extremely low. Our target was less than a mile straight ahead. There were numerous guns around the refinery and they were all firing. We had one or two fixed 50 caliber guns in the nose for the pilot to fire but I do not recall firing them. I was too busy flying toward the target to concentrate on a target for the nose guns. I remember seeing a ground soldier literally explode when hit by some of our 50 caliber guns. He was less than 400 feet away.

“We had the target in sight from about 10 to 15 miles away and now we were rapidly approaching at a very low level – less than 50 feet high. I remember very clearly pulling up to get over the smokestacks on the power house which was my assigned target and I feel sure we put our bombs directly over target. The bombs were delayed action bombs and exploded at intervals of 30 seconds to 72 hours. This was to keep fire fighters away from the refineries.

“After releasing our bombs, we continued on a course that led us to the southwest and toward home. The fighters jumped us on the retreat and several of them flew into the ground as we were still at a very low level. Our gunners were well trained and experienced at shooting enemy planes and they did an excellent job.

“I noticed one B-24 trailing heavy black smoke from the tanks in the bomb bay. He was flying very low and about 200 to 300 yards in front of me. The smoke grew bigger and I knew he could not last much longer. I never did understand why he did not gain some altitude in order to bail the crew out. After about 20 miles he pulled up into a steep climb to about 700 to 800 feet. I was so close behind I had to observe the direction of his nose in order to dodge his plane. I turned to the right as he veered to the left. When he stalled the nose fell abruptly and three chutes opened as the men in the tail were thrown 15 to 20 feet above the tail section. I feel sure they landed okay

and probably made their way to the wreckage. The plane passed under our left wing and exploded which I believe ended in the deaths of all the men in the front, six, probably. I never heard any more about this plane or crew.

“We lost #3 engine as our fuel ran out because of a faulty pump. We were not far from the target when this happened so we transferred fuel and restarted the engine until we were off the coast. In the meantime, I ordered the crew to throw everything overboard: guns, ammunition, etc. I remember the long strings of 50-caliber ammo snaking through the air and into the mountains of Yugoslavia. We saved 100 rounds for the top and tail turrets in case we ran into enemy planes. We dropped behind after crossing the coast in order to save fuel. All engines were reduced, both RPMs and manifold pressure. Our flight across the Mediterranean was uneventful. We encountered a number of low cloudbanks and felt that each one would be over landfall but this was not to be until about the fourth or fifth cloudbank. It was nearing dark as we finally crossed the coast and our field was now only about 20 miles ahead. We proceeded directly to the field and landed promptly as we knew we were extremely low on fuel.

“I thought we flew about 14 hours, but later records showed 13 hours and 26 minutes. The next day I was told by the crew chief on our ship, “Wing and a Prayer,” that we had less than ten minute’s fuel. He drained the tanks to be sure.

“We were very tired but elated at the excellent results of our mission. “Blue Target,” which was the Brazi refinery, the largest and latest American-built refinery in Rumania, was 100 percent destroyed.

“We were all saddened by the loss of 50 or more planes in the five groups making the raid, but especially touched by the loss of one in our squadron piloted by Roland B. “Sam” Houston when he and his entire crew were lost. This plane was shot down by German Fighter Pilot Willie Steinman in an Me 109 whose story has been recorded. Houston and his crew were on their 32nd mission.

“All of us felt the importance of this raid and had practiced long and hard to make it. Patriotism was very much alive in America on August 1, 1943, and most certainly in our crews as well.

“All crewmembers were well decorated; our squadron receiving two Distinguished Service Crosses, three Silver Stars, and everyone on the mission receiving Distinguished Flying Crosses. Five Congressional Medals of Honor were awarded for this raid, including our own Group Commander, Col. Leon Johnson, and Col. “Killer” Kane. Three were awarded posthumously. The group received its second Presidential Unit Citation – the first, three months earlier for the raid on Kiel, Germany on 14 May, 1943.

“The official records of the Ploesti raid are recorded well by Webb Todd, a member of the 68th Squadron, in his history of this squadron.

“Most of the events of this raid are still quite vivid in my mind some 58 years later as I write this account. I shall never forget our fallen comrades, and I pray that the price they paid shall not have been in vain. To this day I am thankful I do not have to arise and make another mission. The experience was something we endured with hope and gratitude but never desired to repeat.”

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## 16 August 1943

### Airfields and Marshalling Yards, Foggia, Italy

Just 15 days after the horrors of Ploesti, the 44th BG was to suffer another devastating blow. This was the mission to the airfields of Foggia. On previous flights into that territory the missions were “milk runs”, but this day proved far from that. Seven planes failed to return with the losses by Squadrons as: 66th – 1; 67th – 3; 68th – 1; and the 506th – 2.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23778 F, Curelli	LADY LUCK	MACR #3150
66th Squadron Crew:		
CURELLI, ROCCO A. ASN 0-670981	Pilot KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (I-5-63)	2nd Lt. Biddeford, Maine
PAPADOPULOS, JOHN G. ASN 0-743260	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt. Salt Lake City, Utah
ROSSI, WALTER Jr. ASN 0-797402	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt. Bronx, New York
TURROU, VICTOR T. ASN 0-738948	Bombardier KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (J-2-62)	2nd Lt. Falks Church, Virginia
GRINDE, JOHN H. ASN 36241507	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Morrisonville, Wisconsin
ZIMMERMAN, WESLEY L. ASN 34312350	Radio Oper. POW, escapee, returned	T/Sgt. Winston Salem, North Carolina
ELA, DEFOREST L. ASN 31157299	Asst. Rad. KIA	S/Sgt. Quincy, Massachusetts
SHAFER, RAYMOND C. ASN 35354093	Asst. Eng. KIA	S/Sgt. Anderson, Indiana
HUGHES, JOHN R. ASN 32468888	Gunner KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (J-13-57)	S/Sgt. Bogeta, New Jersey
ZOLLER, HARPER F. Jr. ASN 36529756	Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Detroit, Michigan

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2nd Lt. R. Curelli and crew were newly arrived replacements, and like several others lost on this mission, were on only their second mission.

The MACR states that this plane was hit by flak over the target. While in a spin, it was attacked by enemy aircraft. Three to five chutes were seen to open. Later Glenn C. Hickerson [the tail gunner on the Austin crew, who was for a time a POW at Bari, Italy until he escaped] stated that all of the crew were killed except Zimmerman, who eventually returned to the 44th BG on 4 November 1943.

Sgt. Zimmerman, radio operator on this crew, sent this description, “Contrary to the MACR report, I do not recall our ship being hit by flak. After passing over the target and dropping our bombs, one of the engines went out due to an extreme oil leak. When this #3 engine failed and we fell out of formation, that is when we were hit by enemy fighters. After several direct hits from the fighters, we tried to get out of the plane, but could not. The main hydraulic system would not operate, and we couldn’t get the bomb bay doors open in order to jump.

“At that point, Sgt. Grinde, engineer, went out the sliding door to the bomb bay without a parachute on, to try to open the bomb bay doors manually. This was the time that the ship went into a dive or spin and the sliding door came down and we could not get out. Since I was on the flight deck I don’t know if any of the crew in the rear got out before the plane exploded. But when it did explode – which I think was caused by the fire in that burning engine reaching the gas tanks – I was somehow blown clear, and opened my chute and came down safely. I had several small cuts on my head and arms, and was black and blue over most of my body for two or three weeks.

“I was taken prisoner by the Italians and was in several camps before escaping and returning to Africa – and later back to England; and then the States.

“Also, contrary to the reports, I saw only one other chute and that landed several hundred yards from where I did. I went to it and it was Lt. Curelli. He was badly torn up and was dead.”

Two men in the town of Ruoti, Italy, stated that the plane seemed to partly explode in mid-air and several crew members were seen to parachute from the plane. When these two men arrived at the scene of the crash and landing parachutists, they saw several civilians taking many articles, such as watches, rings and even identifications papers from the bodies. Only five of the nine bodies could be identified due to these thefts. They were: Lts. Curelli and Papadopoulos; Sgts. Hughes, Grinde, and Shafer.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23817 L, Bateman	SUZY-Q	MACR #2445 & #02361
67th Squadron Crew	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, North Africa	
BATEMAN, WALTER R. ASN 0-796281	Pilot 1st Lt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Baltimore, Maryland
PROPST, HALBERT W. ASN 0-793136	Co-pilot 1st Lt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Cape Girardeau, Missouri
TRAVIS, WILLIAM C. ASN 0-736049	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Akron, Ohio
ELLIS, JOHN T. ASN 0-676452	Bombardier 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Warren, Ohio
CHAPMAN, ROBERT D. ASN 32142986	Engineer T/Sgt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Albion, New York
POST, HERBERT F. ASN 16109394	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Port Huron, Michigan
CIANCIOLO, MICHAEL A. ASN 34288192	Asst. Eng. S/Sgt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Memphis, Tennessee
AGUIRRE, ADOLPH P. ASN 39251163	Asst. Rad. Sgt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Exeter, California
STEVENSON, JOE A. ASN 32478604	Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Little Valley, New York
SMITH, CHARLES R. ASN 11165246	Tail Turret S/Sgt. KIA, WOM North Africa	Hendersonville, North Carolina

1st Lt. Walter R. Bateman was the pilot on SUZY-Q, the most famous ship of the 67th Squadron which had led the Group on Ploesti. He was new to the Squadron and was on his first mission, as

was his entire crew. It seems very ironic that this famous ship should be lost without a survivor and with only one observer seeing her demise. No one reported seeing the aircraft go down until Sgt. William Brady (of the Carpenter crew that went down 1 October 1943) said that he had. About the only mention of SUZY Q is that when they last saw her she was “lying burnt and broken on an Italian beach” believed to be Cape Stilo.

Lt. Egan, bombardier on the Hill crew, stated that he also saw SUZY-Q go down. “Four men managed to bail out, but one man’s parachute hung up in the bomb bay. I remember a man hanging by his parachute in the bomb bay – he couldn’t get out and the plane was burning all over. We were the lead ship of our squadron, with six ships behind us. All six of them were shot down!”

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-41021 T, Hager	BLACK SHEEP		
67th Squadron Crew:			
HAGER, CARL S. ASN 0-669713	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Glasgow, West Virginia
PIMENTEL, ROBERT E. ASN 0-735107	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Berkeley, California
BAKER, WALLACE P. ASN 0-734296	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Champaign, Illinois
MILLS, JOHN D. ASN 0-676093	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
CURRY, FRANCIS X. ASN 33361905	Engineer KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (I-14-55)	T/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
WOODS, HOWARD C. ASN 37374038	Radio Oper. KIA, buried in Missouri	T/Sgt.	Stella, Missouri
DONES, ISABELINO ASN 32437848	Asst. Eng. POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Bronx, New York
BLAKENEY, ROBERT W. ASN 11088344	Asst. Rad. POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Newton Center, Massachusetts
FARLEY, HENRY R.	Gunner POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Peoria, Illinois
HESS, JOHN M. ASN 13089744	Tail Turret POW (injured), escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Dunbar, Pennsylvania

2nd Lt. Carl S. Hager was the pilot of the second airplane lost by the 67th. Assistant radioman on this crew, Robert W. Blakeney, related their experiences this day: “We were shot down by German Messerschmitts and FW 190s. Our B-24 tried to reach Sicily but three engines were on fire. We crash-landed on a beach in the Reggio Calabria area of Italy. Five of our crew were killed when the plane exploded before they could get out. They were: Lts. Pimentel, Mills, and Baker; Sgts. Curry and Woods. Five of us were able to get out safely.

“I suspect that the five who were killed died in the explosion and fire that followed – am not sure whether any had been wounded or killed in the fight with the German planes. Lt. Hager was badly burned about the face, ears, hands and arms. They looked to me like 3rd degree burns. He only survived because of his courage, and he always felt guilty and surely responsible for the



deaths of his crewmen. John Hess was injured in the crash and he received the Purple Heart later. The rest of us were singed by the fire but O.K.

“Lt. Hager was the only one who got out of the front part of our plane and he was able to crawl through the broken-out pilot’s window. The rest of us were in the rear of the plane.

“We were taken captive by Italian soldiers and turned over to the Germans later at Bari in Italy. The officers from the other planes were all sent to a prison camp in Germany. Eighteen of us sergeants (four or five crews) who survived were taken to a German prison camp in Sulmona, Italy. About two months later we escaped and spent some 30 days behind the lines. We broke up into pairs – John Hess with me – and we eventually ran into the Canadian 5th Army just outside of Foggia.

“Certainly someone like Lt. Hager deserves some honor. He never complained. He was in complete shock for almost a solid week! He had no medical attention at all but yet he was worrying about us. I had to help him take his clothes off and I washed his clothes for him for a short period. I will never forget his tremendous courage. His great flying skill saved us in that most difficult crash-landing.”

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-24229 P-Bar, Smith

BUZZIN’ BEAR

67th Squadron Crew:

SMITH, LEIGHTON C. ASN 0-665729	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	San Antonio, Texas
MILLINER, JOSEPH S. ASN T-60563	Co-pilot POW	Flt Of.	Louisville, Kentucky
CLIFFORD, THOMAS A. ASN T-190739	Navigator POW	Flt Of.	Upper Darby, Pennsylvania
DEVINNEY, JAMES F. ASN 0-727322	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	Atlantic City, New Jersey
WINTER, LEROY R. ASN 19064228	Engineer Escapee, returned	T/Sgt.	Orland, California
SPARKS, GERALD A. ASN 6930238	Radio Oper. POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Meridian, Mississippi
McCABE, ERNEST G. ASN 36303257	Asst. Eng. KIA	S/Sgt.	Pontiac, Illinois
GIBBY, GOLA G. ASN 19055445	Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Madisonville, Tennessee
GRETT, GERALD L. ASN 37120507	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Urbanette, Arkansas
MARUSZEWSKI, FRANK A. ASN 13038809	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Uniontown, Pennsylvania

1st Lt. Leighton C. Smith, flying BUZZIN’ BEAR, a plane which was almost as famous as SUZY Q, was the third 67th Squadron ship lost on 16 August. Like SUZY Q, it was lost without many observing her end. But unlike SUZY, there were some survivors.

It was reported that Lt. Smith was having great difficulty maintaining formation due to the heavy flak and the fierce, persistent fighter attacks that were inflicting considerable damage. Shortly after leaving the target, and down to an estimated altitude of 18,000 feet, with the gunners still fighting off the attacks, the plane broke in two.

Lt. Smith reports: "I had difficulty in control. This was caused by fighters knocking out our controls on about the second pass. The difficulty was lateral control. Soon, it was obvious to me that bail out was the only solution. At almost that instant, the bail out signal was given. The fighters hit our bomb bay tank – 400 gallons of 115 octane."

Four chutes were observed, all from the front of the plane, while those in the rear were continuing to shoot down their attackers. None of these gunners got out, riding their aircraft to the ground. Two of these gunners were former ground crewmen.

The co-pilot, Milliner, wrote: "Up the coast of Italy, the formation was a bit loose and relaxed. This changed on the approach to the target as everyone tightened up and prepared to drop their bombs. At that moment, flak started coming up, very heavy and seemed to be concentrated on the lower aircraft. The 67th was flying high cover so it seemed we did not get much flak, however, the flight behind us could have picked up some. This flight consisted of Hager, Batemen, and Curelli. At this moment, my mind maybe wandered and I started thinking about what the mess hall might serve for dinner when we got back. Everything seemed to be okay until the fighters appeared, just after we left the target, and I snapped back to reality. Our guns opened up and small holes started to appear in our wings and engine nacelles on #2 and #3 were taking hits. The fighters were very accurate and determined. The only enemy aircraft I saw were 109s and they were attacking Austin and Whitlock from the rear.

"At this time, I was trying to spot fighters attacking us. No frontal attacks were observed. All came in at 6 o'clock and 4 o'clock. I could not see these, but knew they were there. Small caliber was glancing off my windows at about 45-degree angles – going up. These had to come from the attack at 4 o'clock under the Bear. After the first couple of attacks, the intercom must have gone out because nothing was coming in. So I took mine off and hung them on the side. I looked back to the flight deck and McCabe was sitting on the deck with a frightened look on his face. I did not have time to question him, but I thought that he was supposed to be at one of the waist guns. At this time, I looked toward Hill and saw him push the nose into a steep dive. Evidently, Smith did not see this and wanted to know where he went. I was sure Hill was not hit very badly and was taking evasive action. At this time I learned over and told Smith to give the Bear everything it had and emphasized "Get the Hell outta here!" Smith throttled forward and I looked to my right and another burst hit from 4 o'clock. I heard a loud pop in the bomb bay and turned to look. McCabe was gone from the deck and at that moment a fire broke at the base of the fuel tank (bomb bay) and started to spread very quickly. At this very moment, an enemy fighter must have unloaded his guns from about 100 feet at 6 o'clock. We even seemed to be keeping up with the wall of lead that hit us.

"The Bear shuddered. I'll swear I could hear it groan. The nose shot up and I looked at Smith. He was trying to make sure his chute harness was okay. At this moment, I grabbed the controls and pushed the nose back down and pushed the alarm bell because I wasn't sure that Smith had hit it. I shouted for Smith to go out the top hatch because I thought the bomb bay doors were closed. The fire was so intense at that time you could not see into the bomb bay.

Smith dived for the door and I saw him disappear into the fire. I was sure, no way, he could make it out of that inferno alive. Miraculously, he did, but suffered second degree burns on his face, hands and neck. His clothes were scorched a bit and surely he was in great pain. Finally, getting my own wits together, and realizing there was no saving the Bear, I reached for the latch on the top hatch. It dropped and immediately the suction from the opening caused the fire to fill the flight deck and up through the hatch. This I did not count on. By now, it was too late to do any counting.

I dove for the opening and hung there for a couple of moments and then swung my feet out on top of the fuselage and toward the rear of the plane. My right leg was hanging over the leading edge of the wing, however, there was no problem getting up and running off the end of the wing just past #1. My clothes were on fire when I left the hatch, but the rush of air put the flames out almost immediately, leaving me with burns on my face, neck, armpits, and legs. My clothes, especially my shirt, would crumble and fall apart. Big blisters had popped on my neck and left it very raw."

"On the ground I met an Italian count that could speak very good English. He had visited the crash site and confirmed the number of men that had perished with the aircraft. He had also watched the air battle from the ground and said that the 'Bear' had spun in from a great height."

Many of the crewmen lost with Buzzin' Bear were from Bill Cameron's original crew. Cameron recalls: "In late March, 1943, there was a desperate search for people to form new crews in the 67th Squadron. In a few days, I soloed in the "Little Beaver." Shortly thereafter, two officers recently transferred from the RAF were assigned to me as my co-pilot, Bill Dabney, and Navigator, Tom Clifford. Five volunteers from the ground crews who had worked on "The Line" were sent off to gunnery school. Upon their return, I had my two flight engineers in Winters and Gola Gibby; two waist gunners, Ernest McCabe and Jerry Grett; and a tail gunner, Frank Maruszewski. A real character, a reject from a B-17 outfit, was given to us as our radio operator, Gerald "Sparky" Sparks. The last to join our crew was our bombardier, "Gentleman" Jim DeVinney. Thus was our crew born – a fine, eager bunch of kids it was!"

With the exception of Capt. Cameron and his co-pilot Bill Dabney, this crew was still intact, but on this date replaced by two new pilots borrowed for this mission as Capt. Cameron had more than completed his tour of duty.

Lt. Smith notes that his original navigator was named Sweet and his original bombardier was Kullman. Both participated in the Ploesti raid (see Fred Jones' crew for Adolphus Sweet and Reginald Carpenter's crew for Martin Kullman).

Later when it was learned that this crew did not return from this mission and I was informed that my close friend, Ernest McCabe, had been killed, I had the very sad duty to post a letter to his girlfriend that he had given to me in the event that he was lost. What a very sorrowful task that was.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-40373 Z, Shannon	NATCHEZ-BELLE	MACR #3558
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#### 68th Squadron Crew:

SHANNON, EUNICE M. ASN 0-665349	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Cranbury, Texas
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HERSH, GEORGE P. ASN 0-670542	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Kansas City, Missouri
TEMPLE, GEORGE W. ASN 0-797243	Navigator POW, injured, escapee, returned	2nd Lt.	Newport, New York
COLLINS, ELWOOD E. ASN 0-733533	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Columbia, Pennsylvania
SLATTERY, DENNIS E. ASN 11019806	Engineer POW, escapee, returned	T/Sgt.	Miller Falls, Massachusetts
STRANDBERG, CLARENCE W. ASN 17025880	Radio Oper. POW, escapee, returned	T/Sgt.	Minneapolis, Minnesota
ROTHROCK, CLARENCE H. ASN 39453341	RW Gunner POW, escapee, returned	Sgt.	Spokane, Washington
HELLER, CLAYTON E. ASN 17058569	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Concordia, Kansas
SMITH, NICK B. ASN 35456291	Hatch Gun. KIA, buried Florence (E-1-37)	S/Sgt.	Cincinnati, Ohio
VOGEL, ROBERT I. ASN 35310805	Tail Turret POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Youngstown, Ohio

1st Lt. Eunice M. Shannon captained the 68th Squadron plane lost this day. Observers state that about 30 miles after passing the target and while under enemy attack by fighters, this aircraft was seen on fire, and seven men bailed out.

Navigator George Temple states, "Our plane was about one mile behind when four minutes after the target. We were attacked by 24 yellow-nosed FW 190s. The attacks came in from three, six, and nine o'clock, level, and pressed home almost to our wing tips. The first 20-mm shell hit the flight deck near the radio and set the upholstery and other inflammable material on fire. The next thing I knew, two engines were burning and we started down in a long glide.

"All the way down we were under attack. On the way down Sgt. Smith, on the belly gun, and Sgt. Heller, on one of the waist guns, were killed by this enemy fire. Smith got two enemy aircraft before he was killed. Vogel, the tail turret gunner, got three; Slattery, the top turret gunner, got two; and one of the waist gunners, Rothrock, got two more [a total of nine enemy aircraft]. At 18,000 feet the pilot gave the bail out signal; our intercom was shot away. Shannon did a grand job of trimming up the ship and gave everyone a chance to get clear before he left his position. We all jumped except the two rear gunners and the co-pilot [Hersh]. I do not know why he did not jump. [Editor's note: Lt. Shannon notes later that Hersh had left his parachute behind his seat.]

"I opened the emergency nose wheel doors and bailed out. I figured I wanted a minute before opening my chute and I was afraid that I would get excited and open up too soon, so as I fell, I followed the second hand on my watch with my finger. When it had been around once I pulled the cord and she opened up nicely.

"I was coming down in a valley with mountains all around me, but the last fifty feet seemed to come up in a rush, and as I miscalculated the slope on which I landed, my left ankle broke. It seemed only a minute until an Italian farmer with a shotgun appeared over the top of the hill. He got me on a mule and took me to a main road where a truck was waiting. The truck took me to the local police station in a town of Atalla.

“They had a doctor who looked after the wounds. With me at this time was Lt. Shannon, who had a minor bullet wound; Lt. Collins; Sgt. Strandberg, who had some 20-mm fragments in his right leg; Sgt. Vogel, who had minor bullet wounds and two sprained ankles; and Sgt. Rothrock, who had a bullet wound all the way through his foot.

“Two months later I was in London. I was the first 8th A.F. man to be shot down, taken prisoner of war, escaped, got through enemy lines in action (in Italy this time) and get back to the 8th A.F. in England. Gen. Ira Eaker’s decision to send me stateside set a precedent for the future action after the invasion of Europe.”

*Note: Slattery and Vogel also escaped and returned to Shipdham on 13 November 1943. Rothrock, Strandberg and Temple also escaped and returned.*

Lt. Shannon said that his co-pilot, Lt. Hersh, in the rush and excitement, had left his parachute behind his seat when he rushed to the bomb bay. It was only then that he became aware that he had forgotten his chute, but he was unable to go back because of the raging fire in the radio compartment. When last seen, he was standing on the catwalk. Lt. Hersh refused to share the parachute that Lt. Shannon offered him, saying that it was his own fault, and that he would not jeopardize Lt. Shannon’s chances for survival!! One brave man!

Sgt. Strandberg tells of his experiences: “We had dropped our bombs and were heading south towards the instep of Italy’s boot when 24 FW 190s seemed to come out of nowhere. I was standing behind the pilot and co-pilot near the radio compartment when I felt the nudge of a boot in my back. I turned around and saw that Dennis Slattery’s top turret guns had been hit and were jammed and that the ammunition was piling up in his lap.

“As I stepped back to help him there was a tremendous explosion that shook the B-24. A 20-mm cannon shell had hit the left side of the radio compartment and tore a hole so big that I could have walked out through it. The impact and explosion picked me up and threw me so that I lay up against the right wall on top of the radio table. I was so numbed by the concussion that I had no feeling in the lower portion of my body. I remember feeling with my hands to find out if my legs were still there. As I lay there I could see that one parachute had been hit and had fluffed out. The incendiaries that we were supposed to set the plane on fire with if we landed in enemy territory, had also been hit and were burning.

“The flames were spreading to the tattered upholstery on the side of the radio compartment. By now the numbness in my legs had subsided enough so that I was able to roll off the table and find my parachute. I snapped it on and headed for the catwalk. The bomb bay doors were open and I could see that the big bullet-proof gas tank on the left side of the bomb bay was full of holes and the gas was gushing out. I knew that the fire up front and this fuel in the bomb bay would soon reach each other, so one of the most inviting things I have ever done in my life was to bail out head first.

“On previous missions I had seen German planes going back and forth between Americans as they were parachuting down. I had assumed they were being shot at, so I delayed pulling my ripcord until I was so low that it felt like the earth was coming up to meet me. As it blossomed out, I could see two FW 190s, so I immediately went limp and hung in my harness as if I were already dead. Even so, the two pilots made three passes at me, coming so close that I was sure they were going to clip out the top of my canopy with their propellers. Every time they went by their prop wash would collapse the air out of my chute and I would fall off at a crazy angle before

my chute would blossom out again. Later, when I was captured and interrogated by the Germans, I found out that they were having some fun while they were getting a fix on me and radioing my position so that I could easily be located by ground troops.

“I landed with an awful jolt on a hillside in a farm yard and unsnapped my English-style chute harness. As I ran from the farm yard I looked back and saw three women come out of the house, gather up the chute and run into the house with it. I often wondered how many petticoats and quilts they were able to get out of all that material.

“As I ran, I could see Italians converging on me from every direction. Some of them were even on horseback, so I just sat down on a big rock and consulted my escape kit material as I waited for them to come. There was money to bribe them with but how could you bribe that many people? As they stood all around me with axes, pitchforks, rifles, shotguns, and clubs I came across a phrase that was spelled out phonetically in Italian. It said, ‘Tell them you are an American aviator.’

“Up till then they thought I was a German, so it was the worst thing I could have said. It was like somebody dropped a bomb. The peaceful group became an angry mob and I was lined up to be shot. If it hadn’t been for one kind soul who tried to talk reason, and two of his friends who disarmed the nearly hysterical man with the shotgun, I’m sure I would have been killed right there.

“After six weeks in Sulmona, I escaped and lived up in the mountains for another six weeks until I met up with some Canadians in a Jeep, and I went with them.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-40778 T, Austin

SOUTHERN COMFORT

*Note: This was the first of many 44th aircraft named SOUTHERN COMFORT.*

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

AUSTIN, HORACE W. ASN 0-7933711	Pilot POW, escapee, returned	1st Lt.	Virginia Beach, Virginia
FABINY, ANDREW T. ASN 0-740592	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Rock Springs, Wyoming
SINGER, PAUL S. ASN 0-736038	Navigator KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (J-12-62)	2nd Lt.	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
FINDER, SHELDON ASN 0-733298	Bombardier KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (J-11-62)	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
JETT, JOSEPH W. ASN 38097871	Engineer POW, escapee, returned	T/Sgt.	Dallas, Texas
WHITBY, RAY L. ASN 39829592	Radio Oper. POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Alpine, Utah
LEE, DALE V. ASN 17032710	LW Gunner POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Bradish, Nebraska
PURCELL, THOMAS O. ASN 16083700	RW Gunner POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
WARTH, CHARLES J. ASN 15117864	Hatch Gun POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Cincinnati, Ohio

HICKERSON, GLENN C.  
ASN 6294273

Tail Turret                      S/Sgt.  
POW, escapee, returned

Temple,  
Texas

The 506th Squadron had not lost an aircraft in any of these north African missions – until today when two did not return. The first crew was that of 1st Lt. H. W. Austin. The Missing Air Crew Report states that approximately 15 minutes after bombing the target, this aircraft pulled out of formation and lost altitude under continued attack by enemy aircraft. From 3 to 10 chutes were observed before the aircraft itself was seen to explode in the bomb bay section and crash. Both #2 and #3 engines had been on fire.

Sgt. Charles J. Warth, hatch gunner, had these comments, “We came in sight of our target (at 20,000 feet) and saw something else – half of the German Luftwaffe were waiting for us. In just a very few minutes you would have thought the gates of Hell were open, as there were a bunch of us trying to get in – both American and German. SOUTHERN COMFORT took an uncountable number of direct hits from the German fighters who were coming at us from every o’clock position. I know we shot down at least three of them, and very possibly more. But at a time like that, you don’t have time to count who you hit – you just keep trying your best to protect yourself and do as much damage as you possibly can...

“Shortly, we heard the bail-out klaxon sound, three of our engines were shut down or on fire; the bomb bay was a blazing inferno, and we in the rear of the plane were completely cut off from the pilot and the rest of the crew forward. I made it from the tail turret to the camera hatch, turned around and saw the door to the bomb bay vaporize in flame!

“The four of us in the rear wasted no time then in attempting to get out – two going out the waist windows. Hickerson and myself (at least I think it was Hickerson) were at the camera hatch door and we got it open and both of us were out and away in a matter of seconds. In moments of stress, time itself becomes an immeasurable entity. Looking back now, it seems like not a second was lost or a motion wasted.

“After what seemed to be many minutes, the ripcord on my parachute accomplished what it was designed to do, and the chute started opening. First the drogue, then the main chute came to life, and I was able to start breathing again. With the chute lowering me to earth, I had nothing to do but look around and to see what the rest of the world was up to.

“The sky for many miles around was a mass of aircraft – some on fire, some still pressing attacks, others trying their best to fight them off, and everywhere patches of white chutes! Seven of the 44th BG’s Liberators were lost that day, plus over 20 of the Luftwaffe. On the ground you could see German soldiers coming from all directions to pick up any survivors. I kept a wary eye on a German fighter that circled me quite a few times, and saw the final moment of a gallant bit of man-made machinery – a Liberator named SOUTHERN COMFORT – which was a mass of flame as she spun down, empty now of human life, finishing her own “life” by crashing into an Italian hillside. There was a final blast of flame and noise, as if she had but one desire left and that being to return to the earth as the ores from which she came.

“Lts. Singer and Finder never reached the ground alive. Both of their bodies were found later by the Germans who reported that their parachutes were flak and bullet-ridden, and failed to open properly. The rest of us were captured by the Germans and we were sent to prison camps from which some of us were able to escape from later and return to the States.”

Co-pilot Andrew Fabiny said that soon after he got out of the plane and was floating down in his chute, he saw Lt. Singer pass quite close to him, but his parachute was damaged and was only partly open. Sgt. Lee explained that Lt. Finder did not parachute, as he had been decapitated by enemy fire.

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-40606 X, Whitlock	TIMBA-A-AH	MACR #3559
506th Squadron Crew:		
WHITLOCK, CHARLES A. Jr. ASN 0-665748	Pilot POW	1st Lt. Corsicana, Texas
WILSON, EDWARD R. ASN T-74	Co-pilot KIA	Flt Of. Kansas City, Missouri
RICKS, ROBERT A. ASN 0-796600	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Norfolk, Virginia
WAITE, JOHN K. ASN 0-734766	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt. Texas
STEWART, EDWIN M. ASN 39090749	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt. San Francisco, California
MUNDELL, ROBERT F. ASN 17091292	Radio Oper. POW, escapee, returned	T/Sgt. Walsh, Colorado
KNOX, RALPH B. ASN 16123614	Well Gun POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt. Cicero, Illinois
KOSCH, EMIL M. ASN 7024614	Waist Gun KIA	S/Sgt. Tampa, Florida
DUNAJECZ, HUGO Jr. ASN 32313726	Waist Gun KIA, buried Sicily/Rome (E-8-40)	S/Sgt. Bronx, New York
BONHAM, ROBERT W. ASN 15125248	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt. West Mansfield, Ohio

1st Lt. Charles A. Whitlock was the pilot of the second of the 506th aircraft lost on 16 August. S/Sgt. Ralph B. Knox, well gunner on this crew, had these comments, "We had only six of our regular crew with us as the other four men were very sick (from dysentery). We took off somewhere between 0630 and 0700 and reached the coast of Italy a little before 1300 hours. The flak started the minute we hit the coast and followed us all the way into the target, which was 25 to 30 miles inland. There was plenty of flak and it was well-aimed. In fact, it was bursting right outside of our waist windows. We hit the target at 1315 and got our bombs away without much trouble.

"We were away from the target about 5 to 10 minutes when it happened. The Group flying off to our left was hit by about 20 to 30 fighters and a few seconds later we were jumped by about the same number – and all Hell broke loose. We were flying 'Tail-end Charley' and caught almost everything they had to throw at us. Their first pass didn't cause any damage and I don't think that we got any of them. The second time it was different! A 20-mm shell came in and set my ammunition cans on fire and nicked me in a couple of places, but not badly. I got the burning cans out before they exploded. One of our waist gunners had been hit also, but he managed to stick to his guns.



“In the meantime, I had seen the plane flying on our left wing [Austin’s] catch fire and then go out of control. I saw six chutes come out of this plane, but things got so hot again that I didn’t have time to watch it any longer. The fighters were coming in on their third pass and it proved disastrous for us. Two more 20-mm shells came into the back and blew up. Many flying flak fragments got me behind the right knee and above the left ankle – and that laid me out over the hatch door. This burst also killed the already wounded waist gunner (Dunajecz).

“The other waist gunner (Kosch) didn’t look wounded as far as I could see, but there was a look of terror in his eyes, and he was trying to kick the plexiglass out of the well door where I was still lying. It wouldn’t have done him any good to get the plexiglass out as we couldn’t possibly crawl through the opening. We couldn’t open the door because of the gun that was stuck through it. I didn’t have the strength to pull the gun out, and he didn’t have the presence of mind to do it either.

“I finally got to my feet and got him to the waist window and practically threw him out of the ship. I watched him until he disappeared from sight, but I didn’t see him open his chute. Unfortunately, he did not survive.

“I took one long last look around and saw that the tail gunner [Bonham] was slumped over his guns and his turret was swung completely around to the side. I couldn’t have gotten back to him if I tried. The waist gunner was dead, the two left engines were on fire, the area over the wing and above the bomb bay was a mass of flames, and there was not a single gun on the ship firing, so I figured it was time that I left. It was quite a struggle to get out of the window as my legs were practically paralyzed by then and it took all of the strength in my arms to pull myself up, over and out.

“I estimate that we were about 18,000 feet when I jumped. I delayed my opening of the chute until I could almost see the leaves on the trees below. When I pulled the cord on my chute it came loose so easily that I thought that maybe the line had been shot through and it wasn’t going to open. But in a few seconds I felt a gentle tug and when I looked up, I was very relieved to see that the white umbrella was opening as it should.

“It was only about 30 seconds between the time that my chute opened and the time that I hit the ground. Luckily, I came down through some tree branches, which broke my fall and I didn’t hit the ground very hard. It was only a matter of a few seconds until I had my chute off and had destroyed all papers that I had in my possession. I couldn’t walk, so I crawled and rolled down the mountain until I reached the bottom. I started crawling again up the next hill a few feet at a time. It was quite a job and I quickly tired. When I was about half way up the hill I spotted a chute on the side of another hill and I called over there. I found out that my navigator, Robert Ricks and bombardier John Waite were there.

“They weren’t hurt but had been already captured by Italian soldiers. It wasn’t very long after that, that I was picked up and carried to a farm house where I met our other two men. (Sgt. Mundell and Lt. Whitlock).

“When they finally got me to the hospital, they removed most of the shell fragments without any anesthetic, which was really rough to take. Then they put me to bed without any food, and I was very hungry.”

Lt. Whitlock later wrote to Ralph Knox to add, “You probably never did know what happened on the flight deck. You see, after we caught fire I sent the co-pilot (Edward Wilson) back with Stewart (engineer) to try to put it out. As you probably know, the interphone and alarm systems burned out immediately as well as the controls. Since the bomb bay doors would not open, the co-pilot jumped into the bomb bay onto one door.

“Although he succeeded in knocking a door off, he was burned to death and his chute did not open. Stewart went back to his turret and kept right on shooting. Then the fire got so bad I couldn’t see a thing in the cockpit. The radio man, Mundell, left by the top hatch, and then I could see enough to find that the flames were coming through the radio compartment and up into the top turret. Stewart stayed with his guns and was burned to death, also. After that, I also got out by the top hatch, as the plane had no controls and was going down fast.

“I want to apologize to you and the others that are living for our formation that was too erratic to allow good marksmanship for the gunners. However, I do know that you boys shot down several enemy fighters.”

Robert Ricks told Sgt. Knox much later, “Whitlock and I were prisoners of the Italians until they surrendered. Then the Germans took us over and we were prisoners in the Reich until the end of the war. Whitlock and I lived together all of that time and got along fairly well until near the end. Then we had so little to eat that we were too weak to walk around.”

The radio operator, Robert F. Mundell wrote the following account: “The top hatch was already open. The hatch is located directly in front of the top turret – which the engineer operates – so Stewart, the engineer, had to have opened it. But he hadn’t bailed out. He had left the top turret and was now standing on the flight deck – directly opposite the radio operator’s station. He was looking at me with a very calm, dispassionate expression on his face – an expression so out of place, considering the situation we were in, that it lent a certain surrealism to the scene. Then he looked down at the bomb bay – by now a roaring inferno – as if he were considering going out that way. But he didn’t move. He must have intended on going out through the top hatch when he opened it, but for some reason he had changed his mind. I pointed toward the open hatch, motioning that we should leave. Stewart watched me as I started up the steps, but made no move to follow me.

“I reached the top hatch and was halfway out when I got hung up. The top half of me was outside the plane, and the blast from the ice-cold wind was numbing (the air temperature at 20,000 feet is close to zero). The wind had caught my belly pack (parachute) and it was now floating four feet from me – I don’t know where all the slack in the harness came from – and the straps felt like they were going to pull through me. I was praying the chute wouldn’t open before I got clear of the plane. I kept struggling to free myself, but I could feel my strength ebbing in the cold wind. Then I felt a hand push me.

“Whitlock had followed me up the steps and had reached up and given me a shove. It was enough to free me, and out I went. I hit something that skinned my knee, and I remember thinking for a second that I was hung up on something. The next thing I knew, my chute was open. I don’t remember pulling the ripcord – the chute might have opened on its own, or maybe the ripcord snagged on something and caused the chute to open. Whitlock who was about 5’11” and between 155 and 160 pounds told me later that he came out right behind me and didn’t have any trouble, that he dropped down right behind the wing.

“I do remember that it took a long time to get down (I had jumped at 18,000 feet), and I had a front row seat to an air battle for quite awhile. At one point I saw a German fighter heading my way, and I remembered the stories we had heard about some of our men getting strafed in their chutes. Talk about being a sitting duck – there’s not a more helpless feeling in the world! But as he drew closer, he banked his wings and went on by.

“I hit the ground pretty hard but wasn’t hurt. I had landed next to some trees on a small farm. A farmer and a bunch of kids came running up and started examining my silk parachute. They looked thrilled with it and started jabbering (in Italian) and pointing to a donkey under a shed. I thought they might want to make a trade, and I could get on the donkey and get the hell out of there. I don’t know to where, but it seemed like a good idea at the time.

“Then an Italian policeman arrived and put a pistol to the back of my head. I raised my hands to shoulder level – I didn’t hike my arms over my head like the bank tellers in the westerns did when told to “reach for the stars.” With my hands lowered, I might be able to spin around and grab the gun before he could shoot. I was trying to get a better look at him out of the corner of my eye when I noticed an old farmer standing 30 feet away with a shotgun leveled at me. He looked like he was reading my mind. I reached for the stars. But a truck showed up and Whitlock and I were taken into a nearby town of Potenza. I’ll never know what that mob had planned for us.

“Word of our capture had spread. As the truck brought us through the middle of town, a large crowd of people had gathered along the “parade route” and were applauding. There were also a lot of people applauding from the balconies. Somehow I got the feeling they were applauding *us* instead of our Italian captors.

“A little later, they brought in Ricks (navigator) and Waite (bombardier), who had dropped out through the nose wheel doors – an emergency exit for the two men in the nose of the plane. Ricks had seen Knox (well gunner), who had been injured. Bonham (tail gunner) and Kosch (waist gunner) had been killed in the attack. Dunajecz (waist gunner) had died when his chute didn’t open. Wilson (co-pilot) had burned to death trying to get out through the bomb bay, and Stewart (engineer) had remained on the plane all the way to the ground. We had lost five of our ten-man crew.

“Waite had been drinking some wine with one of the Italian guards and was half drunk. He had found out that the guard had lived in Texas, and was saying, “He’s okay – he’s from Texas! Waite tried to get the rest of us to have a drink with them, but none of us did.

“I was put into a small dungeon by myself that night. There was a concrete slab about a foot off the floor that I tried to sleep on, but it sloped toward the floor so much that I couldn’t relax on it without rolling off. I didn’t get any sleep at all. There was a hole in the center of the floor full of excrement, and there were brown finger marks all over the walls (without going into a lot of detail, there was no toilet paper). The stench was awful.

“Three days ago I was drinking wine with Bill Heberd in Oran. Now I was in a dungeon staring at brown finger marks. Even hauling feed didn’t look all that bad right now.

“The next day the Italians put us on trucks (except for Knox, who was taken to a hospital), and we departed – to more applause – for Bari, where we met the other downed airmen from the same raid. There were about 30 of us. The 44th had lost a total of seven planes on the Foggia

mission; two were from the 506th. The pilot of the other 506th plane – SOUTHERN COMFORT – was named Austin, and he and his surviving crewmen were there.

“The guy in Benghazi had been right – there had been a raid coming up, and they now had plenty of cots. Seven crews lost meant 70 empty cots.

“The navigator on the Austin crew, a guy named Singer, had tried to get out of going on this mission – he said that he was afraid of flying today. But they made him go anyway. He bailed out when the plane was shot down, but his chute didn’t open. Austin had lost one of his shoes getting out of the plane, so when he came across the body of the navigator he took one of the dead man’s shoes.”

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There were wounded aboard another aircraft that landed in Malta.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-24201 Bar-O, Strong	BALDY AND HIS BROOD		Landed in Malta
STRONG, WILLIAM H.	Pilot	Capt.	
DAVENPORT, LYLE S.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.	
FRETWELL, LLOYD G.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
FLAHERTY, THOMAS A.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
NELSON, CLARENCE W.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
FLEMING, LEMUEL D.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	
HAMEL, EDGAR O.	RW Gunner	T/Sgt.	
HAAS, VERNON DALE	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
	Wounded		
GERMANN, OLIVER R.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	
	Wounded		
ACKERMAN, LONNIE L.	Rear Hatch Gunner	S/Sgt.	

BALDY AND HIS BROOD was being attacking singly and in pairs by German aircraft. They made about 20 attacks. Tail turret gunner, Sgt. Germann first shot down one Me 109 which had attacked from 6 o’clock. It went into a spin and burst into flames. However, Germann was also wounded at that same time. However, he remained at his guns when the next fighter approached. Again, he fired, hit his target, and this fighter also went down in flames. Sgt. Dale Haas, waist gunner on the left waist gun, caught another Me 109 breaking off from an attack from the rear.

Then Lonnie Ackerman took over the waist position while Haas went back to the tail turret to assist Sgt. Germann. Badly wounded, Haas pulled him out of the turret, laid him on the floor, and then got into the turret himself even though he, also was wounded. Somehow he got the guns working again. Then he and Capt. Strong worked together in their defense. When Haas would see other planes attacking, he would call out their positions as they attacked and Capt. Strong could then take the appropriate evasive actions.

When they got to Malta, they landed so the wounded crewmen could be attended to at the British Hospital. Capt. Strong knew by landing there his three wounded gunners could get immediate attention. An examination of his aircraft showed many large holes caused by large caliber armor piercing shells. Dale Haas stated that he remained at the hospital for a month, and then taken to

Benghazi where he boarded another plane to be taken to other hospitals in the U.S. In all, he spent nearly a year in recuperation. However, before he departed, he was awarded seven decorations including the Silver Star.

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## 27 August 1943

### En Route Back to England from North Africa

Although there were no further losses on missions from Africa, the 44th BG suffered three more casualties when the three Bomb Groups were returning to England. Both the 93rd and the 44th BGs had loaned ground crewmen to the 389th BG as their ground echelon had not arrived in the ETO before their air echelon was called upon to bomb from northern African bases.

However, on the return from Africa, when one of the 389th's aircraft was approaching England and still over the English Channel, it was lost. This aircraft, a B-24D, was piloted by 2nd Lt. Dwaine C. Lighter of the 389th's 564th Squadron. It carried his crew and several passengers from both the 44th and 93rd bomb groups, as well as ground crewmen loaned from the 389th. This plane took off from Marrakech, French Morocco, for a non-operational flight to England. There was a crew of ten and five passengers on board.

The squadron split up opposite Portugal because of the weather. Every one of the planes proceeded individually. The B-24 piloted by Lighter was attacked by German fighters over the Channel, with one propeller being feathered after the first pass. This aircraft began losing altitude. On subsequent attacks, the rear of the plane was badly hit and then the top turret blew up. The pilot ditched as he already was too low for a bail out. Due to the rough sea, the B-24 broke in two behind the bomb bay, and quickly sank. The area was approximately 65 miles southwest of Portreath.

The pilot and one of the passengers (M/Sgt. Charles Kronberg) survived and were taken prisoner. The bodies of two of the 44th's ground crew washed up on the Brest peninsula, where they were temporarily buried. The body of Sgt. Haaf was never recovered and his name is now inscribed on the Wall of the Missing at the Normandy American Cemetery, St. Laurent, France.

#### 68th and 506th SQUADRONS

389th BG, #42-40767, Lighter

MACR 12266

*Note: This aircraft was from the 564th Squadron.*

#### 68th Squadron Ground Crewmen:

WEEMS, MANUEL H. ASN 18053822	Ground Crew KIA	Sgt.	Shawnee, Oklahoma
WOOLFE, CHESTER R. ASN 35036742	Ground Crew KIA, buried Brittany Manche (F-15-3)	Sgt.	New Lexington, Ohio

#### 506th Squadron Ground Crewman:

HAAF, HOWARD S. ASN 18081540	Ground Crew KIA, WOM Normandy	S/Sgt.	Fort Worth, Texas
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*Note: Sgt. Weems is interred in the Fairview Cemetery, Shawnee, Oklahoma. Sgt. Woolfe is interred in plot F, row 15, grave 3 of Brittany American Cemetery, St. James, (Manche) France.*

This plane was reportedly shot down near Cape Finisterre by a JU 88 piloted by Hauptmann Hans Morr.

*Note: For additional details on the downing of this plane., please see "Bloody Biscay: The History of V Gruppe/Kampfgeschwader 40" by Chris Gross.*

Mr. J.A. Hey of Hengelo, Holland compiled the following list of the full crew and passengers:

LIGHTER, DWAIN C. ASN 0-520632	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.
REINARD, DALE E.	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.
WILLIAMS, SHERWOOD V. ASN 0-729687	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt. Killed in air by 20 mm shell
SCHULTZ, LARS F. ASN 0-735932	Bombardier KIA, WOM Normandy	2/Lt.
SPEECE, CHARLES W. ASN35401619	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.
SHAVER, THOMAS L. ASN 14120849	Engineer KIA, WOM Normandy	T/Sgt.
POITRAS, ALFRED E. ASN 31152328	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.
STOUT, JOHN E. ASN 35493173	LW Gunner KIA, buried Brittany (E-18-3)	S/Sgt.
HURST, HERBERT W. ASN 31082411	Tail Turret KIA, buried Brittany (K-14-22)	S/Sgt.
MITCHELL, CLAUDE H. Jr. ASN 18036992	Nose gunner KIA, WOM Normandy	S/Sgt.
KELLER, EDWARD L. ASN 14063239	Passenger KIA, buried Brittany (L-12-19)	T/Sgt.
WEEMS, MANUEL H. ASN 18053822	Passenger KIA	Sgt. 68th BS, 44th BG
WOOLFE, CHESTER R. ASN 350336742	Passenger KIA	Sgt. 68th BS, 44th BG
HAAF, HOWARD S. ASN 18081540	Passenger KIA	S/Sgt. 506th BS, 44th BG
KRONBERG, CHARLES L. ASN 37038977	Passenger POW	M/Sgt. Hit by shell in leg

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*Note: Mr. Hey's list has been supplemented with some additional information provided by Chris Christensen.*

## Second North African Tour of Operations

1 October 1943

Airframe Plant for Messerschmitts, Wiener Neustadt, Austria

Exactly two months after Ploesti, our Group attacked this assembly plant and suffered many casualties. The official records reported that we had eight planes lost, but later it was learned that one crew had landed okay at Bari, Italy.

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23811 K, Bridges

FASCINATING WITCH

66th Squadron Crew:

BRIDGES, RICHARD W. ASN 0-794067	Pilot POW, escapee, returned	2nd Lt.	Ft. Wayne, Indiana
PHELPS, DELMAR F. ASN 0-743272	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Palo Alto, California
STIEFEL, MAX A. ASN 0-801102	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Shreveport, Louisiana
SCHULER, WILLIAM M. ASN 0-736730	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Birmingham, Alabama
DISALVIO, ROBERT L. ASN 32144464	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Rochester, New York
BRIDGES, DONALD O. ASN 33279989	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Hunker, Pennsylvania
GARRETT, KENNETH O. ASN 35431908	Waist Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (C-30-46)	S/Sgt.	Duling, West Virginia
ROSENSTEIN, JACOB ASN 31145138	Waist Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Hartford, Connecticut
SASEK, CHARLES M. ASN 13168268	Belly Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Houston, Pennsylvania
MERCER, GEORGE W. ASN 16070123	Tail Turret KIA, buried Lorraine (G-6-1)	S/Sgt.	Muscatine, Iowa

Richard W. Bridges, pilot of the first 66th Squadron plane lost this day, recalled the mission: "Our aircraft, which had been temporarily assigned to me... was identified as 811 K, and had two engines (the inboards) which were using so much oil that the Squadron Engineering officer had grounded it. I persuaded him to release it for any mission briefed not to exceed ten hours.

"As the Group started its second climb somewhere over northern Italy or Yugoslavia, my aircraft suffered a sudden and severe loss of power on the two inboard engines. From that time on, I was unable to achieve power settings of more than 18 to 20 inches from those two engines. We saw the Group climb away from us, but continued on below them and ahead, because we were flying faster, straight and level, while the others were climbing.

"Finally, the Group leveled off at the briefed bombing altitude and I was able to nurse 811 K back into its proper spot in the formation, which was #2 on the element leader of the third

element. On the bomb run, as a pilot, I was mainly concerned with maintaining formation and I did not see very much of what was going on except to realize that the flak was very heavy and accurate.

“Shortly after bombs away I just happened to look up at about 2 o’clock, high, in time to see four Me 109s diving on us. I decided later that they had already finished shooting when I saw them. In any event, I believe it was this fighter attack which knocked out the two inboard engines and started a fire in the bomb bay.

“We had two 425 gallon spare fuel tanks (Tokyo tanks) in the forward bomb bay, so this fire in the bomb bay left no alternative for us – we bailed out. All but three of the crew successfully bailed out. The tail turret gunner, Mercer, and the well gunner, Garrett, were killed in the aircraft, probably by the fighter attacks. These two men were replacements for my regular crewmen, Sgts. Rice and Abrams, who had been grounded due to illness.

“Also killed in the action was my assistant engineer, Sgt. Jacob Rosenstein. Six of us survived the bail out and five men spent the rest of the war in German prison camps. I was taken prisoner in Hungary, then moved to a camp in Belgrade. Then the Germans occupied Hungary in March 44; I escaped from that camp in May 44, spent some time with Tito’s partisans, and was finally evacuated by air to Allied Military Control at Bari, Italy, in August 1944.”

William M. Schuler, bombardier, added, “This mission had been planned five or six days prior to 1 October 43, but inclement weather had delayed it. On the 1st, we got the go ahead to fly across Yugoslavia and on up to Wiener Neustadt. Our airplane was an old combat plane with over three hundred hours on the engines, and as we started to climb across Yugoslavia we had to drop out of formation because we could not sustain the rate of climb. Due to the poor mechanical condition of the aircraft, we probably should have aborted.

“The Germans certainly were well prepared as they had moved in a lot of mobile flak guns. They had flak guns on railroad cars and there were approximately two hundred fighters in the target area. They centered their attack on the 44th BG. With the combination of the heavy flak and the large numbers of fighters, the results were disastrous. It was hard for me to determine whether the engine power losses were due to the flak or to damage caused by the fighters – or a combination of both.

“The fighters must have been the single most detrimental element as they were coming in from every clock position. We had three engines knocked out and they were making head-on passes and we were alone. They killed the gunners in the rear of the plane and scored hits on the bomb bay tanks which were temporarily installed to give us extra range for this target. In my opinion, these tanks should have been hung on temporary shackles in the event of a severe attack – and could have been dropped when the fighter attacks began.

“The fighter attacks continued for fifteen to twenty minutes and these were no young, inexperienced Luftwaffe pilots! After I bailed out and pulled the ripcord and was floating down, four fighters headed in directly for my parachute and for a moment I thought they were going to put a few shells through it, but that certainly wasn’t their intention. They were simply curious to see what I looked like as they came within about thirty yards of the parachute, waved, and turned away.”



Charles M. Sasek, the belly gunner, noted: "The plane we were to fly on this raid was red lined due to the fact that two engines on the plane had a large oil consumption and due to the distance of this raid, there should have been some doubt if this plane should have been used. This was my 20th raid and I think this may have been the 2nd raid for this crew.

"When we could not get into formation over Yugoslavia, I think Lt. William Schuler, the bombardier, was right to think this was the proper time to abort this raid. As we came into the target area, there seemed to be a large volume of flak and numerous fighters. Our tail gunner [Mercer] was dead by now and Jacob Rosenstein was on the floor. Shortly after there was a large explosion around the hatch area, blowing me back against the bomb bay bulkhead and the plane was solid flame from the waist windows to the rear of the plane. By this time, Kenneth Garrett was also dead. I was lucky to find my chute in the flames and got out of the waist window. My feet were caught inside and I was banging up against the side of the plane and don't ask me how, but Rosenstein somehow got strength enough to get me clear of the plane. He went down with the plane."

## 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-72877 A, Hobson

MACR #9022

## 66th Squadron Crew:

HOBSON, THOMAS B. Jr. ASN 0-791426	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Columbus, Ohio
CALLAHAN, ARTHUR W. ASN T-190576	Co-pilot POW	Flt Of.	Buffalo, New York
HYDE, THOMAS I. ASN 0-728214	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Orinda, California
DUNN, ROBERT F. ASN 0-670043	Bombardier KIA, buried Lorraine (A-16-50)	2nd Lt.	Los Angeles, California
CUTSHALL, EARNEST J. ASN 34174154	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Biltmore, North Carolina
TUTTLE, RICHARD E. ASN 19064422	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Sacramento, California
WILLIAMS, RICHARD H. ASN 12031124	Waist Gun KIA, buried Lorraine (G-3-24)	T/Sgt.	Buffalo, New York
KALLAL, LAWRENCE B. ASN 16051552	Waist Gun KIA, buried Lorraine (E-9-8)	S/Sgt.	Jerseyville, Illinois
POPOVICH, NICHOLAS ASN 15074648	Hatch Gun POW	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
MILLWARD, WARREN F. ASN 13092560	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

The second of the two 66th Squadron aircraft lost was that piloted by 1st Lt. Thomas B. Hobson. Lt. Hobson states, "Bad weather was a great hampering factor, with 10/10th cloud cover up to the target. A small hole in the clouds that was too small for a completely successful bomb run, was found so the bombs were dropped, but with poor results.

"Our intercom was knocked out in the first fighter attack, so we had no contact with the rear or nose section. #4 engine was hit, also in the first attack, and a fire started in the wing behind it.

The tail section was hit at this time as well I believe, since the controls became sloppy. A climb to the right began, which could not be controlled with our #4 engine feathered and #3 engine redlined (maximum power).

“During this time, we received two more attacks by fighters lined up abreast, 6 to a formation, and further hits were encountered in the nose and cockpit. Our autopilot controls also were knocked out. We stalled, followed by a spin, which could not be broken by the later feathering of engines #1 and #2.

“The spin was violent until flaps were lowered, permitting the spin to be flattened and gentle, but no recovery. However, free and easy movement was now possible, so I put on my chute and left through the bomb bay, estimating my altitude at this time to be about 5,000 feet. All bailed out except the four who were believed already dead – Millward, Kallal, Williams, and Dunn.”

“Lt. Dunn was last seen by Lt. Hyde to be in good condition, but for some unknown reason he apparently did not jump.

“Tuttle was the first man to leave the ship, followed by myself and later, Popovich. Lt. Hyde was experiencing some difficulty with his chute and finally exited through the nose wheel door, and landed about 1,000 feet from me. The surviving waist gunner (Popovich) landed in the same area, so I assume that he left immediately after the bail out signal, too.

“I landed about 50 feet off of my ship’s left wing, after seeing it hit the ground and start burning all over within a few seconds. The right tail surfaces were almost completely gone, accounting for the lack of control.

“During the several enemy attacks, our ship was continually returning fire. Guns were firing from the nose, ball, and waist positions. Hits were observed on two fighters in the first attack and another one in the second. No hits were seen in the third one.”

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-23936 J, Oakley	QUEEN ANNE		Crash-landed
66th Squadron Crew:			
OAKLEY, WARREN W. ASN 0-746893	Pilot Not seriously injured	1st. Lt.	Seattle, Washington
McKENNEY, ELWIN J. ASN 0-735424	Co-pilot Seriously wounded	1st Lt.	Sacramento, California
SNEFF, FRANK B. ASN 0-805099	Navigator Not seriously injured	2nd Lt.	
EDWARDS, ROBERT L. ASN 0-660337	Bombardier Not seriously injured	Capt.	
PISARSKI, CHESTER S. ASN 324008172	Radio Oper. Not seriously injured	T/Sgt.	Huntington, New York
BYERS, JOHN F. ASN 37152814	Eng./Top Turret Not seriously injured	T/Sgt.	Chester, South Dakota
CAROON, KENNETH C.	RW Gunner Not seriously injured	S/Sgt.	
YOUNG, JAMES F. ASN 14000162	LW Gunner Seriously wounded	S/Sgt.	Sanford, Florida

ABEYTA, ISAAC ASN 18068133	Belly Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Blanco, New Mexico
CARSON, KENNETH G. ASN 17047313	Rear Hatch Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Pine City, Minnesota

*Note: Warren Oakley was killed in action on 22 December 1943.*

A third 66th Squadron aircraft suffered casualties before it was forced to crash-land four miles from Foggia, Italy. This plane, piloted by Warren Oakley, was so badly damaged over the target area that two of these crew members abandoned ship before Lt. Oakley somehow again got the aircraft under control and almost returned to base with two other crew members seriously wounded.

1st Lt. McKenney wrote: "I was a pilot flying as co-pilot for Oakley. One of my jobs while flying the right seat was to call out fighter locations to the crew. We experienced some flak as we got near the target area, but no fighters until we were turning into the IP.

"The first ones I saw came in from straight ahead – these being four or five Me 109s, diving in trail. They leveled out, looking right at us and fired. I had my hand on my throat mike and was calling the Me 109's, and saw flame in the nose cannon of the lead bandit. He got us right through the windscreen with a 20-mm cannon shell, which exploded on impact. I caught the explosion on the left side of my head. In fact, still have a piece of that shell in my brain.

"I lost my left eye and it fractured my skull pretty badly. I was a bloody mess, but never lost consciousness. I remember the radio operator trying to wrap gauze around my head while we were catching hell from the fighters. We lost one engine, and later, on the way back, a second one.

"Oakley hit the bell to prepare to bail out shortly after we dropped our bombs over the target. I put a chest pack on and went to the catwalk in the bomb bay. Doors were still open, so I squatted down and prepared to roll out. We were still being hit by fighters and the sky below the plane was a smoky mess, crisscrossed with tracers. I took a last look up into the cockpit and saw Oakley waving me to come back!! He had decided to stick with it.

"Best news I ever had! I laid down under and along side the top turret and got sprayed with shell casings for quite a while. We managed to get out of there and flew for about two hours or so toward the Mediterranean, but when we lost that second engine we were forced to crash-land. Oakley did a great job of landing wheels down in a plowed field about four miles out of Foggia, Italy. (The British had taken this field only four days earlier.) The nose wheel, of course, dug in and we skidded on our nose, but nobody was hurt in the landing.

"I remember worrying that the top turret might break loose and fall on me, but it didn't. I was still conscious by then, but pretty groggy. They helped me out through the top hatch and I slid down the nose to the ground. An Italian in a small sedan stopped on the road by the field and the crew helped James Young and me to his car.

"We were taken to a British Field hospital set up, I believe, in a school building in Foggia. I remember laying in a stretcher on the floor in a hall with a priest bending over me. I tried to talk to him but don't think that any words came out, and the next thing that I remember was being washed to get all of that dried blood off my face, getting me ready for surgery. I had a moustache and it hurt like hell.

“I learned later that two of our crewmen bailed out, but I didn’t know them. I knew James Young and visited with him about six weeks later when we both were recuperating.”

T/Sgt. Byers destroyed two enemy aircraft, as did S/Sgt. James F. Young.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23918 O, Bronstein	MARCIA ANN	MACR #2806
67th Squadron Crew:		
BRONSTEIN, GEORGE ASN 0-523516	Pilot KIA, WOM Florence	1st Lt. New York City, New York
ERICKSON, CHARLES R. ASN 0-742572	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt. Rockfort, Illinois
COHEN, JACOB ASN 0-798753	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Malden, Massachusetts
ARCHAMBAULT, WILLIAM S. ASN 0-738953	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt. Denver, Colorado
BERKSTRESSER, GEORGE B. ASN 18104589	Engineer KIA, WOM Florence	T/Sgt. Balmorhea, Texas
CLICK, GEORGE ASN 15115001	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Lorraine (K-48-12)	T/Sgt. Logan, West Virginia
SHEPHARD, JACK P. ASN 36073284	Asst. Eng. POW	S/Sgt. Benton, Illinois
PREKOPIE, MICHAEL L. ASN 33289063	Asst. Radio KIA	S/Sgt. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
BOLSTER, HARRY T. ASN 35397686	Gunner KIA, WOM Florence	S/Sgt. Barberton, Ohio
MANSFIELD, JOE ASN 18000247	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Florence	S/Sgt. Tiburon, California

The first of the three aircraft lost by the 67th Squadron was piloted by George Bronstein. Only two men were able to parachute from this plane, The MACR does not have any information concerning the fate of this ship and crew. Apparently, there were no observers on the other aircraft as they were far too busy fighting off the multitude of attacks by the enemy aircraft.

However, recently I heard from Jacob Cohen, the navigator. He wrote: “I recall that when we approached the target we were under heavy antiaircraft and fighter attack. We managed to drop our bombs and turned to return home. I could see several fighter planes coming directly at us. It was frustrating because the machine guns in the nose of the airplane where I sat as navigator could not be turned to aim at planes coming directly at us. One of the fighter planes coming at us was so close I could see the pilot.

“Looking to my left, I could see one of our planes going down in flames. Our plane appeared to be in a slow descent. Looking up I see that most of our wing was gone. As navigator, being in the nose of the plane, I could see what was happening behind me and the condition of the rest of the plane. The pilot rang the bailout bell so we (the bombardier and I) opened the bomb bay doors. I attached my parachute and sat down in the open door and let myself slide out. The bombardier was behind me. I found out later that he had been killed.

“Coming down I could hear voices on the ground. A gust of wind caught me as I got to the ground and I hit the ground on my backside. I was soon surrounded by civilians but they did not bother me. I had been injured and could not move. An ambulance came over and took me to a German military hospital. I was the only American there, but they left me alone, and after I could walk, though with difficulty, I was sent to prison camp, Stalag Luft I in Barth, Germany, where we were liberated by Russian guerillas, mainly Mongolians, close to the end of the war.”

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-41017 L-Bar, Carpenter

MACR # not known

## 67th Squadron Crew:

CARPENTER, REGINALD L. ASN 0-665663	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Ferndale, Michigan
PRATT, CARROLL H. ASN 0-743276	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Santa Monica, California
SELASKY, CHARLES J. ASN 0-795305	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
SWENSSON, BERTHEL ASN 0-733113	Bombardier KIA, buried Ardennes (D-37-21)	1st Lt.	Los Angeles, California
PALIGA, FRANK ASN 19071407	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Stockett, Montana
IRWIN, JOHN F. ASN 37071188	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Albion, Nebraska
YEATTS, ROY J. ASN 20364881	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (C-29-13)	T/Sgt.	Farmville, Virginia
BRADY, WILLIAM R. Jr. ASN 12031414	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Hammondsport, New York
BITTNER, HARRY H. ASN 16063878	Ball Turret KIA	Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
BRYL, EDWARD B. ASN 10601101	Tail Turret KIA, buried Lorraine (E-14-22)	S/Sgt.	Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The second of the three 67th Squadron aircraft lost was that flown by 1st Lt. Reginald L. Carpenter and co-pilot 2nd Lt. Carroll H. Pratt.

S/Sgt. Frank Paliga, radio operator, wrote these pertinent facts: “I had flown 24 missions with my original crew under Lt. Abernathy, but as I had missed one mission with them. They completed their tour and I was assigned to this crew for my 25th – and last. This was a completely new and strange crew to me, so I tried to get acquainted with Irwin, Bittner, and Brady before the mission. John Irwin told me that he was worried about jumping out of a plane at high altitude in an emergency. He thought that if he pulled his ripcord as soon as he left the plane, he would die from lack of oxygen. But on the other hand, he was worried if he made a free fall for quite a distance, he would pass out from the speed of falling and would not be able to pull the ripcord and therefore die from the fall. His plan was that he would hold his hand over the chest pack and pull the ripcord before he jumped. Then, he would make a free fall and if he passed out, his hand holding the chest pack would go limp and his chute would then open and save him. Unfortunately, he would soon have an opportunity to test his plan.

“On the day of the Wiener Neustadt mission, at approximately 1130 hours, we were heading over the target with the bomb bay doors open ready to drop our bombs when we were struck from 12 o’clock, a little high, by what seemed to be 40 to 50 or even 70 fighter planes. They flew through our formation and shot down and/or crippled a large number from our bomber force. The heavy concentration of enemy planes was a bit more than our gunners could handle. The flak was also very heavy going in toward the target.

“I noticed that we had two engines on fire from my position in the top turret, and soon a third engine fire erupted about that time. The bail out bell rang and John Irwin poked me in the leg to call my attention to my chest pack that he was trying to hand me. You couldn’t wear one in the turret. So I climbed down out of the top turret and took the chest pack that Irwin handed me. At that moment the plane was in a shallow dive. While I was on the flight deck putting on my parachute, Irwin stepped down onto the catwalk in the bomb bay to get ready to jump. When I got to the catwalk, John Irwin was lying face down on the catwalk next to the burning bomb bay gasoline (auxiliary) tanks with his parachute inflated out of the bomb bay and the shroud lines between the catwalk and bomb bay tank. The open chute was pulling him tightly against the catwalk and the burning tanks. I tried to pull on him to free him and drop him out of the plane but the pressure of the inflated chute made it impossible. I was running out of oxygen and jumped, pulling my ripcord as soon as I got out of the plane.

“I never met or heard from anyone from our crew or knew who might have been killed or made it out of the plane except William Brady, our tail gunner. He and I spent the balance of the war in Stalag 17B at Krems, Austria.”

William Brady said, “Our [original] aircraft was a brand new one with ball and nose turrets – 4-Q-2. When I had been a regular crewman on Kolliner’s crew, I flew with him and Pappy Moore in SUZY Q. And so were several gunners on this ship. I saw SUZY Q get hit and go down...

“Edward D. Bryl had flown 40 to 60 missions in the RAF and had been awarded the English DFC for those many missions. He was our tail gunner and was blown completely out of that turret and into the tail section. I went back and checked him out but he was already dead. Harry Bittner, ball turret gunner, was hit and killed on the very first pass by the enemy planes and was the first to die. Yeatts, right waist gunner, was hit by bullets and was knocked over against me, and then fell to the floor. I helped him, got him back on his feet, and he then started shooting again. Later, he was again hit by flak or enemy machine gun fire and fell dead.

“Berthel Swensson, bombardier, had obtained a very small dog someplace and took him on this mission. I believe that Berthel was hit by a 20-mm and probably killed, not leaving the ship. I managed to jump out, opened my chute and then felt the explosion as the ship blew to pieces. Many parts fell around me as I went down. All in the rear of the ship were dead. Paliga was burned by the fire in the bomb bay and flight deck.”

Co-pilot Carroll Pratt wrote that, “Berthel is believed to have been seriously wounded because the navigator, Charles Selaski had blood over his flight jacket when he landed – and never saw Berthel get out. He could have ‘frozen’ and could not jump, but more probably was dead or dying at that time.

“After dropping our bombs, we were being damaged by both flak and fighters but it was the fighters that ultimately got us. Carpenter sent me back, along with Paliga, to help put out the

fires. We found the bomb bay doors partly open, the fires beyond controlling, so Paliga soon bailed out. Later, I saw Irwin lying on the catwalk and his chute trailing out the door. I got down, put my arms around him in a bearhug, and we both went out. However, the force of that dragging chute tore him from my grasp, taking some of my fingernails with him. I looked back and saw one man coming down with his chute burning and that could have been Irwin – and he did not survive.”

Somehow Carpenter survived the explosion, parachuted safely.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-72853 Q, Henderson	COUNT BRUGA		MACR #6452
67th Squadron Crew:			
HENDERSON, CHARLIE P. Jr. ASN 0-665686	Pilot KIA	Capt.	Dallas, Texas
GREYHOSKY, ALBERT ASN 0-791424	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Cokeburg, Pennsylvania
NEWBOLD, WILLIAM P. ASN 0-791619	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Langhorne, Pennsylvania
ZWICKER, HENRY R. ASN 0-728529	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt.	Pendleton, Oregon
COOPER, HAROLD E. ASN 38139230	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Denver, Colorado
DAYBERRY, JOHN J. ASN 34259156	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Shelby, North Carolina
RAMSEY, IVAN W. ASN 35255507	Well Gun KIA, Florence WOM	S/Sgt.	Wadesville, Indiana
PORTER, JAMES M. ASN 37212157	Waist Gun KIA	S/Sgt.	Formosa, Kansas
CONFER, CHARLIE H. ASN 35371803	Waist Gun KIA	S/Sgt.	Peru, Indiana
WARVICK, ISLEY B. ASN 37290897	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Britton, South Dakota

The last of the 67th aircraft lost this day was Lt. Charlie Henderson's. The MACR for this crew is rather short and incomplete, saying only that "A/C #853 was flying in the second element of the low, left section and on the bomb run was seen by his #2 wingman to drop down and slide over to the right, under attack by enemy aircraft. When last sighted in the target area, was on fire in bomb bay section."

Albert Greyhosky, co-pilot, stated that, "As we turned into the bomb run, our flight was forced out of formation by a too-great a bank by the leading squadron. We were low flight in the low formation. Just as we slid out of formation, the fighters hit us head on. Our #3 and #4 engines were knocked out at the same time. Our plane immediately fell into a steep spiral. Capt. Henderson immediately gave the bailout signal and tried to hold the ship from spinning to give the crew a chance to get out. His action resulted in four of us being able to bail out. From the time we fell into the spiral to the time the plane went into an uncontrollable spin must have been very brief because Ramsey, top turret gunner, jumped almost immediately, followed by Dayberry

(radio)– I was to have followed but the plane was already in a spin and I was knocked unconscious inside the plane. I recovered when I was already on the ground! But just before I was knocked out, I saw Henderson still holding the controls trying his best to counteract the spin and regain some control.”

William P. Newbold, navigator, adds, “We approached the IP, about 50 miles east of Vienna, at 17,000 feet. The time was about noon. As we were making our left turn at the IP, the German fighters struck. It was a nose attack and the fighters came out of the sun in formation. I can’t be sure, but I would say there were five or six of them attacking almost simultaneously. Zwicker and I got in a few bursts before they disappeared over the top of our ship.

“There was only one attack. The nose was not hit but, from the feel of it, I would say we were raked from the flight deck on back. Immediately after the attack, our ship veered sharply to the right and down. I observed the right wing and #4 engine to be on fire. Although attempted, there was no interphone communication. Zwicker and I snapped on our chest packs, and I opened the nose wheel door. During these few seconds, we had fallen 5,000 feet and the ship was entering a tight spiral to the right.

“At this point I shook hands with Zwicker and dove out. He was in good shape apparently, and was ready to follow, since the nose had not been hit. When the opportunity to observe came, after a delayed chute opening, I couldn’t tell from which ship I had jumped, as there were several B-24s and fighters going down. I doubt if our bomb load had been salvoed. I saw four or five other chutes at various altitudes and distances from me, but I had no way of telling if they were from my ship or not. From there to the ground I was busy observing the German aircraft which were flying rather close to the chutes. I did not see the fighters fire at any chute, though.

“Upon reaching the ground, I was almost immediately rounded up by civilians with dogs. The civilians were hostile, but the German soldiers who took me from them were not. I might add here that none of our crew carried side arms. Later, somewhere along the chain of interrogation, solitary confinement, hospital, then prison camp, I saw Greyhosky and Dayberry, who apparently knew no more than I concerning the fate of the remaining crew members. Greyhosky’s mind apparently went completely blank as he remembers nothing except waking up on the ground and being taken prisoner.

“It is my opinion that Capt. Henderson, if he was not hit, remained at his position in an attempt to bring the ship under control until it was too late to escape. I saw no midair explosion.”

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23779 G, Taylor	4-Q-2		Returned to base
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew missing, but returned		
TAYLOR, EDWARD F. ASN T-121030	Pilot	Flight Officer	Perry, Oklahoma
VAN ESS, RALPH E. ASN 0-735127	Co-pilot	2nd Lt. Wisconsin	Green Bay,
MURPHY, WILLIAM T. ASN 0-801142	Navigator	2nd. Lt. New York	Highland Falls,
TOLBERT, WITHERS V. ASN 0-734541	Bombardier	2nd. Lt. Texas	Lubbock,



BAGGE, WALTER B. ASN 11071279	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	Springfield, Massachusetts
BENNETT, MICHAEL J. ASN 33291490	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt. Pennsylvania	Fayette City,
DZWONKOWSKI, HENRY J. ASN 35318190	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
HUNT, ROBERT E. ASN 35470700	RW Gunner	S/Sgt. Ohio	Dayton,
MARION, SID T. ASN 34303358	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Asheboro, North Carolina
McKINNEY, DONALD W. ASN 35662959	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Dayton, Ohio

*Note: William Murphy was killed in action on 18 November 1943.*

A fourth missing crew from the 67th Squadron was that of Flight Officer Edward F. Taylor, who later was MIA on 1 December 1943. S/Sgt. Donald W. McKinney, tail gunner on this aircraft states, "We were shot up rather badly. The radio and electric systems were shot out as well as #3 engine. We landed at an Aussie fighter base outside of Bari, Italy. We were there for five or six days working on our plane – all but the radio – and then went back to Tunis.

"Most of the Group had gone back to England ahead of us. Our plane was called 4-Q-2. No one had heard from us until we returned to Shipdham. We were listed as MIA. Lt. Taylor, our pilot, flew all the way back to England with a live 20-mm unexploded shell in his chest parachute!!"

No casualties on this crew.

67th Sq., #42-72860 N, Butler	MISS EMMY LOU	Crash-landed
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No serious injuries

Lt. Richard Butler, in Miss Emmy Lou (42-72860 N), crash-landed near Catania with no serious injuries. (Catania is on the eastern coast of Sicily, and was Allied territory at the time of the crash.)

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-24009	MARGARET ANN	Landed in Bari
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68th Squadron Crew:

KESSLER, JOSEPH D.	Pilot	1st Lt.
ALTEMUS, WILLIAM B.	Co-pilot	Fl. Officer
SAFOS, VANGELO S.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
VAN DER LINDE, HAROLD	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
LOPEZ, VICTOR R. ASN 12088339	Radio Oper. Wounded	T/Sgt.
BAKER, LANNING C. ASN 35350340	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
O'LAUGHAN, WALTER E. ASN 16018752	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.

NOSAL, JOHN A. ASN 17029388	RW Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	Omaha, Nebraska
ACKLEY, GORDON E. ASN 17035928	LW Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	Mankato Minnesota
STOROVICH, ROBERT D. ASN 37332475	Tail Turret Wounded	S/Sgt.	Norfolk, Nebraska

*Note: William Altemus became a pilot. He was killed when his aircraft was shot down on 8 April 1944. Lanning Baker was part of that crew. He survived and was taken prisoner. John Nosal also went down on 8 April 1944 and was taken prisoner. He was with the Townsend crew.*

L. C. Baker recalls: “We were hit hard by both fighters and flak over the target area. Vic Lopez, who normally sat at his equipment, stepped down into the bomb bay for some reason and by doing so escaped some of the flying pieces of metal from a shell that exploded in the radio compartment. A piece of something cut the back of my right flying boot but did not touch me. I was in the top turret at the time.

“We took a direct hit of flak between the right waist gun and the tail. The waist gunners, Ackley and Nosal were both badly wounded in the legs. The tail gunner, Bob Storovich, was hit in the spinal area by flak.

“We came out of the battle with all four engines running, but #1 was smoking badly. With three wounded crewmen, no radio equipment, and the hydraulic system shot out, the pilot decided we should get down as quickly as possible.

“We landed on a grass runway on a field near Bari, Italy – not too far from the front – manned by Canadians flying Spitfires. On our approach, we cranked down the flaps and the landing gear saving what hydraulic pressure we had left for the brakes. The Canadians fired flares indicating we should not try to land on such a short strip. With our radio out, we had no way of telling them our problem, so we just proceeded to land.

“We used all the landing strip and then some. Much to the surprise of the Canadians, we did no damage to their strip, but we did tear up a wire fence and leave some deep ruts in a tomato field beyond.

“We immediately got ambulances for the wounded and they were taken to an American Field Hospital somewhere to the south of where we landed. The next day we went to the hospital to visit and determine the extent of their wounds. We were told that Gordon Ackley would have to be sent to the States for special surgery, then, no doubt, he would be discharged. I have never heard just what did happen to him. Johnny Nosal was to remain in a hospital for a couple of months. He returned to the squadron around Christmas time, 1943.

“John finally went back to flying duty and was shot down on the same day I was – 8 April 1944. However, we were not on the same plane. He and I spent the rest of the war at Stalag 17B. Bobby Storovich was paralyzed from the waist down. A small piece of flak damaged his spinal column, causing the problem. We kept in touch until he died in the mid-1950s while living in California.

“The Canadian Spitfire pilots shared what they had with us. They were housed in an old tobacco warehouse that served as a mess hall and sleeping quarters. After our evening meal, we were given stretchers with short legs on which to sleep. The one I was assigned had been occupied by a pilot that was shot down a few days before we arrived.

“Along about dark, the Canadian pilot who had the cot next to me came in carrying a couple of packages. He introduced himself while undoing one of the packages. It turned out that each parcel contained a bottle of Canadian Club. These pilots routinely got one bottle per month. He had received two because the Squadron was short several pilots and by the luck of the draw, he had an extra one. He’d had a hard day and so had I so we made the situation more pleasant by consuming most of one bottle. I had a good night’s sleep but a terrible headache the next morning.

“I returned his hospitality in part by giving him my fleece-lined flying suit along with the boots, one of which had been damaged by the flak. He was most grateful, because he said it was much better than anything he had.

“We eventually were taken to an American Air Base where we were returned to England via Air Transport Command. Whatever happened to the B-24? As far as I know, it may be still sitting there.” (Editor’s note: No such luck; it was repaired and transferred to the Mediterranean Theater of Operations.)

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23816 X, Whitaker	BLACK JACK	MACR #3312
68th Squadron Crew:		
WHITAKER, COLEMAN S. ASN 0-885920	Pilot KIA, buried Lorraine (C-17-3)	1st Lt. Petersburg, Tennessee
SCARLETT, THEODORE B. ASN 0-660006	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt. Erie, Pennsylvania
VIKERY, EUGENE P. ASN 0-794077	Navigator POW	1st Lt. Canajoharie, New York
GUILFORD, GEORGE W. ASN 14035289	Bombardier POW	T/Sgt. Hartford, Alabama
CARLSON, EDWIN L. ASN 13039285	Asst. Engineer POW	S/Sgt. McKeesport, Pennsylvania
BAUMAN, FRANCIS A. ASN 39020115	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Lorraine (C-19-71)	T/Sgt. Los Angeles, California
RICHE, WILSON A. ASN 32143092	Eng. KIA	T/Sgt. Auburn, New York
SMITH, ROBERT M. ASN 13027651	Waist Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (B-44-53)	M/Sgt. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
DAMICO, ANTHONY ASN 38197204	Waist Gunner KIA, buried Lorraine (A-22-20)	S/Sgt. Maringovin, Louisiana
REASONER, ROBERT J. ASN 34242418	Tail Turret POW, repatriated	S/Sgt. New Plymouth, Ohio

2nd Lt. Coleman S. Whitaker was the pilot of this 68th Squadron aircraft. The MACR states in part, “This aircraft was observed to be hit in the bomb bay by flak shortly after turning away from the target. It fell back, and peeled off to the left, losing altitude; and then it passed directly under another aircraft. It was burning in the bomb bay section. Three chutes came out at this time. It drifted back to the left and passed over the top of another aircraft in the formation, and then

swerved to the right and seven more parachutes were observed. The plane then turned to the right and broke into two pieces.

George Guilford, a T/Sgt. bombardier, added these comments, “We were over the target and were getting hit by flak and fighters, but I didn’t know to what extent. There were no communications between the crew members at that time. The navigator, Eugene Vickery, tapped me on my shoulder and said, ‘I’m bailing out’. I didn’t know anything about the rest of the crew at that time. A few seconds later, the plane got a direct hit from flak and went into a nose dive – and I could not bail out. Soon, the plane exploded and blew me out. I was knocked out for a few seconds and when I came to, I was falling – and opened my chute. I could see small pieces of the plane floating around...

“I was captured as soon as I hit the ground and was carried to the hospital with shrapnel wounds in my neck. At the hospital they told me they had a crew member of mine there – and it was Bob Reasoner, the tail turret gunner. He was severely burned on his face and head. Also, that was when I learned about our plane being on fire. I was hospitalized for two weeks and was then sent to Stalag 17B. I think they repatriated Reasoner a few months later. [Editor’s note: It is correct that Reasoner was repatriated.] Carlson was in the same POW camp with me.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-72857 Bar-X, Olson	STAR SPANGLED HELL		
506th Squadron Crew:			
OLSON, STANLEY F. ASN 0-730588	Pilot KIA, WOM Florence	1st Lt.	Salt Lake City, Utah
ROBERTS, EDGAR W. ASN T-357	Co-pilot POW	Flt Of.	San Jose, California
ALLEN, RONALD S. Jr. ASN 0-408633	Navigator POW	Capt.	Wagoner, Oklahoma
HANSON, CHESTER B. ASN 0-667289	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Ft. Dodge, Iowa
GOODSON, WALTER N. ASN 35255236	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Evansville, Indiana
HEARNE, ALLIE T. Jr. ASN 18059989	Radio Oper. POW	Oper.T/Sgt.	Jasper, Texas
BELL, J. R. ASN 39094739	Asst. POW	Eng. S/Sgt.	San Bernardino, California
FERKAUFF, OSCAR ASN 38157563	Armorer POW	S/Sgt.	Kansas City, Missouri
BUGYIE, STEVE F. ASN 16131104	Ball Turret Evadee, POW	S/Sgt.	Exeland, Wisconsin
McMENAMIN, VICTOR A. ASN 16037239	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	DeKalb, Illinois

1st Lt. Stanley F. Olson was the pilot of this 506th Squadron aircraft. The MACR states: “Approximately 125 to 150 enemy aircraft made vicious attacks on this formation in the target area at 1140 hours. It was hit individually by five Me 109s with nose and passing attacks, very

close. This aircraft dropped its bombs and peeled off to the right and was still pursued by five fighters. No chutes observed.”

Steve Bugyie, ball turret operator, adds, “I think that I may have been the last one to depart the airplane – and the first to hit the ground. I delayed pulling my ripcord until the last minute and this, according to Vic McMenamin, tail gunner, may have saved my life. Vic was adjusting his harness when I came out of the ball turret, and he accidentally dropped my chest pack chute down into the turret. I had to crawl back into the turret to retrieve it. Victor claims that he pulled his ripcord right away and saw the ship blow into pieces.

“Due to the flames from the burning bomb bay tank, we do not know who left the plane last. Bell and Ferkauff, the waist gunners, were already gone. It may be that reports of only eight chutes accounts for my being reported as missing in action. I was loose for four days and made about 120 kilometers due west.

“After I got to the ground, my face felt like I had a bad sunburn. The fires were so intense that there was molten aluminum stuck to my face. The molten metal and exploding aircraft may account for the many holes that I had observed in my parachute.

“I did not normally belong to Olson’s crew, as I was flying as a spare gunner for that day only. I was the regular assistant engineer with Lt. Bunce. Lt. Olson may have stayed with the airplane too long as no one ever saw or heard of him again. I think that I had 15 missions when I went down.”

Due to the flames from the burning bomb bay tank, we do not know who left the plane last. Lt. Olson may have stayed with the airplane too long as no one ever saw or heard of him again. Bell and Ferkauff, the waist gunners, were already gone.

Up in the nose of the ship, Ron Allen could see the fire in the bomb bay, and was preparing to go out through the nose wheel doors. He snapped on his chest harness chute and moved toward the doors. He recalls: ‘Suddenly I was stopped. I had forgotten to disconnect my communications and oxygen equipment. I quickly disconnected them and jumped. The fires singed my wrists, jacket and hair. As I drifted down, I looked up to see my parachute was full of holes. I didn’t know if I had pulled the ripcord too soon. The chute may have struck the ball turret guns as I went by. There was also the possibility that the turret gunner may have put a few holes in the chute since he was still in the turret and firing.”

On the flight deck, Goodson and Hearne were both burned by the fires that were raging in the bomb bay when they jumped. Goodson also had quite a chunk of skin torn loose when he hit the catwalk in the bomb bay.

Norm Kiefer remembers there were a lot of planes, both bombers and fighters that were burning in the target area. Around this time, Ron Allen and Steve Bugyie were drifting to the ground in their parachutes. Ron reports: “I jumped at 11:45 when our aircraft was at 16,500 feet (we should have been at 22,000 over the target). It was 12:00 noon when I reached the ground. I was hungry, tired, and disgusted. I had an escape kit, but it was not intended to be used in this area. It had Francs in it rather than money that was appropriate to this area. I had an apple that I had obtained the night before. That was all I had to eat for three days except for berries that I could scrounge. On that third day, I was in a thinly wooded area. As I was lying down trying to figure out what to

do to get across a road, I suddenly heard a stick pop behind me. When I turned to look, I saw an Austrian army doctor. I later learned that he was on leave from the Russian front.

“The doctor was with his family visiting a farm. The doctor could speak English just as well as I could. He sat down and we visited a while. At one point, the doctor said, ‘Well, the war is going to be over in about 18 months.’ He then went back to rejoin the others. He didn’t attempt to capture me. He told his wife about me and they discussed what to do. He brought me something to eat. He then told me that they had decided, for their own protection, to turn me in. We went to the farmhouse and they gave me some warmed milk. Having been brought up on a dairy farm, warm milk just did not appeal to me.

“One of the farm girls said something and the doctor broke out laughing. He slapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘Do you know what she said?’ I replied, ‘I have no idea.’ The doctor then told me, ‘The girl thinks you are good looking.’ There I was, unshaven and my clothing was filthy. What did she see?

“The farmer sent a boy that was about 12 years old for the local constabulary. They put me in the local jail and all the kids from around that town hooted at me. I don’t know whether or not they were making fun of me.”

Steve Bugyie continues: “When I came down, I landed in quite a large pine tree. In order to get down, I had to climb on the shroud lines and broke the top of the tree off. When I hit the ground, I am certain that I was unconscious for a short period of time. When I woke up, I hid in some evergreens. It was fairly late in the afternoon when I heard the whistles of the Germans who were out searching for me. I took off in a westerly direction heading for Switzerland. It was then that I made the rule that I would only travel at night.

“When I stopped, I found a haystack and went to sleep in it. I was startled awake when I heard a blast from an 88-mm antiaircraft gun. There apparently was a German encampment near there. It was daylight, but I went back to sleep and slept most of the day. When I tried to look out of the stack, I couldn’t see anything. It was mostly an open field in front of me.

“As soon as the sun went down, I took off again. I was loose for three nights and four days. By walking and trotting, from sundown to sunup, I was able to make 190 kilometers (about 120 miles). The next to last night I was loose, I couldn’t find any cover so I slept in a small hay field behind a tavern. It was around noontime when I heard some rustling in the grass next to me. When I looked, I saw a water spaniel smelling me. About 50 yards away was a German hunter, an old fellow with a shotgun. I just lay there and the hunter walked on. When night fell, I took off again.

“I was weak from dysentery as well as the lack of food and water. It was on the fourth day when I approached some people. I was hoping that I could get some help. I spoke to them in German. After a brief conversation, they spoke to one of the people in Hungarian, or some other language. I thought they were sending for food. Instead, they went to bring the Home Guard. The next thing I knew, I was surrounded. I was taken back to Wiener Neustadt. On the following day, Lt. Matson, a pilot from the 389th and I were transported to Dulag Luft.”

## Operations from Shipdham

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4 October 1943

### Diversion to Assist B-17 Attack, Frankfurt, Germany

The 8th Air Force operations order of 4 October called for the 392nd to lead two formations of eighteen airplanes each across the North Sea, with feigning attacks toward Wilhelmshaven and toward Emden. The purpose was to draw German fighters from the B-17 formations on their big attack on the factory complexes of Frankfurt, Germany. If shipping convoys were sighted, we were to bomb them. The 392nd flew alone except for one flight consisting of six 44th and three 93rd aircraft. Most of their ships and crews were still returning from action in North Africa.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-72873, Stamos	RAGGEDY ANN II		MACR #5149
67th Squadron Crew:			
STAMOS, ROBERT G. ASN 0-730646	Pilot Returned to duty	1st Lt.	Danville, Illinois
METTS, HOWARD W. ASN T-201	Co-pilot Returned to duty	Flight Officer	Hampton, Virginia
MUST, JOHN A. ASN 0-801384	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Bronx, New York
CAMPBELL, DONALD G. ASN 0-734422	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Brookville, Massachusetts
AUTRY, HERMAN J. ASN 34266826	Radio Oper. Returned to duty	Sgt.	Athens, Georgia
KOWALSKI, ANDREW A. ASN 33168900	Eng./Top Turret Returned to duty	Sgt.	Reading, Pennsylvania
O'BLACK, JAMES A.	Ball Turret Wounded, shot through cheek	Sgt.	Zelienople, Pennsylvania
WOJCIK, EDWARD S. ASN 39094162	RW Gunner Returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Portland, Oregon
MILLERBIS, CALVIN A. ASN 39103451	LW Gunner Returned to duty	Sgt.	Arcata, California
MORRIS, WILLIAM F. ASN 12138123	Tail Turret Returned to duty	S/Sgt.	Canandaigua, New York

*Note: Lt. Robert G. Stamos, pilot, was later KIA (11 April 1944) while flying as co-pilot for Lt. John D. Money.*

On this diversion, the aircraft piloted by Lt. Stamos, was attacked head-on by several single-engine enemy aircraft and was severely damaged. The two pilots lost control and the plane went into a spin. The two officers in the nose of this ship, Lts. Must and Campbell, followed bail out orders from Lt. Stamos.

However, Lt. Stamos and co-pilot Howard Metts were able to regain control again at 5,000 feet by utilizing the automatic pilot system. Fortunately, other members did not bail out as some were

too busy giving aid to a wounded gunner (James O'Black), while others were trying to assist the pilot and co-pilot with their parachutes. Both the navigator and bombardier drowned at sea and their bodies were never recovered.

Sgt. Autry recalled, "Most of our original crew with Lt. Stamos was on this raid. Our co-pilot was F/O Howard Metts...I am sure that he saved my life! After Lt. Stamos pushed the bail-out button, F/O Metts stayed with the controls until he could activate the auto-pilot...Metts [fought] with those controls until he got the plane out of the spin.

"This was the first mission for our crew since we returned from North Africa...we didn't make that Ploesti mission, and this is why. After leaving Lands End, England on the flight down, we set down in Lisbon, Portugal. We were interned in Lisbon for about a month until we were able to get a flight out on a regular British Airline."

This was the first and only mission for James O'Black. Though shot through his cheek, James survived, and returned to ground support work.

Like the other returning crewmembers, Bill Morris was assigned to other crews. He was shot down on the 1 December 1943 raid on Solingen, Germany and was taken prisoner.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-40989, Johnston		MACR #940
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
JOHNSTON, FREDERICK V. ASN 0-675349	Pilot 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Passaic, New Jersey
DUDRICH, JOHN ASN 0-684699	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Bridgeport, Connecticut
LARSEN, GEORGE N. (67th Sq/) ASN 0-744855	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Deep River, Iowa
FREDRICKS, ADRIAN E. ASN 0-734663	Bombardier 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sheboygan, Wisconsin
GREEN, DONALD ASN 35462147	Engineer S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Cincinnati, Ohio
ANDRIS, EUGENE E. ASN 16028759	Radio Oper. S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Margraten	Marietta, Ohio
IDLET, PHILLIP D. ASN 17015167	Belly Gun Sgt. KIA, WOM Margraten	St. Joseph, Missouri
PEST, DAVID ASN 14130256	RW Gunner Sgt. KIA, WOM Margraten	Hattiesburg, Mississippi
SHORT, EMERSON D. ASN 35339045	LW Gunner Sgt. KIA, WOM Margraten	Archbold, Ohio
FUNKHOUSER, EUGENE H. ASN 35495933	Tail Turret S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Ft. Morgan, Colorado

*Note: Larsen was with the 67th Squadron*

Diversions were usually considered "milk runs", but this turned out to be anything but that when this formation succeeded in attracting 30 to 50 single-engine enemy aircraft. These "yellow noses" attacked and one of these bandits slashed through the formation. It was hit by the B-24



gunners, which knocked off its wing and it lost control and slammed into the aircraft piloted by Lt. F. V. Johnston. The collision sent both planes down into the sea. There were no survivors from this 506th Squadron crew.

For additional information concerning this mission, refer to the December 1975 issue of the Second Air Division Association Journal, pages 6-7. The article is entitled "We Remember: The Great Diversion Mission" and was written by Myron H. Kielman and Harrison S. Cassell, Jr. of the 392nd Bomb Group. The authors note: "Our low squadron was made up of both the 44th and the 93rd Groups...the fighters worked them over good because they didn't have nose turrets." The 392nd had been operational for about a month and was equipped with new B-24H models.

## 11 October 1943

### Oudna #2, Libya, North Africa

Ten days after the 1 October mission to Wiener Neustadt, we suffered one more casualty due, in part, to that raid. 66th Squadron aircraft #42-40764 was badly damaged on 1 October 43, and was forced to make an emergency landing at Palermo, Italy with one engine out and the wing almost burned through.

The co-pilot, James Kahl, recalls: "I was Deputy Command Pilot on the mission – Lt. Col. Posey was in the lead ship. Just before the target area, he asked us to take over – something about the bombsight. Shortly after, we were hit by fighters and our #1 was set on fire. After bombing, we abandoned the formation to prepare for whatever. Even though the fire kept burning, we were able to land at Palermo, Sicily – a day after the 7th Army had taken it. On landing, there was a circle of red, burnt metal almost the width of the wing – why that rascal didn't blow, I don't know."

The crew spent several days patching up their ship in order to return to base, and when they finally arrived, they found that most of the 44th Bomb Group had returned to England. As their radio was inoperative, they could not call the base to advise their position.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-40764 M-Bar, Irby	HELEN B. HAPPY		Emergency landing
66th Squadron Crewman:			
IRBY, SHELBY L.	Pilot	1st Lt.	Watson, Arkansas
KAHL, JAMES W.	Co-pilot	Capt.	Winona, Minnesota
STERNBERGER, NATHAN L.	Navigator	Flight Officer	Springfield, Ohio
SAENGER, LESTER E. ASN 0-734982	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
PARYLAK, JOSEPH	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Providence, Rhode Island
THOMPSON, LESLIE E.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	Meridian, Mississippi

EVANS, LUCIUS R.	Belly Gunner	T/Sgt.	Greenville, South Carolina
RICKEY, JAMES W.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Albany, Ohio
COX, JOHN F.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Antioch, California
BRITT, WILLIAM B.	Observer	2nd Lt.	
RENDALL, WILLIAM A.	Passenger	2nd Lt.	Buffalo, New York

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*Note: This listing shows eleven, but there were others on board who cannot be identified. After the emergency landing, the plane was salvaged.*

Norman Ross, who was the navigator on the original Irby crew, noted that the name “Helen B. Happy” was picked for John Cox’s wife, Helen. Ross recalled, “It was a play on words as we were quite sure where we were going, but we would be happy about it. John was a former California state trooper and a heck of a good Armor Gunner.”

On 11 October, Lt. Irby and his crew of 10, along with three other men, took off from Libya bound for Marrakech, Morocco, the first leg of the trip back to England. But shortly after take off and at about 600 feet altitude, all power was lost. The pilots put the plane into a glide to attempt a wheels-up crash-landing. But just when the plane lost power, Lt. Saenger decided to bail out.

Lt. William Rendall, navigator, adds, “We had climbed just enough for Saenger and I to go down to the nose compartment. When we lost power, Saenger put on his chest pack and opened the nose wheel door. I put my hand on his shoulder and when he looked at me, I shook my head – but he had ditched once and did not intend to crash-land. He went out over a slight valley where he probably had his best chance. I climbed up on the navigator’s table and braced myself to the left side because I could see a row of trees coming up. We clipped the tops of the trees and Irby put her down tail low on the first six feet of plowed land – wheels up, no power.

“She plowed a 150 yard furrow through the field, and when I put my feet down, I was standing on bare ground with my head in the astro dome in a crouched position. I was trying to loosen the wing nuts of the astro dome when Irby kicked it in so I could get out. We used gun barrels to pry out the waist windows to get the people out of the rear, many of whom were badly cut up.

“A French Lieutenant raced over in a Jeep and told me that he had seen the chute come out. I jumped into the Jeep and the two of us went back to where Saenger’s body was. Obviously, his back was broken, but I still feel that he almost made it – just a few more feet would have done it. I remember that I sat down in that desert and cried...”

Of the Helen B. Happy crash landing Norman Ross notes: “This was probably the only take off that I ever missed with the crew...All of the crew came back after this crash except for Les Saenger. Of course, he should have rode the ship down, but it was not his way. He was always the most nervous one of the crew and I can remember him saying that if anything went wrong with the aircraft, he was going to get out. The rest of us all returned to Shipdham for many more missions over Germany, but not with the Helen B. Happy...”

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## 5 November 1943

### Munster, Germany

The specific target here was the railroad junction that supplied traffic and war materiel through the Ruhr Valley, both by rail and canal. The flak in this area lived up to its reputation, ranging from heavy, accurate, intense to moderate. Flak Alley it was! Many were wounded. The target was hit visually.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-29148, Armstrong	Returned to base
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#### 66th Squadron Crew (partial):

DENT, FREDERICK R.	Command Pilot	Colonel
ARMSTRONG, CHARLES L.	Pilot	Lt.

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Although not officially recorded on this mission, Colonel Dent was seriously wounded in his lower back area, hospitalized, and later returned to the U.S. to recover. This was his last mission with the 44th. S/Sgt. Arthur A. Hand, the left waist gunner, wrote, “ My recollection is either twelve or maybe twenty-four yellow-nose FW 190s. However I notice the interrogation report shows only nine. They came in train straight at us, but did not fire until they were lined up with the box beside us. I started firing when the first one got in range and did not stop until the last one was past. If I hit anything, it never went down. They also made a pass from the right side at the same time as the left side. I do remember when they started their attack Col. Dent said, ‘Navigator, this is Col. Dent, what is the fastest way out of here?’ ”

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#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7551, Williams	Returned to base
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#### 68th Squadron Crew (partial):

WILLIAMS, SAM D. ASN 0-524481	Pilot	2nd Lt.
McDONALD, JAMES R. ASN 0-738994	Bombardier Wounded	2nd Lt.

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Few details are available on this incident, however Lt. James McDonald, a bombardier on Lt. Williams’ aircraft, was injured by flak on this mission. He returned to duty in February.

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One 506th Squadron aircraft was badly damaged, with nine of the ten men receiving wounds.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-7535 Bar-U, Parker	PEEPSIGHT	Crash-landed
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#### 506th Squadron Crew:

PARKER, RICHARD A. ASN 0-734262	Pilot Slight Wound	1st Lt.	Pacific Palisades, California
SIMONS, DAVID R. ASN 0-805692	Co-pilot Wounded	1st Lt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

RUTHERFORD, EDWARD L. ASN 0-738790	Navigator Wounded	1st Lt.	
COFFEE, JOHN E. ASN 0-678410	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
NYHOFF, IVAN G. ASN 37334756	Engineer Wounded	T/Sgt.	Cawker City, Kansas
LIECK, DAVID L. ASN 38144739	Radio Oper. Wounded	T/Sgt.	Pleasanton, Texas
WHITLOCK, DOY V. ASN 17055472	Waist Gun. Wounded	S/Sgt.	Lander, Wyoming
COVONE, JOSEPH T. ASN 33325351	Waist Gun. Wounded	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
HARDWICK, MACK Jr. ASN 34331191	Ball Turret Wounded	S/Sgt.	Halesburg, Alabama
SORROW, CLAUDE ASN 34261117	Tail Turret Wounded	S/Sgt.	Commerce, Georgia

This emergency landing is not recorded in the 44th BG casualty file, but a photo and text was found in “Jaws Over Europe” (and “44th BG Libs. Over Europe”): “On a mission to bomb Munster, Germany, PEEPSIGHT, aircraft #535, piloted by Lt. R. A. Parker took off at 1015 hours flying number 9 position in the second squadron, led by Lt. Richard D. Butler. The Group leader was Lt. Shelby L. Irby, with Lt. Col. Dexter L. Hodge as Command Pilot.

“Approaching the initial point (IP) at 1340 hours, the formation was engaged by approximately twenty enemy aircraft, but despite continuous attacks, a good bomb-run was made and the target was bombed at 1352. Attacks were resumed as the formation made the turn away from the flak-covered target area and PEEPSIGHT received direct hits as the result of a vicious attack at approximately 1432 hours, which was half way from the target to the coast. Hits were sustained in the right wing, #4 engine, right and left waist sections, top and tail turrets. Control cables and the instrument panel were damaged and the oxygen system was knocked out.

“The ship had to fall out of formation and drop to a lower altitude because of the wounded and lack of oxygen. The wounded were Lt. D.R. Simons, co-pilot; Lt. E.L. Rutherford, navigator; T/Sgts. D.L. Lieck, radio operator; Sgts. Covone, Hardwick, and Sorrow, gunners. Lt. Parker, too, was slightly wounded, but not too seriously to bring the battered bomber back to base and land it with a flat tire.” The photos shows a man being removed from PEEPSIGHT on a stretcher, as well as holes in the fuselage, etc.

Lt. Parker had his radio wire shot out where it made contact with the metal on the back of the pilot’s seat. One round had hit his head, cerebellum area. Parker said that the tail gunner, Sgt. Sorrow, was hit in the buttocks by a bullet, but hardly noticed the pain due to the uncomfortable position in the small turret. “My radio man, Lieck, took a round through his left elbow while he was resting that arm on the back of my seat – a few inches from my neck. #4 engine was shot out, and #4 throttle cable was cut at the quadrant (in the cockpit). Had it cut another one, I’d never have made it back. Simons kicked his seat back to clear the controls and I was cut on the neck from flying glass and thought my throat had been cut. I told myself, ‘What the hell do I do now?’ But I escaped with only minor cuts and burns. I had too many wounded to consider bailing them out, so just stuck with it.

“Two P-38s picked us up and escorted us back across the Channel. Our right main gear tire was flat so we ran off the runway and wound up stuck in the mud. My C.O. gave me hell for that. I was very tired, but didn’t have time to get scared.”

Lt. Parker thought that the aircraft had been too badly damaged to be repaired, but records show that it completed the war. The two men with the most serious wounds were taken to a hospital near London (the 231st) for treatment. When they asked for food they were told that there was no food available, which angered the wounded men. Their story was published in Stars & Stripes, with pictures of Cavone and Nyhoff in the hospital. While there, they were visited by the Queen, who presented them with their Purple Heart medals.

Lt. Parker and crew flew the 31 Dec 43 mission and then were transferred to the 93rd BG to serve as a PFF (Pathfinder) lead crew. They completed their tour with a total of 31 missions.

Co-pilot Lt. Simons said that, “I got my Purple Heart the hard way. The exploding 20-mm shell hit part of the radio equipment and sent a shower of metal shards into the back of my head. The medics never got all of them out so I still get an occasional piece coming to the surface. When I was hit, I thought it was fatal so immediately pushed my seat back so that I wouldn’t fall against the wheel and interfere with Lt. Parker’s control of the ship.

“The shells also knocked all of our oxygen system out, so we were in a bad way at that altitude. The engineer [Nyhoff] realized this and was coming to our aid with a walk-around bottle when he was hit by another shell from the next attacking aircraft. He was knocked to the floor of the flight deck and the bottle was set on fire. He bravely picked up the bottle and threw it into the bomb bay, no doubt saving all our lives. Broken pieces of plexiglass and shrapnel had showered us all. Both our waist gunners [Whitlock and Covone] were wounded as well.” This is obvious when the photos of PEEPSIGHT are examined – one hole in front of the waist window on the left and two on the right behind the right waist window, one of them huge.

## 13 November 1943

### Bremen, Germany

The second largest port in Germany was the objective for this mission, with its extensive port facilities and large manufacturing and storage facilities as well as an important rail transport center. Adverse weather conditions, severe cold, and enemy fighters which rose to give fierce engagements to our formation, made this raid a most difficult one. About 50 enemy aircraft made their attacks on the bombers from all directions, using the dense contrails to hide their approach. Due to these attacks, the Group suffered two aircraft lost as well as two other men KIA in returning aircraft; and another ship crash-landed. Three men were seriously wounded, none of them were identified on the casualty listing, are now identified in Squadron papers and shown later in this section.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-40973 D, Almlie	BATTLEAXE	MACR #1375
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire Crew KIA	
ALMLIE, HARLAN C. ASN 0-676714	Pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	1st Lt. Bricelyn, Minnesota

HACKER, WILLIAM E. ASN 0-531342	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt.	Roslindale, Massachusetts
SCHEXNAYDER, JOSEPH L. ASN 0-684807	Navigator KIA, WOM Margraten	2nd Lt.	Garyville, Louisiana
SEILER, WALTER J. ASN 0-678476	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
DAVIS, DONALD A. ASN 36343869	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Rockford, Illinois
PERMAR, EVERETT E. ASN 35497759	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Margraten	T/Sgt.	Aurora, Indiana
IORGOV, GEORGE W. ASN 18025712	Belly Gun KIA, buried Margraten (B-1-3)	S/Sgt.	Donna, Texas
TOWNING, JOHN L. ASN 39542241	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Bell, California
LUNDSTROM, JOHN V. ASN 35372611	LW Gunner KIA, buried Margraten (A-8-30)	S/Sgt.	Terra Haute, Indiana
ROBINSON, FREDERICK A. ASN 12171724	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt.	Albany, New York

2nd Lt. Harlan C. Almlie was the pilot of this 66th Squadron aircraft. The Squadron reported that at the IP, slight inaccurate flak was encountered at 24,000 feet; bombs were away at 1147 hours. Over the target, flak was slight and inaccurate and fighter opposition slackened due to support of P-38s. From the target out to the coast, flak again was inaccurate, spasmodic.

BATTLEAXE was last seen flying in a diamond formation with the Group to within 20 minutes from the English coast, one engine was smoking heavily, and the aircraft was gliding down under control. Air-Sea Rescue Service was notified as soon as crews were interrogated, but there were no eyewitnesses to a ditching or crash of this craft. It seems most likely that they ditched, as later bodies of two crew members were found and buried at Margraten, Netherlands. Five are listed on the Wall of the Missing. Three others were recovered and are buried in the United States.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7650 J-Bar, Hansen	MACR #1376		
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire Crew POW		
HANSEN, LEROY M. ASN 0-733647	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Los Angeles, California
HANSON, JOHN D. ASN 0-740800	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Warroad, Minnesota
PECKA, WILBUR J. ASN 0-795296	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Cicero, Illinois
TOPPING, WILLIAM H. ASN 0-668836	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Clifton Forge, Virginia
SPEARMAN, CHARLES C. ASN 14104095	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Cedartown, Georgia
SCHATTE, WILBUR C. ASN 36074941	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	St. Louis, Missouri

HENDERSON, DAN S. ASN 34125526	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Savannah, Georgia
NORTON, JAMES W. ASN 13048793	Waist Gun POW	S/Sgt.	Kittanning, Pennsylvania
SUZDAK, JOSEPH J. ASN 32490243	Waist Gun POW	S/Sgt.	Massons, New York
BAKER, BOYD B. ASN 38136365	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Ozona, Texas

*Note: Jan J. van der Veer, a noted Friesland Air War author and historian, wrote and published a book covering this crew, from their training days to completion of this event. It is titled, "De Dag Van De Liberator" printed in Dutch, and not available in English except as a manuscript.*

67th Squadron's 1st Lt. Leroy M. Hansen and crew, were flying on their first combat mission even though they were an experienced crew, having been utilized for crew training at Shipdham. The Hansen crew arrived in the 67th shortly before the temporary duty move to Africa. The original bombardier was Lt. Charles L. Rouser (who had gone down on the 17 July 1943 mission in Lt. C.S. Griffin's LADY FIFINILLA). He was replaced by William Topping who arrived from the Anti-Sub group when patrolling was turned over to the Navy in England.

On the route in to the target, the formation was attacked by nearly every type of fighter the Germans had. Finally, on one more pass, the #4 engine was hit and started smoking, and the prop had to be feathered. The damage was inflicted by an Me 210 using rockets. But they maintained formation on three engines, bombed, and were turning for home when a flak burst knocked #4 engine completely out and #2 was damaged.

The pilots managed to nurse their plane back to the Dutch coast on one good engine and two sick ones. But just after getting out over the sea, one of the sick engines gave out so Lt. Hansen turned back, knowing they could not reach England now, and ditching so far from England probably would be fatal to all. When attempting to lower their landing gear for a crash-landing it was found to be damaged, only one main gear came down, and then could not be retracted. Too low now for the men to parachute, Lt. Hansen saw a canal and headed for it, dipped down to it and successfully tore off this gear on the far bank, lifted the nose again just enough to allow a miraculous, safe belly landing. No one was seriously injured in the aircraft!

A German flak battery was near by, so the Frisian citizens could not attempt to hide the crew, and they were all captured almost immediately to become Prisoners Of War.

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Aircraft #41-29168, piloted by 1st Lt. Robert Bickerstaff, crash-landed upon return to England.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-29168 F, Bickerstaff

Crash-landed

#### 66th Squadron Crew:

BICKERSTAFF, ROBERT G.	Pilot	1st Lt.
SUMMERS, JAMES C.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.
JOPE, F. L.	Navigator Seriously injured	1st Lt.

HOLTZMAN, JACK	Bombardier	1st Lt.
NOWAK, ANDREW B.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
ELKIN, ALTON M.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
BALCA, MICHAEL J.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.
BARNETT, THOMAS J.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
CUNNINGHAM, CHARLES E.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
BETHKE, ELMER J.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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*Note: Nowak, Elkin, Balca, and Bethke all were killed in action on 20 February 1944.*

Co-pilot James C. Summers wrote the following account: "My crew and I were assigned to the 66th Squadron of the 44th DC; [during September] while the bulk of this group was in Africa. This flight to Bremen was my first visit to enemy territory. It was policy at that time for all first-pilots to fly as Co-pilot with another crew for their first mission to 'see how it should be done'.

"I don't remember our exact position in the formation, but we were fairly high on the right side of the group. We were carrying a load of incendiary bombs. The outbound flight was over the North Sea, approaching Bremen from the North. I saw my first real live flak off in the distance as we passed Heligoland. (One would think there was something there that the Germans wanted us to stay away from.) Shortly thereafter I saw my first real, live enemy fighters. Unfortunately we did not see any of the friendly escort that had been scheduled.

"I watched an FW 190 fly along parallel to our formation, then turn toward us with little puffs of smoke trailing behind him. Our left waist gunner called to say that a B-24 was diving out of formation. No one saw any parachutes.

"I spotted another FW 190 flying along parallel to our formation, I called him out and the top gunner said that he was too far away, out of range at this time. I said, "Why don't you lob a few shots at him anyway, just to let him know we are watching him". He did. The FW 190 made an abrupt turn and disappeared behind us. I am sure we didn't shoot him down, but at least we scared him. No doubt he was planning to attack our plane.

"I saw no more fighters up close, but many in the distance. As we came over land, we were surrounded by little puffs of smoke (flak). Lt. Bickerstaff said that these puffs can't hurt you unless they are close enough to be heard. I was relieved until I heard several of them, and our #3 engine lost oil pressure. Lt. Bickerstaff ordered its propeller feathered and we continued on the bomb run.

"After 'bombs away,' Lt. Bickerstaff requested a damage report. No one had been injured, but fuel was streaming off the trailing edge of each wing. And, of course, #3 engine had been shut down. Lt. Bickerstaff elected to leave the formation to conserve what fuel we had while flying on three engines. We started a slow descent, hoping to reach England before running out of altitude.



“We discussed what throttle setting would most likely be successful, not really knowing how bad the fuel leaks were. The engineer made frequent checks of the fuel level in the standpipes (the B-24 did not have fuel quantity gauges), knowing that their accuracy was questionable even when the airplane was level.

“Almost immediately we were alone in the sky. Everyone kept a vigilant watch for enemy aircraft, but saw none. Our return route to England was over the western part of Germany, then Holland to the English Channel. Our navigator, Lt. Jope, kept careful track of our position, avoiding anyplace that might have a flak gun.

“After what seemed like an eternity, we arrived over the English Channel without further incident. Lt. Bickerstaff directed the crew to throw overboard everything that was loose. We in the cockpit did not know it at the time, but the crew dumped all of the ammunition overboard, but for some unknown reason, they saved the ammo boxes.

“The engineer reported that the fuel standpipes indicated empty, but somehow three engines were still running. Lt. Bickerstaff directed the crew to review their ditching positions and procedures. He ordered the bombardier and the navigator out of the nose compartment. Our navigator, Lt. Jope, requested permission to remain in the nose until the last minute, hoping possibly to guide us to an airport. This was approved.

“We reached land with maybe a thousand feet of altitude but we still had three engines running. They evidently were running on “crossfeed,” because they all quit at the same time. I ordered everyone to take ditching positions and evacuate the nose. “We are about to land.” Lt. Bickerstaff requested the extension of “1/2 flaps”. I selected them but they did not extend. (The only engine driven hydraulic pump on a B-24 is on engine #3. The electric pump had limited capability.) We had previously agreed that we would land with the landing gear retracted unless we reached an airport.

“Lt. Bickerstaff made a perfect “no flap” approach to an open field of Brussels sprouts. As we crossed the field boundary, the right wing struck a tree, which caused the airplane to yaw to the right. We touched down sliding somewhat to the left. I remember #4 engine tore loose and was bounding along beside us. The airplane slid to a stop sitting nearly perpendicular to our approach path. The #4 engine crashed into my side window and bounced over the top of the airplane. The fuselage had been ground off until the center section of the wing was resting on the ground. (You remember that this was a high wing airplane.) The nose section was entirely gone. I stepped out of my side window, which now was missing, directly onto the ground.

“Lt. Bickerstaff assembled the crew and found Lt. Jope was missing. We could hear him calling from inside the wreckage. Lt. Bickerstaff headed for the nearest farmhouse while the rest of us attempted to rescue Lt. Jope. He was trapped beneath the center section of the wing. This was as far as he got in vacating the nose section.

“Several of the crewmembers had been injured, in the landing, primarily from empty ammo boxes flying around the airplane. Those of us who were able started digging a tunnel in the soft ground beneath the wing, using scraps of metal shed from the airplane during the landing. We finally reached Lt. Jope, but could not get him free from the tangle of wreckage. He appeared to have at least a broken leg and was in considerable pain. Someone found the first aid kit and gave him a shot of morphine.

“After another eternity, an English mobile crane came down the road. That was able to pick up the entire airplane and get Lt. Joep free.

“I was given a week off at a rest camp while my crew flew missions with other pilots. When I returned, they all requested assignment with me except for my Bombardier, Lt. Nielson, and my navigator, Lt. Marcoulier. They both insisted that they were not superstitious, but they did not want to tempt fate. Lt. Nielson was killed a few days later in a midair collision over England, and Lt. Marcoulier was killed in an airplane shot down over France.

“The rest of my crew stayed with me. We were all transferred to Italy several months later in a crew exchange program, and eventually ended up in B-17s. Everyone received credit for at least 50 missions, and no one was even scratched while they were with me.”

The following information comes from the mission interrogation: “Sgt. Elkin, engineer, released bombs from bomb bay manually at 25,000 feet without a parachute. Six of the bombs were knocked out over the target; the other six were jettisoned in the North Sea below oxygen level. Bomb bay doors would not close (#3 engine out).”

The mission interrogation also contained a description of the crash-landing: “#3 engine was feathered and #1 was running away. When the fuel pressure would come up, the #4 engine would function satisfactorily. At other times, it would windmill. Then #4 ceased to function and #2 was the only engine operative. The hydraulic system was out, which made it impossible for them to put down the landing gear, and it was decided to crash land in a field near the town of Cromer. The co-pilot signaled the crew to stand by for a crash landing. At approximately the same time they hit, the switches were out. The ship skidded through a field, across a road, and over a ditch which pulled the #4 engine from its mounting. It continued skidding to the right and the right wing caught a tree, pulling the ship to a stop after a skid of from 90 to 100 yards. During the landing, it is unknown whether it was the aircraft or a piece of it, which hit a young girl returning on a bicycle. At the initial point of impact, where the ship hit the ground, the earth was not torn at all. The right and left waist gunners and tail gunner were behind the bulkhead between the ball turret. Lt. Joep was standing by the put-put; all others were on the flight deck. All the crew but Lt. Joep climbed out, suffering from severe shock, Sgt. Cunningham with internal injuries, Lt. Bickerstaff with cuts and bruises, and Lt. Joep with a broken leg. Lt. Joep was entirely cool and calm, and instructed the crew in the best method of extricating him. Sgt. Elkin gave him morphine to ease his pain and Lt. Joep passed out. An RAF unit came out and immediately took over, and worked for four hours to extricate Lt. Joep, who was conscious for about an hour. They dug a tunnel three feet deep from the trailing edge of the right wing up to the flight deck.

*Note: No record can be found of a killed or injured civilian, so it is not clear what happened to the bicyclist mentioned in this account.*

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Three men were seriously wounded in Lt. A. R. Anderson's aircraft #42-7551 Y.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7551 Y, Anderson

Returned to base

#### 68th Squadron Crew:

ANDERSON, ARTHUR R.

Pilot

2nd Lt.

BARTOL, STOCKTON R.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
BARKER, WILLIAM H.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
O'MALLEY, CHARLES H.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
CAPIZZI, THOMAS F.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
CASKEY, JAMES W. Jr.	Eng./Top Gunner	T/Sgt.	
ALBRIGHT, LLOYD V. ASN 35360530	RW Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	Muncie, Indiana
MOORE, WARREN E. ASN 36406564	LW Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
SCOTT, JOHN P. ASN 14139690	Belly Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	Rome, Georgia
KOPKO, EDWARD E.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

*Note: Two men from this crew were killed in action later in the war: Stockton Bartol (8 April 1944) and Thomas Capizzi (21 January 1944).*

This aircraft sustained extensive battle damage, returning with one engine running normally and landed with a flat tire on one main landing gear. (This same plane crashed and burned on 13 January 1944.)

Albright, Moore, and Scott were wounded at about the same time as the plane was damaged and still under attack. These three men remained at their guns, refusing any sort of first aid, in order to call out the fighter attacks and helping all of the men defend their ship better.

Lt. Anderson did a remarkable job of landing their plane successfully with no further damaged to the plane or injuries to his crewmen. The aircraft had to be sent to the 3rd S.A.D. (Strategic Air Depot) for repairs.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-7647, Hart

Crash-landed

506th Squadron crew:

HART, WILLIAM H.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
KNIGHT, EARL B.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
HOREY, JOHN J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
COURTAWAY, ROBERT M.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
STAMBAUGH, JACOB F.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
PROCYSZYN, WALTER W.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.

OVERLY, RUSSELL E.	Belly Gunner	Sgt.	
STRAIT, RALPH E.	RW Gunner Seriously wounded	S/Sgt.	
HURST, CLIFFORD C. Jr.	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Youngstown, Ohio
OLSEN, GEORGE E.	Tail Turret KIA, buried Cambridge (B-5-36)	Sgt.	East Englewood, New Jersey

*Note: Ralph Strait was killed in action on 2 February 1944.*

On this same mission of 13 November, the Group suffered two additional men KIA on a 506th Squadron aircraft that was forced to crash-land when returning to England.

Upon return from this raid, Lt. W.H. Hart, in A/C #647, circled the field and then crashed in some trees near the base. Killed were young George Olsen and Clifford Hurst. Ralph Strait was so badly wounded that he was not expected to live through the night, but he did, and ultimately returned to duty. All men with blood type AB were asked to report to the hospital due to the needs of these men. The pilot and other surviving crewmembers all had been injured or wounded prior to the crash. Only the two men killed had not been wounded by enemy action.

## 18 November 1943

### Kjeller Airfield, Oslo, Norway

The primary target was the Motor Works at this airfield near Oslo, which was bombed exceptionally well, with some aircraft bombing from as low as 5,000 feet. Being a neutral and friendly country, special care was made to hit only Nazi targets. The Group had great difficulty in assembling in the pre-dawn take off and in adverse weather. Several planes could not make assembly and had to return. But critical fuel supplies were expended by our planes in this assembly, and the very long flight over the North Sea to the target. Enemy aircraft made attacks both before the target and again on the return. Many ships were damaged by an unexpected attack out of the sun on the return, and were lost due to these attacks or by running out of fuel and having to ditch. The 67th Squadron lost three and the 68th lost two, plus two men KIA on return. There was also a spectacular crash-landing.

All four of the 67th Squadron ships went down in the North Sea on the return, it is believed, with no survivors from any of them to obtain further details as to damages or wounded aboard any of them.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7603 L-Bar, Dobson	RAGGEDY ANN/JUNIOR	MACR #1380
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, Cambridge	
DOBSON, EDWARD M. ASN 0-668216	Pilot 1st Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Bellmore, L.I., New York
CHARLESON, NORMAN ASN 0-740744	Co-pilot 1st Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Modesto, California
LATIMER, BYRON H. ASN 0-674210	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Texarkana, Texas

BURROUGHS, SIDNEY M. ASN 0-661588	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Georgia
GALLAGHER, JOSEPH W. ASN 31071580	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Winthrop, Massachusetts
FAUST, DAVID F. ASN 32297428	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Bronx, New York
VOORHIES, HENRY H. ASN 38263445	Ball Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Moreauville, Louisiana
HELPHREY, AARON L. ASN 39013517	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	California
GILBERT, JOSEPH D. ASN 34339959	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Lafayette, Alabama
FEICHTER, HERSCHEL H. ASN 35162685	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Ft. Wayne, Indiana

*Note: Lt. Dobson named his plane "Junior" for his infant son.*

Capt. Richard D. Butler states that, "I was on that mission and either led the 67th Squadron or an element of it. We did lose four planes – one of which we saw shot down by a JU-88 just after we left the coast of Norway. One other that I vividly remember was one of my wingmen. I believe the pilot's name was Houle." Capt. Butler's account appears below under the story of Lt. Houle.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-29164 I, Houle	MACR #1379		
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, Cambridge		
HOULE, JOSEPH L. ASN 0-526201	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt.	Muskegon, Michigan
JOHNSON, FARMER A. Jr. ASN T-001010	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	Flt Of.	Hazard, Kentucky
MURPHY, WILLIAM T. ASN 0-801142	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Highland Falls, New York
STIGORA, JOSEPH H. ASN 0-734393	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Nanticoke, Pennsylvania
GOODFELLOW, GEORGE E. ASN 11042195	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt.	New Bedford, Massachusetts
DILLAHUNTY, JACK C. ASN 18160347	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt.	Tulsa, Oklahoma
PETERSON, RAY O. ASN 36609092	Belly Gun KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
GRUSHKEVICH, ARON ASN 32501788	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Bronx, New York
POOLE, ELMER H. ASN 34366534	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
GOODE, ARMEL M. ASN 38235476	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	No. Little Rock, Arkansas

The second of the four 67th Squadron ships lost was that piloted by 1st Lt. Joseph L. Houle. Like the others, this aircraft was severely damaged but was making a gallant effort to stay airborne

back to England. But it ran out of fuel and was forced to ditch approximately 50 miles short of landfall. Upon ditching, it broke in two just back of the wing, and four men were seen in the icy water trying to free their liferafts. None of the 10 men survived or were found.

Capt. Butler gave his observations for this loss, "We were very short of fuel and about 10 minutes from the English coast when Lt. Houle said he wasn't going to make it. I dropped back and flew formation on him as he ditched. We were calling 'May Day' for him. We saw the plane hit the water and immediately break in two. I made a tight 360 degree and came back to him. By then the plane was floating nose down and the wing was intact. The plane was broken at the bulkhead at the rear of the bomb bay. No sign of the tail section or any crew members. The next pass over, we threw all of our one-man dinghies out the waist windows, but still saw no sign of survivors. We stayed in the area about 10 to 15 minutes but had to leave because our own fuel situation was critical. Our calls for Air-Sea Rescue were acknowledged but nobody ever showed up. I seriously doubt that anyone survived the impact."

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7545 D-Bar, Johnson		MACR #1378
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, Cambridge	
JOHNSON, EARL T. ASN 0-799569	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt. Montgomery, Alabama
JARRETT, DANIEL D. ASN 0-683457	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Roundup, Montana
FANN, IRWIN ASN 0-798775	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Gary, Indiana
SIEGEL, LOUIS ASN 0-678397	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. New York City, New York
HOLLAND, EARL M. ASN 37299913	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Hendrum, Minnesota
SULLIVAN, WILFRED C. ASN 35457629	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Cincinnati, Ohio
GLASSCOCK, KENNETH J. ASN 37197914	Ball Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Stuart, Iowa
REASONS, JOHN W. ASN 34194483	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Maury City, Tennessee
RUSSELL, LLOYD E. ASN 37224426	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Galena, Kansas
SNIDER, EDWON R. ASN 34435403	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Winston Salem, North Carolina

The third 67th aircraft lost was that piloted by 2nd Lt. Earl T. Johnson. Like the other three 67th ships, this plane and crew went down in the North Sea on the return from Sweden. Like the other 67th Squadron planes, the loss surely was due to the combination of battle damage and shortage of fuel. Again, all men were KIA with no bodies ever found. This could have been the one Capt. Butler described as shot down just off the coast of Norway.

Yet another 67th Squadron aircraft was damaged and made a remarkable crash-landing at Shipdham.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-29161 H-Bar, Griffith

Crash-landed

## 67th Squadron crew:

GRIFFITH, ROCKFORD C.	Pilot	1st Lt.
GRONO, LAWRENCE W.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.
WEATHERWAX, ROBERT B.	Navigator	1st Lt.
GOFF, MAURICE L.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
GIBBONEY, JOHN W.	Engineer	S/Sgt
SOFFERMAN, ABE	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt
PARRISH, EARL J.	Gunner	
McANDREWS, LEO J.	Gunner	
KUBAN, WILLIAM T.	Ball Turret Head, Body Wounds	S/Sgt.
CLARK, FORREST S.	Gunner	

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*Note: All bailed out over the field except for Griffith, Grono, and Kuban. Abe Sofferman went down on the 29 January 1944 mission and evaded for several months but was killed while trying to avoid capture.*

Pilot of this aircraft, 1st Lt. Rockford C. Griffith, (later interned) had also circled a plane as it ditched, his radio operator notifying Air-Sea Rescue. But also low on fuel and battle damaged, flew on to Shipdham.

Once there, he attempted to lower his landing gear but discovered the right gear was damaged, came only part way down, and then could not be retracted. Having one seriously wounded man aboard, they could not all bail out, as this man was in no condition to jump or be assisted in jumping. Lt. Griffith decided to have his crew bail out over the field, which they did successfully, retaining only his co-pilot, Lt. Grono, to assist him in this dangerous attempt to crash-land in order to save his gunner's life. These two pilots then performed an unbelievable feat of setting this damaged bomber down on the main runway, on only the left main gear until the fuselage and two right side propellers hit the pavement, skidded along and then off onto the grass at a very precarious angle until the left gear finally collapsed, ending in a ground loop! But it was a most successful landing, with no further injuries and no fire. Sgt. Kuban then was given immediate medical attention to his wounded head, neck and body.

Lt. Griffith was awarded a Silver Star for his actions.

Sgt. Miles McCue was on the ground when Griffith's aircraft came in: "As it was sliding and spinning toward me after landing, I turned to run, tripped over a bicycle and lay on the ground for a moment in panic. One of the seven chutes failed to open until it was about five or six hundred

feet from the ground. As it opened, a great cheer went up from myself and the many others who were watching. We all must have had the same sickening feeling for it seemed as though the chute was about to fail.”

After this hair-raising show, Miles could only wait for his aircraft. Some moments later, Ed Taylor landed safely with CALABAN but still no trace of Miles’ crew, E. T. Johnson’s aircraft. The plane his crew was flying was not POOP DECK PAPPY, but an unnamed one, 42-7545 D-Bar. D-Bar would not return! Incidentally, on this mission, this plane was “Tail-End Charlie,” with 1st Lt. Edward Mitchell flying just ahead of D-Bar, and Joe Houle just in front of it. All three were lost on that mission, apparently from a concentrated attack on that rear section.

Miles remembered: “I’ll never forget my feelings as I waited for their return and realized that these great and brave friends were lost. I’ll never forget those wonderful men I lived with for six months as they moved to their fate. Their act of charity is so outstanding that there are no words worthy enough to eulogize these men properly.”

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., Brown			Returned to base
67th Squadron Crew:			
BROWN, DELLAS A.	Pilot	Lt.	
TAYLER, JOHN P.	Co-Pilot	Lt.	
SEIBERT, FRANK R.	Navigator	Lt.	
MORRIS LEONARD C.	Bombardier	Lt.	
CAPUTO, ANTHONY	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	
MILLER, JOHN D.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	
REED, ROBERT M.	Belly Gunner	Sgt.	
FALLON, EDWARD J.	RW Gunner	Sgt.	
GAZIUKEVICZUS, ALBERT ASN #11054081	Waist Gunner KIA, buried Cambridge (C-0-41)	S/Sgt.	Haverhill, Massachusetts
DESOTELLE, GEORGE A.	Tail Turret	Sgt.	

In addition to the men lost above, the 67th Squadron suffered another man KIA aboard a plane which returned to base. Lt. Dellas A. Brown, pilot of this plane, gave me this information, “Al Gaziukeviczus (Little Al) joined my crew at Davis-Monthan in April 1943. We trained there and at Biggs Field in El Paso until Aug ‘43. Little Al married a Mexican girl just before we left for England.

“Al was a waist gunner for me when he was struck in the head by a single bullet, presumably from an Me 210, on our way back from Kjeller. He was killed instantly, and was buried at Cambridge, England.”

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This 67th Squadron aircraft (A/C #41-29139) went down in the North Sea along with three others from the 67th Squadron.



## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-29139 E-Bar, Mitchell		MACR #1381
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, Cambridge	
MITCHELL, EDWARD R. ASN 0-728013	Pilot Capt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sioux City, Iowa
OSBURN, RICHARD R. ASN 0-678132	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Washington, Dist. of Col.
HARDWICK, ROBERT E. ASN 0-746482	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Barnesville, Ohio
HANSEN, JAMES E. ASN 0-671429	Bombardier 2nd Lt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Cardeville, Illinois
GENTRY, WILLIAM H. ASN 39389081	Engineer T/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Pomeroy, Washington
HESS, WILLIAM H. ASN 15095162	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Logansport, Indiana
O'HARA, HENRY H. ASN 32436174	Belly Gun. S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Brewster, New York
CRAWFORD, MICHAEL S. ASN 34267452	RW Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Blue Ridge, Georgia
HESTER, MILTON Jr. ASN 18076405	LW Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Post, Texas
MYERS, BILLIE B. ASN 18166363	Tail Turret S/Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	McCrory, Arkansas

Capt. Edward R. Mitchell was the pilot of this aircraft lost in the North Sea. Lt. Mitchell had also piloted a plane on the Ploesti mission and was forced to land in Turkey.

This plane and crew, like the three others from the 67th, was lost with no survivors and almost no observers. So the cause of this loss is not known positively, but most likely involved enemy damage and shortage of fuel. Lt. Mitchell and crew were to be transferred to the 68th Squadron after this mission.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-63971 W, Weant	HELEN HYWATER	MACR #1377
68th Squadron Crew:		
WEANT, W. BAXTER ASN 0-729938	Pilot Capt. Interned, returned	China Grove, North Carolina
BRANDON, WILLIAM H. ASN 0-404078	Command Pilot Lt. Col. Interned, returned	Florasville, Texas
KELLEY, GEORGE J. Jr. ASN 0-727021	Navigator Capt. Interned, returned	Annapolis, Maryland
JORDAN, JOHN R. ASN 0-734920	Bombardier 2nd Lt. Interned, returned 1 Sept. 1944	Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
GAVIN, FRANK W. ASN 7001235	Engineer T/Sgt. Interned, returned	Turley, Oklahoma
PAFFENROTH, SAMUEL ASN 32402095	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. Interned, returned 1 Sept. 1944	Jersey City, New Jersey

KELSEY, GEORGE L. ASN 18053366	Asst. Eng. Interned, returned 1 Sept. 1944	T/Sgt.	Bokchito, Oklahoma
WELLS, WALTER U. ASN 17160572	Gunner Interned, returned 1 Sept. 1944	S/Sgt.	St. Joseph, Missouri
MILLER, SAMUEL H. ASN 13090675	Asst. Radio Interned, returned 1 Sept. 1944	S/Sgt.	Loganville, Pennsylvania
GOZA, JAMES M. ASN 38208089	Tail Turret Interned, returned 1 Sept. 1944	S/Sgt.	Malvern, Arkansas

*Note: After returning from internment, the pilots and others were put on temporary duty to initiate procedures for the return of many airmen interned in Sweden. Super secret!*

This 68th Squadron aircraft was flown by Captain W. Baxter Weant and was forced to land in Sweden. This aircraft had been hit after attacking Kjeller and was badly damaged. Captain Weant knew that he would not be able to make it back to England, so he flew to Trollhattan and began circling that city, and had his crew fire signal flares to advise the Swedes that he intended to land there. He did not want them to be shooting at him as he was attempting a difficult landing.

He then made a crash-landing just outside of Trollhattan, and before the Swedish officials arrived he had the crew set fire to the plane to keep the Germans from capturing it. However, the plane did not burn fully and the Swedes were able to save part of it. They sent the engines to the Swedish Civil Air company and salvaged as much as possible for themselves. The entire crew of 10 were interned, later nine returned to duty. T/Sgt. Gavin, the engineer, was retained to repair B-24 aircraft for use by the Swedish Air Force.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23788, Hughes	AVENGER	Returned to base
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#### 68th Squadron Crew (partial):

MERRIGAN, JOHN ASN 10601009	Waist Gun. KIA, buried Cambridge (B-5-58)	S/Sgt. Bronx, New York
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On this same 18 November mission, the 68th also suffered a KIA on a returning aircraft #41-23788 AVENGER, piloted by Lt. William D. Hughes. S/Sgt. John Merrigan, waist gunner, had earlier in this mission shot down an enemy aircraft, but was hit by a bullet from another plane as it attacked from below, and was killed almost instantly. He previously had flown the famous low-level attack on Ploesti, 1 Aug. 1943.

## 26 November 1943

### Bremen, Germany

The primary target at Bremen was the industrial area, which was hit with a good pattern. Weather conditions were quite bad in that it was exceptionally cold, which probably contributed to the collision early in the mission and the loss of one plane and crew. None of the eleven casualties was caused by enemy action on this mission.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-24234 N, Trolese	MR. 5 X 5	MACR #1501
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66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA
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TROLESE, ALEXANDER ASN 0-743297	Pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (A-36-54)	1st Lt.	Richmond, California
HARPER, JAMES A. ASN 0-681402	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Ellwood City, Pennsylvania
MARCOUILLER, GORDON L. ASN 0-749680	Navigator KIA, buried Ardennes (D-13-7)	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
GATES, JACK A. ASN 0-663253	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Odessa, Texas
RAY, THOMAS C. ASN 34280331	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (D-18-20)	S/Sgt.	Illinois
KRAUSS, CHARLES E. ASN 33338303	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Springfield, Pennsylvania
APPLEDORN, THOMAS J. ASN 15087738	Belly Gun. KIA, buried Ardennes (A-23-3)	S/Sgt.	Huntington, West Virginia
RAILING, ALTON S. ASN 35338599	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Decator, Indiana
MARKUS, EDWARD R. ASN 32536008	LW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (A-37-15)	S/Sgt.	Yonkers, New York
WRIGHT, RAYMOND E. ASN 35474099	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (C-15-4)	S/Sgt.	Cincinnati, Ohio

2nd Lt. Alexander Trolese, pilot of A/C #41-24234 (MR. 5 X 5), was flying close formation with the plane flown by 1st Lt. J. G. Cary (#42-7501). Apparently, MR. 5 X 5 was caught in the prop wash of the planes ahead and was forced up into a collision with #501. The propellers of #501 cut and sheared off the entire tail section of MR. 5 X 5 causing it to crash, apparently into the sea. Six parachutes were observed coming out of MR. 5 X 5 on its descent, but no one survived. All bodies were recovered. Lt. Cary and crew from the 68th Squadron escaped from the collision and returned to base, but only after succeeding in recovering from their spin at an altitude of only 4,000 feet.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., # 42-7501, Cary	BING'S BIG BOX	Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew:	All uninjured	
CARY, JAMES G.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
LEE, ROBERT L.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
CLARK, WARREN J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
PURCELL, EDWIN J.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
LONGAN, MYRON H. Jr. .	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
MERCER, JAMES W.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
PIERCE, ROBERT G.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.
MYERS, RUDY S. Jr.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
CONNORS, EDMUND F.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
CRANTZ, CHESTER F.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

*Note: Rudy Myers was killed in action on 11 February 1944.*

2nd Lt. Robert L. Lee, the co-pilot on Cary's aircraft, reported: "As I recall, the other plane was not flying on our wing but we were flying on the wing of a plane on the pilot's side of our plane. Cary, our pilot, was flying the plane as we never flew cross cockpit. I have always felt that the other aircraft had lost its place in the formation and was trying to tuck itself back into the squadron some place. It slid out from underneath us and came up on the right side of our plane bringing its tail into contact with our #4 engine. It immediately went down out of our sight.

"We seemed to slide off to the right and into a very severe spin. It all happened so fast that neither I or the waist and ball turret gunners had time to sound an alarm of any kind. Both Cary and I were pulling back on the controls and standing on the rudders in a vain attempt at getting out of the spin and leveling off.

"We sounded the bail out alarm but fortunately, the gravity pull was so severe that none of the crew could move. I suppose the formation was flying at about 24,000 feet and we eventually pulled the plane out of the spin at around 10,000 feet. We looked around and found ourselves all alone with a full bomb load, our #4 engine out, and the prop gone. No injuries and the plane operating well.

"We salvoed our bombs in an open field (we did not want to get anybody mad at us being so low and by ourselves) and headed home. There was some cloud cover at that altitude and we took good advantage of it as we periodically suffered individual fighter attacks. No real problems though until we hit the coast and were hit by some fairly heavy flak barrages. Fortunately, being by ourselves, we took some effective evasive actions and managed to get over the Channel and headed home. We landed the plane without incident, but only after the rest of the group had landed and reported us missing.

"After de-briefing, we got back to our quarters as soon as possible before other crews raided them, which was a popular practice at that time when crews were reported missing.

"My flight log shows we were given over six hours for that mission. I can only surmise that we were approaching the IP when the collision occurred as we usually tightened up the formation at the IP prior to releasing our bombs over the target and that was when there was a lot of movement within the formation."

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23699, Marcoullier	LEMON DROP		Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew:			
MARCOULLIER, ARTHUR S.	Pilot	2nd Lt.	
PETERSON, NORMAN J.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
MOCKLEY, JAMES H.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
TRUMBO, GROVER C.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
BRYSON, FRANK R.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
HOLENBECK, JOHN A.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
TATE, THOMAS M.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.	
BRENAN, JOSEPH R.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
SEMONS, EARL M.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Columbus,
ASN 35420784	KIA		Ohio

O'LAUGHAN, WALTER E.

Tail Turret

S/Sgt.

The severely cold weather caused many cases of frost-bite on hands, feet and faces, and there were a few men wounded by flak. But S/Sgt. Earl M. Semons, from the 68th Squadron and a member of the Marcoullier crew, was killed when his oxygen mask froze so badly that he suffocated before he was observed to be in trouble. This was his fourth mission. Two others on this aircraft, S/Sgts. Thomas M. Tate and Walter E. O'Laughan, also suffered frozen hands and feet.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., Kessler

Returned to base

## 68th Squadron Crew (partial):

KESSLER, JOSEPH P.

Pilot

1st Lt.

ASN 0-733662

Suffered frostbite, returned to duty in U.S.

In addition, Lt. Joseph P. Kessler, a 68th Squadron pilot, suffered frozen hands and feet. He was sent to the 2nd General Hospital for further treatment on 18 December 43. He was then returned to duty in the United States.

## 1 December 1943

## Solingen, Germany

The main objective in this city was the aero-casting works, that had to be bombed by Pathfinder (PFF) method due to bad weather. Twenty aircraft were dispatched for this target, one did not return – the one piloted by 1st Lt. Edward F. Taylor from the 67th Squadron.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7544 C-Bar, Taylor

MACR #1382

## 67th Squadron Crew:

TAYLOR, EDWARD F.

Pilot

1st Lt.

ASN 0-530758

Evadee, returned

Perry,  
Oklahoma

AKINS, JAMES C.

Co-pilot

2nd Lt.

ASN 0-677193

Evadee, POW

Haskell,  
Texas

FOARD, JACK D.

Navigator

2nd Lt.

ASN 0-678629

POW

Summerville,  
Missouri

DOLGIN, WILLIAM J.

Bombardier

2nd Lt.

ASN 0-676576

Evadee, POW

Los Angeles,  
California

WOJCIK, EDWARD S.

Engineer

S/Sgt.

ASN 39094162

POW

Portland,  
Oregon

KNOLL, ROBERT S.

Radio Oper

T/Sgt.

ASN 33358743

POW

Warnersville,  
Pennsylvania

DZWONKOWSKI, HENRY J.

Belly Gun.

S/Sgt.

ASN 35318190

Evadee, returned

Cleveland,  
Ohio

McCUE, MILES J.

RW Gunner

S/Sgt.

ASN 33303966

POW

Pittsburgh,  
Pennsylvania

BAYER, ARTHUR T. ASN 37377434	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	St. Louis, Missouri
MORRIS, WILLIAM F. ASN 12138123	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Chadwick, New York

Sgt. Miles J. McCue, right waist gunner on this crew, relates this account, “We had dropped our bombs over Solingen and were on our way home on what had been a comparatively uneventful trip. But as we neared the coast of Belgium, Lt. Taylor and the engineer (Wojcik) began exchanging small talk about the gasoline supply. ‘Did you switch tanks?’ ‘No, I didn’t, but I will.’ Eventually I realized that we were just about out of gas. The navigator (Lt. Foard) was brought into the conversation and I remember the words, ‘twenty minutes.’ Now, as to whether this referred to the fuel supply or to the nearest landing field, I can’t recall.

“About this time, just as we started out over the North Sea, Lt. Taylor announced that we were going to have to bail out! He, then, turned the plane around and when we were over land, again announced, ‘Bail out – hit the silk!’ These are the last words I heard before I left the plane, and needless to say, they are etched indelibly in my mind.

“The first clue I got that something unusual had happened after I left the plane was during my second interrogation which took place about five days later at Dulag Luft, in Frankfurt. The interrogator asked how we were knocked down ‘Flak or fighters?’ When I showed no inclination to discuss it, he suggested that, ‘Maybe you ran out of gas?’ This indicated to me that the plane had not been found, and also that someone had tipped the enemy to the fact that we had a fuel problem.”

*Note: The aircraft came down in Isselmeer and may have been salvaged.*

Arthur Bayer, another crew member added, “We had to bail out over a little Belgian village – Veurne, I think. I was an extra that day – waist gunner. It was not my regular crew. I don’t know whether Taylor was ever heard from again.”

*Note: Lt. Taylor was an evadee.*

William Morris, tail turret gunner, states that, “Our ship apparently was hit by flak in the target area, problems developed, and later we were ordered to bail out. There were not many fighters in the target area, so our damage was thought to be flak. I thought that we all bailed out OK, as all in the rear of the ship did so. Miles McCue’s (chute) harness caught on the escape hatch but I managed to work him free with great difficulty and much strength. I was the last to leave from the rear area. I could see the Channel on the way down.

“Upon landing, I was free for about one hour after meeting up with Ed Wojcik, and we headed south through several dykes and canals where we got soaking wet. But a party of German soldiers came over a small rise and gave us the usual, ‘For you, the war is over’ bit. Went to jail overnight, then to Frankfurt Dulag Luft, arriving the day after a night bombing raid by the RAF, and the citizens were trying to lynch all of us. The soldiers kept the citizens away.”

The bombardier, William Dolgin, said, “I did not know the crew very well as I flew this mission as a fill-in for their regular bombardier. I was on Art Lowe’s crew, normally. Jim Akens, the co-pilot, Henry Dzwonkowski, and I were together (as evadees) most of the time we were in Belgium. Jim and I were caught by the Gestapo on 25 March 1944, while Henry made it back to the States. Henry was the one to inform my parents in August that I was alive. Prior to that, they

thought that I was KIA. Yes, it was flak that got us. It hit our wing. The lead bombardier goofed and got us too close to some flak batteries.” Bill’s extended account continues with detailed evasion data, capture, POW time and assisting in the capture of a man aiding the Germans.

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## 11 December 1943

### Emden, Germany

This target was vital to traffic, both a boat and rail center. Fierce enemy fighter attacks were made by forty to seventy ships despite the very fine fighter support that we had. One 67th Squadron plane did not return.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #41-23232 M-Bar, O’Neill

CALABAN

#### 67th Squadron Crew:

O’NEILL, RICHARD F. ASN 0-798225	Pilot POW/KIA, buried Ardennes (A-25-15)	1st Lt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
WORTH, WOODROW N. ASN 0-683521	Co-pilot POW/KIA	2nd Lt.	Winter Haven, Florida
GRIMES, GEORGE G. ASN 0-885961	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Albia, Iowa
SHAW, CHARLES M. ASN 0-661667	Bombardier POW, KIA, buried Ardennes (A-41-50)	Capt.	Liberty, Mississippi
McADAMS, ROBERT C. ASN 14039719	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Ensley, Alabama
KENNON, DANIEL ASN 38102848	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Douglas, Arizona
ALLEN, NORBERT G. ASN 37430255	Hatch Gun. KIA	S/Sgt.	Des Moines, Iowa
HAGMANN, PAUL A. ASN 39393257	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (B-44-55)	Sgt.	Mt. Shasta, California
LESTER, JULIAN V. ASN 17047877	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Minneapolis, Minnesota
BOGGESE, BOYD Jr. ASN 33213653	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Richland, Virginia

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*Note: The 44th BG records show that O’Neill, his co-pilot Worth, and bombardier Shaw were officially reported as POW; then later changed to KIA. Nothing has been found to explain this.*

Again, the 67th Squadron lost an airplane and crew, but not through the efforts of the Germans. Lt. Richard F. O’Neill was the pilot of CALABAN (this ship was a veteran of Ploesti) who was noted for his violent evasive actions on bomb runs. It was this excessive action which contributed to his downfall. O’Neill was seen to swing over and behind aircraft #42-72878 and slightly to the right, just at ‘bombs away’. Lt. O’Neill’s bombardier dropped his bombs on the swing. But just then the bombs from a plane above them struck the right wing, breaking it off at #4 engine. Bombs also hit the tail assembly as well, knocking it completely off. The ship went into a spin, caught fire, but no chutes were observed. Lt. George W. Carvour saw the plane crash on land

near the Emden estuary – his interest being especially high as he had been the regular bombardier for the O'Neill crew! Though no chutes were seen, one man did survive.

*Note: Mrs. McAdams said that her husband, who is now deceased, reported he may have seen at least one other parachute. Sgt. McAdams, a veteran of Ploesti, was interned in Turkey for a short period. He was the only man to survive from this crew.*

There was one other casualty in the Group this day, that being a navigator, Louis V. Trouvé, who became a POW.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-7476, Comey	NICE 'N NAUGHTY	Returned to base
<i>Note: This aircraft was also known as PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.</i>		
66th Squadron Crewman:		
COMEY, RICHARD J. ASN 0-789539	Pilot	Lt. Stowe, Vermont
DRYSDALE, THOMAS T. ASN 0-739744	Co-pilot	Lt. Arizona
TROUVÉ, LOUIS V. ASN 0-797427	Navigator POW	1st Lt. Hempstead, L.I., New York
KIPPLE, JAMES E. ASN 13044897	Bombardier	Lt.
GREENBERG, ALBERT ASN 33323980	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt. Pennsylvania
STOEFEN, M. J. ASN 37263571	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt. Rapids, South Dakota
HALL, QUENTINE J. ASN 12137925	Belly Gunner	T/Sgt. Newcomb, New York
ROSINSKI, STANLEY J. ASN 12050666	RW Gunner	S/Sgt. Elizabeth New Jersey
NEITZEL, D. W. ASN 37424963	LW Gunner	Sgt. Guernsey, Louisiana
WALKER, RICHARD H. ASN 37335675	Tail Turret	S/Sgt. Newcomb, New York

Richard Comey provided the following account, “We received a direct hit on the nose, right above the navigator, Louis Trouvé. The force of the explosion knocked him backwards, over on the nose wheel doors and out he went. Fortunately, though wounded, he opened his chute, landed in a bay, and was picked up by the Germans. (Lou and his wife, and Charlotte and I got together in New York after the war.)

“After Lou was gone, we found flames were licking out of the hole in the nose, so I pressed the alarm button, “prepare to abandon ship”. The ball gunner (Neitzel?) saw Lou go by his turret and decided things were really serious. He tried to get out of his ball, but some empty shells or perhaps a belt or two had jammed the back exit door. With brute strength – and he was not a very heavily-built guy – he pushed the door right off its hinges and got out [of the ball turret]. The bombardier passed out in the nose turret and we thought he was a goner.



“It turned out the flame was fed by a broken oxygen line, and when the oxygen was used up, it went out! By then I was half way out of my seat and preparing to signal “abandon ship” when I realized things were not so bad, and finally got things back on keel again. However, we were now alone and I headed for the Channel, losing altitude at a rapid pace.

“When we reached about 10,000 feet or so, the bombardier’s voice comes on the intercom. He was alive and O.K. – just passed out from lack of oxygen.

“We very luckily crossed the Channel and returned to base without encountering any German fighters. The hydraulic system was shot out, but there was enough pressure still in those spheres to work the brakes. I should have stopped at the end of the runway and received a hero’s welcome, but I taxied back to our pad and coasted very slowly off the edge of it when the pressure finally ran out.”

About PRINCESS CHARLOTTE (also known as “Nice ‘N Naughty”), Comey wrote, “She got us home O.K. We were blessed with good fortune as far as the crew was concerned. I believe I saw her fuselage on the junk heap later. [Editor’s note: She crashed at Shipdham on 4 January 1944 while on take off.] I still have the stencil that says “PRINCESS CHARLOTTE” used on some of these planes. I completed 25 missions in the Princesses – some bore the name in paint. Others in mind only. Some bore two names, but as far as I was concerned, they were all Princesses, and all great.”

Louis Trouvé’s son Paul contributed these details: “I don’t know much about my father’s war experience since he didn’t talk about it for the most part, even to my mother...she told me that the last mission my father was on...was the only one in which he wore his parachute. This was also my grandfather’s (his father’s) birthday, 11 Dec. When he was ejected from the plane, the parachute opened on its own. He landed in a farmer’s field and was brought to safety by the farmer and his wife. He didn’t handle the parachuting well and his leg was badly injured in the fall but it was saved by a German surgeon. I do remember my father saying that the medical help he got was first rate and he had great respect for the German people because of their intelligence and enterprise.”

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Aircraft #42-7501, BING’S BIG BOX, returned with two injured crewmembers.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7501, Howington	BING'S BIG BOX		Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew			
HOWINGTON, HARTWELL R. ASN 0-800356	Pilot	2nd Lt.	Cantonment, Florida
CURTIS, HERMAN M. ASN 0-748585	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	Seaport, Maine
KASTEN, RICHARD J. ASN 0-683831	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Grand Rapids, Michigan
CROWL, WAYNE D. ASN 0-741141	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Canterburg, Ohio
SHELTON, JACK A.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
SHAEFFER, CLAIR P. ASN 33187932	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	Wernersville, Pennsylvania

MITSCHE, MICHAEL P.	Staff Sergeant Badly wounded	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.
HEITER, NICHOLAS M. ASN 17106849	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Bridgewater, South Dakota
BLAKLEY, CHARLES W. ASN 39831745	LW Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	Parma, Idaho
BOGGS, EARL E. ASN 18162560	Tail Turret	S/Sgt. Oklahoma	Porter,

*Note: S/Sgt. Michael P. Mitsche was seriously wounded by flak. It was his fifth mission. He was transferred to the 77th Hospital on 21 December 1943 and did not return to Shipdham. He was sent back to the United States. Eight members of this crew were lost on 21 January 1944. Four of them, Howington, Curtis, Kastnen, and Crow, were killed in action. They were on the same aircraft with Heiter, Blakely, and Boggs, who survived. Schaeffer was killed when another aircraft was lost that day.*

From Hartwell Howington's diary: "11 December 1943. Went out again today – to Emden. Roughest mission yet. Mitsche hit direct with cannon shell. Blakely hit with fragments. 138 fighters shot down. Blakely got Purple Heart and recommended for Soldier's Medal. Mitsche got one fighter. Crew got two possibles. Mitsche got Purple Heart, OCL, and Air Medal. Ship hit with five cannon shells. O'Neill exploded right in front of us. Sky littered with burning and exploding Libs parts and fighters."

'Chick' Blakely wrote the following about Michael Mitsche: "A 20-mm shell hit the edge of the ball turret sight glass. The result was that it took a great deal off his upper inner thigh muscle just below his groin. When I was with him in Milwaukee, we made most of his known bar rounds for him to show his beer buddies the guy that gave him in-air first aid 'and the guy who saved his life.' " Blakely reported that Earl Boggs, the tail gunner, heard that Mitsche died in 1969.

## 16 December 1943

### Bremen, Germany

Intense, accurate flak was encountered over the target. One 68th Squadron aircraft was badly damaged over the target but the crippled craft made it back to England to crash-land on the coast.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23788 S, Jones	AVENGER	MACR #4709
68th Squadron Crew:		
JONES, PARKE H. Jr. ASN 0-674587	Pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (B-7-3)	1st Lt. Minneapolis, Minnesota
GRIFFIN, JOHN W. ASN 0-748630	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt. Corning, New York
PICCOLO, ANTHONY J. ASN 0-670165	Navigator POW	1st Lt. Omaha, Nebraska
BUCKHOLTS, JOHN J. ASN 0-669980	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt. Okmulgee, Oklahoma
MARTIN, CHESTER A. ASN 13125993	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt. Girardville, Pennsylvania

FRIES, PATRICK J.	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Louisville, Kentucky
ZDONICK, MICHAEL P. ASN 31169351	Hatch Gun. KIA, buried Cambridge (E-0-38)	S/Sgt.	Naugatuck, Connecticut
TERWEY, ALPHONSE J. ASN 37281321	RW Gunner KIA, buried Cambridge (A-1-36)	S/Sgt.	Ward Springs, Minnesota
BESSE, WILSON P. ASN 38194491	LW Gunner KIA, buried Cambridge (E-0-43)	S/Sgt.	New Orleans, Louisiana
GORDON, RHODES C. ASN 13089150	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	McKees Rock, Pennsylvania

Parke H. Jones was the pilot of AVENGER, and his co-pilot, Lt. Griffin said, "This plane was severely damaged by a direct burst of flak which knocked out our #4 engine, and damaged parts of the bomb bay while we were en route to the target. After the pilot and I both tried to regain control without success, Jones gave the order to bail out. Four of us left the ship, but the pilot and five other crew members did not follow. Why the pilot tried to take the plane home after ordering us out is unknown. Perhaps he regained some control is just a guess. The bomb bay was badly hit and it was impossible to contact the boys in the rear of the ship either by radio or to get back to see if they were injured when we were hit. According to hearsay, the plane crashed on the English coast and burned. Two bodies remained unidentified after the plane crashed. The four men who bailed out were taken prisoner within a few hours – these four being the navigator, engineer, radioman, and myself."

Capt. Charles Kuch, a 68th Squadron lead pilot, stated that observers in other planes said that this aircraft had #4 engine blown completely off and the #3 propeller was gone, so Lt. Jones had power on only the left side. The aircraft disappeared into a cloudbank with the front half of the catwalk hanging down out of the bomb bay! All were amazed that he was able to coax this plane all the way back to England. He then chose to "belly-in" on the first open area he saw – the beach near Hull. Unfortunately, he set her down in a minefield and the resulting explosions and fire burned and killed all six men remaining aboard.

The site of the crash-landing was near Skeffling, on an estuary southeast of Hull.

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## 20 December 1943

### Bremen, Germany

Once again it was another trip to Bremen, but this time the weather was clearer, permitting visual bombing and better results. As usual, the flak was heavy with eight of our ships sustaining damages. One aircraft did not return.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-7630 P-Bar, Maynor

MACR #1712

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

MAYNOR, WILLIAM M. ASN 0-666783	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
GUNNELL, JOHN E. ASN 0-676780	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

GRAY, ARNOLD L. ASN 0-678637	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Providence Rhode Island
AHO, AUGUSTUS ASN 31121510	Nose Turret KIA, WOM Margraten	Sgt.	Schenectady, New York
CORRIGAN, JAMES L. ASN 31140327	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Fairhaven, Massachusetts
LISS, MICHAEL J. ASN 35312812	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
SCANLON, WALTER J. ASN 32562495	Ball Turret POW, wounded, leg broken	S/Sgt.	Bloomfield, New Jersey
STOFFEL, GLENN C. ASN 17108124	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Margraten	S/Sgt.	Minneapolis, Minnesota
COONELLY, JOSEPH M. ASN 13112426	LW Gunner POW, wounded	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
PARKER, JOEL Jr. ASN 12034648	Tail Turret POW, wounded, hemorrhage	S/Sgt.	Manasquan, New Jersey

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*Note: Sgt. Aho may have been a former ground man as he is credited with painting many of the nose art pictures on 506th aircraft – and possibly others. This was his fourth mission.*

Lt. Maynor said, “I don’t remember the call letters or the name of our ship as we were a replacement crew and flew several planes. On our 11th mission we went to Bremen and were hit by fighters as we approached the target. We were knocked out of formation and lost an engine, but continued on to the target through flak and bombed. After leaving the target, the fighters again picked us up and shot the plane up rather badly, firing point blank at us. We had only three guns left firing at them.

“We lost altitude to 9,000 feet and flew out over the North Sea at Wilhelmshaven, still losing altitude. We were nearly out of gas and the plane was becoming unflyable. The German fighters did not follow us out over the North Sea, so I had a decision to make – to ditch or to turn back to Germany. If we ditched, it was almost certain death, so I decided our best choice was to return to the coast and bail out. This we did. I was the last one out and just barely made it due to the centrifugal force of the spin.

“I only know about those of my crew who survived. I was with Gray and Gunnell in the POW camp.”

An official German report concluded that the aircraft crashed at 1207 near Langeoog at sea and that five men parachuted from the aircraft and were driven to the east by strong west winds. The MACR states that aircraft #42-7630 was attacked from behind and slightly to the right by one of five FW 190s. It was then seen to bank to the right and go into first a glide, and then a dive. Five to nine chutes were seen coming out of the aircraft. The aircraft may also have been hit by flak at the same time. It was last seen disappearing into a cloud.

Lt. Gunnell said that the two men who were MIA, Aho and Stoffel, must have perished in the North Sea after bailing out. Their bodies were never recovered. Parker and one other crewmember were rescued from the North Sea by a German pilot named Willy Koch. During the rescue, Koch found a letter addressed to Parker and neglected to turn it in to the authorities. He

found it after the war and decided to contact Parker. Koch sent him a picture of his DO-22 seaplane.

Lt. Gray provided the following account: "Our final mission on 20 December, 1943 is stamped indelibly on my memory, as you can well imagine.

"Just after dropping our bombs on Bremen, we were struck simultaneously by flak and by enemy aircraft projectiles. Both waist gunners, Glenn Stoffel and Joe Coonelly, were badly wounded. Two engines were knocked out, and we began losing altitude at about 1,000 feet per minute.

"As we approached the North Sea coast, I attempted to learn, without success from the pilot, Bill Maynor, whether he wanted to ditch or should we prepare to bail out. Bill apparently decided that we should bail out as the alarm bell sounded with a series of short rings (prepare to leave the ship). I immediately summoned Augustus Aho, the nose gunner, who was in the front of the ship with me. We hooked on our chutes and opened the nose wheel doors, awaiting the final bail out signal, which never occurred.

"When I looked down and saw water below, I decided to jump and Aho followed me. I learned later that the rest of the crew left the ship after the 'prepare' signal. Mike Liss, our radio operator, and I landed in the water and were picked up by a German Air-Sea Rescue boat.

"As for Aho, the last I saw of him, he was parachuting behind me. I do not know what happened to him. Apparently, he was unable to survive the landing in the water. I do not have any information on Stoffel other than the fact that he was badly wounded."

## 21 December 1943

### Practice Mission, West Bradenham, England

This aircraft crash-landed on Richards Farm in West Bradenham near Shipdham while on a test flight/practice mission.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-72878 A, Butler	MISS EMMY LOU II	Crash-landed
67th Squadron Crew:		
BUTLER, RICHARD D.	Pilot Injured	Capt.
GRELL, GERALD C.	Co-pilot Injured	1st Lt.
NICHOLSON, ROBERT J.	Bombardier Injured	2nd Lt.
COINER, MAYO L.	Navigator	1st Lt.
NEEPER, LOY L.	Engineer	T/Sgt.
MASON, GERALD D.	Radio Oper. Injured	T/Sgt.
KOOKEN, WARREN K.	Gunner	S/Sgt.
CHAMBERLAIN, DONALD H.	Gunner	S/Sgt.
BOULANGER, CLEMENT C.L.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

GARZA, NICK E.	Armament	Sgt.
CLARK, FORREST S.	Gunner/passenger	Sgt.

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This is Richard Butler's April 1990 account of the crash-landing: "Miss Emmy Lou II was the plane I was flying on 21 December 1943. The flight was a combination test hop and practice mission (group practice formation). I believe General Johnson was in the lead plane.

"The reason for the test hop was because the plane had been in for repairs after severe battle damage. It seems as though it was about two weeks before this on a mission, I believe, to Bremen." [Editor's note: The Bremen mission was 11 December 1943.]

"The crew was mostly my regular crew at that time: Jerry Grell, co-pilot; Nicholson, bombardier; Coiner, I believe as navigator; Neeper, engineer; Mason, radio operator; and gunners to be Kooken, Chamberlain, and Boulanger. Nick Garza from armament lived with our guys and was along for the ride. Forrest Clark was along for flying time – his first flight since bailing out from R.C. Griffith's famous one-wheel landing.

The flight was routine through till the formation breakup. We were at 800 feet, in the pattern for landing, when there was an explosion in the number two engine. With the explosion, the other three engines quit! Nothing to do but land straight ahead. We were headed right at a large tree but I managed to avoid hitting it with the nose, and it took it about at the #2 engine area. We hit, skidded, hit a ditch and the plane broke open.

"I tried to open my seat belt with my left hand, but there was a 90 degree bend at my left wrist – broken. So I managed to open the safety belt with my right hand and then went out through the left cockpit window area which was completely broken open.

"Upon getting out, I found that I couldn't stand up – my left ankle was broken. This probably was caused by the jolt received from the left rudder pedal when we hit the tree.

"People were coming out of the wreck from all kinds of holes. Fires had started and some shells were exploding. After taking roll, Nicholson, the bombardier, was missing. He and the navigator had been on the flight deck in preparation for landing. When I asked, 'Where's Nick?' Loy Neeper went back into the wreck through the top hatch. I can still see him coming back out while reaching back in and with one hand, lifting the unconscious Nicholson out and dropping off of what was left of the fuselage. For this action, Loy Neeper received a Soldier's Medal – well-deserved!

"We moved away from the wreck as, by this time, there was quite a fire with lots of exploding shells. I was crawling along as best I could and Neeper was dragging Nick.

"About this time a farmer, who owned the field where we crashed, came over and began helping some of us. Surprisingly, General Johnson was one of the first to arrive from the field. He had seen the crash from the air, got down quickly, into his staff car, and came over to us.

"Somebody tore a gate off the farmer's fence and used it as a stretcher to carry me. I remember Gen. Johnson helping to carry it and I was very embarrassed. Nick had regained consciousness by then and was doing a lot of moaning.

"We were very lucky! Besides my injures, Grell, co-pilot, had a broken right arm. Nicholson's injuries turned out to be some broken ribs and a bump on his head. Mason, my radio operator,

was missing his left ear! When the explosion occurred in #2 engine, metal came through the fuselage and took his ear off completely. Someone found it, and at the hospital it was sewn back on and saved. Amazingly, that was the extent of the more severe injuries.

“There was a lot of speculation as to what really had happened. One theory was that there was an unexploded shell in the #2 engine from the battle damage that finally let go. A hole in the underside of the #2 nacelle had been patched, but the projectile not discovered. Another view was that we had encountered ice and that caused all four engines to quit. But I doubt that it would affect all engines at the exact same time. And, it doesn’t explain the explosion. Personally, I think the explosion severed fuel lines or the electrical system and that is why they all quit. There was a lot of damage to the left side of the fuselage along the flight deck before we hit the ground.

“Grell, Nick, Mason and I wound up in the hospital. Mason and Nick got out in a few days. Some time in January, Grell and I got back to the 44th where it was decided that we would be sent home as hospital patients as it would take so long for our broken bones to heal in the English weather. I remember Col. Dent was opposed to this action, but the flight surgeon, backed up by Bill Cameron, prevailed.”

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## 22 December 1943

### Munster, Germany

The weather on this mission was terrible, with heavy clouds up above 20,000 feet and thunderstorms as well as very low clouds over Holland. Bombing was done by PFF, with results unobserved. Flak was moderate but accurate, and the 44th BG lost two planes, both from the 66th Squadron.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-7638 A, Miller	BIG BANNER		MACR #1714
66th Squadron Crew:			
MILLER, KENT F. ASN T-60679	Pilot KIA	Flt Of.	New Martinsville, West Virginia
TAYLOR, CHARLES E. ASN 0-680761	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Westfield, New Jersey
PASSAVANT, FRANK A. ASN 0-678758	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	New Matamoras, Ohio
SHAFFER, DONALD E. ASN 0-678477	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Los Angeles, California
BIRGE, EDWARD E. ASN 14080954	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Chattahooshe, Florida
CHILDERS, JAMES C. ASN 19087860	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Berkeley, California
PILCH, STANLEY Jr. ASN 35316138	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
LARSON, JOHN H. ASN 19108009	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Tombstone, Arizona
McCORD, GERALD D. ASN 39084175	LW Gunner KIA, buried Margraten (H-16-11)	S/Sgt.	Fresno, California

SHEEHAN, WILLIAM J.  
ASN 12124435

Tail Turret  
KIA, buried Ardennes (C-10-42)

S/Sgt.

Bellerose, L.I.,  
New York

This plane, flown by Flight Officer Kent F. Miller, per the MACR, began lagging behind in the rear of the formation just after the target, tying in with aircraft #42-7533. It was variously reported as being seen lagging behind the formation up to 1437 hours. Each observation was that it was in apparent good condition, but was losing altitude and getting farther behind. At 1437 hour, it was last seen as it dropped beneath the clouds. At that time no chutes had been seen, and since the ship was apparently in "good" condition and under control, it is believed the crew had a good chance to bail out near the German border with Holland.

The MACR was correct as Miller and Taylor, the pilots, managed to get as far as the Zuyder Zee, approximately 25 kilometers northeast of Amsterdam, where they were still in heavy clouds but could go no further. Miller gave the bail out signal and some crewmembers did bail out but the bail out order was changed to ditching as soon as Miller learned they were over water. F/O Miller must have been stunned by the ditching as he did not leave the wreckage. Charles Taylor, the co-pilot, was the only man to survive, although he did get a life raft free of the plane and could see one or two other crewmen in the water near him supported by their Mae Wests. But by the time Taylor got the raft inflated, he did not have the strength left to help them or even to climb inside. He held on until he was rescued.

Sgt. Birge, engineer, apparently was trapped by his top turret. Sgt. Pilch got out of the plane, into the water, but must have passed out from shock and the cold water. Larson was seriously wounded, and when the Germans pulled him out of the water, he did not respond to artificial respiration.

*Note: The details above appeared in the original Roll of Honor. The material below has been added. Not all of the details align perfectly, specifically around the point of whether any of the remaining crewmen were able to get out of the ditched B-24, but both accounts are included here for the record.*

The co-pilot, Charles E. Taylor, wrote the following: "On December 22, 1943, our group bombed Muenster, Germany. We were flying on Oakley's wing, and after leaving the target realized we were both losing the formation. Flak had damaged three of our engines and when we realized we would never make it back to England, Miller gave the order to bail out. Four of the crew did bail out in the rear, but when we opened the bomb bay doors, there was a break in the clouds and we saw we were over water, so the order was changed to prepare for ditching, which six of us did.

"We hit the water at over 100-mph and submerged immediately. When I released my seat belt, I floated free of the plane. No one else appeared in the water, which I have never understood! I swam around for a few minutes, thinking the plane would sink, but it never did, so I released one of the dinghies, which floated away from me. I caught up with it, but with my wet winter flying suit, flak jacket and Mae West on, I could not climb into it, but just put my arm over the side and passed out.

"Obviously, it was not long before a German patrol boat picked me up or I would have died from hypothermia within 15 or 20 minutes, I am quite sure. I was taken to a jail in Amsterdam, awaiting transfer to Frankfurt for interrogation, when I saw that Doug Powers, from Oakley's crew was also there. We chatted for a few moments, until the Germans broke it up. After interrogation, we were sent to Stalag Luft.



“The war in Europe ended on May 8th and on May 13th we were flown to France in B-17s. In June we sailed home, and in September I was ‘separated’ from the service. The next month I went back to my old job with AT&T Long Lines Department.

“Thirty years later [in 1975], the Westfield police called me and informed me that the Royal Dutch Air Force had found my plane, after draining a large area of the Zuyder Zee. My wife and I were invited over to Holland to take part in a TV documentary NCRV was planning to make. They eventually recovered the remains of the five missing crewmembers, and sent them back to their families for burial.

*Note: The five crewmembers whose bodies were recovered in the plane were Childers, Miller, Passavant, Pilch, and Shaffer.*

“It took the Dutch over four months and many dollars and manpower to accomplish that feat, but they were and are still very grateful for our entry into the war which released them from German occupation. As a matter of fact, they still conduct an annual memorial service at Gronkin, on that reclaimed land, in memory of all airmen who perished on their behalf.”

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-7533, Oakley			MACR #1713
66th Squadron Crew:			
OAKLEY, WARREN W. ASN 0-740893	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Seattle, Washington
COLLINS, RICHARD K. ASN 0-393514	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Ithica, New York
POWERS, FRANK D. ASN 0-673624	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Jacksonville, Florida
CHRISTIAN, JAMES W. Jr. ASN 14266875	Bombardier KIA	T/Sgt.	Seberling, Florida
BYERS, JOHN F. ASN 37152819	Engineer Evadee, POW	T/Sgt.	Custer, South Dakota
FLEISCHMAN, ABEL ASN 32509819	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
SMITH, ROBERT F. ASN 17026292	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Minneapolis, Minnesota
TIMME, ARTHUR C. ASN 12092338	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
WEAVER, LEWIS R. ASN 35401274	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Columbus, Ohio
SONDAG, WILLIS ASN 17068404	Tail Turret KIA, buried Margraten (O-22-2)	S/Sgt.	Harper, Iowa

The second 66th Squadron aircraft lost was piloted by 1st Lt. Warren W. Oakley and Richard K. Collins. The MACR contains this information: Aircraft #533 was reported as lagging in the rear of the formation just after target with bomb bay doors still open. Different crews observed this aircraft at various times between 1400 and 1431 hours and each one reported that it was losing altitude but apparently under control. Aircraft #548 (Heskett's) had been flying on the right wing and Heskett reported that he pulled alongside #533 to determine why they were not keeping up

with the formation. (It was later learned that #533 had lost three superchargers.) Oakley motioned for him to go ahead and catch the formation. At 1431, the tail gunner of #548, saw the ship begin to spiral down below into the clouds. It was not believed likely that any of the crew survived as no chutes were seen to open.

A crew member, Sgt. Abel Fleischman, tells his account: "I was flying spare radio operator on this crew. First of all, we were hit by flak, and then jumped by about five to seven fighters. We couldn't unload our bombs as they were stuck as were the bomb bay doors. Our bombardier, Christian, asked the pilot if he should unload them by hand, but the pilot said, 'No. We are over enemy-occupied land.'

"The fighters knocked all or at least part of our tail off. After Byers (engineer) came out of the top turret and bailed out, I think we started to go into a spin, but I managed to get out as well. Just Byers and I got out. [Editor's note: One more crewmember, Lt. Frank Powers, also got out.]

"Miller's crew also went down the same day – that was my original crew with whom I trained. I landed by parachute in Holland (near Den Ham). After hiding out a couple of hours, was captured and taken to a Dutch hospital for about six weeks. Then to Frankfurt, Stalag Luft 6, 4, and 1."

Lt. Frank D. Powers, navigator, adds, "We were a squadron leader and made our target. But we lost two engines on the return, our wingmen abandoned us, and flak or fighters hit the tail surfaces – and we spiraled down, out of control. T/Sgt. Christian, the bombardier, and I had no warning of how serious the problem was, so we stayed with the plane. (Pilots were so busy trying to regain control they couldn't ring the bail out warning.) We thought that Warren Oakley would regain control. Byers and the radio operator (Fleischman) knew about the tail damage and they abandoned ship at high altitude. Had Byers warned us, we probably all would have made it. Christian, bless him, helped me put on my parachute and was killed by the jump. We were so low, less than 800 feet at that time, that Christian's chute never fully opened.

"Before the local policemen arrived, a young man of about 25 or so, came up to me and in good English, said 'I congratulate you – all of your friends are dead.' At that time I did not know we were in the Netherlands and had the fleeting thought that he was a German and was going to inflict a terrible beating on me.

"Then a policeman, a young man about my age, 22, arrived and his sympathy was with me, but with the surrounding families knowing that I was there, he had to phone the German authorities and release me to them."

I contacted the widow of John F. Byers, who gave me the following information: "John told me much of what Abel Fleishman told you. He also thought that they were the only two to get out. John was too big to wear his chute in the turret, so he grabbed it and snapped it on, but when he tried to pull the ripcord, he had it on upside down. In his own words, it scared the hell out of him, but as you know, it worked. He landed in a plowed field somewhere in Holland, went in to the top of his boots, and hurt his knee. Some men were there almost as soon as he landed – they helped him to a barn, then hid him in the hay, under gobs of hay. Soon S.S. men came with pitch forks, but he was hidden deep enough that they missed him. When they left, one of the Dutch men got him on a bicycle, took him in to town and to a doctor (Den Ham?). He stayed there over a Pub or bar until they could move him a few days later."

John managed to avoid capture for a considerable period, had many close calls – too many to include in this report. Then an informer notified the S.S. and he was captured and became a POW.

P.C. Meijer, Dutch historian from Den Ham, Netherlands, has sent data about his investigation of this crew. “Last week I found the place where the Liberator came down, and met a farmer who lives near the place. The farmer, Mr. Bril, said he remembered all what happened, he was outdoors when the plane came in at low speed and was just above the roof of the barn. At first, he thought it was a belly landing, but it hit very hard. Then immediately, he saw an American come running toward him (Powers, who had just parachuted) and was yelling, ‘Bomb! Bomb!’ and making gestures to lie down – and he did. The aircraft exploded immediately and it was like a fireworks display with the ammunition exploding, fire, flares, etc. Pieces of the plane were strewn about. The explosions made a large crater seven meters deep and 20 meters in diameter, broke the windows in his house, and blew the doors open.

“One crew member landed about 30 meters from his house – Powers. People later told him that another chutist, Fleischman, came down southwest of his farm, and he hid in the woods and was soon captured. And the third chutist, Byers, was found and hidden by the other farmers in the area. In a very short time, the Germans arrived to take Powers prisoner, but they could not understand English, so brought in a teacher who spoke English to interpret for them. Later, he was taken away...”

In 1985, during the 40th anniversary celebration of the liberation of their country, the people of Den Ham honored this crew with speeches, flowers, photographs – they are remembered!

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## 30 December 1943

### Ludwigshaven, Germany

The primary target there was the Chemical Works of I.G. Farben-industries which was bombed via PFF method through clouds. One aircraft did not return.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-7548 I, Heskett	BULL O' THE WOODS		MACR #1752
66th Squadron Crew:			
HESKETT, DONALD J. ASN 0-530727	Pilot Evadee, returned	1st Lt.	Junction City, Kansas
BILLINGS, JAMES R. ASN 0-676728	Co-pilot KIA, buried Epinal (A-20-41)	1st Lt.	Guthrie, Oklahoma
RENDALL, WILLIAM A. ASN 0-678767	Navigator Evadee, POW	1st Lt.	Buffalo, New York
ZIELENKIEWICZ, ADOLPH ASN 0-735010	Bombardier Evadee, returned	1st Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
RISCH, ELMER D. ASN 38173842	Engineer Evadee, returned 20 March 44	T/Sgt.	New Orleans, Louisiana
SYMONS, EUGENE ASN 33348877	Radio Oper. Evadee, returned	T/Sgt.	Oil City, Pennsylvania

LANGCASKEY, STANLEY G. ASN 12132225	Ball Turret Evadee, returned	S/Sgt.	Trenton, New Jersey
BLITZ, AULIS L. ASN 33204357	RW Gunner KIA, buried Epinal (B-22-53)	S/Sgt.	Baltimore, Maryland
CREGGER, CHARLES W. ASN 7023872	LW Gunner Evadee, returned	Sgt.	Nebs, Virginia
MILLER, GEORGE R. ASN 33237069	Tail Turret Evadee, returned 20 March 44	S/Sgt.	Woodbine, Pennsylvania

1st Lt. Donald J. Heskett was the pilot of this plane. The MACR included this account by Sgt. Elmer D. Risch, engineer: "I knew this crew quite well due to a shortage of engineers and top turret gunners. I made two missions with them: one was Kjeller and then this mission to Ludwigshaven. Our load was fire bombs and both bomb bays were loaded full with the 80 or 90 pound type. Just before crossing the Channel, I pulled all the arming pins myself so the bombs were armed and ready to go off on contact.

"We were hit by enemy fighters at 3 o'clock, a little higher than level. I was in the top turret facing the rear. As they came in, they gave us the works, one behind the other. We were flying high and on the outside of the formation. Bullets were ricocheting because I was hit in the left leg twice and the left heel from the rear, or front of the plane.

"The pilot soon gave orders to 'Prepare to bail out' on the interphone, so I left the turret and the interphone system. I opened the bomb bay doors and stood on the catwalk. When the radio operator (Symons) started to come to me, and I saw Lt. Heskett leave his seat, I went overboard. I never saw Lt. Billings, and I never saw anything in the waist of the plane. I never saw anyone of the crew or heard about them until I got back to England.

"When in France, I was told that two planes had crashed in that neighborhood. The name of the plane (I was on) was BULL O' THE WOODS with a large bull painted on the left front side, snorting smoke. I made a free fall in my chute and didn't pull the ripcord until I went through the clouds. Then, in a matter of seconds, I was on the ground. I did not see the plane crash..."

William A. Rendall, navigator, added to the story, "The original Heskett crew was assigned to the 66th Sq. on 14 August 1943. Don Heskett had been a Flight Officer, came up from the ranks, and was married. Ed Risch was flying as a replacement for Chocklett, who was otherwise scheduled that day. We had been assigned to do some GEE-Box training, but were called for briefing on very short notice. Sgt. Elmer D. Risch was flying as a replacement that day for our engineer, who was being court marshalled that day for decking an MP in Norwich.

"As I recall, we were about 14 minutes across the coast in Abbeville Country when Heskett moved from the box to fill in an open spot on Coffin Corner, due to an abortion at the coast. He swung a little too wide and that was a signal for an attack from 3 o'clock by three FW 190s. Blitz was killed instantly on the first pass and Miller took a metal fragment through his elbow. Controls were damaged on the right side, and we started losing altitude in a slow turn.

"Heskett rang the bail out bell, and I was not able to get any answer on the interphone, so I started through the tunnel to go up on deck, but found that the bail-out dinghy in the passageway had snapped onto the pocket of my leather flying trousers. I finally got the other snap of the dinghy free from its ring, and went out the nose wheel door with the dinghy still attached to me.

“It was a difficult free fall with that darn dinghy slapping around, and I had to open up higher than comfortable. When the chute opened, the pocket with the escape kit left along with the dinghy.

“Langcaskey, after getting Miller out of the plane, had one of the most amazing escape stories I have ever heard. But Langcaskey has since died of a coronary. Heskett walked out through Portugal. I went back to France in 1972, and back to the crash site to recover some of the pieces of BULL O’ THE WOODS. I learned that Billings’ body was recovered at the crash site, as was Blitz’s, and they had been buried side by side by the French until they were moved to Epinal, at the American Cemetery.

*Note: For Stanley Langcaskey’s story, see the 2nd Air Division Association’s “News Letter” dated June 1975, page 3, story by William R. Robertie.*

“We all landed within two miles of the crash site near Chavigny, north of Soisson. Don Heskett set a speed record for return to the base; but for me, I made the mistake of showing off my college French to the chief of the first Resistance Group that I contacted (and who was a Chief of Police). He then found me very useful in moving English and American airmen. On June 19th, 1944 the Gestapo got me in France...”

In another letter, Rendall noted: “We were hit by ME 109s as we moved to low, outside wing, 14 minutes over the French Coast, going in. The BULL O’ THE WOODS crashed north of Soisson, near Chavigny, with Sgt. Blitz, waist gunner, and who was killed on first pass, and Lt. Billings (reason unknown) still aboard. Most of the parachutes fell within a two-mile radius of the plane.

“A French family helped me across the river at Soisson on New Year’s Eve and I walked SE by night for ten days. After I made contact with an organized group of the French Resistance, I was active in an evacuation program for airmen and refugees until the Gestapo infiltrated on 19 June 1944. Then Chalons-Sur-Marne and Fersnes Prison in Paris before evacuation to Germany. Finally made a Military POW at Stalag Luft III (Sagan). It was over run by the Russian Front on 1/30/45. Then a long march to Moosburg and liberated by 14th Armored Division 30 April 1945.”

Some details are available on the evasions of Cregger, Heskett, Langcaskey, Miller, and Risch. Risch was first in contact with the “Burgundy” escape line (reseau Bourgogne) and then was handed over to the “Shelburne” line (as was Sgt. Cregger). The former came out of France by boat on the night of March 19/20, 1944 (Operation Bonaparte IV) and the latter on the night of March 16/17, 1944 (Bonaparte III). Heskett was on the first Bonaparte Operation on the night of January 28/29, 1944. Stan Langcaskey was a “Burgundy” evader too, but like most of the Allied airmen who made it back to England with his organization, he crossed the Pyrenees Mountains. Miller possibly was involved with “Burgundy” also, but this is not confirmed.

*Note: Additional details on evasion, specifically the story of Milton Rosenblatt (Sobotka crew, 21 January 1944) can be found in the Summer 2001 8 Ball Tails newsletter.*

# 1944

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## 13 January 1944

### Training Mission, Shipdham, England

On this day, 2nd Lt. Glenn C. Hovey and his crew were performing a training mission, readying themselves for combat. This crew had joined the 68th Squadron on 24 December, 1943, and had not yet participated in a combat mission.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7551 Y, Hovey			Crash-landed
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew perished		
HOVEY, GLENN C. ASN 0-676805	Pilot DIED	2nd Lt.	Fairfield, Iowa
PETERSON, CLIFFORD C. ASN 0-806899	Co-pilot DIED	2nd Lt.	Atlanta, Georgia
WEINER, STANLEY ASN 0-674819	Navigator DIED	2nd Lt.	Santa Monica, California
SOWERS, RICHARD J. ASN 0-679676	Bombardier DIED	2nd Lt.	Toledo, Ohio
NELSON, ARTHUR L. ASN 36378877	Engineer DIED, buried Cambridge (C-3-79)	S/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
HOFFMAN, WALTER G. Jr. ASN 19176656	Radio Oper. DIED, buried Cambridge (C-5-79)	S/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
SNOW, CLARENCE W. ASN 37219104	Asst. Eng. DIED	Sgt.	Wathena, Kansas
ROBBINS, ROBERT E. ASN 35369184	Asst. Rad. DIED, buried Cambridge (F-1-108)	Sgt.	Peru, Indiana
POLLMANN, EDWARD C. ASN 35672481	Gunner DIED, buried Cambridge (F-3-17)	Sgt.	Cincinnati, Ohio
TESTA, ARTHUR F. ASN 35520803	Tail Turret DIED, buried Cambridge (C-2-79)	Sgt.	Cleveland Hts., Ohio

This aircraft approached the field at Shipdham for a landing with wheels and flaps down and #1 propeller feathered. The pilot evidently “over shot” the landing, so he passed over the field and banked to the left (into that dead engine). While in this left bank, the aircraft lost altitude and dropped below the level of the trees, regained some altitude and then settled back down and struck a tree with the left wing. The airplane crashed into a small clump of trees and exploded, killing all ten men aboard. Lt. Sowers, bombardier was thrown clear of the ship and was taken to the hospital alive. He died at 0200 hours. Time of accident – 1420 hours.

Capt. Charles Kuch, 68th Squadron lead pilot, added these observations: "I was flying co-pilot with Major George Jansen on a slow-time test check with just three of us, including an engineer. We turned into our final approach and were following another plane which seemed to have a dead engine with the propeller turning. He was pretty low when he started to go around again. Major Jansen notified the tower that they had a ship in trouble.

"The plane started a left turn at a rather low altitude. it didn't appear that the pilots were carrying enough power. The plane started down, still turning. Jansen told them, 'It's too late, Pathway' as the plane struck the ground at a slight angle. We went around, flying over the crash site and helping direct crash and emergency vehicles.

"When we landed, I went with Jansen in his Jeep to the crash site. It was the first one I'd seen up close, and it was a real mess. It was the crew's first flight from Shipdham and Hovey had asked for a plane. I think he flew co-pilot to me on a [training] mission just a couple of days earlier, but no one else [on that crew] had made even one flight here. I can still smell it!"

Various archaeological groups have visited this site since 1972 and a selection of small personal effects are understood to have been found, including coins, keys and an identity bracelet marked "Stanley Weiner 0-674819". The Norfolk And Suffolk Aviation Museum's members visit to the site (1984) in the now replanted pine grove, revealed various burnt patches and some small items of wreckage, including harness and parachute buckles, many exploded .50 cal. rounds date '42 and '43.

## 14 January 1944

### Coastal Military Installations, Escalles Sur Buchy, France

There was no flak over the target, but the enemy sent about 20 fighters up to give challenge. The 44th BG shot down eight of these. Unfortunately, the 67th Squadron lost one aircraft. Plane crashed near Grandcamp, France.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-23779 G-Bar, Goodwin	4-Q-2	MACR #2362
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#### 67th Squadron Crew:

GOODWIN, HENRY C. Jr. ASN 0-675337	Pilot KIA, buried in U. S.	2nd Lt.	San Antonio, Texas
CLARK, RAYMOND C. ASN 0-748571	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Savannah, Georgia
PHELPS, JOHN E. ASN 0-747138	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	El Monte, California
FOREST, RICHARD P. ASN 0-676584	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Lynn, Massachusetts
MINDELSON, JOSEPH ASN 17037191	Engineer KIA, buried Normandy (B-7-42)	T/Sgt.	St. Paul, Minnesota
PALYS, JOSEPH E. ASN 31129150	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Ware, Massachusetts
MONKS, JOHN C. ASN 35416592	Top Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Nelsonville, Ohio

CHALAN, ANDY ASN 13145502	Hatch Gun. KIA, buried Normandy (B-21-6)	S/Sgt.	Portage, Pennsylvania
CAPO, JOSEPH A. ASN 33362487	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	New Brighton, Pennsylvania
LEWIS, JAMES E. Jr. ASN 33577302	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The MACR includes an account by M.F. McGeary – “I was flying co-pilot in a ship ahead and to the left of ship #41-23779. The formation was attacked by seven enemy aircraft – FWs and Me 109s, from head on. The enemy passed through the formation with one hitting #779 in the #2 engine, setting it on fire. The plane went into a glide and when I looked around again, the ship had exploded. My right waist gunner and tail gunners saw one chute, believed to be the waist position as they went into the glide – it opened OK. I saw another chute that came out on fire, believed from the nose. No more parachutes were seen. This happened near the town of Duclair, west of Rouen [and Bolbec].”

Right waist gunner Joseph A. Capo had this report on file, “Goodwin announced that the plane had been hit and was on fire, and ordered the crew to abandon ship. Palys, our radio operator, was trying to get out of a very small window on the flight deck, too small for him to even try to fit through! Lewis, tail gunner, was dead and motionless in his turret.”

Smoke got so thick that Capo could see nothing at all. He took off his oxygen mask and was immediately burned by the intense heat. He said that in the spirit of panic that was affecting everyone at that time (e.g. Palys) that he thought he could see more clearly if he removed his mask. But only when he actually removed it did he realize how very hot it was. So he immediately made his exit through the bomb bay doors.

“After I jumped and was on the way down, I could see Germans driving in their vehicles to capture prisoners. When I landed, it sent a tremendous jolt all the way up my spine. As soon as I hit the ground, a French partisan appeared very briefly, jumping out of the woods, saying ‘Pistola, pistola.’ I threw him my sidearm and this man quickly disappeared back into the woods.” Shortly thereafter, Capo was surrounded by Germans.

For the first six months he was a POW, Capo could not speak a word, apparently resulting from the jolt that he got on landing, but it also could have been the result of his throat being burned by those searing flames and heat. John Monks, the only other survivor, said that he saw the ship explode soon after he jumped and he saw Capo shortly afterwards. He also commented that Capo was badly burned about his eyes and face. Neither man saw any other parachutes. Sgt. Capo often stated that he thought Lt. Goodwin was killed when the plane was hit and all communications were knocked out at that same time. The plane crashed near Bolbec, France. All eight men remaining aboard the ship were buried at La Harve, France.

This was the fourth mission for the crew.



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## 20 January 1944

### Pilot Suicide, Shipdham, England

A new pilot and crew joined the 68th Squadron in July 1943 while the group was in North Africa, having trained with Col. Crowder's Provisional Group, April 1943, at Tucson, Arizona. This pilot flew his first mission on 25 September 1943 to Lucca, Italy. On 1 October 1943, he flew as co-pilot with Lt. George P. Martin. His third and last mission was on 5 December 1943 again as first pilot, to Cognac, France. Later, he was grounded and on 20 January 1944, he took his own life.

*Note: The pilot's name is omitted here, since naming him would serve no useful purpose, however the story is included here to show the intense pressure that pilots and crew faced.*

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## 21 January 1944

Although all 44th BG planes took off at the same time, there were actually two target missions involved on this date, with two separate formations. As there were losses in both formations, presentation will be made as if there were two missions.

### V-1 Sites, Pas Des Calais Area, Escalles Sur Buchy, France

Once again the weather was poor, with heavy cloud cover over most of this area of France. Normally, this should have been a relatively "safe" mission, being so close to the English Channel, but it turned out to be VERY costly. The 66th and 68th squadrons had their own specific target to hit and were determined to do so in spite of the clouds which were covering the small V-1 launching sites. Bombing altitude was at a very low 12,000 feet.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-72813 L, Spelts	QUEEN MARLENE	MACR #2252
66th Squadron Crew:		
SPELTS, MARTIN E. ASN 0-680326	Pilot KIA, Ardennes Cem. WOM	1st Lt. Las Cruces, New Mexico
SMITH, WILLIAM L. ASN 0-805997	Co-pilot KIA, Ardennes Cem. WOM	2nd Lt. Battle Creek, Michigan
RODGERS, HAROLD R. ASN 0-684197	Bombardier KIA, buried Normandy (A-11-42)	2nd Lt. Allentown, Pennsylvania
GOODNOW, EDWARD W. ASN 0-794123	Navigator KIA, buried Ardennes (C-14-49)	1st Lt. Hartford, Connecticut
HITES, HAROLD B. ASN 17129255	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Merrian, Kansas
HALL, KENNETH H. ASN 35323302	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Normandy (A-9-17)	T/Sgt. Cleveland, Ohio
REEDY, WILBUR R. ASN 17033225	Ball Turret KIA, buried Normandy (B-11-17)	S/Sgt. Grinnell, Iowa
HALL, FRANKLIN P. ASN 14044753	Waist Gun. KIA, Ardennes Cem. WOM	S/Sgt. Leesburg, Florida
GOODEN, RAY C. ASN 33442228	Belly Gun. KIA	S/Sgt. Elkton, Virginia

MAYHEW, RICHARD A.  
ASN 19142329

Tail Turret  
Evadee, returned

S/Sgt.

Reno,  
Nevada

The 66th Squadron lost an aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt. Martin E. Spelts, while attacking Ecalles Sur Buchy. The MACR briefly states that at 1514 hours this aircraft was seen to wing over and dive down, no chutes. It hit the ground and exploded. This loss occurred during the first attack by enemy aircraft and the pilot is believed to have been hit, because the aircraft was not visibly damaged.

S/Sgt. Richard A. Mayhew, tail gunner and sole survivor, told his story, “We were not awakened early, had breakfast and then on to briefing. We were told they didn’t expect us to encounter many enemy contacts. After boarding, I finished my duties of checking all guns and bombs and as I went back to my station as tail gunner, I thought that this would be just another milk run. On this particular mission, the navigator and bombardier were replacements. I did not know them. Lt. Spurgeon was off flight duty due to illness.

“Our squadron was flying the low element of the flight and our ship, QUEEN MARLENE, was in the position known to all as Purple Heart corner. Upon approaching the target, we got a call from the lead ship saying, ‘We missed our target, go around. Go around.’ As we approached it a second time, Lt. Spelts called the bombardier and told him we were on course and he should open the bomb bay doors and take over the ship. ‘I have the aircraft, thank you, Sir,’ as the bombardier answered back. ‘We are on target. Bombs away’, he then said.

“At about that moment, I saw about 5 or 6 FW 190s, or as we called them, Goering’s Yellow Bellies, closing in on us. I yelled, ‘Fighters. Fighters at 6 o’clock, low!’ The sound of their gunfire rang through the aircraft from the underside. The ball turret gunner, Sgt. Reedy, screamed, ‘I’m hit – I’m hit!’ The fighters passed on and made a curve to the right, and returned from above, again fired at us, killing our top turret gunner, Sgt. Hites, and our co-pilot, Lt. Smith.

“Next, I heard someone who I assumed was our radio man, Hall, yell, ‘Hydraulic fluid is spraying over my face!’ Then the navigator, Lt. Goodnow, said, ‘I’m hit! The bombardier is dead. My God, we’re going down!’

“Lt. Spelts’ voice then came through the interphone with, ‘Abandon the...’ That was all – our intercom had gone out. I then looked back into the waist positions and saw the two gunners, Gooden and F.P. Hall, putting on their chutes. I rotated my turret to gain access to the rear section, and fell backward out of the turret. I grabbed my chute with my right hand and opened the lower escape hatch with my left. While I was snapping my chute to the right harness ring, it happened! The ship did a rollover – and I assume there was an explosion because I blacked out.

“When I came to, I was falling free from the aircraft. My chest pack was hooked to the right ring only. I frantically tried to hook the left ring but the harness was too tight. I decided to pull the ripcord anyhow, but the chute didn’t open! I clawed at the cover and managed to open it, and reeled the chute out by hand. It finally opened with a loud crackling sound – and I felt like I was going right through the harness. I blacked out again, momentarily, this time, and when I came to again, I saw pieces of the QUEEN MARLENE falling around me.

“Luckily, I landed in a newly plowed field and I didn’t appear to have any serious injuries. The left side of my face was bleeding – shrapnel, I imagine, but nothing serious – burns, cuts. However, I had lost my partial dental plates and my flying boots were gone.

“Before I could get to my feet, two Frenchmen ran to me, felt my arms and legs for broken bones, and being assured that I was OK, they ran up a small rise to see what happened to the airplane. I followed them and saw the remainder of the ship burning. I did not see any parachutes or anyone else around. There were German military trucks racing to the site of the crash. At that time, it was the policy of the German Army to go to the site of the crash and search an area one mile in diameter.

“When I saw the Germans, I ran back, buried my chute and raced off in the opposite direction to where I met a French farmer with a cart loaded with boughs. I crawled under the wood and hid.” S/Sgt. Mayhew successfully evaded capture and returned to duty 29 May, 1944. He was sent back to the U.S. for skin grafts and treatment. He is now deceased.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7635 Q, Howington	RAM IT-DAM IT/ ARIES		MACR #2357
68th Squadron Crew (one exception):			
HOWINGTON, HARTWELL R. ASN 0-800356	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Cantonment, Florida
CURTIS, HERMAN M. ASN 0-748585	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Seaport, Maine
KASTEN, RICHARD J. ASN 0-683831	Navigator KIA, WOM Normandy	1st Lt.	Grand Rapids, Michigan
CROWL, WAYNE D. ASN 0-741141	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt.	Centerburg, Ohio
BARLOW, ARCHIE R. ASN 14151313	Engineer Evadee, returned 5 June 1944	T/Sgt.	Hattiesburg, Mississippi
ROSENBLATT, ALVIN A. ASN 12164582	Radio Oper. Evadee, returned	T/Sgt.	Newark, New Jersey
HEITER, NICHOLAS M. ASN 17106849	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Bridgewater, South Dakota
BLAKLEY, CHARLES W. ASN 39831745	RW Gunner Evadee, returned	S/Sgt.	Parma, Idaho
KLEIN, ALFRED M. ASN 32337637	LW Gunner Sgt. Evadee, returned		New York City, New York
BOGGS, EARL E. ASN 18162560	Tail Turret POW, wounded in ankle and foot	S/Sgt.	Porter, Oklahoma
REEVES, RAY P. (67th Squadron) ASN 18076981	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. Evadee, returned		Alanreed, Texas

The 68th Squadron drew the “Tail-end Charlie” section of our formation and paid heavily for it. The 68th sent out seven aircraft and only three of them returned!

Lt. Hartwell R. Howington, pilot of RAM IT-DAM IT, was hit during the third attack of the enemy aircraft, according to the MACR. It was observed to make a wide circle to the left, smoking, and went into a spin; one chute observed. But the fighter attacks were so intense at this time that no further observations were made or reported.

Sgt. Archie Barlow, engineer, relates his experiences that day, “All of our previous missions had been to Germany or Norway at high altitudes and extremely cold temperatures. This milk run

was misnamed, for sure. We had a mid-morning call out and briefing instead of the usual pre-dawn awakening.

“The target area was cloud covered when we arrived and we were on our third run, trying to get a good visual drop from about 12,000 feet when we first saw the German fighter formations. They made the first pass from off our right wing, then climbed ahead to make the next from about 11 o’clock, high. They must have raked us with several 20-mm hits. One exploded directly on the nose, killing the bombardier and navigator, and turning their compartment into an instant inferno. We think the co-pilot, Lt. Curtis, was killed by that very same blast. Another round must have gone off either on, or very near, the top turret I was manning, blowing off the plexiglass dome and sending shrapnel into my left chest and arm. I grabbed the seat release cable and dropped to the flight deck.

“The right wall above the radio station was on fire and Rosenblatt, the radio operator, was putting on his chute. He yelled that we had other fires in the waist area and had been ordered to bail out by the pilot. A quick glance forward showed the pilot, Howington, fighting the controls and was apparently unharmed.

“I snapped on my chute, opened the door to the nose wheel compartment, and dropped down to be hit by heat and flames blowing back from the nose area. I stepped out on the catwalk, thankfully noting that the bomb bay doors were open and the bombs had been jettisoned. Just then Rosenblatt dropped down from the flight deck. I took one final glance into the cockpit. The pilot was looking back and motioning with one hand for us to jump.

“I actually jumped with the intention of free-falling for two to three thousand feet before opening my chute as we had been instructed to do many times while in training. But that falling sensation was such a shock to my system that I could not have been more than twenty to thirty feet beneath the plane when I changed my mind and gave a hearty yank on that cord. I wanted to know – and immediately – whether or not that chute was good! It was, and the heavy jerk of the canopy’s opening was welcome relief.

“I spent a few seconds trying to stop my wild oscillations, then looked off toward our plane. It was by then some distance off and probably at no more than 2,000 feet altitude. As I watched, it went into a steep glide and hit the ground in a fiery explosion. I saw only one chute between the plane and myself and figured that to be Rosenblatt’s.

“I came down in a plowed field on the edge of a small village, spraining my ankle in landing. An elderly lady, once convinced that I was an American, led me into a nearby wooded area where we soon came upon Charles Blakely, one of our waist gunners. Speaking no English, the lady made us understand, through sign language and by using my watch, that we were to remain there until she returned at 9 o’clock that night. She left, going deeper into the woods.

“Within 15 minutes, German troops were searching for us. Three of them, talking quietly, but looking neither left or right, walked by us on a path no more than fifty feet away. Blakely was wearing a bright blue “Bunny Suit” (electrically heated coveralls) that could have easily been seen. And as we waited for darkness, Blakely told me about a fire in the wing-root area above the bomb bay and that we had also lost one engine and another seemed damaged. The photographer had been the first to jump – from the rear hatch – and Blakely and Alfred Klein, the other waist gunners, jumped once they saw the belly and tail gunners get out of their turrets OK.”

Later that night they were joined with Rosenblatt and Klein, who also had been hidden nearby. And later still, they were told that the pilot had gotten out of the plane, but that he was killed on impact with the ground. He probably had bailed out too low for his chute to fully open. And after a long and eventful trip that took until May, Sgt. Barlow arrived in Spain; June 1st in London, soon on a flight home.

Archie also added, "The mind sure plays tricks on you after 40 years. I think, but am not positive, that our plane was 'QUEENIE', and not RAM IT-DAM IT. I do remember her Crew Chief was Sgt. Lee. Also, we did have an eleventh man aboard that day. He was a photographer, I think named Reeves. He had loaded up in the rear just before take off and I never saw him then or later. When I came through an intelligence unit in London in June 1944, I was told that he, too, had just been through, having gotten out through Spain also."

*Note: The name "Queenie" is probably due to the aircraft's call letter (Q).*

S/Sgt. Earl E. Boggs said, "There definitely was a cameraman on the plane that morning. When we loaded into the plane, I went in through the rear camera hatch and the camera was raised up into the fuselage. It completely blocked off the tail section, so I had to wait until it had been lowered into position before I could get back into my tail turret. I remember telling the cameraman that if we had to bail out, he was not to raise the camera up into the plane and cut me off back there in the tail with no way to get out. Instead, he should salvo the darn thing.

"When I came out of the turret to bail out, the camera and the cameraman were long gone. I do not remember the man's name but have a listing of our crew that day – perhaps it was Ray P. Reeves.

"I was hit in the right foot and ankle and spent the first month in a German field hospital in France. From there, I went to the interrogation center at Frankfurt. From there, by train, to Stalag Luft 6 at Memel, East Prussia and from there to Stalag Luft 4 near Stettin, Germany. The last three or four months were spent on the road. I was liberated May 3rd by the English. I think Heiter was in Stalag Luft 1."

Boggs was right that it was radio operator Ray P. Reeves who was operating that camera that day. Ray informed me that, "I had been the radioman for Pappy Hill for many missions, including Ploesti and Weiner Neustadt, but was temporarily taken off combat to correct my nose and ear problems in December '43. As I had often operated a hand-held K-20 camera taking photos of our bomb strikes through the bomb bay on our missions, I became familiar with the photographers, etc. While recovering, I spent many hours in the photographic section helping and talking with the officer (Harvell?) My position on Hill's crew in the 67th Squadron had been filled (by Sgt. Chase) so I was asked to fly as a photographer with the large camera at the rear hatch to try to take photos of German military installations to and from the target. My first mission – and last – as a photographer was with this 68th Squadron crew.

"On the fifth circle to bomb, an old Me 109 converted night fighter attacked us, not from the nose, but from beneath and did not close, but fired from long range – and hit us, starting a fire. So I cleared the back hatch and jumped. I was eventually hidden by the French UG [underground], was almost caught by the Gestapo in Paris, was escorted by train and then by bus towards the Spanish border. My guide abandoned me in the Pyrenees, where I nearly froze to death, but walked into Spain and was interned until an American Attaché came for me. To

Gibraltar, to England, and the ZOI [Zone of Interior] on 17 June 44, and “separated” on 24 November 1944.

During the war, Hartwell Howington’s brother received the following letter from a French girl named Gilberte Daumal of Lignieres-Chatelain, Somme, France: “I am an unknown French girl, but you will understand the reason why I dare to write to you. I think you have heard of death of your brother, Lt. Howington Hartwell. I am very sorry to revive your pain and I am deeply moved to tell you a sad story so difficult for me to translate in English.

“On the 21st of January 1944, at 3:00 o’clock in the afternoon, a big airplane fell, touched by antiaircraft near my small village somewhere in France. I perceived several parachutes in the sky, then with many people I went to see the remains of the airplane, which burned.

“Suddenly, a Frenchman called us. He had uncovered a parachute. I was very afraid to approach near him. I did not want to see his face because I am a girl of feelings. People told me that he was not wounded, but his limbs broken by the downfall, the blood flowed from his ears, nose and mouth. A man who was working in the fields said to me to have seen him who struggled in the air because his parachute did not open. German soldiers were there.

“They put his papers and perhaps jewels but I cannot assure to you I stayed aloof and I saw something which shone on the ground. Quickly I lowered and I picked it up. Cautiously, I looked. It was a wristwatch; there were some drops of blood outside and inside. I kept it in my hand precisely. I did not want that Germans would take it. I tried to learn his address, but I have been forbidden to approach. I just learned his name and birthday, but I swore to myself to send this dear souvenir to Howington’s family. At that time I did not know how very difficult it would be with this insufficient information.

“The day after, I went again to the airplane. One or two airmen who could not jump out were on ground and burned. Germans put their remains into a small coffin. Lt. Howington was also placed in a large coffin. Soldiers carried him in a truck. His body passed in front of me. I crossed myself and the tragedy finished.

“He was buried in the cemetery of Poix at 10 kilometers from my village and I knew his grave very well where I went often to bring flowers and pray for him and his family so far.

“Now I am very sad because his grave is not there. American authority has taken away all bodies and transported them in a village in another district in order to make a military cemetery, but I know the name of this new place.

“During the occupation, I could not make inquiries. I was waiting for the liberation. I learned that a French woman of French forces inside had lodged four American paratroopers who were in the same airplane. Lastly, I went and saw her. She gave four civilian addresses, so I wrote on the 18th of April [1945]. At the same time, I wrote to the American Embassy in Paris, which replied very quickly and could not give Howington’s family address.

“I was beginning to despair when on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, I received a lovely letter from one of Howington’s comrades, Charles Blakley. He indicated to me two addresses – yours and Mrs. Howington’s. I chose yours because I suppose, but I am not sure, if his wife knows this bad news. Please show her this letter if you like and tell me how I can send the wristwatch as soon as possible.

“Destiny has confided a mission to me and it is nearly finished. Please excuse my bad English, but you must understand how difficult it is to write so long a letter. Give my regards to Mrs. Howington.”

As she promised in her letter, Mademoiselle Gilberte Daumal returned the watch to Howington’s widow. The women corresponded over the years and later Howington’s widow sent Gilberte material for her wedding dress.

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The second 68th Squadron aircraft lost on the 21st was that piloted by 1st Lt. Gary M. Mathisen.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7514 O, Mathisen	VALIANT LADY	MACR #2359
68th Squadron Crew:		
MATHISEN, GARY M. ASN 0-735418	Pilot KIA – Body Identified 5 Feb. 1944	1st Lt. Schenectady, New York
BALLANGRUD, NORRIS S. ASN 0-681300	Co-pilot KIA – Body Identified, Location: USA	2nd Lt. Portland, Oregon
CLEARY, JOHN J. ASN 0-678888	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Long Beach, New York
HOELTKE, DONALD R. ASN 0-678414	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt. Pittsford, New York
DICKINSON, JOHN L. ASN 32453614	Engineer KIA, WOM Ardennes	T/Sgt. Gladstone, New Jersey
ALLEN, RICHARD E. ASN 32456988	Radio Oper. POW, died from wounds in 1947	T/Sgt. East Orange, New Jersey
TYLER, LEO M. ASN 17155940	Ball Turret POW, KIA Poix, France	S/Sgt. Glenwood, Minnesota
ADAMS, VICTOR J. ASN 32323720	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Brooklyn, New York
OSTENSON, JACK N. ASN 6569189	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Normandy	S/Sgt. St. George, Utah
PLAYFORD, JOSEPH E. ASN 11052136	Tail Turret KIA, buried Normandy (B-10-3)	S/Sgt. Ossining, New York

The MACR briefly says that this aircraft, #42-7514, was hit on the sixth and last attack by the enemy fighters. The time was 1526 hours. This plane was seen to nose up and over the formation with the waist position burning profusely. No one reported seeing any parachutes. This was their 18th crew mission.

Sgt. Leo M. Tyler, ball turret gunner, was (apparently) reported incorrectly as POW. He was later reported killed at Poix, Somme, France by the Department of the Army.

Only three men survived to become POWs: Allen, Cleary, and Hoeltke. Relatives of Donald R. Hoeltke reported that only three men got out of the plane and one of these was very seriously injured (probably Allen). The plane was shot down in the area of Bruay, France. The crash site is located at Neuville-Ferrieres, 4 miles SSW of Neufchatel.

When Lt. Hoeltke hit the ground, he was immediately surrounded by troops with about 18 bayonets shoved at him. There was no possibility of any attempt at evading capture. He was taken in for interrogation according to the usual procedure, but Donald learned that his interrogator had worked in the U.S. for several years, knew Al Holderman of the Gannett News, and had returned to Germany as a private pilot. Later, he was grounded and due to his excellent English, was made an interrogator of English and American POWs.

Lt. Hoeltke's widow stated that he had told her he thought that three men got out and parachuted, but one was critically wounded and could have died. He knew that Sgt. Tyler had been made a POW; their site of capture being about 45 miles south east of Calais, France.

Lt. Hoeltke was later sent to Stalag Luft I, Barth and remained there until the end of the war. Lt. Cleary's name was not mentioned. (See his account later on.)

Richard Allen wrote the following, not long before his death in 1947: "We were attacked by about 30 fighters over France near Path Colay on 21 January 1944 and shot down. I believe we went over our target about six times but I couldn't be sure. Before we were hit by the fighters, I was flying Radio Operator (my position) when Sgt. Ostenson came up front to fix some trouble with the nose guns. He was our armament gunner. The pilot told me to take over his (Sgt. Ostenson's place) until he came back; that was the left waist.

"I no sooner plugged in my electric suit when the attack began. There were about seven planes in our squadron and I believe six of us got knocked down. When we got hit, I was shot through the leg and received a bullet in my spine. The other waist gunner S/Sgt. Victor Adams was also shot and as far as I could see, he was dead. The plane was all on fire from oxygen burning, and it brought me to my senses and I put my chute on and pulled myself up on the waist window. My interphone was shot out and I couldn't tell if we were going to make it back or not. The plane was vibrating violently. I saw Sgt. Playford run out of the tail turret, and he was all on fire. At the same time, Sgt. Tyler, our ball turret gunner started to come out. It all happened within a few seconds and in that time, the plane seemed to roll over and I let go and went out. I didn't notice whether they had their parachutes on or not. I did not see Sgt. Dickinson as he was up front in the top turret. When I got on the ground, I was picked up and taken to a hospital where I saw my bombardier, Lt. Hoelke, and Lt. John Cleary (navigator) for a few minutes. Lt. Hoelke and Lt. Cleary had bad ankles from the parachute landings. Later, in the hospital, I met a crewmember from one of the other planes in our squadron and he said he saw our planes going down in a spin with flames coming out of the engines."

The following information comes from a document written by a graves registration investigator named Howard E. Ephraim: "Contact was immediately made with the Mayor of Neuville-Ferrieres, Mr. Gonse, who was particularly well informed on all details pertaining to the crash of A/C 42-7514. He stated that he had seen the plane crash, that three men bailed out, and that six men were removed in caskets by the German troops. That accounted for nine of the ten-man crew. He further declared that eight days later a dog, which had been attracted by the odor, indicated an additional set of remains which had been obscured by a sheet of aluminum. A guard had been posted at the wreckage of the plane and eventually all of the wreckage above ground was removed by German ordnance crews. No one at Neuville was aware of the fact that this last remains was removed, hence, it is considered possible that it was buried at the scene of the crash by the ordnance team. This account was verified by Mrs. Lefebvre who also gave to the



investigator the identification tag of Jack Ostenson, one of the unresolved casualties in the crash. This tag was found at the scene of the crash by Mme. Lefebvre. A few days later, the Germans removed the wreckage. This definitely fixes the identity of the plane as that of A/C 42-7514."

Lt. Cleary wrote the following account about the events of January 21, 1944: "Gentlemen, your target today is a milk run, a V-1 site, southeast of Neufchatel, France, only ten minutes over the enemy. Area escort provided by the 8th Air Force Fighter Command and British Spits. Altitude, 10,000 feet. Departure point is southeast corner of England. The (44th G) Group flight of 24 ships in two 12-ship boxes, will split into two flights of six each. Flight A, lead by Col. Dent; Deputy Lead Lt. Gilbert. Flight B lead by Lt. Williams, Deputy lead Lt. Mathisen. Good luck men. See you when you return.

"Deputy lead, Flight B crossed enemy coast at Fecamp, on course, at altitude. The boxes have split for the different targets, and all are now in separate flights. I.P. in sight, three minutes to target. Light, scattered cumulus below, visibility .8. No flak, no fighters, all is well. Target in sight, obscured by small cumulus, so fly 360 degrees to let it clear. Time 1500. Flew continuous 360s, target is still isolated, but clearing. Time 1550.

"Suddenly, 'Waist to crew. Waist to crew. Enemy aircraft at 2:00 o'clock, low.' Immediately B Flight tightened up the formation and hoped for the best. A quick glance revealed approximately 16 Me 109s and 35 FW 190s. A Flight was approximately three miles ahead and coming off the target. Do not believe they 'dropped.'

"Then the enemy was up and because we were on the bomb run, they concentrated on us, leaving A flight alone. I knew from the ship's vibration that all stations were manned and firing, but they are attacking from about 4 to 5 o'clock, low to level, working us over from the rear.

"From the tail turret came the report (1) 'Spelts going down, (2) There goes Starring. (3) They've got Howington!' We were still on the bomb run and suddenly from the bombardier (Lt. Hoelke) came 'Bombs Away!'

"I heaved a sigh of relief to know that we were rid of them. Bank away to the left and head home. Then, over the interphone from the pilot (Mathisen). 'Keep an eye on Sobotka. He's hit.' I verified this, noting all reports in the ship's log, got a visual fix and informed the crew that if we could hold out for five more minutes, we would be clear and over the Channel to safety. I requested the pilot to summon assistance from our escort. He replied that he couldn't do so. That was up to Lt. Williams in the lead ship.

"Waist gunner then called in that Sobotka was going down, and then from the pilot, 'They're coming in again. Let's get some of the bastards!' All stations were firing and the ship gave a terrific lurch, banked to the right, and went into a slow, descending spiral as the enemy raked us from the nose to tail. A 20-mm exploded between the cockpit and nose, showering Lt. Hoelke and myself with light fragments. 'We've had it!' shouted Hoelke, as we checked things, and found all communications out. Our Nose Gunner, by now, had his turret aligned (so he could get out). Hoelke slid past me to the escape hatch, passed me my chute, and with the nose gunner behind me, we prepared to abandon ship.

"I pulled the emergency release, and as the escape hatch flew away and to save time for the others, I stepped out into space, parachute in hand, intending to secure same during my fall. To my amazement, I still hung suspended in space, shoulders even with the fuselage bottom, with

my head in the ship!! I was caught on my extra long interphone extension. Reaching up, I pulled myself aboard and while I cleared my phone, Hoelke reached over and put my parachute on me. As I re-jumped, I heard the nose gunner shout, "My chute! My chute!!" I fell through the air, spinning like a top while experimenting to find the best position. This proved to be on my back.

"I felt like a feather in the air – there was no feeling of resistance, no planes were to be seen except my own, spinning. It crashed in a flaming roar. No other parachutes were in sight, and I felt sick about the other men.

"There was no more gunfire to be heard, absolutely no sound at all. A celestial calm seemed to prevail. but coming to with a start, I pulled the ripcord. From my now upright position, I realized my chute was satisfactory, and the calm, sunlit terrain of France was sweet below.

"As I neared the ground, I could see a farmer calculating my angle of fall, and as I neared there, he was reinforced by a dozen others. Then I clearly saw they were Germans of the Luftwaffe all around, with machine gun pistols. As I turned to keep them in sight, I hit the ground and my right foot buckled under me. The Germans were on me in a flash, spread-eagling me, they conducted a rapid search. Completed, I was assisted to arise. I reached to release my English type parachute harness, and seeing same was in the unlocked position, I grew suddenly weak. The Germans had to support me to prevent my collapsing. Had I but touched that buckle in the air, my parachute and I would have parted company!

"Escorting me to the roadside, I was seated on the bank while a medical orderly administered some necessary first aid. My right foot was severely injured. Cutting away my flying boot, he applied a cold compress and assured me that there were no broken bones. My left arm was injured from a 20-mm, halfway up the arm from my wrist. It was just like a cut from a keen razor. Washing same, he applied a disinfectant and tied up same with adhesive.

"I was then carried by my escort to their headquarters, and so learned that I was back at Neufchatel, having floated in my chute a distance of 35 kilometers from the Channel at Deippe.

"Here I was the object of much curiosity and many would stroll by, then quickly snap a picture with their cameras. I was detained there for two hours, given my first cup of Ersatz, and met my first German Officer. He strode to the phone and having got his connection, yelled back and forth so loud and fiercely, I was sure they could hang up the phone and still continue the conversation. He studied me a moment, and then gave what I realized to be a description of the Group - Squadron insignia on my A-2 (flying jacket). Then, hanging up, he strode to where I sat and barked in excellent English, "What is the strength of your Group in men and ships?"

"I just sat there and wondered if he really thought I would answer that. Evidently not, because as I silently sat there, he spun on his heels, marched out. After this, I relaxed, slept for half an hour, and then I was awakened by the entrance of a German field gendarmerie. He was the first adult-looking man I saw since being captured (all of the others being boys of extreme youth).

"He took me in charge and seeing I could but hobble, he picked me up in his arms and carried me out to a car very similar to a Willys, where I promptly fell asleep again. This was probably much to the relief of my guard and his chauffeur. I awoke in Rouen and was taken to what appeared to be a Catholic hospital.

“Upon being carried inside, I was overjoyed to see Sgt. Allen, my radio operator, who was in action as a waist gunner that day. He was lying on a stretcher, but sat up and gave me some additional information on the crew. Lt. Hoelke, bombardier, had been there recently, and like myself, had but minor wounds. No one else got out of the ship. The plane itself had communications out, hydraulics out, and the tail section was on fire. Richard, although shot through his body and legs, looked okay, and should, I believe, recover. To date, however, I have been unable to get any word of him.

*Note: Sgt. Allen returned home but died in 1947.*

“Taken to another room, I was treated for my leg and arm, given some vile potion to drink. My guard carried me to Police Headquarters in town where I met Lt. Hoelke and Sgt. Andrew Ross, of Sobotka's crew. Having the office to ourselves, except for a Jerry, who seemed to be acting as C.Q. and who talked to us by means of a German-English-French book of vocabulary, we talked.

“We discussed the situation and came to the conclusion that the nose gunner may have had his chute on the escape hatch and same was lost when I pulled the emergency release; or else he left it at his regular position in the waist, and failed to get back there in time. The Germans had caught us square in the cockpit, getting both the pilot and co-pilot (Ballangrud), then raking the ship back clear to the tail. Like myself, Lt. Hoelke was captured as soon as he hit the ground.

“We were finally served a meal of a hot, hideous soup, Ersatz and bread, which was the national Jerry war loaf. I promptly dug into same and immediately became nauseatingly sick, so that I left the rest of it untouched. The prospect of life on such stuff was distinctly unpleasant, and it was a relief when they showed us to a bed. It was a double bunk, with straw ticks, permitting four occupants in a cell 8' x 10'. I shall be eternally grateful to Sgt. Ross who took off my shoes, wrapped the blanket around me, as I was violently ill.

“An hour later, the lights came on, chain and bolts withdrawn, and Lt. Fred Butler, navigator of Sobotka's crew, was shown in – to complete our happy home.

“I awoke the next day feeling a new man, the shock and dazed condition having passed away. We were given what was to become our standard breakfast – Ersatz and bread. We loafed around the office being an object of curiosity to all the Jerries and French workers. Due to the heat in the room, I removed my A-2 jacket and coveralls. A sad mistake, because shortly thereafter, a guard detail came in and motioned us out, refusing to permit me to take my A-2. I have often wondered if it was recovered by the capturers of Rouen or kept by the Jerries as a souvenir.

“We were ushered into an open truck with six guards, and transferred to the Bastille of Beauvais, a building with a 4 x 8 cubicle containing the usual prison bed, a small stove and a bedpan which stunk to high heaven. The room was daily swept out and stove remade by a British Senegalese, a slim giant who spoke a soft, musical English. He was captured in Africa, had made three escapes – one clear back to Africa, which was now controlled by Rommel. He told me about prison life – mail, Red Cross parcels, etc. Just before we left, he gave me a half can of Corn Beef. It was delicious, as by that time we were famished on the Jerry diet.

“Here, I noticed that the Germans, despite a search, had overlooked my wallet, taking it out and destroying my A.G.O. card and secreted some 12 pounds Sterling in my belt. Lt. (William) Jones, Bombardier from Starring's crew, joined us here.

"After four days at this hostelry. we started on our journey to the "Vaterland" via Paris. All was peaceful and serene in Gay Paree. Everyone seemed well dressed, well fed and fairly content, although we received many a sympathetic glance. We traveled in a compartment to Frankfurt-on-Main and were taken to Oberusal, a small village ten miles from Frankfurt. This was the Jerry interrogation center for captured Allied airmen. After a thorough search, which found the money in my belt, we were again thrown into solitary confinement. Next day, I was given a questionnaire to fill out, giving my name, rank, serial number, and home address. I left the remainder blank, and returned it to the Jerry. I was then informed that I would go to interrogation immediately. So preparing for a third degree of the worst sort, and all set to give battle, I was taken to another building and introduced to my Grand Inquisitor. To my amazement, he greeted me like a long-lost brother and spent the first half-hour discussing his wife and family in New York, as well as the fine times he had at Jones' Beach.

"After that he switched to questioning: Route overseas, Personnel of the 44th BG, Cadet School, O.T.U., bases, and members of the crew. Upon refusing any information, he said that he knew the crew and if I would verify it, he would give me any information he had on them. All this time he was "feeding" me some abominable cigarettes, which being my first in a week, I thought were grand!

"He produced a list of names and positions - and sure enough, it was the entire crew. I acknowledged it, and was told that all were dead except Hoelke and myself. He had no information on our radio operator, Sgt. Allen.

"He then produced a thick manual and spent a half-hour telling me all about my Group, both combat and ground personnel, etc. He told me we were starting to receive the new B-24 H & J's, knew the exact routes for flying overseas, training schools in the States, O.T.U. bases, etc. He concluded by saying, "So you see I actually know more than you do!" He was correct. He then remarked as he dismissed me, "Your Air Force is about to separate from the Army and Navy, similar to the R.A.F. and Luftwaft, and your new uniform is a light blue gabardine." To date, I have heard nothing to verify this.

"I was returned to solitary and usual prison lunch at 1:00 and to my surprise, was again taken back to the interrogator. This time to meet half dozen German navigators who could speak no English. Through the interpreter, they requested info on "G," the reliability of metro info, radio bearings and fixes. I grinned, smoked their cigarettes and explained that we depended strictly on D.R. and Pilotage, if weather permitted. They quickly lost interest and as I was dismissed, the guard was instructed to permit me to wash and shave. I was then told I would move to the Transit Camp in Frankfurt for shipment to a POW camp.

"After a week's time, the wash and shave was a heavenly gift and a natural necessity. Later the guard brought a book to my cell and the thought of electric lights was like looking forward to Christmas. He must have been exercising a sadly neglected sense of humor or else sincerely thought an airman could see in the dark.

"That night was my first experience on the receiving end of an Allied Air Raid. The RAF came over, but it was merely a nuisance raid. Thirty Mosquitoes, with a "Cookie" each, (60 tons - some nuisance!). Locked in my cell, I felt like a caged animal. Next day I was transported to a transient camp at Frankfurt and received immediate medical attention, followed by an honest-to-goodness

hot shower and a fine, hot meal of Corned Beef, mashed potatoes, cake, coffee, and cigarettes. Hooray! God's in his Heaven, All's well with the world.

"Here we had an air raid shelter, of which we made much use, especially on January 29th, 1944, when we were the target of the 8th Air Force. I was never so scared in my life. The ground vibrated and the walls shook. Through 10/10ths, the 8th did its work well, blasting the railroads and public utilities. We were without lights and water for eight hours. We were informed by the German authorities that nothing was hit except residential areas and churches, and that the infuriated people had lynched the air crews who were forced down in that locality. That should serve us as a warning against attempting any escapes. We were better off inside the wire.

"That night, we were again in the Shelter, as the RAF came over, but was on its way to Berlin. Many the man here was severely wounded and the hospital and staff was inadequate. There was an English pilot who flew with artificial limbs. These, the Jerries took away every night as an escape prevention measure. Several of the men were severely burned around the face from oxygen aflame. One, a Captain Cook, so badly burned that his eyelids were gone, preventing sleep - only able to relax an hour or so every night. He left for a base hospital and plastic surgery. In the face of all this, my injuries were trivial and I ceased going on sick call.

"While at Frankfurt, I met Capt. Robert L. Ager our Group Gunnery Officer, and Lt. (Henry A.) Wieser Group Bombardier, who came along on the 21st, expecting a milk run, flew with Lt. Cookus in 'A' Flight. In leaving the coast, they flew over Calais, were hit by flak. Cookus gave orders to bail out while he stayed with his ship and crash-landed in southern England. Hard luck for Ager and Wieser.

"One afternoon we were issued necessary clothing and a grip containing cigarettes, pipe and tobacco. extra socks and underwear, etc. We also got a Red Cross parcel to last a week, and told we were on our way. We were admonished not to make a demonstration or attract the attention of the public who were still plenty mad, Any attempt to escape and we would be shot.

"Loaded onto trucks with plenty of guards, we were taken to the Depot where we had visual evidence of the recent bombing raid. We were loaded into a freight car on a siding, and as they locked us in, off went the siren heralding the approach of the RAF. There was great uneasiness among the Kriegies and a thorough testing of the locked doors and barred windows. It was obvious we could never get out that way, and it was a sigh of relief we gave when the train jerked into motion and pulled out of the yard.

"That night we passed 20 miles south of Berlin and we could see it was a target of the RAF. The city was a glow of fire and flame. We had four guards in our car, well armed with automatic and machine gun pistols. They informed us our destination was Barth, Germany, and painted a glowing picture of same until we concluded we must be headed for a rest camp with recreation facilities. Later on, they offered us beer in exchange for coffee, and some of the boys did it, getting a very poor grade of beer, which was by now the national brew. This trip was our initial meeting with the Red Cross Food Parcel and with a German ration of bread, potatoes and salt, we were to become excellent cooks.

"After three days and four nights, we found ourselves at Barth, Pom., Germany, greeted by a formidable guard detail and a dozen German-trained dogs. So I entered what was to be my home for next one and a half years: Stalag Luft I."

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1st Lt. Frank W. Sobotka was the pilot of the third 68th Squadron aircraft lost on this mission to the V-1 sites.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7501 P, Sobotka		MACR #2360
68th Squadron Crew:		A/C crashed near Beaussault (Grattenoux village)
SOBOTKA, FRANK W. Jr. ASN 0-799486	Pilot KIA, WOM Ardennes	1st Lt. Flushing, New York
ROSENBLATT, MILTON L. ASN 0-680721	Co-pilot Evadee, returned	1st Lt. Miami Beach, Florida
BUTLER, FREDERICK C. ASN 0-676018	Navigator POW	1st Lt. Pasadena, Texas
TEITEL, ABRAHAM ASN 0-678456	Bombardier Evadee, returned 24 June 1944	1st Lt. Brooklyn, New York
SHAEFFER, CLAIR P. ASN 33187932	Engineer KIA, WOM Ardennes	T/Sgt. Wernersville, Pennsylvania
CAPIZZI, THOMAS F. ASN 32533914	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt. Bronx, New York
SMANIETTO, AUGUST F. ASN 19062047	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt. Santa Barbara, California
ROSS, ANDREW J. ASN 35663111	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Cold Springs, Kentucky
SHOCKLEY, CHARLES W. ASN 15332970	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Milan, Indiana
REEVES, CLARENCE D. ASN 13046428	Tail Turret KIA, buried Normandy (A-14-42)	S/Sgt. Pennsylvania

The MACR had very little information, "At 1524 hours aircraft #42-7501 was hit by enemy aircraft and the bombs were dropped immediately. It was observed to circle off to the left and to begin burning, apparently under control. Enemy aircraft attacks became so intense at this time there was no further chance to observe."

Lt. Milton L. Rosenblatt, co-pilot, added these comments: "We were attacked by Me 109s while circling to find our target. Both engines on the left side were shot out, putting us in a steep left turn and rolling our plane over on its back. With both Frank (Sobotka) and me on the controls, we managed to right the plane, but couldn't pull it out of the flat spin it went into. The rudder controls were gone and the instrument panel was shot out. Frank immediately hit the alarm bell switch alerting the crew to bail out.

"After a few seconds, I spotted only four chutes descending. The mess in our cabin, due to the rolling over, was unbelievable. Our chest chutes, usually stowed behind our seats, had ended up in the radio compartment. I retrieved the chutes, putting Frank's in his lap and buckling mine on. Sgt. Clair Shaeffer was strapped in the top turret, obviously dead, and our radio operator, Sgt. Tom Capizzi was putting his chute on as well. Frank was yelling at us to jump.

"Capizzi and I stood at the edge of the bomb bay, so I jumped and apparently Capizzi froze up. He and Frank rode the plane down. I have no idea what had happened in the waist or nose

sections of the plane, but I know I was the last one out. We were so low at the time I jumped that my chute only oscillated once before I hit the ground.

“I came into contact with the Underground about three days after landing. The only information they could give me about my crew was that Abe Teitel was alive and Frank Sobotka’s dog tags were found in the wreckage of the plane. I have never heard from any of my crew since then, although on my return to the States, I talked to most of their families and gave them as much information as I could.”

*Note: Rosenblatt’s full story, including his evasion, can be found in the Summer 2001 8 Ball Tails newsletter.*

A French historian named Joel Huard reports that there is a memorial to the Sobotka crew in the French village of Grattennoix near Beaussault, which is southeast of Neufchatel-en-Bray.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-23813 V, Starring	VICTORY SHIP		MACR #2358
68th Squadron Crew:			
STARRING, ALFRED A. ASN 0-743121	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Pasadena, California
RHODES, LEWIS W. ASN 0-807052	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Lockport, New York
MANEVAL, WELDON H. ASN 0-750204	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Frankfort, Kansas
JONES, WILLIAM C. ASN 0-684165	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Decatur, Iowa
CHANDLER, LAWRENCE W. ASN 36427258	Engineer Evadee, returned 20 May 1944	S/Sgt.	Springfield, Illinois
KASLASKAS, EDWARD A. ASN 13127444	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Plains, Pennsylvania
STEELE, ARTHUR M. ASN 19170304	Ball Turret KIA, buried Normandy (B-22-5)	Sgt.	Junction City, Oregon
MITCHELL, ROBERT A. ASN 15323016	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Fairmont, West Virginia
CIEPLY, EUGENE B. Jr. ASN 32491716	LW Gunner KIA, buried Normandy (B-11-34)	Sgt.	Broadalbin, New York
SCHILD, ROBERT C. ASN 35338667	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Monroeville, Ohio

The fourth and last airplane lost on the 21st was the one piloted by 1st Lt. Alfred A. Starring. The MACR states that “At 1516 hours, aircraft #41-23813 was hit by enemy aircraft. Numbers one and two engines were set on fire, but the pilots managed to keep in formation. But when the enemy made following attacks, this aircraft was seen to go down in flames. Seven parachutes were seen to open.”

Tail Gunner Robert C. Schild adds, “I was new to this crew. I flew only two times with them before going overseas with them. Therefore, I was not well acquainted with the crew.

“This was our very first combat mission. We came under heavy fighter attacks by both FW 190s and Me 109s. They eventually knocked out three of our engines and we could no longer stay in

the air. Our co-pilot, Lewis W. Rhodes, was killed on the very first pass by the enemy aircraft. Our pilot, Alfred A. Starring, was wounded as well, probably also on that first attack. As our co-pilot was already dead, Starring found it impossible to stay in formation especially with two engines out. When later attacks knocked out the third engine, we were on our way down.

“At that time, the waist gunners went forward and jumped out through the-bomb bay. But I opened the rear hatch and went out from there just as the plane went into its final spin. We must have been quite close to the ground by then as my parachute had barely opened a few seconds before I hit the ground.

“Our navigator, Weldon H. Maneval, must have jumped from the front end at about the same time as I did, with his parachute opening but not quite quickly enough, and he was killed by the impact with the ground. I was taken prisoner and spent 16 months in Stalag Luft VI and IV. Robert A. Mitchell, our right waist gunner, survived POW camp but found that he had tuberculosis when he returned home after the war.”

*Note: Based on information from Joel Huard, the crash site is in or near the French village of Bracquetuit, east of Totes, which is 25 kilometers south of Dieppe, 2 kilometers southeast of Auffay, France.*

Lawrence Chandler, the engineer, evaded capture for nearly four months and returned to duty at Shipdham on 20 May 1944. He was sent home on 25 May.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., # 41-24225, Williams	FLAK ALLEY	Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew:		
WILLIAMS, SAM D. ASN 0-524481	Pilot	1st Lt. Seriously injured, hospitalized for months
REICH, STANLEY J.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.
BELLARD, HAROLD W.	Navigator	1st Lt.
STEADHAM, ROY J.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
LUND, PHILMORE H.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
HOLENBECK, JOHN A.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
McALISTER, GEORGE E.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.
KENYON, FREDERICK A.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
CARSTENS, JOHN H.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
VAN DYKE, DAVID P.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.
DAVIDO, FRANK	Observer/Com. Pilot	1st Lt.

*Note: Lts. Bellard and Steadham were KIA on 8 April 1944.*

On this mission, the pilot, Sam D. Williams, was seriously wounded by 20-mm from Me 109s.

Tail Gunner David P. Van Dyke noted: “Operations Officer Pilot Frank Davido flew with us as an observer on the 1/21/44 mission on the V-1 rocket site. It was supposed to be a milk run. Heavy cloud cover hid the target. After the first bombing run Col. Fred Dent led us on four more. It was a disaster and about twelve ME 109s hit our seven ships, tail end formation, which we led. The 68th lost four out of seven. Both of our wingmen were shot down and the lower element lost both wingmen and also tail-end Charlie.



“Lt. Sam Williams was shot in the face and Frank Davido, took over. In spite of a wound in his neck, he brought the ship back safely, although it was well beat up. There are calls over the Tannoy for type ‘A’ blood and I am sure it is for Lt. Williams. Just how bad he is, we don’t know at this time.”

### Military Installations, Agathe D’Aliermont, France

The second formation of the 44th BG was led by 1st Lt. Keith Cookus of the 67th Squadron and included planes from the 67th and 506th Squadrons. Their target was military installations south of Calais, France.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-99970 M-Bar, Cookus	LIB-ERTY BELLE	MACR #8714
67th Squadron Crew (three exceptions):		
COOKUS, KEITH ASN 0-675040	Pilot Survived crash-landing	1st Lt. Eugene, Oregon
HOLLADAY, HOWARD K. ASN 0-681418	Co-pilot Survived crash-landing	1st Lt. New York City, New York
CAMPBELL, FRANKLIN A. ASN 0-678607	Navigator Wounded, injured, survived crash-landing	1st Lt.
COLE, WOODROW W. ASN 0-741099	Bombardier KIA, buried Cambridge (D-1-35)	1st Lt. Correopolis, Pennsylvania
ANDERSON, WILLIAM N. (506th Sq.) ASN 0-411678	Command Pilot KIA	Major Taylorville, Illinois
WIESER, HENRY A. (not with the 67th) ASN 0-669253	Observer POW	1st Lt. Hamilton, Texas
AGER, ROBERT L. (68th Sq.) ASN 0-727956	Group Bombardier POW	Capt. Port Blakely, Washington
KOWALSKI, ANDREW A. ASN 3316890?	Engineer Survived crash-landing	S/Sgt. Reading, Pennsylvania
TRECHEL, RICHARD J. ASN 6688765	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt. Schenectady, New York
SEIFRIED, EUGENE K. ASN 33107243	Nose Turret Survived crash-landing	S/Sgt. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
FONG, THOMAS ASN 12124529	Ball Turret Survived crash-landing	Sgt. Brooklyn, New York
BOYD, WALTER E. ASN 38179723	LW Gunner Survived crash-landing	S/Sgt. Littlerock, Arkansas
BECKER, HERMAN ASN 32079625	Tail Turret Wounded, trapped, survived crash-landing	S/Sgt. New Jersey

*Note: This aircraft crash-landed at Manston, England. Three crewmembers parachuted over enemy territory and were captured.*

67th Squadron’s 1st Lt. Keith Cookus was leading this formation with Command Pilot Major William N. Anderson (flying his 25th mission) as well as the Group Gunnery Officer and Group Bombardier along just to observe, as it should have been an easy, short attack. Bombing altitude was at 12,000 feet to assure better accuracy on a very small target.

Keith Cookus wrote this description: “We met little opposition at first. We had cloud cover, anyway. As we were trying to bomb through this cloud layer, it was necessary to make five runs on the target, hoping to get a hole large enough for visual bombing. But we could not be sure, so we turned back with our bombs. We never bomb in France unless we are dead sure of our target.

“As we were crossing the French coast, we found the Jerries had moved in a bunch of mobile ack-ack. They must have been tracking us for quite a time. The first burst was so close I heard it. I started evasive action. There were 12 of us in the formation, but 30 seconds after that first burst, we got hit at 11,000 feet. It happened so fast we were thrown around completely out of control by the smack of the explosions. The Jerries got us with seven direct hits in a bunch! I put the plane into a dive as soon as I got some sort of control and went down as fast as I could to 8,000 feet to get out of the area as quickly as possible – and we were not hit again. But I realized at once that there was not much of my plane left. Those bursts practically blew us to pieces. One of the shells burst right inside the bomb bay, ripping out the catwalk which holds the bottom of the fuselage together. This shell killed the Command Pilot, Major Anderson (506th Squadron), who was standing between the co-pilot and me. It also blew the radio operator completely out of our plane. We never saw him again (Trechel, POW). It wounded Chubby Campbell, my navigator, as well as our tail gunner, Moe Becker. There was a hole in the middle of the plane just as if a big shark had taken a bite out of it.

“Neither Tiny Holladay, co-pilot, or I was touched. Major Anderson had slumped to the floor of the cockpit and was lying in a heap. I couldn’t get any news from the rest of the plane because nothing was working. #1 engine had been blown to pieces – that was the second direct hit. It was hanging in shreds, but I managed to feather the propeller before I lost all of the pressure there. The third direct hit had blown out half of my #2 engine – there was nothing there to feather. I then saw that #3 engine was on fire. The engineer, Kowalski, saw the hit on this engine. The flash of the explosion set it on fire and it was blazing furiously, leaving a long lick of black smoke trailing back, streaked with red. I had to leave it to burn because I could not get back to the English coast without letting that engine run as long as it could. I just left it and looked the other way – but couldn’t forget it because it began to fill the plane with gas and smoke.

‘The Major’s in a bad way, Buck’, Tiny yelled. ‘He’s hit in the legs and through the back. He’s asking for morphine.’ We gave the Major two shots on the way back to the coast, but it was clear that he was in very bad shape. There had been another direct hit in the base of the nose turret. Splinters sailed up all around Sgt. Seigfried, but by some miracle, he wasn’t hit although it blew the top right off of his turret.

“Another direct hit had gone clean through the right wing. The shell – the seventh they had pumped into us – took the right main landing gear with it, and part of it is metal as thick around as your thigh. All of the hydraulics were out.

“I had to keep that blazing engine going to get us home. I couldn’t ditch because we had wounded aboard. I still thought the Major would live. The group bombardier and gunnery officers jumped immediately after seeing half of the middle of the ship was gone, but I had no interphone to tell the others to bail out. We were over the coast and the wind should have taken them back to land in France. (It did.) Both men captured, taken to Rouen along with others downed that day.

“As we were settling down to the job of trying to get home, the bombardier, Junior Cole, crawled up on the flight deck. Junior, a big guy, was covered with blood – his face looked awful. The blast had tossed him around, but later we found out that he had crawled into the bomb bay, holding on with his hands and toes to anything he could find that was still firmly rooted to the rest of the plane. He had been tossing out what he could of the mess of shattered bombs in there. With the emergency release mechanism gone, it was the only way he could rid our plane of these dangerous bombs. He’d cut his hands to ribbons. And his intent then was to advise me that he could not get rid of all the bombs. Then he flopped down, couldn’t see and couldn’t talk, couldn’t move. He died of suffocation later in the crash when he was trapped on the flight deck, before we could free him.

“The ball turret gunner, Sgt. Fong, Chinese, managed to get himself out of the ball turret. How, he did not know. His turret was a jangle of twisted metal like in a train wreck, was filling with blazing hydraulic oil. Fong’s clothing was on fire when he got out and as he crawled back toward the tail, flames and burning oil were blowing back at him. He joined Walter Boyd and the other waist gunner. They were back there in the tail section covering their faces with their gloves against the blazing oil. Luckily, all oil burnt out of the hydraulic system and stopped blowing back at them. All three got bad face burns; Fong’s hands were terrible.

“It was only common sense to bail out. The machine was on fire, it was wobbling like a broken fishing pole, smoke was pouring out of one of the two engines still running, etc. Kowalski picked up his chute and Fong watched him fumble with it. ‘She is still flying, isn’t she?’ he said... We were going along all right, heading straight for England and not losing too much height. Tiny shouted in my ear, ‘Coast!’ At that moment there was a whoosh and a smack that made the plane shake like jelly. I saw that I had no power on #3 – the engine had blown up and was white hot. But it got us home.

‘How’s Anderson?’ I asked of Tiny. He said, ‘The landing won’t hurt him, Buck. He’s dead.’ We had to pick a landing spot quickly, and I went in. I cut my sole remaining engine at 50 feet and switched off everything in sight. I saw that we were going to hit the roof of a farmhouse. We were headed for a belly flop anyhow, so I swung the machine around and slammed it back – we missed the house. We shot across that field with its ups and downs like a piece of soap on a bathroom floor. We ended up in a ditch. I thought that the plane might go up any minute – we had all of those bombs aboard. Our extinguisher had no effect on that burning #3 engine. I tore a hole in the cowl and was stuffing earth, turf, anything I could grab, into the fire to smother it as our men were trapped on the flight deck and we couldn’t get to them. The co-pilot, Tiny, told me later that he had stayed inside trying to help get those trapped men out, tearing at anything to get them free, but he didn’t have a chance.

“Folks began to arrive – farm hands, boys, etc. A civilian car came by and we sent Fong, Kowalski and Boyd to the hospital. It was three long hours of ceaseless work before we finally managed to free the four men who were trapped. Anderson and Cole were dead, but Campbell and Becker were rescued alive. Trapped for 3 hours!!” The crash was at Brambling Down, Wingham, Kent in southern England.”

Lt. James R. Perry, flying right wing on Lt. Cookus, told me, “The reason that his plane was hit is that his navigator had allowed our formation to get off course and we were nearly over the city of Calais! All of their guns were pounding us as we approached and that is when Cookus was

bracketed with flak bursts. I saw one hit in the bomb bay and the doors flew off and what looked like a man fall out, apparently without a parachute on. (Trechel, who survived.) The plane immediately fell out of formation and so I took over, breaking radio silence and told the others to follow me in a tight turn to the right and changing altitude. They were zeroed in on us and had to react quickly as we were under 12,000 feet and easy targets.

“I kept watching Cookus as they dove toward the sea and back toward England. He appeared to be near the water as he was nearing landfall and I thought he ditched, as I saw a large explosion in the water. It must have been his bombs going off when his bombardier, Cole, got his bombs free, as they continued on to land and bellied in. It could have been that Cole got all of them out as there was no explosion when they crash-landed.

“When we returned, we found over 150 flak holes in our plane, and I believe it was Thornton (Lt. Richard L.) on the right wing who had over 300 holes in his. But we had no injuries.

“Several years ago I read in the paper where Cookus, flying out of Eugene, Oregon, crashed into a mountain near here and was killed.”

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## 29 January 1944

### Frankfurt, Germany

Again, due to poor weather conditions, our bombers had to drop their bombs via PFF method. Flak and enemy aircraft attacks were moderate but no enemy fighters were claimed by our gunners. However, the Group suffered two planes and crews lost; one each by the 66th and 67th Squadrons.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-29157 J, Maynard

MACR #2356

#### 66th Squadron Crew:

MAYNARD, GEORGE H. ASN 0-800011	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Wellsboro, Pennsylvania
NORQUIST, JOHN E. ASN 0-747876	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	St. Paul, Minnesota
MUNDT, CAROL A. ASN 0-685318	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	St. Louis, Missouri
NIELSON, THOMAS W. ASN 0-676493	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt.	Antonito, Colorado
PORTER, DONALD C. ASN 11042360	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	North Andover, Massachusetts
PATTERSON, RUSSELL W. ASN 13151627	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Allentown, Pennsylvania
SWAILE, CLARENCE R. ASN 13041424	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania
O'DONNELL, LOUIS J. ASN 12158116	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Bayonne, New Jersey
ARCAMONE, FRANK ASN 32540668	LW Gunner KIA, buried Epinal (B-5-70)	S/Sgt.	Bayside, New York

NICHOLS, DERISE L.  
ASN 13119510

Tail Turret  
POW

S/Sgt.

Roanoke,  
Virginia

1st Lt. George H. Maynard, pilot of A/C #157, and his crew were listed as MIA. The MACR states: "At 1115 hours, the pilot of A/C #41-29157, was observed to leave his position on Lt. Jewell's wing, and to fly for a time with a Group to the left. Shortly thereafter, fire was reported in the bomb bay of this plane. Two chutes were seen to open as it was disappearing into the clouds, under control, apparently."

Three men were able to exit the falling ship and survive. One of them, tail turret gunner Derise L. Nichols, gave me this report: "We had been briefed three times for this mission and it is believed that the Germans may have got word and were ready of us."

"We were over France and about an hour from target, with all bombs on board, when we were jumped by a flight of fighters and were hit immediately. I was the tail gunner and shells hit just behind me and made very large holes in the waist section. #4 engine was hit and put out of action; so were the controls to the tail section. So the pilots could only control flight with the three remaining engines. With the possibility of getting back to England now so slight, the decision was made to head for Switzerland."

"The bombs were salvoed, but even then with the trouble of trying to steer with the engines, we continually lost altitude across France. We did finally cross the Swiss border, but by then we were less than 1,000 feet. We were shot at and hit by ground fire, and #2 engine was put out of commission as well. Not being able to gain altitude over the rising terrain of Switzerland, we had to circle back to abandon ship."

"Only three of us got out – all from the rear – because we were so low by that time that the others did not have time to get out and open their chutes. We landed about five miles from Switzerland at Mulhouse, France."

*Note: The crash site is actually near Ilfurth, France.*

The village of Ilfurth placed a memorial stone near the crash site and also put a plaque in the local church. It was dedicated 8 June 1996. A translation of the French text on the plaque follows: "Eighty meters west of this monument, the American bomber B-24 Liberator #41-29157, 66th Squadron, 44th Bomb Group, was shot down on 29 January 1944, returning from a mission over Germany. Seven crew members (George H. Maynard, 1st Lt.; Thomas W. Nielson, 1st Lt.; John E. Norquist, 1st Lt.; Russell W. Patterson, T/Sgt.; Donald C. Porter, S/Sgt.; Louis J. O'Donnell, S/Sgt.; and Frank Arcamone, Sgt.) died for France. Passersby, remember."

*Note: For additional information on this memorial, please refer to the 44th BG 8-Ball columns in the Spring 1995, Spring 1996, and Summer 1996 issues of the 2nd Air Division Journal.*

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7547 X-Bar, Pinder

MACR #2251

#### 67th Squadron Crew:

PINDER, HAROLD H.  
ASN 0-800931

Pilot  
Evadee, POW

1st Lt.

Burgettstown,  
Pennsylvania

GRONO, LAWRENCE W.  
ASN 0-680437

Co-pilot  
POW, evadee, repatriated, died

1st Lt.

Minneapolis,  
Minnesota

BOOMER, DONALD S. ASN 0-738956	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Mesa, Arizona
STUBBS, ALVIN E. ASN 0-679687	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
HALL, EARL W. ASN 33288720	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Parkersburg, West Virginia
SOFFERMAN, ABE ASN 32436994	Radio Oper. Evadee, KIA, buried in New York City	T/Sgt.	Bronx, New York
LAUCAMP, ROBERT L. ASN 17071305	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Tipton, Iowa
ROBISON, JACK C. ASN 15330702	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Wabash, Indiana
GREEN, MILAS L. ASN 34036551	LW Gunner POW, wounded	S/Sgt.	Clyde, North Carolina
PAXTON, WILLIAM A. Jr. ASN #12155754	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (A-12-10)	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York

Also on this mission of the 29th, 1st Lt. Harold W. Pinder and crew were lost. The MACR contained the words of observer James Perry, 1st pilot: "A/C #547, pilot H. H. Pinder, was flying on our left wing. About 1110 hours and just before the IP, one FW 190 attacked and scored hits near the right wing tip. A/C #547 began to lose altitude and fire was seen in the bomb bay. Two chutes opened and the aircraft went below the clouds, under control."

The pilot, Lt. Pinder, wrote the following: "We were met on the coast and on in by both Me 109s and FW 190s. I had never seen them mixed before. At about 1102 hours we dropped out of control after about three separate enemy passes. We took 20-mm hits under the flight deck that cut the control cables. I couldn't get the auto pilot to take over control – probably a hopeless effort, anyway. The aircraft dove out of control. I remember the wing afire and at least the #4 engine knocked out.

"Green was in shock from a 20-mm hit through both lower legs. Jack [Robison] pushed Green out the rear hatch and pulled his ripcord, but he did not get out himself, possibly giving his chute to Green."

"Sofferman and I were able to escape capture and were loose with the Belgian Resistance group for three months. But Sofferman was killed by the Secret Police while trying to avoid capture, and I was taken prisoner – in April 1944.

"#547 did not have a name and I think that this mission, our tenth, was the first time we flew this plane. The plane we flew over (to England) had a shark nose painted on it."

Lt. Pinder was referring to A/C #42-7549, which is believed to be the one featured on the front cover of "Jaws Over Europe," published by Ursel P. Harvell in the early 1980s. Pinder flew two mission in the "Shark."

Pinder reported that four crewmen died in the aircraft: Stubbs, Laucamp, Robison, and Paxton. Six others parachuted. Pinder noted that his co-pilot Grono had died in August of 1944 of tuberculosis after repatriation. He also said that his regular navigator was named Weatherwax, who later became a ground officer.

Donald Boomer wrote: “I landed in the Ardennes, and around midnight that night I made contact with the Belgian underground where I spent six weeks, moving around from one safe house to another. I don’t think I ran into any of Pinder’s crew, but I can’t be sure because I didn’t know any of them very well. The guy I got to know best in the Maqui was an American aircrew sergeant named Shepard or Sheppard. I don’t think he was from the 44th. I never asked. We didn’t talk much in the underground because you could never be sure who you were talking to, and the Krauts had a nasty habit of trying to break into the underground networks with spies who spoke fluent English and pretended to be shot down Americans.

“In the middle of March, with the underground’s help, Shep and I traveled from Liege to the Swiss border near Porrentruy, where at the last minute a German patrol caught us about a half a mile from freedom...I spent 14 months at Stalag Luft I.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., 42-7509 V, Duffy	GALLAVANTIN’ GAL		Returned to base
506th Squadron Crew:			
DUFFY, WILLIAM M. Jr.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
McCASLIN, JOHN M. Jr.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.	
CALLAWAY, JAMES P.	Navigator	1st Lt.	
RODRIGUEZ, FRANK L.	Nose Gun/Togglier	S/Sgt.	
HERSHEY, RICHARD	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
VICKERS, HAROLD, J.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
SCOTT, WILLIAM D.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.	
	WIA		
STEWART, JOHN H.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
DRUMEL, WILLIAM E.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
CHOPP, VICTOR J.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Kalamazoo,
	WIA, lost eye		Michigan

Although not lost in combat, the airplane piloted by 1st Lt. William Duffy was badly damaged and limped back to base. Later it was repaired.

Lt. Duffy explained, “We had gone to Frankfurt – in the last echelon, of the last flight, of the last squadron of the last group of the last Division in the 8th Air Force. We came home alone and landed with one propeller feathered, no brakes, one flat tire, and the ball turret down.

“My crew had gotten us back to the base and I could do no less than put the thing down. Victor Chopp, great and brave man, survived a direct hit on the rear turret, but he lost an eye, and yet never a word of complaint during the flight or in the 38 years that he lived thereafter.

“In some way or another, the ball turret gunner was taken out of that damaged turret before the landing. He, too, managed to survive his wounds.” (This was William D. Scott.)

Lt. Duffy and his co-pilot demonstrated exceptional skill in landing their craft in a tricycle landing without even touching that lowered turret on the runway! Simply amazing!

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## 2 February 1944

### V-1 Sites, Watten, France

“Military Installations” were the words used to describe the target for today, which we later learned meant V-1 launching sites. The mission was flown under severe icing conditions and a 10/10th cloud cover over both France and southern England. Over the target area moderate accurate flak was encountered with several of our ships suffering minor flak damage. One 506th Squadron plane crashed upon return on the outskirts of Eastbourne.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-24282 Bar-Y, Bolin	RUTH-LESS	MACR #6385
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
BOLIN, JAMES O. ASN 0-424895	Pilot 1st Lt. KIA, buried Cambridge (F-3-83)	Pine Bluff, Arkansas
WULFF, ORVILLE L. ASN 0-675462	Co-pilot 1st Lt. KIA, buried in U.S.	De Smet, South Dakota
ACKERMAN, EDWARD J. ASN 0-798720	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA	Brooklyn, New York
SCHWAB, HAROLD W. ASN 0-733360	Bombardier 1st Lt. KIA, buried in NYC	Bronx, New York
BALES, JAMES H. ASN 34283420	Engineer T/Sgt. Injured, KIA	Dayton, Tennessee
YURICK, CHESTER W. ASN 31140518	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. KIA, buried Cambridge (F-3-4)	Needham, Massachusetts
WILSON, JAMES L. ASN 14124998	Ball Turret S/Sgt. Injured, KIA	Easley, South Carolina
MALOY, AUBREY J. ASN 34335159	RW Gunner S/Sgt. KIA	Hacoda, Alabama
STRAIT, RALPH E. ASN 13074162	LW Gunner S/Sgt. KIA, at Cambridge (D-1-75)	Saluvia, Pennsylvania
DEWALD, GEORGE M. ASN 13124616	Tail Turret S/Sgt. KIA	Norristown, Pennsylvania

*Note: All of Bolin's crew were buried temporarily at a military cemetery at Brookwood Woking, Surry, England. Other details: This B-24 was named "Ruth-less" after the wife of its original pilot, Frank Slough. Schwab was a veteran of the 1 August 1943 Ploesti raid.*

Lt. Bolin, pilot of A/C #41-24282, became separated from the formation during the return. While lowering altitude in trying to find a base in southern England, he crashed into a low hill inland from Eastbourne. Eight of the crew were killed instantly, while Sgts. Wilson and Bales were taken to Princess Alice hospital where they both died later that same day.

Ruth Wulff Swanson, sister of Orville Wulff, wrote: “Our parents did receive a letter from someone back in 1944 who apparently was either related to or who knew the Radio Operator (Chester W. Yurick) who lived a short time after the crash that day – long enough to tell the details of the crash. If our information was correct, they had accomplished their mission and were then attacked and lost two to three engines, and the instrument panel was badly damaged. They were too badly (#3 only?) damaged to return to Shipdham, so opted to attempt a landing on the



coast of Eastbourne. However, being a British field, they had to establish identification before clearance for a landing, had to circle back around Eastbourne (which was covered in a heavy cloud band). They were cleared for landing, and needed to complete the final circle and land. In that final circle, without instruments, they came in too low and couldn't clear the hill (Butt's Brow). They crashed just below the crest of it."

A detailed description of this crash is included in the book "Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories" by Ian McLachlan and Russell J. Zorn (Patrick Stephens, Ltd., 1991). See Chapter 8 "Hurry Home Boys." The authors gathered eyewitness accounts, including one from a Mrs. Ellen Barrow who heard the approaching plane and wondered if it might be a German raider. However the engines sounded irregular and the plane was low. Soon thereafter the bomber appeared, flying slowly and looking exhausted according to Mrs. Barrow. She saw an airman standing at one of the waist-gun windows, and her heart went out to him. As it went by she whispered: "Hurry home, boys."

A schoolboy, Derek Wilkinson, was outside on the grass at Willingdon Golf Course. He saw the bomber and realized that unless it gained altitude, it would crash into the nearby hills. On those hills was Audrey Armstrong, rounding up sheep with the golf-club's greenskeeper. She heard the straining engines and saw the pilot as both realized that a crash was inevitable. The aircraft crashed into the hill and exploded. An engine tumbled down the hill near her. She and the greenskeeper ran toward the wreck once the explosions had stopped, but found only smoldering debris. Amazingly there were some signs of life. One aviator died at the scene despite receiving first aid. Two more died later at a nearby hospital. Audrey thought that if the bomber had only been 40 feet higher it would have been able to make it to the emergency landing strip at Friston near Eastbourne.

A stone memorial was placed at the crash site on 13 May 1995 due to the exceptional efforts of Kevin Watson and through the backing of the Eastbourne Mayor. Each year a memorial ceremony is conducted at the crashsite. There is also a small museum in Eastbourne in honor of this crew. Mr. Watson has compiled a book covering this crew and the crash. It is called "Ruthless and Far from Home."

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-99996, Milliner		Returned later
66th Squadron Crew:	No injuries	
MILLINER, WALKER T.	Pilot	Lt.
BENADOM, DALE F. Co-pilot	Lt.	
GRIMES, ARTHUR V.	Navigator	Lt.
CROWDER, J. A.	Bombardier	S/Sgt.
GRIFFIN, DENNIS P.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
SMITH, BEAUFORD, R.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
NABER, JULIUS V.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.
NELLUMS, FRED B.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
PASAVANTIS, PETER G.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
DAVES, JAMES F.	Tail Gun	S/Sgt.

*Note: Everyone but the pilot and co-pilot bailed out over the coast of England. The pilots landed the aircraft at Shoreham, Sussex. Julius Naber died on the 29 April 1944 mission.*

The two pilots, Milliner and Benedom elected to try to land this seriously damaged plane after the eight crew members bailed out over the south coast of England. Then the pilots moved the trim tabs as well as the AFCE (Automatic Flight Control Equipment) in a successful attempt to save their aircraft by making a rough but safe landing at an airport close by. Their aircraft, unnamed, was eventually repaired between 21 February to 20 March 1944. Both the #3 and #4 engines were replaced as well as the entire empennage (tail section). Great job of landing a badly crippled aircraft!

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## 3 February 1944

### Essen, Germany

A mission was scheduled this day but was later recalled. However, while the planes were warming up, all engines running waiting for the green flare, S/Sgt. Hantober, radio operator, discovered he did not have his mission radio codes. He decided to leave the ship to go to the one in the next dispersal to get a copy. But in his haste and about dawn, he forgot about those spinning propellers, ducked out of the bomb bay, and ran directly into the propeller of #3 engine, killing him instantly.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-29231 J, Thom	THE IMPATIENT VIRGIN		
67th Squadron Crew:	Partial crew list		
THOM, GEORGE J.	Pilot	Lt.	
HANTOBER, MANUEL ASN 32509732	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn. New York
SCOTT, RAYMOND E.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	

T/Sgt. Raymond E. Scott, radio operator, gave this information, "I was not scheduled this morning and was in bed when I heard this Jeep right outside of my barracks. An officer rushed in, told me to get up as I must fill in for an injured radio operator. They hurried me to this dispersal where the plane and crew were waiting – the others scheduled for the mission were already airborne. Everyone was pretty shook up, blood scattered around, but Lt. Thom was set on catching the formation and to complete his first mission. We took off at least one-half hour behind the others and never did catch them. We flew out over the North Sea alone without ever seeing anyone and finally had to give up and return to base, much to my relief, as we were most vulnerable out there alone."

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## 5 February 1944

### Tours Airdrome, Central France

Fifteen of the 44th BG's aircraft departed Shipdham at 0700 hours, reached the objective, bombed and return was at 1430 hours. One 68th Squadron aircraft did not return.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-100181 Z, Bohnisch	STAR VALLEY	MACR #2233
68th Squadron Crew:		
BOHNISCH, CARL A. ASN 0-735031	Pilot KIA, buried Normandy (A-16-30)	1st Lt. Lindsey, California
GIFFIN, JOHN S. ASN 0-805903	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt. Schenectady, New York
EDE, HUBERT J. ASN 0-729151	Navigator KIA	1st Lt. Louisville, Kentucky
SPINK, HAROLD W. ASN 0-678399	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt. Lincoln, Nebraska
LEVERICH, WILLIAM F. ASN 37224192	Engineer KIA, buried Normandy (B-10-11)	T/Sgt. Kansas City, Missouri
OHLER, BERNARD A. ASN 13135813	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt. Baltimore, Maryland
EDGERTON, EUGENE C. ASN 31281654	Ball Turret KIA, buried Normandy (A-16-5)	S/Sgt. Andover, Connecticut
KLEIN, WARREN E. ASN 16064248	RW Gunner POW, later returned to base	S/Sgt. Detroit, Michigan
HALL, KENNETH E. ASN 11114148	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Haverhill, Massachusetts
MORIN, JOSEPH E. ASN 20108691	Tail Turret KIA, buried Normandy (E-20-27)	S/Sgt. Easthampton, Massachusetts

The 68th plane, STAR VALLEY, #42-100181 Z, was shot down by enemy aircraft, which made very concerted attacks against the Group's formation. It crashed at St. Leonard en Beauce, near Blois on the crew's eighth mission.

*Note: St. Leonard en Beauce is in the Loire-et-Cher region of France.*

Very little was recorded concerning this loss, including the MACR. The loss was caused by enemy aircraft, which managed to shoot off part of one wing. The plane went into a spin and couldn't recover. Three parachutes were observed to come out and open. As there was only one survivor who cannot be located, no further information has been found to determine why only he managed to survived.

Sgt. Keith Nutter from Perry's crew (see more on this below) stated: "A FW 190 made an attack straight in on our nose, turned over on his back just as he passed under our left wing, then started down. As he came back up, I started firing straight down. He went down and with him went the B-24 which was flying on our left wing. Both seemed to hit the ground at approximately the same time and place. This fighter had hit our #2 engine and navigator's compartment and also hit our wingman (Bohnisch) at the same time on that first pass. Our waist gunner claimed hits as well."

In the 1990s, a chaplain named James A. Marvin from Hillsborough, New Hampshire heard from a group of French villagers who had additional information on this crash. The following account was translated from the French by Marvin's wife:

"St. Leonard in Beauce, Saturday, 5 February 1944, 10:00 German time: After a white frost, the weather is very calm and the sky very clear. Coming from the east there appeared in the sky at a

medium altitude a very large formation of bombers heading west to return to England. The significance of this squadron in perfect order made witness to a sight never seen. The rising sun illuminating under the planes which reflected to earth luminous streaks which moved.

“The inhabitants had gone out into street alerted by the strength of the roaring of the motors of such quantity of planes and this in spite of the altitude of these last ones. Each one commented on thinking that the place of the bombing must have been seriously hit.

“Among the group of neighbors where I found myself, a wife of a Spanish lumberman who was there with his daughters, following a glance at this aerial parade, in terror cried “fire.” All turning at that moment, flames exiting from the left wing of the one (pair) near the outer motor.

“Several minutes afterward, the aircraft reduced its altitude and a little after a parachute was seen opening behind the bomber. The fire spreading rapidly one then saw the aircraft start a downward spiral to the left – the ellipses reducing and in site of the reduced speed, the ground was soon reached.

“Immediately, a giant black cloud was visible rapidly following a loud explosion. Flames and smoke were quickly dissipated. The last lines of bombers disappeared to the west when at very low altitude and at lightning speed, a fighter plane passed several meters from the last houses in the direction from south to north. Was the pilot the originator of the chute and who went across to see the result of his shooting?

“Before the last moments, the eyewitnesses put forth some probabilities of where this plane could have crashed, to the west, passed the village of Sigogne. From afar the people, knowing the region had seen the impact not far from the farm of Monchaux. All the eyewitnesses of the unfolding of this catastrophe were certainly impacted by that which they came to see.

“Without hesitating, the mayor, Monsieur Redouin, took his bike and in parting said, ‘It is necessary to look over the spot immediately.’ [I must go to the crash site immediately.]’

“On returning, he indicated that the bodies had been gotten out of the plane with the help of the people who were there, lined up and covered with their parachutes. The Mayor had taken down the identity of the flyers of whom the state of the burns made it possible. He asked the people of the village to stay away and to not let their dogs wander over the place.

“After lunch, we went with the son of the mayor to Sigogne to see the place. The wreckage was broken up, a motor was pulled off. A propeller was lying rather far away, under the detached motor and half-buried in the ground. One noticed a brown leather bag under this metallic mass. The ground was littered with metal, machine gun cartridges, and pieces of wreckage, such as the small electrical motors used inside this bomber.

“This visit to the place did not last long for we noticed a column of German military come out from the hamlet of Sigogne where the trucks were parked. With the other curious who like us, wished to make a report on the place we believed the soldiers at arms coming from Blois.

“From this moment on, there were no eyewitnesses for the transfer of the bodies or the salvage of the plane. The victims had been transferred to the cemeteries of Blois. The older students wanted to help and to decorate the graves, but they couldn’t leave the site.

“The surviving parachutist (Sgt. Warren E. Klein), pushed northeast by the light breeze in the morning, ended his descent close to the farms of LaCoudraie, south of the Marchenoir Road from where, at that time, the path to the cow shed went off.

“The airman, after having rolled his parachute, approached the houses and went in by the north entrance at the Leroux-Genty Farm. The people of the house were not up to date on the events, and surprised by this presence, had the visitor come in for refreshment, but he accepted only some milk.

“To leave his name at the French house which he came to enter he discreetly wrote his name on the back of an almanac taken from a hook on the wall.

The German soldiers from the watch post of Boisseau burst into the house at the same moment. Madame Leroux treated several wounds on his head. This woman and her son died about 20 years later without having news of the American.”

From the City of Blois Cemetery Service comes this account dated 8 February 1944: “I, undersigned, Crussy Henri, commander of the Legion of Honor, Mayor of the city of Blois, certify that: Sunday, 6 February at 3 p.m. the German military authorities carried nine bodies to the city cemetery. The commanding officer of the detachment declared that it is a matter of nine servicemen of the American Army Air Corps fallen over the jurisdiction of the community of St. Leonard in Beauce. After having examined the papers, the German servicemen left the bodies in the hut located behind the caretaker’s dwelling and sealed it.

“7 February at 5 p.m. Doctor Land of the Field Command at Blois took us to proceed immediately to identify the bodies and put them in coffins which we did in the presence of a German military doctor.

“After having removed the seals and opened the door of the hut, we certified that the bodies carried no distinctive marks, no papers or objects and that only five bodies had a name tag on their clothing.

“After this operation, we had the bodies placed in the coffins furnished by the German supply depot on the Avenue Chateaudun. The coffins were closed and numbered, we placed them, following the orders of the Feldkommandantur, in the public shelter.

“8 February at 10:00 the Feldkommandantur ordered us to place the coffins in the graves which had been prepared in the Basse street city cemetery from the west along the outer wall.

“The grave have been numbered from 1 to 9.

“8 February at 4 p.m. A detachment from the German army came to render military honors. Then we were given orders to fill the graves.”

The letter below dated 21 November 1944 was written by Roger Leroux:

“Dear Friends, On the 5th day of February, 1944 an American plane fell in flames a mile from here and then exploded. It had been attacked by a German plane. A single airman jumped out in a parachute, but the nine others were killed and the plane reduced to a scrap heap. The nine bodies have been interred in the Blois cemetery.

“The injured airman who parachuted, landed in a field and was discovered an hour later by our searching party and brought to our home. He was unable to walk and had a head injury. I do not believe that he was seriously injured.

“The Germans were on the lookout for the parachutist in the vicinity and found him in our home, whereupon they took him as prisoner of war to Blois, 25 miles from here. The following day, according to information received, he recovered from his shock.

“Since he did not leave an address, I have tried various means to get in touch with him, but have not received an answer. I would greatly appreciate if you could give me some news, that is, if you have some and I shall gladly give you further details.

“Please accept my expression of sincerity.”

Many years later, Mr. Leroux’s question about the identity of the airman was finally answered according to information supplied by Mr. Philippe Canonne: “At the end of July, I received a very touching letter from Mr. Frank M. Komor, the best friend of Warren Klein, the survivor of the crash. He told me that he encountered Warren when they were both prisoners and that Warren died on 25 April 1975 of a massive heart attack. He left behind three daughters and two sons.” Mr. Komor put Mr. Canonne in touch with Nancy Klein, one of Warren Klein’s daughters.

On 8 May 1945 the city of Saint-Leonard-en-Beauce conducted a memorial service to honor the memory of these nine airmen who died there. In every subsequent year they have conducted a ceremony to honor their memory.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-72873 B, Perry	RAGGEDY ANN II		Returned
67th Squadron Crew:			
PERRY, JAMES R. Jr.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
GASPERONI, RICHARD O.	Co-pilot Wounded	1st Lt.	
WEATHERWAX, ROBERT B.	Navigator Wounded	1st Lt.	
GOFF, MAURICE L.	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
SCOTT, RAYMOND E.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
MOSELEY, WALTER H.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
NUTTER, KEITH H.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.	
ROSE, KENNETH W.	RW Gunner	Sgt.	
LONDO, MILFORD E.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
NABORS, WILLIAM H.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

The following data comes from the MACR: “At 1042 this A/C #181 (Star Valley) was observed hit by enemy fighters. It flew on two or three minutes and went into a roll. The left wing came off between #1 and #2 engines, and the ship started to burn. Three parachutes were seen.

Lt. Perry wrote: “On the mission to Tours, we were jumped by Me 109s and we were shot up real bad and the co-pilot had the center of his left hand blown out by a cannon shell which blew up in

the instrument panel. The navigator was slightly wounded. I was barely able to get the aircraft back across the Channel. I made a forced landing at a fighter field near Maidstone.”

*Note: The fighter field was at West Malling, Kent.*

Lt. Gasperoni later recovered, transferred to another base, and continued to fly by making ferrying supplies to our army in France.

Keith Nutter noted that he was chosen to fly as a substitute ball turret gunner on this mission. He wrote: “An FW 190 made an attack straight in on our nose. He turned over on his back just as he passed under our left wing, then started down. He then started flying straight up and I started firing straight down. He went down and with him a B-24 which had been flying on our left wing. Both of them seemed to hit the ground at approximately the same place and at about the same time.

“I always felt I was the one that hit the FW 190, but the waist gunner claimed he hit the fighter as he passed under our left wing. Being a sub on a strange crew, I made no mention of it.

“On the first pass, the FW put 20 mms into our left inboard engine and one explosive shell into the navigator’s compartment. It also hit the B-24 flying on our left wing. Our navigator was hit in the back of the head (Weatherwax) with shrapnel and a portion of the projectile continued through the A-5 pilot and went through the left palm of the co-pilot (Gasperoni). He lost the middle finger of the left hand.

“On the trip back, we had one prop windmilling and I believe the other inboard prop was feathered. We made it to a Spitfire base somewhere in southern England. Ray Scott and myself ended up with a week’s stay in a rest home in southern England.”

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## 8 February 1944

### Watten, France

On this mission all aircraft returned but there was a casualty of a ground crewman after an emergency landing. A pilot was wounded in another incident.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-29208 D, Milliner	SHOO SHOO BABY		Returned
66th Squadron Crew:	No injuries		
MILLINER, WALKER T.	Pilot	Lt.	
BENADOM, DALE F. Co-pilot	Lt.		
GRIMES, ARTHUR V.	Navigator	Lt.	
CROWDER, J. A.	Bombardier	S/Sgt.	
GRIFFIN, DENNIS P.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.	
SMITH, BEAUFORD, R.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
NABER, JULIUS V.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.	
NELLUMS, FRED B.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
PASAVANTIS, PETER G.	LW Gunner	Sgt.	
DAVES, JAMES F.	Tail Gun	S/Sgt.	

Ground Crew (not 44th Bomb Group):

CROSS, SGT. ASN 920444	Airfield controller Killed	Sgt.
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*Note: Our records do not include Sgt. Cross' first name or any additional details on this casualty.*

Due to damage by enemy, Lt. Milliner ordered the crew to bail out near Manston, Kent. The pilot and co-pilot remained with the aircraft and made an emergency landing at Manston, Kent but lost control and hit the control wagon, killing Sgt. Cross, a ground controller. Both pilots reported to a court of inquiry at Dover, England on 10 February 1944.

It was over a month before the aircraft was ready for combat. All four engines were replaced.

68th Squadron Crew:

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68th Sq., #42-100110, Hamlyn	NORTHERN LASS	Returned to base
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68th Squadron Crew:

HAMLYN, RAYMOND E.	Pilot Wounded	1st Lt.
ALTEMUS, WILLIAM B.	Co-pilot	Fl. Off.
BELLARD, HAROLD W.	Navigator	1st Lt.
STEADHAM, ROY J.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
SHELTON, JACK R.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
MORTON, WILLIAM G.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
MICKEY, JAMES D.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.
MAY, ROY P.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
GILBERT, ROBERT N.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
RUHL, ARTHUR C.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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*Note: The following members of this crew were KIA on 8 April 1944: Altemus, Bellard, Steadham, Mickey, and Gilbert.*

A return engagement to Watten, France was made today with 28 of the 44th dispatched (7 of them 67th). Major Jansen, 68<sup>th</sup> Squadron, was Lead Pilot. The run was made visually but with poor results. The flak was moderate heavy accurate, with some men in the group being injured. Enemy fighters were seen but they kept their distance because of the excellent fighter escort our heavies had. Return to base was at 1130 hours. Lt. Hamlyn, pilot of one of the 68th planes, sustained a serious facial flak wound, so it was necessary for his co-pilot Lt. Altemus and T/Sgt. Norton acting as co-pilot to bring the ship back safely.

Lt. Richard Hamlyn had part of his cheek blown away by an explosion of flak that burst on the flight deck of his aircraft. On the 12th, the Lt. was back from the hospital with a large scar on the side of his face. The medics did a nice piece of plastic surgery on a very nasty wound.

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## 11 February 1944

Military Installations, Siracourt, France

One man was killed and another wounded on 1st Lt. Cary's aircraft, HEAVEN CAN WAIT II.



## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7507 X, Cary	HEAVEN CAN WAIT II		Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew:			
CARY, JAMES G.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
LEE, ROBERT L.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.	
CLARK, WARREN J.	Navigator	1st Lt.	
McCLENDON, SAMUEL L.	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
LONGAN, MYRON H. Jr.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Milton, Pennsylvania
MERCER, JAMES D.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	Los Angeles California
TATE, THOMAS M.	Belly Gunner	S/Sgt.	Columbus, Mississippi
MYERS, RUDY S. Jr. ASN 18170066	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Lafe, Arkansas
CONNORS, EDMUND F. ASN 32501858	LW Gunner Serious Knee Wound	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
CRANTZ, CHESTER F.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Vulcan, Michigan

A few enemy aircraft were seen but no attacks were pressed home. Flak, however, was much heavier and more accurate than previously experienced on this target. All six of the 68th Squadron's ships were hit by flak, with two casualties resulting in Lt. James Cary's crew. S/Sgt. Rudy S. Myers was killed by flak that hit his neck and S/Sgt. Edmund F. Connors sustained a knee injury.

## 13 February 1944

## Military Installations, Raye-Sur-Authie and Petit Bois Tillencourt, France

The bombing run was a visual attack and the results were quite good. Plenty of continuous accurate flak was encountered, with many of the Group's airplanes being hit. The 506th Squadron had one crewman hit and killed by flak on an aircraft piloted by Lt. Gail W. Larson. Two others on Larson's crew were slightly injured.

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-7535 U-Bar	PEEPSIGHT		Returned
506th Squadron Crew:			
LARSON, GAIL W. ASN T-10131	Pilot	2nd Lt.	Lynd, Minnesota
GOLUBOCK, RALPH ASN 0-742418	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
PUTNAM, HARRY H. ASN 0-747139	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
EBLER, JOSEPH A. ASN 0-676580	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Newark, New Jersey

SMITH, MYRON L.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Youngstown, Ohio
DUNLOP, WALTER E. ASN 39458474	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	Seattle, Washington
TOLLE, JAMES D. ASN 19059067	Belly Gunner Slightly injured	S/Sgt.	Yakima, Washington
JOHN, GLENN G. ASN 38236097	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Elm Springs, Arkansas
SCARBOROUGH, DALE M. ASN 37469480	LW Gunner Slightly injured	S/Sgt.	St. Paul, Nebraska
TRUONO, ALFONSE A. ASN 12152867	Tail Turret Slightly injured	S/Sgt.	

The damaged plane was landed at Hawkinge at 1600 with no flaps, no brakes or hydraulics after sustaining four hits by flak. The nose wheel collapsed on landing. One engine was feathered.

Ralph Golubock, the co-pilot, wrote: "The mission was called late in the afternoon on February 13th. I will always remember that date because it was my 13th mission. The mission was briefed around noon and all I had for lunch was a chocolate bar. We were to hit a target in the Pas de Calais area – a milk run. I believe that only the 14th combat wing flew this mission. After takeoff and the usual milling around during form up, we headed toward northern France.

"The mission was strictly routine until we were on our bomb run when we were badly hit by flak. The burst was just to our starboard and was level and visible. We immediately lost #3, which we feathered. There was also damage to #4, but we kept it running, but could not pull full power. Upon assessing battle damage, and being able to hold some sort of course, we headed toward England, gradually losing altitude. The gunners in the back began calling in to tell us of their casualties. We discovered that Sgt. Glenn was badly hit at the right waist position. Several others received minor wounds.

"At this time, we felt that we could reach England all right, but we could never return to Shipdham. We were gradually losing altitude and had very little left when we hit the coast of England. We had to find a place to land at once. No thought was given to bailing out because of the wounded. When we were down to less than 1,000 feet, we suddenly saw a small grass fighter base.

"Gail immediately headed for the field while I tried to pump down the wheels and flaps. I got the wheels down but not the flaps. We were headed straight at the field at closer to 200 mph, when I noticed an RAF amphibian on the runway preparing to take off. Apparently, he saw us because he immediately cleared the runway. None too soon – we touched down at high speed and both Gail and I got on the brakes. With #3 out we had only one shot at the brakes, so we just locked them and eventually came to rest in a revetment used by the Spitfires on the base. We immediately evacuated the aircraft but Gail noticed that #4 engine was on fire. We grabbed a fire extinguisher as he went out the top hatch. We went out on the port wing onto the wall of the revetment and Gail began applying foam to #4. About that time, the British fire engines arrived and put out the fire.

“We then proceeded to open the rear hatch to check on the men in the rear. Unfortunately, Sgt. Glenn was already dead. One of his legs was completely blown off. We spent the night at this air base called Hawkins. The next day we were taken to Manston and were flown home.”

Myron Smith wrote: “The raid was on the buzz bomb installations in the Pas de Calais area. We were hit with flak, which resulted in the right waist gunner, Glenn G. John, being killed. The left waist gunner [Scarborough] and tail gunner [Truono] were wounded. Our number one and four engines were out with the propeller on number four windmilling. The hydraulic system was shot out.

“We managed to make it back to the English Coast and landed the plane, PEEPSIGHT, on a grass Spitfire base at Hawkinge. This was the last combat mission for PEEPSIGHT. It was later repaired and used as a cargo plane. Our crew was picked up at Manston about four or five days later and flown back to Shipdham. I believe it was Jim Clements who flew us back. After this raid, I was grounded and subsequently worked in the Squadron Office as C.Q. and mail clerk.

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## 20 February 1944

### Ochersleben and Helmstedt, Germany

The weather was severely cold over all of Europe with snow covering the ground both at the target and on the base. Two targets of opportunity were hit because the primary at Halberstadt, which was scheduled for bombing by PFF equipment, malfunctioned. Slight but fairly accurate flak was encountered over the two targets, coupled with attacks by enemy aircraft, led to two of our planes being MIA. One each was lost by the 66th and 506th Squadrons.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-64166 A, Decker	BIG FAT BUTTERFLY		MACR #2449
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA		
DECKER, DONALD R. ASN 0-204424	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Jamaica, New York
JORGENSEN, ROY G. ASN 0-679073	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Cozard, Nebraska
LIDDELL, JAMES M. ASN 0-807917	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Columbus, Ohio
GATENS, FREDERICK B. ASN 0-672946	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
ELKIN, ALTON M. ASN 38132105	Engineer KIA, buried U.S.A.	T/Sgt.	Ft. Worth, Texas
NOWAK, ANDREW B. ASN 35326545	Radio Oper. KIA, buried U.S.A.	T/Sgt.	South Bend, Indiana
CROCKER, JOHN L. Jr. ASN 34430758	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Charlotte, North Carolina
ALBINE, ROBERT L. ASN 13087450	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Connellsville, Pennsylvania
BALCA, MICHAEL J. ASN 15070162	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Akron, Ohio

BETHKE, ELMER J. ASN 16077154	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Muscoda, Wisconsin
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*Note Decker and Albine were veterans of the 1 August 1943 Ploesti raid.*

1st Lt. Donald R. Decker was the pilot of BIG FAT BUTTERFLY but little is told in the MACR about it. “#166 was last seen about one hour after bombs away – 1428 hour. One engine was smoking and it was with a formation below and behind the 44th BG’s.” Nothing more.

Only the engineer, Alton M. Elkin, and radio operator Andrew B. Nowak, were reported killed by the German officials during the war. The other eight were determined dead after the war in U.S.A.’s investigations. These eight were returned and buried in a common grave at: Grave 242, Section I, National Cemetery, Louisville, Kentucky. These men were S/Sgt. Robert L. Albine, S/Sgt. Michael J. Balca, S/Sgt. Elmer J. Bethke, S/Sgt. John L. Crocker, Jr., 1st Lt. Donald R. Decker, 2nd Lt. Frederick B. Gatens, 2nd Lt. Roy G. Jorgensen, and 2nd Lt. James M. Liddell.

*Note: Elkin, Nowak, Balca, and Bethke were on the crew of Lt. Bickerstaff when they crash-landed near Cromer on 13 Nov. 1943.*

This aircraft crashed east of Koblenz and 40 miles west of the target, near Dierdorf and the village of Sessendorf. Three bodies were found in the aircraft at the crash site. One additional body was found in the tail section, which came down on the Kohl/Frankfurt Highway. This crewman could have been Bethke.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-100373 Y, Rawson

MACR #2421

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

RAWSON, FREDERICK H. ASN 0-802783	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Erie, Pennsylvania
LEWIS, JAMES R. ASN 0-684010	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	San Angelo, Texas
JOHNSTON, WILLIAM P. ASN 0-738559	Navigator KIA, buried Margraten (H-12-9)	2nd Lt.	Kansas City, Missouri
RICHARDSON, WILLIAM G. ASN 0-752643	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Portland, Maine
McCOY, RICHARD J. ASN 12165291	Engineer KIA, buried Margraten (L-14-16)	S/Sgt.	Jersey City, New Jersey
READER, GERALD E. ASN 16154446	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin
WINFREE, JULIAN E. Jr. ASN 34431710	Ball Turret KIA	Sgt.	Greensboro, North Carolina
HOFFMAN, JOHN B. ASN 18063734	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Longview, Texas
SHULTZ, ROBERT E. ASN 33442877	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Staunton, Virginia
WAPENSKY, RUSSELL A. ASN 13056108	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (D-21-17)	Sgt.	Laneford, Pennsylvania

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The second aircraft and crew lost on 20 February was that flown by 2nd Lt. Frederick H. Rawson. The MACR states that, "At 1350 hours, A/C #373 was seen hit by flak, #4 engine was smoking. A/C fell back and became a straggler. Between 1405 and 1410 hours, the ship was attacked at least four times by one Me 109. No chutes observed."

S/Sgt. Gerald E. Reader, radio operator, was able to add his recollections, "We were on our first mission and were put in formation as Tail-end Charlies [in the first section]. Our target was Helmstedt. We got our bombs away and were leaving the target area when flak got one right engine. The rest of our formation was leaving when the Me 109s showed up. I shot flares to alert our fighter cover, but they were all busy. One Me 109 hit us in the tail and set that section on fire. Our tail gunner, Russ Wapensky, was burned. His chute, which was just outside of his turret, was damaged and partially burned.

"Co-pilot Lt. Lewis got up from his seat and motioned for us to get out. Engineer Dick McCoy then bailed out from the front. I don't know what happened to him. Our waist gunners, Winfree and Schultz bailed out from the rear, followed by Sgt. Hoffman, ball turret gunner. Wapensky then came forward looking for a spare chute to replace his damaged one. Lt. Lewis got Wapensky on his back and jumped out, both hanging on to each other. But when the chute opened, Wapensky was torn loose and fell to his death. I, then, went out from the front, too. Both our navigator and bombardier were in the nose so I don't know what happened to them or what took place there.

"Lt. Rawson, Lt. Lewis, Lt. Richardson, Sgt. Hoffman and myself are all that came down alive as far as I know. I don't know if Winfree got out of the plane or not.

"We landed near Odessa, were taken to Bad Hamberg, then on to Frankfurt for interrogation, etc. However, our crew was not together as Hoffman went to the hospital and I didn't see the others again. I ended up a POW at Heidakrug, East Prussia." The bombardier, Lt. William Richardson adds even more, "I was not their regular bombardier – he was unable to fly this day and I was substituted from my regular crew. Our briefed target was Helmstedt, but the primary target for most of the 8th AF was Liepzig. Helmstedt, as I recall, was a diversionary target. We were supposed to fly over the target at 13,000 feet, and thereafter climb to 18,000 on the return journey.

"All went well until we reached our destination. There we encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire and at least one of our engines was knocked out. Any other damage caused by the flak I was not aware of. Our bombs were dropped. After passing over the target, the formation started their ascent to the new altitude. In our crippled condition, we were unable to keep up, and gradually fell behind, until we were all alone.

"Shortly after that, several enemy fighters moved in and shot the hell out of us. A FW 190 flew up, right in front of my turret, so close I could look right into the pilot's face – moments you don't forget! Had my guns been operating, I could have given him a bad time, but they were out – as was most everything else in our aircraft.

"I didn't hear any bail out order, but was sure it was getting near that time. My intercom was out. I couldn't open the door to the turret but the navigator (Lt. Johnston) opened it for me. Had he not done that, I would have been casualty #6. At this point, the B-24 was in a pretty violent

attitude and heading down. Lt. Johnston went out through the nose wheel door and I followed. At that time I didn't know the fate of the rest of the crew or if anyone was still on board.

"It was sort of open country and farmland where we came down. I landed in high brush and had hardly extricated myself when arms-bearing "natives" appeared and escorted me to a group several hundred yards away – Lts. Rawson and Lewis, a badly wounded ball turret gunner [Winfrey], and one other crewman. The navigator Johnston was there, but dead as his chute was unopened!

"I have enclosed a copy of a letter prepared by Lt. Rawson recommending Lt. Lewis for a Silver Star. Outcome unknown."

In part it states, "The rudder controls were shot out, the elevators jammed, the whole tail section set afire, and the tail gunner severely injured and his flying suit set afire. On the second pass, the left (waist) gunner was killed and the right gunner and ball turret gunners were severely injured. The order to bail out was then given and the right waist gunner, ball turret gunner, navigator and bombardier parachuted out.

"As Lt. Lewis prepared to leave the aircraft, he noticed that the quick release mechanism of the pilot's flak suit was jammed. He paused to tear off the flak suit of the pilot who was fighting to maintain control of the aircraft; he retrieved the pilot's parachute from behind the armor plate and buckled it on him. As Lt. Lewis entered the bomb bay, he saw the wounded tail gunner on the catwalk. His suit was still on fire and his parachute had been riddled by 20-mm shells. Pausing again, Lt. Lewis dragged the injured tail gunner [Wapensky] onto his back and dived out the bomb bay. When the parachute opened, the tail gunner's hold was loosened and he fell to the earth and was killed."

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-100285 J, Talbott

Crash-landing

#### 66th Squadron Crew:

TALBOTT, DAVID R.	Pilot	Lt.
CLAUSEN, LEMOINE H.	Co-pilot	Lt.
GOLDMAN, ARTHUR	Navigator	Lt.
MORIARTY, CLIFFORD F.	Bombardier	Lt.
SWICK, RAYMOND E.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
CLAUSEN, GEORGE A.	Eng./Top Turret Injured, hospitalized	T/Sgt.
HADDOCH, SAMMY	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.
WERNING, ROBERT T.	RW Gunner Injured, hospitalized	S/Sgt.
GASSER, HERMAN C.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
SYMPSON, CECIL H.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

*Note: This aircraft was totally wrecked when it crash-landed near Ipswich, England. Lt. Talbott's crew was lost later on 15 March, 1944 while on another mission. Lts. Goldman and Moriarty were KIA. Clausen and Werning were hospitalized after this crash and were not part of the crew when it was lost.*

On the return from this mission of the 20th, one 66th Squadron aircraft crashed, luckily without loss of life. Sgt. Herman Gasser, waist gunner, briefly explained, "We were on the deck coming back over England. We lost power suddenly, hit three trees and crashed into a potato field. Our plane was totally wrecked." Crash-landing site reported near Ipswich at Holbrook, Suffolk.

From the S-3 Narrative of Operations: "No fighter support was observed from the I.P. until after leaving the target area, where the group was joined by P-47s, who furnished excellent fighter escort for the remainder of the way out. One aircraft, #373 (Rawson), straggled after being hit by flak in the target area and was last seen to go into the cloud cover approximately 45 minutes after leaving the target area.

"Lead bombardier's narrative [Joseph J. Young, Captain, Air Corps, Group Bombardier]: Bombing approach and run: The wing was north of the briefed course and no well-defined I.P. was seen due to snow on the ground. After the lead group dropped their bombs on a target of opportunity, a flare was fired and the I.P. code word was employed. It was impossible for this group to drop their bombs on the same target, so after a sharp right turn, the city of Oschersleben was picked for a target by this group. The bombing run was made on automatic pilot on a heading of 160 degrees and was approximately 50 seconds long. There was no enemy opposition on the run. The rail junctions were used as an aiming point.

"The second and third sections dropped their bombs on the city of Helmstedt. After seeing the flare signals, the section lead bombardiers noticed that the group was on the briefed heading with a town ahead that resembled the briefed target. The bombing runs were made with manual pilot, on a heading of 60 degrees with no enemy interference to either section. Bombing was done by sections on individual section leader.

"Results of Bombing: Fires were seen in the center and edges of both targets. A large explosion was seen in Oschersleben with smoke rising several thousand feet into the air."

The following account comes from an unidentified family member of one of the crew: "The crash site is exactly the same now as it was in 1944, apart from the hedge (removed) and the smashed pole that was replaced. The open field was about one and a half miles long and 400 yards wide. Lt. Talbott almost made this field. A few gallons of fuel more and he would have made this large opening where the damage to the plane could have been minimal.

"The B-24 clipped treetops as it came down, it then struck and smashed a telegraph pole before hitting the ground then slowing down to face the way it came in (out of fuel) in the open field.

"As the B-24 rapidly lost power and altitude shortly after crossing the English coast on return from bombing Helmstadt, eastern Germany, my father recalls hearing Dave Talbott, the pilot, shouting: "Find me a field! Find me a field!" He occasionally commented what a good pilot Dave Talbott was, often flying the four-engined bomber more like a fighter."

George Clausen, the engineer, remembers being in the middle of the B-24s bomb bay with tree branches scraping along the underside of the barely flyable aircraft. Just as he reached the flight deck, they hit the ground and the top turret fell on his hips. He and Robert Werning (waist gunner), who was also badly injured, were taken to a nearby air base hospital (Raydon airfield, near Ipswich, 353rd Fighter Group). The other eight crew members were brought to "Woodlands" where they were cared for by the Rodwell family before being transported back to Shipdham airfield, Norfolk.

Ian Hawkins, who was five years old at the time, was a witness to this crash-landing: “In recent years I have learned from a variety of sources some of the missing details concerning Lt. Talbott’s crash-landing in February 20, 1944. I vividly recall going inside the wreckage of the two halves of the B-24 fuselage, sitting in the tail turret – the prospect (Plexiglas) was badly broken, seeing long belts of 50 caliber ammunition, and keeping one for a souvenir. Seeing and smelling the incredible number of thin plastic-coated (different colors) electric cables, connections going along the whole length of the fuselage; the oxygen bottles, etc. The wreckage of the B-24 was hauled away through my home village of Freston on low-loaders and taken to the huge wrecked aircraft dump at USAAF Woodbridge, via Ipswich.”

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## 22 February 1944

### Gotha, Germany

This Washington’s Birthday mission eventually had to be recalled due to the snow and severe weather conditions that hindered assembly as well as the formations as they were passing over Holland and approaching the German border.

T/Sgt. Kipnes, radio operator on Lt. Mercer’s plane, stated, “Our element of three ships flew into a heavy cloudbank. When we came into the clear later, both of our wing ships were gone. We later heard that they were hit by eight FW 190s and went down...” Both planes were from the 67th Squadron.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-72865 F-Bar, Evans	F FOR FREDDIE		MACR #2420
67th Squadron Crew:			
EVANS, EARL A. ASN 0-677250	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Ft. Worth, Texas
SWANK, CLIFFORD W. ASN #0-807076	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Kansas City, Missouri
PINKUSSOHN, LEWIS A. ASN 0-673942	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	New York City, New York
FLAUGH, HAROLD E. ASN 0-681534	Bombardier KIA, WOM Henri-Chapelle	2nd Lt.	Winterset, Iowa
DEAL, JOSEPH C. ASN 13156210	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania
JACKSON, MYRON G. ASN 35519315	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Chagrin Falls, Ohio
SIMON, OSCAR ASN 35255212	Ball Turret POW	Sgt.	Evansville, Indiana
BRITT, JOHN O. ASN 12169672	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Buffalo, New York
WILD, EDWARD C. Jr. ASN 11040487	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Shelburne, New Hampshire
PUTNAM, THOMAS A. ASN 14138447	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Columbus, Georgia

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2nd Lt. Clifford W. Swank, co-pilot of this aircraft, briefly explained, “Due to the heavy damage to the plane, (inflicted by these enemy fighters) we were forced to bail out. We landed near Wesel, Germany.

“We were all accounted for and uninjured except for our bombardier, Lt. Harold E. Flaugh, of Winterset, Iowa. No trace was ever found of him during or after the war! When I did get back home, I visited the parents of Lt. Flaugh [in Iowa in 1945].”

Mr. P. Pouwels, of Elshout, Netherlands sent me this information: “I made inquiries about Harold E. Flaugh. According to the information I received from the authorities of the U.S. Cemetery, Margraten, Flaugh is listed as MIA. His name is chiseled in a memorial wall on a U.S. cemetery in Henri Chapelle, Belgium. I am still searching for the exact location of the crash of B-24 #42-72865.”

*Note: The crash site was finally established to be in the Elshout area near Bokhoven, Belgium.*

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-100402 M-Bar, Fish		MACR #2422
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA, all on WOM, Cambridge	
FISH, GEORGE E. ASN 0-803799	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. St. Cloud, Minnesota
SHERIDAN, CHARLES M. ASN #0-401892	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Clarion, Pennsylvania
STAIB, HENRY T. ASN 0-808172	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Renova, Pennsylvania
JEFFS, ROBERT H. ASN 0-681994	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Denver, Colorado
MAY, GORDON L. ASN 15102491	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Cannelton, Indiana
MASCI, PETER J. Jr. ASN 32635601	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Middleton, New York
CORSILLI, GENE ASN 32466223	Ball Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt. Guttenburg, New Jersey
ROGERS, FRED B. ASN 37235533	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt. Carthage, Missouri
SWETLIK, WILLIAM M. ASN 16133615	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Eau Claire, Wisconsin
SZABO, PAUL A. Jr. ASN 36113560	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt. Dearborn, Michigan

The second aircraft lost on the 22nd was that piloted by Lt. George E. Fish. Almost nothing is recorded or known concerning this plane and crew. As S/Sgt. Kipnes stated above, this plane was the other wingman that disappeared in the heavy clouds and was not seen again. But unlike the plane above of Lt. Evans, there were no survivors. In fact, all ten men on board this plane are listed on the Wall of the Missing – not one crewman was ever found. It seems reasonable to assume that this airplane went down in the North Sea, either ditched or was shot down. This was only the third mission for this crew.

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## 24 February 1944

### Gotha, Germany

This was a very successful mission with excellent bombing results as the 44th BG led the 14th Combat Bomb Wing. T/Sgt. Kipnes made this evaluation: "Enemy fighters were with us all the way into and out of the target. We fought off at least 40 fighters. Attacking planes were Me 109s and FW 190s. But our formation was tight and few could break through." However, the 44th BG did have two losses – one each by the 66th and 68th Squadrons.

### 66th SQUADRON:

#### 66th SQUADRON:

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66th Sq., #41-29148 B, Etheridge

MACR #2923

#### 66th Squadron Crew:

ETHERIDGE, HAROLD E. ASN 0-799359	Pilot POW, injured	2nd Lt.	Woodleaf, North Carolina
LEWIS, WARD B. ASN 0-806471	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Kiowa, Kansas
BUECHSENSTEIN, JOHN L. ASN 0-739538	Navigator KIA, buried Lorraine (B-20-9)	2nd Lt.	Alliance, Nebraska
HALL, KENNETH R. ASN 0-671350	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Yonkers, New York
AMBLER, JAMES S. ASN 39107032	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	San Jose, California
NABLO, PAUL D. ASN 12207382	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	No. Tonawanda, New York
HAWKINS, SIDNEY E. Jr. ASN 14125350	Ball Turret POW, injured by Germans	S/Sgt.	Inman, South Carolina
STUBBS, ERSKINE H. ASN 34196076	RW Gunner POW, injured	S/Sgt.	Lumpkin, Georgia
BABBITT, BERTRAM T. ASN 12146313	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
ROLAND, FRANK C. ASN 13154821	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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The MACR states in part, "At 1331 hours, A/C #148 was seen to be hit by enemy aircraft. It began to straggle and became a victim of concentrated attacks by the enemy. #4 engine was smoking and aircraft lagged farther behind, losing altitude. #4 and #2 engines burst into flames at 1334 hours and seven chutes opened. It crashed at 1354." The aircraft crashed 800 meters west of Dippach, 200 meters west of the Dippach/Simmershausen road, 20 kilometers east northeast of Fulda.

The MACR also included a statement made by the engineer, Sgt. Ambler, "All but one of us bailed out. About 5 minutes past the target, we got orders to bail out. Paul Nablo went out first, then Lewis, followed by me. Our plane hit the ground about 50 yards from us. The Germans said one man remained in the crashed plane in the nose section..."

Pilot Lt. Etheridge stated that, "While on the bomb run, at an altitude of about 20,000 feet, a few minutes before bombs away, the aircraft received considerable damage from antiaircraft fire. The two right engines were knocked out, the right horizontal stabilizer was badly damaged, and there was other undetermined damage in the bomb bay which prevented releasing the bombs by either normal or emergency systems when we passed over the target.

"Consequently, the remainder of the formation quickly pulled away from us as soon as they dropped their bombs. Almost immediately, we came under attack by about a dozen German aircraft. The crippled condition of our aircraft soon made it apparent that when enemy fighters began an attack, our best defense was to fire our longer range .50-caliber machine guns from as stable flight as I could maintain, until the enemy fighters were close enough to effectively fire their shorter range .303-caliber guns. At that moment we would take abrupt evasive action. This evasive action consisted of diving, banking, skidding, and slipping our aircraft in as violent and erratic manner as possible.

"These maneuvers were repeated for as long as we were under attack – two or three times with such violence that one or more bombs broke loose and clattered out of the bomb bay. I thought the aircraft was breaking up on these occasions.

With two engines inoperative, we were losing altitude rapidly while performing these maneuvers, and after passing over a low range of hills, we approached a higher range ahead which we could not clear. At this point I ordered the crew to bail out. We were still under fighter attack, and as the tail gunner, Sgt. Roland, was crawling forward to the waist to be in position to bail out, he was thrown completely out of the plane through the open camera hatch when I made an abrupt diving, twisting turn.

"Normally, all of the crew members are belted down except the two waist gunner, who must stand beside an open window on either side of the plane and hold the butt of a .50 cal. gun, which is mounted on a post in the window. These two men are not belted in as they must stand and move around in order to fire the guns. Therefore, they were being thrown around like popcorn in a popper during my evasive maneuvers.

"After bailing out, I landed on the side of a mountain and soon saw Sgt. Stubbs, my waist gunner, lying behind a log about a hundred yards above me. I climbed up to where he was and asked if he was injured. He said he hadn't been wounded but that he was afraid his neck or back was either cracked or broken because it hurt so badly. I asked if it was due to landing hard in the chute (I had fractured my right leg on landing because my chute had not fully opened and assumed the same thing might have happened to him.) But he said it had happened when he had struck the top of the aircraft with his head a couple of times while being thrown about.

"We were captured a few minutes later by armed citizens from a village nearby. They were quite abusive and made life miserable for Sgt. Stubbs because he could not raise his arms in surrender.

"The walk to the village over rough ground covered with several inches of snow, was obviously very painful for Stubbs. Each time he slipped or stumbled he could not refrain from exclaiming in agony. We had to stop several times to allow him to get himself together to go a little farther.

"After we got to the village, I was taken to the dispensary where my leg was splinted, and did not see Stubbs again until that night when we were locked up along with two others of our crew. During the night, he spoke of having stiffness and severe pains in his neck and back. Next

morning we were taken to the city of Eisenach, and during the day we were sent to different POW camps.”

S/Sgt. Erskine H. Stubbs, this waist gunner, added, “The 24th of February, 1944 at times seems like only yesterday; at other times it is like a lifetime ago. There’s no way to forget it – only some parts of it.

“To the best of my knowledge, #3 engine propeller was running away and wouldn’t feather. #4 engine was on fire and the right tail section was almost gone. We were under very heavy fighter attacks. My position was right waist so I don’t know about the #1 and #2 engines. The fighters literally ate us up. I am sure our aircraft accounted for either 4 or 5 German fighters, so all was not lost in vain.

“Our navigator, Buechsenstein, was KIA but I never could get the details. The Germans had different stories. We don’t know if his parachute didn’t open, if he was strafed in his parachute, or was in the crash itself. The rest of the crew parachuted and were POWs for the remainder of the war. To my knowledge, the pilot and I were the only ones who were injured.”

T/Sgt. Paul Nablo confirmed statements made above, “I recall we had flak hits on two engines, one out and one running away that could not be feathered. Then fighters shot away the right vertical stabilizer, making it impossible for our pilot to keep the plane flying, so told us to get out. I was not wounded but received facial cuts from being thrown around on the flight deck – I was the radio operator.”

Konrad Rudolph, a German war historian from Homberg, West Germany, sent this information, “I have found an eyewitness to this crash in the Dippach-Simmershausen area. A woman, who at that time was a sixteen year old girl, was at a camp for ‘B.D.M.’ (girls from the Hitlerjugend) in the Rhon-Hills. The plane crashed near her camp. She saw some parachutes coming down and ran to that crash area. Some German policemen and men from the ‘Land-wacht’ captured the airmen, and were rounding them up.

“However, one of the American airmen was very badly injured. A policeman said that perhaps when the airman jumped from the airplane, he was struck by a propeller or was thrown against the plane, (tail section, etc.) as he had one arm and one leg torn or sheared (almost) completely loose from his body, and was unconscious. One policeman suggested that they shoot him to end his suffering, but the Burgermeister from the village said ‘No’. But this policeman still wanted to kill him as he said these “Terror-flyers” had bombed his home in Kassel and killed his family.

“While these two men disputed the airman’s fate, another crewman came up, carrying his parachute. His presence apparently threatened the policeman, as he then left the wounded man. But in a few minutes this wounded airman died of his terrible injuries.

“The name of this witness is Mrs. Ludwig.”

Sidney Hawkins wrote: “I landed in a tree and with little injuries. So I cut myself free from my chute and fell to the ground. As the ground was covered with snow, I assumed the snow would help break my fall. But there was little snow so I injured my back. I still suffer from that injury. Later, I was captured by German Brown Shirt kids who hit me in the face with a rifle butt, losing most of my teeth.”

Harold Etheridge wrote: "Fields was ball gunner on my crew. On the mission before we were shot down (13 February 44). Fields' feet were frozen, frost bitten, etc. I took Fields to the hospital when we returned to base, so he wasn't on the crew when we were shot down. I didn't see Fields again. Another 44th POW gave me info on Fields."

Alfred McDonnell (on Jack Thames' crew) wrote: "Harold Etheridge and crew were flying on our right wing on that mission over Gothia, Germany when fighter plane came through and knocked them out. As they went down, we counted the chutes that came out and all ten made it. About two months later, we heard they were all taken prisoners of war. From my ball turret that morning, I counted 45 chutes in the air. I am sure there were more for we lost a number of planes that day."

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-24225 T, Bell	FLAK ALLEY		MACR # 2922
68th Squadron Crew:			
BELL, PHILLIP W. ASN 0-742832	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	St. Joseph, Missouri
KING, JAMES L. ASN 0-681117	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Parksville, Kentucky
SCHROEDER, JAMES A. ASN 0-678513	Navigator POW, repatriated	2nd Lt.	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
HALL, GEORGE W. ASN 0-686193	Bombardier POW, injured	2nd Lt.	Ann Arbor, Michigan
FREEBURGH, CHARLES H. ASN 14150973	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Mississippi
MILILLO, ANTONIO ASN 31158071	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Ardennes (A-24-16)	S/Sgt.	Boston, Massachusetts
HAMMONTREE, JAMES A. ASN 14161472	Ball Turret KIA	Sgt.	Paiton, Georgia
HAYNES, WILEY W. Jr. ASN 34572318	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (A-21-9)	Sgt.	Gainsville, Georgia
SULLIVAN, KENNETH E. ASN 35562810	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Hammond, Indiana
GLEASON, ROBERT J. ASN 13049367	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Washington, Dist. of Col.

*Note: This aircraft crashed near Pferdsdorf, Germany.*

The MACR includes the following information: Just after the target this aircraft was caught in a prop wash and fell out of formation, with two props on one side running away. Enemy aircraft immediately concentrated their attacks on this plane and it began to straggle. Much of the damage to the aircraft was to the left side. Sgt. Kenneth Sullivan, left waist gunner, was seriously wounded as well. Sgt. Wiley Haynes was told to contact the others in the rear of the ship and then to bail out. This he did but he was so badly wounded that he died soon after landing.

About 1330 hours and 21,000 feet, five minutes flying time south of Gotha, crew bailed out. Six parachutes were seen to come out of this aircraft before it exploded. The pilot, Lt. Bell, knew of eight men bailing out, but only four of them survived. Lt. Bell said that he had been told that all

of his men had jumped prior to his leaving the ship, but later was told that Sgts. Hammontree and Gleason, both from the rear of the plane, did not jump. However, in another portion of the MACR it states that both Gleason and Hammontree did bail out (or were blown out by the force of the explosion) but too soon as both men were dead before getting down to the ground. (The MACR reported that Gleason and Hammontree froze to death.

Lt. George W. Hall, bombardier, and Lt. Schroeder, navigator, bailed out of nose wheel door; Sgt. Charles H. Freeburg bailed out of bomb bay doors. James L. King, co-pilot, bailed out, but was wounded by a 20-mm shell and died a few minutes after hitting the ground. He had had three previous missions. Sgt. Sullivan was seriously injured, captured as soon as he hit the ground, was taken to a schoolhouse near Gotha, but died soon afterwards in a hospital. It was his second mission.

Radio operator Milillo was only slightly injured at the time that he bailed out, but his chute did not open or he failed to pull his ripcord soon enough. He died on the ground.

Lt. James A. Schroeder, navigator, was badly wounded, bailed out and was later repatriated by the Germans back to the U.S. about 25 September 1944.

Four from this crew were buried temporarily in the Pferdsdorf/Rhon Cemetery:: Lt. James L. King (grave #202), Sgt. Anthonio Milillo (grave #203), Sgt. James A. Hammontree (grave #204), and Sgt. Wiley W. Haynes, Jr. (grave #205).

Their plane, the famous "Flak Alley", with 41 previous missions successfully completed, crashed in a small village south of Gotha, Germany.

Lt. Schroeder reported that he could not run due to seven holes in his back. Freeburgh tried to escape and the last glimpse Schroeder had of him he was running and his helmet flaps were flapping. Schroeder said that Hall, the bombardier, was wounded in both eyes, probably from shards of steel from exploding shells. He lost one eye, but the other was saved by a German doctor, who used magnets to remove slivers of steel from it. Lt. Hall died many years ago.

Schroeder said that this crew had been up five times, but had only two missions credited. Just a couple of days earlier they had aborted, in Flak Alley, when the props ran away. On this mission, they went over the target but when swinging around to return, two engines on the same side had the props run away again. The pilots tried to counteract this strong torque with all their strength but could not do so, fell out of formation, and apparently were attacked by fighters, finishing them off.

Schroeder was caught by civilians and farmers who started to beat him with pitchforks. He started to resist but decided to appeal to them with sign language and assure them he had no weapons and they then took him prisoner. Shortly after Lt. Schroeder parachuted safely, a German citizen, Mr. Irbrukker, took him to his home for treatment of his injuries. Later he was befriended by a German soldier who spoke good English who said his brother was in Texas. He was taken to the wreck of his plane which had both the nose and the tail sticking up from the ground. He believes that he was taken prisoner near Isenburg, placed in a church for a while, and then was sent to POW camps.

Witnesses on the ground reported that the aircraft had been shot down by an Me 109. They also said that a man from the village pulled one of the crewmembers from the burning bomber. This man was later abducted after the war by the Soviets and never heard from again.

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### 3 March 1944

#### Oranienburg, Germany

##### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-109822 O, Townsend	Returned to base
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##### 68th Squadron Crew (partial):

TOWNSEND, RAYMOND H. Jr. ASN 0-670670	Pilot	1st Lt.	
McDONALD, JAMES R. ASN 0-738994	Bombardier Severely frozen	1st Lt.	

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*Note: Lt. Townsend was killed in action on 8 April 1944.*

On recall and while over the North Sea/Channel, all instruments were frozen and inoperative. When the bombs were salvoed, they exploded, causing severe damage to the bottom of the aircraft. Due to the overcast, the crew was not aware of the altitude, and were very close to the sea. Lt. McDonald was so badly frozen that he was taken off combat status and re-assigned as Assistant Armament Officer. On 18 January 1945 he was transferred to 2nd Air Division headquarters.

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### 7 March 1944

#### Training Flight, Shipdham, England

After a mission to Lippstadt was scrubbed due to adverse weather, local formation flying was scheduled for several crews. One of these was pilot Glenn R. Folsom and a crew of six, one of whom was a ground crewman. The time was 1610 hour (CAVU 10 miles), cloud base 2,500 feet, 1/10 overcast.

Lt. Folsom was leading an element of three ships and was approaching the field when he was involved in a collision with a P-47 and both planes crashed. Lt. J.B. Williams, co-pilot of the plane on Folsom's left, was looking at Lt. Folsom just as the P-47 hit Folsom's right wing, and saw the startled look on his face as he never saw the P-47 approaching.

##### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-7582, Folsom	Collision with P-47
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##### 66th Squadron Crew:

Entire crew perished		
FOLSOM, GLENN R. ASN 0-745068	Pilot DIED	1st Lt.  Elk City, Oregon
PURDUE, PAUL F. ASN 0-686492	Co-pilot DIED	2nd Lt.  Newburgh, Indiana
MAUK, CHARLES N. ASN 0-685346	Navigator DIED, buried Cambridge (A-1-5)	2nd Lt.  Toledo, Ohio

GILLIGAN, EUGENE G. ASN 18110321	Engineer DIED, buried Cambridge (C-4-5)	S/Sgt.	Brookville, Pennsylvania
BESSEN, THEODORE ASN 20227109	Radio Oper. DIED	S/Sgt.	New York City, New York
BARBER, THOMAS G. Jr. ASN 34163105	Crew Chief DIED	S/Sgt.	Birmingham, Alabama
HAWKES, HAZEN E. ASN 39120898	Tail Turret DIED	Sgt.	Drummond, Idaho

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65th Fighter Wing:

65th FW, #41-6356, Schreiber

Collided with B-24

## P-47 pilot:

SCHREIBER, CHARLES H.  
ASN T-190930

Pilot

Fl. Off.

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*Note: Flight Officer Schreiber was assigned to HQ 65 Flight Wing, HQ and HQ AAF 370 65 Fighter Wing.*

S/Sgt. Raymond McNamara, a 67th Squadron Crew Chief, was an observer. He stated that the P-47 could have made a simulated attack on the B-24, but for reasons unknown, the P-47 crashed into the B-24, tearing off its right wing, and the P-47 then spun on down and crashed. The B-24 flew on for a few seconds, winged-over and also crashed and blew up. The wing that had been torn off kept fluttering and flipping all the way to the ground. No parachutes were seen from either of the stricken craft, with much debris landing near the runways 15 – 21 (northwest). A search was conducted for several hours for the pilot of the P-47, as its wreckage had been strewn over a large area. His body was eventually found in some widely scattered parts.

In a letter from dated April of 1998, Harold Morrison writes: “After arriving at Shipdham on February 28, 1944 I was required (as a new aircraft Commander) to be checked out prior to being certified for combat ready status. This involved an area orientation flight on March 3rd (1:30 hours), take offs, landings and bomb procedures (3:15 hours) on March 6th and a formation flight check (2:00) on March 7th. In addition I was to fly two missions as co-pilot with an experienced combat crew prior to flying combat missions with my own crew.

“On the morning of March 7th, 1944 I was directed to report to the flight line, in mid-afternoon, for the formation flight check. After forming up in a three aircraft flight we later returned to the field at traffic altitude heading East expecting to complete a formation landing maneuver. I was flying the aircraft from the co-pilot’s position (right seat) and was tight on the lead aircraft’s left wing (Lt. Folsom – lead aircraft). The right wing aircraft was lagging out of good position.

“Lt. Folsom had just reached forward to turn off the C-1 autopilot in preparation for our formation landing maneuver. On impact with the P-47 he turned abruptly, looking directly at me, over his left shoulder, with an astonished look on his face, probably thinking that I may have bumped his aircraft. The B-24 aircraft flipped hard right into a two and a half turn right spin and exploded on impact. The P-47 had made a diving left bank and struck the lead aircraft’s right wing outboard of #4 engine and that portion of the wing was severed. At the time the aircraft started to flip hard right I observed a crewmember standing in the open left waist gunner window, fall back into the fuselage.



“The pilot flying in the left seat of our aircraft grabbed the controls and banked close to the 90 degree right bank position to observe the impact area. My concern at the time was that we could stall and end up the same way. I thought that Lt. Walter T. Milliner was the left seat pilot, but in late 1993 he informed me that he was not. [Looks like it was J.B. Williams...] He was the aircraft commander on my first two missions that I was required to fly as co-pilot. On March 8, 1944 (Berlin) and March 9th (Berlin area). It was on March 9th that we flew #4 position (slot) and Lt. Ken Jewel, lead aircraft, lost his leg.

“After landing, we were close to the impact area (our parking hard stand) and we were going to go over and look at the crash area. We decided against it when a ground crewman returned and informed us that the object laying on the taxi-way was a flying boot with a foot in it.

“At the time I thought the P-47 pilot, who was heading west into the sun (which was low on the horizon) was blinded. The accident report seems to confirm this.”

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## 9 March 1944

### Airframe Factory (Berlin Area), Brandenburg, Germany

The airframe factory at Brandenburg, Germany was the primary target for this day. It was a PFF mission and the results were unobserved. On the return, one 66th Squadron aircraft made a crash-landing with the pilot severely wounded.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-99980, Jewell	BANSHEE IV/E. Z. DUZIT		Returned to base
66th Squadron Crew:			
JEWELL, KENNETH G. ASN T-60062	Pilot Lost left leg	1st Lt.	Bedford, Pennsylvania
KOONTZ, HAROLD L. . ASN 0-681439	Co-pilot	Lt.	
SAKOWSKI, ARTHUR T. ASN 0-683323	Navigator	Lt.	
FOLEY, MATHEW J. ASN 0-676367	Bombardier	Lt.	
CARROLL, WILLIAM F.	Nose gun./Toggler	S/Sgt.	New Haven, Connecticut
SHANLEY, EDWARD M.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	New York City, New York
WIKE, WILLIAM M. ASN 35313566	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	Warren, Ohio
POIRRIER, GEORGE G. ASN 31110968	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.	Laconia, New Hampshire
SAPORITO, SAM S.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Houston, Texas
GUZIK, EDWARD P.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Latrobe Pennsylvania
McCLOSKEY, JOHN S.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Port Washington, LI

ASN 12154447

New York

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(Then) 1st Lt. Kenneth G. Jewell stated that, "On March 9th, which was our second raid on Berlin, I led the 2nd section and avoided the heavy flak so that none of the Group was damaged. Over the target we found solid cloud cover but the flak there was extremely heavy and accurate. Just as we released our bombs, my plane was hit by four bursts of flak.

"Our nose section was shot up and the front wheel assembly was lost. The front oxygen system was destroyed and all the radio equipment was put out of action. The #3 engine and the right side of the plane was heavily damaged and we feathered #3 engine, losing our hydraulic pump.

"I had my left leg severely damaged – so much so that we tried to remove what was left of it, but we did not have a knife to cut the remaining portion free. It was a gory mess and my new co-pilot (his first mission) vomited into his mask, couldn't breathe and passed out. The crew had to revive him, of course, so someone could fly the plane while I was out of my seat trying to tend to my leg. My crew helped me back to my seat so that I could help fly the plane back to base, utilizing the auto pilot most of the way, as I now had only one leg.

"My co-pilot [Harold Koontz] had never landed a B-24 by himself, so I had to instruct him so that he could get us down – and he did great. With no hydraulics and no nose wheel, we were in plenty of trouble, but my crew used two parachutes out of the waist windows, attaching them to the gun mounts to slow us down as we had no brakes, either. We nosed in at about 70 mph but kept things under control and skidded to a halt with most of the nose scraped off.

"MovieTone was there that day, along with Major Generals Kirk and Grant, along with Brig. General Johnson. Kirk sent me to ZOI, Walter Reed Hospital for treatment. There I met "Hap" Arnold, who put me back on flying status in Feb 1945. I became the first amputee to fly in the USAA Corp with a wooden leg."

Later Captain Jewell was recognized as one of the most decorated men in the USAAC.

Bob Weatherwax wrote: "I was at the General Hospital when Jewell was injured. Two generals came to see him, one was the Surgeon General from Walter Reed Hospital. They told Jewell he would be given the best artificial leg available and guaranteed he would fly again."

An account of this mission was published in Air Force Magazine in the October 1991 issue under the title "Valor: The Will to Endure." The author was John Frisbee.

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## 12 March 1944

### Military Installations, Siracourt, France

These military installations were bombed with unobserved results. Due to the closing in of the "unusual weather" back at Shipdham, this crew was ordered to find an 'open' field in southern England. However, unable to locate any open fields, this crew was running low on fuel, so was forced to attempt an emergency landing on the RAF fighter field at Friston. Unfortunately, a fire erupted and the aircraft was completely destroyed. No serious injuries among the crew. This was the second time that Lt. Bowman had crash-landed his plane in the last few weeks.

## 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-7507, Bowman	HEAVEN CAN WAIT II	Crash-landed
68th Squadron Crew:	No serious injuries	
BOWMAN, SAM. H.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
ROSSMAN, JAMES M.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
YOUNG, WILLIAM A.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
GORDON, CHARLES S.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
CREEDON, BERNARD D.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
DROPEK, KENNETH S.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
COMMISA, PATRICK J.	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.
TARZIA, MICHAEL	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
GURRY, THOMAS P.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
ENNIS, DON	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

Ken Dropek wrote: "Our crew trained at Davis Monthan in Arizona in B-24-Ds; and at Blythe, CA in B-24-Hs. While at Blythe we made several flights to Norton AFB to get the planes modified. We left Forbes AAF Base in Topeka, KS in a B-17-G, and arrived in ETO on 30 November 1943. Our destination was to be Prestwick, Scotland. We then went to Cheddington, which was the 2nd CCRD (replacement depot) and flew some training missions in the B-24-D. They were blue and white jobs on Sub Patrol, Coastal Command.

"We arrived at the 44th on January 29, 1944. Four planes had been shot down in the Pas de Calais area the previous week (21 January) and the 44th needed replacements. We flew several missions with Sam Bowman being our 1st pilot.

"On March, the day we went down near Beachy Head, we had #2 engine out. It was a mission to the Pas-de-Calais area, with only three 8th AF Groups sent up that day. They were the 44th, "the 93rd, and the 392nd BGs – all B-24s.

When we took off, the ceiling was almost zero. We climbed through solid overcast to 18,000 feet. We finally made a formation and went to our target, bombed okay. We had to feather #2 engine, flew back to England okay, but still solid clouds at all bases. After formation flying around for several hours, we were notified we were again over France and to put the machine guns back in place. After milling around for awhile, we were back over England, and by then were told to land wherever we could, and suggested Ford Field.

"After following the formation around on only three engines, we were low on gas, so we left the formation and, as the fickle finger of fate would have it, we found a small hole in the clouds. With our engines cutting out, set down as soon as land appeared. We barely cleared some high voltage power lines by lowering the flaps about 10 degrees. The crash caused the plane to burn up, but we were the able to get out with only minor injuries.

"We made one more mission as a complete crew, to Frederickhafen on 18 March 1944, but that is a complete story unto itself. A few substitute crewmembers flew with us on the rest of our missions but five of the original crew finished our 30 missions together on the 30th day of May, 1944. They were: Rossman, Young, Dropek, Creedon, and Gurry.

“Bowman was reduced to co-pilot and flew with Lt. Rose and different crews. The rest of our crew made it, too, and I have been in contact with a few of them.”

The bombardier, Charles “Shep” Gordon, wrote: “While in the target area, we were hit by flak in the #2 engine and it was shut down and ‘feathered.’ As we came back over the channel, we could not maintain altitude, so it was decided to land as soon as possible. We had either lost hydraulic pressure, or because of the short strip at Friston, we came in wheels up.

“We landed with a sharp impact which caused the batteries under the flight deck to tear loose and short out. Almost immediately a fire started, forcing us to scramble out the top hatch or side windows, and congregate about 100 feet from the burning ship to watch it go up in smoke and flames.

“However, shortly thereafter, the ammunition started firing off, so everybody started running away for safer ground. The next day I went back to look at the wreckage, found my parachute ring with my G.I. shoes tied to it! Why the shoes did not burn is a mystery to me. I also remember a crew landing there to pick us up and take us back to Shipdham.”

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## 15 March 1944

### Brunswick, Germany

Specific targets at Brunswick were the Bomber Aircraft component factory, Primary, and constructional engineering works as a bonus. Results were unobserved due to undercast, and enemy aircraft attacks were strong but ineffective, due to excellent fighter support we received. However, the 66th Squadron reported that one plane did not return.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-52332, Talbott	MY ASS'AM DRAGON		MACR 3220
66th Squadron Crew:			
TALBOTT, DAVID R. ASN 0-742224	Pilot Evadee, returned	1st Lt.	Bristol, Maryland
CLAUSEN, LEMOINE H. ASN 0-684490	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Blairstown, Iowa
MORIARTY, CLIFFORD F. ASN 0-679201	Bombardier KIA, buried Margraten	1st Lt.	Memphis, Tennessee
GOLDMAN, ARTHUR ASN 0-671345	Navigator KIA	1st Lt.	Cleveland, Ohio
ARBON, ERNEST W. ASN 39832379	Engineer POW, interned, wounded	T/Sgt.	Malta, Idaho
SWICK, RAYMOND E. ASN 15335773	Radio Oper. Evadee (underground)	T/Sgt.	New Richmond, Indiana
HADDOCH, SAMMY W. ASN 14181734	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Florence, Alabama
WILLIAMSON, JACK D. ASN 14001629	RW Gunner POW, wounded	S/Sgt.	Ruth, Mississippi
GASSER, HERMAN C. ASN 35333614	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Toledo, Ohio

SYMPSON, CECIL H.  
ASN 35508939

Tail Turret  
POW, wounded

S/Sgt.

Clarkson,  
Kentucky

1st Lt. David R. Talbott was the pilot of MY ASS'AM DRAGON, and his left waist gunner, Sgt. Gasser remembers, "When we were shot down, the FW 190s came in from the low rear because our ball turret was up, having been earlier knocked out of commission. So they shot us up pretty badly – and set us on fire. I was the waist gunner on the left side and I could see all the bullets coming into the fuselage on the right side. I had a flak suit on which probably saved my life. I could feel them hitting the suit and grazing my body. I was lucky I got out with only one in my leg below my flak suit. I think that Williamson got hit but don't know to what extent because I never saw him again in the POW camps. (He was in a Dutch hospital)

The rear gunner, Sympson, came running out of the rear and went out the waist window. That was a dangerous thing to do as you might hit the stabilizer. I think that Arbon went out the waist window the same way. I don't remember where Sammy Haddoch, ball turret gunner, went out. I know I went out the bottom hatch, which I had to straighten out first because it was all shot up. The ship was really burning by then and I was lucky to get out – I guess it blew up later after the pilot got out.

"I didn't pull the ripcord for quite awhile, and I still remember the smoking ship flying away. An American fighter followed me down to the clouds and when I got below them, a German fighter came towards me, but he didn't shoot. I never saw any of the crew in the POW camps except for Sammy Haddoch, who was with me most of the 14 months. Moriarity and Goldman were both killed; Williamson, Clausen, Sympson, Arbon, Haddoch, and myself were all POWs. Swick was with the Underground and stayed with them throughout the war. I was in Stalag Luft IV from March until after Christmas, 1944, when we 'went on the road' until liberation on 2 May 1945."

Lt. Talbott wrote his recollections of this mission, "We were about half way across the English Channel when trouble developed again with our superchargers, but I felt we could avoid aborting by manipulating the supercharger and throttle controls so that they wouldn't over-power each other. But it didn't prove very successful. We had lots of trouble in formation as we were not able to regulate power properly. But at any rate, we got through to the target and we probably would have gotten back home had it not been for the fact our Group was assigned the job of distributing some sort of pamphlets, which meant that we flew around over Europe dropping these damned papers. Not being able to closely control my power settings, I wasn't able to fly my close position in the formation that we should have. For that reason, and being out of formation, we were attacked by fighters. I think we were about 22,000 feet when we took some hits in the fuel tanks, which caused leaks into the bomb bay.

"The engineer was not able to open the bomb bay doors to let the gas flow on through, and we took another hit in our main hydraulic engine (#3), and he wasn't able to knock the doors loose with anything. We were losing altitude because we lost that engine, and although there was a fire in the bomb bay, it wasn't a large fire until we lost enough altitude so that the increase in oxygen increased the flames.

"So I finally gave the orders to abandon the plane. All of the men in my section of the plane went back through the bomb bay area and left the plane from the rear. My inclinometers were not working too smoothly, either. No one told the bombardier and navigator about the abandonment, and I could see the boys there, but there wasn't much I could do to advise them. I finally got the

plane trimmed pretty well and went down through the flight deck opening, down to the bomb bay and started up to the nose section under the flight deck to tell those two men that we had to get out. But as I was approaching the nose compartment, the plane went out of control. I was going to ask them why they were still in there, but just then the nose wheel snapped down and knocked me out!

“When I regained consciousness, I was on the ground near a small Dutch village of Nieuw Leusen. I released my parachute as the wind was dragging me across the ground. I got up and started walking, had a twist in my back, flak in my shoulder, flash burns around my head, but nothing to stop me from walking. Some gentleman came up and asked me if I could use some help – of course I could – and he directed me to go in one direction, not to look back, but just to keep walking as I would be watched. Well, it wasn’t long after that I was told there would be another gentleman, and I could see him riding down the road on a bicycle. I thought it prudent to look for a few minutes, so I crawled into a canal and hid along the bank, allowing him to pass. In less than an hour, walking in the direction I was instructed to, I was met by some gentleman who told me to hide. They piled brush over me out in a field and instructed me to stay there until nightfall. They returned that night and took me to a village...

“After a couple of days I was taken to another village where I witnessed the burial of my navigator and bombardier. The ship had crashed within sight of the house I was being hidden in. So I saw the bodies being removed from the plane and carried to the village to be buried...

Lt. Talbott gave me considerable material about his days on the loose. Eventually he was met by American soldiers. This was the crew’s 14th mission.

J. van der Maas of Amsterdam, Netherlands advised me that S/Sgt. Williamson was gravely wounded and spent many weeks in Queen Wilhelmina Hospital in Amsterdam. He received special attention from Dutch nurses as they often smuggled in books in English, flowers, sugar, etc. against all German rules. One of the nurses was caught in the act of making Jack’s life more comfortable and was sent to Germany as slave labor. I was informed that she survived these hardships and often wondered how well Jack recovered. I learned that he never did become completely well and died several years ago.

I also received several letters from Robert C. Gibson, who served with the 3059th Graves Registration Company at Meppel, Holland in 1945 and 1946. His unit disinterred American airmen from civilian cemeteries in Holland and Germany. He noted that Moriarty and Goldman were buried side by side in a cemetery in Nieuw-Leusen, Holland and that Goldman was holding a rabbit’s foot in his left hand.

The following material is from a translation of an official police report dated 15 March 1944:

“On March 15, 1944, at approximately 1230 hours, I, Pieter Postma, commander of the air raid precaution service received a telephone call of Mr. Th. P. Leenhouts, head of section IX (region Hoogenraven). He stated that a burning aircraft crashed in the northern part of the municipality and that several parachutes have been seen. Immediately, I drove, together with the mayor of Ommen and the commander of the military police, by car to Balkbrug. There we saw that the aircraft crashed in the municipality of Nieuw-Leusen.

“On the way back to Ommen, we met the car owned by the air raid precaution service and stationed in section VIII (region Ommerkanaal) and driven by Mr. G. Baas. He stated that he had taken an airman who landed in his section to the barracks of the military police in Ommen.

“At approximately 1445 hours, I received a telephone call that a wounded parachutist was staying in the house of Mr. S. Lantinga in Junne. I asked Doctor G. Pos to go to Junne and later went together with the mayor and the commander of the military police also to Junne where we found an American who was wounded at his right leg. After he was treated, we brought him to the barracks in Ommen.

“In the meantime, a farmer from Witharen brought a parachutist to hotel ‘The Sun,’ in Ommen. We picked him up and he also was brought to the barracks.

“At approximately 1815 hours, the commander of the military police informed me that another parachutist arrived at the house of Mr. Bolks in Witharen. This, according to a statement of Mr. Bolks.

I took the car, together with commander, to this farmhouse where we found a parachutist who was taken to the barracks.”

Mr. Postma assured the authorities that the necessary telephone calls have been made to the Commandant at Zwolle, the German police in the province of Overijssel, and the federal inspection of air raid precautions in The Hague. He wrote that a total of 15 liters of gas from his reserves had been consumed in the process. Later, he provided the following additional details:

“On March 16, 1944, at approximately 2100 hours, I received a message that another airman was staying at the house of Mr. E. Egberts at the Hardenbergerroad near Ommen. This man was also taken to the barracks of military police at Ommen.”

## 16 March 1944

### Friedrichshafen, Germany

The 68th Squadron had the honor of leading the 44th BG and the entire 2nd Air Division. Flak was ineffective for most of our formation, credited to the use of aluminum chaff for the first time. However, even with the reduced damage by flak and few enemy air attacks on the 44th's formation, the 67th Squadron had a plane crash at Kingsnorth, near Woodchurch, Kent, England.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7549 K-Bar, Scarborough	THE SHARK/SHARK FACE	Crash-landed
67th Squadron Crew:		
SCARBOROUGH, JOHN I. ASN 0-730624	Pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (D-6-39)	Lake Charles, Louisiana
BEAN, LORAN M. Jr. ASN 0-756831	Co-pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (D-6-29)	Wichita, Kansas
NESBIT, ALDEN C. ASN 0-678381	Navigator KIA	Magnolia, Arkansas
EDMONDS, DAVID ASN 0-734660	Bombardier KIA, buried Cambridge (D-3-75)	Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania

MUIRHEAD, EDGAR P. ASN 18188771	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt.	Houston, Texas
HOWLEY, ROBERT M. ASN 19144166	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Spokane, Washington
STICKEL, ROBERT J. ASN 16097147	Waist Gun Severely wounded, KIA	Sgt.	Moline, Illinois
SILVERMAN, JEROME B.	Asst. Eng. Slightly injured	Sgt.	Bronx, New York
LANDELLS, CHARLES ASN 32606252	Ball Turret Severely injured	Sgt.	Wood Ridge, New Jersey
BRENN VERN A. ASN 39266431	Tail Turret Broken ankle, nose	Sgt.	San Diego, California

Charles Landells sent his description of this day, “We lost an engine before the target. We saw Switzerland across the lake but Lt. Scarborough said, ‘Let’s go home.’ Fortunately we were not attacked as I think we lost another engine before reaching England. We were banking to make a landing on a fighter field somewhere in Kent when our other two engines quit! Our left wing dropped and an observer on the ground said we hit a tree with our wing tip. I know when I looked out of the waist window I was looking straight down at the ground. I remember being thrown forward and then the waist section rolling over and over, with dirt and spent casings falling on me. When it all stopped, my one thought was to get out before any explosion or fire. I saw an opening above me and crawled up to it and without hesitating, went right out. I dropped about four feet to the ground and kept moving. About 20 feet away from the plane, I heard Vern Brenn call and saw him in a drainage ditch. I fell in beside him to learn that Jerome also was out and a bit farther away.

“When we realized there was no fire, we went back to see if anyone else survived. We found Lt. Bean, our co-pilot and Lt. Edmonds, our navigator next to one another. We knew that Bean was dead, but Jerry gave Lt. Edmonds a shot [morphine] from the escape kit because we were not sure about him. We saw Sgt. Howley, radio operator, laying across a bush, but people had arrived by then and forced us to lay down on stretchers.

“Up until then I hadn’t realized that I had injured my back and my head was bleeding. Vern had a broken nose and ankle, while Jerry only had frostbite. Bob Stickel died a few weeks later. Bob was new to our crew, having been picked up when we were in Ireland.”

Sgt. Vern A. Brenn clarified some items. “I’ve always carried a sense of guilt about being one of the three of us who lived through it. All of the other seven were far more deserving to live than me. The only one who was not one of our regular crew members was the navigator, Edmonds. He flew as a spare, replacing 2nd Lt. O’Connell from New York.

“Yes, we were a new crew in the 67th. Lt. Scarborough and I had flown our first mission as spares on another crew – he as a co-pilot and I as a ball gunner. That mission was to Berlin. The plane we were flying when we crash-landed was SHARK FACE and it had a lot of missions on it.

“The day we went down was mission number three for Lt. Scarborough and me. Flak was heavy and we had to feather one engine due to low oil pressure – this on the way to the target. We were still able to hold our position in the formation and completed the bomb run. On our way back we



lost another engine and were then not able to keep up with our group, and the P-38 escort took turns covering us back to the English Channel.

“By this time our fuel supply was about gone. I remember the pilot asking all of us if we wanted to ditch or try to make it to the English shore. We all said to go for England. Somewhere over the Channel, we lost another engine and started to lose altitude very fast. One crewman in the front spotted a farmer’s field and we headed for it. At this time we were only about five hundred feet with the pilots struggling to keep the plane in a position to crash-land. Then I heard the last engine cough and die!

“I seem to remember a large bump and a very loud crushing noise – and then I must have been knocked out. When I came to and realized I was still alive, I tried to get out and run but I couldn’t move. So Jerry Silverman and Charles Landells carried me to a safe grassy place away from the wreckage, then they went back to check on the rest of the crew. They found all the others dead except Bob Stickel. He was injured so badly that I don’t think they tried to move him immediately.

“Some English farmers were the first to arrive on the scene after they had called for assistance from the nearest hospital and an ambulance. All four of us survivors were loaded into the ambulance and driven to the hospital. We were there several days until they transferred all of us except Bob Stickel, to an American hospital near Southampton. We were told that Bob could not be moved and he later died.

“Landells was so badly injured he never flew again. Jerry Silverman retrained to fly the nose turret position. I flew only three more missions after being grounded for a long time.”

Many years after the war, Charlie Landells visited Woodchurch and learned more about the perspective of the people on the ground. It was their contention that Lt. Scarborough pulled up to save the houses, and the green where the school children were playing.

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## 18 March 1944

### Friedrichshafen, Germany

The specific target here was the Manzell Air Armaments and it was hit with good results. But it proved to be a black letter day for the 44th BG as eight aircraft failed to return to base. This was a shocking loss for a period of time until it was learned that six of our damaged ships had made it successfully to neutral Switzerland. The planes were lost, but most importantly, most of our men were safe, and many were able to ‘escape’ and return to duty.

Dan Culler, engineer on the Telford crew noted: “We were heading to Lake Constance to bomb a target in this German town [Friedrichshafen]. Our leader lined up on the target and flew over the town, but didn’t drop the bombs, due to other planes bombing at a lower altitude so the leader did a big circuit for a second run. All the time, there was heavy flak and also enemy fighters making passes at the formation, so the group planes were taking lots of hits.

“Planes were dropping out of the formation heading into Switzerland to be interned. Eleven planes were lost, most were hit bad enough that they felt that they wouldn’t make England, so chose Switzerland and a chance for another day. Needless to say, we were not very happy with a second bomb run. This also was the first time we had seen P-38 fighters. They must have come

up from Italy. They made passes at the German fighters, but kept close to our formations all of the time and not overly aggressive on making kills of the German fighters. It also might have been from England on their first flights.”

*Note: Culler wrote a book about his war experiences entitled “Hell Hole of Wauwilermoos.”*

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-7618 C, Telford			MACR #3982
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned		
TELFORD, GEORGE D. ASN 0-800967	Pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt.	Grey Stone Park New Jersey
COUNÉ, FRANCIS L. ASN 0-748582	Co-pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt.	Tampa, Florida
McCONNELL, DONALD H. Jr. ASN 0-735949	Navigator Interned, returned	1st Lt.	Portland, Oregon
CARROLL, WILLIAM E. ASN 0-738616	Bombardier Interned	1st Lt.	Johnstown, Pennsylvania
CULLER, DANIEL L. ASN 15105134	Engineer Interned, returned	T/Sgt.	Syracuse, Indiana
TESTA, FRANCIS J. ASN 31169235	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	T/Sgt.	Waterbury, Connecticut
HANCOCK, JAMES H. ASN 14073058	Waist Gun Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Columbia, South Carolina
PETRIK, GEORGE A. ASN 33305379	Waist Gun. Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania
MELSON, HOWARD E. ASN 32065296	Ball Turret Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Dagsboro, Delaware
HUGHES, JOHN J. ASN 12127437	Tail Turret Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Long Island, New York

1st Lt. George D. Telford was 1st pilot of this 66th Squadron aircraft. The MACR states in part, “This aircraft left the formation in the vicinity of target at 1445 hours with no apparent visual difficulty. The pilot was heard to say on the radio, ‘Am landing in Switzerland.’ The plane landed at Dubendorf airfield.”

T/Sgt. Daniel L. Culler was able to expand further, “We were on our last mission before our tours would be ended and we would be sent home. After bombing, we were hit by flak that ruptured our left fuel cells. Being the engineer, I got out of my turret and was in the process of transferring fuel from these damaged tanks to the right side. It was just then that Lt. Telford, our pilot, reported that we had lost oil pressure on #1 and #2 engines – on the left side. Perhaps the same flak that got our fuel cells got those two engines. However, when I got back from transferring that fuel, we were surrounded by Swiss Me 109s which were escorting us to an airfield in Switzerland. (Dubendorf)

“Because of the damages we got on our previous missions, we had to fly replacement planes so I cannot remember any details of our plane this day. I don’t know what number, name or logo it had, but I believe it was an “H” model.

“We were interned at Adelboden until 12 July when Howard Melson and I attempted an escape. We made our way towards Italy, but Melson and another British Army man, Matthew Thirlaway, were captured by Swiss police close to the Italian border. I had to return to camp because of illness that was caused by eating some poison plants while up in the mountains. All three of us were moved to a regular prison camp called Wauwilermoos. And it was here that a Brigadier General, a Military Attaché, visited me and told me that due to this attempted escape, we would be considered common prisoners and would not be released even with war’s end. For that reason we made attempts to escape every chance we got. And we finally succeeded!” Sgt. Culler had quite a time of it in Switzerland until escaping to France, and eventually back to England. Even in England he was mistreated until he could get back into military clothes and was issued mess gear, etc.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-100073 H-Bar, Lacombe	SACK ARTISTS	MACR #3407
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned	
LACOMBE, RAYMOND J. ASN 0-2044994	Pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt. Providence, Rhode Island
CARDENAS, ROBERT L. ASN 0-423198	Command Pilot Interned, returned	Capt. San Diego, California
TINNEY, JACK RUSSELL ASN 0-382727	Co-pilot Interned, wounded	1st Lt. Bowie, Texas
BYERS, EDGAR M. Jr. ASN 0-670085	Navigator Interned	1st Lt. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania
CARVOUR, GEORGE W. ASN 0-728704	Bombardier Interned, returned	1st Lt. Mansfield, Ohio
HIGLEY, GLENN O. ASN 36237827	Engineer Interned	T/Sgt. Gaylord, Michigan
CHAROCHAK, JOSEPH ASN 15332900	Radio Oper. Interned	T/Sgt. San Antonio, Texas
LOOKER, ROLLIN C. ASN 37207413	Ball Turret Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Topeka, Kansas
HEDGELON, ROBERT P. ASN 13100540	RW Gunner Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Honesdale, Pennsylvania
WALLACE, JAMES G. ASN 12182501	LW Gunner Interned, returned	S/Sgt. New York City, New York
LAIRD, JOHN C. ASN 14150821	Nose Gun Interned	Sgt. Decatur, Mississippi
FLISTER, HENRY O. ASN 36232737	Tail Turret Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Edgerton, Wisconsin

The 67th Squadron crew that also made it to Switzerland was that piloted by 1st Lt. Raymond J. Lacombe. The MACR states that, “Several crews reported seeing this aircraft peel off, apparently under control, and headed in the direction of Switzerland. Time – 1447 hours.

Lt. Carvour, bombardier, relates that, “The formation made two passes at the target and the second pass had allowed the anti-aircraft gunners to zero in on us. That is when most of the planes were damaged. Captain Cardenas, Command Pilot from the 506th Squadron, said that the

ship took a shell in the right wing, weakening it so much that it bent upwards, a dihedral of about 15 degrees. The plane was so badly damaged and on fire, that after getting over Switzerland, all of the crew were forced to parachute. The airplane then exploded at such a low altitude that it seared off the top of some trees before finally crashing.

“The flak hits caused insulation to fly about in the nose section of the ship, looking for all the world like feathers. Lt. Tinney, co-pilot, had wounds to his face, Sgt. Charochak was the first to bail out, but I was the first to land.”

Damages reported by other crew member included one engine on fire, then followed by a second engine fire. Severed fuel and hydraulic lines, electrical system inoperative, and control lines cut made the plane almost uncontrollable, but Lt. Ray Lecombe skillfully nursed it over neutral territory where he then ordered abandonment of ship.

In November of 1944, LaCombe was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission. Below are some details from that award: “Raymond J. LaCombe, 0-2044994, 1st Lt. Army Air Force. For extraordinary achievement, while serving as pilot of a B-24 aircraft on a bombing mission to Germany, 18 March 1944, Lt. LaCombe’s aircraft sustained flak damage causing one engine to catch fire. Damage to the left wing caused the aircraft to descend at a 45-degree angle.

“By skillful manipulation of the controls, Lt. LaCombe succeeded in righting his aircraft and regaining his position in the formation to complete a second bomb run. Additional flak damage set fire to a second engine, severed fuel and hydraulic lines and rendered the electrical system inoperative.

“With several members of his crew badly wounded, the aircraft on fire and uncontrollable, Lt. LaCombe entered neutral territory where the entire crew parachuted to safety. The superior flying skill, cool courage, and determination demonstrated by Lt. LaCombe on this occasion reflects the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States.”

Capt. Cardenas, ranking officer, worked with the Swiss Embassy. Later he was a pilot with Chuck Yeager on the Mach One project.

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Two 68th planes and crews were lost, those being Lts. Dyers and Nichols, but both were able to get their damaged crafts to Switzerland and safety.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-109800 T, Dyer		MACR #3410	
68th Squadron Crew:		Entire crew interned	
DYER, EUGENE N. ASN 0-680192	Pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	New York City. New York
CULBERTSON, EARL W. ASN 0-747756	Co-pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt.	Corvallis. Oregon
WALSER, WALTER A. ASN 0-808192	Navigator Interned	2nd Lt.	El Paso, Texas
McFARLAND, JOHN W. ASN 0-682557	Bombardier Interned	2nd Lt.	Bronx, New York

WILLIAMS, GEORGE V. ASN 13018547	Engineer Interned	T/Sgt.	Hepners, Virginia
DE LUCA, SALVATORE J. ASN 32535381	Radio Oper. Interned	T/Sgt.	Mount Vernon, New York
MILOJEVICH, JOHN H. ASN 37457663	Ball Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Rock Springs, Wyoming
WILLIAMS, HOMER W. ASN 33211862	Waist Gun Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Burgoo, West Virginia
SEAMAN, JOHN S. ASN 11101134	Waist Gun Interned	S/Sgt.	Bridgeport, Connecticut
FAIRALL, ALFRED V. ASN 13104569	Tail Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Cumberland, Maryland

Lt. Dyers's plane, per the MACR #800, was seen to leave the formation at 1448 hours, headed for Switzerland, under control. They landed at Dubendorf at 1520 hours, and were interned.

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The second 68th aircraft, piloted by Lt. Hollis R. Nichols, was last seen at 1447 hours in a gradual dive, all 4 engines running and under control, states the MACR.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-100112 Q, Nichols	PAPER DOLL or LADY DOT	MACR #3408
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned	
NICHOLS, HOLLIS R. ASN 0-738223	Pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt. Seattle, Washington
BOLICK, SIDNEY R. ASN 0-204505	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt. Toronto, Canada
McNAMARA, JOHN S. ASN 0-694686	Navigator Interned	2nd Lt. Albany, New York
SLOVACEK, ADOLPH ASN 0-685093	Bombardier Interned	2nd Lt. Caldwell, Texas
McGOLDRICK, WILLIAM E. ASN 32381135	Engineer Interned	S/Sgt. Silver Creek, New York
WIKLE, EARLE E. ASN 35508635	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Eaton, Ohio
COUNTS, GEORGE E. ASN 34645869	Ball Turret Interned	Sgt. Prosperity, South Carolina
SCOTT, JOHN P. ASN 14139690	Waist Gun Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Rome, Georgia
WADDELL, CARROLL ASN 18169374	Waist Gun Interned	Sgt. Manila, Arkansas
CUMBIA, JOSEPH L. ASN 13119162	Tail Turret Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Brodnax, Virginia

This account is by Lt. Hollis R. Nichols, the pilot: "Today, I started my second mission as first pilot with practically a new crew. Lt. Bolick and Sergeant Scott had previous combat experience, but the balance of the crew was on their third mission. This was my second trip to

Friedrichshafen, both trips in 112Q, PAPER DOLL. We took off with very bad visibility that formed over our field. The assembly was normal.

“Starting out on course, I had to pull excessive manifold pressure and RPM to stay with the formation. Coming up to the south coast of England, we had a very bad series of light cirrus clouds and prop wash causing a lot of trouble. The entire formation made a 360 over the Channel as we were ten minutes early and needed another 2,000 feet of altitude. This maneuver made us late and last in the division. We had to draw excessive settings again to stay with the bomber stream.

“My element, the high in the second section, caused a lot of trouble by the ‘S’ turns required to stay behind the lead section. Bad settings and varying speeds made me sweat fuel all the way to the target. We approached the target the first time in pretty good shape and not bothered with enemy fighters, although the flak was pretty accurate and intense. We did not drop the first time, although the formation went directly over the target (a group of B-17s slid under us). We did a 180-degree turn to the right to go back to I.P. and make another run.

“We (the 44th) proceeded into the second run at the same altitude, speed, and heading, but all alone at the end of the bomber stream. Just as we approached the city, my #3 engine ran wild. I had been sweating #1 supercharger and #3 came to me as quite a surprise. The prop governor had gone bad and we couldn’t feather it. I tried everything, including circuit breaker and shutting off fuel and ignition, but with no results.

“We still maintained 60 inches of manifold pressure and 3,700 RPM. The prop was coming loose and causing excessive vibration throughout the ship. Sparks, oil and flames were coming out from all around the engine. In the meantime, I ordered the bombs salvoed on the city and dropped out of formation, swinging toward Switzerland in hopes that if I were terribly lucky, I could get it shut down, hit the deck and head back. But my fuel was so low, I probably would have been darned lucky if I got to the French Coast. When I saw I couldn’t do anything about it, I made sure I was far enough inside Switzerland before I gave the order to bail out so my men wouldn’t drift back into Germany.

“I stayed with the ship as long as I dared to make sure the crew was all out. I had it on AFCE [Automatic Flight Control Equipment] and in 140-mph glide to ensure I could get out. The ship was beginning to fall apart now. I had fastened my GI shoes to my parachute to be sure I had shoes when I got down. I then went to the catwalk and paused. AS I did so, the engine blew up and the prop went through the ship – too darned close to where I would have been sitting. Flames and debris sprayed back on me and I decided then to jump. The tail gunner came out at the same time I did. He saw all the control cables go in back when they were severed by the prop.

“We all landed safely and were taken into custody by the Home Guard in the little town of Wil, 28 miles inside the Swiss border.”

Lt. Nichols and his entire crew were interned at a golf club facility above Neuchatel, Switzerland, until early summer when, due to overcrowding, he was separated from the enlisted men and transferred to Davos. Later, Lt. Nichols managed a successful escape aided by the Free French, and returned to duty.

In November of 2000, an article in ‘Smile with Nile’ magazine mentioned Nichols story, noting that the plane had crashed in Wil, Switzerland. A former resident of Wil, Fred Greuter, saw the

article and contacted Nichol's widow. He wrote: "I was there and saw the crew jumping out of the plane. It was three days after my 22nd birthday, and I was just working outside behind our business, when I heard the sound of this heavy B-24 bomber coming in our direction from Germany and all of a sudden the whole crew jumped out of the plane and landed smoothly in the wide field next to us, then gathering their parachutes. In the meantime, our police and military officers arrived and interrogated the young flyers and shortly thereafter whisked them away to the nearest hotel. We never heard or saw anything from this crew during the war year.

"The empty bomber flew over us and lost a propeller after a quarter of a mile then steered to our mountain village of Kirchberg, about nine miles away. There the plane overshot by inches a big farmhouse, then clipped a walnut tree behind it, and crashed to pieces on the mountainside. The farmer saw the plane coming and ran away with his wheelbarrow as fast as he could!"

Sidney Bolick, Nichol's co-pilot, wrote: "We were badly damaged by flak, but managed to make it across Lake Constance to Switzerland, where we bailed out. The whole crew landed safely and were interned by the Swiss. After D-Day, I escaped into France and made my way back to England. After debriefing in London, I went back to Shipdham for a couple days to 'clear the base,' then was flown back to the States."

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The 506th Squadron uncharacteristically bore the brunt of the losses on this day with four planes and crews not returning to base.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-52305 P, Albert

MACR #3406

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

ALBERT, FRANK L. ASN 0-800804	Pilot KIA, buried Lorraine (K-37-22)	1st Lt.	Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania
McGEARY, MEREDYTH F. ASN 0-748729	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Cleveland, Ohio
DONNELLY, EDMUND H. ASN 0-682156	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Flushing, New York
CASTELLOTTI, PAUL E. ASN 0-671279	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt.	Corona, New York
WALKER, BEAUFORD K. ASN 38182539	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Konawa, Oklahoma
WARVEL, JAMES K. ASN 35283432	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Toledo, Ohio
BOLICK, CARL C. ASN 14188101	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Lincolnton, North Carolina
BRADY, LLOYD J. ASN 37232782	Waist Gun. KIA	S/Sgt.	Wichita, Kansas
ANDELLO, DAVID F. ASN 15016119	Waist Gun. KIA, buried Lorraine (K-48-18)	S/Sgt.	Girard, Ohio
MONTELEONE, EDWARD G. ASN 39841223	Tail Turret KIA, buried Lorraine (K-15-29)	S/Sgt.	Mountain View, California

Lt. Frank L. Albert's plane did not make it to the sanctuary of Switzerland. The MACR includes, "At just after bombs away and near Friedrichshafen, this aircraft was hit in #1 and #4 engines by flak. It slid under the formation and to the right for about a minute, seemingly under control. Two chutes were seen, then the left wing tore off and the plane exploded.

1st Lt. Donnelly, navigator, has this story, "March 18, 1944 was a bad day from the word go. Takeoff was delayed to begin with. After forming up on the Striped A\_ Ape (Lemon Drop), we did a 360 over the Channel. The trip in was fairly routine. On final, another Group slid under us, so the 44th held its bombs. The leader decided to make a second pass at the same heading, altitude and airspeed. We were hit early, and #4 engine was burning. I offered a heading to Switzerland, but Lt. Albert said that we had brought the bombs this far and they would go on the target. Immediately after bombs away, he gave the bail out signal. I crawled back to the bomb bay to see if we could hold on for the few minutes needed to get to Switzerland. But Frank motioned me out. I asked Lt. Castellotti if he was OK. He nodded, so I bailed out.

"The bomb bay was a shambles. The fuel lines over the 'putput' [A.P.U.] had been hit and fuel cascaded from either side. The fire on number four had spread to the wing, and was approaching the fuselage. My last view of Frank Albert was of him hunched over the controls giving four of us a chance for life. Frank knew what the odds of survival were. He gave his life for the mission, just as Colin Kelly did. The big difference was that there was no Press Agent to plead his case. I recommended him for the Medal of Honor as soon as I returned, but was informed that he merely did his duty and that the cluster to the Air Medal was sufficient. (Obviously by some clerk who had never seen 88 mm in action) Frank was a credit to the 44th and to the Pennsylvania State Police. The State Police Hall in Wyoming, Pennsylvania is named after Frank.

"Sgts. Warvel, Walker, Bolick and myself survived. The others were all killed. I tried to delay opening my chute I counted 60 seconds before I pulled the ring. I must have counted quite rapidly for it took an eternity to get down. As I descended, I could see a little man in a gray-green uniform riding a bicycle. He had a rifle over his shoulder which was about twice as long as he was. I, therefore, was not too surprised to find a greeting committee when I finally landed.

"I was taken to a local jail and put in solitary for three days. I was then taken for a three day jaunt through Germany winding up at Dulag Luft at Frankfurt. On the first day I was reunited with Sgt. Walker. His first three days were better than mine. He had been held in a small communications detachment staffed by Wehrmacht enlisted personnel. On his last night there one of the Germans brought in a guitar and they had a minor blast.

"The Germans' interrogation was thorough. They insisted that I tell them what time we dropped our bombs as this would prove we were legitimate prisoners of war. I did not answer and I am certain that none of the others did either. I am sure that this was to give them a measure of the effectiveness of their augmenting the normal flak batteries with additional railroad and portable units. I saw several railroad units three days after the raid.

"I then took up residence a Stalag Luft III at Sagan but that is another story..."

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-29172 T, Houghtby

LUCKY STRIKE

MACR #3404

506th Squadron Crew:



HOUGHTBY, RAYMOND C. ASN 0-800541	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Shebbona, Illinois
SAFRANEK, LOUIS A. ASN 0-976442	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
RAMSEY, GEORGE K. ASN 0-736027	Navigator POW, head wound	1st Lt.	Davenport, Iowa
BOGART, CLOMAN D. ASN 15105558	Nose Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Sycamore, Ohio
WARREN, WAYNE M. ASN 35400551	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Springfield, Ohio
PHILLIPS, FRANK P. ASN 12083302	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Staten Island, New York
LEWIS, JAMES W. ASN 32486667	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Somerdale, New Jersey
CASTRO, LADISLAO C. ASN 18201801	RW Gunner Evadee, returned	S/Sgt.	Austin, Texas
DYE, NORMAN L. ASN 14158242	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Hickory Flat, Mississippi
CANNON, THOMAS M. Jr. ASN 34396263	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Birmingham, Alabama

The second of four 506th aircraft lost on the 18th was that piloted by 1st Lt. Raymond C. Houghtby. The MACR states in part that this aircraft, #172, was last seen at 1446 hours peeling off for Switzerland, under control. Apparently there was a mistake in identification of this aircraft because it did not head for Switzerland. The navigator on board this ship, Lt. George K. Ramsey, sent his recollections:

“Our mission on the 18th was to Friedrichshafen, near Switzerland. In one of the incredible foul-ups of the time, the 44th BG arrived at target on time, at the right altitude, only to find a Group of B-17s below us and making their run on this target. We could not drop our bombs so the 44th had to make a full circle and come back over the target a second time. We were no longer part of the stream of bombers, but one Group coming back alone – at the same altitude, same heading and same speed. We did hit the target, but took so much flak, we could not continue with the Group, and became a straggler.

“We encountered enemy aircraft after we left the target and headed back for England. An occasional American fighter would give us some cover, but we continued to have problems. We arrived at the French coast near Abbeville at about 8,000 feet and not moving very fast. We were within several miles of the coast and it was heavily fortified because the Germans were expecting the invasion. We were sitting ducks for their anti-aircraft fire, and in short order! Ray Houghtby had to call ‘Mayday’. We all parachuted out and were captured immediately upon landing. I received a head wound at about the time we jumped. To my knowledge, everyone survived.

“Our crew was on its 25th and last mission of our tour of duty and I was of the opinion had we made it all the way back we would have been the first complete crew to have completed 25 missions. At least we did bomb our target on that 25th and last mission. Pat Gallagher, our regular co-pilot, was not with us as he had just been given a crew of his own.”

*Note: Gallagher completed his tour of duty on March 22nd as a 1st pilot. This mission was to Berlin.*

Lt. Houghtby provided his recollections of that day, “As I recall, one of the newer replacement Groups had missed their target sequence and made their run directly beneath the 44th BG. We held our bomb drop and circled, falling in behind the last Group in that portion of the bomber stream. Apparently, the German anti-aircraft gunners had zeroed in on our flight parameters.

“The first flak burst was in the center of the Group and continued very accurate, especially as we were on our bomb run and had to hold steady on course and altitude. Our flight took several hits (noted by sound), but no apparent damage until after one burst when one of the waist gunners, Castro or Lewis, reported a stream from under the wing. It had to be our fuel.

“As I recall, I advised the engineer, Warren, to transfer fuel to the opposite wing. Also, after quick consultation with the navigator, Ramsey, and a intercom check with the crew, we decided to try to make it home. I noted that we could see several B-24s crossing Lake Constance to Switzerland. I also remember German fighters working them over as they left the formation!

“In any event, we did some flight planning and concluded that we couldn’t make England and keep up with the Group, so I established minimum power – about 15hg/1500 or so – had the crew jettison guns, flak vests, ammo, etc. as we’d requested and got two P-51s for individual escort.

“We started a very slow descent to hold adequate flight speed. Ramsey and Bogart (bombardier) were in the nose, scanning for any visible towns or other possible anti-aircraft installations which we flew around. This procedure worked okay all the way to Pas de Calais area. As we approached that area, knowing it was heavily fortified with anti-aircraft and other artillery, we discussed the advisability of dropping to the deck to cross – as the P-51s did, but I decided that with the fuel showing empty, we’d better hold what altitude we could, which presently was at about 11,000, and continue our power glide on towards Ford field on the coast of England.

“As we approached the coastline, the first 4 shell burst pattern from anti-aircraft took off four feet of our left wing tip. I immediately started violent evasive action. However, the obvious pointed fire stayed close to us with numerous partial hits. After one burst, I jammed in maximum right roll/turn controls and almost wound up in the co-pilot’s lap!

“Apparently, the control cables had been damaged. I tried differential power and autopilot, but couldn’t stop a shallow right turn. I lowered the landing gears and the Germans stopped shooting. (Not all bad, huh?) We could look across the Channel to the white cliffs of Dover, but there was no way to get there! Reluctantly, I ordered the crew to bail out. I believe Castro went out first, understand he evaded, got with the French Underground and back home through Spain. One of the gunners, I forget which, had to be thrown out of the bomb bay. I was the last out – even checked forward in cockpit and nose area – and then bailed.

“There was a strong westerly wind blowing and I drifted east rapidly. While floating down, I recall our aircraft circling in the distance, with all four engines still running! Pratt & Whitney made good engines!

“I came down in a French hayfield, narrowly missing a power line. The field was covered with small hay cocks. I did my best to miss one, but apparently caught my right toe on it, which sent me tumbling. I released my chute and hurriedly stuffed it under a hay cock, then started running toward a nearby woods. After about 100 yards, I stumbled and fell. My right foot was broken (I found out later). In any event, as I stumbled on towards the woods, a motorcycle/sidecar came

out of the woods and across the hayfield towards me. The uniformed Germans dismounted and continued towards me, waving pistols and yelling, 'Camerat!' They apprehended me, loaded me into the sidecar, and we went to a nearby small town where several others of the crew were also held."

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-29431 Q-Bar, Irwin			MACR #3405
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned		
IRWIN, WINSTON C. ASN 0-804341	Pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	Detroit, Michigan
HARTMAN, URIAH G. ASN 0-627851	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	Brodhead, Wisconsin
NORTHFELT, WALLACE D. ASN 0-695959	Navigator Interned	2nd Lt.	Minneapolis, Minnesota
LIBELL, ROBERT W. ASN 0-752875	Bombardier Interned	2nd Lt.	Portland, Oregon
BOATMAN, GEORGE ASN 38349850	Engineer Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Gallup, New Mexico
MERISOTIS, PETER E. ASN 31281547	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Derry, New Hampshire
BEUOY, JAMES L. ASN 33557064	Ball Turret Interned, returned	Sgt.	Eaton, Indiana
LAWSON, GROVER R. ASN 35576130	RW Gunner Interned, returned	Sgt.	Joliet, Illinois
HUNTER, JAMES ASN 35791732	LW Gunner Interned, returned	Sgt.	Lexington, Kentucky
LAUX, PAUL M. ASN 33242974	Tail Turret Interned, returned	Sgt.	Williamsport, Pennsylvania

The third aircraft lost by the 506th was that piloted by 2nd Lt. Winston C. Irwin. The MACR briefly states that this ship was last seen at 1446 hours near Friedrichshafen, peeling off and heading towards Switzerland. It was reported that one engine was feathered and one was windmilling, losing fuel.

The bombardier, Lt. Robert W. Libell, sent his recollections, "We were on our first mission, except that Lt. Irwin had flown a mission earlier [16 March] as co-pilot with an experienced crew [R.C. Houghtby's]. The mission was listed as Sortie Number 199. The plane number was #431 Q-Bar. Six 1,000 pound bombs were loaded in the bomb bay. The 44th put up 18 B-24s in three boxes of six and our ship was number five in the lead or middle box. Major Kolliner, the 506th Commander, was leading the formation. As bombardier, I was manning the nose turret on our ship.

"The weather was bright and clear, take-off and join-up were uneventful. The target area was reached without incident; no fighters and no flak that threatened the Group. Friedrichshafen was passed to the north and 180 degree turn was made to begin the bombing run. Approaching the bomb release point, a lone B-17 was moving ahead of and about 3,000 feet beneath the formation. From my viewpoint, the B-17 would be well clear of our bombs, but the lead signaled

No Drop. Our 18-ship formation made a perfect race track pattern for a second bomb run with no change in altitude or airspeed. On this pass, all of Friedrichshafen came up to greet us. There was intense flak everywhere – you could smell it!

“The deputy leader [LaCombe], number two directly in front of us, dropped about 1,000 feet and appeared to explode in a huge ball of fire. No chutes were seen. Number three and four began losing altitude and trailing black smoke. Some crew members bailed out of one of these aircraft. I have no recollection about the fate of the rest of the formation. The distinct impression that remains is that the only ship to leave the target area under what seemed normal power was the leader [Fox/Kolliner].

“Attention was now diverted to our own problems as we had taken several severe flak hits. The crew was safe but the B-24 was not. One engine was out and feathered, another was windmilling, and our fuel tanks had large holes. There was a one-foot hole in the nose turret enclosure probably caused by concussion since no flak fragments were found in the nose turret. Fuel was streaming from between #3 and #4 engines in a feathery white pattern. It was burning from the tail on behind the airplane. For some miraculous reason, the flames never reached the wing. By this time, considerable altitude had been lost and we were alone.

“S/Sgt. Boatman, the engineer, checked the remaining fuel supply and found that slightly more than 30 minutes flying time was left. After reviewing possible alternatives, Lt. Irwin made the decision to turn to Switzerland, located on the opposite shore of Lake Constance. After crossing into Swiss air space, we were joined by a Swiss fighter that looked like an Me 109. It directed us to the Dubendorf military airfield near Zurich. Lt. Irwin made an excellent emergency landing and the crew was interned by the Swiss. Except for minor cases of frost bite, the only crew injury suffered was when Lt. Northfelt, the navigator, cut his finger on the bomb salvo lever to insure our bombs were released.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-100400 Y-Bar, Lucas			MACR #3409
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned		
LUCAS, ROBERT R. ASN 0-677807	Pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt.	Rosebud, Texas
WASKA, CHARLES D. Jr. ASN 0-742541	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	Helena, Montana
CAPELLA, BERNARD J. ASN 0-807897	Navigator Interned, returned	1st Lt.	New Orleans, Louisiana
KIRCHNER, DONALD E. ASN 0-679629	Bombardier Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	Quincy, Illinois
BASS, JOHN F. ASN 14098031	Engineer Interned, returned	T/Sgt.	Brookhaven, Georgia
STAMBAUGH, JACOB F. ASN 16114109	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	T/Sgt.	Hanover, Pennsylvania
DUBAIL, ARTHUR W. ASN 31144498	Ball Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Sheldon, Connecticut
BRICE, DOUGLAS D. ASN 18034469	RW Gunner Interned	T/Sgt.	Dallas, Texas

HAMMER, LLOYD W. ASN 20720758	LW Gunner Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Wichita, Kansas
LUTHER, ERNEST C. ASN 20318816	Tail Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Wellsboro, Pennsylvania

The fourth and last airplane lost by the 506th Squadron was that piloted by Lt. Robert R. Lucas. The MACR includes these words, "Just after bombs away, at 1446 hours, this aircraft peeled off formation under control and started across Lake Constance for Switzerland. It then turned back towards Germany and was last seen going down at 1500 hours in that vicinity."

Again, there appears to be some mis-identification with this aircraft on the MACR as all men from this crew were interned in Switzerland. Either that, or the plane managed to remain airborne and again turned back to Switzerland. The Swiss show that Lt. Lucas was the last to land at Dubendorf at 1538 hours.

Lt. Lucas wrote: "Just as we were preparing to drop our bombs on Friederichshaven another group cut right under us. The 44th lead ship had no alternative but to make another run. We made a 40 mile circle and came back over the target at the same altitude. Of course, they were there waiting for us. We took a hit in the right wing and soon began to lose altitude. When it was determined that we had lost most of the fuel in that right wing, we tried for Switzerland. Entering Swiss airspace, we searched out the biggest, flat field, and belly landed (the nose wheel collapsed). The field was Dubendorf. No one was injured." [Editor's note: Photos show that there was a light covering of snow on the ground.]

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## 23 March 1944

### Training Mission, Shipdham, England

Aircraft #41-29538 crashed on take-off during a training mission. No one was injured.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-29538, Barry			Accident on take-off
68th Squadron Crew			
BARRY, WARREN H. ASN 0-678992	Pilot	2nd Lt.	New Albany, Mississippi
KREBS, ANDREW J. ASN 0-669738	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	Memphis, Tennessee
MURPHY, GEORGE J. ASN 0-688456	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Baltimore, Maryland
CHOMA, JOSEPH ASN 0-752317	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Cleveland, Ohio
McKENNA, RAYMOND H. ASN 31155162	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	Readsboro, Vermont
CRACOLICI, JOSEPH Jr. ASN 12190881	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
PERRY, DONALD L. ASN 13042032	Ball Turret	Sgt.	West View, Pennsylvania

EURE, WILLIAM H. ASN 13119398	RW Gunner	Sgt.	Wakefield, Virginia
WHITWORTH, JOHN L. ASN 34448789	LW Gunner	Sgt.	Martin, Georgia
DAY, RUSSEL A. ASN 16008549	Tail Turret	Sgt.	Tomah, Wisconsin
DAVIDO, FRANK	Observer	1st Lt.	

*Note: This crew was shot down on 8 April 1944. McKenna was killed in action. The rest were taken prisoner.*

John Whitworth was able to provide details on this incident. He noted that his crew arrived on 15 March 1944. He wrote: "One morning, we went out to a plane and practiced on the ground seeing how fast we could get out from the crew positions when the alarm was sounded. After dinner, the crew was to fly around over England. Lt. Frank Davido went with us. We went down the runway and we were going 105 miles per, according to someone on the flight deck.

"I was on the left side in the waist and we bounced off the runway maybe a foot and touched back and the left wheel was retracting and the left wing came down on the ground, tearing #1 and 2 propellers off as they hit the runway. The right wheel held up so no damage was done to that side. The plane skidded for some distance before it stopped and did not catch fire.

"This was Lt. Warren H. Barry's crew along with Lt. Davido as instructor. No injuries to any of the 11 men aboard."

## 27 March 1944

### Airdrome, Mont-de-Marsan, France

This target, almost on the Spanish border, was one of the longest flights for the 44th BG out of England. Stationed at this air base were long-range reconnaissance German aircraft. The airdrome was hit visually with good results. Two aircraft were lost, one each by the 66th and the 67th Squadrons.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-109836 B, Harleman

MACR #3590

#### 66th Squadron Crew:

HARLEMAN, RICHARD E. ASN 0-799767	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt.	Lehighton, Pennsylvania
JOHNSON, MELVIN J. ASN 0-749695	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Rhone	1st Lt.	Utah
COBANE, WILLIAM E. ASN, 0-735857	Navigator KIA, WOM Rhone	1st Lt.	Detroit, Michigan
BAUM, PAUL F. ASN 0-685420	Bombardier KIA, buried Rhone (C-9-18)	2nd Lt.	Sandusky, Ohio
WOOD, FRED D. Jr. ASN 13119193	Engineer KIA, WOM Rhone	S/Sgt.	Madison Heights, Virginia
LAWYER, DONALD A. ASN 33244873	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Rhone	S/Sgt.	Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

FIELDS, LEE H. ASN 19180515	Ball Turret Captured, injured, liberated in Paris	S/Sgt.	Sheridan, Wyoming
CRANE, JAMES J. ASN 12074922	RW Gunner POW, injured	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
BENOIT, JOSEPH G. ASN 18171590	LW Gunner POW, injured	Sgt.	Kaplan, Louisiana
PETRICEVICH, JOHN J. ASN 12085309	Tail Turret POW, injured	Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York

1st Lt. Richard E. Harleman was the pilot on this 66th Sq. aircraft, which was damaged by flak over the target. The MACR for this aircraft states in part, "Moderate accurate gunfire was encountered at Mont De Marsan and several aircraft were damaged. #836 left the formation at 1438, just after bombing, one engine hit by flak and losing altitude, but under control. Was last seen headed for Spain." It did not reach that neutral country, but came very close to it.

Left Waist gunner Joseph G. Benoit filled in the missing pieces, "Seconds after we dropped the bombs, the plane was hit by flak. The right wing had a big hole just aft of the #4 engine that caused this engine to backfire and the prop began windmilling. It hit the fuel cells, too, and we were losing gas.

"We could not keep up with the formation, therefore, we decided to go to Spain. The pilot decided that we should hit the deck and take our chances with ground artillery rather than be shot down by enemy aircraft at higher altitude.

"As we approached the French coast, we were fired on by machine guns and small arms along the beach. The plane caught fire in the bomb bay area and that halted all hopes of making it to Spain. We ditched about one mile from shore. The plane broke at the waist windows when we hit the water, and the four of us standing in the waist section were thrown into the water. These were John Petricevich, James Crane, Lee Fields and myself.

"When I could see again, bombardier Paul Baum was out of the nose section and swimming near me, but he soon sank and I never saw him again. The Germans picked up his body the next day, and I was told that he had bullet holes in him – seven of them, as I remember it.

"The four of us were picked up by a Frenchman and his young son who had been fishing nearby. John Petricevich had a cut over his eye; Lee Fields was badly burned; James Crane had a crushed forehead, and I had a broken left leg at the knee, light burns on my hands and face, and a cut on the back of my head.

"We four were taken to a hospital in town, can't remember the name, but was in the area of Bayonne and very near to the French border [with Spain]. I remember that Crane was in the operating room for at least three hours while the doctors were removing pieces of shattered bone from his brain.

"The next day John Petricevich was sent to a POW camp in Germany. Three or four days later I went by train with German guards to a hospital in the heart of Paris – it was a Catholic hospital. A young German doctor put my leg in a cast; then later I was sent to a hospital in Obermassfeld, then to another in Meinigen, Germany.

"Five months later I was sent to Stalag Luft IV until the Russians got close; then to Stalag Luft 1. John and I were in the same camp together, but in different compounds. It seems to me that I saw

Lee at a hospital waiting to be repatriated to the States, and that is the last I saw or heard from him. (He was never listed as a POW but was repatriated).

“Lts. Harleman, Johnson, Cobane and Sgts. Lawyer and Wood never got out of the plane after ditching and went down with it. Harleman, Cobane, Baum and Fields were not members of my regular crew, but were replacements for Roy Jorgenson, James Lidell and Fred Gatens who had been shot down earlier when flying as replacements. Sidney Hawkins also had been lost.

“The plane had no name and was a new one, this being its first and only mission.”

Joe Benoit provided additional information on Lee Fields’ injuries: “He had both legs broken; one was a multiple break with some bones crushed. He also had facial burns. He was transferred to a hospital in Paris where doctors worked for months to save his leg. He was not repatriated, but was left in Paris and liberated by our troops during the Paris takeover. The German doctor left written instructions with Lee on the condition of his leg and what he was attempting to accomplish. After all the work and surgery was done on his leg, he still had his leg, but it was one and a half inches shorter than the other.”

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-29554 J-Bar, Hess	TEXAS ROSE	MACR # 3588
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned	
HESS, HAROLD F. ASN 0-798299	Pilot 1st Lt. Interned, injured (broken ankle)	Terra Haute, Indiana
BINSWANGER, WALTER MAX ASN 0-755505	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. Interned, returned	San Diego, California
PECK, FLOYD C. ASN 0-692432	Navigator 2nd Lt. Interned, returned	Watten, Pennsylvania
FISHER, ALBERT R. Jr. ASN 0-690556	Bombardier 2nd Lt. Interned, returned	Hollis, New York
CHRISTOPHER, ANTHONY J. ASN 31037024	Engineer S/Sgt. Interned, , injured (broken neck)	Ipswich, Massachusetts
BLACK, PETER E. ASN 12124754	Radio Oper. S/Sgt. Interned, returned	New Hyde Park, New York
BEDNAR, ADAM B. ASN 13081348	Ball Turret Sgt. Interned, returned	
BAILEY, CLARK G. ASN 35400754	RW Gunner S/Sgt. Interned, returned	Linworth, Ohio
HOLLADAY, FRED R. ASN 18163207	LW Gunner S/Sgt. Interned, returned	Tulsa, Oklahoma
BUTLER, JOHN M. ASN 14182636	Tail Turret Sgt. Interned, returned	Tifton, Georgia

Note: Bailey participated in the Ploesti low-level mission

1st Lt. Harold F. Hess was the captain of this 67th’s ship lost on the 27th. The MACR for this aircraft states in part, “Several crews saw J-Bar 554 leave the formation at 1456 hour and head in the direction of Spain, under control. At 1459 hour, one engine was feathered (not true) and still headed for Spain.” And they made it! This was the sixth mission for this crew.



Lt. Hess remembers, “After several delays, we took off about the middle of the morning – take off was on instruments and we broke out of the overcast at 10,000 feet. Since the mission was a very long one, and in order to save fuel, we flew at 10,000 feet and also bombed at that altitude.

“We finally arrived at our target, an airfield, and encountered the most flak of any of my 50 missions! This from a briefing of only 12 anti-aircraft guns. We were badly shot up by this flak as we went in at 10,000 feet and were sitting ducks when all those guns opened up on us at that altitude.

“Peck, our navigator, came up on the flight deck and said there was a hole in the nose the size of a washtub. Christopher, our engineer, was busy transferring fuel from the damaged tanks. We debated whether to drop the ball turret, but decided not to attempt it. We flew over the Bay of Biscay and threw overboard the bombsight, guns, ammunition, etc. All of the crew bailed out in the vicinity of Navarra. I tried to put the airplane on automatic pilot, but it wouldn’t work, so I trimmed it the best I could with that #3 engine revving up like it was. I aimed the plane out towards the bay and bailed out. The plane circled around and didn’t miss me by too far and then brushed the top of a house and crashed without burning. I landed in the vicinity of San Sebastian on the coast. We had two injuries – Christopher broke his neck, and I broke an ankle. Through all of this, I still don’t understand two things – how the engines kept running, and why we didn’t blow up from the gas leaks.”

Lt Hess graciously canvassed several members of his crew to obtain as much input as possible for their story. Left waist gunner Fred Holladay then compiled their stories, ably assisted by the bombardier, Lt. Albert Fisher. I have included much of it here.

“The 67th sent 10 planes along with the 44th’s formation. The airdrome was hit visually with 500 pound bombs, and with good results. The anti-aircraft fire was heavy and accurate. We were hit quite hard, as we counted approximately 400 holes in the aircraft that we could see, about 250 on the left wing, including a large hole right through the left inboard fuel tank, made by an 88-mm shell that failed to explode! The bomb bay was saturated with fuel and hydraulic oil fumes, so I opened the bomb bay doors to reduce the fire danger.

“When Lt. Hess asked me about the stabilizers and rudders, I told him that the left stabilizer had a hole in it. When he asked me how big, I told him, ‘About the size of your hat’. The number three throttle cable was shot in two.

“Then Pappy Hess told us to throw everything overboard that we possibly could get loose to lighten the plane so that we could make it to Spain – and for a slower landing speed. We also discussed if we should drop the ball turret. We had been briefed before takeoff that if we couldn’t make it back to England, we should try for Bilbao, Spain, where they had an airport. And so we headed for it.

“Upon arriving there, we attempted to lower our gear for the landing but had only the right main gear come down. The left tire had some holes in it and the hydraulic lines to that left gear had been shot in two. The runway was sod, was very short, and we could see a few World War I type aircraft on the field. Lt. Hess then made his decision for us to bail out, as a crash-landing would be too hazardous.

“As I jumped out from the right rear bomb bay, Max, co-pilot, was ready to go out the front right bay. I had the small-type chest pack chute and it failed to open! So I hurriedly pulled at the chute

to open it manually as I had remembered in a training lecture. As Max watched, he was relieved to see that it finally opened – not to mention my anxiety!

“Lt. Hess told me that he trimmed the plane and headed it out of our landing area and bailed out. But as he was descending in his chute, the airplane had a mind of its own and circled back around, and appeared to be headed right back toward him. Luckily, it missed him, headed down and struck the roof of a house, and the fright caused a pregnant woman to give birth to her child right then. No one was hurt but a dog was killed. The plane then skidded out across the rocky and stumpy hillside to a full stop, and didn’t even burn. Not enough fuel left to burn, I guess. Christopher hurt his neck when he landed and couldn’t fly combat anymore. He was hospitalized in England later and eventually sent back to the States. Hess also broke an ankle when he struck the hard ground.

“Added to our problems as we circled Bilbao attempting to parachute, was that the Spanish soldiers were firing their rifles and artillery at us! They even showed us their empty cartridges later. Happily, their aim was not very good, and nothing or no one was hit.

“The American Counselor and most of the city then turned out for the occasion. We were taken to the Priest’s home and were permitted to stay. But the Spanish military confiscated all of our military items and our money. So the American Counselor drove us into town and purchased civilian clothes for us. Some civilians thought we were invading Spain and appeared to be very happy about it. One of the Spanish girls gave me a book with her picture and her address in it, which I still have. Later, I bought a Spanish dictionary to use in writing to her. Peter Black, our radio man, who knew Spanish, would read her letters for me.

“Three days later, we departed Bilbao and were taken to a beautiful resort in rolling hills and with a desert-like climate. It had warm mineral water flowing out of the hills and into large, stepdown bathing pits about six foot square and with about three feet of water flowing through them. Some pools had the largest goldfish I’ve ever seen. Here we stayed with a large number of air crewmen, some of whom had been there for a long time. Many of them had made the torturous journey through those snowy Pyrenees, hunted by the German soldiers with dogs. Some had frozen toes and fingers and other injuries [gotten while] trying to avoid their patrols. We were lucky as we had flown over those Pyrenees.”

Fred continued with their story about their experiences in Spain, travel to Gibraltar, and eventual flight back to England at night in a C-87. But, according to the “Rules” this crew could no longer fly combat from England, so they eventually were transferred to Italy and the 15th AF where most of the crew completed their tour from that Theatre of Operations.

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## 8 April 1944

### Airdrome, Langenhagen, Germany

The month of April cost more plane losses and casualties of the entire war so far as the 44th Bomb Group was concerned! More so than the August 1943 disasters of Ploesti and a later mission to Foggia, Italy. The 8th of April was the worst single day.

For the first time in the war, the 44th BG was led by 389th BG aircraft equipped with PFF (Pathfinder equipment). With them as Command Pilots were Col. Gibson, Group C.O., and

Captain Robert Lehnhausen, 68th Squadron C.O. They flew with 389th Bomb Group personnel and airplanes. It was not a successful endeavor.

The primary target, Brunswick, as well as the secondary were obscured by a successful smoke screen, so a target of opportunity, Langenhagen Airdrome, was bombed instead. Enemy aircraft attacks were numerous and severe, with our gunners claiming 12 destroyed, 6 probables and 1 damaged. But the 44th Bomb Group's formation was subjected to concentrated attacks and lost a total of eleven aircraft! This, compared to the nineteen other B-24s lost by all other Groups. This was the worst loss of the war for one mission by the "Flying Eightballs".

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-99996 I, Richardson			MACR #3763
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA		
RICHARDSON, WILLIAM M. ASN 0-687496	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Macon, Georgia
MILLER, ARTHUR L. ASN 0-818724	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Birmingham, Alabama
ORBACH, NORRIS F. ASN 0-698138	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	New York City, New York
DAVIS, MILTON H. ASN 0-691878	Bombardier KIA, buried Ardennes (C-2-13)	2nd Lt.	North Hollywood, California
NAPPIER, VERNON D. ASN 37438712	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt.	Bedford, Iowa
GOOLSBY, RAY K. ASN 13066720	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Waynesboro, Virginia
POHLMAYER, ROBERT L. ASN 15097510	Ball Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (C-5-47)	Sgt.	Montgomery, Ohio
SIECKE, ELDON D. ASN 17165143	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Pilger, Nebraska
BRUCE, W. B. Jr. ASN 14159347	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Nashville, Tennessee
POWNALL, OTIS H. ASN 20733281	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (B-43-20)	Sgt.	Little River, Kansas

The plane and crew lost was that piloted by 2nd Lt. William M. Richardson. He and his entire crew were KIA – no survivors. There were even few observers to this loss. The MACR is equally brief because of this, stating only that aircraft #996 apparently was hit by enemy aircraft at 1345 hours in the vicinity of Salzwedel and was seen to go down. No chutes were observed. At least five airplanes were lost within the three minutes near 1345 hours from one pass by enemy planes, as described by survivors from the other crews lost.

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Two planes and crews were lost by the 67th Squadron plus one other that crashed in England, killing another crewman.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-110083 X-Bar, Mayes	MACR #3855
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67th Squadron Crew:

MAYES, ROBERT A. ASN 0-742181	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	San Antonio, Texas
RUSSELL, JAMES F. ASN 0-812315	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Ashville, North Carolina
RUSSELL, ROBERT P. ASN 0-797076	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Ashville, North Carolina
PLASZCZYKOWSKI, EDWARD M. ASN 0-688396	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
O'NEAL, CHARLES E. ASN 13104794	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt.	Cumberland, Maryland
SIEGERT, PAUL C. ASN 17175511	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Toganoxie, Kansas
NEWTON, ROGER J. ASN 31254221	Ball Turret KIA	Sgt.	Burlington, Vermont
THOMAS, ARCHIE M. ASN 18118735	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Palestine, Texas
LOGAN, DONALD J. ASN 35564011	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Peru, Indiana
BURK, WILLIAM J. ASN 14091412	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Talladega, Alabama

2nd Lt. Robert A. Mayes was the pilot of aircraft #083 and was probably one of the first 44th aircraft to go down. The MACR states that in the vicinity of Langenhagen Airdrome, at 1410 hours, Lt. Mayes gave orders to bail out on the interphone. The plane was on fire and in a spin. This plane had been hit by enemy aircraft before the target and went down. Sgt. Archie M. Thomas was the first to bail out, and probably the last, as his chute opened at about 400 feet. The plane exploded when it hit the ground.

For the first edition of the Roll of Honor, Archie Thomas wrote that there wasn't much that he could add to the data in the MACR. "We were hit by enemy aircraft fire on their initial pass through our formation. Our plane caught fire and went into a spin immediately, probably indicating that our pilots were injured, too. We had been flying in the "tail end Charlie" position. I am certain that the other men in the rear of our ship with me were KIA – William J. Burk, Roger J. Newton and Donald J. Logan.

"The craft went down in a tight spin, on fire, and I was the first one to leave from the rear area. My chute opened probably no more than 150 feet from the ground. It is also safe to say that there were no other survivors. But I did see that there was another plane that went down at the same time that we did.

"I spent my POW time in Stalag 17B until the war was over."

Thomas later provided a more extensive account. He titled this "That Fateful Easter Eve, April 8, 1944": "Our take off time was delayed from 07:00 a.m. to 09:00 a.m., due to a very heavy fog. While waiting for take off the officers were gathered at the front end of the B-24 whereas the six enlisted men were gathered at the tail end of the aircraft. During this wait, one of the enlisted men stated that, 'If it is my time to die, I am ready to die for my country.' One by one, four of the remaining crew made the same statement. I, alone, had not spoken, and at this time I stated, 'I am not ready to die for my country, but rather I am ready to LIVE for my country.'

“After loading on the aircraft my intercom was out and as a result, I missed out on some of the conversation. The radio operator took care of this problem before we got over enemy territory. After breaking through the fog, we had a beautiful spring day. We test fired our guns and the assistant engineer transferred fuel. At one point, we had to take evasive action to avoid colliding with another aircraft. We could see a little anti-aircraft flak in the distance near the Zuider Zee.

“Our preliminary checks were all made over the Channel. We were now entering enemy territory. As we proceeded over enemy territory, we kept a close lookout for enemy aircraft and gunfire. We were joined by one Allied Fighter Escort who stayed with us for some time. After they turned around and prior to our second Escort group joining us at approximately 13:00 o’clock, we spotted German fighters at a 3:00 o’clock position. They proceeded to move ahead of our formation and they attacked from directly in front of us, coming through our formation firing their guns. I am quite sure these were Me 109s.

“Our aircraft was hit on this first pass, caught fire and went into a spin. I was at the right-hand waist gunner position with Don Logan flying left waist gunner, Roger Newton, ball turret, and Burk in tail gunner position. We received word on the intercom stating, “We are hit. Get out!” This order was given by the pilot. I pulled the cord to my flak suit and it fell off. By this time, due to the spin, the weight of our bodies had increased several times, and everything was fairly well held to the floor.

“I grabbed my parachute and was the first to get to the escape hatch, which was also known as the camera hatch or main entrance hatch on the B-24. I made an attempt to open the hatch alone and had planned to jump holding my chute as I figured the plane would probably blow up in a few seconds. It would be better to try to hold onto the chute and put it on as I was on the way down, rather than face certain death in an exploding aircraft. This attempt failed and I managed to put the parachute on. By this time, two other crewmembers, Logan and Newton, had managed to get to the escape hatch, one at each end and I at the center of the door where it opened. We managed to get the door opened approximately eighteen inches and could open it no further due to the [centrifugal force of the] spin.

“I looked at Burk in the tail, unable to get out of his turret. Beads of perspiration were on his face and a look of fear, even death was on his face. I looked at Logan and Newton, neither in a position to jump. I thought if I try to exchange places with either of these men, no one will get out of this plane alive. I layed down and tried to get under the low opening of the door. Finally, after what seemed a long while, I felt my body hurled from the force of the spinning aircraft. I reached for the ripcord and thought I had missed it somehow. At this time I said, ‘Oh, Lord, I’m gone.’ As I uttered these words, the tumbling stopped. I glanced up and there was my chute. I glanced down and the pine treetops were just below my feet. The ripcord had caught on the door as I squeezed under it. Thanks to God and my crewmates, I was able to eject from the aircraft seconds before it dashed into the ground.

“I figure that had my stay in the aircraft been extended as much as one-tenth of a second, or even less, I probably wouldn’t be here today. One has to wonder about the remarks of the other enlisted crewmembers who all perished at this time, as well as the officers on the plane. The aircraft crashed about 100 yards from where I landed, and exploded seconds later. Just prior to the explosion, I disconnected my chute which was hanging in a tree and attempted to get out of the area. Of the crewmembers left in the aircraft, the Germans were able to identify all the bodies

with the exception of the co-pilot who, I believe, was probably hit by the exploding shell that brought our ship down.

“I was not captured until approximately one hour later. Two German enlisted men had gone out to inspect the wreckage of our aircraft. On their return to the village near by, they found me in the woods, where I was attempting to keep hidden to avoid capture. One said to me, ‘For you the war is over.’ This was spoken in English.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-7767 C-Bar, Thom	SHACK RABBIT	MACR #3849
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew POW	
THOM, GEORGE J. ASN 0-742628	Pilot POW, Very seriously injured	1st Lt. Burlington, Wisconsin
ABAD, ANTHONY J. ASN 0-684456	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt. San Francisco, California
GILLE, GERALD G. (506 Sq.) ASN 0-676373	Navigator POW/WIA	1st Lt. Quincy, Illinois
ALCOTT, RUSSELL J. ASN 0-679598	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt. Houston, Texas
KOWALSKI, ANDREW A. ASN 33168900	Engineer POW	T/Sgt. Reading, Pennsylvania
JOHNSON, ALVIN D. ASN 17063731	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt. Hastings, Nebraska
MEINKE, HARVEY H. ASN 36305301	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt. Elmwood Park, Illinois
PROULX, EARL D.(506 Sq.) ASN 19114709	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Tacoma, Washington
KNOTTS, LOYES H. ASN 33397479	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Waynesburg, Louisiana
SMILANICH, BRONKO ASN 37316734	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt. East Hibbing, Minnesota

*Note: Lt. Gille and Sgt. Proulx were from the 506th Squadron.*

The second 67th Squadron aircraft lost was that piloted by 1st Lt. George J. Thom. The MACR briefly states that this aircraft is believed to be the one that exploded after being hit by enemy aircraft and that no chutes were seen. (Time: 1347, in the vicinity of Salzwedel.) However this cannot be correct as George Thom rode this aircraft nearly to the ground and everyone else had time to bail out.

1st Lt. Gerald G. Gille, navigator on this crew, gave me his story, “On the early morning of April 8th, 1944 I was awakened and asked if I would like to volunteer for the navigator’s job, flying with the ‘foreign’ 67th Squadron. Being one mission behind my regular crew, I consented, and found myself with Lt. Thom’s crew after breakfast. Our mission was to Brunswick with a direct route through ‘Flak Alley’.

“After assembly in the air, and crossing the European coast, I noticed we were having trouble keeping in formation. I always thought we should have aborted, but Lt. Thom was making every

effort to keep up. Upon entering Germany, we were straggling badly, and sure enough, Me 109 enemy aircraft were attacking between eleven and one o'clock, high.

"It seemed as though they were about 10 abreast. The first pass they crippled two of our engines. Now we were really far behind our formation. On the second pass, they shot out the far left (#1) engine and our electrical system, and the remaining left engine, #2, was smoking. A 20-mm shell exploded just under the nose turret and blew out the nose wheel tire and covering. The bombsight also got a direct hit, saving my life, I believe, as only my right ankle caught the fragments.

"This all started at approximately 21,000 feet. After helping to get the bombardier (Alcott) out of the nose turret, I stood up and looked out the astrodome to see Lt. Thom motioning for us to bail out. We were in a flat spin, and after watching the altimeter slowly winding down, I checked my chute straps, zipped my leather jacket closed, after making sure I had escape rations. I decided to forget about my flight cap, checked the altimeter again – it was at 6,000 feet – stood up and looked out the nose astrodome again and saw no one left, and got ready to jump. The last reading on the altimeter was 1500 feet when I dived out the missing nose door head first.

"We were in the suburbs of Hannover when the plane crashed and exploded. (So the MACR data was incorrect) I found myself landing in a two acre plowed field with a sprained, wounded right ankle, with blood running out of my G.I. boot. I was gathering my parachute together when a German soldier on a motorcycle came to me off the road, into the field where I was. He jumped off his motorcycle and pointed his rifle at me, yelling, 'Pistol? Pistol?' I said 'Nein' and offered him some chewing gum, which he declined.

"I tried to explain to him about my damaged ankle and that it was hard for me to walk. But he forced me to carry my gathered parachute down the road approximately one-half a mile to a flak tower. Then I was able to sit down on the mound levee around the flak gun. Several of our crew's sergeants soon were captured and brought to this same assemblage where I found out all of the crew got out safely!"

Left waist gunner, Loyes Knotts, added a few facts, "Our crew had been grounded when the April 8th mission came up. We had two crew members – Lt. Jackson and Sgt. Arthur Silverburg on leave in London for the weekend. Two temporary crew members were given to us for this mission – a right waist gunner, (Proulx) and a navigator (Gille), who I think was from the 506th Squadron."

George Thom never committed his amazing survival story to paper, but it seems proper to tell it as best as I can based on a conversation I had with him. Lt. Thom said that he stayed with the plane as long as he could, waiting for all of his crew to parachute. When satisfied that all of his men had jumped, he then made his escape.

However, by that time he was so close to the ground that he never got his parachute on by the time he jumped. Nor did he have time to hook it to the rings before he landed in a large tree! Lt. Thom was a big man, well over six feet tall, and that may have contributed to his survival. The large tree did break his fall so that he did not go through to the ground. But even though suspended in that tree, he did "break most of the bones in my body, including my back!"

Col. Thom did not continue on with how he was rescued, but at the time of his conversation in the late 1990s, he was still suffering from that or those injuries.

His story is truly amazing, for he is one of the very few, or even the only account we have of a survival from escaping a falling plane, no parachute opening, and surviving.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-52293 G-Bar, Wahler	JUDY'S BUGGY		Returned
67th Squadron Crew:			
WAHLER, WILLIAM L.	Pilot	2nd Lt.	California
ASN 0-746488	Crash-landed OK		
PINO, PIETRO	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	Burlington,
ASN 0-807042	Crash-landed OK		New Jersey
MURRAY, THOMAS P.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Cambridge,
ASN 0-682123	Parachuted OK		Massachusetts
TRUMBO, GROVER C. (506/68 Sq.)			
ASN 0-739637	Parachuted, injured legs		
JONES, ROBERT G.	Engineer	S/Sgt.	Louisville,
ASN 35492819	Parachuted OK		Kentucky
MAZER, EDWARD	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	Pittsburgh,
ASN 13167474	Parachuted OK	Pennsylvania	
HARMEYER, CHARLES H.	Ball Turret	Sgt.	Cincinnati,
ASN 15336777	Parachuted OK		Ohio
RAY, CHARLES W.	Waist Gun.	Sgt.	Chalybeate,
ASN 14170302	Seriously Wounded		Mississippi
WARREN, JAMES H.	Waist Gun.	Sgt.	Queens,
ASN 32514996	Seriously Wounded		New York
MESKINIS, JOSEPH M.	Tail Turret	Sgt.	Bloomsburg,
ASN 33355549	KIA, buried Cambridge (C-6-55)		Pennsylvania

A third 67th plane was badly damaged but was not counted in the total of eleven lost as the pilots succeeded in getting it back to England

Co-pilot Lt. Pietro Pino wrote that, "The 67th Squadron was leading the Group and the Group was leading the entire 8th A.F. We were flying in the #4 position, and that probably is why I am alive today. We were in the vicinity of Dummer Lake where we were making a turn to the right towards our target, when approximately 100 enemy aircraft made one sweeping attack on us out of the sun, with almost no one seeing them coming. It reminded me of the second-hand car lots, with their hundreds of bare bulbs, only these "bulbs" were 20-mm cannon shells exploding!

"They made only one pass but they got several planes, and hit us quite badly. They hit both #3 and #4 engines, with the oil pressure on #3 dropping to nothing quickly, but we held formation, got to the target and bombed. Soon, #4 engine quit and we lost more altitude quickly, while the crew was heaving everything that they could overboard so we wouldn't go all the way down.

"Alone now, we got back over Holland, having a difficult time trying to fly a course with full rudder and trip tabs set against that loss of all power on the right side. Lt. Wahler suggested that perhaps we should bail out over Holland, but I felt that as long as we were not on fire, we should try for England – and that is what we did.



“We came in from over the North Sea over a small village of Beccles, where we saw an airfield with newly completed runways and bailed our crew out except for five of us. Sgt. Meskinis, our tail turret gunner, had his turret almost completely demolished around him, but not too badly injured. Our bombardier, Lt. Murray, helped Meskinis from the tangled wreckage, put his chute on his harness, got him to the rear hatch and helped him bail out. But Joe never did pull his ripcord. Instead, he must have become confused because when they found him, he had his heated suit cord in his hand – not the ripcord – and his chute was unopened.

“Wahler and I landed the plane at Beccles without further trouble as our engineer, Robert G. Jones, pumped the flaps and the landing gear down manually (#3 engine out). Those with us still in the plane were the two waist gunners who had been peppered full of shrapnel. When we checked the waist area, there were so many holes for daylight that it was like looking at the sky at night and seeing stars everywhere.”

Frank Stegbaur, Squadron navigator, who was the regular navigator on this crew, sent his recollections of this crew:

“The Wahler crew was assigned to the 67th in February ‘44, but because of a shortage of navigators, I was assigned to another, more experienced crew to fly while the rest of the Wahler crew were undergoing ground training. I had flown 5 missions before I was re-assigned back to Wahler. Later, I was sent to PFF School, and it was during this time that the incident involving Joe Meskinis occurred.

“Lt. Wahler informed me the crew had been decimated while on this mission. Their aircraft encountered severe fighter attacks and was badly damaged. His two waist gunners, Charles Ray and James Warren, had been badly wounded in the buttocks and legs when a 20-mm shell burst in the waist position between these two gunners. The aircraft had other serious damage as well. Lt. Wahler was able to nurse the aircraft back to England, and then ordered the crew to bail out, and they did. All landed safely except Joe Meskinis. They found him on a hillside with his chute unopened. The ripcord was still in the chute and the handle or cord was not fouled.

“Joe and I were good friends. Our friendship started because we both had type AB blood and we always said we had to stick together in case either of us needed a blood transfusion.

“After this experience, S/Sgt. Robert Jones was so badly shaken that he was taken off of flying status and re-assigned.”

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Three airplanes and crews were lost by the 68th Squadron. They were: Lts. Altemus', Barry's, and Townsend's.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-110020 Z, Altemus

MACR #3854

#### 68th Squadron Crew:

ALTEMUS, WILLIAM B. ASN 0-2045026	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Hollywood, California
PHELAN, EUGENE A. ASN 0-748234	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Chinook, Montana
BELLARD, HAROLD W. ASN 0-675984	Navigator KIA	1st Lt.	Woodlawn, Maryland

STEADHAM, ROY J. ASN 0-668816	Bombardier KIA, WOM Netherlands	1st Lt.	Jacksonville, Indiana
BAKER, LANNING C. ASN 35350340	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	La Grange, Indiana
LOPEZ, VICTOR A. ASN 18135755	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Netherlands	T/Sgt.	Claremore, Oklahoma
MICKEY, JAMES D. ASN 35305177	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
FEENEY, JOHN E. ASN 33155399	RW Gunner POW	T/Sgt.	Washington, Dist. of Col.
GILBERT, ROBERT N. ASN 15102189	LW Gunner KIA, buried Margraten (L-5-13)	S/Sgt.	Conneaut, Ohio
GAFFNEY, WILLIAM J. ASN 12143699	Nose Turret KIA, WOM Netherlands	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
HOCK, FRANK ASN 33186384	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

2nd Lt. William B. Altemus was the pilot of #020. The MACR includes this explanation, "At 1344 hour near Salzwedel this aircraft was attacked by enemy aircraft. It broke into flames and blew up. No parachutes were seen."

Again, it appears that the wording on this MACR is not quite correct as I have been advised by the engineer, Lanning C. Baker that, "We were flying a new plane so it had no name. It was a beautiful sunny day, not a cloud in the sky. I remember feeling quite secure because there were so many bombers in the air, well escorted by P-51s.

"We were hit by fighters which came out of the sun from above and in front. Our plane was hit so hard it seemed to momentarily stop in the air. Fire immediately erupted from the bomb bay and flashed onto the flight deck. I got out of the top turret, losing my oxygen mask in the process, and opened the top hatch door. This allowed the fire to go over us and out that hatch between the pilots. I then passed out from lack of oxygen.

"When I came to, I was lying on the flight deck floor right next to my parachute pack. I noticed that the right front bomb bay door was open or had been blown off. The other three were still closed. So I snapped on my chute and got out as quickly as I could. The bombs were still in place. "By this time, the plane could not have been too high because I hit the ground in no more than 3 or 4 minutes. I remember looking up after my chute opened and the plane was still flying, but there was a lot of fire.

"What happened to the others on board? Hock and Feeney were in prison camp with me. I saw Lt. Phelan at Camp Lucky Strike in France after the war was over. He said Lt. Altemus told him to jump and he would follow. He also said he saw me lying on the deck and thought I was dead. But when I got out of the plane, I saw no one! Altemus could still have been in his seat as the smoke and fire made poor visibility. As hard as we were hit in the front, I'm sure all in that area were killed or badly wounded.

"The big question of the day was, how did the single bomb bay door get open? I discussed it with Lt. Phelan when we met in France. He thought I had opened it and I, in turn, thought that he did

it. I have now concluded that for some reason the Almighty decided to keep a couple of us guys around a little longer.”

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-99987 S, Barry	PIZZ AND MOAN	MACR #3853
<i>Note: This aircraft was also known as TOOTIE BELLE.</i>		
68th Squadron Crew		
BARRY, WARREN H. ASN 0-678992	Pilot POW	2nd Lt. New Albany, Mississippi
KREBS, ANDREW J. ASN 0-669738	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt. Memphis, Tennessee
MURPHY, GEORGE J. ASN 0-688456	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Baltimore, Maryland
CHOMA, JOSEPH ASN 0-752317	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt. Cleveland, Ohio
McKENNA, RAYMOND H. ASN 31155162	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt. Readsboro, Vermont
CRACOLICI, JOSEPH Jr. ASN 12190881	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt. Brooklyn, New York
PERRY, DONALD L. ASN 13042032	Ball Turret POW	Sgt. West View, Pennsylvania
EURE, WILLIAM H. ASN 13119398	RW Gunner POW	Sgt. Wakefield, Virginia
WHITWORTH, JOHN L. ASN 34448789	LW Gunner POW	Sgt. Martin, Georgia
DAY, RUSSEL A. ASN 16008549	Tail Turret POW	Sgt. Tomah, Wisconsin

The second aircraft lost by the 68th Squadron was piloted by 2nd Lt. Warren H. Barry. The MACR does not have an observation reported on this airplane. It only states that the aircraft disappeared after a furious attack by enemy aircraft and heavy anti-aircraft fire. About six planes were lost at this time and it seems no one had an opportunity to observe other planes or crews. Sid Kipnes told me that he learned from S-2 that Lt. Barry's ship was seen to drop out of formation under heavy fighter attack. Six chutes were seen to come out of plane before it disappeared from view.

The bomber formations were attacked by German fighters just after bombing. The #2 engine of this aircraft was knocked out and when #3 was set afire, the crew bailed out. The B-24 crashed at Ilse, 5 km NE of Petershagen or 12 km N. of Minden, Germany.

This aircraft and crew fared better than many others this day, as nine of the crew survived to become POWs. Sgt. John L. Whitworth, left waist gunner, sent this information, "I have no idea what the name or number of our ship was. Nor can I remember just what our location was when the fighters hit us. We should have been pretty close to the target by the time they say the attack came. I was left waist gunner, and on about the first pass, they got us. Number two engine was knocked out and started windmilling. So I told our pilot, Lt. Barry, he would need to feather it if he could.

“Someone else reported that #3 was on fire, too. We were then told to get out. Sgt. Raymond McKenna was our top turret gunner, and I never did know if he got out or not.

*Note: McKenna was KIA. His body was finally identified in the early 1950s. The radio operator, Joe Caracolici, reported that McKenna had exited the plane prior to him and was uninjured at that point. Based on McKenna's injuries, the Army determined that his parachute had failed.*

“Incidentally, I was shot down on my first mission, so I did not get a chance to know many of the fellows. But one thing that impressed me was the concern shown when it was about time for the Group to return from a mission. All the boys who didn't go would go to the flight line to watch to see if all their friends made it back.”

This crew had just joined the 68th Squadron in mid-March. Lt. Barry had flown two missions during the latter part of the month, but as a co-pilot on another crew as was the standard practice. This was normal procedure for first pilots to gain experience before taking his own crew on missions. All others on this crew were flying their first mission. Also, as was the customary procedure for new crews, was flying near the end of the formation.

Donald Perry, the ball turret gunner, wrote: “The plane (Tootie Belle and Pizz and Moan) was attacked by both German Me 109s and FW 190s. We flew as tail end Charlie, outside on the last end of the “V.” We had no guns firing from that side. We were attacked all the way up the line.

“We were shot down over a German town, two months before the Normandy invasion. The crew bailed out at 21,000 feet and I free fell through the clouds about 10,000 feet before opening my chute. I landed alone in a tilled field about three acres in size, with no buddies in sight and only a lone manure pile for cover. I frantically stuffed the parachute into a hole I hollowed out in the mound. I saw that a piece of our B-24 and an engine had dropped into the field nearby.

“I was equipped with a meager survivor's kit – water in a rubber bottle, tablets, and a candy bar. None of the three compasses I had pointed to the same north direction. So, I first ran toward the pieces of our plane and then towards the woods beyond. We had received no training on what to do after we hit the ground. In the woods, I stripped the patches off my clothing, cut away my earphones and threw them in different directions. Then I retraced my steps and went the opposite way so as not to leave a trail.

“It was three long, cold and hungry days before I was captured. Later moved to Stalag 17B and there was re-united with several from my crew.”

*Note: Perry kept a diary with drawings and observations while a prisoner that he donated to the 44th.*

Warren Barry, the pilot, provided the following account: “We were attacked by German fighters and knocked out of the formation and lost altitude quickly. The top of number two engine and wing was blown off. I feathered #2 and observed a hole in the broad part of the prop just above the hub. The bombardier, Lt. Choma was in the front turret which he reported was “shot out.” I called our engineer S/Sgt. McKenna out of the top turret to help and to assess other damage and to check the back of the plane. He returned and reported, “#3 was on fire and there was a fire in the back.”

“I told the crew to bail out and told Lt. Krebs, the co-pilot, to be the last man out and to see that all men were out. He followed S/Sgt. McKenna out. I did not think I could get out so I took a heading of 275 degrees and headed for England. After flying awhile, I saw two B-24s; one about a mile ahead and the other about two miles ahead at 10 o'clock a little below me, both with

mechanical trouble. I thought if I could catch up with them, we three might have a better chance. The rear plane had an internal explosion, both wings broke off and the fuselage tumbled. The front plane flew over what appeared to be a rocket battery and was blown up. I did not observe anyone getting out of either plane.

“I continued on but picked up two Me 109s which fortunately, came in at 12 o’clock high. As I saw them fire, I would take evasive action as best I could. After each attack, they would climb, pass on my left side and attack 12 o’clock high again. I suspect they kept this pattern as no one was shooting back at them from the front, had they come in from the rear...

“Along the way, I flew over an elevated gun tower, but fortunately no one was in the tower. Later, in the prison camp, I was trying to determine just where I was. I talked to a lead navigator. He asked where the target was and my compass heading. I described a lake I had flown over. He determined I flew over Damme Lake [Dummer Lake]. He said, “How is it you are still alive? That is where the Germans are working on “heavy water” and a very highly defended target.” I told him I had two German fighters following me. He said, “They saved your life.” I had lost altitude to about 2,000 feet and realized I would not make it across the North Sea and to England. I did not want the Germans to get a good B-24 so I decided to try to bail out. I trimmed the plane up, here God became my pilot. I headed for the bomb bay and jumped, opening my chute just as soon as I cleared. My flying boots and shoes came off as my chute opened.

“I hit in a plowed field and bounced over a barbed wire fence. My chute was hung in the fence. It was a large, open field with no place to hide. I saw a small depression in the field, so I ran there and sat down and put on my G.I. shoes which I had wired to my parachute harness (we were advised to wire a pair of G.I. shoes to our parachute harness). I got up and started walking. In a few minutes, bullets started whizzing by – not knowing where the shots were fired, I stopped. Soon I was picked up.

“All the crew survived except the engineer, S/Sgt. McKenna, the next to last man out. He was listed as MIA for nine years. A grave was located in a church yard at Bissendorf, Germany, located about eight miles northwest of Isenhagen, Germany, with a cross marked “Hier ruht in Gott ein amerikanischer Flieger” (“Here rests in God an unidentified American airman”). His death was caused by parachute failure.”

S/Sgt. McKenna remained missing after the war. Finally, in 1953, the body of an unidentified US airman was found in a cemetery of Bissendorf, which is 9 km NE of Reese and 14 km SE of Helstorf. (These are the locations where S/Sgt. Cracolici and Lt. Krebs were captured, according to German reports attached to MACR 3853). McKenna’s remains were first buried in the Mausoleum at Frankfurt-Griesheim and later repatriated to the USA for permanent burial in his home state Vermont. The

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-109822 O, Townsend	TOWNSEND’S TERRIBLE TEN		MACR #3857
68th Squadron Crew:			
TOWNSEND, RAYMOND H. Jr. ASN 0-670670	Pilot KIA, WOM Netherlands	1st Lt.	Idaho Falls, Idaho
WARD, EDWIN M. Jr. ASN 0-2045032	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Clifton, Virginia

JONES, PAUL A. ASN 0-676068	Navigator POW, wounded	1st Lt.	Nashville, Tennessee
NEALON, WALTER K. ASN 11032594	Bombardier POW	T/Sgt.	Malden, Massachusetts
CLEMONS, ARCHIE D. ASN 15015217	Engineer KIA, WOM Netherlands	T/Sgt.	Bradonton, Florida
LYMAN, JOHN M. ASN 11066620	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Meshoppen, Pennsylvania
CHURCHILL, DOUGLAS E. ASN 16108271	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
NOSAL, JOHN A. ASN 17029388	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Omaha, Nebraska
BRAY, ROBERT S. ASN 39011105	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Pacific Grove, California
WENKE, RAYMOND G. ASN 6150461	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Kalamazoo, Michigan

*Note: S/Sgt. John Nosal was a veteran of the 1 August 1943 Ploesti raid.*

1st Lt. Raymond H. Townsend, Jr. was the captain on the third ship lost by the 68th on the 8th of April. The MACR includes the information that this aircraft was observed at 1407 hours, west of Hannover, was hit by flak, fell back in the formation with one engine smoking. Later, it blew up and one parachute was seen.

The navigator, 1st Lt. Paul A. Jones sent his account, “We were hit by fighters three times. The first time, we lost one engine, which caused us to drop out of formation. One shell came through the little window in the nose compartment and went into the electrical box which knocked out power to the nose turret.

“I called Lt. Townsend and asked him if he was going to jettison the bombs, and he said ‘No’. He thought that he could get us back into formation with them and continue on to the target. I checked with Sgt. Nealon who was in the nose turret and he told me that his power was out, but he was going to stay in the turret and use his guns manually.

“We were almost back into formation when we were again hit by the fighters, losing two more engines. Now, we could no longer remain airborne, so Townsend gave orders to bail out. I relayed this to Nealon, and crawled back to open the nose wheel doors – and that is when we were hit the third time. I guess I stuck my head right in the middle of those exploding shells as my steel helmet was blown off and my eyes were immediately sealed with blood, my head and face were bleeding, riddled by the shrapnel from the cannon fire.

“I sat down and decided I would not jump if I was going to be blind – I would just ride her in to the ground. But then I explored my head with my hands, pulled at one eyelids, and it opened and I could see! So I tried the other eye and found it to be alright, too.

“I turned to see where Nealon was, found him sitting on the shell compartment, trying to get his parachute on, but was unsuccessful because his hands were nearly frozen. I went to him, helped him get the chute attached to his harness, and he followed me to the nose door opening and I jumped. But just before I went out, I looked up towards the cockpit to see that both Townsend and Ward’s legs were hanging down off the controls – both unconscious or dead?

“I made a delayed jump for a considerable distance, until I started spinning like a leaf, then pulled the cord and I said to myself, ‘Well, what do you know, it opened’.

“About this time one of the big wheels from the plane came by me, so I assumed the plane had blown up. I looked up to see one other parachute way above me and some distance away. It was Nealon’s chute. I checked my watch and remember it to be 2:15 PM.

“I was captured in a small village that I thought was Weinhausen, but can’t find it on a map. I have been told that Weinhausen means ‘wine house’ so I might have only seen the sign on a building. I spent 401 days in a German Prison Camp.

“At Camp Lucky Strike, France, after being liberated, Nealon and I located each other, and there also were our two waist gunners, Sgts. Lyman and Nosal. They told me that before they jumped, the ball turret gunner (Churchill) was killed while out of his turret. They saw Wenke get out of his rear turret to put on his chute, but he did not survive. I understand he is still buried in Germany. I know nothing about the top turret gunner or radio operator.”

T/Sgt. Walter K. Nealon was an enlisted bombardier, one of five enlisted bombardiers in the original 68th Squadron back at Barksdale Field, Louisiana in early 1942. Sgt. Nealon remembered that, “If it were not for Paul (Jones) I would not be here today. I had been shot in the head, and although appearing to be conscious, I remember nothing. When Paul saw me fumbling with my chute, he thought my hands were frozen, but I simply was not thinking at all, but was out on my feet.

“When Paul attached my chute to my harness, he accidentally put it on upside down, and then bailed out. Until I talked with him recently I had always thought I was still in the plane when it blew up, and I was blown clear. I finally came back to consciousness floating through the air and remember trying to open the chute. But the ripcord was on the left side instead of the right, and still not thinking clearly, I had to practically tear the chute open with my fingers.

“Sgt. John Nosal and I were captured in the same area – and we never saw anyone else from the crew until the war was over and at Camp Lucky Strike in France.”

John Lyman’s daughter Esther wrote that her dad told her that he was trying to move Doug Churchill’s body away from his gun when they were hit again. She said her father credited Churchill’s death with his own survival since the pilot (Townsend) had sent him back to take Churchill’s gun. Otherwise he would have been on the flight deck when the plane exploded, and of course everyone on the flight deck died.

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The 506th Squadron bore the brunt on this mission and lost five aircraft as well as another man being KIA on a returning aircraft.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-110023, Herzing	RUBBER CHECK	MACR #3860
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew POW	
HERZING, ERNEST A. ASN 0-663911	Pilot POW	2nd Lt. Houston, Texas
FILLBACH, VIRGIL W. ASN 0-687023	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt. Gregory, South Dakota

DUNKERLY, GAYLE J. ASN 0-688006	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Detroit, Michigan
BALL, WILLIAM F. Jr. ASN, 0-1296624	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Bessemer, Alabama
BROWN, JOHN J. Jr. ASN 31228632	Engineer POW	Sgt.	Abington, Massachusetts
WEISS, WILLIAM J. ASN 13128091	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Weatherly, Pennsylvania
HIRSCH, MOREN ASN 32617876	Ball Turret POW	Sgt.	New York City, New York
THORSON, ALVIN L. ASN 16035901	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Newark, Illinois
LEBLANC, ALBERT A. ASN 31085436	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Waltham, Massachusetts
MAHANEY, FRANCIS X. ASN 33198065	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Washington, Dist. of Col.

Again, the MACR is very brief in its explanation of what transpired with this plane and crew. “At 1347 this aircraft left the formation in difficulty after enemy fighters had attacked. No chutes were seen.”

The engineer, Sgt. John J. Brown. wrote that, “I believe that they were mostly Me 109s that hit us in that one flashing pass. We didn’t know they were coming and were shocked when we heard the firing.

“As engineer, and sitting in the top turret, I could observe everything as it was happening. The damage was this – #1 and 2 engines were knocked out and smoking; #3 was on fire immediately, and the flames engulfed the whole right wing area. #4 engine was the only one operating!

“I quickly reported this damage to Lt. Herzing, our pilot, and it seemed that a long time elapsed with no answer, so I repeated it a second time. Apparently he and the co-pilot, Lt. Fillbach, were nearly in shock trying to determine what had happened and what to do about it.

“Lt. Herzing then said, ‘What do you think, Phil?’ The reply came back from the co-pilot, ‘Let’s get the hell out of here!’

“The next order was to salvo the bombs – then to prepare to bail out. Very shortly after that, Lt. Herzing could see the hopelessness of the situation then said, “Go ahead and jump.”

“Well, it was our first jump. We had practiced the procedure earlier, but only from the ground and just to orientate each person which exit to take. But this was the real thing and we had complications, as the bomb bay doors were swinging back and forth, apparently damaged as well.

“After checking those swinging doors, it was decided to jump as soon as they were about to open because they swung back almost immediately. We all bailed out and landed with only a few minor bumps and bruises, banged up legs and backs, but otherwise in good shape. Amazingly, with all of the damage to the plane, no one had been hit! I was told that shortly after we bailed out, the ship blew up.

“We were quickly rounded up by German soldiers somewhere near Hannover and taken to Dulag Luft for interrogation. Then on to Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria.”



Navigator Lt. Gayle Dunkersley remembers that, “The name of our airplane was RUBBER CHECK – you know, always comes back. We were attacked by Me 109s and had hits on both wings, but none in the fuselage. At least two engines were knocked out, with a fire in one wing. Not being able to maintain altitude we were ordered to bail out. The plane was set on automatic pilot, and was observed to blow up shortly after we all got out.

“All crew members were captured upon landing, and by evening, we were rounded up together in jail cells at an air force base in the area. Once we were in the hands of the German Air Force personnel, we were treated with mutual respect. The following day was Easter Sunday, and were fed a good dinner and then were put into one large cell for a few hours so that we could compare experiences with each other. All four of us officers were sent to Stalag Luft I, near Barth.”

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-73506 X-Bar, Johnson			MACR #3852
506th Squadron Crew:			
JOHNSON, GUY W. ASN 0-681431	Pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (A-36-2)	1st Lt.	Parkersburg, Iowa
WILLIAMSON, LEROY M. ASN 0-805717	Co-pilot POW, wounded	1st Lt.	Sealy, Texas
BAUMANN, ROBERT J. ASN 0-735244	Navigator POW, wounded	1st Lt.	St. Louis, Missouri
WIEST, CHARLES L. ASN 0-736742	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	Baltimore, Maryland
HICKMAN, ROBERT J. ASN 12132169	Engineer POW, escapee, returned	S/Sgt.	Frankfort, Delaware
GOLDMAN, MARTIN R. ASN 11073423	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	New Britain, Connecticut
PROCYSZYN, WALTER W. ASN 33284808	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Ford City, Pennsylvania
RANDALL, WILBUR R. ASN 39458252	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Lewiston, Idaho
MANAK, PAUL ASN 36196213	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Lawton, Michigan
REED, GEORGE W. ASN 12181955	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Wilmington, Delaware

The second 506th Squadron aircraft lost was an aircraft piloted by 1st Lt. Guy W. Johnson. His MACR includes this information, “Left formation at 1347 hours, in difficulty after an enemy aircraft attack. Johnson was shot on ground when trying to surrender to some soldiers. He was overheard to be saying words like, ‘Don’t shoot! I give up.’ The aircraft was hit by flak in the nose section, bomb bay, tail and left wing. It caught fire immediately while still over Brunswick. Orders to bail out was given and all jumped successfully.”

Co-pilot Williamson stated that, “After all personnel had cleared the aircraft and were descending to earth, we were fired upon by small arms. Upon hitting the earth, I recognized the voice of 1st Lt. Guy W. Johnson saying, ‘I give up. Don’t shoot’ – or words to that effect. Then followed a burst of rifle fire. I was wounded and did not see Lt. Johnson, although I would judge

from the sound of his voice he was about 400 feet away. I could see a number of German soldiers running in the direction of Lt. Johnson.

“I was told by German military personnel at the time I was taken prisoner that Lt. Johnson was dead and notice of his death would be sent through the Red Cross.”

Lt. Robert J. Baumann, navigator, states that, “While in prison camp I made notes of what I remembered about the mission and I still have them. My listing shows that Johnson was killed, Williamson, Wiest, Goldman, Procyszyn, Manak, Hickman and myself as alive, and I knew nothing about Reed and Randall.

“On that last flight, our Group was leading the formations and our plane was flying in the number 4 position. We were catching some flak, but just before the IP, I was looking out the side window checking pilotage points when the window was shattered by flak. Other parts of the plane also were hit by flak, but no one was hurt at that time.

“We began to get fighter attacks while on our final approach to the target. Our section had good fighter support and although there were a lot of enemy planes, I don’t believe we received any hits, nor do I recall hearing that any other planes in our Group were hit seriously.

“We began to get heavy accurate flak just before bombs away and it continued. I remember hearing noises as though flak was hitting the plane at various places. It sounded like rocks being thrown against the plane. However, no one was hit – at least I heard nothing on the intercom about serious hits. I turned around to reach for my log to record the bomb data when all hell broke loose.

“The ship shuddered, my legs felt like they had been blown off, and I fell face down on the floor. The space below the flight deck and just to the rear from me was an immediate roaring inferno. I was able to get up on my right leg, but my left leg was useless. I started to open the emergency nose wheel door, but I couldn’t hold on long enough to get the door completely open, as the flames were burning my face.

“I recall backing away, and then making another try at it with my head turned to the side. The side of my head and face were pretty badly burned, but I did get the door open. I passed out a few times but before I finally got out of the ship I remembered to open the nose turret door. Our ship was an older model and was the only one in our Squadron that did not have an emergency release handle inside the nose turret. Had I not gotten that door open, the bombardier (Wiest) would have been trapped.

“I don’t know how I got out of the ship, but I did, and ended up in a prison camp after a few transfers and transportation problems. This flight was my 22nd mission, but my first with this crew. I am almost certain that Lt. Johnson, the pilot, was killed by flak.

“I was on Lt. Money’s crew during my first 15 missions or so, then I was being trained for lead crew. My notes also show that our bombs were away at 1402 hours, so the information about our crew leaving the Group at 1347 is in error.”

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-29153 Z-Bar, Marx

GREENWICH

MACR #3850

506th Squadron Crew:

Entire crew POW

MARX, ROBERT H. ASN 0-806104	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
BROCKMAN, VERNIE R. ASN 0-812538	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Seattle, Washington
MASCOLA, LEON A. ASN 0-811645	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Hartford, Connecticut
POLJANEC, RAYMOND L. ASN 0-752935	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Winston, Minnesota
FRANKLIN, ROBERT C. ASN 17161318	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	St. Louis, Missouri
TAYLOR, RONALD J. ASN 36174618	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Dewitt, Michigan
APPLEGATE, EDWARD J. ASN 32326464	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	New York City, New York
ZIMMERMAN, THEODORE F. ASN 16036987	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
JOHNSON, DEAN F. ASN 18118882	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Pelly, Texas
NELSON, ESLEY E. ASN 16155835	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Eugene, Oregon

The third 506th lost was an aircraft piloted by 1st Lt. Robert H. Marx. The MACR briefly states that at 1357 hours, in the vicinity of Langenhagen, the ship started down under control. No chutes were observed.

Sgt. Theodore F. Zimmerman, right waist gunner, expanded a bit on the above observation. “The entire crew bailed out over a town named Herford, Germany. Fighters hit us, but what really got us was flak.

“After we dropped our load of bombs (4 x 2,000 pounders) we lost engine power and went into a spin. Our two pilots pulled it out at 4,000 feet, and hit the horn – and we all started to bail out. The ball turret gunner, Applegate, and I were the last to leave. He had to get his shoes, and then he lost them when he opened his chute. I guess he did not have time to tie them to his harness.

“We were captured when we landed. Then we were all sent to Frankfurt for interrogation. From there we went to Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria. The officers went to Stalag I.”

Bob Franklin recalls: “As I remember, we were hit by flak in the #3 engine putting it out of commission and caused us to drop out of the formation. It wasn’t but a few minutes before the #4 engine decided to quit. As you know, the B-24 does not fly too well on two engines, especially on the same side.

“We went into a spin and I threw the hydraulic switch to get pressure to get the flaps down and open the bomb bay and nose wheel doors open so we could bail out if necessary. We went into a spin but our pilot Bob Marx was able to pull it out and gave the alarm to bail out as he couldn’t hold it very long.

“As I was floating down, I remember seeing a crowd of people following my descent and were there to greet me on my landing. I was taken to a house where I was met by Lee Mascola, our navigator, and Ray Poljanic, our bombardier. We were then taken to another place where the rest

of the crew was rounded up. It was good to see that we all had gotten out safely. From there, we were taken by train to Frankfurt for interrogation. From Frankfurt, we were put in boxcars with what seemed like hundreds of other POWs and transported to Stalag 17B at Krems, Austria.” This was his eighth mission.

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-109827 Q-Bar, Sprinkle

MACR #3858

## 506th Squadron Crew:

SPRINKLE, DALLAS L. ASN 0-440634	Pilot POW, injured	2nd Lt.	Akron, Ohio
NEUTZE, ROBERT E. Jr. ASN 0-755738	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	San Antonio, Texas
SMITH, JOSEPH R. Jr. ASN 0-813456	Navigator KIA, WOM Netherlands	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
SCHUYLER, ROBERT E. ASN 0-682125	Bombardier KIA, WOM Netherlands	2nd Lt.	Little Falls, New York
RADU, CHARLES ASN 35317454	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (D-23-14)	S/Sgt.	Lakewood, Ohio
WINN, CHARLES ASN 17091138	Radio Oper. POW, burned	S/Sgt.	Ft. Collins, Colorado
SPRINGS, CHARLES F. ASN 34598241	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Mt. Holly, North Carolina
MURACH, STANLEY Jr. ASN 31104988	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (A-31-19)	Sgt.	Bridgeport, Connecticut
HICKS, JEANE M. ASN 39410222	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Stockton, California
FREEMAN, JACK B. ASN 19112691	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Tacoma, Washington

The fourth of the five planes lost by the 506th on the 8th was that of 2nd Lt. Dallas L. Sprinkle. His MACR states that for reasons unknown, at 1357 hours near Langenhagen, this aircraft was last seen under control, but no chutes were observed.

Sgt. Jack Freeman sent his recollections, “I was flying in the tail turret position that day and we were flying ‘tailend Charlie’. We had just turned at the IP for the bomb run, had opened our bomb bay doors, when several [fighters] came down out of the sun and decimated our formation.

*Note: Freeman thinks the fighters were Me 262s, but Sprinkle was sure they were FW 190s.*

“Our plane was hit with cannon shells in the main gas lines across the front of the wing above the flight deck, as well as on the deck above the wing over the bomb bay where all of the oxygen supply bottles were secured. Fire erupted immediately, fed by the fuel, the oxygen and the wind blowing in the open bomb bay. It quickly spread back to the waist positions and forward into the flight deck area.

“Lt. Sprinkle sounded the bail out alarm very soon after the hits and everyone hurried to get set to abandon ship. We in the waist area prepared to leave through the bottom camera hatch, as the heat from the fire soon was igniting the ammo in the waist gun belts.

“Sgt. Charles F. Springs was in the ball turret and he never rotated his turret or raised it in order to get out. As far as I know, he never showed up later. Sgts. Stanley Murach and Jeane M. Hicks, waist gunners, both bailed out ahead of me and were, apparently, OK at that time. Jeane Hicks made it all right, but I have heard nothing of Stanley Murach.

“I landed after a delayed jump near a wooded area where I ditched my chute, and took off toward the west and Holland. I was loose for about 8 to 10 hours before I was captured by a JU 88 pilot who was home on leave. He spoke English, took me to a Luftwaffe airfield jail near Luneberg for the night. Next day they drove me to the area where our plane crashed to see if I could identify one body there without dog tags. It, unhappily, turned out to be my friend and crewmate, Sergeant Charles Radu, of Lakewood, Ohio. His chute had not opened.

“I was then transported under guard to Dulag Luft, the interrogation center in Bavaria for several days – and where I saw Lt. Sprinkle. I had no chance to speak to him, but he had evidently been blown through the cockpit roof when the ship blew up. He had a heavily bandaged nose as though it was broken. I was transported, along with many Air Corps POWs, in boxcars to Austria and Stalag 17B. There I found Jeane Hicks in good shape, and learned that Charles Winn had been able to get out, but was very seriously burned. I’ve heard nothing about the rest of the crew since that date.”

Dallas Sprinkle, the pilot, wrote: “The fire in the bomb bay and flight deck was severe. I signaled to bail out and those on the flight deck went out the top hatch. I know that Lt. Neutze, Sgt. Raou, and Sgt. Winn got out of the plane. It seems I was told later that Raou’s chute burned up and he fell to his death.

“When I couldn’t control the plane any longer, I started for the hatch and that is the last I remember until I came to, falling through space! I pulled my ripcord and in a second was on the ground. I was either blown or thrown clear of the plane. I landed near a small village and near some woods.

“I hid my chute in the woods. Took off my flying boots and started to run and I ran right into a home guard detail that captured me. They were wearing the spiked World War I helmets and long coats.

“After being captured, I was taken to Frankfurt and then to Barth and Stalag Luft I. I was injured and burned around the face and nose. At Stalag Luft I, I was put in the hospital staffed with English doctors captured at Dunkirk in 1939.

“I spent about six months in the hospital with an infected right leg, which I almost lost. I was released in mid-May 1945 by the Russian Army and shortly after was air evacuated to a hospital in Paris. I eventually got back to the states in July 1945.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-100423 A, Winn	OH MY SUFFERIN’ HEAD		MACR #3856
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew POW		
WINN, JACK M. ASN 0-807092	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Dallas, Texas
McEVER, JAMES H. ASN 0-755587	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Waco, Texas

FINESMITH, MAX ASN 0-692306	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
WALKER, ALFRED C. ASN 0-691912	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	New Philadelphia, Ohio
TURANSKY, LOUIS A. ASN 15323105	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Canton, Ohio
VAUGHAN, CHARLES W. ASN 33450690	Radio Oper. POW	Sgt.	Sacramento, California
MATTHEWS, ALLEN T. ASN 33075854	Ball Turret POW	Sgt.	Royersford, Pennsylvania
ALBERT, RICHARD L. ASN 15105209	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Freemont, Ohio
ISAACS, LEON PRESTON ASN 15382857	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Berea, Kentucky
GOLDBERG, SIDNEY I. ASN 13041065	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Uniontown, Pennsylvania

The fifth and last aircraft lost by the 506th Squadron on the eighth of April was that piloted by 2nd Lt. Jack M. Winn.

The MACR states in part that there was a collision with an enemy aircraft at 1346 hours. This enemy aircraft first hit the deputy lead ship in the formation and then continued on to crash into this aircraft. Both airplanes exploded. No one was believed to have survived this collision, but all of them did!

This was the pilot's second mission, while the remainder of his crew were on their first flight against the enemy.

Lt. Jack Winn, pilot, gave this information, "Actually, my crew and I did not spend enough time with the 506th Squadron to even get acquainted. We flew a new ship to England during the middle of March 1944, but upon arrival, we were told that the 506th needed replacements badly. I flew a mission as a co-pilot on April 1st [for Lt. Mendenhall], and on the very next mission, April 8, my crew and I had an unfortunate encounter with an FW 190.

"With luck, all of the crew made it to the ground in reasonably good shape, considering the circumstances. We spent the next 13 months as POW. I understand that the 44th took a terrible loss that day."

Lt. Max Finesmith, navigator, added, "We were knocked down on our very first mission over Germany on the way to Brunswick. Our position in the formation was behind the deputy lead. A FW 190 hit our port engines, our plane caught fire, and all of our crew bailed out safely. We were supposed to get fighter support at rendezvous point, but never saw them.

"The altitude when I bailed out was about 5,000 feet. I injured my back and ankle on landing, and was captured soon after. I was a POW for 13 months at Stalag Luft I, until liberated by the Russians in May 1945."

*Note: 2nd Lt. Jack Winn should not be confused with 2nd Lt. Jack Wind, a pilot who also flew his first mission this day – also from the 506th Squadron – also was badly shot up. Lt. Wind crash-landed at the base. He and his crew went on to successfully complete 31 missions, many of which were in SOUTHERN COMFORT II. (For more on Lt. Wind, see below.)*

Finally, one other 506th Squadron aircraft returned to base with a co-pilot killed in action. Although there is no official information in either the 506th Squadron or the 44th BG, the pilot of that plane, 1st Lt. John M. McCaslin, Jr. sent his recollections of this tragedy.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-7509 Bar-V, McCaslin	GALAVANTIN' GAL		Returned, salvaged
506th Squadron Crew:			
McCASLIN, JOHN M. Jr. ASN 0-440434	Pilot	1st Lt.	Cincinnati, Ohio
BARTOL, STOCKTON R. ASN 0-680595	Co-pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (C-2-15)	1st Lt.	Wynewood, Pennsylvania
WILLIAMS, ALLEN N. Jr. ASN 0-683887	Navigator	1st Lt.	
GUTKNECHT, ROBERT E. ASN 0-738635	Bombardier	1st Lt.	Maplewood, Missouri
PETERSON, MELVIN P.	Radio Op.	S/Sgt.	
HALL, MAURICE G.	Engineer	T/Sgt.	
STRUBLE, ROBERT	Nose Turret	T/Sgt.	
RUSH, PERL R.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
RICHARDSON, COLEY W.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
GUTIERREZ, TRINADAD	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

*Note: Hall's name is also listed as M. Glenn Hall.*

Lt. McCaslin stated that, "My crew had not been together very long. We were, including myself, former members of other crews. I think some of the gunners came from Bill Duffy's crew (as I did), but I'm not sure of it. Possibly, they included Richard Hershey, John Stewart and William Drumel.

"Stockton had flown quite a number of missions with another pilot. Shortly before he was killed, I had checked him out in the left seat and he was in line to get a crew of his own. Stockton entered the Army Air Corps after completion of his freshman year at Princeton University.

*Note: Stockton Bartol had flown quite a number of missions with another pilot. In fact, he had flown 30 missions in all with three pilots, from 9 September 1943.*

"The plane that we were flying was GALAVANTIN' GAL, with a bottle of 'Old Crow' painted on the other side of the nose. This old plane had flown the low level Ploesti mission.

"My impression now is that on the mission of 8 April 44, the 506th was leading the 44th, and the 44th was leading the 2nd Air Division. Stockton and I were flying on Col. John Gibson's left wing, and the deputy commander, Lt. Col. Robert Lehnhausen, was on Col. Gibson's right wing.

"Shortly before reaching the target area, we were raked pretty severely with head-on attacks by Me 109s. We took a hit in the leading edge of the left wing between number one and number two engines which, unaccountably, seemed to do no serious damage.

“Hannover, I believe, was our secondary target. I think this was the reason for the unusually long bomb run (straight and level for about four minutes); and hence the god-awful flak. I don’t recall how many planes we lost, but I do know it was one of our very bad days.

“Because we were on the Colonel’s left wing, I had to fly cross-cockpit when in formation. Stockton, in the right side seat, could more easily keep us in tight, and hence flew during the bomb run. He was at the controls when he was hit.

“This happened almost exactly on ‘bombs away’. Some flak came through the windshield and hit him in the head. Despite my proximity to him, I wasn’t even scratched, nor was anybody else on the crew. Our plane, though considerably riddled, did not suffer any extensive functional damage, and I had no undue difficulty in flying it back to England.

“Col. Gibson then took evasive action, but I did not stay with him due to the commotion in my plane. It was several minutes before I located the Colonel and found a place back in formation.”

1st Lt. Stockton R. Bartol was buried at the American Cemetery in Cambridge, England. Plot C, Row 2, Grave 15. His father visited him annually for more than 20 years.

Robert Struble, the nose gunner, wrote: “Flak was so heavy we could not see our wing man on the bomb run. We took a burst in front of the cockpit dead even. One large piece of shrapnel went thru the cockpit safety glass, thru Bartol’s flak helmet, thru his head, thru the armor plate to his rear and hit the radio operator on the face which drew blood.

“We lost #3 and #4 engines on the way back. At the base we cranked and pushed the wheels down. McCaslin sideslipped the ship in on the north/south runway for as beautiful a landing as I can remember.

“After burying Bartol in Cambridge, we went on a rest leave to Southpool, England for a week.”

Glenn Hall, the engineer, wrote: “We not only had a bomb sight for Robert Gutknecht, our bombardier, but also we had a nose gunner who was an engineer. On the bomb run our tail gunner, Trinidad Gutierrez was letting us know as each plane was shot down. As I remember it, we had dropped our bombs before Bartol was hit. He was wearing a flak vest and flak helmet. He was hit in the forehead just below the helmet. He was flying the plane when he was hit. Gutknecht acted as co-pilot until we were ready to land and then I sat in the right seat and the nose gunner took over as engineer. Two weeks later that plane had armor glass, but it was too late for Bartol.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-100429 Bar-O, Wind

Crash-landed

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

WIND, JACK J.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
	Hit by shrapnel	
WALDO, EDWIN L.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
MAZZA, BEN K.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
STANTON, ARTHUR C.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
WRIGHT, W. H.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
LIGHTCAP, HAROLD E.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.



GURT, WILLIAM A.	Ball Turret	Sgt.
EMCH, HAROLD D.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
TULINI, DENO C.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
ECCLESTON, CHARLES R.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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Jack Wind recalls: “After I had flown my first mission with Sid Paul, my crew was waiting to hear what combat was all about. Since the mission had been a milk run, I reported with, ‘Hey guys, nothing to it. We just flew there, dropped bombs and came home.’ Two days later, I took my crew on their first mission. Brunswick!

“Our position was lead of the ‘coffin corner’ element of the lead squadron. Everything was fine till the bomb run. Our fighter cover had pulled out and their relief was coming up behind us.

“Suddenly, I saw a trail of smoke way out in front of us. Then there was what appeared to be a swarm of blackbirds coming at us head-on. Despite our training to call out fighters by clock position, my crew said I screamed, ‘Fighters, Fighters, Fighters.’ Those fighters went through us with their cannons blazing like crazy.

“One fighter picked us out and passed close to our left wing. I don’t know if it was an FW 190 or a Me 109, but the top turret gunner, Lightcap, said later that he was blond with a mustache.

“We took six 20-mm hits on the left side. Luckily they were armor-piercing shells. There were two hits in the gas tank between the #2 engine and the fuselage. The #2 engine took a hit that shattered a rocker-arm box and caused a fire as oil poured onto the exhaust. We had to feather that engine. One hit us between the #2 and #1 engine and then continued into the wheel. The last hit was through the tail.

“I managed to pull up on the leader’s wing in time to drop bombs. After our turn from the target, we could see chutes everywhere below us.

“It was not over yet. We were flying over solid clouds and suddenly were caught in a solid box barrage over Hanover. Flak was everywhere. Fortunately, Ed Waldo was wearing a flak vest when the piece of shrapnel came through the windshield. I caught a “dollar’s worth” of Plexiglas in the eyebrows, eyelids, and eyes. At that point, the whole world turned “blood red.” When I could see again, we were clear of the flak.

“However, it still wasn’t over! As we were coming in to land and I was turning into the final approach, the plane ahead of us ground-looped, blocking the runway.

“I turned to make the cross-runway as the engineer called out that the #3 engine red-lined. The co-pilot feathered it. Then it was the #4 engine that redlined and Waldo and I were struggling with the controls to get us down. When the wheels struck the runway, we were surprised to hear what sounded like a million tin cans. We didn’t know that our left tire was shot out. Suddenly, we ground-looped in the grass.

“They later counted 78 flak holes in the ship. Included were holes in both the #3 and #4 oil tanks. We had lost all of our oil while coming home. That was the end of a very close first mission for my crew. This was no milk run.

“After the debriefing, Dr. Allison, the flight surgeon, took me to his clinic and bandaged one eye. He then sent me by ambulance to a hospital, which was located not far from Shipdham

(Wymondham). About 7 p.m. that evening, a doctor put me in a dentist chair and began removing the glass from my face and eyes. All during this procedure, he was showing and lecturing another doctor on his technique. This went on until midnight. I was relieved when it was over and I found out that there was nothing serious. There were six scratches in one eye and seven in the other. I left there with a bandage on one eye.”

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## 9 April 1944

### Airdrome, Tutow, Germany

Very unfavorable weather confronted the 44th's formation, so a recall was issued. Some of the planes had dropped their bombs prior to receiving the recall, however. Very heavy flak and enemy aircraft attacks were experienced, with the 68th Squadron having one aircraft that did not return.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-72858 U, Palmer	PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA	MACR #3851
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned	
PALMER, HIRAM C. ASN 0-729892	Pilot Returned to duty	Novelty, Missouri
STERNBACK, LAWTON L. ASN 0-693572	Co-pilot Returned to duty	New Holstein, Wisconsin
GILLESPIE, JAMES ASN 0-755150	Navigator Returned to duty	Camden, New Jersey
BABICH, ANDREW F. ASN 36225989	Bombardier Returned to duty	Ironwood, Michigan
KRUSE, PAUL J. ASN 35467328	Engineer Remained	Covington, Kentucky
PUTMAN, DAVID C. ASN 15338965	Radio Oper. Returned to duty	Detroit, Michigan
FEINSTEIN, JACK H. ASN 12062017	Ball Turret Returned to duty	Brooklyn, New York
LONG, RAYMOND J. ASN 35678775	RW Gunner Remained	Cheviot, Ohio
DAMICO, RAYMOND J. ASN 33588383	LW Gunner Returned to duty	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
JOHNSON, NORMAN B. ASN 39454377	Tail Turret Returned to duty	Susanville, Oregon

The MACR states that the right wing was damaged, so the plane headed for Sweden at 18,000 feet. All engines apparently were operating, under control. This plane landed at Bulltofta airfield, Sweden, with considerable damage to the right wing and nose section. PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA had completed 29 missions, but only half of her 30th, and proudly displayed 29 pistols, not bombs, on her left nose section.

T/Sgt. Paul J. Kruse stated that, "PISTOL PACKIN' MAMA was not our plane. Oh, we flew her that day, but it was on loan because our aircraft, SHOO SHOO BABY had been shot up on our

previous mission. We had returned to base with over 130 flak holes, and it was out of service for repairs.

“April 9th was Easter Sunday and our crew was assigned to PISTOL PACKIN’ MAMA for this raid over Berlin. Our regular radio operator, Paul Brown, and our bombardier, Lt. Hybarger, were replaced by Sgts. David Putman and Andrew Babich. Later, I learned that Lt. Hybarger was killed on another mission.

*Note: Lt. Hybarger was KIA on the 7 July 1944 mission.*

“We were attacked on our way to the target by the yellow-nosed Me 109s and FW 190s. About the third or fourth pass, we got hit in our right wing. It missed #4 engine, but that big hole in the wing, compounded by the large section of the skin peeled back, caused us to pull 60 inches of mercury on all four of our engines. We also took a hit in the nose area which disabled our nose wheel landing gear.

“We couldn’t keep up with the formation, even with absolute maximum power, so we slowly started dropping back. At the time of the hit, we were near Hamburg, Germany so we headed for Sweden. Several German fighters started chasing us, but they didn’t shoot at us! They could see we were in trouble and headed for Sweden and out of the war.

“We were over Denmark by this time, close to Malmo, Sweden. Before any further German fighter attacks could be made, a group of Swedish fighters, Regiani 2000, came up to protect us by chasing off those German planes. Then they led us to an airfield in Malmo, Sweden.

“We couldn’t get our nose gear down, even though we tried to lower it manually. It was shot up pretty badly. The crew was throwing everything overboard to make it less of a drag on those engines. We couldn’t hold out any longer, so we followed the Swedes to Bulltofta, the no-runway airfield, in Malmo. With our main gear down, nose wheel up, we went in for a crash-landing on that grass field. I was stationed in the bomb bay where I could see our pilot, Lt. Palmer, and the crew was back in the tail section but where we could see each other. After the pilots had landed on the main gears and was slowing down, the four in the tail started moving slowly forward in order to allow the nose to lower slowly, following my hand signals.

“The nose settled down slowly until it started skimming up the grass and dirt. Then it started digging in. Since I was standing in the bomb bay at the edge of the flight deck, I had to lift my feet up to keep the dirt from burying them. That was the most beautiful crash-landing I’ve ever seen or heard about, anytime, any place. We were shaken and very scared, but none of us were injured.

“The Swedes treated us excellently. They explained that since our bomber was in trouble, they took our side in chasing off the German fighters. Nine other U.S. planes landed in Sweden that Easter Sunday.”

Sgt. Kruse went on to relate the crew’s experiences of being interned; sent many photos of 8th AF ships also interned. The Swedes retained the engineers and those familiar with the mechanics of the B-24 to help them in repairing the planes.

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# 11 April 1944

## Bernberg, Germany

For the third straight time, fierce enemy opposition from the air as well as from the ground was experienced by our Group. The specific target was the Junkers Aircraft Assembly Plant, which was bombed with good results. One aircraft did not return, a 506th plane piloted by Lt. John D. Money.

### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-7522 S-Bar, Money	SOUTHERN COMFORT II	MACR #3848
506th Squadron Crew:		
MONEY, JOHN D. ASN 0-740104	Pilot POW	1st Lt. St. Louis, Missouri
STAMOS, ROBERT G. ASN 0-730646	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt. Danville, Illinois
WHEATLY, HAROLD J. ASN 0-675979	Navigator KIA	1st Lt. Jefferson City, Missouri
BLAKE, FOSTER A. ASN 11055810	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Bradford, Vermont
GRAFF, ANDREW C. ASN 37428100	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (B-36-54)	T/Sgt. Geneva, Iowa
WERNICKI, EDWARD A. ASN 32765359	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Margraten (P-10-5)	T/Sgt. Jersey City, New Jersey
HILL, HERBERT S. Jr. ASN 11088586	Ball Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Revere, Massachusetts
YOUNG, DONALD L. ASN 19193283	RW Gunner POW, burned hands	S/Sgt. Topeka, Kansas
KIRSCHNER, WALLACE E. ASN 12155416	LW Gunner POW, repatriated (burns)	S/Sgt. Bronx, New York
ROOP, EUGENE W. N. ASN 14158075	Tail Tur KIA	S/Sgt. Knoxville, Tennessee

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The MACR states that this aircraft went down at 1123 hours. The right bomb bay doors failed to open, so when the bombs were dropped, the right side fragmentation bombs hit the closed doors, immediately setting that area on fire. The ship flew on for awhile, then winged over, breaking in two at the waist section. It went down and exploded. Four bodies came clear of the falling wreckage, but only two chutes were seen to open.

Sgt. Wallace Kirschner, left waist gunner, sent his experiences, "According to my diary, we had flown nine missions prior to this one on 11 April. We were carrying incendiary bombs. Near the target, we were under a barrage of flak, getting set for our bomb run. The bomb bay doors would not open as the tracks were frozen tight. Upon informing Lt. Money, our pilot, that I could not break the ice, we received a direct hit in the bomb bay. The rest is history.

"Sgt. Roop, tail gunner, saw that Sgt. Young's hands were badly burned, took his own parachute and placed it on Sgt. Young and helped him get through the rear camera hatch door. This resulted in Sgt. Roop being without a parachute of his own. I followed Young out the rear hatch, after

removing my oxygen mask because I couldn't get the hose to release from the regulator. With the mask removed, I got 3rd degree burns on my face and right hand due to the fire all around me.

"I was picked up by German soldiers upon landing and was taken to an aid station in Frankfurt. They had converted an Agricultural School into a hospital. The doctors and aids were all part of the Dunkirk Evacuation Force captured – who were a wonderful group of men. Then I was sent to Bad Soden for work on my eyes. Even the doctors there were also from Dunkirk. I was later repatriated and returned to the States on 21 February, 1945. I saw Sgt. Young once after the war."

Lt. Money wrote that, "When the fire erupted in the bomb bay it quickly spread forward, filling the cabin with fire and smoke. I gave the bail out signal, as my co-pilot, Robert Stamos, was already dead from flak wounds. I then contemplated my own escape from that inferno. There was absolutely no way I could get back to the bomb bay, and the top hatch itself was burning. So it would have to be out one of the windows, but they were still intact. While still trying to maintain some control of the craft, I got my feet up, braced my back, and succeeded in kicking out the co-pilot's side window.

"Then I managed to get over Stamos, got hold of his wheel, and continued to hold the plane under control as I worked myself out that window. Soon I was entirely outside the ship, but still holding onto the wheel as I needed to tilt the plane right-wing high, as that #3 prop was still churning the air a very short distance behind me.

"Then I let go – and immediately got clipped on my head by a tip of one of the propeller blades that knocked me out. But the cold air brought me to my senses before I hit the ground and I got my chute open in time. On the ground I found I was not seriously injured, and soon was taken prisoner."

James H. Stevens was part of Capt. Schmidt's crew (K-314 ). He saw Money's aircraft go down and spotted two chutes. He noted that on this mission his aircraft's nose turret was demolished, one engine was knocked out, and one tail section was shot up, but the aircraft returned safely to Shipdham. He wrote: "Lew Karstadt (in the nose turret) was saved by the rather small panel of armored glass. When we all got out of our flight gear at the base later on, we found that Lew had been the only one wounded in the attack. As I recall, it was a flak fragment in his knee."

## 13 April 1944

### Lechfeld, Germany

A twin-engine fighter plant and an adjoining German airfield were attacked visually with good results. One aircraft from the formation was missing, being forced to land in Switzerland.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-100330 L-Bar, Griffith

MACR #4045

*Note: This aircraft's name is not known but it is believed to have had nose art of a flying woman.*

67th Squadron Crew:

Entire crew interned

GRIFFITH, ROCKFORD C.  
ASN 0-531343

Pilot 1st Lt.  
Interned, escaped, returned

Fort Worth,  
Texas

TINSMAN, WILLIAM Jr.  
ASN 0-748844

Co-pilot 1st Lt.  
Interned

Newton,  
Pennsylvania

JACKSON, RALPH B. ASN 0-671364	Navigator Interned	2nd Lt.	New York City, New York
HOERL, NORBERT A. ASN 0-699407	Bombardier Interned	1st Lt.	Houston, Texas
PARRISH, EARL J. ASN 35360264	Engineer Interned	T/Sgt.	Freedom, Indiana
CLARK, FORREST S. ASN 32562885	Radio Oper. Interned, escaped	S/Sgt.	Caldwell, New York
STRUTZ, GEORGE J. ASN 32472766	Ball Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Rochester, New York
HARMON, HAROLD P. ASN 31150094	RW Gunner Interned	S/Sgt.	Gorham, Maine
MARION, SID T. ASN 34303358	LW Gunner Interned	S/Sgt.	Asheboro, North Carolina
BARTAY, FORREST E. ASN 38410822	Tail Turret Interned, escaped, returned	S/Sgt.	Rosenberg, Texas

Pilot of this plane was 1st Lt. Rockford C. Griffith who had made the spectacular one-wheel landing at Shipdham on 18 November, 1943. (Recorded on film!) His MACR states that, "At 1535 hours, #330 L-Bar was seen leaving the formation, headed for Switzerland, under control. All four engines seemed to be OK, and there were friendly fighters for escort." He landed at Dubendorf airfield.

"Rocky" Griffith sent this account, "When we went into Switzerland, it was about the only mission when I never met German fighters or encountered flak!"

"About half way to the target, all of the engines began to overheat. I opened the cowl flaps as far as they would go, and put the fuel mixture controls into full rich position. I knew at that time I was using too much fuel, but had no other choice.

"After we dropped our bombs, I pulled out of formation to check the amount of fuel left. There was just not enough left to get back to England. As I turned toward Switzerland, I lost #2 engine due to low oil pressure. At that time I began to worry about the rest of the engines going out. I don't think I could have made it back to England even if there had been enough fuel.

"As we crossed into Switzerland, the Swiss fighters came up to meet us, but they did not come in too close. I didn't know why until we were hit by three rounds of Swiss flak! I immediately dove down and to the right, but up where I would have been, three more rounds exploded. I believe I landed at Dubendorf without any further trouble.

"After about nine months I escaped into France and was flown back to England."

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## 21 April 1944

### Zwickau, Germany (Mission Recalled)

The 68th Squadron lost an airplane and crew on this date to severe icing conditions. Sgt. Siteman from the Hawkins crew (506th) wrote the following in his diary: "We were briefed at 1000 hours for a mission to Germany. However, when we got to 14,000 feet, ice formed on the plane and we couldn't continue and had to return to base. The entire formation was recalled due to this

weather. That ice gave us a hard time and for while we thought we might have to bail out. We lost 6,000 feet a minute, were in a spin and managed to pull out at only 4,000 feet! It was close, but we made out okay. The whole group returned to the base due to bad weather. No mission or sortie credit. (One 68th Squadron plane did crash, with eight men killed)”

## 68th SQUADRON:

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68th Sq., #41-29418 U, Havens	PAPPY'S CHILLUN	Crashed, ice a factor
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*Note: This aircraft was also known as TURNIP TERMITE. Its nose art was painted by Clayton Hutsell at the 486th Bomb Group at Sudbury, but was transferred to Shipdham before he could put the name of TURNIP TERMITE on it. It was renamed PAPPY'S CHILLUN at the 44th.*

## 68th Squadron Crew:

HAVENS, FORREST C. ASN 0-687031	Pilot Hospitalized at Station #231	2nd Lt.	
DEL GRANDE, LEON L. ASN 0-817399	Co-pilot Injured, severe ankle sprain	2nd Lt.	San Francisco, California
ZAJICEK, JAMES L. ASN 0-698812	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
COLE, EDWARD A. ASN 0-691634	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	El Dorado, Kansas
LAMBERT, LEONARD P. Jr. ASN 18202589	Engineer KIA, buried Cambridge (C-5-17)	Sgt.	Breckenridge, Texas
HOUCHINS, GEORGE B. Jr. ASN 15339517	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Bluefield, West Virginia
EDMONSON, ROGER W. ASN 18218286	Asst. Eng. KIA	S/Sgt.	Avery, Texas
HIGGINS, HARTWELL J. ASN 14094125	Asst. Rad. KIA	Sgt.	Winder, Georgia
WOOD, HAL N. ASN 18113166	Ball Turret KIA	Sgt.	Rogers, Arkansas
TAYLOR, RUSSELL G. ASN 39196030	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Seattle, Washington

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At first it was reported that this aircraft collided with another plane – a B-17. This was found to be in error, as there is another report to the contrary. It states, “It is believed that due to severe icing conditions, this plane stalled, spun, and fell apart. The pilot and co-pilot were the only survivors.

“At five miles northwest of Norwich, and one mile northeast of Pingland Hills, this aircraft was climbing into formation, travelling at 155 to 160 MPH through overcast, in severe icing conditions. When it reached 14,000 feet, the aircraft lurched violently and started swerving to the right. The pilots had no control over the ship as it swerved back to the left, and then started to spin tightly toward the ground. The plane then turned onto its back and the right wing and tail were torn off by the violent maneuvers. The two pilots were thrown into the top of the cockpit, and when the cabin ripped apart, they were thrown clear of the wreckage.

“No definite statement can be made as to the cause of the accident, but it was the opinion of the investigating board that the airplane picked up too much ice, was forced into a stall, and from there into a spin, when it fell apart.”

The aircraft was heavily loaded with eight 1,000 lb. bombs and 2,700 gallons of fuel. Another aircraft and crew (Lt. Dine, 506 Bomb Squadron) experienced the same icing conditions, went into a spin, but finally managed to recover control at 4,000 feet.

The two survivors from this accident, Lt. Havens and his co-pilot Leon Del Grande were taken to the hospital immediately. This was their second mission. Lt. Havens suffered severe injuries when he landed in a tree, fractured his left ankle, and his spine. Lt. Havens spent some time at the 231st Hospital. He did not return to the 44th Bomb Group. Lt. Del Grande injured his ankle when he landed, apparently quite seriously. He flew no more missions for the 44th, was transferred to the 70th RCD on 10 December 1944 for transfer back to the United States. However it appears that Lt. Del Grande recovered, was transferred to the 93rd BG, and completed his tour with them.

On April 21, 2001, the owner of the property where the plane crashed conducted a ceremony to honor the memories of the eight airmen who died there. It was 57 years to the day that they crashed. A memorial was also dedicated at the site on which the names of the entire crew are listed. It was Jo Cottingham, recreation manager for Anglian Water, who made the decision to provide the memorial at this crash site, and was instrumental in locating next of kin of the men who died there.

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## 27 April 1944

### Moyenneville, France

This day was the first of the double-header days for the Group, with two separate missions being flown. One plane was lost on the first mission due to the moderate to intense, accurate flak, which hit Lt. Clarey's aircraft.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #41-29467 X-Bar, Clarey	MACR #4257
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#### 67th Squadron Crew:

CLAREY, HOWARD A. Jr. ASN 0-676748	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Yardley, Pennsylvania
RHODES, CARL E. ASN 0-747318	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Birmingham, Alabama
FORREST, GEORGE W. ASN 0-695641	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Upper Darby, Pennsylvania
HINKLE, GLENN E. ASN 0-752855	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Burlingame, California
SHIRLEY, RAYMOND ASN 15081820	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Lexington, Kentucky
CHAGNON, PAUL L. ASN 11116914	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Salem, Massachusetts
LYTLE, LESLIE L. ASN 39328109	Nose Turret KIA, buried Normandy (B-5-17)	Sgt.	Portland, Oregon



RIEGER, MARTIN A. ASN 32414057	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	New York City, New York
PHILLIPS, ALLEN W. ASN 32612831	LW Gunner KIA, buried Normandy (C-14-32)	S/Sgt.	Richmond Hill, Queens, N.Y.
YOUSE, CHARLES M. ASN 33498702	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Sunbury, Pennsylvania

The MACR states that aircraft #467 was observed to receive a direct hit by flak in its #3 and #4 engines. The right wing fell off and the aircraft tipped on its left wing – started down in a tight spiral. It soon became enveloped in flames and then exploded. No chutes were seen.

Radio operator Paul Chagnon was the first man to escape from the falling aircraft, followed by the engineer, Sgt. Raymond Shirley. The pilot, Lt. Howard A. Clarey, Jr. also managed to free himself from the doomed ship but his parachute did not open, or did not have time to open. It could have been that he was knocked out by the explosion and never regained consciousness, but the two men who survived to become POWs did not know for sure.

This was Lt. Clarey's 28th mission, having flown all previous missions as a co-pilot for Lt. McCormick. This was his first mission with a new crew, which was on its fifth mission.

In a letter dated December 4, 1992, Ray Shirley wrote: "At briefing that morning we had been told that there was one battery of four guns at the target. We were on the bomb run. Paul Chagnon, radio operator, was on the catwalk holding the bomb bay doors open, I was in the top turret. Immediately after dropping our bombs, we took a direct hit just outboard of #3 engine and lost the wing from there out. I saw it start spinning like a seed pod falling from a tree in the fall season.

"I was thrown forward in the turret as the aircraft started spinning to the right and I started coming out of the turret during which I saw Chagnon bailing out from the catwalk with my chest chute. Someone pulled the plane out briefly and then we started spinning again to the left. I managed to get Chagnon's chute from his position, got it on and went to the catwalk to bail out. When I bailed out, Lt. Clarey was on the catwalk to bail out when I left the ship. I finally found the ripcord and started my descent slipping the chute on the way down and ending up with a badly sprained right ankle upon landing. I took up bowling after the war to strengthen it up.

"After getting to the ground, Chagnon came to help me and French civilians were trying to help us. They carried our chutes off and, of course, were speaking French. Chagnon had been born in Canada and had been brought up on French until they moved to the U.S. when he was six or seven years old. But that day he didn't remember one word of French so the civilian efforts were of no avail. Anyway, Chagnon was helping me. Then the French abandoned us as the German military began to arrive at the scene.

"Chagnon and I approached a barn, which we hoped to get into and hide. As we rounded one corner of the barn, the Germans came around the barn corner at the opposite end with their little 'burp guns' and that was it. They put us into a small truck, the bed portion had a cover on it, and inside the truck was Lt. Clarey's body. His chute had failed to open. We saw no other bodies other than that of Lt. Clarey.

"The Germans took us to a building with an underground bunker where we stayed one or two nights, then through Paris to Dulag Luft and from there to Stalag Luft VI via the 40 or eight rail

cars. We were subsequently evacuated from Luft VI to Luft IV via that damned freighter down the Baltic. From IV, I was shipped to Luft I, again on a 40 or eight-rail car and Chagnon wound up on one of those forced marches as the Germans fled from the approaching Russians. The Germans abandoned us at Luft I just a few hours before the Russians arrived. We were eventually evacuated to Camp Lucky Strike in France.”

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## 29 April 1944

### Berlin, Germany

Specific target was the underground railway in the heart of Berlin. Our formation of 21 aircraft encountered moderate to intense flak and from 30 to 50 enemy aircraft sustaining their attacks from Berlin back to Holland, most of this time unescorted. Three of our aircraft did not return. Squadron losses were as follows: one each by the 67th, 68th and 506th.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #100279 I-Bar, Schuyler	TUFFY		MACR #4464
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew POW		
SCHUYLER, KEITH C. ASN 0-808597	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Berwick, Pennsylvania
EMERSON, JOHN F. ASN 0-818847	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Santa Monica, California
RAUSCHER, DALE E. ASN 0-678774	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Goodland, Kansas
DAVIS, JAY LARRY ASN 0-692481	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Cleveland, Ohio
SANDERS, WILLIAM L. ASN 36634767	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Karnak, Illinois
ROWLAND, LEONARD A. ASN 37495062	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Portland, Oregon
REICHERT, WALTER E. ASN 19130088	Ball Turret POW	Sgt.	Farragut, Idaho
COX, GEORGE G. ASN 15336328	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Louisa, Kentucky
RENFRO, GEORGE N. ASN 38426809	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Handley, Texas
SCHOW, HARRY J. ASN 36032490	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Austin, Minnesota

2nd Lt. Schuyler was the pilot of TUFFY. His navigator, Dale E. Rauscher relates his experiences, “Our aircraft was under control as we dropped behind the formation. We had been badly damaged by flak and we were unable to keep up with the formation. We were doing okay until about ten or twelve FW 190s spotted us and came in at us head-on. Their first pass hit us pretty badly, although no one was killed or wounded.

“There was cloud cover at about 5,000 feet, so Schuyler put the nose down and we headed for the clouds. I think only one enemy aircraft followed us, and he kept coming in on us each time we

came out of cloud cover. We had iced up and had to come out of the clouds to try to get rid of a little ice buildup. We played hide and seek in the clouds for awhile, but finally ran out of clouds.

“Our gun stations were out of ammunition, fuel tanks had been hit and we had two fires in the tail section, so we were told to bail out. We had about fifteen minutes of fuel left when we finally abandoned ship. As we had been flying all over the sky and in every direction while trying to shake off those fighters, I was not positive where we were, but we were about forty or fifty miles east of the Zuider Zee. We bailed out safely and were all captured a short time later.”

The plane crashed at 1400 hours, 10 miles east of Holland at Tilloy-Floriville, County of Meppen.

Lt. Keith C. Schuyler, pilot, has written a book of his wartime experiences titled “Elusive Horizons” and gave permission to include some of his account of that day. “Berlin was always a rough one. This was a symbol of Germany’s might. There were still plenty of German fliers willing to die for Berlin for ideological reasons. There were plenty more who had lost their grasp on symbols but flew and fought us in exquisite machines that were manufactured out of the best parts available.

“We were told that we could expect heavy fighter opposition. The Luftwaffe had been unusually quiet for the past week, and we expected plenty of trouble today. ‘You will have fighter cover much of the way, but you know they can’t stick around long,’ we were told.

“Some fighters were overhead, friendly fellows cutting contrails back and forth in a protective web that made you feel good. Then Larry Davis, bombardier, cut in on the interphone, ‘Fighters! A whole swarm of them!’ I didn’t see them at once. Larry pinpointed them, “Straight ahead, low at twelve o’clock!”

“Then I saw them ... and took a deep breath. Coming up at us like a swarm of bees was a literal swarm of at least forty German fighters. And they were headed directly at our formation! Like specks at first, in almost an instant they materialized into wings and engines.

“Then there was a hellish roar as everything became a confusion of sound and motion. Like entering a tunnel with the windows open on a train – dust, noise, and debris became indistinguishable. Right over my windshield a German fighter came apart in a glimpse of flame and junk. That was Larry’s.

“A B-24 that had been lagging at seven o’clock, drew in close at five o’clock just as a German came through. The fighter smashed head on into the big one right at the nose turret and both planes exploded in a ball of flame. Then it was over. For us.

“Somehow, after you have dropped your bombs, you get the feeling that everything is all right. If your airplane is working as it should, it becomes more a matter of whether you have enough fuel for the trip back. At least that is the feeling you have. But deep down inside you know it is not over. This is not a game. They want to punish you for what you did if they can. So they try.

“Somehow our lead plane took us over Brandenburg on the way out, so the Germans would now get another crack at us with their flak guns. Although it was heavy, we seemed to be getting by without incident. Then I noticed four bursts off our left wing, maybe a hundred yards out, and just below our level. Then four more, closer. Fascinated, I watched as four more burst just ahead of and below our left wing, possibly 30 yards away. I didn’t see the next bursts – but I heard

them. And our ship shook to the concussions. Immediately, #2 prop ran away. The torque, as the propeller screamed up to over 3,000 rpm, dragged at our wing, and I leaned into the rudder, then hit the feathering button. We were hurt again – badly.

“A hole in #2 cowlings gave visual evidence that we had caught plenty from the last volley of flak, the manifold pressure on #4 was down badly. The supercharger had probably been knocked out. Although the engine was running smoothly, it would not do much more than carry its own weight at over 20,000 feet.

“Normally, we wouldn’t have too much to worry about, but we were still a long way from home. The disruption in power had dropped us back behind the formation and there was no chance of catching up. I personally called the lead ship. ‘Red leader, we’ve got some problems back here. Can you slow down a little?’

‘We’ll try,’ the answer came back, ‘but we can’t cut it back much.’

“But it soon became evident that we couldn’t keep up. We kept dropping back – slowly, inexorably ... If we were hit in the wings as much as I feared, there was a good chance that we would be losing fuel from the wing tanks. I called Sanders, our engineer, who climbed down out of his turret to check the gas supply. His report confirmed my suspicions. There was a serious imbalance in the gasoline tanks to indicate that we were losing some somewhere. I asked Rauscher, navigator, for our estimated time of arrival in England and his fast mental calculations convinced me that we were not going to make it home. We’d be lucky to stretch our glide to make the North Sea. But I kept this news away from the crew.

“Again it was Larry who alerted us to fighters, ‘Off to the left. They are hitting the group off to the left.’ There were eight of them! And had they elected to come at us singly, subsequent events might have been different. But they came straight on, strung out wing to wing, like a shallow string of beads. FW 190 they were! And I had only an instant to make a decision of how to deal with them.

“Get ready, I called. I, too, got ready. I didn’t make my move until I saw the leading edges of the FW’s start to smoke and yellow balls begin to pop around out wings. Then I dove straight for the middle of the string of beads! Either they would get out of the way or we would take a couple of them with us. They scattered!

“Deliberately, I held the nose of the bomber as straight down as I could manage. But she was trimmed for level flight and wanted to come out of the dive. Jack Emerson saw my quivering arms and added his strength to keep the nose down. I wanted those fighters to think they had us. The strategy worked on five out of the six remaining, but that one was destined to give us more trouble than all of the others combined. He did not believe us.

“I heard Jack shout under his oxygen mask and I felt the controls wrenched from me for an instant. Jack had seen him coming from his side and he rolled the bomber into the attack. Tracers cut by the left side of the fuselage as the tortured Lib responded. We kept the pressure on the elevators and the nose toward the ground as I watched the air speed pass the red line. Then it touched 290, which gave us somewhere around 400 mph at our altitude. Below us I could see a solid cloud cover and it was our only refuge. But in one of the frequent paradoxes of war, to gain them was also our undoing. Our precious altitude, needed to get us somewhere near home, was being used up in a desperate effort to escape the more obvious danger from the fighters.”

The cat and mouse drama continued for a considerable time, including the added problem of icing, and then the clouds ran out. The tail gunner, Schow, later told Lt. Schuyler, "The fighter came in at 5 o'clock. I started firing but the tracers bounced right off him. And then, when I was just pressing triggers, nothing was happening. It was only an instant before I could find the extent of damage. A 20 mm had hit us in the right elevator. It blew my hydraulic unit onto the floor, clipped off my left gun, cut my mike cord about an inch and a half from my throat, and generally took my plexiglass.

"I tried to fire my right gun manually, but it, too, was ruined. So I got out of the turret, went to the waist, where another fire had started, put on my chute and told Sgt. Cox to relay the news to the pilot, but Cox had already done that." Both men then attempted to extinguish the two fires, waist and turret.

"With only 50 gallons of fuel left, two fires and only one gun left firing, the time had come. We were close to being over Holland – possibly 40 miles away from the Zuider Zee. "I started a 180-degree turn. Let her blow in Germany! A quick glance back through the fuselage – it was empty. Flicked on the aileron switch of the automatic pilot, always set for emergency, rose hurriedly from my seat; then onto the catwalk in the bomb bay.

"As I tumbled below and away from our airplane, I was determined to delay the opening of my parachute. And I almost waited too long! Later, I was told our ship blew all to hell." All ten men survived to become POWs.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-29471 X, Sweigart

MACR #4472

#### 68th Squadron Crew:

SWEIGART, GLENN H. ASN 0-747360	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Fort Thomas, Kentucky
GREENE, FLOYD H. Jr. ASN 0-812577	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Salt Lake City, Utah
TUROC, JOHN W. ASN 0-695992	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Cleveland, Ohio
ROBERTS, GILMAN N. ASN 0-688402	Bombardier KIA, buried Ardennes (A-41-31)	1st Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
McWHORTER, LAMER ASN 34442753	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (B-36-56)	S/Sgt.	La Grange, Georgia
LE VAKE, JOHN W. ASN 19186283	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Walnut Creek, California
NABER, JULIUS V. ASN 37263649	Ball Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (B-24-13)	S/Sgt.	Marshall, Minnesota
TILLER, HOMER M. ASN 38101171	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (D-11-41)	Sgt.	Colorado City, Texas
KOEHLER, HAROLD F. ASN 15019186	LW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (B-40-56)	S/Sgt.	Canton, Ohio
NOME, ALBERT A. ASN 35544549	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (A-32-32)	Sgt.	Mishawaka, Indiana

The pilot on the 68th Squadron aircraft lost on the 29th was 2nd Lt. Glenn H. Sweigart. The MACR states that at 1101 hours, aircraft #471 was hit by enemy aircraft, peeled off to the left, #3 engine was on fire and spreading to the fuselage. Two men bailed out before it went into a spin and then exploded.

Mrs. Mary E. Turocy, widow of Lt. John W. Turocy, navigator on this airplane, sent this information "It was their eighth mission when their B-24 was hit by the Germany fighter and exploded. Two crew members were blown out with the debris and when John regained consciousness, he was falling through space. He jerked his ripcord and the shock pulled his shoes off. He threw his gun away, and tore up what papers he was carrying as he was descending. When he landed bare-footed in a little Germany town, the villagers surrounded him with pitchforks until German soldiers came and dragged him off to jail, bleeding feet and all. He was in several POW camps, one of which was Stalag 13.

"Being an officer, he was given the privilege of using their library and John took this opportunity to study theory – he played classical violin – and to occupy his mind, he translated from German to English copious notes. When John was liberated, he weighed just 110 pounds!

The pilot, Lt. Sweigart, added, "Our call was Smokey Blu Joe, X for X-ray. Somewhere over Germany we lost all the oil pressure on #3 engine and had to drop out of formation because the prop flattened out on us. I couldn't hold altitude or air speed. So we finally maintained altitude at 9500 feet and 105 mph, skidding sideways against the prop with near full rudder and still making a long arc, which we corrected occasionally by a circle. We had good cloud cover and limped along until, I think, it was Nuremburg where the clouds gave way.

"Then all hell broke loose! I had told the crew that if anyone wanted to leave, they could jump at any time. I had two men I didn't know, replacing Gwin and Tony (Goodman). I told them if we got hit and lost intercom to go, cause I'd go if we got hit or went below 7500 feet. I believe that our radioman, Sgt LaVake, took off.

*Note: The two men that Sweigart didn't know were Julius Naber and Harold Koehler. Naber was from the 66th Squadron and had flown 22 missions previously. Koehler had joined the 68th Squadron on 31 January 1944 with the Dyer crew. He had flown 15 prior missions.*

"When we got hit, it took the putt-putt right out of the side of the aircraft, and split the control pedestal wide open and knocked out all controls as well as the intercom. Our bombardier, Gil Roberts, was begging for us to all go as he would not go alone. Turocy showed me black and blue fingerprints on his shoulder where Gil was hanging onto him when we were hit. The explosion blew Turocy out the nose wheel and Gil into the front of the airplane and killed him. I was told about Gil's position at prisoner interrogation.

"McWhorter, my engineer, tried to get to the back of the plane to help the fellows in the back. He was blown off the catwalk by another hit, I think. Greene (co-pilot) then left, and I hung up my mike and earphones, looked at Greene's cigarettes and lighter – for some reason I left them, thinking he'd be back after them.

"The aircraft crashed and burned after a long, slow, even half circle when anyone in it could have and should have bailed out. At interrogation, they kept asking me why I had only a six man crew, so I know that some of my men got out but they didn't live. Turocy, Greene and I were together. I saw who I thought was McWhorter lying in a field as I came down, and Gil Roberts was still in

the plane. That makes five that I can account for. And they had pictures of Sgts. Nome and Tiller – that’s seven.

“I do know that I bailed out without my leg straps buckled and hung myself by the neck. When I tried to take the pressure off by swinging my feet into the shrouds, I skidded back and forth across the sky. I think that’s why I survived because I could hear those 88 mms going off nearby all the way to the ground and couldn’t see anything else in the sky but me for a target!

“I came down in the middle of a plowed field and about 3,000 people. I spoke enough German to get myself into the hands of a little infantry corporal, who took me to his Captain and eventually to the airdrome.

“As far as the MACR account, it must be about another aircraft because we were at least an hour and a half out of formation and completely alone when we were shot down. Turocy, Greene and I were together in POW camps at Sagan, Nuremburg to Moosburg, until liberated.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-29513 Z-Bar, Hruby			Ditched near English coast
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew rescued		
HRUBY, RICHARD J. ASN 0-682866	Pilot Rescued	2nd Lt.	Mt. Holly, New Jersey
SMITH, THOMAS L. ASN T-61379	Co-pilot Rescued	Flt Of.	Okarche, Oklahoma
ROSENBURG, EDWIN H. ASN 0-684989	Navigator Rescued	2nd Lt.	
ARTHUR, WILLIAM D. ASN 0-690535	Bombardier Rescued	2nd Lt.	
CLARK, CLETUS C. ASN 17157054	Engineer Rescued	S/Sgt.	Canova, South Dakota
BLANCHARD, EUCLID F. ASN 11083941	Radio Oper. Rescued	S/Sgt.	Belmont, New Hampshire
FOSTER, EVERETTE E. ASN 37499715	Ball Turret Rescued	Sgt.	Lowery City, Missouri
BARTLEY, FOUNT B. ASN 37284336	RW Gunner Rescued	Sgt.	Indiahoma, Oklahoma
BARTLEY, THOMAS L. ASN 37284340	LW Gunner Rescued	Sgt.	Indiahoma, Oklahoma
PETKOFF, ROBERT ASN 37284310	Tail Turret Rescued	S/Sgt.	Carnegie, Oklahoma

*Note: Three of these men must have enlisted together from Oklahoma – both Bartleys and Petkoff, per serial numbers.*

This 506th Squadron aircraft and crew was not listed on the 44th Bomb Group’s Battle Casualties due to a technicality of reporting – they ditched and all survived! It appears to be appropriate to include them here.

2nd Lt. Richard J. Hruby was the pilot of aircraft #513 and was returning from bombing the Friedrichstrauss Railroad Station in Berlin, 29 April, 1944. The Group had experienced heavy and intense anti-aircraft fire and damaging attacks by many enemy aircraft.

In the target area, Lt. Hruby's plane was damaged by flak and it is believed this caused a leak in either the main gas tanks or gas lines. The prop-governor stuck at 2500 rpm, and #2 engine was surging as much as 600 rpm. Furthermore, the formation was nearly 45 minutes late on the flight plan, prior to reaching the enemy coast on the way out.

Lt. Hruby, believing that his fuel supply must be low, asked his engineer, Sgt. Clark, to check the amount remaining in the tanks. Despite the fact that the engineer reported all gauges registering nearly empty upon leaving the Dutch coast, Lt. Hruby was determined to complete the mission and bring his aircraft and crew back. He cut back his RPM on all four engines, instructed his crew to throw out all possible equipment, and told the engineer to switch all engines to crossfeed fuel to keep all four engines running as long as possible. He knew that this would mean losing all engines at once with little or no notice, but worth the gamble.

The men then assumed their ditching positions while they tried to call air-sea rescue service, but were unable to transmit due to a malfunctioning of VHF radio equipment.

Flying at 5500 feet and with the English coast barely in view, all four engines quit! The pilots lowered one-half flaps and put their plane into a dive to maintain airspeed. As they neared the surface of the sea, Lt. Hruby leveled off and after skimming off one swell, settled down into the next one in a slightly nose-high position. The nose of the aircraft buried itself for approximately 30 seconds and then the plane came to rest on the surface – floating and intact.

So skillfully did the pilots hit the water that not only was the plane not visibly damaged, but the plexiglass in the nose turret remained unbroken – and no member of the crew was injured! The ditching belt proved very successful.

The crew then exited the upper hatch and released the two life rafts, but found one of them unserviceable and the other would only partially inflate. The plane slowly sank and was gone in approximately 15 minutes. One man got into the raft, while the others clung to the ropes and remained in the water at least half an hour until picked up, luckily, by a British minesweeper.

This remarkable ditching is described in great detail in the following U.S. military document:

“The ditching of a B-24H aircraft, serial number 41-29513, of the 44th Bombardment Group, occurred at 1505 hours, 29 April 1944, at approximately 52° 35' N, 02° 00' E, about 40 miles NE of Cromer. This is the first USSTAF incident involving a B-24 where a complete crew of ten was saved.

“*Events preceding ditching:* The aircraft was returning from an operational mission. At an altitude of 5,500 feet it was definitely decided that there would be insufficient gas to reach land. The pilot immediately lowered 20 degrees of flaps and set the trim tabs for a glide of approximately 125 mph. In the meantime, the crew was notified by interphone that they were going to ditch, and orders were given to jettison excess equipment. The formation leader was contacted on VHF ‘A’ channel and informed of the situation, which was acknowledged, then contact with U.S. Air/Sea Rescue Station was tried without success.



“The radio operator had been operating the top turret guns, pinch hitting for the engineer while he was transferring fuel. On order ‘prepare for ditching,’ he started to set up his liaison set to send a distress message, but the trailing antenna was clipped off by a jettisoned flak suit. However, one SOS was sent using the fixed aerial, and IFF toggle switch was turned to the emergency position.

“The bombardier, navigator, radio operator, and engineer jettisoned every piece of equipment that was loose or could be pried loose, such as flak suits, tuning units, A-3 bags, and frequency meters. The co-pilot put on his steel helmet and assisted the pilot on with his helmet. In the waist section, the gunners threw out waist guns, ammunition, and some radio equipment. The ditching belt was then connected in the waist position. The belt later proved very efficient in protecting the men from the impact that occurred when contact was made with the water.

“At approximately 1,000 feet, the co-pilot informed the crew on the interphone to take their ditching stations. In the waist three gunners sat with their backs to the ditching belt, and one of them sat between the legs of another. On the flight deck, the bombardier sat with his back against the pilot’s armor plating, with the navigator between his legs. The radio operator’s station was behind the pilot’s armor plate next to the bombardier, but because of the fire extinguisher holder, he was unable to get a good back rest. At 200 feet, the engineer was still endeavoring to close the bomb bay doors, but a flak suit was hanging across the catwalk just forward of the aft bomb bay, leaving the doors open about eight inches on each side. The engineer had just reached the flight deck and closed the hatch to the bomb bay when the aircraft hit the water. He had not fully assumed his ditching station when the aircraft landed.

“Another attempt was made to contact the Air/Sea Rescue Station on VHF just before ditching in a last-minute try to obtain a fix.

“*Touchdown:* When the flattening out was started, the pilot noticed that the air speed was about 120 mph, though that was the last time he noticed the instrument panel until after the landing impact. The aircraft made contact with the nose slightly up in a normal landing attitude using 20 degrees flaps. The approach was made directly into the swell, and the aircraft landed on the upslope of a crest. Only one moderate impact was noticed. The co-pilot was thrown against the glass, but was protected by his tin helmet. The co-pilot’s seat was more forward than the pilot’s, though the pilot also recalls hitting the glass.

“*Exit from the aircraft:* The water started rushing in through the nose, and filled up the cockpit in a matter of seconds. The cabin was completely under water within 30 seconds. The pilot and co-pilot tried to get out of the escape hatch, but the other crew members were still climbing out the exit. The pilot had on his steel helmet and he tried ramming his head through the top to get some air. He was unsuccessful because glass and metal structure were still intact, and he could not break clear. The airplane then settled to a level position, and the crew on the flight deck had about four or five inches at the top of the compartment to breathe.

“On the flight deck the jolt was not felt to any extent except by the radio operator, who received a bruise from the fire extinguisher holder, and the engineer, who received a leg bruise from the radio seat.

“The navigator was the first one out of the top hatch, followed closely by the engineer, bombardier, radio operator, pilot, and co-pilot.

“In the waist, on impact, the ditching belt absorbed the shock, though the men were lifted off the floor, but the belt prevented them from being thrown forward into the ball turret. The water filled the waist to about two inches above the waist windows. The gunners made their exit through the waist windows, taking with them the emergency equipment. They joined the other crew members on the top of the aircraft.

“The navigator pulled the life raft release handles, but both rafts failed to inflate. He then pulled a raft from the compartment and pulled the inflation cord, which broke off inside the plastic cover and could not be reached. The cord on the other raft was then jerked, and this also broke off. The co-pilot, however, was able to get a grip on it and released the CO<sub>2</sub> to inflate the raft, which, only inflated halfway. Again, every effort was made without success to inflate the other raft.

“*Events preceding rescue:* The navigator, engineer, radio operator, ball gunner, and a waist gunner occupied the half-inflated dinghy on the right side of the plane, while the bombardier, co-pilot, and pilot dragged the uninflated raft around to the left side as the aircraft started its final dive under the sea. The aircraft floated for approximately 15 minutes before it began to settle slowly. Gradually, it sunk nose first.

“When the right waist gunner made his exit from the airplane, he started after the emergency equipment, which had floated away. Before he could retrieve it, he had drifted quite a distance from the aircraft, and was unable to get back to the rafts. The crew members in the dinghy paddled over to the rest of the crew, and together they started after the right waist gunner. It soon became apparent that they would be unable to reach him because the current was taking him away at a faster rate than they could follow with five men hanging on the side of the life raft. They could only see him when they were both on the crest of a swell, and there were times when they did not see him for several minutes. The navigator looked through the accessories of both rafts trying to find a pump to inflate the rafts, but without success. It was then decided they could hang on until the rescue craft arrived.

“The crew had been in the water about 40 minutes when the minesweeper “Catsmuir” pulled alongside and fished them out of the water. A lifeboat was lowered for the waist gunner, who was about 200 yards away.

“*Other points of interest:* Inspection of the B-24 after exit revealed a small fracture of the skin just forward of the waist windows. It was about three inches wide, and seemed to have ripped the rivets from about six inches behind the tear. The rip was located about a foot to the left of the top center of the fuselage. One main wheel was floating off to the right, slightly behind the aircraft. The Plexiglas on the nose turret appeared to be in good condition. One oxygen bottle was thrown loose, and was floating in front of the plane. The tail section and tail turret were still in good condition.

“*Conclusions:* This incident demonstrates that a B-24 aircraft can be ditched successfully provided the crew is adequately trained. However, a few mistakes were made, and are emphasized below:

“The effectiveness of the liaison set was reduced because it was necessary to use the fixed aerial for transmitting rather than the trailing antenna which was broken off by equipment jettisoned by the crew.

“The emergency kits should not have been released without a tie rope to keep them from washing away.

“The flight engineer should have assume his ditching station sooner and all members should have used padding to help absorb the shocks, particularly the radio operator over the fire extinguisher holder.

“The malfunction of the life rafts, something over which the crew has little, if any, control, could have been disastrous had the crew not been rescued quickly. This should be adequate proof of the care that must be exercised when packing and inspecting all life raft installations.”

## 8 May 1944

### Brunswick, Germany

There was an operational mission to Brunswick this day, and all of the aircraft returned safely. But the 66th Squadron lost an aircraft and two crewmen killed in an apparent unrelated incident.

66th SQUADRON:

The 66th Squadron had had a tremendous turn over in personnel due to their being established as a Pathfinder (PFF) Squadron. One of the new crews being transferred into the 66th Squadron was a PFF aircraft #41-28795 and crew from the 466th Bomb Group. 1st pilot was Lt. Forest M. Musgrave. On this date, this crew was performing a practice flight at 23,000 feet, while on their way to Shipdham with a partial crew. They did this to gain experience and were making a practice run using their PFF equipment in the vicinity of Great Yarmouth.

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-28795, Musgrave	Shot down, crashed
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66th Squadron Crew:

MUSGRAVE, FOREST M. ASN 0-677848	Pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (F-12-13)	1st Lt.	Tampa, Florida
RICE, RODERICK F. ASN 0-686494	Co-pilot Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Crystal River, Florida
BRANCH, WELDON P. ASN 0-759792	Navigator Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Atlanta, Georgia
DOVEY, ARNOLD J. ASN 0-808009	Nav-Radar Parachuted, injured spine, hospitalized	2nd Lt.	Newport Beach, California
PERMAR, DONALD S. ASN 0-671173	Bombardier Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Michigan City, Indiana
ROSS, ARTHUR B. ASN 0-694950	Bombardier Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Whittier, California
RUSSELL, GEORGE E. ASN 15330700	Engineer Parachuted	T/Sgt.	San Diego, California
CARGILL, LAWRENCE E. ASN 37464353	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Tabor, Iowa

Sgt. George Russell, engineer, states, “We took off about 1130 hours to go along the coast and practice bombing runs, using the new Radar equipment. This was the reason for the two

bombardiers. We climbed to 23,500 feet, leveled off at this altitude for a simulated run on Yarmouth. Just as Lt. Musgrave throttled back, there was an explosion – and then another!

“The plane started into a dive which Musgrave and Rice both fought to correct. They succeeded, but it was very difficult to control. During these few seconds, I took off my oxygen mask and went in between the two pilots to see what was happening. The elevator control was turned full up and the auto pilot seemed to be still working. I pulled the emergency release but this did not seem to help. Musgrave and Rice were both struggling to regain control, but could not. Rice looked at Musgrave, and then both looked at me as if to say, ‘What is wrong?’ None of us knew. I had no ear phones on with which to talk with them at that time.

“I turned to leave them, and in getting down from the flight deck, I saw and felt that we were in a tight spiral to the right. I stepped on someone’s feet – and drew back onto the flight deck to let whoever this was to get ahead of me and jump. This person did jump and Rice, being right behind me at this time, took his foot and nudged me as if to say, ‘What are you waiting for?’ I then stepped down onto the catwalk and jumped – and waited for a while to pull my chute.

“Branch and I landed close to each other – I in a pasture and he in a creek. On the way down, I could see the plane burning in the distance. Both Lt. Musgrave and T/Sgt. Cargill were killed, and Cargill did not get free of the plane.

“This was the first time this plane had been flown at high altitude. I have never known conclusively, but have suspected that we had been attacked by a German fighter that had come from out of nowhere. We never even saw the fighter coming. Even if we had, we had no guns or ammunition to protect ourselves. This flight was the first with our crew for Dovey, Branch and Ross. Ross and Dovey never flew with us again.”

The aircraft came down near Halvergate, which is located between Acle and Yarmouth. The survivors were sent to a Rest Home on 12 May to help forget this experience.

The co-pilot, Lt. Rice, added, “We flew that day with a skeleton crew that had no gunners – our purpose was to test the new Pathfinder equipment, two navigators and two bombardiers. It was near noon when suddenly two sharp thuds jarred the plane and knocked it into a steep right wing-down attitude. The auto pilot was ineffective, so it was disengaged with the thought that maybe it was damage to that instrument that caused this sudden disruption.

“It required extreme effort by both of us to bring that wing up again. Then it went into a steep dive. Again, it took extreme effort to correct, but it didn’t stop there. The nose kept rising to an acute climb attitude. Manipulation of throttles and trim tabs were of no consequence, so it was at this point that the decision was made: This equipment is completely out of control. We still have a good margin of altitude. We’d better evacuate while we can.

“Permar and Ross were in the nose section and escaped via the nose wheel hatch. Russell, Branch and Dovey were on the flight deck and went out the bomb bay, followed shortly by us two pilots. It was assumed that Cargill was at or near his station located in front of the waist position. He was the only one who did not get out and no one knows why. He may have been hit for all we know. Musgrave got out behind me but his parachute ripcord was still in place when he was found. Again, no one knows why.

“The plane went down in a spin and burned. Typically, very few minutes elapsed between the time of the attack and the plane’s impact with the ground. No one reported having seen or heard anything other than the two explosions so there was no eye-witness among the surviving occupants of the plane, but it is my firm belief that we were victim of an invading aircraft that had shadowed the bomber formations returning from that day’s bombing mission and had spotted an easy target.”

The records at Acle, near the crash site, shows that this aircraft, in fact, was shot down. Official records show that they found five 20-mm holes in the plane which had burned after crashing and not much was left for further examination.

Arnold Dovey was injured as he departed the airplane hit something as he went out that tore his parachute and his left side. The parachute did not open properly so was again injured when he hit the ground. He spent considerable time in the hospital. The pilot, Musgrave, was the last to leave the stricken ship, but he, too, apparently struck some part of the airplane that knocked him out so he never pulled his ripcord.

The Civil Defense records state: “Plane crashed at 12:20, Halvergate Marsh. Police, National Fire Service and USAAF informed. Ambulance sent from Acle. Two dead, one injured and two unhurt.”

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## 9 May 1944

### St. Trond/Brustrem Airfield, Belgium

This target was selected at the request of the RAF who had encountered night fighters in quantity operating from this base. Bombing results were excellent. However, one 68th Squadron aircraft had a pre-mature explosion of bombs just beneath the ship while over the target.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-100110 P, Larson	NORTHERN LASS		(Salvaged)
68th Squadron Crew:			
LARSON, ARNOLD V. ASN 0-684358	Pilot Returned	1st Lt.	Billings, Montana
WILSON, JAMES A. ASN 0-690017	Co-pilot Returned, bailed out over England	2nd Lt.	Cushing, Oklahoma
WEBER, ROBERT J. ASN 0-690514	Navigator Returned, bailed out over England	2nd Lt.	Elm Grove, Wisconsin
MOYLE, GEORGE B. ASN 0-752346	Bombardier POW, blown out over target	2nd Lt.	Saxton, Pennsylvania
KING, GERALD K. ASN 14058048	Engineer Returned	T/Sgt.	Douglas, Georgia
KELLY, ABSOLAM H. ASN 15336171	Radio Oper. POW, bailed out over target	T/Sgt.	Austin, Indiana
BURKS, MILO B. ASN 37409588	Ball Turret POW, bailed out over target	S/Sgt.	Carroll, Missouri
HOM, JIM Y. ASN 12188925	Nose Turret Returned	S/Sgt.	New York City, New York

FERGUSON, REGINALD L. ASN 13063662	RW Gunner Blown out by explosions, evaded, returned	S/Sgt.	Emporia, Virginia
MANNING, FRANK A. Jr. ASN 17037062	LW Gunner POW, bailed out over target	S/Sgt.	Winnebago, Minnesota

At 0956 hours, the bombs of Lt. Larson's ship prematurely exploded directly below the ship. The bomb bay area caught fire, and an engine went out as a result of the explosions, probably damaged by shrapnel. Five crew members bailed out of the ship, the remaining crew extinguished the flames, and Lt. Larson flew his aircraft back safely to England where he elected to crash-land at Attleboro. Those returning were: Larson, pilot; Wilson, co-pilot; Weber, navigator; King, engineer; and Hom, nose turret gunner. These five men returned to duty unhurt.

The right waist gunner, Reginald Ferguson was blown completely out of the airplane, most likely through the waist window. Four others bailed out around the same time. All landed safely. Ferguson was the first man to leave the aircraft, so was separated from the others, evaded capture and returned to duty on 9 October.

1st Lt. John McClane, navigator in a nearby aircraft, tells of viewing this event, "I was always fascinated by the sight of bombs leaving the nearby planes. We reached the drop point and the bombardiers released the bombs using an intervalometer, a device that lets the bombs out one at a time. As they fell, it would appear the bombs were stacked one above the other, suspended in space in a long stream, especially when they were stacked 52 high.

"I was looking directly at one plane when flak set off the bottom bomb. It exploded and set off the one above it, which in turn, set off the next higher and so on until the last exploded in or very near the bomb bay of this unfortunate aircraft.

"The plane fell out of formation and began to go down with men bailing out. I then assumed that the plane and all the crew were lost, but later learned that Lt. Larson and a few crew members brought the damaged aircraft back to England."

Sgt. Kelly, radio operator, adds that this crew had flown 19 missions with the 449th BG in Italy and 9 more successful ones in England. He was one of the five men who bailed out over Belgium, and was a POW until 2 May, 1945 – almost one year.

Sgt. Dropek, on a plane in formation next to this plane, told me that his aircraft was blown completely out of formation by the force of those explosions, turning his aircraft almost 90 degrees away from the formation!

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## 11 May 1944

### Mulhouse, France

The Marshalling Yards at Mulhouse was the briefed primary target, but it was obscured by clouds, so several targets of opportunity were hit, including Orleans/Bricy Airdrome and Belfort Marshalling Yards. The 506th Squadron was attacked by enemy aircraft, losing 2nd Lt. James H. Walsh and crew.

506 SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #42-94999 Bar-B, Walsh			MACR #4849
506th Squadron Crew:			
WALSH, JAMES H. Jr. ASN 0-663211	Pilot Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	St. Louis, Missouri
BAUDER, WARREN F. ASN T-1748	Co-pilot POW	Flt. Of.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
O'SHANICK, PETER ASN 0-689542	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Sharon, Pennsylvania
LUNDY, EMERY R. ASN 0-752872	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Newburg, Oregon
PELOQUIN, JOSEPH O. ASN 11097446	Engineer Wounded, evadee, returned	S/Sgt.	Biddeford, Maine
MARTIN, DONALD R. ASN 37240513	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	South Haven, Kansas
ROPER, SYDNEY ASN 32768378	Ball Turret POW	Sgt.	Chatham, New Jersey
PUKSTA, EDWIN A. ASN 13115875	RW Gunner POW/Wounded	Sgt.	Scranton, Pennsylvania
RICHARDS, LAWRENCE C. ASN 33487589	LW Gunner Evadee, returned	Sgt.	Emmaus, Pennsylvania
FANARA, THOMAS J. ASN 32584939	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Rochester, New York

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The MACR for Walsh's aircraft states that it was last seen at 1411 hours. An attack by enemy aircraft set their #1 engine afire. It left the formation "in difficulty" but still under control. Ten chutes were seen.

Sgt. Peloquin, engineer, gave me his story, "As I recall, the time of day was very close to 1420. It's always been a habit of mine to look at watches when things occur – and I do recall that very well. We were shot down by Me 109s. Our position in the formation was Purple Heart Corner. It turned out to be just that!

"As an engineer, my position was the top turret, and that is where I was just before it all started. Things were rather quiet, and as we had a fighter escort, Lt. Walsh suggested that I go back and transfer my fuel. It would seem to be a good time as we had used enough from our main tanks to transfer in from the outer cells. And the fuel would be out of the way in case we ran into trouble later and couldn't spare the time. So I went back to the waist section and told Sgt. Lawrence Richards to cover my position while I was doing my job of transferring the fuel. I could take his position if anything happened.

"Well, I had just had time to finish and was on my way back to the waist position when all hell broke loose. There was flak banging around us as well as fighters firing at us. One Me 109 hit us in the #2 engine, setting it on fire. Another shell exploded in front of us and blasted my head gear off just as I was scrambling to get my chest chute. Sgt. Puksta helped me to snap it on and that's when I could see that he had been hit also. I opened the escape hatch and told him to jump. He looked at me and said, 'You go first!'

“The plane was going down and he didn’t look too good, so I told him to be damned sure to follow me. Up to this day, that was the last time I saw Sgt. Puksta. Yes, he bailed out and was captured to become a POW.

“As for my experiences, they are ones that I still have nightmares about. When I jumped, I counted to about ten – enough to clear the plane. We were at about 15,000 feet at that time, and I pulled my ripcord – and nothing happened. No chute came out! So I was falling free at 120 mph and I tugged and pulled at the flaps on my chute – and finally pulled out a little of the silk or nylon. As I kept pulling, the pilot chute came out and it, in turn, released the main chute. All of this took so long that when it finally blossomed out, I was about 300 feet from the ground! This is one of the reasons why the Germans did not spot me coming down.

“When I landed, I injured my left heel and I, too, had been hit by the shrapnel from that exploding shell that had hit Puksta. I had one in my arm above the elbow and several small ones in my face, and another one in my neck, which I still have there. It just missed my jugular vein.

“This all took place near a little village which is about 20 miles from Orleans, or 80 miles south of Paris. The name is Patay, and is known for its association with Jeanne D’Arc (Joan of Arc).

“I met up with Richards a couple of weeks or so after we bailed out. To my surprise, we met on a bus, along with our Free French escorts, going to a farm camp about which the enclosed article was written. (Forest Of Hidden Men – Canadian Weekend Magazine). When the camp was started, there were only about eight or ten of us. But things changed rapidly and soon there were several hundred of us evadees.”

The location was Forest of Freteval, where the Germans had an ammunition dump, and these men all hid out successfully, right under the German noses. Most of these men were liberated by the U.S. Third Army on 13 August, 1944. The article is well written, explicit, but not appropriate for this record.

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## 12 May 1944

### Zeitz, Germany

The primary target here was the synthetic oil plants, which were bombed with excellent results. One 67th Squadron aircraft did not return.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-110042 J-Bar, Vance

MACR # not known

67th Squadron Crew:

VANCE, LEWIS I. ASN 0-749359	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Retz, West Virginia
BARNETT, THOMAS P. Jr. ASN 0-817814	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Roanoke, Virginia
SWINBURNSON, GILBERT E. ASN 10601400	Navigator POW, wounded	T/Sgt.	Saskatchewan, Canada
DAVIDOWITZ, EDWARD ASN T-122578	Bombardier KIA	Flt. Of.	Brooklyn, New York



HOLT, NATHAN J. ASN 18098442	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Henderson, Texas
DAVIDSON, ANDREW C. Jr. ASN 16149997	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
MILLER, RAY E. ASN 35548368	Ball Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Nappanee, Indiana
ROSINSKI, STANLEY J. ASN 12050666	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Elizabeth, New Jersey
HOCKMAN, ROBERT O. ASN 37493297	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Hutchingson, Kansas
PEASE, THOMAS H. ASN 37342137	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Colorado Springs, Colorado

The MACR states in part, "042 J was hit by four fighters at location 5040N-0820E at 1504 hours as it was straggling behind the formation. The left wing caught fire and the ship gradually lost altitude. Ten chutes were seen to come out of this stricken ship even though it seemed under control. It then crashed."

Lt. Vance, pilot, said, "We had engine trouble, returned to base, ran to the spare, took off and caught the formation as it crossed the coast. We had been scheduled for R & R but decided to take the mission when we were asked. The war was over before we finally got to London.

"We took one or two flak hits just under our plane that severely damaged it. Both men in the nose were wounded at this time. Davidowitz, bombardier, was covered with blood and couldn't move. Navigator Swinburnson, recently transferred in from the RAF, though wounded, was able to bail out successfully – Davidowitz did not get out. So the tenth parachute observed could have been from the fighter that we shot down. It was flak, not fighters that got us.

*Note: Swinburnson's injuries left him hospitalized for months.*

"Damages included rudder cables cut, flak hits on the left wing, setting it on fire and making it necessary to abandon ship. Two flak hits under the rear of the ship made holes so large that the men there eventually exited through them!

"One gunner on the crew, on his first mission, lost control and had to be restrained from throwing things. Other crew members held him, got his chute on, and tossed him out. So nine of the crew got free from the aircraft.

"I put the plane on automatic pilot to hold it reasonably level so that my crew, and eventually myself, could bail out. I was captured and placed in a POW camp southeast of Berlin."

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## 25 May 1944

### Belfort, France

Primary target was the Belfort Marshalling Yards located on the main railroad line between Paris and Switzerland, and only ten miles from the Swiss border. Flak was meager and slightly accurate and the fighter support was excellent. Yet one 67th Squadron aircraft was lost.

## 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-94962 I-Bar, Tomer

MACR #5158

## 67th Squadron Crew:

TOMER, FRANK J. ASN 0-693433	Pilot KIA, buried Normandy (B-11-25)	2nd Lt.	Corona, California
SANDERS, JAMES E. ASN 0-700988	Co-pilot KIA, buried Normandy (C-21-43)	2nd Lt.	Byron, Ohio
FRANSON, QUINTEN A. ASN 0-707579	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Sedgewich, Colorado
PRINCE, BERTIS R. ASN 0-700389	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	McLeansboro, Illinois
NAVISH, KENNETH C. ASN 35052331	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
KATZ, ERVIN ASN 16144626	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
STEBURG, WILLIS L. ASN 19063345	Ball Turret POW/Burned	Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
BROSE, WILLIAM F. ASN 12203454	RW Gunner Evadee, returned	Sgt.	Fords, New Jersey
THURMAN, HOMER A. ASN 37211941	LW Gunner KIA, buried Normandy (C-2-6)	Sgt.	Turner, Kansas
ANDERSON, ELDON B. ASN 18029464	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Stanford, Texas

The MACR states in part that at 0842 hours, this aircraft (962 I-Bar) left formation, went into a steep dive with #2 engine feathered and #3 engine smoking. It apparently was under control and seemed to be headed for Switzerland. Weather was good.

All three survivors have been located. Sgt. Anderson, tail turret gunner, said, "After we left the formation, we flew around a bit trying to decide what to do with our bombs. We finally found a big, open space and let them go. We then discussed what to do – to go on to Switzerland, which wasn't that far away, or to attempt to make it back to England.

"By that time we were down to about 10,000 feet due to those ailing engines, but thought that with luck, we could get back to base. We flew at this altitude because we couldn't get any higher – and were prime targets for the German flak batteries. Eventually we were hit again by flak, and this time I believe it was the nose section because the plane started falling at once. Those of us in the back never heard anything from up front over the intercom, but it was time to get out. I was the first one out, Brose was right behind me, and Steburg was last. But about the time that he was leaving, there was an explosion, and Steburg was pretty badly burned. "I broke my ankle when I hit the ground so had no chance to attempt evading. But the last time that I saw Brose, he was heading for a forest. We were in the county of Champagne, France, about 60 miles west of Paris. The doomed plane went straight to the ground carrying the rest of our crew to their deaths. It exploded again and burned.

*Note: The crash site is near Erchau, 30 kilometers southwest of St. Quentin.*

“Steburg and myself were at Stalag Luft IV until February 1945, when I was marched out and was liberated May 12th. I never knew what happened to Brose and am happy to learn that he made it.”

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28 May 1944

Zeitz, Germany

This mission was a deep penetration into Germany with the oil plants located at Zeitz the primary target, reportedly to assist the Russians. Results of the bombing were excellent. The 506th Squadron lost an aircraft to the slight but accurate flak that the Group experienced.

506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #42-110045 Bar-K, Gurman	THE BANANA BARGE		MACR #5353
506th Squadron Crew:	ALL MEN POW		
GURMAN, IRVING S. ASN 0-610141	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
JIPSON, ROBERT F. ASN 0-815493	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Lansing, Michigan
KAULBACH, ANDREW J. Jr. ASN 0-702445	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Beaumont, Texas
WIITALA, EINO J. ASN 33403476	Nose Turret POW	Sgt.	Daisytown, Pennsylvania
COSTELLO, GEORGE B. ASN 36216016	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Iron River, Wisconsin
CARSON, JOSEPH ASN 11047446	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Cambridge, Massachusetts
WILLIS, THEODORE D. ASN 13061728	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Erie, Pennsylvania
McMASTER, JAMES H. ASN 36065138	Ball Turret POW	Sgt.	Galesburg, Illinois
WILLIAMS, CHARLES D. ASN 32766643	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Joppa, Maryland

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The MACR states that at 1347 hours, in the vicinity of Dummer Lake, Germany, this aircraft was hit in #2 engine by flak. It left the formation under control, escorted by several of our friendly fighters. Two chutes were observed, and then the aircraft disappeared into the haze below. At that time #2 engine was on fire.

Jim McMaster, the ball turret gunner, wrote: “When the order to bail out was given, I was the last one to leave the plane as I waited to make sure the tail gunner, Chuck Williams was out. I landed in the middle of a small village (name unknown) like a ton of bricks.

“The mayor shoved a gun against my chest and walked me to where some soldiers were based nearby with anti-aircraft guns, etc. The soldiers hauled me by truck to Dummer Villate jail. I didn’t see any of my crew until morning but learned that Williams had landed about two miles away and was free for about an hour before he was also captured.”

Sgt. Eino Wiitala, nose turret gunner, sent this information, "It was just our fifth mission and our bombardier was sick that day. There was no replacement, so we flew with only nine men. I was the nose turret gunner.

"After the plane was hit by flak, we turned back, but the pilot, Irving S. Gurman, notified us that he could not maintain altitude, and we would have to bail out. The pilot sent the navigator, Andrew Kaulbach, down to see that I got out of the turret okay. When he got me out, he jumped first and I followed, but I landed first as I delayed my chute opening longer than he did.

"I landed in an open field and some German farmer was shooting at me with a rifle. I was hit in the buttocks, but managed to get loose from my parachute and run away from him. I was later captured by a group of German soldiers. By evening, the Germans had captured the entire crew, and we were all put together in a local jail before they took us to an interrogation center near Frankfurt, Germany.

"The officers and Costello were sent to Stalag Luft III, while the rest of us were put into a boxcar and shipped to Stalag Luft IV at Gross Tychow."

After nine months there, the entire POW camp went on the road to escape the advancing Russians, and then part way back again when the British were advancing from the west. It was starvation diet for 86 days until liberated by the British! Their regular bombardier, Morton Bauman, was shot down and became a POW as well, on 7 October 1944.

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## 29 May 1944

### Politz, Germany

Once again, the specific target was an oil refinery. On the bomb run, the Group experienced some very determined attacks by the enemy with FW 190s. Approximately 50 fighters took part in these attacks and nine of them were destroyed. The flak in the target area was fairly inaccurate. Two of our aircraft were forced to seek refuge in Sweden – one each by the 68th and 506th Squadrons.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., # 42-73500 F, Foy		MACR #5218
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned	
FOY, FRANK L. ASN 0-803177	Pilot Injured, interned, returned	1st Lt. Gastoria, North Carolina
BROWN, ROBERT A. ASN 0-547405	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt. New York City, New York
BERKOWITZ, SAMUEL I. ASN 0-695857	Navigator Interned, returned	1st Lt. Wilmington, Delaware
ROWINSKI, ELLSWORTH P. ASN 0-668782	Bombardier Interned	1st Lt. Passaic, New Jersey
KOZLOSKY, ZIGGIE L. ASN 13084282	Engineer Interned	S/Sgt. Quecreek, Pennsylvania
UNDERWOOD, OSCAR B. ASN 33532304	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	T/Sgt. Fries, Virginia

FICK, KENNETH M. ASN 37549574	RW Gunner Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	St. Charles, Minnesota
FANNING, PHILLIP J. Jr. ASN 11082349	LW Gunner Interned	S/Sgt.	Arlington, Massachusetts
SPURGEON, DEAN H. ASN 39552176	Tail Turret Interned	S/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
CARNELL, WILLIAM F. ASN 33169697	Radar Obs. Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The MACR states that at 1223 hours, the section in which this aircraft was flying was attacked by six to eight FW 190s. It is believed that 500 F was hit on this attack at 1330 hours, south of Dovns Cliff, Kiel Bay. This aircraft was heard on VHF radio reporting low on fuel and heading for Sweden. It was straggling behind the formation, but with escort.

The above crew gave me this information: "Take off was at 0809 hours; departed English coast at 0956 hours at 10,000 feet. Crossed enemy coast at 22,000 feet at Tønning.

"Our ship was attacked by 15 Me 109s at approximately 1245 hours. These attacks came from 12 o'clock on through to 3 o'clock, and pressed their flight through the formation behind us. We spotted the fighters just before our IP, which was the southwestern part of Stettin Lake. This was at 1156 hours. FW 190s were attacking two formations ahead of us at 12 o'clock (position).

"When we turned in on the IP, we spotted 15 of our P-51s, which immediately went down on the deck, engaging in dog fights. The next time that we saw enemy aircraft was the time that we were attacked. Then, on our way out, eight P-38s covered us over Denmark while on our way to Sweden.

"Our #4 engine was knocked out by enemy fighters. Our left rudder was hit by 20 mms, leaving a hole two inches in diameter. .30 caliber slugs came through the right side of cockpit, striking the radio jack box and injuring Lt. Foy in back of his head, bleeding freely. One 20 mm exploded in the tail section, damaging the control cables as well as the parachute of the tail gunner, Sgt. Spurgeon. Another engine and our wing were damaged.

"We dropped out of formation and straggled behind, deep in enemy territory. We were almost alone for 20 minutes, and at 1315 hours, decided to head for the nearest friendly territory. There was a headwind on the way back to England, which would have given us a very slow ground speed. We were about 15 miles south of Gedser.

"Nose gunner, Sgt. Fick, claimed one Me 109; top turret gunner Ziggy Kozlosky, also claimed one Me 109. Tail gunner Spurgeon verified both of these kills, and claimed another Me 109G for himself. We saw three parachutes come out of these enemy aircraft. Our right waist gunner took some photographs, but the camera was later jettisoned; and the left waist gunner claimed a probable. All of this took place around 1156 hours.

"On our way to Sweden, our bomb sight was destroyed and thrown into the water. Our IFF was detonated; Carpet was jettisoned into the Baltic. Most everything else possible was jettisoned, as well." Foy said that the aircraft landed at 1500 hours.

The Swedes reported that this aircraft landed at Save Military airfield just outside of Göteborg. It had been sighted by Swedish fighters in the air above the town of Halmstad and was forced or led

to Save. After the war, this same aircraft was brought back to England on 29 May 1945, exactly one year later.

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The second aircraft finding haven in Sweden on 29 May was PRINC-ESS:

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-63962 Bar-W, Golubock	PRINC-ESS	MACR #5219
<i>Note: This aircraft had three names, beginning with Prince and followed by Prince-ass and Princ-ess.</i>		
506th Squadron Crew:		
GOLUBOCK, RALPH ASN 0-742418	Pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt. St. Louis, Missouri
CONNER, CHARLES R. ASN 0-735362	Co-pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt. New Albany, Indiana
CHAMBERS, HAROLD R. ASN 0-698659	Navigator Interned, returned	2nd Lt. La Porte City, Iowa
FITZSIMMONS, WILLIAM D. ASN 0-688332	Bombardier Interned, returned	1st Lt. Denver, Colorado
DUNLOP, WALTER E. ASN 39458474	Engineer Interned	T/Sgt. Parkwater, Washington
NEELY, JOHN C. ASN 19004778	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	T/Sgt. Chicago, Illinois
KILLIAN, JACK L. ASN 39550864	RW Gunner Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Los Angeles, California
GREENLEE, WILLIAM J. ASN 14161982	LW Gunner Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Knoxville, Tennessee
SMITH, GEORGE N. ASN 39261113	Hatch Gun. Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Inglewood, California
HAWLEY, EUGENE H. ASN 32258291	Radar Jam. Interned, returned	S/Sgt. New York City, New York
JONES, STEPHEN E. ASN 17127659	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt. Hale, Missouri

*Note: Several engineers, including Walter Dunlop, were detained in Sweden to assist the Swedish workers in repairing the many American aircraft that landed there during the war.*

The MACR reports that this aircraft was last seen at 1250 hours straggling behind the formation, under control and with friendly fighter escort. This does not appear to be true.

The pilot, Ralph Golubock, sent me his recollections: "This was our 27th mission. Just prior to this one, we had been on leave for a week at the "Flak Shack." While we were on our leave, our airplane had some new equipment installed – Radar Jamming Equipment. I can only assume this equipment was installed in my aircraft because it was an old 'D' model and was a good deal lighter and a good deal faster than most of the other Squadron aircraft at that time. So the addition of this equipment did not hamper us in any way.

"With this new equipment, a first pilot from another crew was flying my right seat, a new navigator on his first mission going along to gain some experience, Sgt. Hawley, a Radar Jammer with us for his first mission – we were on our way. It is interesting to note that while we were

over the target, we received very little accurate flak. Whether this was a result of Sgt. Hawley's action or not, I can only speculate.

"We were flying the lead position in the low element of the low squadron, which put us pretty well back in the overall formation. Our target was in Poland, and in making our approach, we came in over the North Sea, made a feint toward Berlin, and then turned into a northwesterly direction and continued on until we reached the target. It appeared that we hit the target quite well, because when leaving, we saw a great deal of smoke arise. Up to this point, I had not seen any [enemy] aircraft.

"We headed out over the Baltic Sea and were feeling pretty good, like the mission was over. But in reality, we were a long, long way from home.

"Shortly after breaking the coast and going out over the Baltic, we were hit by a lone Me 410 or Me 210. It was very difficult to identify because he came slashing through. I don't think he was aiming at my aircraft. I think he was just spraying the formation and he luckily hit me. Our #1 engine was knocked out immediately and the fuel cells in the left wing were also hit and fuel was flowing out in huge amounts. Had any of this fuel hit our hot superchargers, I'm sure we would have gone up immediately. But for some reason it did not and the fuel was siphoned off the wing harmlessly. But we did lose a good deal of fuel.

"The main problem we faced at this time was that when our #1 engine was hit and knocked out, I was not able to feather it because the feathering motor was inoperative. We were almost on our back at this time. I was finally able to get the ship righted and into a somewhat normal position: Our wings were level, but we were in a dive and the #1 engine was winding up, unable to feather it. This created a tremendous amount of drag on the port wing and it was extremely difficult to keep the ship flying straight and level. I, then, cranked in full trim tab on our rudder, and full aileron tab. Even with the full trim tabs rolled in, I found it extremely difficult to plane in a straight position. I was forced to lock my right leg on the right rudder, holding it down as hard as I could in order to maintain any semblance of true flight.

"Shortly after being hit, I rang the bell one time, which was to alert the crew to buckle up their chutes and prepare to bail out. I did not ring the bell the second time because it appeared that the airplane was flyable and we would be able to get somewhere. However, our tail gunner, Sgt. Jones, having seen what happened and seeing the gasoline flowing off the port wing, decided it was time to part company, and he bailed out. He was the only one to leave the ship.

"At this time, I felt the airplane was flyable and I called the navigator, who was inexperienced, and asked him for a heading either back to England or to Sweden. Unfortunately, he did not have any charts that showed him how to get to Sweden. I then contacted our engineer, Sgt. Dunlop, to determine our fuel situation and to transfer the fuel he could from the port to starboard wing. He was able to salvage enough fuel that I felt we could make Sweden. The chances of getting back to England was zero!

"I was unable to maintain altitude with that windmilling propeller, so I ordered the crew to dump everything over board. All the ammunition, machine guns, even the Norden bombsight which Lt. Fitzsimmons took a great deal of pleasure in tossing out. This, then, allowed us to maintain altitude at near 10,000 feet.

“Just at this time a large formation of German fighters were approaching, and when I saw them coming in on us, I thought there was no way we were going to reach Sweden. They would surely shoot us down and that indeed, we were dead people. Why they never attacked, I’ll never know, except that possibly they felt that we were gone already and no need to waste any more ammunition or risk a plane to knock us down. They flew very close to us as they went by and I could only look at them and pray that one of them would not peel off and attack, as we had no defense at all – totally helpless.

“We then continued on, hoping that we had a heading for Sweden. As luck would have it, we did come back over land, which I learned later was the island of Barnholm. Then, finally, Sweden. In very short order, several Swedish aircraft, which were early American P-35s, picked us up and escorted us to the Swedish city of Malmo.

“One other incident before we landed. When we were hit, our bomb bay doors were knocked open and we were not able to close them. One Swedish fighter, seeing those open doors, tried to fly under us to look into the aircraft, presumably to check for bombs. But when he did, he hit our left wing! It was only his radio antenna which hit us, but it did tear off his antenna, and our damaged wing withstood the collision. We made an excellent landing on their grass field, were immediately surrounded by Swedes in various trucks and vehicles, all armed with sub-machine guns and were politely, but firmly, ushered into the headquarters building and interrogation. We landed at Malmo at 1325 hours.

“During the fighter attacks, one waist gunner saw our tail gunner fire at one of them and saw it go down in flames. The time was 1220 hours.”

“Our tail gunner, Steven E. Jones, known as ‘Zeke’, had made headlines earlier in the year when he got two Me 109s with one burst. It seemed he hit the top one, who in turn, fell into the lower one. He got credit for both of them!

“After he bailed out of my ship, he was picked up at sea by the Germans and remained a POW until the end of the war.”

After the war at Scott Field, Belleville, Illinois, Lt. Golubock saw PRINCESS, which had been returned sometime in 1945.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., 42-50381 D, Smith	FLAK MAGNET		Returned to base
68th Squadron Crew:	All returned to base, one crewmember KIA		
SMITH, JOY M. ASN 0-690265	Pilot	2nd Lt.	Weeping Water, Nebraska
COOPER, PAUL J.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	Colorado Springs, Colorado
POWNER, BENJAMIN ASN 0-700765	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Long Island, New York
COMMISA, PATRICK J.	Nose Turret/Toggler	Private	Dobbs Ferry New York
SPROWL, KENNETH ASN 15389068	Radio Oper. Wounded	T/Sgt.	Bradenton, Florida



CORLEW, PAUL M.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	Dickson, Tennessee
ABESHOUSE, HOWARD L.	Ball Turret Gun.	Sgt.	New Haven, Connecticut
SHELTON, JOHN H. ASN 17159935	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Centralia, Illinois
WILLIAMS, CHARLES E. ASN 36451793	Engineer KIA, buried Cambridge (E-4-19)	S/Sgt.	Big Bay, Michigan
BURNS, ROBERT C.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Davenport, Nebraska

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*Note: This aircraft was lost on 18 October 1944 with a different crew.*

One aircraft returned to base with a crew casualty, Sgt. Charles Williams, who was on board a 68th Squadron ship that was piloted by 1st Lt. Joy Smith. Kenneth Sprowl sent me his story:

“I guess I spent a number of years getting rid of many unpleasant memories. Some of them have haunted me in various ways.

“The mission of 29 May ‘44 was my 6th, flying under Joy Smith as pilot. We were attacked by Me 109 and this particular one came in at about 2 o’clock, nearly level, firing at us with his cannons. A 20-mm round came in over my head (I was the radio operator) and struck the top turret, exploding. The seat gave way and Sgt. Williams fell from the turret to the flight deck, very seriously wounded in the small of his back. Burns [the tail gunner] and I attempted first aid, using sulfanilamide powder and compresses. But Chuck died shortly afterwards.

“I had received some of the fragments in my scalp, so Burns attended to me. I was taken to the waist and instructed to sit in the corner of the waist at the rear bulkhead of the bomb bay, until we got back to base.

“I had an unusual attachment to Chuck Williams – we were very close friends. He taught me to play cribbage and always was the winner.”

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## 4 June 1944

### Ground Crew Incident, Shipdham, England

This incident that resulted in the deaths of Sgt. Monroe Atchley and Private Ted Bunalski, both members of the 2033rd Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon.

2033rd Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon:

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2033rd Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon Casualties

2033rd Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon

ATCHLEY, MONROE A. ASN 35579833	Fire Fighter DIED	Sgt.	Anderson, Indiana
BUNALSKI, TED R. ASN 32756508	Fire Fighter DIED	Private	Camden, New Jersey

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*Note: Atchley and Bunalski were on loan from the 68th Squadron.*

In the late afternoon, a formation of 492nd Bomb Group planes were assembling for a late attack over Europe in the general area south and east of Shipdham airfield. The time was 1720 hours. At an altitude of 17,000 feet, Lt. Frank Haag saw Lt. Sachtleben suddenly make a steep bank to avoid a collision. The other plane, not identified, also made a steep climbing turn. Lt. Sachtleben stalled, fell off on his left wing and went down through the overcast. The aircraft was reported to have made a one or one and a half turn spin, leveling off on its back similar to a pursuit dive. No further observations could be made. This aircraft, 44-40160, crashed into an unoccupied house near Garveston.

Sgt. Atchley and Pvt. Bunalski were off duty and eating supper when they heard men yelling that a plane had crashed. They left their meals, ran out on the road, and jumped on the first fire truck going to the fire. Upon their arrival at the crashed plane, they proceeded to extinguish the flames, disregarding the danger of bombs going off and a gas tank which was burning and full of gasoline. When one or more of the bombs exploded, both of these men were killed. They both were awarded the Soldier Medal posthumously.

Cpl. Anthony Mastradone, 67th Squadron Medic, Capt. Worrall, Doctor, and Cpl. George Houston responded to the emergency, too. Tony reported that he drove the ambulance to the scene, to immediately get instructions to go into the inferno to retrieve the bodies of the two firefighters. Bombs were still exploding, fire very hot. The two of them crawled along in a ditch, dragging a stretcher to get them, had to make two trips. They, too, should have been awarded a medal.

James O. Auman wrote the following description: "On the evening in question, it was about dusk, my friend, Harm, and I were riding bikes in what may have been southeast of the A.A.F. Station 115 at Shipdham. The sky was clear and the sun was setting behind us. We were several miles from the airfield and enjoying the quiet, still air of the countryside compared to the extremely loud roaring of engines being run-up at the field.

"As we coasted along, we became aware of a heavy bomber formation lumbering for altitude at what must have been 16,000 feet. The intense strain on the four engines was very familiar to me and I knew the aircraft was loaded heavily.

"As the B-24 came down, the engines screamed in what must have been a wide open position (that sound is still with me).

"I also remember how long it took for the crippled Liberator to hit the ground. My buddy, Krull, was screaming, "Get out....get out," but no one ever made it.

"There were no flames or smoke until the airplane hit upside down on a building that may have been the farmer's living quarters. The impact was more like a crunch followed by a muffled explosion.

"We rode to within about 600 feet of the farmyard and took a position along the roadside. The entire building and airplane were now a solid ball of flames. Firefighters arrived on the scene in very short order, however, the situation was hopeless.

"It was still daylight when we saw the rescue squad pulling what we assumed were bodies from the wreckage. There seemed to be several smoldering hulks lined up in the farmyard about 50 feet from the wreckage. The squad was using long poles to fetch out the bodies.

“Another four or five firefighters took a position on a thick stone wall about five feet tall with their backs toward us. These firemen did not have enough hoses or water pressure to do any good in putting out the flames.

“Suddenly, there was an explosion and we heard shrapnel ripping through the branches of trees overhead. When we looked back at the fire, we saw two, three, or four firemen laying on their backs on our side of the wall.”

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## 5 June 1944

### Boulogne-Sur-Mer (Pas de Calais), France

Only six PFF aircraft of the 66th Squadron participated in this mission, providing leads for the 95th Combat Bomb Wing. One of these 66th Squadron aircraft was lost, ditching just off the coast of southern England after most of the crew had parachuted on or near the coast at Broadstairs, Kent. This is the mission on which Colonel Leon Vance earned his Medal of Honor. Because this mission involves a PFF crew, it helps to have some background information on issues in regard to bombing through overcast.

In his book, *Mighty Eighth War Manual*, Roger A. Freeman wrote these words in regard to overcast bombing: “The predominance of cloud in the northwestern European sky was a major obstacle to visual bombing and the principal limiting factor in Eighth Bomber Command operations, grounding bombers on an average of four days out of five. During the winter of 1942-1943 it became obvious to even the most ardent promoter of visual attack that other means had to be sought to pursue the campaign during inclement weather. Radars (high-powered radio pulses, reflected or regenerated, for locating objects or determining one’s own position) developed by the British for night operations eventually led to an 8th Air Force Pathfinder Force and, subsequently, to a bombing-through overcast capability. Radar-guided bombing received a number of descriptive terms in the 8th Air Force, namely Blind Bombing, Bombing through Overcast (BTO), etc., but the most persistent term was PFF, derived from Pathfinder Force.”

This new equipment demanded considerable changes in the B-17 and B-24 aircraft themselves, as well as special training of the navigators. One squadron, the 66th, became the Pathfinder squadron in the 44th Bomb Group, and then the better and more experienced crews were moved into the 66th Squadron. In the early stages of development of the Pathfinder era, these specially equipment bombers and crews were established in the three oldest B-24 groups, the 44th, the 93rd, and the 389th. On missions planned under inclement weather conditions, each of these three groups Pathfinder aircraft and crews were delegated to lead the other newer groups, to fly the lead and deputy lead for their formations as well as for their own groups.

Normally, a high-ranking officer from these other groups would fly in these lead PFF aircraft as Command Pilot and Deputy Command Pilot to be in charge of his own group’s activities and to make changes in the mission planning if he deemed it necessary. It was just this situation that was involved in this next incident.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

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66th Sq., #41-28690 B+, Mazure

MISSOURI SUE

*Note: The name “MISSOURI SUE” was not painted on the nose.*

## 66th Squadron Crew:

MAZURE, LOUIS A. ASN 0-442977	Pilot KIA	Capt.	Gary, Indiana
VANCE, LEON R. Jr. ASN 0-022050	Command Pilot WIA, ditched	Lt. Col.	Enid, Oklahoma
CARPER, EARL L. ASN 0-678289	Co-pilot Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
KILGORE, JOHN R. ASN 0-753006	Navigator Parachuted, injured	2nd Lt.	Victoria, Texas
SEGAL, MILTON ASN 0-685854	Bombardier Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
GLICKMAN, NATHANIEL ASN 0-751902	Bombardier WIA, parachuted	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
BAIL, BERNARD W. ASN 0-807964	Navig/Radar Parachuted	2nd Lt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
HOPPIE, EARL L. ASN 39689016	Engineer Parachuted, injured	T/Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois
SKUFCA, QUENTIN F. ASN 15354173	Radio Oper. WIA, parachuted, injured	T/Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio
EVANS, DAVIS J. Jr. ASN 35599199	RW Gunner Parachuted	S/Sgt.	Canton, Ohio
SECRIST, HARRY E. ASN 35401867	LW Gunner Parachuted	S/Sgt.	Newark, Ohio
SALLIS, WILEY A.	Tail Turret Parachuted	S/Sgt.	Smithville, Mississippi

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*Note: Colonel Vance was Command Pilot and Commanding Officer of the 489th BG. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions this day. Colonel Vance was killed in the crash of a hospital aircraft that was returning to the United States.*

Captain Mazure was piloting this aircraft, flying lead for the 489th BG and the 2nd Division. The primary target was reported to be coastal installations at Boulogne-sur-Mer but actually was a V-1 Site, Wimereaux, North Boulogne.

Briefing was scheduled for 0400, even though Colonel Vance evidently had been held up and was late. So the briefing continued with the information that the bombing would be from 22,500 feet and the bomb load would be 10,500 pound GPs. Stepping away from the map, the officer addressed the bombardiers and stressed the point that should they for any reason fail to drop the bombs on the first run, they were to jettison the load over the English Channel and return to their bases. No second run was to be made over the target.

The meteorologist added that there would be broken clouds over the coast and should be clear sailing in and out. Intelligence reported that we could anticipate flak at the French coast and that no enemy fighters were expected so there would be no fighter escort.

Col. Vance arrived at 0830, apologized for his delay, and asked Capt. Mazure to review the information we had received at the briefing. When he had finished with the flight plan, Lt. Glickman informed him of the instructions regarding the bomb run and the specific order not to make a second run over the target.

Takeoff was at 0900; the mission was rather routine as Lt. Bail, radar-navigator, guided the formation via his radar "Mickey" toward the Pas de Calais sector of French Coast. As they approached the IP, control of the aircraft was turned over to Lt. Segal, bombardier, for the bomb run. Lt. Glickman called out the target and then watched for signs of flak and enemy fighters. There appeared to be flak off to the starboard side but it was of little consequence.

As the target was approached, Lt. Segal ordered the bomb bay doors to be opened, steadied down and then called out "Bombs Away." Nothing happened! Every bomb was still hanging in the bays. The other aircraft in the formation awaiting our drop, failed to release theirs, too. Either there had been a malfunction in the bombsight, or the arming release switch on the bombardier's panel had not been activated. So nothing happened due, apparently, to some faulty equipment, and no bombs were dropped by any of the aircraft in our formation.

Lt. Glickman added that "We turned off the target and at that time I notified our pilot, Mazure, that we were to head back over the Channel and jettison our bombs according to the briefing instructions. But Col. Vance countermanded my orders and directed that we make a second run, informing us that he was in command of this flight."

Departing the immediate area, they flew south, circled and flew parallel to the coastline, at the same altitude and airspeed, but as the enemy gunners had zeroed in on them, the first flak burst exploded off their port wing. The pilot, Mazure, was killed when shrapnel sliced in under his helmet, and struck him in the head. Lt. Carper, the co-pilot, immediately took over the controls. When the next blast hit, it tore through the flight deck, hit Col. Vance (who was standing between the dead pilot and Lt. Carper) and nearly severed his right foot so that it was hanging by a shred.

Lt. Bail gave this report, "Our bomb bay doors were still open and I could see that a couple of bombs were still hung up. About this same time, the co-pilot Carper, cut off all four engines and switches, fearing that the plane would catch fire and blow up. He quickly turned our ship for England in a shallow glide. I then began calling the various members of the crew on interphone and was relieved to learn that no others were badly injured.

"As soon as possible, I managed to get Colonel Vance down to my seat, took off my belt and wound it around his thigh as a makeshift tourniquet to reduce the spurting blood."

Lt. Glickman continued, "At this same instant my nose turret took a series of bursts that shattered the Plexiglas and cut open my forehead, as well as hitting the base of my spine. Our plane continued to be hit as we stayed on the bomb run. My primary concern was the possibility of our bomb bays being hit before the bombs were released.

"The starboard outer engine (#1) had been hit and the propeller was now snapped with the three blades drooping downwards. The top turret had most of the Plexiglas blown off, part of the right rudder and rudder elevator also had been hit. Concerned about the previous inability to release our bombs and now approaching the prior drop point again, I called out that I would drop the bombs using my turret release switch that would bypass the bombardier's panel. The other bombers following us in our formation unloaded at the same time that I did.

"After I released our bombs, my turret took another hit which not only cut my left hand but blasted off another large portion of the turret Plexiglas. Looking at my pilotage map I advised Carper of our position and gave him the return heading to England. The celestial navigator had

his equipment, his desk table and charts destroyed and with Bail aiding Vance, I had maps with which to aid the pilot.

“We continued to get hit; the radio room took flak which severely wounded Sgt. Skufca.”

On the flight deck and behind the two pilots and Col. Vance were the two stations for the PFF navigators: Lts. Bail and Kilgore. John Kilgore added these comments, “As we left the south coast of England, the Germans began to jam my ‘G’ set, as usual, so I looked over at Bail to see if his “Mickey” was operating, but he shrugged his shoulders, ‘No.’ This had been the same conditions as from the other two previous missions. We turned at our I.P. (Initial Point) and headed north, and as we approached the target, Glickman said he could see our target through the broken clouds. I assumed that Segal was on the target with his sight.

“At ‘Bombs Away,’ nothing happened! Vance did order a second run on the target. Why we didn’t take some sort of evasive action or change in altitude is still a mystery to me. The second run was uneventful until the bombs were released. Even then, I don’t recall hearing the crump of ack-ack. But I do recall, and very vividly, the left side of the plane pressing inwardly against my right arm. The flak jackets jumped off the flight deck floor, my instrument panel going dead, the sight glasses of the fuel transfer system disintegrating, and raw high-octane gasoline streaming onto the flight deck. Hoppie, our engineer, literally ‘slithered’ out of the top turret, grabbing what I thought was a flight jacket and trying to stem the flow of gasoline with one hand, turning off the fuel transfer valves with the other.

“About this time Glickman came over the intercom announcing that he had been hit in the head and blood was streaming down over his face so that he could not see. One of the waist gunners, Secrist, came over the intercom that Skufca had been hit badly in the legs. As he was calling no one in particular, I answered by telling him of our situation on the flight deck, and asked him and Evans to see about Sallis, our tail gunner, and to assist Skufca out of the plane when the time came.”

“Apparently we had experienced two to three hits or misses – there was no direct hit, for if there were, none of us would be here. The plane seemed to be ‘sailing’ along on an even keel. At no time were there any sudden diving, stalling or yawing motions. I turned to Bail and told him to turn on the I.F.F. (Identification, Friend or Foe) switch was directly above his head, and had a red safety cover over it. As we had left the formation, and we were approaching the English Coast, we must be identified.

“I got up from my seat and looked into the cockpit area, found Mazure slumped in his harness and his instrument panel was covered in blood. Carper was in the co-pilot position, doing what all good co-pilots do, trying to keep the plane flying. I then jumped down into the ‘well’ of the flight deck along side of Hoppie – not that I could assist him in any way, but to be first in line. Hoppie didn’t need any help as he was a true professional and knew his job well.

“As we were standing there looking down at the water, the doors began to close. Hoppie grabbed the manual crank to open them again, and I reconnected my intercom, yelled for someone not to close them again. Apparently the message got through as the doors were never closed again.”

Glickman added, "As we headed towards England, the plane took one last blast that cut the gas lines and forced Carper to cut all the switches to prevent any fire and stopped all three remaining engines as well as the power to my nose turret. With that action and starting the no-power glide towards England, I heard the bailout bell and someone calling us to bail out."

S/Sgt. Harry Secrist, left waist gunner, added his recollections of what took place in the rear of the aircraft: "Skuf was hit while still in his radio room and fell out of it into the waist area ahead of us. He was badly injured and could not stand. Gasoline was spraying all over us in the waist and Skuf was lying on the waist floor in all of that gasoline. So I grabbed a spare parachute and put it under his head. As I stood up, another large burst of flak came through the side of the waist and passed between Skuf and me. It made a hole in the right side about ten inches wide, then made several holes on the left side where it went out.

"All of the tail assembly was intact, but the left rudder and vertical stabilizer had a lot of holes in them. Dave opened the hatch door in the floor and was sweeping some of the gasoline out with his foot.

"When we got near the coast of England, I threw the left waist gun out of the window and turned to get Wiley and Dave to help me lift Skuf to the waist window where he could bail out. But when I turned back from the window, Wiley had Skuf and was going into the bomb bay where they eventually bailed out. Dave went out the right window and I went out the left. I fell about a half mile, it seemed, to get rid of the gasoline on me. We were all soaked with it and wondered about the static electricity when the chutes opened. I think I was the only one of us who bailed out of the rear area to land in a minefield.

"After I opened my chute, I was about a thousand feet above a large cloud and when I came out of the cloud, there was a barrage balloon under it. I missed it by about 100 feet. Then, when I got below the balloon, I was drifting toward the cable, but missed it, too, by about 50 feet. As I got closer to the ground, I saw men running along a dirt road toward me, then came down about 60 to 70 feet from the edge of the cliff next to the Channel, and just a few feet from a fence that ran parallel to the cliff. My parachute fell across this fence and some barbed wire between the fence and the edge of this cliff. This barbed wire was about eight feet high.

After releasing my parachute harness and standing up, I started to walk down to the road. I had taken only a few steps when I understood what the British Sergeant was yelling to me. He was shouting for me to stand still as there were land mines everywhere. Help was on the way with maps to guide me through this field!

After spending a most interesting overnight at this remote cannon emplacement unit, Harry Secrist was driven to the huge British airbase at Manston where he was united with Sgts. Evans and Sallis. None of them were injured in their parachuting.

Lt. Bail continued his recollections. "As our plane neared the English coast, still gliding without power and rapidly descending, I directed the crew to start bailing out. When only Colonel Vance and I remained, I told Col. Vance that we must now jump as there was no way to land that damaged plane, especially with those bombs hung up in the bay, armed and ready to explode on impact. Not being a doctor then, I was not fully aware that the Colonel was in shock. When the Colonel shook his head and said he wouldn't jump, I knew that there was no way I could drag him to the bomb bay, and assist him out. I knew, too, that the plane was losing altitude fast, and

we didn't have much time. I checked his tourniquet, shook his hand and made my plunge through the open bay.

"We bailed out between Ramsgate and Dover in Kent, most of the earlier ones out landing near the water, but on land. I, being the last to parachute, came down a bit further inland, but not too far away from them. Lt. Kilgore broke one leg in two places when he hit the ground.

Lt. Glickman continued, "I was the last man to bail out inasmuch as I was trapped in the nose turret after it had been shattered by flak and the power to turn it in position for me to fall backward had been cut off. I was forced to break my way out although I was wounded and hit in several places. The Air Force Telex indicated that I was blinded by blood and was led to the bomb bay simply was not true.

"When the bailout bell rang, you can imagine the mass exodus! But now I crawled to the nose wheel area, snapped on my chest chute, and because my legs were useless, crawled through the tunnel under the flight deck to the bomb bay catwalk. The only men I saw on board at that time on the flight deck were Col. Vance and the dead pilot, Captain Mazure. In fact, I had to push the bombardier, Milton Segal off the catwalk before I rolled off the catwalk myself.

"I withheld opening of my chute for a time until I was sure no other aircraft was in the vicinity, and also I was very close to the Channel, with the breeze bringing me back over land. I was lucky in that I landed on the lawn of the Royal Marine Hospital at Deal, on the cliffs of Dover."

Lt. Bail continued, "When I visited Col. Vance in the hospital, he told me that he had worked himself forward, crawled into the co-pilot's seat, and turned the aircraft away from that populated area and back out to sea. Captain Mazure's body was still in the pilot's seat so he was forced to get into the co-pilot's position. When the ship hit water, the bombs exploded and destroyed the aircraft, somehow not killing the Colonel. Finding himself still alive and conscious, the Colonel began swimming toward the shore, injured leg and all, until rescued by a ship in that vicinity.

"Later at the hospital, the Colonel told me that he was eager to get back into combat, and would as soon as he recovered. Most unfortunately, the Colonel was killed when he was being returned to the States and his airplane was lost at sea. After the war, I was invited to attend the ceremonies when the Colonel's widow was presented with his Medal of Honor."

On the 19th of March, 1945, Lt. Bail, with another crew, was shot down over Germany and became a POW.

Lt. Nathaniel Glickman added, "A number of years ago I attended a reunion of our Second Division at the Air Force Academy. There, I met a co-pilot of one of the Wing crews on our flight who related the following story, which added a new bit of drama to the end of this flight. He had witnessed the damage to our plane and had counted the number of our crew that had bailed out. Our plane was still airborne and headed inland, but as you know, was losing altitude. Someone had contacted the authorities, which, in turn, were concerned that the plane might crash into a built up area and allegedly, gave orders to them to shoot it down. Just as they turned to follow those instructions, our plane began its very slow turn to the left back towards the Channel where both Segal and I bailed out. The order, of course, was canceled, when it was noted that the plane was still under control and attempting to turn. You can imagine my feelings when I heard this story!"



"I, too, visited Col. Vance at his hospital as soon as I was able to get around with a cane. He informed me that he had submitted my name for the Silver Star which I was informed a month later had been approved. However, the medal was not given to me until this past May (1986) at a formal dress parade at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

"I returned to combat within a month. I had a sergeant carry the bombsight to the ship and I limped along with a cane during my first few flights. Later, I was listed as Pilotage Navigator/Bombardier and 66th Squadron's Lead Bombardier, and completed 19 more missions."

Only Lts. Bail and Glickman and the two waist gunners flew additional operational missions! T/Sgt. Skufca was sent to Station 93 Hospital near Oxford for treatment of his shattered ankle and leg wounds. Skin grafts were necessary, so he remained there for several months. Eventually he was moved to Station #318 near Norwich while his severed Achilles tendon healed. On December 18, 1944, he was evacuated to the U.S. for further grafts and treatment. He never walked normally again.

This mission was the subject of a lengthy article called "Sometimes I Can't Believe It" in True magazine. The author was Carl B. Wall. Wall describes MISSOURI SUE as "a plain, businesslike aircraft...no fancy lettering on its sides...no pictures of pretty girls." Wall also tells a story about Vance's recovery after losing his foot: "During one of the depressed stages, he was crutching along a London street when an eight-year-old boy yelled at him: 'You'll never miss it, Yank!' The kid's mother came up to me and apologized, says Vance. Then she explained that he had lost his own foot in the blitz and was getting along fine with an artificial one. That was the biggest boost I got. Felt a devil of a lot better after that."

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The following is the transcript of an interview of Colonel Vance by Bebe Daniels. It was part of a BBC American Eagle Broadcast. Daniels interviewed Vance at an American Evacuation Hospital in England.

Daniels: Lt. Colonel Vance was born in Enid, Oklahoma. And Enid Oklahoma is mighty proud of him. It was on June 5th 1944 when he was leading his group to attack the famous German Coastal Defenses installations where the invasion attack was made on the following day.

Col. Vance, I wonder if you can tell us what happened on this date?

Vance: We didn't meet any fighters on the way in but met a lot of flak. That's when they knocked out three of our engines about 10 seconds before arriving over our target. We went on in and delivered our bombs on the duplicate? Target and hit it right on the nose. That's when my right foot was shot off and when our 1st pilot, Capt. Mazure was killed. The bombardier said, "We hit it right on the nose!" Capt. Mazure was just strong enough to reply, "Good boy." Those were his last words. Then the co-pilot took over while Lt. Bernard Bail put a tourniquet around my leg. Just then the ship stalled and I took over.

Daniels: With your leg in that condition?

Vance: You don't think about what's wrong with you in an emergency like that, Bebe. It was then that I heard our Radio Operator, S/Sgt. Quentin Skufca had been hit.

Daniels: What happened to him?

Vance: Well, he and T/Sgt Hoppie, my engineer, are here with me at this hospital. Lt. Kilgore was here yesterday but he has gone back to the States with a mending broken leg. I would like you to meet my radio operator S/Sgt. Skufca. He's from Cleveland, Ohio.

Daniels: Thank your, Colonel. Now tell me what happened to you on that foot?

Skufca: Have you seen this?

Daniels: That's a piece of shrapnel, isn't it?

Skufca: It feels much better since they dug it out of the bones.

Daniels: (Laughing).

Skufca: They dug this thing out of my leg. I'm going to show it to my girl in Chicago.

Vance: Here is my engineer, Earl Hoppie. He is from Chicago.

Daniels: What happened to you, Earl?

Hoppie: Well, I was in the top turret when I heard this fellow say over the intercom that #1 engine was smoking. So I got out of my turret to shut off the gas. Just then there was another burst of flak under the ship that cut off all of our gas lines. I tried stopping the leaks by wrapping my jacket around the pipes but it didn't work. I got a shower bath of gas. My eyes were full of gas. I kept the bomb bay doors open to let the gas out, but it was hopeless. So I went back onto the flight deck and told Col. Vance, who ordered all of us to bail out and we did.

Daniels: You couldn't land then, could you, Colonel?

Vance: Not very well. The plane would have exploded with all of that gasoline. Besides, I had gotten my bearing by then. I feathered three of the props, but the fourth wouldn't feather. It was still running alright. By that time we were over England at about 12,000 feet and still gliding.

Daniels: Did you bail out then, Colonel?

Vance: No, I found out that Sgt. Skufca was in the waist area and badly injured, and couldn't bail out. So, naturally, I couldn't leave him. All of the rest did bail out and I flew the ship down to crash-land in the Channel. The windshield was cloudy with vapor and foggy, so that you could hardly see through it. I was lying on my stomach between the pilot and co-pilot seats with my hands on the wheel. I tried to get up but my foot was lodged around the flight deck. I could not take my hands off the controls to get my leg loose, as the plane would have stalled. It was hard to hold the ship level because the right elevator was shot away.

Somehow or other when I got down close to the water, I put my parachute pack on my head so that I would not break my neck with the shock of impact. When the ship hit the water, the top turret came off, pinning me down. It was lying on my back and I was under about six feet of water. I figured that was the end of the line for me.

Then I did something rather odd. I knew pilot Mazure was dead, but I reached over with my left hand and released his safety belt and pulled him up over my head toward the escape hatch. And then just as I thought that my lungs would burst, something inside of the ship exploded and I was blown to the surface.

After I got out I tried to climb back over the top of the ship to get Sgt. Skufca, the injured radio operator, but I just didn't have the strength. But it was just as well because, unbeknown to me, the two waist gunners had bailed him out.

I just had sufficient strength left to inflate my Mae West and the last thing I remember was the British air/sea rescue ship. Later, I woke up in the hospital.

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## 20 June 1944

### Politz, Germany

The extensive oil refineries near Politz again was the primary on this mission. Results were most gratifying as the bombs covered that area with an excellent pattern. 60 enemy aircraft were seen, but only seven attacked the 44th's formation. One 68th Squadron aircraft was damaged and was last seen heading for Sweden.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-94892 U, Keller	BATTLIN' BABY	MACR #6149
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew interned	
KELLER, RICHARD I. ASN 0-812607	Pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt. Selma, California
WILT, KENNETH E. ASN 0-819238	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt. Cape Charles, Virginia
GAUTREAUX, LIONEL E. ASN 0-706925	Navigator Interned, returned	2nd Lt. Thibodaux, Louisiana
DUDZIK, LEON R. ASN 0-689534	Bombardier Interned, returned	2nd Lt. Whiting, Indiana
FERRARA, HAROLD M. ASN 327003474	Engineer Interned	S/Sgt. Brooklyn, New York
WEST, WILLIAM A. ASN 32752930	Radio Oper. Interned, returned	S/Sgt. Collingwood, New Jersey
PUCKETT, HAROLD E. ASN 36294272	RW Gunner Interned, wounded	Sgt. Barnum, Wisconsin
GILBERT, LLOYD W. ASN 34708051	LW Gunner Interned, returned	Sgt. Alexander City, Alabama
FRANTZEN, FRANK C. ASN 36294272	Tail Turret Interned, returned	Sgt. Bronx, New York

The MACR reports that at 1001 hours, Lt. Keller's aircraft was reported to be hit by flak in the vicinity of Politz. He called on Channel A of VHF, after bombs away, reporting "He had sustained considerable damage, that one engine was out, and he was heading for Sweden. He did not need assistance and would someone notify his wife."

Sgt. Harold Ferrara, engineer, sent this information: "We were on the bomb run when we were hit. A flak burst knocked out the electronic control for the turbo superchargers, all four waste gates went into the open position. This, in effect, put us in low blower and no power. With the bomb bay doors open, full load of bombs, and now no superchargers, it felt like we hit a stone wall. We continued on the bomb run alone as we could not keep up.

“After bombs away, I tried to set-up (close) the waste gates with a spare amplifier, but had no luck. We also had fuel cell damage, so getting back to England was impossible due to lack of fuel. The only crewman hit was Harold Puckett, waist gunner.

“Puckett had a piece of flak go straight through his right thigh. He wasn’t bleeding very much but was in great pain. I got the morphine from his escape kit attached to his parachute harness and administered the shot. He was going to be okay.

“After landing at Malmo’s military airport we were greeted by a Swedish officer who proclaimed ‘the war is over for you gentlemen.’

“All of my crew left Sweden after only a short stay. I was retained for 13 months as I had had B-24 training at the Ford Plant and the Swedes wanted my experience in repairing all those airplanes. At war’s end, I flew as co-pilot for six or seven trips between Sweden and England, helping to return many of our aircraft!” BATTLIN’ BABY was one of these planes that was returned to U.S. control – June 19, 1945

21 June 1944

Genshagen/Berlin, Germany

The 44th’s target was the Daimler-Benz Motor Works, but very bad weather prevented visual bombing, so Berlin was hit utilizing the PFF method of bombing. One 66th Squadron aircraft crash-landed at Shipdham with wounded aboard, and a 506th Squadron crew, flying a borrowed plane, did not return.

*Note: This was the 8th Air Force’s first shuttle raid to Russia, in which 1st Division B-17s flew on to bases in Mirgorod and Poltava.*

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-24109, Smith	FLAK MAGNET		Crash-landed
68th Squadron Crew:			
SMITH, JOY M. ASN 0-690265	Pilot	1st Lt.	Weeping Water, Nebraska
COOPER, PAUL	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	Colorado Springs, Colorado
POWNER, BENJAMIN ASN 0-700765	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Long Island, New York
BARLOW, DAVID A. ASN 0-696193	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
DEWATERS, EUGENE J. ASN 32783124	Engineer	T/Sgt.	Staten Island, New York
SPROWL, KENNETH ASN 15389068	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Bradenton, Florida
SHELTON, JOHN H. ASN 17159935	RW Gunner Neck Wound	S/Sgt.	Centrاليا, Illinois
ELIAS, JACOB ASN 13100737	LW Gunner Wounded	S/Sgt.	New York City, New York

FENNER, ROSS W. ASN 37665920	Tail Tur	S/Sgt.	Independence, Louisiana
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S/Sgt. Jacob Elias, waist gunner on this crew, referred to this mission in his story "Bedtime Ramblings" printed in the June 1978 edition of the "Journal", front page. In this article he states in part, "I was assigned to the FLAK MAGNET, Joy Smith in charge. What a pilot! Cool, efficient as a computer, a rock of strength. Another time (21 June 44) Johnny (Shelton) gets a piece of flak in the neck and the bombardier (Lt. Barlow) and I are frantic in our efforts to stem the blood. He made it in spite of us."

Sgt. Elias also said that he seriously doubted if John would survive, because at first it looked so very serious with the loss of so much blood. Elias didn't say so, but he was peppered with flak, himself.

In the book, "Jaws Over Europe" on page 29 (count out to that page since the pages are unnumbered) there are two photos of Sgt. John Shelton being removed from FLAK MAGNET and attended to by Capt. K.E. Comer, flight surgeon.

When Sgt. Shelton was recuperating, he visited London only to be wounded again when a V-1 Buzz Bomb landed near him!

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-100411 E-Bar, Howe	MACR #6150
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#### 506th Squadron Crew:

HOWE, NORMAN E. ASN 0-1101878	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Tucson, Arizona
HENDERSON, GORDON W. ASN 0-817211	Co-pilot KIA, murdered	2nd Lt.	Brisbin, ? Pennsylvania
HARRIS, DAVID MILTON ASN 0-709365	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Steubenville, Ohio
BINKLEY, FRANKLIN W. ASN 0-700097	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Park Ridge, Illinois
SMITH, ROBERT E. ASN 34623289	Eng/Waist POW	S/Sgt.	Indianapolis, Indiana
FALLER, HENRY D. ASN 39854563	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Belleville, Michigan
STOLTZ, FRANK ASN 37558907	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Miles City, Montana
McCONNAUGHAY, Wm L. ASN 17020809	Top Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Larned, Kansas
TERMIN, FRANCIS E. ASN 13084734	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	La Jose, Pennsylvania

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William McConnaughay sent his article containing 2450 words covering his experiences. The following is a condensation of it relating to this day: "Our trip to Berlin, our fourteenth into Germany, was uneventful due mostly to a good cloud cover, with only isolated pockets of inaccurate anti-aircraft fire. About forty to fifty miles out from Berlin, our cloud cover dissipated,

and we could see a light haze hanging over Berlin. Our flight plan routed us southeast to a point approximately twenty miles south of Berlin, and then due north across the city.

“As we turned north and quickly approached our target, the whole damn sky, almost as far as the eye could see, was a blazing inferno created by the hundreds of anti-aircraft guns installed there. Off to each side, German spotter planes were flying at our exact altitude, relaying this information to the gun batteries below, increasing their efficiency for their devastating barrage on our bombers. Although we tried to ignore it, we could see bombers ahead of us falling out of formation, some blowing up, and an ever increasing number of parachutes floating down over the city.

“Even at this time, I believe all of us thought we lived a charmed life and were going to make it, but seconds before we were to drop our bombs, a shell exploded in the vicinity of our left outboard (#1) engine. We dropped out of formation like a ton of bricks and continued to lose altitude until we could jettison our bomb load. With the bombs gone, we were able to stabilize our position and were soon over the outskirts of Berlin. A quick check of the plane revealed our condition not critical, and our navigator, Lt. Harris, estimated we could be in Sweden in approximately 35 minutes.

“My job as a gunner on the crew was to operate the top turret located on top of the aircraft, directly over the flight deck. As I rotated my turret, I saw some Me 109s closing rapidly from the rear. These fighters had a 20-mm cannon in the nose and three .30-caliber machine guns in each wing. As the first two fighters made their pass at us, their cannons made gaping holes in our left rear stabilizer and the left wing. When the third plane came it, I was nearly hypnotized when .30-caliber bullets started penetrating the fuselage on the top and rear of our bomber ... and they came directly in a line for my turret. In what seemed an eternity, .30 bullets came crashing into my turret through the plastic bubble!

“Although slightly dazed from this experience, I remember something had hit me in the neck, and I was convinced it was one of those bullets. I immediately had the sensation of blood running down my neck and a very sticky feeling in my flight suit. Instinctively, I followed the fourth fighter through his pass and about burned out my gun barrels trying to get revenge. He came right in on top of us, and just before he turned it over to go down and away, he raised his hand and waved! Although he was long gone, I remember waving back at him.

“Surveying the damages from my vantage point, I could see that the entire left rear stabilizer was gone and approximately one-third of the left wing. It seemed like there were thousands of holes. Our plane at this time was completely out of control, and I’m sure that the pilots were far too busy to inform the rest of us what we could expect.

“In the confusion that followed, I forgot I had a .30-caliber bullet through my neck and probably was bleeding to death. Then reality came back, positive that I was dying, I became hysterical. I remember hollering incoherently, but then, just as quickly, I became calm and at peace with the world. All sorts of thought then poured through my mind.

“I was brought back to reality when the pilot announced over the intercom that he could handle the plane, and we should all parachute out as quickly as possible. I immediately crawled out of my turret and desperately started looking for my parachute that I had so nonchalantly tossed on the flight deck earlier.

“Crawling on my knees, I finally found it and as I stood up and started to unbutton my heated jacket to snap on my chute, I noticed several fragments of plastic about the size of a dime fall out onto the floor. As I continued to unbutton my jacket, I realized my flight suit was soaking wet – with sweat! It slowly dawned on me that I had found my .30-caliber bullet and the blood.

“Crawling over to the bomb bay, I jumped out, following my plan to free fall as long as possible. But suddenly I was in a small, low-flying cloud and could not see the ground. I immediately tried to open my chute but nothing happened. With my heart skipping beats, I looked down and there was my left hand desperately trying to keep my right hand from pulling the ripcord. Under control now, I pulled the cord for a short ride to earth with my chute blossoming above me.

“With all of this activity, I had completely forgotten about the rest of the crew. Looking up, I quickly counted eight chutes – all of the crewmen. They were all in the same general area and still about a mile up. Breaking almost every rule, I headed on a dead run for a relatively small wooded area where I stopped, sat down and became violently ill at my stomach. I had not been there long when I heard the roar of airplane engines, followed by limbs being torn off trees, and then a shower of airplane parts and pieces of trees. Looking up, directly over my head and not thirty feet high, a four-engined bomber was crashing through the trees and finally came to rest less than a quarter of a mile in front of me!

“Dazed for a bit by the fire, smoke, exploding ammunition, I was jarred back to reality by a large explosion – probably the gasoline. I jumped up and ran out of the woods, back into the potato field where I had landed, and then noticed a small green spot ahead and ran for it – anything was better than this open field. The green area turned out to be far better than I had dreamed because it was a hole perhaps 30 feet in diameter, about eight feet deep, a small pond of water in the middle and small trees and shrubs around the entire bank. Soon I was into the water up to my armpits, my head and shoulders well covered by a small tree...

“I was captured 10 to 12 days later while trying to get to Sweden because I got completely lost and didn’t know where I was. I was sent to Stalag Luft I.”

Sgt. Faller, radioman, answered a few questions, also, “As I recall, we did have a borrowed plane, but I don’t remember why. We received a direct hit through #1 engine just before the bomb run, and fell out of formation. After salvoing our bombs we headed cross-country hoping to tag onto some formation, but were hit by about six Me 109s who took turns at us. When it became evident that we could no longer stay airborne (about 12,000 feet), we bailed out and all became POWs except our co-pilot Henderson. He was killed by civilians when he landed.”

Frank Stoltz, Howe’s right waist gunner, recalls: “I was in the top turret gun position when we were shot down. We were just south of Frankfurt, Germany. Somehow I got caught in the slipstream of my parachute and the intense pressure broke several of my ribs. I’m not even certain that my chute opened all the way.

“About 15 minutes after I reached the ground, a three-seated vehicle carrying six or seven German officers and civilians came roaring across the field. They ordered me to get up. As I painfully rose, I noticed the skull and cross bones on their caps. They were from the dreaded SS troops that reportedly did not take prisoners. I thought they would kill me right then. They only beat me a little, mostly the civilians. It was nearly a month before I got any treatment for my broken ribs: some bandages from medic at the POW camp.

“I was in about three prison camps. During the last four months, we were on the road ahead of the lines. The skies were constantly flashing with the explosions of artillery and bombs. Our biggest fear was the civilians and the American fighters. They shot up everything that moved. I still have a scar on my head from a German civilian’s walking stick. One member of our crew was hit with a rifle butt and lost all of his front teeth.”

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## 27 June 1944

### Creil, France

The primary target was the site of a rail tunnel and marshalling yards in this German defensive area. Flak was intense and accurate over the target, with many 44th BG aircraft sustaining damages. Three men were wounded by flak, and the 506th Squadron lost two aircraft – one over the continent and the other crash-landed at Manston, Kent on the return. One of the wounded men was from the 67th Squadron.

67th SQUADRON:	1st Lt. W.D. Carter’s Crew		
67th Sq., 42-52616 C-Bar, Carter	GLORY BEE		Returned to base
67th Squadron Crew:			
CARTER, WILBUR D.	Pilot	1st Lt.	Omaha, Nebraska
ARTERBURN, ROLEY	Co-pilot Wounded, lost three fingers	1st Lt.	Lamarr, Nebraska
STILL, JACK W.	Navigator	1st Lt.	Prescott, Arizona
KERR, JESS F.	Bombardier	1st Lt.	Irving, Texas
BERGMAN, HAROLD F.	Engineer	T/Sgt.	Hurst, Texas
WHISLER, REYNOLD T.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Pottstown, Pennsylvania
GREGORY, COLLIN	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Salem, Virginia
MAULE, DONALD A.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Mondamen, Indiana
WOOD, EUGENE	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Wichita, Kansas

S/Sgt. Donald A. Maule made these comments in his personal diary, “Our 9th Mission – 27 June 44. We almost got it today. Artie (co-pilot Arterburn) got three fingers cut off of his right hand by flak. The same burst of flak also cut out all of the instrument wires, a hydraulic line and Artie’s oxygen supply. We got hit at 23,000 feet. We counted at least 20 holes, all from flak. It sure was close! One piece went out through the left tire and also cut (frayed) the aileron cable.

“We crash-landed with three engines, no brakes, and the left tire flat – and the aileron on the left side was out. Everybody said it was the best landing like that they had ever seen. They took Artie



right to the hospital as soon as we got stopped. We did not land until 8:45 PM, as this was an afternoon mission, and we did not take off until 3:15 PM.”

## 506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #41-29496 Bar-Q, Scudday	ARIES	MACR #6744
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*Note: This aircraft was also known as RAM IT-DAMMIT.*

## 506th Squadron Crew:

SCUDDAY, BERNIE L. ASN 0-682906	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Forsan, Texas
FARRELL, JOHN A. ASN 0-755660	Co-pilot KIA, buried Epinal (B-31-8)	1st Lt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
McCORMICK, RAYMOND A. ASN 0-689617	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
RICHARDSON, PAUL ASN 0-752904	Bombardier KIA, buried Epinal (B-32-8)	1st Lt.	Riverside, California
WYCHECK, JOSEPH E. ASN 13116002	Engineer KIA, buried Epinal (A-21-28)	T/Sgt.	Treskow, Pennsylvania
VENTURA, ANTHONY J. ASN 32551956	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Falcuner, New York
TEPE, CARL W. ASN 18184357	Nose Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Canadian, Texas
RIES, ROBERT P. ASN 35669582	RW Gunner KIA, buried Epinal (B-33-8)	S/Sgt.	College Hill, Ohio
ACUFF, COYLE J. ASN 14134043	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Washburn, Tennessee
WARREN, LESTER D. ASN 13078765	Tail Gun. KIA	S/Sgt.	Wilmington, Delaware

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The MACR reports that this aircraft was hit by flak approximately 30 seconds before bombs away, at 23,500 feet. It is believed hits were chiefly in the radio compartment since many flares were observed at same time. Aircraft went into a steep glide, later going into steep dive at about 15,000 feet. This aircraft was afire at this point. It crashed or exploded just above the ground. One chute was observed to open, perhaps one other.

1st Lt. Raymond A. McCormick (now an M.D.) sent me his recollections: “The history of #41-29496 and crew is reasonably accurate. We were on an unusually long bomb run from Rheims, France, straight into the target which was a bridge over the Seine River, just north of Paris. There was a G-H aircraft (radar controlled) in the lead, being vectored from England. In establishing the bomb run, he was all over the sky, and our bombardier, Paul Richardson, flying in the deputy lead slot, decided to go up on the flight deck because he said he could not follow the lead ship through the bomb sight. This was a fatal decision! Carl Tepe and I were in the nose when we were hit. (M. Dyer reported, “went belly-up”)

“I saw Carl start to come out of the nose turret, and I turned to open the nose wheel doors. Those doors were kinked upward and jammed. I made a wild dive at the doors that propelled me out of the nose wheel opening. I found out later that Carl Tepe had hooked his shoe laces on the

gunsite, and had some difficulty freeing himself from the electrically heated felt boots. He did, however, get free and was picked up on the ground shortly after parachuting.

“Coyle Acuff, a waist gunner, reached for his chute on the plywood floor that had replaced the ball turret, when the plane began to burn and he thinks he was blown out through the floor! He hung onto his chute and placed it on his chest in midair. One of the other gunners in the rear, either Warren or Riess, bailed out and did not open his chute at once, but when he did deploy it, the chute went through the propeller of the number one engine of another 44th plane that was trailing the formation at approximately 1500 feet below.

That airplane was piloted by a Lt. Milliken (lost at a later date). His co-pilot was Manierre, from Lake Forest, Illinois. I do not know if it was Warren or Ries, but the chute then became a long, single rope-like structure, and I followed it all the way to the ground. A terrible way to go!

“The flight deck was destroyed by that original flak burst, which entered behind the nose wheel and took out the entire flight deck – a direct hit. I looked back from the navigation compartment and the entire flight deck was empty, and it looked like a big canoe. No roof!

“Since I had impulsively opened my chute at about 20,000 feet, I think, it took me a very long time to get to the ground. It seemed about 20 minutes. I fell in a wooded area, caught between two birch trees, like a towel in a clothespin. I sustained a partially ruptured urinary bladder for which the Germans hospitalized me at Beauvais, France. Later, I met Tepe and Acuff at a transient camp in Beauvais. They went to Memel, in Lithuania, and I went to Stalag Luft 1. In this camp with me were at least twenty other officers from the 44th BG.”

Lt. Jack Wind, pilot of an adjoining 506th plane, stated, “Bernie and I talked about this mission that morning – it was the 31st for both of us, and we hoped it would be our last. Sadly, it was for both of us as his was the HARD WAY.

“He was flying deputy lead and I led the 2nd element, just behind him. When we turned onto the bomb run, our leader was fouled up and we were six minutes behind the lead squadron. They dropped their bombs with a smoke marker and the German Ack-Ack used it to zero in on while our leader followed the smoke marker on the bomb run. I recall calling the leader and I think Scudday did also, yelling at him to change altitude.

“The Germans had us dead to right, but he flew right into the smoke. The first shell hit Scudday directly in the cockpit. I saw his window blow out with smoke and flames. The plane seemed to stagger, and then fall off into a spin. The next thing I knew, we were about five miles from the formation, flak all around us. My crew reported they saw one chute from Scudday’s plane.”

“My co-pilot said that I suddenly kicked rudder and slid away from the squadron. And I found a note in my diary that I said I had “blown my cork” and that was it! When I snapped out of the ‘panic,’ the co-pilot had the controls. The crew reported they saw one chute from Scudday’s plane, then the engineer (mine) reported our gas gauges were at zero as we approached the coast of France. We called Air-Sea Rescue for a vector to the nearest field in England, and gave the crew the option of bailing out over France, or to stay if I was to try for England. I never did like the idea of trusting that bundle of silk canvas at 20,000 feet. So we went into a glide with everything cut back and landed on a P-47 field in England. Found we had 800 gallons of fuel. Took off again and returned to base with another crew that had crash-landed at the same field.

The second 506th Squadron aircraft crash-landed at Kingsnorth, Kent, doing so successfully, except for one casualty. The official records make no connection between this crash-landing and the notation on June's casualty listing of Sgt. Santo Romeo dying from injuries, but they were the same.

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-50339 Bar-C, Tucker	FUEDIN' WAGON		Crash-landed
506th Squadron Crew:			
TUCKER, JAMES ASN 0-757629	Pilot	1st Lt.	Largo, Florida
TRUDEAU, ELMO C.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	California
WILSON, ALFRED R. ASN 0-753096	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
ROMEO, SANTO ASN 14023217	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Memphis, Tennessee
KHOURY, RAYMOND ASN 32686237	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
MILLICAN, IVAN C. ASN 38370290	Nose Turret	S/Sgt.	San Saba, Texas
REEVES, THOMAS J. ASN 14059236	Waist Gun	S/Sgt.	Miccosukee, Florida
WHITESIDE, LEON M. ASN 34431924	Waist Gun	S/Sgt.	Forest City, North Carolina
MEYERS, JOSEPH F.	Ball Turret	Sgt.	Croydon, Pennsylvania
BREAKEY, KARL D. ASN 33408973	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Johnsonburg Pennsylvania

*Note: Sgt. Breakey was KIA on 8 August 1944.*

Lt. James Tucker, sent this information, "After our first two mission, I was made first pilot. I was never assigned a regular co-pilot to take my place, but we used any number of co-pilots from then on. That is why I cannot remember who our co-pilot was that day.

"On 27 June, 1944, our target was Creil, France, approximately fifty kilometers north of Paris. Enemy action had been rather heavy on the way in, on the bomb run over the target, and anti-aircraft fire was very heavy and accurate. We had direct hits on our #1 and #4 engines, knocking them out.

"After the bomb run, we were intercepted by enemy fighters because we were a cripple, and they knocked out our hydraulic and oxygen systems. Then we lost our #3 engine over the Channel on the way back, and lost our last engine, #2, near the coast of England. We just made it to a Fighter base just inland from the coastline. We were unable to lower the landing gear with the #3 engine and the hydraulic system out, nor could it be cranked down manually probably due to another malfunction.

“Upon learning that Sgt. Romeo [the engineer] had gone below the flight deck to try to lower the nose wheel and get it locked into place, I gave the order for him to return to the flight deck immediately, as we were very close to ground contact. However, for reasons unknown, he delayed his return too long and upon contact with the ground, the nose wheel was forced back and crushed him. His death was immediate. No other members of my crew were injured at that time.

“This was our seventh mission. I went on to complete my tour, but my tail gunner, Karl Breakey, was killed while on his last mission filling in on a new crew.” (8 Aug 44).

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There was another 506th loss this day, that being William S. Strange, waist gunner from Lt. Fred E. Stone’s crew, who bailed out over France.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-95209 Bar-W, Stone			Returned to base
506th Squadron Crew:			
STONE, FRED E. ASN 0-747516	Pilot	1st Lt.	
DERR, MERRITT E. ASN 0-747767	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
PETRICHUK, ANDREW L. ASN 0-684623	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
FLUGMAN, HERMAN G. ASN 0-543494	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
BROWN, CHARLES J. ASN 32371366	Engineer	T/Sgt.	
CORVELIERA, SAMUEL M. ASN 39118367	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
RYAN, ROBERT E. ASN 17059318	Well Gunner	S/Sgt.	
STRANGE, WILLIAM S. ASN 6255935	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Elysian Fields, Texas
FOUST, ROBERT M. ASN 18217202	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
YOANITZ, MORRIS ASN 36264653	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

At time of bombs away (1913 hours) this aircraft suffered flak damage in #3 booster pump connection to #3 gas tank, causing the fuel to pour out into the slip stream, then spraying into the waist window. Apparently Sgt. Strange thought the spray was smoke and the aircraft afire, or suspected fire to immediately erupt. Sgt. Strange quickly jumped out the camera hatch! The crew was not positive that his chute opened, but it is believed it did since others in the formation saw an open chute in addition to another chute that came from a B-24 shot down at the same time (Scudday’s).

Sgt. Robert Foust, the left waist gunner across from Sgt. Strange, supplied additional information: “On our mission prior to this one (25 June), Sgt. Strange observed a ship from

another Group flying close to us. It requested permission to join the formation for protection. We could see the crewmembers scurrying about trying to stop the flow of gasoline from battle damage it had received. A few minutes later, a fire blossomed out in the bomb bay and the pilot of this aircraft (named TUFFY) then dove out of formation, I'm sure, to keep from taking our B-24 down with him in case he exploded.

"As we watched, we could see the men bailing out of the rear hatch on fire! Some of the chutes opened, but they were on fire as well. It appeared that none of the crew escaped alive. Bill Strange remarked then that if we were ever hit like that, he was going to jump immediately, and advised the rest of us to do the same.

"It was our very next mission on the 27th that we were hit in the fuel transfer pump in the bomb bay, and all of us in the rear section were covered with fuel. Lt. Stone dove out of formation because of exploding B-24s of either side of us. (#s 41-29496 – Scudday's, and 42-110082 that crash-landed.)

"I had the rear hatch open throwing out chaff, and Bill Strange punched me in the back and handed me my chest type pack. After unplugging my oxygen hose, I dropped my flak suit and was putting on my chute. When I looked up, I saw Bill Strange bailing out of the rear hatch.

"By that time I was becoming a bit woozy from lack of oxygen and all my activities, but then the ship leveled off. Our pilot, Lt. Stone, had regained control, so I plugged my intercom back in and reported to the pilot that Strange had bailed out. Lt. Stone then explained the damage to us and told the rest of his crew that if anyone else wanted to bail out, they had his permission – but he was going to make every effort to get that ship back to base. He succeeded. No one else wanted to bail out."

Merrit Derr, the co-pilot wrote: "My logbook indicates the target was a railroad bridge and the total flying time was five hours 45 minutes. This was my 24th mission and I remember our crew feeling sorta cocky by this time; maybe even invincible. How stupid that was, as we learned later in the day. If I recall correctly, the weather was fine. At briefing, I was glad we had been scheduled for this mission. To me, the target seemed like it would be an easy mission; and one more toward completion of that 35-mission tour.

"It was always customary for Stone to fly the mission to target and after "bombs away," for me to fly back to base at Shipdham. This mission was no exception. As we approached the target, flak became very intense and accurate; over the target we were bracketed by it. Just about the time of bomb release, there was a tremendous explosion, which seemed to be just outside the co-pilot's window. Lt. Scudday's plane, Q-496, ahead of us and on our right turned belly up and went down on fire. We received numerous hits, which resulted in a fire in #3 engine; a large hole in a fuel cell that poured gasoline into the open bomb bay; cut hydraulic lines; and flak flying through the cockpit area. Why we didn't blow up, I'll never know.

"I glanced over my shoulder toward the bomb bay and the stream of liquid pouring into the bomb bay reminded me of a cow taking a leak. A piece of flak entered the flight deck from below, lodged in my seat and literally lifted me up against my seat belt. (I have this piece in my possession today). Another piece of flak entered the aircraft on the left side of the cockpit, flew across the instrument panel and out the window on the right side. Had Stone and I not switched jobs at that precise moment, his hands would have been on the yoke and would have been

shattered. There was debris flying all over the cockpit. We feathered #3 and hit the fire extinguisher button, which killed the fire. Charlie Brown, our flight engineer, and Lt. Herman Flugman, who flew with us on this mission as an observer, stopped the flow of liquid from the ruptured fuel cell as best they could by stuffing clothing into the hole. Brown then created plugs for the hydraulic lines by chewing on some pieces of wood he produced from who knows where.

“We started losing altitude and couldn’t keep up with the squadron. About this time, Bob Foust called on the intercom from his waist gun position to report that Bill Strange had bailed out. Surprise! Surprise! No bailout signal had been given, but apparently from the waist position, it appeared imminent. Meanwhile, we called our little friends for support and along came the most beautiful P-51 I have ever seen. He stayed with us to the coast. We checked our fuel supply and decided we would bail out after crossing the allied lines. Upon reaching that position, we again checked fuel and decided to stay with the airplane as long as she had fuel to fly.

“Again, after reaching England, we checked fuel and headed for Station 115. Eventually, we got back to Shipdham with only vapor remaining in the tanks and landed on the grass. This made the engineering officer very unhappy because the aircraft had to be towed back to its revetment.

“That night, we all went into town and got thoroughly soused, with the result that we nearly suffered several casualties from guys driving into ditches on their bikes as we peddled back to base.”

Here is William Strange’s account: “The report that Bob Foust gave you was very accurate, except for one minor detail. The ship he referred to that was badly shot up and flew on our wing actually happened on our second Brunswick raid. On this Brunswick raid, our combat wing encountered heavy fighter attack with the 392nd and 492nd having heavy losses. The ship that was damaged flew a short time on our wing, caught fire, and peeled off, and apparently had no survivors. I did say that under like circumstances I would try to bail out before getting trapped.

“I was grounded for about a week before the Creil raid with a bad ear that was damaged on landing on another raid. So I didn’t fly on the 25 June mission.

“The Creil raid was by far the most accurate, if not the heaviest flak I had ever seen. The flak exploding was like a cannon. The surroundings turned black with smoke. Usually smoke was mostly brownish, but not this time as it had blotted out the sun. I was looking directly at Scudday’s ship when it seemed to get a direct hit. I didn’t see how anyone could have survived, but later learned that three did.

“A few seconds after Scudday got hit, we got hit. As Bob Foust gave a good account of the things that happened after this will only tell about things after I bailed out. After leaving the ship it seemed that I was tumbling end over end and I didn’t like the feeling so decided to pull the ripcord. I should have waited because I almost passed out for lack of oxygen. Seemed like a long time to get to the ground which was about four miles. Looked out and could see smoke from where the bombs had been dropped. Also could see three parachutists.

“As I approached the ground, the wind caught my chute and carried me over a road that was approximately 300 feet below. Just before I was carried into some trees, put my feet together so wouldn’t straddle a limb, then I felt leaves brushing me and then hit the ground harder than I thought I should – then my feet were jerked out from under me and my head hit causing a few stars or whatever. I will always believe that chute partially collapsed at first, causing my fall to be

faster. Then at the end parachute and lines caught in limbs slowing fall down, but liner stretched, then recoiled jerking my feet from under me. I had to pull myself up to unfasten the chute, which was hung in the tree.

“As soon as I got loose from the chute, I started running away from the road. I had run about 200 yards when a French girl ran to me shouting, ‘Americans! Americans!’ She was, I thought, very good looking. Someone was hollering at her to come back. I thought it was probably her mother. She took my helmet and hid it under her bosom and then led me down a creek to cave or a cellar. However, the door was nailed up and wouldn’t open.

“Now here comes a German soldier with a rifle held across his chest. We saw him but he didn’t see us, but unfortunately, he stopped on the creek bank and started looking around. We weren’t hid well; he could turn around and see me anyway. Across the creek there were trees that I could run to and get away before he could turn around and get a good shot. Now let me ask you a question. What would you have done? I ran and got away, however, the girl didn’t follow me and have always wondered what may or may not have happened to her. After the war I should have gone back to France and tried to find out.

“So I was back running in the trees until I came to what looked like a small pond about 15 feet in diameter and in the center was a mound. It was dry with grass growing inside so I climbed inside because I was thinking someone else was probably looking for me. For them to see me they would have to get on the opposite side. Pretty soon I did hear footsteps and they came close and as they came close, I circled around the walls so as not to be on the side they were. It could have been the girl, however, I didn’t dare show myself.

“Now, everything got quiet. All I had to do is wait until dark and do like I had been instructed to do. However, I didn’t like the idea of trying to get out of this place at night because there were too many trees and creeks and gullies. I would walk quietly and hope I saw them first. First walked to the road, which was about 400 yards. There was a fence made of metal more like a chainlink fence that was about 8’ high that would have been hard to climb. Anyway, a car or truck came down the road that scared me back into the woods.

“So now, I decided to try the opposite way from the road and started walking and started to feeling confident, as the trees were thinning out and the ground was better to walk on. Could almost see the light at the end of the tunnel when a soldier with a blue uniform appeared with his rifle. I was in range. We seemed to see each other about the same time and this time there were no trees to run to. He signaled with his hand for me to come to him. He never really pointed his gun at me. He had me walk in front of him for about a quarter of a mile to a truck where about five soldiers were. He was different from the first soldier, the one who was looking at me, being about ten years younger. One of the five said something that sounded like a question as to where did he find me.

“I was taken to a small town where my escape kit, which I never opened, and my water were taken from me. I spent the first night sleeping or trying to sleep at an office where about ten soldiers worked.

“Back to how I felt about being captured. I didn’t like it and felt that with a little luck could have avoided capture. I can’t say what I should have done because I don’t know if that would have worked either.

“About a week later I was in Frankfurt, Germany, where I wasn’t interrogated. The only interrogation I faced was in Brussels, Belgium where they wanted the names of my crew. At first I refused, but was advised by another American to go ahead and give it for identification purposes, so I did. That was it as far as interrogation was concerned. At Frankfurt, they searched me pretty rough once, but no questions. I was sent to Stalag Luft IV. Carl Tepe, who was on Scudday’s crew, was one of the ten men in my room at IV. Coyle Acuff was in the same compound. I was liberated around 1 May 1945 at a hospital north of Munich.”

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29 June 1944

Magdeburg, Germany

Specific target here was the Krupp Aircraft Factory. Meeting the stiffest ground fire of the month, the 44th BG had 26 of their 36 aircraft damaged! Two of these planes were lost when flak damaged one, which lost control, and crashed into his wingman. Both 506th Squadron aircraft were lost. Also, one 66th Squadron aircraft was forced to crash-land; one 67th plane returned with one WIA.

On the return from the target, the following aircraft was forced to crash-land, damaged and out of fuel.

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-28767 L+, Handwright			Crash-landed
66th Squadron Crew:	No serious injuries reported		
HANDWRIGHT, CHARLES B.	Pilot	Capt.	
DENISUK, ALEXANDER	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
STOUGH, LOUIS F.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
PALERMO, JOSEPH S.	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
KENNELLY, HERMAN J.	Pil-Nav.	2nd Lt.	
MAY, CHARLES A.	Nav-V.	2nd Lt.	
GILLEY, JAMES A.	Engineer	T/Sgt.	Vacaville, California
FELLER, ROBERT J.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	Brookville, Illinois
McMULLEN, JAMES C.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Henryetta, Oklahoma
DENTON, FRANKFORD G.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	Williamsburg, Virginia
GOERNDT, WILLIAM W.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	Strool, South Dakota

Capt. Handwright was flying deputy lead of the 392nd BG’s “B” low left section. Time was 0965 at 22,000 feet over Magdeburg when bombs were dropped visually. Flak was intense and accurate, hitting and knocking out #2 engine. Aircraft was forced to drop out of formation, and lost altitude down to 14,000 feet. They continued to lose altitude until they were at 9,000 feet over the Zuider Zee, and could get only 135 MPH.

Having used so much fuel, they were forced to crash-land in a field between Lowestoff and Southwold (at Covehite) when all engines quit. The left wing was torn off and the fuselage broken. Aircraft was declared Category “E” and was salvaged. None of the crew was reported to have been seriously injured.



## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-51181 Bar-K, Landahl	CAPE COD SPECIAL	MACR #7088
506th Squadron Crew:		
LANDAHL, HOWARD K. ASN 0-677785	Pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (B-28-11)	1st Lt. Youngstown, Ohio
SMITH, RANDOLPH K. ASN 0-689390	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt. Stockton, California
PEDERSEN, NELS W. ASN 0-689636	Navigator KIA, buried Lorraine (C-10-79)	1st Lt. Chicago, Illinois
CONZONER, THOMAS C. ASN 0-543493	Bombardier POW	1st Lt. Appleton, Wisconsin
STAPLES, ROBERT L. ASN 39453890	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Post Falls, Idaho
YOUNT, WALTER K. ASN 37462347	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt. Fremont, Nebraska
SCHIESS, CHARLES F. ASN 32529251	Well Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Garden City, New York
DAVIS, JACK ASN 14161625	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Chattanooga, Tennessee
COLEMAN, UNDERWOOD ASN 14085780	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Lakeland, Florida
RINALDO, FRANK A. ASN 31082344	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt. Worcester, Massachusetts

The MACR states that after the flak hit it, this aircraft went into a slip to the right, and, when attempting to pull out of formation, its right wing contacted A/C #41-28829 near the top turret. This aircraft then went into a flat spin.

Sgt. Frank Rinaldo gave me his recollections, “We got hit about 10 AM. I remember that we were getting hit by flak all the way on the bomb run. I had my flak suit over all my body. When the bombardier said bombs away, I looked up at my window and it was all shattered – and that was enough for me. I said, ‘Let’s get the hell outa here!’ – and that’s when we got the first direct hit. It knocked me over, and when I started to get up, we were hit again. That is what I thought at first, but instead, it was when we crashed into Wescott’s plane, MY EVERLOVIN’ GAL. I was knocked out for a few moments and when I came to again, all I could see was open space where the bomb bay had been!

“Luckily, I had a back type chute on. The next thing I did was to dive out where the bomb bay used to be. Our two waist gunners bailed out on the bomb run, just before we got hit. Both the pilot and co-pilot were blown out after the collision. The radio operator and bombardier had jumped out of the bomb bay just after the direct hit and before the collision.

“Lt. Conzoner, Walter Yount and I were captured about two hours after we hit the ground. Also captured were Lt. Smith, co-pilot, and our two waist gunners, Jack Davis and Coleman Underwood. Lt. Landahl, after being blown out, parachuted to the ground safely, but was so seriously wounded that he died about an hour after being captured. So after 27 missions and five diversions, the war had ended for us.”

1st Lt. Thomas C. Conzoner, bombardier, remembers, "First, as I recall, we were #1 aircraft in a formation when our #2 aircraft, high and slightly right, received a direct hit, with the resulting wreckage colliding with our aircraft, which at the same time received severe flak damage, resulting in an explosion of the right, gas-filled wing.

"My first impression was that of intense silence and I became aware that I was outside and slightly above the nose section of our B-24. This, in turn, was separated from many pieces, both large and small, of what was left of our plane. I surmise that when the aircraft exploded, I was blown out along with the other crew members, both dead and alive. My only injury was slight, where a piece of flak hit my helmet and probably penetrated, as I still have a bump on that side of my head.

"I parachuted down with no problems, and ended up in the same field with Frank Rinaldo and Walter Yount. We attempted to hide in a grain field, but eventually were rounded up by the Land Watch within an hour or so after landing.

"They took us to a central gathering place where my co-pilot Smith and Aircraft Commander Howard Landahl were both alive. However, Landahl was mortally wounded in his upper right thigh to lower abdomen, which was fairly wide open and he was in shock. Smith was totally unharmed, but was in a daze from shock. I did what I could for Landahl, but he died in my arms about 20 minutes later.

"By that time, they had rounded up Coleman, so five survived and one was dead and four were missing at the time. The Wehrmacht arrived and put Howie in a cart and marched us about three miles to a village. There we were dispatched to the interrogation camp at Frankfurt. I supposed that they buried Howie in the area."

The second 506th aircraft involved in this collision was that piloted by 1st Lt. Gerald S. Westcott.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #41-28829 Bar-H, Westcott	MY EVERLOVIN GAL	MACR #7093
506th Squadron Crew:		
WESTCOTT, GERALD S. ASN 0-808918	Pilot KIA	1st Lt. Columbia, South Carolina
REEVES, ROBERT H. ASN 0-755597	Co-pilot KIA, buried Golden Gate Nat. Cemetery	1st Lt. Palo Alto, California
HINE, THOMAS L. ASN 0-692312	Navigator KIA, buried Ardennes (D-2-52)	1st Lt. Muskogee, Oklahoma
TOEPEL, ARTHUR C. ASN 0-752794	Bombardier KIA, buried Lorraine (K-17-12)	1st Lt. Dubuque, Iowa
THOMPSON, EDWARD J. ASN 16038586	Engineer KIA, buried Lorraine (D-36-35)	S/Sgt. Chicago, Illinois
DUBOSE, FRED A. ASN 18209799	Radio Oper. POW, wounded	T/Sgt. Florien, Louisiana
LAWRENCE, WALTER V. ASN 18186087	LW Gunner POW, wounded	S/Sgt. Kemah, Texas
ARTYM, FRANK Jr. ASN 16171652	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Harvey, Illinois

MORRIS, JOSEPH I.  
ASN 13096159

Tail Turret  
POW

S/Sgt.

Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania

The MACR states that this aircraft was hit by the right wing of aircraft #42-51181 as it was attempting to pull out of formation after sustaining flak hits. This occurred at 0952 hours over target of Magdeburg, 30 seconds after bombs away. S/Sgt. Walter V. Lawrence, left waist gunner, sent this story, "Our mission was to Magdeburg, 29 June, 1944. We were on the bomb run and flak was very heavy. I was flying left waist, the bombs were dropped, and then we received some damage from a close one. Pilot Westcott called me to check the damage in the bomb bay. As I opened the interior door, (to the bomb bay) fluid from the hydraulic reservoir was pouring out, and the bomb bay doors were still open, all the bombs had cleared. I learned later that Fred DuBose was on the other, cabin side, of the bomb bay to close the doors when the fire began in the bomb bay."

The ship flying off Westcott's left wing was Landahl's. Both were hit at the same time. Due to the flak hits, Landahl lost control and altitude, dropping right on top of Westcott.

Sgt. Lawrence continues: "Fred jumped from that position before the explosion. The last thing I remember was closing my door to the bomb bay, then talking to Westcott on the intercom to tell him the problems with our ship. I had returned to the left waist position when the explosion occurred, throwing me out – and the heat was terrific. My first thought was to pull the ripcord (I had been wearing my chute), which I did, and somehow my chute did not catch fire nor was it hit by flying debris.

"On the way down I counted chutes and assumed we all got out. At this point, I did not know about the collision with Landahl's plane. My only injury was a broken collar bone, pulled muscles in left arm, and sprained ankle when landing. Fred DuBose and I landed within about 200 feet of each other. After getting out of my chute harness and putting on those G.I. shoes strapped to the harness, Fred and I went to help Lt. Landahl who was about 100 yards from us. It was 1000 hours. A Land Watch farmer was coming for us as we approached Landahl. He quickly saw we were trying to help, so he went on searching for the others.

"Lt. Landahl was in great pain from wounds in thighs and legs but neither of our first aid kits had any morphine. But we did find some in his kit and gave him a shot. Both of his legs were mutilated, broken in several places and evidently had lost most of his blood during descent. I put a tourniquet on for a bit, but after cutting his trouser leg to see what was wrong, I removed it. His wounds were not bleeding; they had lost most of it already, I suspect. So Fred gave him another shot of morphine. But he died shortly thereafter.

"We were near a small village, but did not leave the field where we landed until that evening. Only three men from our ship survived. The tail section must have separated from the rest of the plane at the waist window area, making our escape possible. Three men from the other ship were also there with us at that time."

"Joe Morris, tail gunner, also was blown out and free from the debris after the explosion. There was no ball turret gunner on this plane as he, Joe Gasky, had been invited to London by Bebe Daniels to take part in her radio broadcast. So only nine men flew this day, one short."

*Note: Walter "Tex" Lawrence reported that this aircraft, MY EVERLOVIN GAL, appears briefly about halfway through the film, "The Men Who Flew the Liberators."*

Wounded on board one of the returning 67th Squadron aircraft was Sgt. Norman Tillner.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., 42-99967 Q-Bar, Henry	MYRTLE THE FERTILE TURTLE	Returned
67th Squadron Crew (partial):		
TILLNER, NORMAN	Waist Gunner WIA	S/Sgt. Bellflower, California

1st Lt. Howard C. "Pete" Henry, Jr. was piloting this aircraft, with Lt. Albert E. Jones as his bombardier. Lt. Jones had these remarks in his diary, "I flew the waist position because of the size of the turret – it was just too small for me.

"Over the target, Sgt. Tillner, the other waist gunner, was hit in the leg with flak. At that time the flak was heavy and accurate, damaging the ship in several places. The trim tabs on the rudder were shot off, the prop on #4 engine was hit, but still continued to work, I'm happy to say.

"While still over the target I gave Norm some first aid as the fighters would not attack at that time. The flak was too heavy for them to venture too close to us. The piece of flak was still in Norm's leg, I discovered when I cut away his heated suit, so I put sulfa powder on the wound. I did not apply a tourniquet because bleeding wasn't too heavy, later almost stopping due to the cold. Tillner refused a shot of morphine for the pain.

"It was three hours before we got back over England and Pete left the formation at the coast and came in as fast as possible. He circled the field so we could fire red-red flares to alert emergency crews of wounded aboard and then landed. An ambulance followed us to the dispersal area and a doctor took care of Sgt. Tillner, then drove away with him.

Sgt. Tillner spent a considerable time in a hospital, then when almost fully recovered, was transferred to Africa, where he completed his combat tour from that area of operations. He still carried around with him that large piece of flak.

## 4 July 1944

### Beaumont-Le-Roger Airfield, France

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-100412 V, Schaffer	Crew bailed out	
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew bailed out safely over England	
SCHAFER, BENJAMIN L. ASN 0804518	Pilot	1st Lt.
PELLEGRINE, JOHN D. ASN 0806512	Co-pilot	1st Lt.
DUNDA, ANDREW ASN 0687935	Navigator	1st Lt.
MOORE, KENNETH J. ASN 39081967	Nose Gun./Toggler	S/Sgt.
PARSONS, RUSSELL L. ASN 35662830	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.

7 July 1944

*44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties*

GARVEY, JAMES T. ASN 37272533	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
SWEENEY, GEORGE Jr. ASN 15335699	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
HOFKIN, JOSEPH ASN 12011009	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
McNUTTY, JOSEPH W. ASN 31193308	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.
KRZYZEWSKI, IGNATIUS P.	Unknown	S/Sgt.

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After three days of inactivity, the group celebrated the Glorious Fourth by blasting the Beaumont-Le-Roger Airfield in France. Heavy cloud cover delayed the take-off until 0600. Of 28 planes taking off, 27 of them attacked. The one plane failing to bomb was the 68th's #42-100412 V piloted by 1st Lt. B. L. Schaffer. This aircraft had problem with its #1 engine. The engine temperature began rising and the oil pressure was dropping. The pilots decided to feather the propeller on that engine, or shut it down, but could do neither. The navigator noticed oil and smoke coming from that ailing engine, so they elected to turn back. Shortly thereafter the engine simply ran away, completely out of control. Attempts to shut off the fuel supply also failed. The plane was shaking so badly that it could not be controlled, so the crew bailed out. There were no injuries.

Sgt. Garvey wrote, "First, I discovered that my chest chute was upside down. It took about ten minutes to work out that dilemma. Going down, I narrowly missed the steeple and lightning rod on a country church, then landed in a herd of dairy cows feeding in a pasture." An armed British soldier met him, rifle in hand, believing him to be a German airman. He led him to the castle of that infamous turncoat, Lord Haw Haw. There he was interrogated, met the other crewmembers, and returned to Shipdham.

The plane headed off on an erratic course southwest of London. Hours later it came down in an open field at Shalford near Guildford without damaging any property or killing anyone. It was salvaged on July 7.

Over the target, meager inaccurate flak was encountered but there was no damage to the group's planes.

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7 July 1944

*Aircraft Factory, Bernberg, Germany*

On the wallmap of Europe a red tape was stretched all the way from England to Bernberg, deep into Germany. We were briefed to expect fighters and heavy flak as the target in a fighter production area. About five minutes before reaching the target we were hit by fighters, approximately sixty, lined up fifteen abreast, who came in at us from 1 o'clock and slightly higher. They fired as they came in and you could see their orange 20-mm shells coming through the air. Three 68th Squadron aircraft were hit, one going down early, while the other two straggled and so were escorted by P-38s. Both were lost on the return.

E.A. Meyer, the navigator on the Rickett's crew, wrote: "This was the day of the 'Big Shoot.' We could not get fighter cover because our fighters were engaged with German fighters. We were

attacked by many types of enemy aircraft coming out of the sun just as we prepared to turn on the IP. Three aircraft were hit.” Rickett’s aircraft was also hit and the navigator’s window was shot out.

Rickett’s crew became the lead 68th aircraft. Some bombs hit the target, an aircraft plant, but most took out the main road through town.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-110035 Y, Steinke	ANY GUM CHUM	MACR #7355
68th Squadron Crew:		
STEINKE, DONALD H. ASN 0-807537	Pilot KIA	1st Lt. Toluca, Illinois
SOUTHERN, WILLIAM A. ASN 0-886976	Co-pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (D-9-37)	2nd Lt. Staten Island, New York
MITCHELL, DUANE E. ASN 0-698751	Navigator POW, seriously injured	1st Lt. Grant City, Missouri
HYBARGER, TOM P. ASN 0-666673	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt. Brackettville, Texas
RICH, FRED A. ASN 39276079	Engineer KIA, buried Ardennes (D-37-16)	T/Sgt. E. Los Angeles California
DUNN, EDWARD K. ASN 12126659	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt. New York City, New York
MALINOWYCZ, JEROME F. ASN 32286655	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt. Elmer Heights, New York
RABB, HAROLD M. ASN 18218358	RW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (A-28-4)	S/Sgt. Point, Texas
CHRISTIAN, CHARLES M. ASN 14094288	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Rome, Georgia
JONES, PHILIP G. ASN 36726983	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Palatine, Illinois

The MACR states in part that this aircraft was hit by the first enemy aircraft attack on this formation at 0928 hours at the IP. #4 engine was shot out and began smoking as the aircraft went into a steep right bank. One crew reported that this plane crashed and no chutes were seen. However, the entire formation was under a heavy attack and most crewmen had little time for observations.

Lt. Hybarger, bombardier, was a temporary fill-in this day, normally flying with Captain Charles Koch’s crew. He did not survive. Only two members got out to become POWs and I was able to contact only Lt. Mitchell, the navigator. He adds,

“I was on my 29th mission when we were hit by enemy aircraft between the IP and target. Our plane received a direct hit, and we immediately went into a spin. I do not know how I left the plane, but have always felt that the bombardier, Tom Hybarger, pushed me out the nose wheel door. I remember trying to exit, but the spin was throwing the doors shut.

“Therefore, I feel that he held the door handle and pushed me out as I was badly injured. I regained consciousness while free falling at about 4,000 feet. I realized I had a badly broken leg

and was paralyzed from my waist down. I made a delayed jump, opened my chute at about 800 feet and slipped the chute to land in a small wheat field. I was knocked out again on landing and was out for some time.

“When I came back to consciousness, I realized that I was badly wounded and unable to move my legs. So I removed my Mae West vest and waved it above the wheat in hopes of summoning assistance. In a short time I was captured by a group of civilians. They took me to a small village and placed me in a barn. After about eight hours, I was picked up by a military ambulance and taken to a German hospital, where I was given an anesthetic and my leg was placed in traction. I was placed in a very small room with no windows, where I remained in traction for three months.

“At Frankfurt, I was told that the rest of my crew were alive and I would see them when I reached a POW camp. However at the small village, a German man and a young girl who spoke English told me that all of my crew were killed and they showed me pictures of them. These were the pictures we carried in our escape packs.

“After three months in this room, I was placed in a long cast and transferred by train with a 1st Lt. escort to the Dulag at Frankfurt. I had recovered from my paralysis during the three months.

“From there I was shipped by train with a group of wounded prisoners to Ober Masfield and a POW hospital. Here an American physician, who was a prisoner, reset my leg. After a few weeks at this hospital, I was sent to a POW hospital at Meinnigen, where I remained until liberated on April 9, 1945.

“It was not until I arrived in New York that I learned positively that all my crew were killed except Jerome Malinowycz and myself. I’ve tried several times to contact his family but was never successful.”

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The second of the three 68th aircraft lost on 7 July was that piloted by 1st Lt. Ted L. Weaver.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-99966 W, Weaver	FULL HOUSE		MACR #7353
68th Squadron Crew:			
WEAVER, TED L. ASN 0-693829	Pilot Injured, evaded, returned	1st Lt.	Idaho Falls, Idaho
SHAMBARGER, WALTER B. ASN 0-700998	Co-pilot KIA, murdered, buried Ardennes (D-11-28)	1st Lt.	Montpelier, Ohio
PLATT, LAWRENCE Jr. ASN 0-706965	Navigator POW, wounded, injured	1st Lt.	St. Paul, Minnesota
REED, ROBERT E. ASN 0-699567	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
GNIADK, JOSEPH S. ASN 31258858	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Northridge, Massachusetts
FAHEY, DONALD F. ASN 37506294	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Kansas City, Missouri
CROUSE, MARVIN L. ASN 35631988	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Newark, Ohio
NALIPA, STANLEY G. ASN 15324363	LW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (A-37-1)	Sgt.	Poland, Ohio

VOIGT, LORIN L.  
ASN 19186262

Tail Turret  
POW

S/Sgt.

San Francisco,  
California

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*Note: Sgt. Nalipa was a Ploesti veteran.*

The MACR for this aircraft states that hits were observed on three engines, #1, #2 and #4, all occurring on the first pass by the enemy aircraft at the IP. This plane dropped to about 15,000 feet and straggled behind the formation. It successfully withstood another attack by Me 109s and was last seen flying with another 44th BG aircraft #170 – Wilson's. Both planes were being escorted by two P-38s when last seen.

This aircraft eventually crashed near Valthe, 8 km north of Emmen at 1100 hours. Dutch records show that the call letter shown on the tail surface could be W.

Ted L. Weaver sent his recollections, "July 7th, 1944 we were on our 23rd bombing mission, which was to an airfield at Bernberg, Germany. I was flying high element lead that day and just as we were making the standard 'S' maneuver to maintain position of close formation during the final turn onto the bomb run, we were hit by Me 110s out of the sun at 2 o'clock, high. Between their exploding shells and the flak that we encountered at the same time, we lost three of our engines and were able to feather only one of them. The other two windmilled until they froze up, and consequently caught fire just before we abandoned ship.

"Charley Harrison had been wounded in the head by an exploding flak burst inside of our ship on a previous mission [27 June 1944], so was not with us this day. Stanley G. Nalipa, who was flying substitute waist gunner for Harrison, was seriously wounded. Even though Crouse and Voigt made sure he had a firm hold on his ripcord – and was conscious when they helped him out the window and yelled for him to pull as he went out, his chute did not open. The Germans picked his body up about a mile inside of Germany from the Netherlands border.

*Note: Charley Harrison's head wound was not serious. He flew again on 16 July 1944.*

"With the exception of myself, all the rest of my crew landed inside Germany and were captured. Lt. Platt, navigator, was wounded in one leg during the attacks and injured his other leg while landing with his parachute. My co-pilot, Bart Shambarger was captured by a Nazi sympathizer (NSB'r). After capturing Bart, he offered his hand in a handshake gesture. When Bart reached out his hand, the NSB'r grabbed it and jerked Bart toward him and simultaneously stabbed Bart with his bayonet. The Germans spread the story that Bart had impaled himself on a fence post during landing. Joe Gnaidek, my engineer, was shown Bart's body right after he was killed and they told him Bart's chute hadn't opened.

*Note: The name of the Nazi sympathizer was G.J. Trechsel.*

"Bart's body was moved after the war to the American Cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz, Belgium. His murderer, the Dutch NSB'r, was turned in to the Allies after the war and sent to prison for eight and one-half years, then released.

"Being the ship's commander, and therefore, the last to bail out, I landed just barely on the border of Netherlands and Germany. FULL HOUSE was so near the ground when I got out that my chute barely had time to check my velocity before I hit the ground. I injured my back, but managed to crawl to a hiding place and later that evening got into contact with the Dutch Underground. I spent nine months in German-occupied Holland before getting back to Allied lines. All others from my crew became POWs.



“Incidentally, I am reasonably certain of the circumstances of Bart’s death since I have personally visited with the Dutch farmer whose daughter witnessed it.”

*Note: Ted Weaver’s wife Silvia has published a book of Ted’s experiences called “The Twenty-Third Mission.”*

Other sources have informed me that this NSB’r had been hounded by the Dutch ever since his release until he is thought to have committed suicide. Too, during the 40th anniversary celebration of the liberation of the Netherlands, Lt. Shambarger was distinctly honored by the people of Holland. At their request, I sent his photo to them so that they could display it in the Place of Honor at their ceremonies.

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The third and last 68th aircraft lost on the 7th was that piloted by 1st Lt. James A. Wilson.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-100170 G, Wilson	PATSY ANN II		MACR #7354
68th Squadron Crew:			
WILSON, JAMES A. ASN 0-690017	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Cushing, Oklahoma
MURPHY, CHARLES B. ASN 0-755594	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Ft. Smith, Arkansas
WHOLLEY, FRANCIS G. ASN 0-814470	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Malden, Massachusetts
MOOS, JAMES D. ASN 0-752892	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	Shreveport, Louisiana
RAUSCH, WILLIAM H. ASN 12170970	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Troy, New York
YOCCO, DOMINIC P. ASN 12024064	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Niagara Falls, New York
STEELE, CHAUNCEY H. Jr. ASN 33289520	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
WILLEMS, FRANK J. ASN 15060809	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Kenosha, Wisconsin
HOM, JIM Y. ASN 12188925	Nose Turret POW, badly beaten	S/Sgt.	New York City, New York
SCHNEIDER, ALLEN P. ASN 35720564	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Evansville, Indiana

*Note: It is believed that Jim Hom was badly beaten, but further details are not available.*

The MACR for this aircraft reads almost the same as for 966 W above. It was damaged at the IP, fell behind and joined up with 966 W, and was escorted by the two P-38s. The Germans reported that this plane was shot down 7 km southeast of Halberstadt by fighter pilot 1st Lt. Gabler.

Lt. Albert Jones, the bombardier in Capt. Henry’s aircraft, wrote, “I was just swinging the sight on the target when I chanced to look up. Just at that moment about 75 to 100 Me 410s hit the squadron ahead of us. I shut my eyes, expecting all of the 24s to be knocked down. However, they only got one (Steinke’s). I thought we were next to get an attack, but because of our position, high and to the right, and with a good formation, the Me’s took the lower section, the 68th’s squadron.”

A member of this crew [probably C.B. Murphy] provided this account: "Morrison had finished his tour on July 4, 1944, and Shanley, who was in the base hospital, did not make the mission of July 7th. Another 68th pilot, Arnold Larson, had completed his tour about the same time as Morrison, so his co-pilot, James A. Wilson was assigned to our crew as pilot for this last mission. Larson's tail gunner, Jim Y. Hom, also filled in for Shanley.

"With a new pilot, I suppose we were considered a "new" crew and were assigned a position in the low element at the end of the squadron's formation. Between the IP and the target, our group and squadron sustained a frontal attack by several Me 210s, resulting in the loss of our #1 engine. Out of formation as we crossed the target, in trail of our squadron, we dropped our bombs on the target, then tried to close the interval with a reduced load after bombs away. Before rejoining the formation, however, several Me 109s began attacks from the rear. Evading their fire as much as possible, our gunners later reported they succeeded in destroying two of the attacking fighters. As a fire in the forward waist section became uncontrollable, crewmembers in the rear bailed out. Seconds later, when the rudder controls went out and the plane fell off in a spin, the rest of us abandoned the aircraft. This action occurred between Bernberg and Halberstadt. Though several crewmen were slightly injured in the encounter, all left the plane and were picked up by Germans upon hitting the ground. The radio operator was later reported killed. Details are not known. Four of the crew, including myself, fell on the edge of the Halberstadt fighter base and were captured immediately by members of the Luftwaffe attached to the station.

"As Luftwaffe personnel at this base were relieving me of all personal effects except shirt, pants, shoes, socks, and underwear, a very excited young pilot came up to me and, through sign language, let me know that he was the one who had shot me down. [This must be the Lt. Gabler mentioned above.]

"Some accounts stated that eyewitnesses reported that our aircraft joined up with one of the other damaged 68th planes and both were seen being escorted by two P-38s, but I don't recall this.

"We were never able to determine what happened to the radio operator, Yocco. I did not see him as I exited the plane through the bomb bay.

"Eventually, the officers of the crew were sent to Stalag Luft III at Sagan (90 miles NE of Berlin) and the other crewmen to other camps in, I believe, northern Germany. Wholley, our navigator, was met at the front gate of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III, by his brother, who had been shot down about a year earlier. We were kept at this camp until late January 1945, when the Russians advanced their front to within 18-20 miles of Sagan. The Germans surprised all of us and marched the entire camp out across the countryside with about a foot of snow on the ground. We were marched to the west for about a week (about a hundred kilometers), placed on small box cars (WWI type), and transported to Stalag VII B at Moosburg, (not far from Munich). Here, we remained under much worse conditions than at Sagan, until liberated by the 14th Armored Division of Patton's Third Army on 20 April 1945."

## 11 July 1944

## Munich, Germany

The briefed target was Rein airfield near Munich, but heavy cloud coverage prevented visual bombing, so Munich city was bombed on a PFF assisted attack. Two aircraft were lost with one each from the 66th and 68th failing to return.

## 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-28776 E+, Zweig

MACR # not known

## 66th Squadron Crew (with two exceptions):

ZWEIG, LOUIS E. Jr. ASN 0-691130	Pilot Evadee, returned	1st Lt.	San Antonio, Texas
CONRAD, JAMES D. (448th BG)	Command Pilot Evadee, returned	Major	
BURCE, HAROLD L. ASN 0-697098	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Shinnston, West Virginia
QUAIL, JOHN L. Jr. ASN 0-739499	Navigator Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	Fresno, California
BRUCE, JAMES C. Jr. ASN 0-547126	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Gainesville, Georgia
THIELEN, CHARLES M. (448th BG) ASN 0-701346	Bombardier KIA, buried Normandy (I-24-26)	2nd Lt.	Racine, Wisconsin
MOLLEN, MILTON ASN 0-698486	Radar Oper. POW, leg broken	2nd Lt.	Brooklyn, New York
BAXTER, ORUS Jr. ASN 18193549	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Holdenville, Oklahoma
CALLAHAN, CORNELIUS J. ASN 32316551	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Bronx, New York
JESSEN, MAX M. ASN 38267506	RW Gunner KIA, buried Normandy (J-17-35)	S/Sgt.	Lake Charles, Louisiana
STRALLY, SAMUEL R. ASN 32734072	Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Waterloo, New York
SMITH, LOUIS F. ASN 31311918	Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Seymour, Connecticut

*Note: Major Conrad and Lt. Thielen were from the 448th BG.*

This 66th Squadron aircraft (PFF) was flying lead position for the 448th BG. On the route out from the target, in the vicinity of Ghent, Belgium, Lt. Zweig the pilot, reported by radio to Lt. Peterson, flying deputy lead, that he was running low on gasoline and that he, Lt. Peterson, should take over the lead as Lt. Zweig was going to take a shorter route back to base. Lt. Peterson assumed the position, and Lt. Zweig's aircraft was last seen heading toward England at approximately 1520 hours. This information obtained from the MACR.

*Note: The crash site is near Noyelles, France, 8 kilometers from Lille.*

1st Lt. John L. Quail, Jr. sent me the following: “Only four of our crewmen survived the bombing mission of Munich, Germany: Major James Conrad, Lts. Louis E. Zweig, Jr., Milton Mollen, and myself.

“We were part of the Pathfinder Squadron (66th) and, consequently flew to pick up Command Personnel from the designated Group and Squadron for each mission. This is the reason Conrad and Thielen are on the list. Major Conrad was flying co-pilot, which accounts for our co-pilot Burge being in the rear of the plane. This was my 18th mission.

“We had been damaged by flak over Munich so we left the formation and headed across France toward Dover, England. Near Lille, France, with the English Channel in radar range, we ran out of fuel. Suddenly the engines started sputtering and we knew we were out of gas. Orders were given to bail out, so Mollen and I opened the bomb bay doors and were the first out. What happened afterwards is not fully known, but I heard a B-24 aircraft go into a spin. It was a cloudy day and I couldn’t see the plane, but I did hear the explosion when it hit the ground. Everyone in the back of the plane went down with it.

“I landed in a field of chest-high grain, where I was able to hide temporarily; then I was found by some Frenchmen. They took me to a house and fed me – and gave me a place to rest. From the time that I bailed out until I landed and bundled up my chute, I seemed to be acting automatically. I did not even think of the predicament I was in until after that.

“With the help of the French, I met up with Zweig and together we found Mollen. He had broken his leg and we had to leave him, hoping he wouldn’t be caught. Later, we learned that the Germans did locate him but never knew what they did with him. Also, we found out that Conrad, like us, was picked up by the French Underground.

“Zweig and I moved out of the area with the help of French farmers, and after three days of moving toward Paris and Allied lines, we were picked up by the French Force of Interior. We stayed with a French family who took great risks in hiding and feeding us until liberated by the British Army in September. While living with this family, I was told that Conrad was safe and being cared for, but that all other crewmen were found dead in the aircraft. This family treated us royally, allowing us to have the Saturday night bath water first, while they waited their turn. Occasionally, when the Germans were not in the vicinity, we would don farmer clothing and make the trip into the local village.”

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-29544 T, Bonnet	FLAK ALLEY II		MACR #8250
68th Squadron Crew:			
BONNET, ALFRED D. ASN 0-805387	Pilot Injured, rescued	1st Lt.	Indianapolis, Indiana
VAN DYKE, THURSTON E. ASN 0-813980	Co-pilot Injured, rescued	2nd Lt.	Brockton, Massachusetts
OLSEN, OLAF W. ASN 0-702173	Navigator Injured, rescued	1st Lt.	Lihue, Kauai, H.I.
McCANDLESS, DONALD G. ASN 13038391	Nose Turret KIA, drowned, WOM	S/Sgt. Ardenes	New Castle, Pennsylvania
KUSHINSKI, EDWARD W. ASN 16004932	Engineer KIA, WOM	T/Sgt. Cambridge	Lake Bronson, Minnesota

GARVEY, JAMES T. ASN 37272533	Radio Oper. Injured/Rescued	T/Sgt.	Tracy, Minnesota
BUTLER, RICHARD J. ASN 13044499	RW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
BELSKY, GEORGE ASN 33300775	LW Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Aliquippa, Pennsylvania
BANNING, CHARLES E. ASN 12012298	Tail Turret KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Wilmington, Delaware

The following information was obtained from the MACR: "Ditched in Channel, four survivors. Just prior to bombs away, this aircraft was believed to have been hit by flak. #4 propeller began to run away, oil pressure dropped; consequently, the pilot (Bonnet) feathered this engine. He dropped his bombs and held formation until approximately one hour from the enemy coast. Here #2 engine oil pressure dropped and #2 prop had to be feathered.

"Lt. Bonnet left the formation and was picked up by four P-38 aircraft which escorted him. At the coast, #3 engine cut out, so he called the P-38s on Channel B of VHF and he called Colgate on distress procedure. He jettisoned as much equipment as possible, hoping to reach the English coast, but this appeared impossible. He ordered his crew to their ditching stations. He ditched!

"On hitting the water, the nose and top turret caved in and the aircraft broke apart at #6 bulkhead, with the rear section of the aircraft sinking almost immediately. The engineer was either killed or pinned by the falling top turret. The nose turret gunner McCandless, right waist gunner Butler, left waist gunner Belsky, and tail gunner Banning all drowned when the rear portion of the aircraft sank. The pilot, co-pilot, navigator and radio operator were rescued."

The radio operator, James Garvey, wrote: "One at a time, our engines began to fail. Every 500 miles we would lose another. When we got down to one engine, and it was coughing and faltering. Bonnet and Van Dyke were trying to bring the plane down slowly.

"Four P-38s had been escorting us from the time that we left the formation. At the coast the #3 engine went out, so Bonnet ordered all unnecessary equipment to be jettisoned. When it was obvious that the plane could not make it to England, he radioed a distress signal to the P-38; and ordered the crew to assume ditching stations. The P-38 continued to circle, overseeing the ditching and fracture of the plane as it struck the water.

"When the B-24 hit the Channel, the nose and top turret caved in. The aircraft broke apart at the #6 bulkhead and the rear section sank almost immediately. Kushinski, the engineer, was either pinned or killed by the falling top turret. Butler, Belsky, and Banning all went down with the back section of the plane. The nose turret collapsed, taking Donald McCandless to the bottom.

"I was in ditch position with my back to the pilot. Kushinski lay between my legs. We hit the water so hard that the plane split in half. Kushinski's head struck my shoulder and fractured the bone. Part of the turret landed on him, causing his death. A piece of armor plating crashed into my 5th and 6th vertebrae, so when I was dashed into the icy water, I was helpless. The waves were eighteen feet high, but somehow the three officers were able to get the dinghy.

"I remember seeing a green translucent light above me. It was the sea. To me, there was a glimmering of hope in this lightened space. I thought, 'I could fill my lungs with bubbles and escape this certain death.'" At this point, Lt. Olsen grabbed Garvey by his epaulets. Olsen, whose

leg was badly injured, still managed to pull Garvey alongside the dinghy, where he held him until help came. They were picked up by an English destroyer. Garvey had survived a bail-out only a week before with the Schaffer crew.

From a contemporary account: "Lt. Bonnet returned to base sporting a huge black eye, and Lt. Olsen, whose leg was broken, will be returned to the States. Sgt. Garvey is in the hospital and is in bad shape with a broken collar-bone and a broken leg. Looks like his flying days are over. Banning and Belsky were on their last mission and Sgt. Butler also had quite a few. There-in lay the problem. It was for this reason that they did not want to bail out and become POWs."

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## 18 July 1944

### Troop Support, Troan, France

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-94952 A	SHACK RAT	Returned to base
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#### 506th Squadron Crew:

KEARNEY, JACK L.	Pilot Badly injured	Lt.
SMITH, THOMAS L.	Co-pilot	Lt.
STROVROFF, IRWIN J.	Navigator	Flt. Off.
FOSTER, EVERETTE E.	Bombardier	S/Sgt.
WRIGHT, WILLIAM H.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
PARKS, JOSEPH W. Jr.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
MILLER, DONALD R.	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.
SITEMAN, HENRY O.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
ROBISON, WALLACE R.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
HOPKINS, HENRY A.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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Mission was briefed at 0200 hours for an 0400 hours takeoff to the German lines which were about eight miles southeast of Caen. The British troops were to start a drive through this area later on in the day. The British requested we help out. We bombed just 3,000 feet from the British and Canadian troops. We bombed from 14,000 feet and the pilot, Lt. Kearney, was hit by flak in both feet and legs. S/Sgt. William H. Wright, the radio operator, gave him first aid and the co-pilot brought the plane home.

In his diary, Henry Siteman wrote: Lt. Smith [the co-pilot] did a beautiful job. Our pilot almost lost his left foot at the ankle. We gave him morphine to deaden the pain. We had a hard time with him while in the air and also getting him out of the plane after landing." Having completed his 30th mission, Siteman concluded, "I am glad that it is all over now, at least I will be able to sleep nights."

This was Kearney's 17th and last mission.

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## 21 July 1944

### Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany

The mission was a long one to an armaments center near Munich. Flak was moderate and accurate and the enemy aircraft gave fierce challenge, causing the loss of four aircraft over the continent and one plane crash-landed at Warningford, England. Happily, two of the lost planes managed to land in Switzerland.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

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68th Sq., #42-110049 A, Anderson	MARY HARRIET	MACR #7287
68th Squadron Crew:		
ANDERSON, JOHN R. ASN 0-725729	Pilot Interned, returned	1st Lt. Freeport, Illinois
YOUNG, THOMAS JEFF ASN 0-819245	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt. Oma (?), Mississippi
HEWLETT, JAMES A. ASN 0-707526	Navigator Interned	2nd Lt. San Bernardino, California
JENNINGS, JOHN T. ASN 0-698564	Bombardier Interned	2nd Lt. Baton Rouge, Louisiana
BABIN, LESLIE J. Jr. ASN 18134873	Engineer Interned	S/Sgt. Hawkins, Texas
VAN DERWEIDE, EDWARD B. ASN 37470100	Radio Oper. Interned	T/Sgt. Sioux Center, Iowa
TURLEY, HAROLD N. ASN 36451597	RW Gunner Interned, returned	Sgt. Sault St. Marie Michigan
HOFFMAN, LEO J. ASN 13173525	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania
ELLIOTT, RICHARD R. ASN 16118695	Tail Turret Interned	S/Sgt. Greenville, Illinois

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The MACR states, in part, that this aircraft, at 1040 hours, in the area of Munich, was damaged and #1 engine was feathered. Bombs were salvoed before hitting the target, and left formation, headed for Switzerland. At this same time, they reported on VHF that they were going to try for Switzerland. This was the crew's eleventh mission.

They were at an altitude of 5,000 feet (3,000 above ground) and flying on three engines in normal flight when all bailed out. Leo Hoffman came down near the town of St. Gallen, Switzerland, not injured at the time of leaving the plane, but was dead on the ground. His chute was only partially opened. All others landed safely near the village of St. Gallen, where a priest came to them saying, "Una Morte".

When the crew congregated at Appenzell, one of the gunners, Richard Elliott, said that he had seen Leo J. Hoffman Jr. dead with his chute barely opened beside him. Hoffman either had bailed out of the waist window or camera hatch. Failure of the chute to open probably was due either to faulty packing or his fear of falling – and panic.

Lt. Hewlett, navigator, added that indeed, they were shot up over Munich, and they all bailed out when they got above Swiss territory. James did not escape from internment as a few from his crew did, and eventually married a Swiss girl.

The aircraft came down at Silberplatte, Nesslerau.

Jerry Folsom wrote, "This plane was flying on our left wing. They had contacted us to look for damage via radio. They reported that their controls were not working well. In conversation it was discussed as to whether they should try to make it home or go to Switzerland. I had suggested that we were quite a ways from home and if controls were not working, well, it might be a good idea. A while later they called and said that they were going to Switzerland. I wished them well and they left the formation.

"About a month later I was in the latrine shaving when a voice behind me asked the usual question of a new crew: How are the missions? I probably gave the usual reply. Rough, lots of flak, cold, not many enemy fighters, etc. Then the voice said, 'You don't know who you are talking to, do you?' I turned around and there was the fellow I had been talking to in the plane [John Anderson]. He recounted their trip to Switzerland, how they had bailed out and one chute did not open. The Swiss had given that crewmember [Hoffman] a nice funeral and put a cross near the rock where he fell. He told about being interned and that conditions were quite good, lots of freedom. He was interned in a building near a security fence that had a locked gate. One evening he was advised that the gate would be open sometime that evening and to look for a fellow in a white shirt. He later recounted how the underground got him to the coast and back to England. He did comment, 'Do as the underground tells you.' He did not once and almost got shot and captured by the Germans. The underground reprimanded him severely and almost kicked him out."

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The second 68th aircraft to be lost on the 21st was that flown by Flight Officer Donald F. Tofte.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-95226 C, Tofte	CHANNEL HOPPER		MACR #7286
68th Squadron Crew:			
TOFTE, DONALD F. ASN T-123159	Pilot Interned, returned	Flt Of.	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
WESSINGER, JAMES C. Jr. ASN 0-553989	Co-pilot Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	Columbia, South Carolina
JAQUIS, JOHN R. ASN 0-717217	Navigator Interned	2nd Lt.	Jefferson, Iowa
ALBERTS, DONALD H. ASN 0-762880	Bombardier Interned, returned	2nd Lt.	Brookline, Massachusetts
JONES, CLARENCE R. ASN 12096377	Engineer Interned, returned	S/Sgt.	Utica, New York
ROGERS, HAROLD E, ASN 3747600;F	Radio Oper. Interned	S/Sgt.	Rapid City, South Dakota
PARSONS, HOYT D. ASN 34381899-	RW Gunner Interned	Sgt.	Georgetown, South Carolina



DOWD, JOHN F. ASN 20113596	LW Gunner Interned, repatriated	Sgt.	Bridgewater, Massachusetts
BROWNING, ALBERT E. Jr. ASN 36593040	Tail Turret Interned, repatriated	Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan

The Missing Air Crew Report states, in part, that at 1002 hours and in the Munich area – apparently before hitting the target – this ship was last seen flying alone, under control, with no apparent damages.

Sgt. Dowd, waist gunner, remembers, “We were flying in bad weather on the way to the target, and the formation had difficulty. In fact, some of the planes had new positions by the time that we got to the target. We did drop our bombs on the target and were immediately hit by flak. Some of the flak hit in the bomb bay, some hit engine #3, knocking out our hydraulic system. I can vouch for the flak as a piece of it scraped the skin off my shinbone. Both Hoyt Parsons (the other waist gunner) and I were showered with a combination of hydraulic fluid and gasoline.

“We did leave the formation after that, and we saw enemy bandits, but we were looking for our own fighters for escort at the time. We headed for Switzerland, but with considerable concern as our bomb bay doors were open and inoperative. The procedure for landing in a neutral country called for the bomb bay doors to be closed or we could be shot at.

“I do not recall that any of the crew bailed out, but we were ready to do so. (Both Dowd and Jaquis were officially reported as POWs) We had thrown most of our equipment overboard including our guns and ammunition to lighten the plane in order to maintain altitude. We crash-landed near Dubendorf.

“I was sent to Adelboden (Beausite) and remained there until early August, then was sent to Wengen. I escaped from there but was apprehended near Mieux. I was taken to a jail near Montreaux and interrogated. Apparently they thought I had come from France – and I may have wandered around and actually had crossed the border. I do not know. I was then sent to a detention camp at Wauwilermoos, where there were a few Americans, but mostly Polish, Italian and British soldiers.

“There I was eventually visited by an envoy from the U.S. and was told that I should not have been held incommunicado by the Swiss. Then sent to Wengen.

“Later, I again escaped but was captured quickly, and was taken to Hunenberg. An emergency appendectomy was performed on me, thanks to a Lt. who spoke German fluently and got the Commandant to get a doctor. This no doubt saved my life. I was repatriated 17 February, 1945. Both “Yank” and “Stars and Stripes” claimed that Hunenberg and Wauwilermoos were as rough as most Stalags in Germany.” [See Dan Culler’s book “Black Hole of Wauwilermoos.”]

Tail turret gunner, Albert E. Browning, added, “When we ran into heavy clouds, the formation broke up, but before the target, we reformed but not in our assigned positions. Flak was extremely heavy at our altitude, heavier than I had ever seen before. Some German fighters were seen attacking the formation to our rear and at a lower altitude. Before we could close our bomb bay doors after the bomb run, flak hit between the fuselage and the right, inboard engine (#3), and came into the bomb bay, damaging the hydraulic system and rupturing a gas tank where the wing meets the fuselage. The bomb bay and rear of the aircraft was showered with a mixture of

gasoline and hydraulic fluid. The bomb bay doors remained open and we opened every other door and window to get rid of that explosive mixture.

“I can remember being by the rear escape hatch with my parachute on, ready to jump. Lt. Tofte was having trouble with one engine and the prop governor on another, explosion and fire imminent, so we headed for Switzerland. Finally, Swiss fighter planes guided us to Dubendorf, where we crash-landed on the grass field, nose wheel collapsing, and we skidded nose down and tail up into a cornfield adjacent to the airport.

“We were all sent to Adelboden, then split us with the officers going to Davos while we went to Wengen. I was repatriated near the end of February, 1945 and returned to the 44th BG for a short while before returning to the States.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #42-110034 Bar-R, Allen	SOUTHERN COMFORT III	MACR #7805
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*Note: Although this aircraft was the third one named SOUTHERN COMFORT, and therefore is SOUTHERN COMFORT III, it only had “II” painted on the aircraft.*

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

ALLEN, JOHN W. ASN 0-696413	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Tarentum, Pennsylvania
JACOBS, JOHN R. Jr. ASN 0-768561	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Lansford, Pennsylvania
HEALY, DANIEL J. ASN 0-709366	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Buffalo, New York
FLORA, ORVILLE E. Jr. ASN 0-765788	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	New Castle, Pennsylvania
PATELLI, ALEX ASN 36436916	Engineer POW	Sgt.	Peru, Illinois
KEMPOWICZ, JOHN J. Jr. ASN 13004024	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Askam, Pennsylvania
SHAY, WILLIAM E. ASN 35622574	Well Gun. POW	Sgt.	Springfield, Ohio
PETZ, STEVE J. ASN 36419271	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Stephenson, Michigan
PRIDAY, GEORGE C. ASN 13144419	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Washington, Dist. of Col.
PACYLOWSKY, FRANK P. ASN 12157034	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Arlington, New Jersey

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MACR #7805 states that this aircraft, at 1036 hours in the Munich area, is believed to have been attacked by twin engined aircraft. It went into a steep dive, under control. The tail gunner (Frank Pacylowsky) was seen to be firing at pursuing enemy aircraft, which in turn, were being attacked by our P-51s. One chute was sighted and one chute did not open.

Lt. Dan Healy, navigator, states, “SOUTHERN COMFORT was shot down by an anti-aircraft battery despite strong evasive action taken by pilots Allen and Jacobs. One engine failed – I believe #4 – and we stalled, but then righted ourselves when #1 & #2 were adjusted, etc. We had not bombed Munich because of cloud cover, but bombed a target of opportunity not far from

Munich. SOUTHERN COMFORT had two new engines on one side and two old one on the other. We could not keep up with the formation then and set off for England alone. When the battery hit the other engine, the bells went off. I got Lt. Flora out of the nose turret and followed him out the nose wheel hatch. Kempowicz, radio operator, I was told, did not pop his chute after the crewmen had put him out through the bomb bay.

“I never saw fighters on us – but then, I couldn’t from my position. We were collected in a small village (Leonbronn), transported to the Stuttgart area. We were interrogated at Oberusal (near the Leica Works outside of Frankfurt), then sent by train to Stalag I.

“To the best of my knowledge, all survived except the radio operator who had been at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and had also survived a mid-air collision in B-17 training.”

Lt. Orville Flora then added, “Stalag I was located on a peninsula jutting out into the Baltic Sea, 90 miles north of Berlin and just 60 miles from Sweden. Some 10,000 officers including 8,000 Americans were confined in barracks there behind barbed wire.

“For me the war was a short one. I was on my fourth mission when enemy flak struck a wing and touched off an oil-fed fire. Because of our heavy concentration of 110+ octane gasoline in the wing tanks, we were under orders to jump anytime we had a fire. So an open field near a small Austrian village just across the border from Munich provided a convenient landing place and an opportunity for the village home guard to capture its first American. One member of the bombing crew, a radio operator, had to be pushed out of the plane and never was heard from again alive. The others were scattered over 60 miles of German and Austrian countryside before being taken prisoner.”

Neither of these crewmembers make mention of enemy aircraft, so again it is possible that the MACR may not be completely accurate.

*Note: Lts. Allen, Jacob, Flora, and Healy were all at Stalag Luft I until liberated by the Russians in May 1945.*

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The second 506th aircraft to be lost and last of the four ships that did not return on the 21st, was that piloted by Lt. Myron H. Butler.

506th Sq., #42-95142 Bar-K, Butler	CAPE COD SPECIAL #2		MACR # 7288
506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew POW		
BUTLER, MYRON H. ASN 0-702232	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Greentown, Pennsylvania
KINCAID, JACK A. ASN 0-765257	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Sacramento, California
McKAY, JOHN E. ASN 0-712638	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Detroit, Michigan
PERRY, OLIVER C. ASN 0-716944	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Somerset, Massachusetts
RASMUSSEN, JACK D. ASN 39243286	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
MANN, ROBERT E. ASN 11056808	Radio Oper. POW/Injured	S/Sgt.	Metheun, Massachusetts

HUMPHRIES, PAUL C. Jr. ASN 38320472	Well Gun. POW	Sgt.	Tulsa, Oklahoma
CONNELLY, JOHN J. ASN 42009812	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Newark, New Jersey
DEIFER, LOUIS W. ASN 35708185	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Mt. Vernon, Indiana
ERAMO, LEONARD A. ASN 32804732	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York

The MACR briefly states that the weather was poor, high clouds and haze. At 1038 hours, in vicinity of Munich, this aircraft called over the VHF to say that they had a three-foot section of wing tip shot off by flak. However, all four engines were running and the crew was going for Switzerland.

They did not make it. However, all ten men survived to become POWs. Bombardier Oliver C. Perry, told me that, "We were hit over Munich and had a very large hole in the wing that made it most unlikely that we could get back to base. So we proceeded to go toward Switzerland, but we were hit again before we got there. That was southwest of Munich, over a town named Lorach (Eurach or Durach?) where we lost an engine and a rear stabilizer was shot off. Not then being able to make Switzerland, we all bailed out.

"I think that we encountered some fighter action south of Munich, but it was in very cloudy conditions and they lost contact with us in the 10/10th overcast. We had been told that we would have had to fly at least eight miles into Switzerland before we could be considered safe as internees, as those people living in the border area with Germany might be tempted to sell or give us back to the Germans.

"Our radioman, Robert E. Mann, was injured while either bailing out or upon landing as he had a broken arm. A few of the crewmembers got banged up on landing, too. We were captured and made prisoners.

"We were taken to Mulhouse, France and then to a Frankfurt jail for a couple of days; then to Dulag Luft for interrogation for a few more days before we took the trip to Stalag I, Barth, on the Baltic Sea. We remained there until the war ended and were liberated by the Russians."

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## 29 July 1944

### Bremen, Germany

The shipbuilding area of Bremen, Germany was the target for this day's mission. Specific area was Oslebshausen. 34 aircraft were dispatched but only 32 hit the target due to a collision earlier only a few miles off the English coast near Cromer. Only one man survived from the two crews.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq. #42-109820 N-Bar, Green	THE WASP'S NEST	MACR #7804
67th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
GREEN, WILLIAM F. ASN 0-700447	Pilot KIA, on WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Hamilton, Ohio

MORTENSEN, DOUGLAS W. ASN 0-768169	Co-pilot KIA, buried Cambridge (E-3-93)	1st Lt.	Port Orchard, Washington
LENTZ, HERBERT B. ASN 0-709412	Navigator KIA, on WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt.	Baltimore, Maryland
KENNER, JAMES D. Jr. ASN 0-766282	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	King City, California
BROOME, GARLAND R. ASN 34623016	Engineer KIA, on WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Prentiss, Mississippi
SHERWOOD, LAWRENCE J. ASN 39261528	Radio Oper. KIA, on WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Oceanside, California
LANDRY, HENRY C. ASN 31143933	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Meridan, Connecticut
McARTHUR, EARL R. ASN 11017929	LW Gunner KIA, on WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Brattleboro, Vermont
BYERS, CLIFFORD L. ASN 37704580	Tail Turret KIA, on WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Hereford, Colorado

The MACRs for these two aircraft will be covered together as the information is almost identical. At 0830 hours and with visibility fair, the above aircraft was flying in #3 position of low left element. While the formation was in a turn, this element slid under the center section of formation. 2nd Lt. Eberhardt, pilot in aircraft #42-95309, came down and its #2 propeller chewed off the tail of aircraft #820, Lt. Green's. This aircraft, The Wasp's Nest, went into a dive immediately, while #309, Eberhardt's, went into a flat spin.

Four chutes were in the air from both aircraft, two of which were caught in the falling debris. Air-Sea Rescue boats were dispatched immediately to the area but they did not arrive in time to save any lives. However, they did recover the bodies of Mortensen, Kenner and Landry – all from Green's crew, with the six others being listed on the Wall of the Missing.

One man from Eberhardt's crew, and the only man to survive from either aircraft, was S/Sgt. Alva F. Favors. Sgt. Favors was picked up by Dutch seamen in a boat that was in the area at the time of the collision.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-95309 Bar-V, Eberhardt	MACR #7803	
506th Squadron Crew:	Eight Men Listed on the Wall of the Missing in Cambridge	
EBERHARDT, BERNARD J. Jr. ASN 0-681359	Pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
AIROLDI, JOHN A. ASN 0-759546	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Joliet, Illinois
GLEICHENHAUS, SEYMOUR ASN 0-702411	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. New York City, New York
BEIRNE, MILTON R. ASN 0-699505	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Richmond, Virginia
FAVORS, ALVA F. ASN 35572908	Engineer Rescued	S/Sgt. Frankton, Indiana
RANIELLO, JOHN V. ASN 31269979	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Brockton, Massachusetts

PARKER, VICTOR ASN 33586476	RW Gunner      Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
GARRETT, WAYNE D. ASN 39294443	LW Gunner      Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Lomita, California
BEHNKE, GEORGE C. ASN 32736648	Nose Turret      Sgt. KIA, WOM Cambridge	Syracuse, New York
GROSS, GALE H. ASN 39167088	Tail Turret      S/Sgt. KIA, buried Cambridge (F-1-71)	Vancouver, Washington

Except for Sgts. Gross and Favors, all other men from this crew are listed on the Wall of the Missing at Cambridge American Cemetery. Apparently the body of Sgt. Gross was recovered later after the MACR was prepared, as his burial place is shown to be at Cambridge, England. Sgt. Favors was taken to a hospital.

After recovering from his injuries, Sgt. Favors was returned to Shipdham. Sgt. Harry Lemond, formerly of the 464th Sub-depot at Shipdham, noted that Sgt. Favors was taken off combat as he was over 30 years of age at that time and was placed under the supervision of Sgt. Lemond repairing airplanes. Sgt. Favors told Lemond that he saw the collision coming, had his chute on, and was attempting to escape the aircraft when the collision occurred! He said that the formation was executing a turn to the left when the two aircraft approached each other on a collision course. Apparently this forewarning was sufficient for him to get to snap on his chute and to get free of the aircraft without serious injury. He stated that an ammunition can fell on him as he tried to get out. Except for that, shock and exposure, he was not seriously injured.

Also, I am told that later, Sgt. Favors became a Crew Chief on General Leon Johnson's aircraft for a period of time.

Another account states that Sgt. Favors was standing between the two pilots at the time of the collision. Lt. Green's ship came in too close and the props on his plane hit the pilot's compartment of his plane and sheared off Eberhardt's head. The nose turret on Green's plane with the gunner in it went down like a sinker. Airolti (the co-pilot) took over and tried to get out of a flat spin, but could not. Favors bailed out. He went around and around with the plane. Some force kept him close to the plane and he could not open his chute. He finally pushed himself away and pulled the ripcord. He hit the water and his chute pulled him under and he almost drowned. Finally, he got it off and was picked up by a British Air Sea Rescue boat (after 15 minutes in the water). They brought him around with brandy. It was said that when he returned to the base and his hair turned from red to gray or white

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## 6 August 1944

### Hamburg, Germany

Hamburg is another great port city in Germany, but this day an oil refinery was the target for the bombs of the Group. Our bombs hit directly on the MPI (Mean Point of Impact) with 80% within 1,000 feet. No enemy aircraft was observed, but flak was intense and accurate. One of the 66th Squadron's PFF aircraft, which was flying deputy lead for the 492nd BG, was hit by flak just after the target and did not return.

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-95561 I+, McKenna	STORMY WEATHER	MACR #8081
66th Squadron Crew (one exception):		
McKENNA, JAMES P. ASN 0-693866	Pilot KIA	1st Lt. Bronx, New York
BYRNE, AUSTIN P. (492nd BG) ASN 0-25011	Command Pilot KIA, WOM Netherlands	Capt. Ventura, California
GRENO, PAUL J. ASN 0-817662	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Netherlands	1st Lt. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
GOO, WILLIAM L. Y. ASN 0-711390	Navigator KIA, WOM Netherlands	1st Lt. Bremerton, Washington
TUCKER, EMMETT Z. Jr. ASN 0-752633	Pilotage-Navigator POW	1st Lt. Greensboro, North Carolina
LEROUX, VINCENT W. ASN 0-802651	Nav-Radar POW	2nd Lt. Toledo, Ohio
FORSETH, VERNON E. ASN 0-701588	Bombardier POW	1st Lt. Iola, Wisconsin
SHELDON, STANLEY W. ASN 11116435	Engineer KIA, WOM Netherlands	T/Sgt. Oakland, Rhode Island
KOVACH, RAYMOND J. ASN 3532716?	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt. Cleveland, Ohio
HOBBS, DOUGLAS U. ASN 34529824	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Manchester, Tennessee
MILLER, DONALD R. ASN 36805649	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt. Beloit, Wisconsin
GAUDIN, PERCY J. ASN 18151328	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt. Destrehan, Louisiana

*Note: Capt. Byrne was from the 857th Bomb Squadron of the 492nd Bomb Group.*

The MACR includes this information: “Just after target, this aircraft was hit by flak and went into a tight spin. Two chutes were seen at first, then eight more. Plane was seen to blow up when it crashed. Pilots apparently were able to pull it out of the spin once or twice, but then it would go back into a dive again. It crashed in the target area, with seven of the twelve men on board surviving.” There was no accounting for the other three chutes observed (ten chutes).

2nd Lt. Vincent W. LeRoux, navigator-radar on board this stricken aircraft, adds, “The mission was routine until we hit Germany – all equipment was working beautifully. We came in over the North Sea and flew south into Germany. It was a thousand-plane raid and shortly after entering Germany, we split in two. 500 planes went on to Berlin and our 500 hit Hamburg.

“We had extensive flak all the way in but received no damage. Shortly after bombs away, I heard someone yell, ‘Look out!’, and we dropped about 1500 feet out of formation. We had sustained a hit in the nose knocking out the intercom. Later, I was told the #3 plane (in our element) came up and over us, then dropped down on us, forcing us out of formation to avoid a collision.

“Both of the men in the nose section watched helplessly while they observed one German Battery begin tracking their plane. With the intercom out, they couldn’t warn Lt. McKenna. Just as we were about to rejoin our formation, they hit us with all four guns. We were hit in the nose, the

waist and the #3 engine. This engine exploded and two cylinder heads from it came through the side of our ship and landed in my lap! I lost six to eight layers of skin from my palm when I tried to dislodge those burning hot objects.

“Immediately, the flight deck floor ignited, with flames two to three feet high. Lt. Goo seemed to have been hit by the flak as he kept staggering around, holding his stomach. I pushed him back into his seat several times, but he wouldn’t, or couldn’t stay there. The fire extinguisher was behind Lt. Greno, co-pilot, and I tried to reach it. However, Captain Byrne was frozen to the bulkhead and I couldn’t get past him. I tried to pry his hands loose but was unable to do so. Finally, I gave up and turned around to see the flames were licking at Sgt. Sheldon’s feet – and he was still in the top turret operating his guns.

“Escape from the flight deck through the bomb bay was impossible by now, and my hand was so badly burned I doubted if I could pull myself up and out of the top hatch. So I was in a quandary. Finally, I saw the hole that the cylinder heads made in the side of the plane and decided that was my way out.

“I was fortunate that day as I had just picked up my new back pack chute and had worn an asbestos-lined suit for the first time. Without that fireproof suit, I probably would have lost my right leg. If I had had my old chest pack, I would have been unable to exit through the hole in the side of the ship. I threw myself out head first, but caught my feet in my chair or something. I kept swinging back and forth in the slipstream until I finally tore loose.

“Shortly after I ripped free, the plane went into a dive that turned into a spin. I was captured shortly after landing.”

Douglas Hobbs, right waist gunner, sent additional information, “We were a ‘mickey ship’ radar equipped for bombing through cloud cover. But being clear weather over the target, this equipment was not necessary and not utilized.

“Just after bombs away, someone observed another B-24 in an extreme attitude, practically upside down and above us. The pilots put our ship in a nose down attitude, diving down to avoid the other ship. Then, when we were attempting to return to the formation, we were hit by anti-aircraft artillery fire just before we were returning to our slot in the formation. Our ship was struck two or three times in the area forward of the bomb bay – and perhaps in the bomb bay as well. The result of these hits was that something in the bay exploded and started to burn. Fire was streaming back past the right side waist window where I was. This all happened immediately after the flak hit.

“Someone said, ‘Let’s get out of here!’ and we left the ship. There was never any communication from the front of the ship to advise us to jump. (Intercom knocked out?) The action of the ship at this time was not violent, but more like a falling leaf.

“The officers went to Barth, Germany, to Stalag Luft I and the enlisted men to the new Stalag Luft VI and Stalag Luft IV. We were liberated by the English in early May, 1945.”

Lt. Emmett Tucker said, “I was flying a make-up mission to catch up with my regular crew (Lt. Peterson) and was in the nose turret. When the plane went into that tight spin, I was unable to move for quite a while. But when the plane came out of the spin, I bailed out. The bombardier, Forseth, went out first, then the navigator and then me. I think the pilot and co-pilot were killed



by the flak hits because when I went out of the bomb bay, I could see no movement in the upper part of the plane. Smoke was very bad, though.”

Major Heaton, the Command Pilot in a 66th Squadron aircraft piloted by Capt. Raymond Craig, wrote, “On the bomb run flak was intense. We were briefed for a descending left turn after bomb release. This we did, only to plunge into the densest flak I saw in 25 missions. As Command Pilot, I was sitting in a sling between the armor plates behind the pilot and co-pilot. We took a 155 through the fuselage forward of the tail turret. Fortunately, it went off above the plane, but we lost one engine and the ship was well perforated. The deputy wing lead, with Byrne aboard, had been on our right wing. In the dense flak he swooped above us and to the left. He looked okay, but started to slip toward us. I put my left foot on the pilot’s control column and shoved, sending us down and out of the way. We lost about 4,000 feet, feathered the bad engine and limped back to the 44th on the remaining two and a quarter engines, landing on one good and one flak-shattered tire. Nobody aboard was scratched.”

*Note: Heaton describes Byrne’s role as Deputy Command Pilot and states that Byrne was the Operations Officer of the 492nd’s 857th Squadron.*

In 1946, a British salvage team visited the crash site and removed two bodies (Byrne and Greno). They were buried in the Ardennes National Cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz, Belgium.

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## 8 August 1944

### La Perth Airfield, Romilly, France

The target was hit visually with excellent results. Our fighters provided excellent coverage. However, one 506th Squadron aircraft went down shortly after the target. The crew was observed to bail out approximately 60 miles east of Paris.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #42-100415 Bar-Y, Komasinski	MY PEACH	MACR #8080
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#### 506th Squadron Crew:

KOMASINSKI, BERNARD J. ASN 0-700477	Pilot Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	Michigan City, Indiana
GIPPERT, WINFIELD S. ASN 0-696765	Co-pilot Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	Rock Island, Illinois
MICHAELS, EDGAR W. ASN 0-717473	Navigator Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
LAIN, CHARLES H. ASN 0-717078	Bombardier Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	Bradley, Illinois
SCHAEFFER, FRANK N. ASN 16116632	Engineer Evadee, returned	S/Sgt.	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
McKEE, JOHN H. ASN 16079990	Radio Oper. POW	Sgt.	Michigan City, Indiana
BROTT, NELSON E. ASN 32855843	RW Gunner Evadee, returned	Sgt.	Troy, New York
BOHENKO, WALTER E. ASN 13108425	LW Gunner Evadee, returned	Sgt.	McKeesport, Pennsylvania

RICHARDSON, COLEY W. ASN 34129217	Ball Turret Wounded, evacuated	S/Sgt.	Conway, South Carolina
HULEWICZ, STANLEY J. Jr. ASN 35914236	Tail Turret Evadee, returned	Sgt.	Cleveland, Ohio

The MACR variously reported this ship with #1 and #4 engines out. Then #2 engine caught on fire shortly after the target. Crew bailed out approximately 60 miles east of Paris while the plane itself, apparently on AFCE (autopilot) continued on in flight, burning.

Frank Schaeffer, Engineer, remembers: "The mission was delayed for several hours because of the ground fog. This was our sixth mission.

"Because the prop governor was faulty on #2 engine, I was told to stay on the flight deck to monitor the engine RPMs with the synchronizing switch. Sgt. Nelson Brott took my place in the top turret. One of our gun positions was left unmanned.

"As I recall, there was little to no flak up to the point of the target area. While on the bomb run and with the bomb bay doors open, the #2 engine began to speed up and the synchronizing switch would not slow it down. We had a runaway prop that was turning over at 4500 RPMs. Our co-pilot, Gilbert, operated the fathering button and closed the throttles, but the propeller would not feather.

"I went to the forward end of the bomb bay to turn off the fuel selector valve and booster pump switch to that engine. But the engine continued to run wild and the oil pressure went to zero. The engine continued to howl and shake violently. I was afraid the prop would come off and fly right through the fuselage. By that time we had reached the target and the bombardier, Lain, had released the bombs. I had dropped my flak suit and removed my helmet, head set, oxygen mask and gloves in order to more easily cope with that runaway engine.

"I heard no bailout order or bell. Suddenly, the co-pilot raised out of his seat and headed back. With my parachute snapped on, I tapped Brott, who was in the top turret, on the knee and motioned for him to come down. Then I got into the bomb bay and suddenly thought that, because I had not heard any bailout signal, I'd be the first one out. In order to get out of way of others, I swung out and around the bomb rack in order to move back on the catwalk. With the chest pack on I could not go along the catwalk between the bomb racks.

"When I made my move around the bomb rack, the handle of my ripcord caught on a bomb shackle and it pulled out about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. I pushed it back in, but the damage had been done. The chute started to spill out. I started to bundle the folds of my chute in my arms. However, the wind going through the ship spilled even more of the chute onto the catwalk. Frantically, I gathered the remaining folds in to my arms.

"It was now or never, so I moved to the forward end of the aft bomb bay section. There I rolled head first off the catwalk and out the right side of the bomb bay. The chute was immediately pulled out of my arms. A moment later I was swinging violently. Overhead I could see the chute fully open, but there were three rips, each about a foot long in the panels.

"While drifting down in the silence I searched for our ship. Then I saw it about a mile away flying level. There was a long trail of black smoke behind it. While looking, I saw that one of my fellow crewmen was below me. I yelled as loud as I could, but got no answer. When I was a few

thousand feet from the ground, I noticed two bicycles or motorcycles running along a road. A little lower and I could see people running out of houses and along the road. I prepared to land with my knees slightly bent. On impact my legs folded and I fell backward. Being dragged by my un-spilled chute, I quickly collapsed it.

Frank managed a successful evasion, thanks to the many Frenchmen who hid and helped him.

Nelson E. Brott, right waist gunner, sent additional information, "Coley W. Richardson was assigned to our crew for that mission when our regular member, Frank La Fazia, was placed on guard duty. He was our ball turret gunner. This was our seventh mission.

We had been flying at 25,000 feet, I bailed out at about 22,000, landed about 100 to 200 feet away from my co-pilot, Lt. Gippert, as we both pulled a delayed jump. Luckily, we landed in a corn field and there to greet us quite unexpectedly, were members of the French Forces of the Interior.

"They hid us in the woods away from all civilization where we had to fend for ourselves for food. We caught rabbits in snares, drained a pond, stripped, and then went into the mud and ooze to catch carp. They provided us with our civilian clothes, we threw away our dog tags, and hoped we'd never be caught as we would have been shot as spies.

"But it was only about a month until the American Forces came through near us and liberated us. What a celebration that was! Coley W. Richardson was seriously injured, eventually being evacuated back to the States on 23 December, 1944."

The following information comes from Coley Bill Richardson, Jr., Coley Richardson's son: "After my dad was shot down, he was severely injured in a hard parachute landing. His right leg was compound fractured at the knee joint. He, too, was contacted by the French underground, but after seeing his condition, they left him. They said, 'The Nazis are your best chance for survival.' They were right. After the underground left, the Nazis captured my father. He was taken to a POW hospital and though he was roughly treated while the leg was being screwed and pinned together, he did survive."

To sum up, the entire crew bailed out and made it with a few of being injured in landing. Eight were taken care of by the French underground and became evadees while the other two were taken prisoner.

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A second aircraft and crew was lost by the 506th Squadron . This second aircraft was one of the eight sent out on the mission to La Perth by the 506th Squadron, but was forced to abort.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #42-50328 Bar-D, Jacobs	PREGNANT PEG
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*Note: This aircraft was also known as FLYING LOG.*

506th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA		
JACOBS, MYRON G. ASN 0-700615	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Muscantine, Iowa
HARMON, HOWARD K. ASN 0-556125	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Salt Lake City Utah

McDARIS, FREDERICK F. ASN 0-719113	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Inola, Oklahoma
WARD, KENNETH P. ASN 0-716788	Bombardier KIA	2nd Lt.	Burlington, Iowa
GROGG, EMIL L. ASN 33566080	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt.	Dunmore, West Virginia
WHALEN, JACK V. ASN 16162293	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Decatur, Illinois
BELL, ROBERT J. ASN 11106940	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Springfield, Massachusetts
BREAKEY, KARL D. ASN 33408973	LW Gunner KIA, buried Cambridge (E-4-53)	S/Sgt.	Johnsonburg, Pennsylvania
JONES, SHIRLEY A. ASN 39680958	Arm/Gun KIA	Sgt.	Largo, Florida
BORGSTROM, ROLON D. ASN 39917713	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Tremonton, Utah

As this aircraft was had no survivors, there is very little available information about this aircraft and crew. The 506th records only briefly state that, "Bad day for our Squadron as we lost two crews and ships. Lt. Jacobs and crew, in #328, crashed near our field due to engine failures and burst into flames. All crew members being lost..."

The 44th BG Operational Report for August probably clarifies the situation. It states, in part: "The other aircraft aborted [from the mission] because of mechanical reasons [engines?] and returned to the field. While flying the traffic pattern, the aircraft suddenly spun in and crashed with a full load of bombs [6 x 1000 lb.] on board. All crew members perished."

The crash site was 2 miles northeast of the base near Yaxham.

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## 9 August 1944

### Saarbrucken, Germany

Actually, the primary target was Sindelfingen, Germany but due to adverse weather, the mission was officially recalled. However, 17 of our aircraft bombed the secondary at Saarbrucken with excellent results. In addition to two men severely wounded in a 68th Squadron aircraft, the 66th Squadron lost one man over Germany.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-28785 B+, Peterson

Crewmember bailed out

#### 66th Squadron Crew:

PETERSON, WILLIAM O.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
DAVIES, HUGH J. ASN #0-682819	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Shandon, Ohio
WILLIAMS, LOWELL E.	Navigator	1st Lt.	
ROSS, ARTHUR B.	Navigator-GEE	1st Lt.	
PARTRIDGE, WILLIAM R.	Navigator-PFF	2nd Lt.	
LAFORM, JOE J.	Bombardier	Capt.	

ST. LAURENT, ANTHONY R.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
KELLEHER, MICHAEL J.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
FOGELSTROM, EUGENE B.	Ball Turret	S/Sgt.
SCOTT, CLARK S.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
BLOTCHER, MALVIN N.	SLW Gunner	S/Sgt.
GIVENS, ARTHUR M.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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*Note: Fogelstrom later became a POW (24 August 1944).*

This PFF aircraft was piloted by 1st Lt. William O. Peterson with a crew of twelve men. It was hit by flak on the bomb run which severed rudder control cables. Co-pilot Davies, realizing the aircraft to be out of control, rang the bailout bell and then proceeded to bail out himself. This occurred about 10 miles west of Saarbrücken, Germany at 1125 hours. His chute was observed to open after dropping about 4,000 feet. Later, the Germans reported him a POW.

When hit, the aircraft started “washing and weaving” to such an extent that when Lt. Davies tested the aileron and rudder controls, he believed the aircraft to be out of control. He got up from his seat, rang the bell, put on his chute and exited the plane through the bomb bay section. Michael J. Kelleher, engineer, watched him go down and saw his parachute open. The remainder of the crew returned to base after the plane was brought under control.

Lt. Davies told me that, “This was my 33rd mission and I had observed several planes hit, blow up and no parachutes. So when we were hit and all control was lost, I panicked – and have had to live with that fact all of these years. It is a very tough thing to live down – and to forget. I could never discuss the war and always changed the subject when it came up in conversations. It has affected me for all of these years.

“I came down right in the middle of a German flak battery in Saarbrücken and of course, soon taken prisoner. Then two young German officers held me and let an old man beat me with a large club before taking me to jail.”

S/Sgt. Eugene B. Fogelstrom, tail gunner on this plane, also added, “I heard the alarm go off back in the tail, but the waist gunners hadn’t. So we were slow in responding. Someone from the front came back to check on us and by that time, Lt. Peterson decided we weren’t in such a bad situation, having established some control with the autopilot. Mike Kelleher, engineer, came back looking for damages and found the stabilizer cable severed, so we used a short ammo strip to splice the cable together. But, as I remember, the splice was never used as the autopilot was doing the job. Our pilot even landed the plane by manipulating the toggles on the autopilot system. The plane was classified A-C damage.”

William R. Partridge wrote: “You had my crew right in the 66th. I was on the mission when Davies bailed out. The cable on the horizontal stabilizer was severed, but the plane worked on autopilot and Bill Petersen landed the aircraft on autopilot – even though the gunners had reconnected the cable using an ammunition belt. Fun days. Petersen’s crew finished up and I flew 14 more missions with the various crews in the 44th, mostly with Seever [Lt. R.G. Seever]. Such was the life of a Mickey Operator.”

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-29156, Collins	V-PACKET		Injured crewmembers
68th Squadron Crew:			
COLLINS, J. R.	Pilot	2nd Lt.	
SCHUYLER, FRED B. ASN 0-820840	Co-pilot Injured	2nd Lt.	Dallas, Texas
MORGAN, EARL J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
KENNEDY, ROBERT W.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
HILL, DONALD R.	Radio Oper. Injured	S/Sgt.	Bellaire, Michigan
DRESSLER, TED W.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	
COHN, WALTER M.	RW Gunner	Sgt.	
GENGLER, JAMES N.	LW Gunner	Sgt.	
REXFORD, WILLIAM J.	Tail Turret	Sgt.	

The group encountered intense and accurate barrages of flak over the target. Two men of the 68th were wounded by flying flak fragments: Lt. Fred B. Schuyler and Sgt. Don R. Hill. Lt. Schuyler was evacuated back to the States on 16 October 1944. Sgt. Hill was treated at the base hospital, recovered, and completed his tour of duty on 28 February 1945.

## 12 August 1944

### Airdrome, Juvin-court, France

Visual bombing again proved to be excellent. No enemy resistance was encountered and fighter support was good. However, one 506th aircraft failed to return.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-110024 Bar-P, McGuire	OLE COCK		MACR #7896
506th Squadron Crew:			
McGUIRE, THOMAS J. ASN 0-817721	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Elmhurst, L.I., New York
TITUS, DUDLEY G. ASN 0-556131	Co-pilot KIA, buried Normandy (G-26-25)	2nd Lt.	Lake Grove, Oregon
CRAWFORD, PETER G. ASN 0-717392	Navigator Evadee, returned	2nd Lt.	Springfield, South Carolina
TURLEY, MERLE G. ASN 0-716997	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Tulsa, Oklahoma
KRAMER, EDWARD ASN #31308781	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Chelsea, Massachusetts
CULLINANE, JOHN C. ASN 12126106	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	New York City. New York
REINER, ROBERT J. ASN 13152107	Arm/Gun Evadee, returned	Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
DANIELS, CARL E. ASN 32669213	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Sidney, New York

NOKES, JAMES C. ASN 33733373	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Brunswick, Maryland
HANSEN, JOSEPH L. ASN 36738150	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois

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The MACR states, in part, that this aircraft left the formation at 1037 hours, losing altitude. The pilot called to say he was low on fuel. He was advised to call for fighter cover and then head for Allied lines. He called again to say that #3 engine had cut out and the fuel tank to #4 engine was empty. When last seen, he was headed for Allied lines and escorted by fighters. They crashed near Pont L'Eveque, France.

Both Lt. Crawford, navigator, and Robert J. Reiner, gunner, bailed out, evaded capture, and with the assistance of the French Underground, returned to duty on 31 August 1944. Only 19 days from date of mission until they returned to duty! Five other men survived to become POWs.

I spoke with Peter Crawford, the navigator, and he provided the following information: Shortly after bombing the airfield in France, one engine failed, thought to be caused by flak. Shortly thereafter, another engine also failed, so Peter gave his pilot directions to the nearest Allied airfield to land. However, the plane lost altitude too quickly, and it was necessary for the crew to abandon ship. Peter said that it was about 12,000 feet when he bailed out, but that he free fell down to about 800 feet before he opened his chute because the Germans were shooting at them. As soon as he landed, he started running, and kept it up for about five miles. Shortly thereafter, he was contacted by the French Underground and they quickly got him near the British/Canadian troops, and away from German capture.

I asked him if all of the crew bailed out and he was quite sure that both pilots remained with the plane. The pilot, Thomas J. McGuire, had several times stated that, "Like the captain on a ship, the pilot should stay with his airplane."

As both McGuire and Titus (the co-pilot) were KIA, one could assume that they elected to stay with their plane. But, of course, another possibility could be that when down to the lower altitude, German gunners could zero in on it with small arms fire or anti-aircraft guns to shoot it down. Also, one gunner, Carl Daniels, also was KIA. It is not known if he remained with the plane or was killed coming down in his parachute.

Peter said that as soon as the pilot gave the orders to bail out, he was the first one out, followed by the bombardier, Merle Turley.

After returning to the base at Shipdham and relating everything that happened to him on the 12th of August, evasion and assistance by the French, Crawford asked to be put back into combat. However, he was not permitted to do so, but was never told why not. After some weeks, and no job found for him, he asked to be returned to the states, and was.

Merle Turley, the bombardier, provided the following account: "We were in the 44th/506th for a very short time. As I recall, only a couple of weeks. Therefore, I met very few other airmen and have to admit that I cannot, at this time, remember any outside of my crew. We flew nine missions in the ten days that we were in the 44th, and did not return from our ninth mission.

"On the morning of the 9th mission, we had breakfast very early and were briefed on the mission, then driven to our plane in a truck. Upon arriving at our plane, which was named "Old Cock," we

did our walk around and other pre-flights and were told by the ground crew chief that our fuel had just been topped out full.

“After takeoff, and arriving at assembly area, our flight engineer, Edward Kramer, reported that we were low on fuel by the gauges. After much conversation between the pilot, McGuire, and the flight engineer, the pilot made the decision that after the conversation with the ground crew chief, that the gauges were at fault and that we would continue on the mission.

“The mission was supposedly a ‘milk run’ to hit the runways at an airport near Paris, which was really a short mission. After dropping the bombs and the squadron headed home, the fuel gauges were indicating that we were very low on fuel and in a short time after this, the operation of the engines indicated that we were, indeed, low on fuel. At this time we radioed for a friendly landing strip on the peninsula taken by the recent invasion.

“We left the protection of the squadron and shortly were intercepted by three P-51s escorting us to the friendly base. The pilot feathered the engines, we threw out all excess baggage to lighten the weight of the plane, and put the plane in a descending glide in order to conserve fuel.

“As we approached friendly territory, the plane was so low that ground fire was beginning to hit the plane. For fear of disabling, the pilot ordered the crew to abandon the airplane. Seven parachuted out, two evaded, and five were captured and interned as POWs. Also, the pilot, Thomas J. McGuire, the co-pilot, Dudley Titus, and gunner, Carl E. Daniels, were killed in the crash of the plane. Why they did not bail out, I don’t know.

“Joe Hansen and I were captured together and taken to the front line POW camp where we were held for about a week then loaded in trucks headed for the interior of France. After some days in a truck, we arrived at Charlon, France. Here, again, I met with Hansen and Sgt. James Nokes. Here the officers were separated from the enlisted men and we were put in boxcars for seven days and arrived at Frankfurt, Germany interrogation camp.

“After about a week there, we were loaded in trains and arrived at a permanent POW camp, Stalag Luft I, in Barth, Germany. There, I stayed until the end of the war and was liberated by the Russians on 2 May 1945. I was flown from Barth, Germany airport on 12 May in B-17s. We arrived at Camp Lucky Strike 15 May. Sailed from Camp Lucky Strike 14 June on the USS Admiral Mayo. Docked in Boston Harbor and arrived at Camp Miles Standish on 21 June. Left by train for Fort Chaffee in Ft. Smith, Arkansas on 22 June.”

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## 13 August 1944

### Road Junctions between Le Havre and Rouen, France

Bombing results were very good for the 25 aircraft dispatched against this target. No enemy aircraft was observed, but the flak was heavy and accurate, causing the loss of another 506th Squadron aircraft and crew.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-95150 Bar-B, Milliken

PASSION PIT

MACR #8322

#### 506 Squadron Crew:



MILLIKEN, JOHN L. ASN 0-693063	Pilot POW, escapee, returned	1st Lt.	Little Neck, New York
MANIERRE, WILLIAM R. ASN 0-702308	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Lake Forest, Illinois
BERTOLI, ROBERT J. ASN 0-708393	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Cleveland Heights, Ohio
STOVROFF, IRWIN J. ASN 0-1995783	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Buffalo, New York
RICHARD, MARTIN W. ASN 38483211	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Grand Chenier, Louisiana
BECKWITH, KENNETH E. ASN 38276416	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Gray, Oklahoma
LARKIN, MORRIS WILLIAM ASN 11050469	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Revere, Massachusetts
LARSEN, DARRELL E. ASN 19176307	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Ventura, California
ALLEN, LEON J. ASN 338402646	Arm/Gun POW	S/Sgt.	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
GUEBARD, VIRGIL R. ASN 15328202	Tail Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Statements in the MACR include, "At 1321 hours, this aircraft was hit by flak. #1 and #2 engines burst into flames and it slid out of formation, under control. Nine chutes observed to open before aircraft exploded and crashed." Six other 506th aircraft received heavy damage."

Lt. John Milliken stated that, "Your information (MACR) is quite accurate. Our plane's name was PASSION PIT, which was named after the basement bar of the Santa Rita hotel in Tucson, Arizona where we took our phase training. This plane had been our regular one since 14 June 1944. We had arrived on the 6th of June and were assigned this one on the 14th. It belonged to the 506th Squadron and was designated 'B' for Baker.

"They had raised the tour requirement to 33 missions and this one was our 31st. I found out later that they had lowered it to 31 that day. If we had returned, they would have told us it was our last mission! (Beckwith was on 30th)

"This raid required a long bomb run over, the Falaise pocket. We had three road intersections in a direct line where we were supposed to drop 1/3 of our bombs on each one to stop the Germans from escaping Patton's pincher. It was too long and straight a run. The first flak burst did knock out both #1 & #2 engines and set us on fire. I was flying deputy group lead (#2) and had a hard time sliding out of the box without hitting others.

"We all bailed out and were captured by the Germans. I escaped that night by jumping out of a canvas-back German G.I. truck that was taking us back to Germany. I walked through the German front lines and joined the advancing Canadian 1st Army four days later.

"No one was hurt as far as I know except Larson, who suffered a wrenched back that he still has today. He escaped before the end of hostilities when he was being marched across central Europe by the Germans. Stovroff, a Jew, was beaten up and given a bad time by the S.S.

“The rest of my crew were prisoners ‘till the end of the war. They are all alive and I correspond with them occasionally.”

John McClane, a navigator on Lt. Peritti’s 68th Squadron airplane, tells his observation of this event: “The 506th Squadron was perhaps a half mile ahead of us or less. As they approached the river, very heavy and accurate flak burst in their formation. I was looking directly at it when one of their planes (Millikens) started to burn. The plane fell out of formation and the crew bailed out just in time.

“As I looked at it, the plane exploded in front of us. There was a monstrous explosion, the plane literally disintegrated before my eyes. The engines were torn from the wings and went tumbling through the sky with their props windmilling as they fell in a large non-linear arc. The wings and the fuselage and tail were torn to shreds.

“As the pieces of aluminum drifted and twisted while they fell, with each turn the sun would reflect off their surfaces back into my eyes as if they were mirrors. But the most spectacular sight was the fuel cells which had been torn from the wings. They did not explode their gasoline, but rather they burned in huge orange tongues of flames streaming out behind the cells as they fell in a wavy fashion toward the earth.

“But now we must fly straight through that same shooting gallery, and would we suffer the same fate? It was very frightening, terribly frightening, but they missed us.”

Roger Tewksbury, a flight engineer on the Firman Mack crew (506th Squadron), had the following observations: “This was my first mission. We were flying on the right side of the PASSION PIT when it was hit by the first bunch of flak. The PASSION PIT slid under our open bomb bay. I saw several chutes open and the plane go into a slow, flat spin. It leveled out just before it hit in a flat area. The right wing was sheared off and caught fire.

At the time I was just wearing my parachute harness when the PASSION PIT passed under us with the left wing afire. Before the plane hit the ground, I had managed to hitch only one buckle on my chute. Needless to say, after this devastation, I wore my chute fully buckled.”

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## 24 August 1944

### Langenhagen, Germany

The mission to Langenhagen airfield was well into Germany, near Hannover, where there was a FW assembly field. Results of the bombing ranged from very good to excellent, with the drop being made visually. Barrage type flak was intense and accurate, causing the loss of one 68th Squadron plane.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #44-40098 B, Dittmer	LONE RANGER	MACR #8273
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#### 68th Squadron Crew (one exception):

DITTMER, ARTHUR H. ASN 0-818843	Pilot KIA, buried Margraten (E-14-14)	2nd Lt.	Glendale, L.I., New York
REDDICK, MARVIN J. ASN 0-813419	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Avon Park, Florida

GRUEBER, ARNOLD A. H. ASN 0-716650	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Byron, Nebraska
DAVIS, WAYNE R. ASN 0-717040	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Pendleton, Oregon
DEVICH, JOHN E. ASN 37275604	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Duluth, Minnesota
DOMOGALA, JOHN W. ASN 33756755	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Central City, Pennsylvania
GASPERETTI, RAYMOND ASN 39043892	RW Gunner KIA, buried Margraten (C-10-8)	Sgt.	San Francisco, California
BRASWELL, HOMER H. ASN 14105559	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Eufala, Alabama
FOGELSTROM, EUGENE B. ASN 37317934	Top Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Staples, Minnesota
DOBSON, GROVER L. (66th Squadron) ASN 6397582	Tail Turret POW	Sgt.	Mt. Airy, North Carolina

*Note: Dobson was on loan from the 66th Squadron*

MACR #8273 includes this information, "At 1127 hours, aircraft #44-40098 was seen to peel off from the formation with its #3 engine and right wing in flames. When last seen, it appeared under control and two chutes were seen." [Near Hannover]

The navigator, Arnold H. Grueber, provided additional information, "I had been flying with two or three crews – lack of manpower, you know. Was flying with the Minnesota boys every day, and when my crew was called up, I flew with them.

"This day I was flying with my crew and we were tail end Charlies. The low slot was clobbered heavily by anti aircraft fire. It not only riddled the aircraft with holes, it also set us afire and knocked out #4 engine. I bailed out at 24,000 feet and the darned plane went into a flat, but wide, spin and came at me four times! It landed in the same dry field as I did, cartwheeled and all hell broke loose.

"Injured, I was picked up by the hostile civilians and saved from hanging when the Luftwaffe Polizei arrived. Just like the old movies! I was taken to a temporary hospital and put into a room where a B-17 pilot was bedded down. He was severely burned – name of Maier, from Minnesota. I tried to nurse him the best I could while we were being transported to Dulag, near Frankfurt. But I don't believe my litter patient survived.

"I was immediately identified as a traitor by my captors because both my grandfather and great grandfather went to the USA in the 1870's and prior had lived in the Hanover area."

Apparently all of the crew parachuted safely except Homer Braswell. However, at approximately 1300 hours, pilot Lt. Dittmer and right waist gunner Raymond Gasperetti, were lined up and shot – apparently by the civilians before the military arrived. This, according to statements made by Arnold Grueber. They were murdered!

S/Sgt. Eugene B. Fogelstrom, substitute top turret gunner from the 66th Squadron, remembers, "This was to be a routine flight. I thought that it would be a milk run as it was over water most of the way and we had been there before. Dummer Lake was our IP and always had accurate flak.

“From my position in the top turret, I could see smoke and some fire too, coming out of an engine when the alarm was sounded. I was the second one out from the front area. I counted to 10, pulled the ripcord, and felt a slight shock when the chute opened.

“I looked around but couldn’t see the plane or any other chutes. It was so quiet, no breeze, and so beautiful. I seemed so stationary that I began worrying that I wasn’t going down – perhaps I was too light and was just suspended there.

“Then I noticed that I was losing altitude and quit sweating, so reached into my pocket for a cigarette. But my lighter was in a lower pocket, so I started to unstrap my leg strap to get at it, when it dawned on me I could fall right out of the chute, so gave it up. I have always wondered what the Germans would have thought of me coming down smoking a cigarette. I really wasn’t all that cool, of course, did strange things, sometimes.”

Homer Braswell had been wounded so badly that when it came time to bail out, he simply could not make it.

There were several crewmen seriously wounded during the month of September but there are few records with which to do little more than to identify the names, dates and Squadrons. These men are shown this month in date & Squadron order.

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## 11 September 1944

### Misburg, Germany

Two 67th Squadron crewmen were injured during this mission.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-110031, Spagnola	Injured crewmember
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#### 67th Squadron Crew (partial):

PONDFIELD, JOHN J. ASN 13142294	LW Gunner Wounded by flak, not serious	Sgt. Baltimore, Maryland
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There are no additional details on this incident.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., \$42-99997, Hurst	Injured crewmember
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#### 67th Squadron Crew (partial):

PORTER, RAYMOND W. ASN T-2607	Bombardier Plexiglass in eye	Flt Of. San Luis Obispo California
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Lt. Porter said that, “I was on Frank Hurst’s crew on the trip to Misburg (Hannover) on the 11th. We had just finished dropping our bombs when a piece of flak came through the plexiglass of the nose turret, shattering it and a piece of the glass entered my eye. I couldn’t see then but didn’t think it too serious. But we heard that the Group ahead of us in the formation [the 492nd] was being raked over by fighters and I had to let Carl Appelin take my place in the turret to man the guns so we wouldn’t meet the same fate. We later learned that this Group was nearly wiped out. I recovered later, with no permanent damage done.”

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## 13 September 1944

### Schwabish-Hall Airfield, Germany

Two crewmen were injured in separate incidents during this mission.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-51234, Stevens			Injured crewmember
66th Squadron Crew:			
STEVENS, MAURICE M.	Pilot	Flight Officer	
CROSS, FINIS G.	Co-pilot	Flight Officer	
BISONS, GINO F.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
GERASIMCZYK, STANLEY J.	Bombardier	Flight Officer	
RAVIS, HERBERT J.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.	
CHISMAN, ALBERT ASN 36671218	Eng./Top Turret Seriously injured	Sgt.	West Frankfort, Illinois
BRAMAN, DONALD S.	RW Gunner	Sgt.	
KENDLE, JACK F.	LW Gunner	Sgt.	
NILES, ROBERT C.	Tail Turret	Sgt.	

Very little information is available on Albert Chisman, except that he was injured while in a 66th Bomb Group B-24 piloted by Maurice Stevens. He was injured on his fifth mission and did not fly his next one until 26 October. He then went on to complete his tour of duty with 36 missions on 24 March 1945.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-95193 I-Bar, Holcomb	THREE KISSES FOR LUCK		Injured crewmember
67th Squadron Crew:			
HOLCOMB, JAMES C.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
HERMAN, BERNARD. L.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
SMITH, L. A.	Navigator	1st Lt.	
FISHER, BERNARD	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
RODRIGUEZ, JOSEPH R. ASN 12083655	Radio Oper. Seriously wounded	T/Sgt.	New York City New York
WHITING, CLAYTON C.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	
GERBE, FRANK	RW Gunner	T/Sgt.	
MANSIR, EVERETT W.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
RHODES, JOHN L.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

*Note: Lt. Herman was KIA on 18 October 1944.*

T/Sgt. Rodriguez stated, "My diary shows that it was a Jet Aircraft airfield at Hall, Germany that we hit, and Major William Cameron, 67th's Squadron's C.O., was Command Pilot that day. Lt. Herring had been our first pilot, but he completed his tour and our co-pilot, Lt. James Holcomb was promoted to take his place that day. Our aircraft was #42-95193 I-Bar, THREE KISSES FOR LUCK, one which we had flown since our 19th mission – this was our 29th, all in the 67th.

“I had the distinct privilege of serving as radio operator on Capt. Charles (Chuck) S. Herring’s crew from its inception in December 1943 in March Field, California. On the day of the mission in question, then 1st Lt. Herring was not flying as he had finished his tour of 30 missions whereas the rest of us on his crew had only 29 missions. He had gone one jump on us due to the fact that he had flown his first mission as an observer on someone else’s crew – as a combat orientation mission. Our co-pilot, 1st Lt. James Holcomb, having checked out as a first pilot, was in command.

“We were carrying 500 lb. general-purpose bombs and flak over the target was reported to be heavy at the briefing that morning. We were hit by very heavy flak before we reached the target and lost our #2 engine – all fuel tanks hit and damage to our hydraulic system – I, myself, was wounded by flak through my left thigh and it was touch and go for awhile as to whether or not we would have to bail out. Since we were losing fuel and altitude, the order was given to lighten the ship and everything that could be moved and wasn’t bolted down, was thrown out.

“We were alone and vulnerable and a decision was made to try to make Switzerland, however, shortly after two P-38s responding to our distress calls joined us and escorted us to an airfield used by artillery spotters very close to the then front lines. We made an emergency landing there and I was taken on a stretcher, by ambulance, to a field hospital very close by after preliminary treatment at a first-aid station. My crewmembers came by that afternoon to visit me after I had been operated on and left me all of their “C” rations, which I eventually traded off. They told me they had counted over 200 holes on the ship, which was left there at the artillery observer’s field. They then took off for Paris, which had been liberated only a few short weeks before. They promised to fly back and fire flares to advise me what my wife, Marie, who was pregnant with our first child, had delivered – red-red if a girl – blue-blue, if a boy.

“They spent close to a week in Paris before they were flown back to England. I spent about a week at the field hospital in a tent that I shared with eight men from a bomb disposal squad who had been injured while disposing of German butterfly bombs. We had constant visits from French farmers who brought us fruit and spirits. There seemed to be daily artillery duels between both sides as we could hear the rumbling of cannon fire in the distance.

“From this field hospital, I was sent by ambulance to a hospital in Paris where the signs were still printed in German and I wore German pajamas. I stayed at this hospital for about ten days, was then sent to a hospital near Cherbourg, and then by boat hospital (this vessel the “Nile” belonged to the king of Egypt and had been donated by him for this use) to a tremendous-sized hospital in Southampton, England from where I was discharged on the 14th of October. I was supposed to return to Stone, England, but I wasn’t going to take any chances on being re-assigned to some other outfit, so I took off on my own back to Shipdham to the 44th Bomb Group where the first sergeant at the 67th [Robert Ryan] fixed it all up.”

Rodriguez returned to combat status and flew his next mission on 2 November, and completed his tour of 34 missions on 5 November 1944.

Frank Gerbe provided this account: “On our way to target area we flew over the Rhine River and got hit with a heavy concentration of flak. The first hit knocked out our #2 engine and ripped open our fuel cells. The next burst of flak hit our oxygen supply tanks and Rodriguez was wounded in the leg.

“Our vacuum gauges on #1 and #2 engines were hit. Gas was pouring into the bomb bays from the holes in the tanks. We literally fell from the sky, with a loss of 7,000 feet altitude. Holcomb was our pilot this day and we had a rookie co-pilot. Our air speed dropped to about 120 mph. Our #3 engine was hit as well as the fuel cells, which were leaking, #3 engine was sputtering and missing. Holcomb used the radio to inform the rest of the flight of our predicament.

“In a few minutes, two of the most beautiful P-38s came alongside and gave us close support and guidance to a friendly field. Bandits were reported in the area and you cannot imagine our feelings with those two P-38s on our wing tips. Little friends were what we called those two P-38s and they guided us toward an airfield in Laon, France.

“We started our approach for a landing and #3 engine cuts out. Then set the selector valves from #4 to #3 engine and started fuel pumps; #3 engine started right up again. That was not the end of our problems. As we got above the runway, we found that the Jerry’s had bombed it two nights ago. It was too late now to change our minds about landing.

“As we hit the runway, the nose wheel gear broke and the main landing gear on the left and tire were ripped up. Immediately, we cut all engines off and old I-193 rolled to a stop. Luckily, she didn’t catch fire. During this hectic ride, we had been throwing all extra weight, such as ammunition, flak suits, guns and etc. overboard, just to make the ship lighter.

“An ambulance took Rodriquez to a hospital. Later on we hitchhiked to the hospital to see Rodriquez. He was coming along okay. Then decided to head for Paris. Stayed overnight at Chauny, France and spent a while in Paris. We got good and drunk while in Paris and went sightseeing when we were not drinking.

“Flew I-193 on this mission and she has had it. We ain’t got her no more. She was shot up too badly and we had to abandon her. Our hearts were broken to lose our favorite, “THREE KISSES FOR LUCK,” but in our memories, she’ll always be part of us.” [Editor’s note: She was repaired and completed the war with 83 missions.]

## 18 September 1944

### Low Level Supply Mission, Best, Holland

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-50596, Konstand

Injured crewmember

#### 68th Squadron Crew:

KONSTAND, GUS	Pilot	Capt.	
ADAMS, LEWIS C.	Command Pilot	Lt. Col.	
OLIVER, GEORGE H. Jr.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
PARKER, GEORGE J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
BAXTER, ROBERT C.	Navigator-GEE	1st Lt.	
LOFLIN, WILLIAM E. ASN 0-1996110	Bombardier Seriously injured	2nd Lt.	Huntington, West Virginia
LYBARGER, WILLIAM B.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
FIELDS, EDWIN D.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	

DAVIS, ADDISON C.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
GARRETT, HOWARD N.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
STEPHANOVIC, REUBEN J.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.
CONROY, H. A.	Other	

*Note: Six members of this crew were KIA on 28 December 1944: Konstand, Oliver, Parker, Loflin, Fields, and Stephanovic. Three others (Lybarger, Davis, and Garrett) survived and were taken prisoner.*

Lt. Loflin had been a member of Capt. Konstand's crew when they were transferred from the 492nd Bomb Group in mid-August 1944. He had completed many missions with that Group and was on his fourth mission with the 44th when wounded. According to the Interrogation Report for the Capt. Konstand's Crew, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Loflin was struck in the left buttocks. He was taken to the 52nd Field Medical Hospital for treatment. He returned to active duty on 23 December 1944 and was KIA on 28 December 1944.

William Lybarger's wife Phyllis, provides some additional information on this mission: "You may be interested to know the 'true' story about what happened that day. Bill had always said he was 'shot down' twice and Davis put all the confusing pieces together for me. As you know, they were flying low to drop supplies and Loflin, the bombardier, was wounded in the buttocks and the plane landed near Brussels. Well, Loflin's wound was not serious. What caused the plane to land was that the two left engines had been shot out and since they were flying so low, they couldn't get any altitude to fly home, therefore, they had to land! They were lucky to be near an airport.

"They returned the next day in another plane. Three additional personnel, Lt. Col. L. C. Adams, 1st Lt. Robert C. Baxter, and H. Conroy were aboard that day as they thought it would be an easy flight to fly. Guess they were sorry they went! Anyway, it appears they must not have wanted it to appear on their records that they were 'shot down,' so it was not recorded that way. Since this happened the day after Brussels was liberated, that's why those Belgium farmers were so glad to see Bill. He saw Hitler's picture in 'The Mannekin Pis' fountain in Brussels."

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #44-40167 Bar-V, Habedank	SIERRA BLANCA	Injured crewmembers
506th Squadron Crew:		
HABEDANK, RICHARD H.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
DUPONT, ROBERT P. ASN 0-710907	Co-pilot Seriously injured	2nd Lt. Jewett City, Connecticut
MARGOLIES, MURRAY G.	Navigator	Flt. Off.
LAUGHLIN, WILLIAM E.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
SCHMIDT, ARTHUR J.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
URANIA, ALBERT J.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
MATTER, ELWOOD A. ASN 33176555	RW Gunner Seriously injured	Sgt. Sunbury, Pennsylvania
WEATHLEY, J. C.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
MOORE, DAVID	Tail Turret	Sgt.
MILLER, C. M.	Other	Pvt.



Both of these men were on the aircraft piloted by Lt. Richard H. Habedank and were wounded at about the same time. Sgt. Elwood A. Matter, assigned as top turret gunner normally on this crew, relates his story, "On this mission, my third, I was in the waist dropping supplies out of the ball turret opening. The turrets had been removed for this mission.

"As we approached the drop zone at about 400 feet, we encountered heavy small ammo fire. One of these shells exploded in the turret opening and I was struck in the left arm, face and scalp with the shell fragments. It put me in the hospital near Shipdham [231st Sta Hosp. at Wymondham] for about a month before I returned to duty [9 November 1944]. Our co-pilot, Lt. DuPont, was also wounded on this same mission by an exploding shell. His wounds were not as severe as mine and he returned to duty before I did.

"While I was in the hospital, my crew kept flying missions so I got behind. When they finished their tour of 30 missions, I was assigned to another crew (Captain E.J. Burns) as a waist gunner. I flew on the March 24th 1945 re-supply low-level mission to ground troops near Wesel, Germany under almost the exact same conditions and position and wondered if I'd be wounded again. But this time our nose turret gunner, Sgt. Truslow, was wounded, but happily, not very seriously and he recovered in a short time and soon returned to duty. This is the crew I flew home with in June of 1945." Matter completed his tour of duty on 20 April 1945. He received his Purple Heart from General Johnson.

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## 28 September 1944

### Kassel, Germany, Mission 229: Motor Works

One 68th Squadron aircraft was hit by flak and made an emergency landing in Belgium

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-52618 Bar-B, Dayball	CHIEF WAPELLO	Emergency landing
DAYBALL, JULIAN H.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
PHILLIPS, ROBERT L.	Co-pilot	Flt. Off.
DAVIS, RICHARD H.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
REINECKE, CALVIN C.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
FINK, IVAN W.	Eng./Top Turret	Sgt.
SICARD, EDWARD P.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
COUVILLION, WILBERT L.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
SMITH, MALCOLM R.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
SHEA, JOHN J.	Tail Turret	Sgt.

*Note: Couvillion and Shea bailed out okay and joined the rest of the crew at the airfield. The Dayball crew was shot down on 18 October 1944. Dayball, Phillips, Davis, Fink, Sicard, Couvillion, Smith, and Shea were KIA.*

Bob McGee, who had been on the Dayball crew, provided the following information on this mission: "September 28, 1944 was a mission (which I wasn't on) to Kassel Tank Factory, plane number B-618, and the crew had bad luck. The bombing was on PFF. The plane had gotten a lot of anti-aircraft flak and they headed for the Brussels, Belgium airport. The pilot, Lt. Dayball, said

anyone could bail out if they wanted to as he didn't know if the landing would be a good one. One engine was out and two were losing oil.

I know Bill Couvillion was one who bailed out and John Shea was another. Bill told me he landed in a tree and when he started down, a man was there talking in French. Bill was from Louisiana and could also speak French. Bill met John at a crossroads. The plane landed okay. Dayball was a very good pilot. Bill said the stores had many flavors of ice cream and there were lots of expensive cameras for sale. They left the plane there and all of the crew came back to our base by ATC (air transport command)."

Less than one month later, the Dayball crew was shot down on the mission to Leverkusen, Germany.

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## 30 September 1944

### Hamm, Germany

The 44th Bomb Group attacked the secondary target, the Hamm Marshalling Yards, with unobserved results due to the cloud cover. Bombing was accomplished by PFF method. This Group led the 14th Combat Bomb Wing and the 2nd Division. One 66th Squadron aircraft and crew was Missing In Action.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #44-10531 R+, Ledford	MY SAD ASS		MACR #9370
66th Squadron Crew:			
LEDFOORD, ARTHUR S. ASN 0-705401	Pilot POW	1st Lt.	Chattanooga, Tennessee
ARMSTRONG, HAROLD A. ASN 0-771649	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Pueblo, Colorado
TOMBLIN, JAMES N. ASN 0-722396	Navigator POW	2nd Lt.	Johnson City, Tennessee
PASCAL, RICHARD W. ASN 0-773438	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Weston, Nebraska
WRIGHTS, WILLIAM H. Jr. ASN 34776118	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Clemmons, North Carolina
SHARP, EDWARD L. ASN 35606490	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Mingo Junction, Ohio
WIENER, FREDERICK ASN 12121767	RW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
BERTOLIO, PERVIS J. ASN 38358009	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Port Neches, Texas
STARR, HENRY P. ASN 13031489	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Arlington, Virginia

The MACR includes these facts, "At 1324 hours, just after bombs away and at the target, this aircraft (#531 R+) was flying in #3 position in the low squadron and apparently was hit by flak. It was last observed at 1325 hours leaving the formation, dropping below, and apparently under control."

1st Lt. Arthur S. Ledford sent additional information about this raid, "We saw no flak until after bombs away and then we were hit at least four times. #1 engine went out immediately and #3 was hit but still producing some power. However, it was burning and eventually burned through the side of the fuselage. We also took a hit around the waist and one near the tail, which got our tail gunner.

"After being hit, we lost power and speed, rapidly dropped behind the formation. We were able to hold to approximately 300 feet per minute descent and when we reached 17,000 feet, I told the waist gunners to go to the tail and check on Starr to see if he was alive. If so, they should tie him to a static line and throw him out, as it was evident that we must all bail out soon. They called back to report that the top of his head had been blown away and he couldn't possibly be alive. So the decision was made to leave him with the plane.

"Approximately 35 minutes off the target, the fire burned into the plane and everybody left except the bombardier, Lt. Pascal, navigator Tomblin, and myself. Those two could not get out due to a malfunction of one of the nose wheel doors. When the plane eventually blew up, they were standing on the doors and were blown out into the air, where they pulled their cords and landed OK.

"After getting rid of all my gear (flak suit, helmet, oxygen mask, electric suit, headphones, etc), I jumped from the flight deck, through the fire there and through the bomb bay. I left at approximately 14,000 feet and pulled the cord at about 1,000 feet. A large piece of the fuselage floated down within 250 feet of where I landed. About another 200 feet away, one of the waist gunner's jackets came down. Two of the engines fell in the yard of a house about 1/4 mile from where I hit the ground.

"Tomblin, Pascall and I were together in prison camp for the duration. The other crew members who had bailed out earlier, were captured in different places and were taken another direction."

Radio operator Edward Sharp has written, but not published, a book about World War II, but sent only the following, "We left on pay-day, a beautiful day. Our target was Hamm – and your information is correct, we started sagging behind after feathering the outboard engine. (rather hastily, I thought) I had a splendid view from the upper turret. From there I could see that we were taking a lot of flak.

"Soon, our inboard engine was streaming smoke and occasionally belched fire. It was the first indication that we were going to bail out. I dropped to the flight deck where Bill Wrights, the engineer, was stretched out with his harness buckled and chute on. He was staring at the bomb bay. I followed his gaze while snapping up my harness and chute, noticing as he did, that the bays were filled with smoke and spraying gasoline. The bombs were all gone, thank goodness.

"I was attempting to tie my G.I. shoes to my harness when the explosion occurred. Bill ripped up the deck floor door and worked the handle to manually open the bay doors; then he leapt through the fire – and I was on his shoulders.

"When I had the opportunity, I checked the time to find it to be 1337 hours. I tried to stay sane by figuring my chances of reaching the Belgian border a few miles to the west.

"S/Sgt. Starr, our tail gunner, was killed and still on board. Sgts. Wiener and Bertolio later told me that Starr had a terrible head wound that was fatal. They could not get him out of the turret.

“We surviving enlisted men were later grouped together in Stalag Luft IV in Poland. After evacuating that camp to the Russians, we met our co-pilot Armstrong in the officer’s camp, Stalag Luft I, Barth. The unofficial name we gave our ship was ‘MY SAD ASS’ as it was our pilot’s favorite expression.”

The navigator, James Tomblin, wrote: “We received three direct hits in the tail, bomb bay, and the nose, thirty seconds before the target. We fell out of formation. The #1 engine was completely disabled, the #2 engine losing power, the #3 was on fire, and #4 was okay. The hydraulics were knocked out also and the bomb bay doors would not close. Had I occupied my usual position between the ammunition cases in the nose, as I had on all previous missions, a piece of flak would have undoubtedly struck me. As it was, I had decided to stand up on this mission, for some reason, and I got the compass heading before we went over the target instead of afterwards. I was standing when flak came through the nose and went between my legs and into an oxygen bottle under the navigator’s table. I started to call the pilot about it, but decided there was too much excitement anyhow.

“The bombardier called up all the crewmembers. All of them answered but the tail gunner. He called the tail gunner three times, and then told the waist gunners to go back there and see about him. At first they balked because they were so afraid, they were scared stiff; but Dick then ordered both Weiner and Bertollio to the tail. Then they reported back the situation: ‘Hank’s done for,’ came the voice of Bertollio over the intercom.

“The pilot called me and asked for an ETA to the Rhine River. Once across the Rhine, we would be over Allied-held territory. I computed an ETA of 2:00 pm, using the air speed and wind we had over the target. Since our air speed had dropped, I thought I should add five minutes more to the time. Instead I subtracted the five minutes and gave Ledford an ETA of 1:55. I’ll never know why I did this silly thing. Ledford said later that he would have given the order to bail out sooner, had he known.

“The pilot then gave the order to prepare to bail out, and I took off my flak suit. The upper turret, Sharp, asked if he ought to get out of his turret, and Ledford said ‘yes,’ he had forgotten about him. So Dick Pascal said he thought he had better get out of his nose turret. It was now about fifteen minutes to 2:00 o’clock.

“Pascal unplugged his intercom, preparing to leave the turret. While I was helping him (it’s very cramped in the nose and two doors must be opened and closed to get anyone out of the turret), I accidentally unplugged my own intercom. It was just then that the pilot ordered everyone to bail out. Of course, neither Pascal nor I heard the order.

“Pascal got out of the turret, and he had closed the turret doors and was just closing the back hatch doors when all four engines quit and the intercom went dead. The hydraulics were already gone; we lost them over the target. It became absolutely quiet.

“Pascal didn’t know the engines had quit. I tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to our parachutes, the snap-on chest packs laying under the navigator’s table. He crouched down and I looked under the table back toward the bomb bay, and saw fire back there.

“We decided we ought to leave. He still didn’t know the engines were out. He handed me up my parachute, and got his. I put mine on and looked up above the navigator’s table to the pilot’s rudder pedals and saw the cockpit, which was empty. A big tongue of flame went across it while

I was looking. I made up my mind to leave the airplane then, and crouched down just behind the bombardier. Just as Dick reached for the emergency release handles, which were supposed to jettison the nose wheel doors, the flames came up into the nose and both of us were enveloped in flame. Then I saw Dick pull the release handles and saw one door disappear. The second door did not release. Dick crawled out, laid on the door and began pounding it with his hand. So I sat back and waited (eyes closed) until I thought Dick had time to get out. I was in the fire all this time, and I could feel myself burning.

“Then, just as I started to move toward the door opening, I thought something had come between me and the fire because I was no longer on fire. I thought that it was the navigator’s table, and that I was going to have to move that to get to the possible escape opening under the nose wheel.

“Two seconds later, I found myself out in the air. Just as I left the ship I felt my parachute leave me. I could not find it at first. Then I heard something flapping above my head and I looked up, and there it was, still attached. The static lines had been tacked on with thread to the parachute harness, and the thread had burned through, leaving the chest pack about eight feet above my head. So I pulled it down to me, and pulled the ripcord and the parachute opened. Looking across the way, I saw Dick in the air at the same level I was, and a part of a wing came fluttering by. Then I looked down below me and saw a large tree. Then I was on the ground, landing in a small ditch next to a barbed wire fence. I remembered to clear my ears on the way down. I also remember holding the ripcord in my hand, wondering if I dropped it that it might injure somebody. Strange thought! A ripcord is a 1/4” diameter steel rod curved to form a handle. It is pretty heavy.

“The plane obviously had exploded but I heard nothing and felt nothing. Both Pascal and myself were badly burned, and Dick’s left hand was broken by some flying object. Strangely enough, my left hand was very badly burned but the rayon glove I had on my right hand wasn’t even singed.

“I got out of my parachute harness and got out of the ditch. Over the fence I saw a civilian farmer. He started talking to me in German; I could not understand it. So then he said, ‘Parlez vous francais?’ Thinking I might be talking to a member of the underground, I got very excited. Remembering I had just completed two years of high school French, I said: ‘Mais oui, j’etude pour deux ans dans l’ecole.’ He responded immediately, correcting my French, just like my French teacher. ‘Non, non, non! Deuxans, deuxans!’ (duzan, as though one word). Then he said ‘Avez-vous le bon-bon?’ Hoping he might help me evade capture, I gave him my escape kit containing maps, money, concentrated food, some of which was chocolate. I think he may have heard of escape kits before. Then he walked away. This was probably the most bizarre thing that ever happened to me during the war.

“A group of soldiers pulled up on a dirt road about 100 feet away. The leader of the group had a sub-machine gun. He gave me an order three times, without my understanding him, then pointed the gun directly at me. That is scary, looking down that gun barrel. A soldier indicated that he wanted my parachute. Another soldier helped me get my parachute disentangled from the branches and I was taken to a haystack about two blocks away. The road I walked on was lined with women and children, staring at us. The children didn’t seem to be afraid, and I knew I looked pretty terrible with my face and hair so burned.

“When I got to the haystack I saw Pascal sitting there. The Germans had already captured him. He stood up and shook hands with me. We sat around the haystack, with a lot of civilians around

us, who thought it was an interesting sight. Ledford came up about fifteen minutes later. Just before Ledford came, a staff sergeant from a B-17 was brought to the same haystack. He had a flak wound in his left arm. We also saw another parachute at about 10,000 feet in the air.

“One of the German soldiers put salve on Dick and myself; face, ears, my left hand, and ankles. We were the enemy, had just bombed one of Germany’s large cities, and this soldier was showing compassion!”

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-94846 L-Bar, Harris	MI AKIN ASS	Injured crewmember
67th Squadron Crew:		
HARRIS, STEPHEN C.	Pilot	1st Lt.
ZIEGLER, GEORGE G.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
DEWITT, DELBERT J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
BULLINGER, WILLIAM M.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
PEEK, JOEL K.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
SIELING, HARRY N.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
VAN EYNDE, ROBERT J.	RW Gunner Seriously Injured	Chicago, Illinois
DORRISEY, WILLIAM	LW Gunner	Sgt.
JEDLOWSKI, HAROLD F.	Tail Turret	Sgt.

Lt. Harris’ aircraft was hit by flak in the target, seriously damaging both wings, forcing the pilots to be very cautious while limping back to base. Sgt. Van Eynde, right waist gunner, also was hit and injured seriously in his upper right arm during this same flak barrage. He was admitted to the hospital to recover. He had completed 10 missions prior to this one, but his injuries would not permit him to fly any additional missions.

## 7 October 1944

### Kassel, Germany

The Group attacked the Tank Factory at Kassels with 37 aircraft. Flak at target was intense and accurate, with the 506th Squadron losing two planes and another was forced to land at Brussels, Belgium with the pilot seriously wounded.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-50789 Bar-A, Salfen	LAKANOOKIE	MACR #9343
506th Squadron Crew:		
SALFEN, WILLIAM S. ASN 0-705812	Pilot POW	1st Lt. O’Fallon, Missouri
IDEN, DONALD B. ASN 0-767814	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt. Visalia, California
VETTER, EDWARD F. ASN 0-1108389	Navigator POW	2nd Lt. Topeka, Kansas

BAUMAN, MORTON ASN 0-685421	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	West New York, New Jersey
BAGGETT, CARNEY W. Jr. ASN 34715099	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Clarksville, Tennessee
DOHERTY, ROBERT L. ASN 13039292	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Grove City, Pennsylvania
SUSZEK, LEO C. ASN 36422846	RW Gunner POW/Injured	Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
SINCLAIR, NORMAN L. ASN 36803002	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	West De Pere, Wisconsin
BUCKLEY, FRANCIS X. ASN 13124177	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Troy, New York

The MACR states that this aircraft, #789, was last seen in vicinity of Kassels at 1224 hours. #1 and #2 engines had been knocked out by flak and it fell out of formation, under control. It was last heard from at approximately 1239 hours calling on VHF for fighter support. It was believed to be trying for or heading toward friendly territory.

Lt. Donald B. Iden, co-pilot, sent the following information: "We had just closed the bomb bay doors after releasing bombs over Kassel when our plane, which was named LAKANOOKIE, took two bursts of flak. One hit the left wing and the other went into the tail section. The hit in the wing took out the #1 and #2 engines, so that made it impossible to keep a heading without complete cross-control of ailerons and rudders. Needless to say, loss of altitude was very rapid.

"We rode it down to 1,500 feet, at which time we bailed out and soon were captured. After Salfen and I bailed out, the aircraft entered a flat spin, crashed and burned.

"No, Leo Suszek was not an evadee – he was captured by the Germans as were the rest of us. But, somehow, he was badly injured on bailout. When we last saw him on the ground, he was unable to converse and appeared to be in extreme pain. I thought he had internal injuries of some kind. We gave him an injection of morphine before he was taken away.

"We were told that Robert Doherty's parachute failed to open. Apparently Francis Buckley went down with the aircraft. I can only assume that he probably was unable to bail out, but for reasons unknown. Possibly the flak hit in the rear could have injured him or damaged his chute.

"Spent the rest of the duration at Barth, Germany – Stalag Luft I. After the war, Suszek visited me two or three times before he headed for the V.A. Hospital in Tucson, Arizona. I have not heard from him since."

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The second 506th aircraft that failed to return was piloted by Homer E. Still and Francis C. Welborn.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #44-40167 Bar-Y, Still	SIERRA BLANCA	MACR #9342
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506th Squadron Crew:

STILL, HOMER E. ASN 0-462673	Pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Jacksonville, Florida
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WELBORN, FRANCIS C. ASN 0-828847	Co-pilot POW	2nd Lt.	Lexington, Kentucky
WILSON, JOHN E. ASN T-126388	Navigator POW	Flt Of.	Beeville, Texas
STRUNC, HENRY ASN 0-776824	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Staple Hurst, Nebraska
WESSMAN, HELGE E. ASN 32432466	Engineer KIA	S/Sgt.	West Orange, New Jersey
LORD, JOHN B. ASN 16081465	Radio Oper. POW/BURNED	S/Sgt.	Maywood, Illinois
HIBBS, LEO R. ASN 35809558	Hatch Gun. KIA	Sgt.	Corydon, Indiana
WYANT, JOHN C. ASN 13169581	RW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Uniontown, Pennsylvania
DAHLIN, JOHN K. ASN 11067243	LW Gunner POW	Sgt.	Worcester, Massachusetts
BUHL, VERNON ASN 39621427	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Whitehall, Montana

The MACR relates that aircraft #167 was last observed in target area at Kassel. Bombs were away at 1224 hours under heavy anti aircraft fire. This plane then dropped slightly behind the formation.

Sgt. John Dahlin made the statements that, "Our plane was hit by flak and set on fire. Seven of us bailed out. The plane broke into pieces soon afterwards. I met the other six men who had bailed out safely, but none of us ever again saw Sgt. Hibbs. Later, a German Major told me that three bodies were found in the crashed plane. He had a correct list of names of the missing crew members."

Radio Operator John Lord sent a tape of his experiences, "September 1st was our first mission as a crew. The pilot, Still, and co-pilot Welborn had flown one other combat mission prior to this. But on our first mission, the tail hit a white fence at end of runway – I could see pieces of the fence fly! We [later] dropped our 1,000 pound bombs through the bomb bay doors. Not a very good way to start.

"On the 7 October mission to Kassels, being the newest crew, we got one of the oldest planes to fly. It was patched up, my radio table was broken off, no place to write. [Editor's note: Aircraft received from the 492nd Bomb Group when that Group was de-activated.]

"When we opened the bomb bay doors, I could see the flash of flak guns shooting at us. We had trouble with one engine losing power, finally had to feather it. Not then being able to keep up with the formation, we began to fall behind. Our pilot, Homer Still, asked John Wilson, navigator, for a heading to fly back over France.

"Another engine on the right side was lost, making two of them feathered on that side of the wing, and we were in deep trouble. About that time I heard a loud POP and then saw our co-pilot, Welborn, open the top hatch and climb out! When I turned around and looked into the bomb bay, I saw the reason for that exit. It was full of flames.



“How was I to get out? Normally I could have climbed up on the radio table and pulled myself up though that same top hatch, but the table was broken. I had my chest pack chute on but in a dilemma as what to do when the plane made my decision for me – it turned upside down. I then fell out of that open top hatch – well, almost out. My heated suit and intercom plugs were holding me tight. I quickly broke or tore them loose and fell free.

“I found myself in a head first position and slowly spinning so that I had little sense of falling. I guess that my altitude at that time to be about 17,000 feet. Slowly I saw the ground getting closer, pulled my ring and thankfully saw my chute blossom out. Looking down, I could see a round, burning area of incendiaries, so I pulled on some shroud lines and missed the fire, and landed in an open field. Then a large piece of the aircraft – the waist area – came down close to me. I suspect that the plane had exploded for that piece to hit like that.

“I had burns on my left hand and around my eyes. A young German lad of about 8 to 10 years old, helped me with my chute. Then German soldiers came running up, holding pistols on me. I had landed close to a Signal Corps practicing in the woods, unfortunately, with no possibility of evasion.

“They took me to a dispensary where I was bandaged on my hand and face. While I was there several teen-aged boys, who had been manning a flak gun nearby, came in to see me. They thought they had shot us down. Both Dahlin and Wyant had been shot at as they were coming down. I also learned that Welborn hit his head on something when he left through the top hatch, severely damaging his eye. I later got gangrene in my burned left hand, was treated by some British doctors who had been captured earlier, but suffered no permanent damage – thanks to them.”

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 Seriously wounded on this same mission to Kassel was 2nd Lt. John W. Jones, Jr.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-50894 Bar-N, Jones			Returned
506th Squadron Crewman:			
JONES, JOHN W. ASN 0-764327	Pilot Seriously Wounded	2nd Lt.	Tucson, Arizona
HOLCOMBE, CLEMENT R.C. ASN 0-772376	Co-pilot Wounded	2nd Lt.	Michigan
WESTENHISER, JAMES T. ASN 0-712964	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
BAIER, EDWARD A. ASN 0-768980	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	
KIRKLAND, ROBERT E. ASN 34803237	Engineer Slight Wound	S/Sgt.	Coal Valley, Alabama
VAN EPPS, ELWOOD ASN 36815930	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	
SIMON, R. E. ASN 35679039	Ball Turret	Sgt.	
GARZA, RAUL ASN 38541707	RW Gunner	Sgt.	Port Lavaca, Texas

HAGGARD, ROBERT G. ASN 18202891	LW Gunner	Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
HAGE, MITRY K. ASN 38555766	Tail Turret	Sgt.	

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*Note: Sgt. Garza was KIA on 30 October 1944.*

Aircraft #894 received a direct hit in the bomb bay and #1 engine, which had to be feathered. The aircraft headed for friendly territory and landed at Brussels. The pilot, Lt. Jones, had been hit in both legs, had his left leg amputated when treated at the 8th British Army Hospital.

2nd Lt. Clement R.C. Holcombe, co-pilot on this aircraft, was instrumental in making the safe emergency landing without a pilot. He states that, "The mission was to Kassel and the target was the Tiger Tank Factory. We were hit on the bomb run before dropping our bomb load. Lt. Jones was injured and I was hit in the back of my left shoulder, rendering my left arm useless.

"Sgt. Kirkland, engineer, also was hit, but fortunately his flak suit protected him from serious injury. The right wing fuel tanks were punctured and both #1 & #2 engines were damaged and lost normal power. The radio was damaged and I learned later that we were transmitting all right but could not receive. Adding to our problems was our compass which was malfunctioning and would not indicate correctly. #4 engine caught fire briefly, but it was blown out because we lost a few thousand feet in a hurry.

"When I finally got the plane straightened out, the formation was gone. I got Sgt. Kirkland to help Lt. Jones from his position and had him get into Jones' seat to handle the throttles and help me with the rudder pedals. With my injured left arm I could not manipulate the throttles or other controls which were on my left side. The plane was 'crabbing' due to the uneven power output between the left and right sides, making straight flight most difficult.

"We salvoed our bombs to help hold altitude and tried to contact our 'little friends', but were not able to contact any of the fighters. Since Jones was hurt badly, and we were losing fuel steadily, I was afraid we might have to ditch if we continued towards England, and probably couldn't get Jones out from a ditching situation.

"Lt. Westenhiser, navigator, found that Strip B-58, near Brussels, had very recently been taken from the Germans, so we decided to try to land there. With the compass screwed up, we just plain lucked out, finding it on the first pass.

"I followed a B-17 in on the final, (approach leg) but he did not make it, and crashed just short of the runway. There were bomb craters everywhere, but enough had been filled in to make a landing possible.

"With Sgt. Kirkland handling the throttles, I got the plane down OK. Jones and I were taken to the hospital. A day or two later, I was able to walk around with my arm in a sling. Our crew hitched a ride back to England in a C-54, but we hit bad weather and had to land near Dover. Next morning the C54 dropped us off right in front of the control tower!

"This was our seventh mission, but I spent some time in the hospital before going on to fly 23 more missions before returning to the States. Other than Lt. Jones, Raul Garza, who was our ball turret gunner, was the only other crewman who didn't complete his tour. He went down over Germany while flying a make up mission." [30 October 1944]

Lt. Holcombe was recommended for the Silver Star medal for his remarkably safe emergency landing under the most trying of conditions. But this modest pilot never mentioned this commendation in his letter.

*Note: Sgt. Robert Eugene Kirkland's son, Chuck Kirkland, wrote to say that his father had told him that the aircraft was named "Down the Hatch" and had a picture of a bomb dropping into a toilet on it. Chuck Kirkland reported that his father had died in January of 1994. Further research shows that the aircraft known as "Down de Hatch" (#42-95016) was not flown this day but did complete the war with a total of 93 missions.*

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## 18 October 1944

### Leverkusen, Germany

This Group sent 31 aircraft to attack the Chemical Works located at Leverkusen. Bombing was accomplished with G-H equipment; results unobserved due to clouds. Three aircraft did not return, due primarily to the severe weather conditions that existed over the continent. Squadrons incurring losses were the 67th and 68th.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #41-28944 D-Bar, Bakalo	FLYING GINNY	MACR #15421
67th Squadron Crew:		
BAKALO, MICHAEL ASN 0-699752	Pilot KIA	1st Lt. New York City, New York
TURNBULL, JOHN I. ASN 0-399733	Command Pilot KIA	Lt. Col. Baltimore, Maryland
HERMAN, BERNARD L. ASN 0-817213	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt. Baltimore, Maryland
BRADSHAW, EUGENE T. ASN 0-717169	Navigator KIA	1st Lt. Warrensburg, Missouri
FOWLS, RALPH A. ASN 0-717050	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt. Piketon, Ohio
HOLABAUGH, JOHN W. ASN 13110122	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Tylersburg, Pennsylvania
STERN, JEROME J. ASN 16105797	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt. Brooklyn, New York
ZIEGLER, NORBERT J. ASN 17129592	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Collyer, Kansas
ENCIMER, GEORGE J. ASN 16129729	RW Gunner Seriously injured, returned to U.S.	S/Sgt. Chicago, Illinois
SCOTT, CECIL L. ASB 399100198	LW Gunner Seriously injured, returned to U.S.	S/Sgt. Winnemucca, Nevada
LOPEZ, CHARLES R. ASN 37722472	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Topeka, Kansas

*Note: Lt. Col. Turnbull was originally from 492 Bomb Group, then later 44th Headquarters.*

The MACR was not available but there is a statement from Sgt. George Encimer, right waist gunner on this crew. "Approximately seven miles from the assigned target, the radio operator, Jerome Stern called on the interphone to say that there was fire in the bomb bay. I, then, went

there – forward and looked into the bay. Evidently the bombs had been salvoed by the bombardier, as the bay was empty.

“On the way back to the base there was a large cloud bank or front, building up to 28,000 feet that we could not get over. We were at 24,000 feet and proceeded to go through this bank of clouds. While still in the bank, we must have hit a prop wash (or collision). The engines were throttled back. About this time, it felt like a huge force was lifting the right wing. The aircraft went into a sharp bank to the left. It was at this time, I think, that Colonel Turnbull, the Command Pilot, said, ‘Center the needle! Center the needle!’

“I knelt on my knees and buckled the hook of my chest-type parachute to the harness. The aircraft then flipped over on its back. I fell and broke my arm. When I looked up, I saw the rear escape hatch, and the next thing I remember is being outside the ship. I pulled my ripcord and soon afterwards heard an explosion.

“Within moments I saw land beneath me. Cecil L. Scott, left waist gunner, landed approximately 30 feet away from me, but his chute hung up in a tree.

“The Canadians gave Scott a quart of blood and set my broken arm. We had landed approximately seven miles from Ghent, Belgium. Shortly after that, they put me on a hospital train back to the 231st hospital near Shipdham.

“The last aircraft we saw before going into that cloud bank was U-Bar, below us at five o’clock. I think that the pilot had trouble with the controls or control cables.”

*Note: The aircraft Encimer refers to was from the 67th Squadron: #42-50539, SULTRY SUE.*

George Encimer also stated that all other crew members were killed when this plane crashed 1 kilometer from Petegem, Deinze, Belgium. All watches stopped at 1307 hours. The dead were buried at the U. S. Army Cemetery, Flanders Field, Waregem, Belgium. It should be noted, too, that Colonel Turnbull was not killed immediately, but died two days later.

Lt. Col. John I. Turnbull, the Group Operations Officer, was Air Commander on the mission and aboard Lt. Bakalo’s ship. Col. Turnbull was an All American lacrosse player in the Baltimore, Maryland area and was a member of the 1936 U.S. Olympic Team in the Olympic Games at Berlin. In his honor, an annual Turnbull Trophy is awarded, equivalent in lacrosse to the Heisman in football. He served with the 492nd Bomb Group immediately before his transfer to the 44th Bomb Group.

See Lt. Dayball’s story below for related information.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-50381 K, Dayball		MACR #10140
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire Crew KIA	
DAYBALL, JULIAN H. ASN 0-701907	Pilot KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-115)	1st Lt. High Hill, Missouri
PHILLIPS, ROBERT L. ASN T-125025	Co-pilot KIA, buried Henri-Chapelle (E-12-22)	Ft Of. Enumclaw. Washington
DAVIS, RICHARD H. ASN 0-723022	Navigator KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-114A)	2nd Lt. Rockaway Park, New York

STEINKE, ARTHUR A. ASN 39204852	Nose Turret KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-115)	S/Sgt.	Snohomish, Washington
FINK, IVAN W. ASN 33574486	Engineer KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-115)	S/Sgt.	Altoona, Pennsylvania
SICARD, EDWARD P. ASN 31284222	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-115)	Sgt.	Turner Falls, Massachusetts
COUVILLION, WILBERT L. ASN 38494335	RW Gunner KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-114)	Sgt.	Baton Rouge, Louisiana
SMITH, MALCOLM R. ASN 33452262	LW Gunner KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-115)	Sgt.	Washington, Dist. of Col.
BETTLEY, CONRAD R. Jr. ASN 11113894	Radar Obs. KIA	S/Sgt	Worcester, Massachusetts
SHEA, JOHN J. ASN 37046013	Tail Turret KIA, buried Jefferson Barracks (82-115)	Sgt.	Dubuque, Iowa

*Note: Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery is in St. Louis, Missouri.*

On the route out of the continent near the coast, a cloud layer building up to 28,000 feet caused the group to break the integrity of the formation. As described previously, the two aircraft collided. On 24 October, 1944, six days after the above two losses, official word was received as to the cause for the loss of two of the three aircraft MIA on the 18th.

“The flight surgeon’s report stated that the aircraft piloted by Lts. Bakalo and Dayball, collided in mid-air during an electrical storm over Belgium. Both aircraft crashed, with one exploding; all crew members were killed in action except Lt. Bakalo’s two waist gunners, who bailed out safely. Twelve bodies were found in the two crashed Liberators.

The second 68th aircraft that failed to return on the 18th was piloted by 1st Lt. Edward C. Lehnhausen, brother to the commanding officer of the 68th Squadron.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-50596 O, Lehnhausen	FLAK MAGNET	MACR #9654
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA	
LEHNHAUSEN, EDWARD C. ASN 0-764355	Pilot KIA, buried Luxembourg (B-7-11)	1st Lt. Peoria, Illinois
DOLAN, CHARLES Jr. ASN 0-825804	Co-pilot KIA, buried Margraten (B-3-32)	2nd Lt. Reading, Pennsylvania
WITKIN, LEONARD ASN 0-701359	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt. New York City, New York
DAVIS, BYRON C. ASN 34248774	Nose Turret KIA, buried Margraten (M-5-3)	Sgt. Denver, Colorado
HAYNAM, RICHARD D. ASN 35610332	Engineer KIA, buried Luxembourg (I-7-10)	S/Sgt. Canton, Ohio
FUXA, ERNEST C. ASN 18194853	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Margraten (B-12-12)	S/Sgt. Bison, Oklahoma
YOUNG, WILLIAM C. ASN 36743059	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt. Rockford, Illinois

ADAMS, CARL E. ASN 34735355	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Maryville, Tennessee
GUNTER, NOAH ASN 14195404	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Aiken, South Carolina

With no MACR available and little or no information in either the reporting of the 68th Squadron or the 44th Headquarters, it has taken many years to discover any data about the loss of this aircraft and crew.

This mission planning as briefed changed as soon as the Lead plane, E-806, piloted by Parks failed to take off. Colonel Turnbull transferred to D-944, piloted by Captain Bakalo and they led the formation. 1st Lt. Edward Lehnhausen, in O-596, had been shown to be in the last section, and on the right, behind Lt. Kelly. Also, there were several other aircraft that aborted, so the briefed positions were considerably changed.

Robert Lehnhausen, brother of Edward, told me that, "The 44th Bomb Group filled in a formation with another Group. It was three 'boxes' and the fourth squadron filled in. Edward was in the high, right section and Lt. Dayball was in the low left. Edward was on Lt. Kelly's wing and had a poor navigator who was on his 10th mission.

"When the formation approached that high weather front, they separated to avoid collisions. When Bakalo's aircraft turned over and went down, it is believed it crashed into Dayball's. But it is believed that Lehnhausen's ship became separated from all the others and was flying alone near Walcheren Island, just off the Netherlands coastline when they reached the North Sea.

The crewmembers were temporarily buried at various, rather scattered cemeteries. Bob Dimpfl checked, but learned nothing. Edward was buried in Luxemburg, while another was buried at Aachen – so the crew was scattered but no one knows why."

The casualty report provides the following details: "[At 1330 h.] Flak batteries shot off the tail of the B-24 [B-24J 42-50596, FLAK MAGNET] which crashed near the casemates at Buttinge, 3 kilometers west of Middelburg on Walcheren Island, Holland. On return, the formation broke its integrity near Brussels where a cloud layer, building up to 28,000 ft. was encountered. Byron Davis' body was found in the water near Buttinge. The island of Walcheren was inundated at that time, and only the higher lying parts (mostly centers) of the villages were still dry. The Liberator must have crashed on inundated territory, which may explain the loss of bodies."

A witness named Mr. H. W. Bouwman (mayor of Grypskerke) reported: "The plane was heading towards Grypskerke (in a northern direction) then it circled back (south) seemingly looking for a place to land. It was spiraling down, gunning its engines trying to control itself when it suddenly lost control...spinning into the ground. The plane crashed at approximately 1,000 yards south southwest of the town of Buttinge in about five to six feet of water.

"The island where the plane crashed was flooded with water usually having about five feet of water, and at high tide, it would rise to ten feet. Therefore, most of the wreckage and the crewmembers, those who were pinned down, were submerged. During the period in which the water remained from the time of crash to about November or December of 1945, we recovered two American aircorp men who were floating around, near the location of the wreckage (about 600 feet away). One was Byron C. Davis, ASN 34248774, who was later buried in Grypskerke cemetery and the other, Ernest A. Fuxa, ASN 18134853, who was buried in Middleburg

cemetery. Both were recovered one or two months after the crash. Davis was later disinterred on 13 September 1945 and Ernest Fuxa about the same time. I believe that they were both reinterred in the Margraten cemetery.

“After the flood was drained from the island, I had a chance to look the wreckage over. I saw the bones of some of the crewmen under the broken parts of the wing and fuselage (which was pretty well covered over with barnacles) and estimated that there were about five or six bodies located in the wreckage. These facts are, to the best of my knowledge, all of the information I can recall about the airplane crash that took place at the above-mentioned time and place.”

A Dutch historian who has done considerable research on 8th Air Force losses provided the following information regarding Edward Lehnhausen and crew: A/C 42-50596 WQ Flak Magnet passed over Walcheren Island at about 1330 hours on 18 October 1944. It received a direct hit of flak, lost the complete tail section, and crashed near Buttinge, Netherlands (on that same island). The entire crew was killed. They came down near Middelburg on Zeeland of Welcherin Zuid. The bodies were buried locally, near where they came down. Shortly after the war, teams of investigators came in, exhumed the bodies and moved them to the continent. But these teams did not work together; they took the bodies to various other temporary burial areas on the continent. Later, when our men (Air Force) went to investigate our lost men, they found the crew in various, widely separated cemeteries. This caused considerable confusion as our investigators could not understand why the men were buried so widely separated. Eventually this puzzle was cleared, but not for some time – years later.

Hans Hauterman and John Hey from Holland, who have been investigating this crash, do not believe that the guns on Walcheren Island were responsible for the shooting down of B-24J 42-50596. They also sent an extract of a diary kept by a young Dutchman who wrote the following: “On 18 October, a four-engined bomber came down. There were thunderstorms in that afternoon and I think it was hit by lightning. It may also be that it had already been hit and damaged over Germany; the guns on Walcheren did not fire then. It was a ‘Liberator’ and came down from a very high altitude, each time overturning what made a terrific noise. It seemed that it would crash near to me but drifted away and fell near Buttinge.”

Hauterman and John Hey also report that Walcheren has the shape of a saucer; with high dunes at the sea sides. The Germans had built extraordinary bunkers and installed heavy guns that protected the access to the mouth of the Scheldt River, which runs from Antwerp to the North Sea. Analyzing the burial details in the Casualty Report, they concluded that Dolan, Davis, and Fuxa were recovered and buried in Grijpskerke and Middelburg in October, December, and April. It has been recorded that Davis’ body was floating in the water and it is likely to accept that this was also valid for Dolan and Fuxa. Five crewmembers were recovered by a team of the Quartermaster-General that apparently had been attached to a grave Concentration Unit operating on the U.S. Military Cemetery at Luxembourg-Hamm. This team also recovered exhumed American bodies on other locations in the coastal area of western Holland. Most of the U.S. War Dead in Holland were concentrated into the military cemeteries at Margraten (Holland) and Neuville (Belgium).

*Note: Thanks to Mr. John Hey, Air War Historian living in Holland, for his assistance in obtaining some of this data.*

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A 66th Squadron aircraft experienced considerable difficulty on this mission and crash-landed in Belgium.

## 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-51234 L+, Norris	Aircraft destroyed
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66th Squadron Crew:	All survived	
NORRIS, CHARLES P.	Pilot	1st Lt.
ROUZE, EUGENE R.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
JOHNSON, DONALD	Navigator	2nd Lt.
WIKMAN, CHARLES P.	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
GARISTINA, UMBERT	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
TRIPP, HAROLD A.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
CRESENTI, DIEGO F.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
RITTER, STEPHEN P.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
GRIMES, EDWIN R.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

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This aircraft experience mechanical difficulty – no manifold pressure on #3 engine. It dropped to 30 inches and remained that way. #4 engine had fluctuating power. They returned with the formation, coming back over Belgium. When they made a check of the fuel level, they found only about 50 gallons remaining in each tank. After calling the Group's formation leader, they did a 180-degree turn, let down from 21,000 feet through dark clouds – and iced up. They utilized instruments to finally break out of clouds at 2,000 feet and over Brussels, Belgium. Heading northeast, they missed the field, did another 180-degree turn to get back.

Then, engines started to spit and sputter from lack of fuel, so they headed for an open field; bombs were salvoed, which blew out all windows in the aircraft, damaged the elevators so they failed to operate. #3 engine began burning and #2 smoked. The pilots used throttles to maneuver the nose up and down – they had rudders and ailerons. They went into a grassy meadow about 30 miles northeast of Brussels. (HentjeWesterloo) The nose wheel collapsed, the main gear held up but the ship split apart. The dashboard was shoved back into the pilots' laps, but only minor bruises and cuts from flying plexiglass resulted. The aircraft was completely wiped out.

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## 30 October 1944

### Hamburg, Germany

Due to weather conditions at the IP and interference by preceding Wings, our formation integrity was broken, forcing 19 aircraft to bomb the Hamburg Oil Refinery by PFF and eight others to attack Utersen, Germany. No enemy aircraft were encountered, flak at the target was heavy but inaccurate. One 506th Squadron aircraft did not return, with flak being suspected as the cause.

## 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #44-10523 Bar-T, Bentcliff	MACR #10139
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506th Squadron Crew:



BENTCLIFF, CLIFFORD J. ASN 0-815806	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Chicago, Illinois
GEMPEL, CHARLES L. ASN 0-704835	Co-pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (D-13-40)	1st Lt.	Toledo, Ohio
FISKUM, LOWELL A. ASN 0-713157	Navigator KIA	1st Lt.	Walhalla, North Dakota
CELENTANO, LOUIS S. ASN 0-703026	Bombardier KIA, buried Ardennes (D-11-34)	1st Lt.	Minong, Wisconsin
BAREFOOT, CHESTER L. ASN 0-1995910	Pilotage-N. KIA, buried Ardennes (D-35-9)	1st Lt.	Hollis, Oklahoma
GRIFFIN, LESTER A. ASN 34544294	Engineer POW	T/Sgt.	Coral Gables, Florida
MASCHMEYER, GENE E. ASN 38511707	Radio Oper. KIA	T/Sgt.	Oakland, California
FULLER, CLINT J. Jr. ASN 38451853	Top Turret POW	S/Sgt.	Malvern, Arkansas
CAPPS, RALPH W. ASN 34609307	RW Gunner. POW	S/Sgt.	Zirconia, North Carolina
GARZA, RAUL ASN 38541707	LW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (D-11-36)	Sgt.	Port Lavaca, Texas
DOWNEY, JOHN J. III ASN 12193464	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (D-37-14)	S/Sgt.	Jersey City, New Jersey

MACR #10139 states, in part, "Immediately after bombing, at 1318 hours, in vicinity of Hamburg, this aircraft went into a very steep bank. Heavy flak was encountered at this time. Aircraft came out of the 90-degree bank and was last observed flying apparently under control on 180-degree heading. Poor visibility, due to high clouds, made further sightings impossible. No chutes were seen." (Wrong aircraft?)

Lester Griffin, engineer, said that three men survived Fuller, Capps, and himself. "We were a radar crew and flew only in bad weather. We were on our 23rd mission. The plane exploded, knocking or blowing me out, and I came down by parachute after regaining consciousness. I am writing this letter from the V.A. Hospital in Gainesville."

Further information was not possible as Sgt. Griffin died in 1983.

Sgt. Clint Fuller sent other brief statements, "Bentcliff, Gempel, Fiskum, Barefoot, Celentano, Maschmeyer, Downey and a man of Mexican descent (Garza), went down with the plane. Ralph W. Capps and I bailed out over Hamburg, but I don't know how Lester Griffin managed to get out.

"We flew into a heavy front while leading the high, right squadron. Soup was so thick that we had to fly on instruments. Someone crossed over in front of us, with the prop wash flipping us over, and the plane spun into the ground from approximately 28,000 feet.

"On the contrary, our plane did not explode – it hit the deck. Neither was it a radar ship. The radio operator, Maschmeyer, froze, apparently from shock, and would not bail out. I had to climb over him in order to get to the catwalk in the bomb bay. On this mission, I was riding the top turret and that is why I had to fight my way past the radio operator. Both Barefoot and Garza

were new to our crew. Barefoot was riding the nose turret in order to complete the final mission of his tour. He was killed.

“We did drop our bombs, but only to get rid of them. We saw no fighters or flak! In my opinion, there was no explosion as the German interrogator discussed our tail markings, base, Group, Squadron, town, Base Commander, etc.”

“Griffin, Capps and I were sent to Dulag Luft, Frankfurt, Stalag Luft IV; and moved to Stalag Luft I. Capps left Stalag Luft IV 30-31 January 1945 with 4-5,000 POWs who walked (snow waist deep) until the first week of May 1945. I saw him at Camp Lucky Strike after we were liberated. Griffin and I were sent from Stalag IV to Stalag I by railroad freight cars. We had it made!”

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## 10 November 1944

### Hanau, Germany

The Lanzendieback airfield, Hanau, which was near Frankfurt, was the target this date. There was no enemy resistance in the target area, but moderate and fairly accurate flak was encountered in Koblenz area. Two men were seriously wounded by this flak.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #42-50795 N-Bar, Spencer	Injured crewmember
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#### 67th Squadron Crew:

SPENCER, EDGAR J.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
COLELLA, FRANK J.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.	
BEAVERS, JOHN R.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
CREAN, W. J.	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
FISHBONE, HENRY	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
MOSKOVITIS, PETER	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
STEWART, THOMAS R.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
SCHOFIELD, GEORGE E. ASN 32057010	LW Gunner Evacuated to U.S.	S/Sgt.	Rockaway, New Jersey
PICARDO, EDDIE	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

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The target was in Hanau, Germany, near Frankfurt; probably an industrial plant. Lt. Spencer flew in the number 4 position (the center of the formation and logical aiming point for enemy ack-ack gunners). The flak was intense and accurate that day, resulting in 20 holes in the plane (N-bar).

During the bombing run, George Schofield was hit in the lower jaw and began bleeding profusely. It was the nose turret gunner, Tom Stewart, who went from the front of the plane, all the way to the back to administer first aid to Schofield. Lt. Spencer received permission to leave the squadron and got fighter escort on the way back to England. By flying in a gradual descent, he was able to increase his speed enough to keep up with the fighters and return to base approximately one hour ahead of his squadron. Flares were fired in the landing pattern to signal injured aboard. Ambulances and medical personnel met the plane at the hard stand.

The entire crew visited Schofield in the hospital the next day. (Lt. Spencer later learned that Schofield required multiple operations over the next several years to reconstruct his face.) The crew was given the next ten days off before the next combat mission, as was the custom when a crew member was badly injured. Schofield was replaced on the crew by Abercrombie, an armament gunner.

Sgt. Peter Moskovitis, engineer on this plane, said, "The flak was fairly heavy near Koblenz when one burst hit directly under us. George Schofield was standing just ahead of the waist window when the explosion occurred. A piece of flak came up through the bottom of the ship and hit George in his jaw, breaking it, and then exited through his cheek.

"Blood was flowing everywhere and George was convinced that he was mortally wounded. He mumbled through the blood and broken bones for us to get him back to England as fast as possible so he could die in England. When we told Lt. Spencer this, he immediately dropped out of formation, called the 44th BG leader to advise him of his actions and also called for fighter support, as he headed straight back toward Shipdham alone. Our fighters picked us up and escorted us to the Channel. As we circled the field preparing to land, I kept shooting Red Red flares to warn them that we had wounded on board. When we landed, an ambulance was waiting to rush George to a hospital,

"A few days later, the entire crew caught a train at Thuxton station that took us to the hospital [at Wymondham] so we could visit him. By that time he was in good spirits and enjoyed showing us how he could suck spaghetti up a straw in order to eat! George was later returned to the States for further treatment on his jaw and face, as he was badly scarred."

On a later mission [21 November 1944]. Lt. Spencer's aircraft was again peppered with flak, resulting in 62 holes in the plane. This time it was Tom Stewart who got hit, but he did not say anything. After returning to base, Lt. Spencer went over to the barracks to talk with his crew. There, he found Stewart sitting on his bunk with a knife, digging flak out of his leg. Spencer told him he should go to the hospital to have it taken care of. Tom told him it was all right, he had sterilized it. He begged Spencer not to report him because he would not be allowed to go on the next mission if he did. Tom Stewart had been born in England and had lost relatives there in the war, so was more eager than most to go on combat missions. Spencer didn't report the leg injury, and has felt badly ever since that Stewart didn't get the Purple Heart he deserved.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

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68th Sq., #42-50725 M, Hobbs	Injured crewmember
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#### 68th Squadron Crew:

HOBBS, JOHN C.	Pilot	2nd Lt.	
COOPER, WARREN H.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
RICHFERTIG, SEYMOUR L.	Navigator	Flight Officer	
SMITH, THOMAS P.	Bombardier	Flight Officer	
BROWN, HARRY H. Jr.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.	
MONTRE, DON W.	Eng./Top Turret	Sgt.	
COWAN, HENRY Jr.	Gunner	Sgt.	
KIRK, VERNON E. Jr.	Gunner	Sgt.	
	Seriously wounded		Randallstown, Maryland

KRAYNIK, DANIEL J.

Tail Turret

Sgt.

*Note: Kirk was transported to Hospital 4210 on 15 November and did not fly combat again. The Hobbs crew went down on 2 December 1944. Hobbs, Cooper, Smith, Brown, Cowan, and Kraynik were KIA.*

Vernon Kirk wrote: "The flight to Hanau was routine, though we did see some flak and some planes we thought were German jets [Me 262s]. They seemed to be just staying out of range and did not attack. When we approached Koblenz, we could see heavy flak ahead so we started to drop the strips of anti-aircraft foil. The flak became thick and close, rocking the plane. I reached over to pick up my flak suit and for an instant I could or did not move from that leaning position. It was then I heard a loud noise and knew flak had hit the plane. Then I felt a burning in my right hip. I told Hank, the other waist gunner to help me and then we found blood. He and another crewman bandaged to stop the bleeding and we made it back to base. At the hospital that night I saw another person, probably George Schofield, and though I felt pain I realized how lucky I was because he appeared to have a head injury. This was only my second mission though one time we became lost in heavy clouds and lost the formation.

"Some of the crew came to visit me in the hospital, then I never saw them again. Later I asked about them and was told they were lost over France, but could not get any other information. Hobbs gave me the piece of flak and a Cuban nickel I had in my wallet. The flak had struck it and ripped it almost in half and then came out my hip at my waist. This nickel evidently deflected the flak and saved more serious injury and possibly my life."

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## 14 November 1944

### Aircraft Salvaged, Europe

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-94952 Bar-A

SHACK RAT

Salvaged on continent

506th Squadron crew (no record of crew)

Records indicate that this aircraft was salvaged on the continent this day due to battle damage. Aircraft must have been damaged some time prior to this date as no missions had been flown by the 506th Squadron since 10 November. This aircraft was loaned to the 458th Bomb Group. Their personnel were flying it. No records exist for it.

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## 21 November 1944

### Harburg, Germany

The primary target was the Crude Oil Refinery located at Harburg which was attacked by 30 of the 44th BG planes utilizing PFF equipment. Intense, accurate, barrage type and tracking flak was encountered in the target area. One man was killed and several others were wounded, one seriously.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-51552 M-Bar, Phillips

Crew casualties

67th Squadron Crew:

PHILLIPS, CHARLES E. Jr.	Pilot	1st Lt.	
NAGY, ALEXANDER S.	Co-pilot	1st Lt.	
BURKE, ROBERT A. ASN 0-886703	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Los Angeles, California
POULSEN, KENNETH R.	Bombardier	1st Lt.	
CODDINGTON, JAMES W.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.	
VANDER BOOM, JOSEPH F.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.	
FAY, RAYMOND C.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.	
KOSTOCKA, PHILIP ASN 37231265	LW Gunner Seriously wounded	S/Sgt.	Humboldt, Nebraska
DENNISON, JAMES T.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.	

2nd Lt. Robert A. Burke, navigator, was killed instantly when he was struck in the abdomen by a heavy, unexploded projectile as he was leaning over his table. The impact simply blew him to pieces, knocking his head out of the navigator's window, bending #2 propeller, and scattering his body over much of the aircraft. S/Sgt. Philip Kostocka, left waist gunner on this same plane, was seriously wounded by flak. He did not return to duty until 19 January, 1945.

This aircraft was cleaned and repaired but 67th Squadron combat crews would not fly in it – for various reasons. The aircraft eventually was transferred to the 506th Squadron where the combat men did not know about this gruesome incident.

The pilot, E. C. Holmer wrote: "Burke was my navigator. He was one of, or, the youngest officer [19] in the 67th at that time. A very great and likable person and did a fine job of navigation with no problems. He guided us safely from U.S. to England in a new B-24 without following the 'beam' to axis territory. He was not flying with me at the time of death – was on loan to another crew catching up on missions to finish with the rest of us. I accompanied the body to Manchester for burial. After discharge, I visited his parents in California. A sad job."

## 2 December 1944

### Bingen, Germany

The Marshalling Yards at Bingen was our primary target but weather conditions forced bombing to be done via the Gee-H method. Flak was meager and inaccurate in the target area and enemy fighters attacked only stragglers of other Groups. In spite of that, two of our aircraft were missing – one each from the 68th and 506th Squadrons.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-50805 T, Hobbs	MACR #10834
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#### 68th Squadron Crew:

HOBBS, JOHN C. ASN 0-828430	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Lancaster, Pennsylvania
COOPER, WARREN H. ASN 0-829129	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Hampton, Virginia
RICHFERTIG, SEYMOUR L. ASN T-128471	Navigator POW? Evadee?	Flt Of.	Brooklyn, New York

SMITH, THOMAS P. ASN T-126546	Bombardier KIA	Flt Of.	Sharon, Pennsylvania
MONTRE, DON W. ASN 39331313	Engineer POW, badly burned	S/Sgt.	Topeka, Kansas
BROWN, HARRY H. Jr. ASN 15327559	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	Cadiz, Ohio
COWAN, HENRY Jr. ASN 31240322	RW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	New Bedford, Massachusetts
FAULKNER, JAMES L. ASN 34927059	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Louisville, Mississippi
KRAYNIK, DANIEL J. ASN 32934067	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Buffalo, New York

This aircraft was leading the low, left squadron of the 392nd. Shortly after having passed the IP (initial point) between 1246-1250 hours, the squadron passed through heavy cloud banks and the formation was completely broken up. Enemy fighters attacks were reported in this area.

The only information located for this aircraft is that from the MACR, which states, "Between one and four minutes before bombs away, at 1238 hours, this formation flew into a cloud layer formed by a junction of high and low clouds. This aircraft was last seen when the formation flew into this cloud bank. Flak at this time was meager and inaccurate; enemy aircraft were seen in the area, but attacked other units following this formation. The 44th did not have attacks on its formation."

Sgt. Don W. Montre was reported returned to military control on 27 March, 1945, but no record of him returning to base.

Flight Officer Richfertig had only the notation of "EUS" beside his name on the MACR, indicating that he survived and was returned to the US. There is no record of him having been a POW.

Louis G. Montre, brother of Don, sent me the following information, "Don was on his seventh mission and was flying as a gunner in the top turret. The pilot (Lt. Hobbs) pulled their plane up when the formation ran into that high overcast to avoid any possible collision with other planes in the formation. But when they broke into the clear at about 23,000 feet, they were attacked by enemy fighters. These attacks caused major damage to their plane and fire erupted in the bomb bay and probably injured or killed other crew members.

"Don made his evacuation from the flight deck after getting out of his turret. He said that he had always kept his chute nearby, put it on quickly and then dove from the flight deck into that burning inferno in the bomb bay. And that was the last he remembered until the cold air revived him. When he regained consciousness, he felt like he was floating, and made a free fall to about three thousand feet. Although badly burned, he managed to reach and pull his ripcord – and the chute opened. BUT his chute had a large hole burned in it – it must have been smoldering as he fell. Again, he was lucky because he came down in a forest, his chute caught on a tall tree, breaking his fall or he surely would have been killed.

"An elderly German woman, her daughter, and a dog found him, helped get him to the ground, and from there to their farmhouse nearby where they tried to give him first aid. He was taken into custody by the Germans and spent five weeks at a German hospital near Wiesbaden where he

received treatment. At that time a German doctor, when examining his eyes, said ‘Kaput’. Don also said that this hospital was full of young American men with grievous wounds, and that he always was moved when he spoke of those young men. Don was 33 years old at that time.

“Eventually, he was moved to the Heppenheim prison camp near Koblenz where he remained until he was liberated on 30 March 1945 by General Hodge’s Third Army. Then he went to a hospital in Paris, still bandaged over his eyes and could not see. He arrived home in April, and then went to a hospital in Palo Alto, California, for extensive plastic surgery and skin grafts. Eventually he regained sight in one eye.

“The first word we heard from him was in March 1945, when he telephoned from New York. Don was sent to California where he spent eighteen months for treatment for his burns. His face and his hands were terribly burned. But they did a wonderful job on him – new eyelids, new eyebrows, and part of his nose. His hands were better, too.

“I’ve always suspected that Don was caught in the bomb bay section to received those burns. The plane was afire and probably exploded.

“I’m sorry to tell you that Don passed away on May 12th, 1966, and I have no other information about that mission.”

Don’s daughter, Edith (Montre) McBride, wrote: “On the day his plane was shot down, the plane went into the cloudbank you described in the letter you sent to my uncle. My father said the pilot was not comfortable flying by instruments, and wanted to get out of the clouds. Others on the plane wanted to stay in the clouds, but the pilot chose to take the plane out, and they immediately encountered 15 Messerschmitt German fighter planes and [the plane] was hit. My father said the small door leading to the bomb bay was totally engulfed in flame, a wall of flame. The entire plane was burning, and he dove to where he thought the small door opening probably was, and miraculously fell clear of the plane, after hitting his head on the catwalk in the bomb bay area. He was unconscious for some moments due to the blow on his head and the altitude of the plane. When he regained consciousness, he was amazed that his chute was open, that somehow he had pulled the ripcord. When he looked up he saw flaming holes in his parachute. When he looked down, he saw forest and the Rhine River. He landed in a tree, and was severely burned – face and hands. That is when the elderly German woman, her daughter, and their dog found him.”

#### 506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-50766 Bar-D, Bayless

MACR #10848

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

BAYLESS, HERBERT L. ASN 0-768414	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Bakersfield, California
LOUISA, VICTOR P. ASN 0-813186	Co-pilot POW	1st Lt.	Carnegie, Pennsylvania
JOLOVITZ, ALFRED W. ASN 0-719085	Navigator POW	1st Lt.	Canton, Ohio
BRENNAN, FRANCIS W. ASN 0-562611	Bombardier POW	1st Lt.	Orlando, Florida
MOORE, ROBERT L. ASN 34407173	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt.	Daytona Beach, Florida

DOSMANN, JOSEPH B. ASN 35542266	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Mishawaka, Indiana
PASSANTINO, THOMAS J. Jr. ASN 39537767	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Kansas City, Missouri
McBRYDE, WILLIAM H. ASN 34665208	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Red Springs, North Carolina
BEGGS, WILLIAM A. ASN 38345296	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (C-34-5)	S/Sgt.	Chalk, Texas

This aircraft (766), per the MACR, was leading the low, left squadron of the 392nd BG. Shortly after having passed the IP, between 1246 and 1250 hours, the squadron passed through heavy cloud banks and the formation was completely broken up. Enemy aircraft attacks were reported in this area. Nothing specific on this aircraft as no one reported seeing it again.

Although there were four survivors from this aircraft, only two of them, Lt. Brennan and radio operator Joseph B. Dosmann, were still alive when this book was first published. Sgt. Dosmann told me about his experiences that day.

Although this aircraft was leading an element of the formation, they did not have PFF equipment. When their aircraft came out of the clouds, they were separated from the other planes and were soon under attack by enemy aircraft. His first indication of the attack was hearing the top turret firing, so he looked out of the small window in the radio compartment and saw Me 109's attacking from about 4 o'clock, a bit high. One or more 20-mm shells exploded just under the flight deck, hitting either the gasoline in the "putt-putt" or the hydraulic fluid reservoir, (possibly both) as flames immediately erupted.

Joseph Dosmann said that his instructions were for him to leave his radio and go to the waist position to man a gun there when and if they were attacked. Upon hearing the top turret firing, he had snapped on his parachute and was on his way toward the bomb bay when the explosions and fire occurred. The crew was one waist gunner short this day.

At this time, Robert L. Moore, engineer, seeing the fire and feeling the heat, dropped down out of his top turret in order to determine the extent of damages and attempted to extinguish the fire. Finding the situation hopeless, he opened the top hatch next to the top turret, but decided against that exit, preferring to attempt to open the bomb bay doors. Sgt. Dosmann says that the last he saw of Bob Moore was when Bob jumped down onto the catwalk in an attempt to open the doors, and he was waist deep in flames.

At that moment, the pilots lost control of the ship and it flipped upside down and provided a miraculous escape for Joseph. He was thrown completely out of the plane through that open top hatch! It is believed that the co-pilot, Lt. Victor P. Louisa exited from this hatch, but for him it was a real struggle as by then the plane was in a flat spin, upside down, so centrifugal force made movement difficult. Every time he tried to push away, the falling plane would catch up to him. But at about 2,000 feet, he finally managed to free himself and barely got his chute opened before he hit the ground. This ended mission number 23 for him, but his first with this crew. He had volunteered for this mission as this crew was short and his regular crew was not scheduled.

Lt. Louisa recalled that his hearing was damaged for several days while he took evasive measures. He stripped himself of all identifications and began working his way back to Allied



lines. Along the way he was subjected to barrages of artillery, which he later learned was our own. But he was captured on 12 December while hiding along a river bank trying to locate a means of crossing it. Had he found a means to get across that river, there was a good possibility that he may have made it to the nearby Allied lines. He was sent to Stalag I until liberated by the Russians.

Bombardier Lt. Francis W. Brennan said that, "I never saw the planes attacking us, but when I was coming down with my parachute, I saw radial-engine fighters, so they had to be FW 190s. The cannon fire did hit the auxiliary power unit and the gasoline from it started the fire. With that fire between us and the bomb bay, our only way out was through the nose wheel doors. I opened the doors, then Alfred Jolovitz and I got ready to bail out. Jolovitz was first out, and I was next. Just as I was about to jump, I looked back at the nose turret gunner, Thomas Passantino, to see him snapping on his chest type chute. I jumped, but never saw Passantino again and don't know why he did not make it.

"My understanding is that both the pilot, Herbert Bayless, and our co-pilot Victor Louisa, managed to get out, and I think Louisa was last out. Bayless did not survive for reasons unknown, although there were several rumors about what happened to him."

Records show that Passantino was the right waist gunner on this mission, but he actually was the nose gunner. So this could explain why the radio operator Dosmann was on his way to man a waist gun – the crew was one man short. Lt. Brennan confirmed this, stating that Sgt. Robert Crawford had been granted a leave about two weeks earlier and no replacement was made. Sgt. Tom Passantino was moved up to the nose turret so that bombardier Lt. Brennan could handle the bomb sight if need be – they were flying as deputy lead.

Frank Brennan wrote: "My recollection is that we, who were a lead crew, were flying lead for the 392nd on this mission. We had not been on the battle order the preceding night and were less than pleased to be awakened at 3:30 a.m. and told we were to lead the 392nd on this mission. The reason we were given was that there was a possibility of bad weather over the target area and a bombardier who had been checked out for G-H bombing was needed. I had been checked out for G-H. We were told that no bombardier in the 392nd had been. I didn't believe that then and still don't."

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## 4 December 1944

### Kolschhausen or Wetzlar, Germany

Due to heavy traffic over the Primary target of Soest, and the necessity to bomb with the aid of malfunctioning instruments, two targets are believed hit. Even though Allied fighters gave excellent protection, one 66th Squadron plane did not return.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-95124 P+, Rogers	SAND BOMB SPECIAL	MACR #10835
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#### 66th Squadron Crew:

ROGERS, WARREN ASN 0-771541	Pilot POW/Injured	2nd Lt.	Pasadena, California
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MOIR, ALEXANDER B. ASN 0-2058239	Co-pilot POW/Injured	2nd Lt.	Papaikou, Hawaii
McCRACKEN, JOHN Jr. ASN 0-1102377	Navigator KIA, buried Lorraine (A-11-39)	1st Lt.	Oakland, California
FRAZIER, JOHN S. ASN 0-927690	Bombardier POW	2nd Lt.	Oneonta, New York
MILLER, FRANCIS J. ASN 13114418	Engineer POW	S/Sgt.	Bangor, Pennsylvania
MISKIEWICZ, FRANK A. ASN 11073501	Radio Oper. POW	S/Sgt.	Jewett City, Connecticut
SPEIR, ROBERT J. ASN 16063102	Nose Turret KIA	Sgt.	Detroit, Michigan
HARKOVICH, MICHAEL ASN 33353758	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Boise, Idaho
SPENCER, LEWIS D. ASN 36763796	Tail Turret POW/Injured	Sgt.	Roodhouse, Illinois

Included in the information shown in the MACR is the statement that a Lt. Wilson saw P+ (124) fall out of formation between the IP and the target. It appeared to be under control at that time. Another crew saw a B-24 with two engines feathered going down at the same time (1245 hours) and same place, but could not see the identification letter, but apparently it was the same one.

Left waist gunner Michael Harkovich, later wrote his account for this day, which was published in "American Diaries Of World War II". Information was abstracted from this book with his consent: "We no sooner hit the target when #2 engine went KAPUT. Ten miles further, the 'mate' joined her (#1). We lost the formation, lost altitude, and before we knew it, we were all by our lonesome. We tried to get fighter protection, but no soap. The transmitter was also Kaput. We had to throw out most of our ammo, etc. It was 33 degrees below zero, but that was no sign it was cold. I, for one, honestly sweated to beat hell. Nothing to do but pray.

"We went quite a way, then suddenly #1 got competition, as #3 decided to cut out. It was smoking and giving trouble. Lt. Rogers gave warning to be set to hit the silk as we drifted down to 12,000 feet. Bingo; hold your cards, out of nowhere 6 Jerrys – 109s – came at us. Ring! Ring! sounded the emergency alarm to abandon ship. We left in the following order: B. Speir, F. Miskiewicz, F. Miller, A. Moir, Red Spencer, myself, then last of all, the pilot, Rogers.

"When it came time for me to jump, I couldn't think, completely forgot the procedure they gave me at lectures, looked out the hatch, said to myself, 'What am I waiting for?' and then left. I went head first, did a half somersault, and pulled the ripcord.

"I only counted eight chutes. Evidently our navigator, John McCracken, stayed with the plane, or his chute failed to open. I hit the good old earth with an awful thud, fell backward and hit my back and head soundly. Was slightly dazed, got up on my feet and had a time trying to unbuckle due to the fierce wind blowing. Suddenly I heard a 'Kachow', turned my head to see a soldier coming at me with a rifle. I threw my right hand in the air as high as I possibly could. But in so doing, I had to release my grip on my chute roll, causing the wind to knock me for a loop. Before I regained my feet, this character was upon me. He frisked me, yelling, 'Pistul, pistul?'

“Out of nowhere I started to get hit from all sides, kicked in the head, kicked in the mouth, punched in the nose and all parts of my face. Don’t know how I ever held consciousness. After the bloody ordeal, I was picked up and was astonished to see a group of civilians gathered around me. They had nothing but evil plans for me. Then three soldiers proceeded to march me to their big wheels, over what seemed like three miles of dirt roads.

“They showed me Speir’s dog tags and asked me if I knew him. Then they led me to a large room where I found Lt. Moir, co-pilot. He had two fingers on his right hand broken, claiming he received them while protecting his head from being bashed in by an iron bar from a civvy. A trickle of blood came from his chin, otherwise apparently unhurt. He told me Bob Speir was dead.

“Later Red Spencer hobbled in on one leg. He had sprained his right ankle, which had ballooned up – otherwise, unhurt. Frazier, our bombardier, didn’t have a scratch on him. But someone had stolen his watch. Miskiewicz claimed that he had been hit a few times and his watch also was stolen, but Warren Rogers was practically carried in. He couldn’t walk as both of his feet were hurt. It was quite a time before Miller, engineer, came in. But Bob Speir and McCracken didn’t show – ever.”

Bombardier John Frazier sent this information, “This was pilot Rogers’ second mission, but the first for the remainder of the crew. Although we arrived at Shipdham as a 10 member crew, the pilot bumped one of the waist gunners to provide room for me on the mission as no bombardier was required. I flew as right waist gunner, not in the nose with navigator Lt. McCracken and nose turret gunner Speir – both of whom were lost.

“I seem to recall that the pilot had difficulty in getting the plane to lift at takeoff and we were delayed in reaching our position in the Group formation. During the bomb run, the left waist gunner, Sgt. Harkovich reported that the left engines were throwing oil. Ordered to check it by the pilot, I could not identify the liquid and told Rogers to rely on his instruments to reach any decision to feather. Although there was some flak, I am inclined to believe that we had suffered engine failure rather than a hit. Shortly thereafter, Lt. Rogers feathered the prop on #1 engine; then, on the second engine, too.

“Unfortunately, we could not keep up with the group. Fighter escort was radioed, but did not respond. Later, it became known that the signal had been sent over air-sea rescue channel (I think #4), rather than the fighter escort channel. As the formation and fighters continued to pull further away, flares were fired from our plane and a fighter did return. However, inasmuch as there was no radio communication, the fighter left and returned to the formation.

“There had been considerable cloud undercover up to that point and the navigator, Lt. McCracken was unsure of our position. By consensus, it was decided to take a compass heading of 270 degrees, believing that this would bring us to France. Lt. McCracken, upon receiving my instructions, toggled the bombs singly, at timed intervals, and all gunners jettisoned all ammunition except approximately 50 rounds each. With full trim and with the effort of Lt. Rogers and co-pilot Moir, the plane stabilized and flew on the compass heading at an altitude of somewhere around 7 to 8 thousand feet.

“After what seemed to be a considerable period of time, we encountered German fighter planes within sight of what we believed was the Rhine River. Lt. Rogers ordered the crew to parachute

and sounded the bail out signal. I saw several crewmembers bail out through the bomb bay before doing so myself. I do not recall their identities, but imagine they must have been engineer Miller, radioman Miskiewicz. Am not sure whether nose turret gunner Speir was one of those who preceded me or not. Tail gunner Spencer bailed from the rear hatch in the waist. I was knocked unconscious upon impact with the ground in a ditch, and had been searched before regaining consciousness.

“We were assembled and taken to a post in nearby Freiburg, in southwestern Germany, being much further south than we had anticipated. At the German post, we were informed that Sgt. Speir’s parachute had failed to billow and just trailed. He was dead, they reported. I heard nothing about Lt. McCracken. The Germans asked about him, as he was missing. Lt. Moir had an injured hand and was taken for treatment the following morning. The rest of us began our trip to Frankfurt, then to POW camp Stalag Luft I at Barth.”

According to the MACR, the document ‘Reviews of War Crimes Trials at Dachau 1945-1948’ (Case 12-1934) confirms that Sgt. Speir landed near Freiburg in a railroad freight yard and was bayoneted and then shot. He was buried in the Jewish Cemetery at Freiburg. One German got a ten-year sentence.

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## 18 December 1944

### Mission recalled

One aircraft crashed on takeoff. Fog and cold contributed to this mission being recalled.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-51309 V-Bar, Collins		Crash on takeoff
COLLINS, ORELL	Pilot	2nd Lt.
POWELL, RAYMOND C.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
DUNWOODY, JAMES M.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
FISHER, DONALD	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
HOOPER, E. E.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
WARPACK, E. H.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
OURS, ELVIN D.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
WYSOCKI, EDMUND	LW Gunner	Sgt.
PETZOLDT, WILLARD	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

Raymond Powell wrote: “We crashed the aircraft V-Bar [#42-51309] on takeoff in early December. This was on our tenth or eleventh mission. According to my photos, the ship’s fuselage was split 4’ to 5’ upward between the flight deck and forward part of the bomb bay. We really never knew the cause other than we (the pilot and co-pilot) felt the left landing gear give way as we were approaching lift off speed. I recall Fisher, the bombardier, calling out the air speed. At 95 mph, Collins beginning to lift the nose wheel and suddenly the left main landing gear folded causing the nose wheel to fold. From that moment on, some of the 500-lb. bombs dropped from their shackles, sparks through the bomb bay, #1 engine ripped partly out of the wing and smoking, propeller ripped off #2 engine and landed about 300 yards away and no fire.

After an eternity, we finally skidded to a halt about 150 yards from the end of the runway with the crew scattering in all directions. The ship never exploded nor did we have any injuries. It was a miracle to me. I was really surprised to read that it had been placed back into service and finally flown home.

“As far as I can remember and looking at the photos I have, the weather was not a problem – cloudy as usual that time of morning and cold as always, but I do not recall icing, however, this is quite possible at high speed. There is one aspect of the crash that I have not been able to reconcile and that is the bomb bay doors are opened in my photos and the doors are always closed prior to takeoff!

“At any rate, it is amazing how quickly two large men (190 lb. myself and Collins about 200 lb.) with flak suits, heavy flying suits and boots can get through a small hatch and run the 100 yards under ten seconds. I recall as I ran down the wing past a smoking #1 engine, that I prayed to the Almighty to allow me to touch the ground before it exploded – after touching the ground, I asked, “Lord, please give me another ten yards. And I’ll hit the ground.” Needless to say, I didn’t hit the ground until I had covered 75 to 100 yards.”

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## 28 December 1944

### Kaiserslautern, Germany

A road and rail junction at Kaiserslautern was the target for the bombs this date from our 36 aircraft. Results were considered excellent. Meager to moderate, fairly accurate flak was encountered at the target, fighter support good, weather clear. But this was a bad day for the 68th Squadron as they lost one aircraft in action, another was forced to land on the continent and a third crashed while aborting, due to a malfunctioning engine.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-95260 P, Bledsoe	LILI MARLENE	MACR #15998
68th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew KIA (five buried at Cambridge)	
BLEDSON, JESSE W. ASN 0-718848	Pilot 2nd Lt. KIA, buried Cambridge (D-2-43)	Corpus Christi Texas
GRIFFITH, WARREN W. ASN 0-828160	Co-pilot 2nd Lt. KIA	Greenfield, Indiana
WELLMAN, HARRISON W. IV ASN 0-2065203	Navigator 2nd Lt. KIA, buried Cambridge (F-6-129)	Battle Creek, Michigan
FIDARES, NICHOLAS J. ASN 42068546	Nose Turret Sgt. KIA, buried Cambridge (D-6-23)	New York City, New York
ARNOLD, ERNEST F. ASN 17035780	Engineer Sgt. KIA, buried Cambridge (F-2-82)	Watertown, South Dakota
FRANGOS, THEODORE W. ASN 12036607	Radio Oper. S/Sgt. KIA, buried Cambridge (F-2-66)	Bronx, New York
STELL, CHARLES E. ASN 18187261	Asst. Radio Sgt. KIA	Bay City, Texas
BARTH, DAVID ASN 42069644	RW Gunner Sgt. KIA	Brooklyn. New York

GARRETT, JAMES J. ASN 31388309	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Worcester, Massachusetts
KISER, WILLARD ASN 32836806	Tail Turret KIA	Sgt.	Endicott, New York

Reports state that this aircraft had to turn back from the mission because of engine trouble. As the plane approached the field with #2 engine out, it was seen to lower to about 500 feet on approach. It missed the runway and then began a right turn, when it stalled out and crashed. One bomb exploded, demolishing the plane and killing the entire crew.

The second aircraft lost on the 28th was that piloted by Captain Gus Konstand, who was one of the five lead crews brought in from the 492nd BG when it was disbanded in August 1944.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #44-10582 D, Konstand MACR #11373

68th Squadron Crew:	(One Exception)		
KONSTAND, GUS ASN 0-794428	Pilot KIA	Capt.	Akron, Ohio
HENDERSON, JOHN L. ASN 0-666173	Command Pilot POW	Capt.	491st B. Group 853rd Squadron
OLIVER, GEORGE H. Jr. ASN 0-819153	Co-pilot KIA, buried Lorraine (D-35-34)	1st Lt.	Valdosta, Georgia
PARKER, GEORGE J. ASN 0-699237	Navigator KIA, buried Lorraine (D-33-34)	1st Lt.	Houston, Texas
COHEN, ROBERT M. ASN 0-1998577	G-H Navig. POW? Evaded?	1st Lt.	Cincinnati, Ohio
LOFLIN, WILLIAM E. ASN 0-1996110	Bombardier KIA, buried Lorraine (E-34-36)	1st Lt.	Huntington, West Virginia
POVICH, GEORGE ASN 33675477	Nose Turret KIA, buried Lorraine (B-31-26)	S/Sgt.	Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania
FIELDS, EDWIN D. ASN 33522224	Engineer KIA, buried Lorraine (E-35-36)	T/Sgt.	Richmond, Virginia
LYBARGER, WILLIAM B. ASN 39556559	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Miami, Arizona
DAVIS, ADDISON C. ASN 31312747	RW Gunner POW, wounded	S/Sgt.	Canterbury, Connecticut
GARRETT, HOWARD N. ASN 18098718	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Gladwater, Texas
STEPHANOVIC, REUBEN J. ASN 13169810	Tail Turret KIA, buried Lorraine (D-30-41)	S/Sgt.	McKeesport, Pennsylvania

*Note: Robert M. Cohen was never listed as a POW, but the MACR indicates that he survived and was returned to the United States.*

The MACR states that, "Aircraft #44-10582 was the Gee-H lead of the 491st Bomb Group. At 1235 hours, on the bomb run, this aircraft received two direct flak hits in the bomb bay. Fire broke out immediately and this aircraft's bombs were dropped. The aircraft dropped below the

formation and seemed to stay under control for approximately 90 seconds before breaking in two at the waist. Both sections of the aircraft were seen to crash into the ground.”

Right waist gunner Addison C. Davis, sent his recollections, “We were on the bomb run when we took two direct hits. The first set off a box of flares on the flight deck and set us on fire. The second one hit right under us in the waist and knocked us over. Edwin D. Fields, engineer, was standing right beside me and was not injured. I picked up my parachute pack and put it on, then started back to the tail to help Stephanovic, tail gunner, to get out.

“The next thing I knew, I was out in the air! I opened my chute and looked down. I could see four chutes below me. The plane was completely gone! They were still shooting at us on the way down. When I hit the ground, a bunch of German soldiers jumped on me. I had a broken leg, so they put me in a wheelbarrow and pushed me up a hill into a town.

“Later that day, I saw Lybarger and Garrett. They were both all right. Lybarger said he landed right near Captain Henderson, and he, too, was not seriously injured. But I never saw them after that. They put me in a hospital train for four days. Later, I wound up in a military hospital where they finally set my leg.

“About a month later, they sent me to a POW hospital where I stayed until we were liberated by the American Armored Division in April, 1945.”

William Lybarger’s wife Phyllis, wrote about what Bill said about the day they were shot down: “He said they were hit by flak and on fire, so three of them (probably Henderson, Garrett and Bill) became lodged trying to escape out the top hatch. It was fortunate that the plane exploded (broke in two?) as it released them into the air. Bill often complained of a shoulder injury as his arm was locked above his head when he was trying to get out.

“The explosion knocked off his flight boots. He missed them until the Germans gave him something to wear as it was very cold. I think he even may have said the ground was snow-covered. He got flash burns on his face, but luckily his goggles protected his eyes, his face healed up well and he wasn't left with any scars.

“He said it was very scary when he was parachuting down as at first, he thought he'd land in a big body of water he saw, then he thought he'd land on top of the many pointed trees! But, it turned out he landed far from water and in a clearing. A group of cocky German SS officers in a jeep picked him up right away and took him to camp. That was also a very scary experience as they drove over a bumpy road with their cocked guns pointed at him all the way! Also, they had neglected to search him and he was carrying a concealed gun! He was very relieved to turn it in to someone else the first chance he got.

“He spent the next three days in solitary confinement, although he didn't exactly know why as it appeared from the papers they got that they knew as much as he did about their mission. He was first in camp 13D [Nurnberg-Langwasser] then, as the front lines were moving so fast, they had to march them to camp 7A [Moosburg] as they were supposed to be 200 kilometers behind the line. That march, too, was quite an experience. There was snow on the ground and they had only one blanket each. Three would sleep together and they would take turns being in the middle. They had little or no food. From that experience, he said he'd never be caught again without a jack-knife, fishhook, and candy bar in his pocket! He continued to carry a knife the rest of his life

and ate loads of Hershey bars, but although he loved to go fishing, that's the only time I knew him to carry a fishhook!

“He never felt any animosity toward the Germans for as on the whole, he got the best treatment they could give. The older Germans knew they were losing the war and the people just didn't have much themselves. He even wondered about what the poor German farmer would do the next spring as he stole and ate his seed potatoes during their long march!”

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A 68th Squadron aircraft made an emergency landing in Merville, France

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #44-10553 L		Emergency landing
VAN DYKE, THURSTON E.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
HALL, JOHN R.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
HAFT, RICHARD A.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
RICHMAN, BENJAMIN	Bombardier	2nd Lt.
GROTHAUS, JOSEPH V.	Nose Gun./Toggler	S/Sgt.
BLUE, FRED E.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
ROSE, LAURENCE F.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
MCLEAN, DONALD	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
CRITES, F. L.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
STAPLES, CHARLES W.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

Thurston Van Dyke recalls: “Most other missions were without incident except the one when I was flying back to England as a cripple and flew directly over Cherbourg at 5,000 feet. Needless to say, the 105s didn't allow that. Being badly damaged this necessitated a belly-landing on a bombed-out runway in Merville, France. The plane was a wreck but luckily no one was hurt.

“I was a member of the 44th Bomb Group, 68th Squadron from June 1944 to May 1945, flying back to the U.S. the last of May and arriving in the U.S. on May 31st. I flew SAN ANTONIO ROSE back with crew and passengers via Wales, Iceland, Greenland, and Bradley Field, Conn.

“My first mission was as co-pilot on an orientation mission with Lt. Bonnet. We were shot up over Munich, and eventually landed in the English Channel. The four survivors, all severely injured, spent time in the hospital. The rest were lost, and their bodies never recovered (to my knowledge). I flew two more missions as co-pilot as a favor to my friends, Lts. Washburn and Kohler, on their last missions. They thought I was a good-luck charm. My remaining missions were flown as first pilot with various crewmembers until I wound up with a semi-permanent crew, which I flew home.”



# 1945

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## 16 January 1945

### Marshalling Yards, Dresden, Germany

Enemy resistance at this secondary target was nil, and the fighter support was very good. Yet three aircraft were lost; all abandoned in flight. Others landed in France and three of these were abandoned or left for repairs! Group Commander, Col. Eugene H. Snavely, was flying Command Pilot on one of the MIA aircraft.

66th SQUADRON:

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68th Sq., #42-50660 A, Testa

MACR #2863

*Note: This was a 66th Squadron crew flying a 68th Squadron aircraft.*

66th Squadron Crew:

TESTA, JOHN J. ASN 0-659413	Pilot Injured, returned	Capt.	Arlington Massachusetts
SNAVELY, EUGENE H. ASN 0-221364	Command Pilot Returned	Col.	Harlingen, Texas
DUBOWSKY, ROBERT ASN 0-818128	Co-pilot Injured, returned	1st Lt.	Mineola, New York
ALBIN, CHARLES H.	Navigator Returned	1st Lt.	
JENSEN, ERNEST L. ASN 0-694676	Navigator Returned	1st Lt.	
ARMS, LESTER A. ASN 0-668696	Bombardier Returned	Capt.	St. Louis, Missouri
RICE, CHARLES F. Jr. ASN 0-699530	Pilotage/Nav Returned	1st Lt.	
GEGENHEIMER, JAMES E. ASN 14096114	Engineer Returned	T/Sgt.	New Orleans, Louisiana
STEDGHILL, EDWARD T. ASN 37417267	Radio Oper. Injured, returned	T/Sgt.	St. Louis, Missouri
FRADY, ROBERT G. ASN 34608949	Waist Gun Injured, returned	S/Sgt.	
DAVIES, GOMER B. Jr. ASN 31326950	Waist Gun Returned	S/Sgt.	
SCHOTT, ANTHONY J. ASN 33558662	Gunner Returned	S/Sgt.	
BRIDGE, RAYMOND E. Jr. ASN 32750351	Tail Tur Returned	S/Sgt.	Mt. Holly, New Jersey

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Capt. Testa's aircraft began this mission as Group and division lead but was forced to turn over this lead shortly after crossing into Germany, as their H2X equipment malfunctioned. Subjected to considerable ground fire, smoke and low clouds covered the Primary at Ruhland, so the Secondary target at Dresden was bombed, with poor results.

Captain Testa's aircraft had lost two engines from the accurate flak near Ruhland and dropped from the formation, salvoed its bombs near Bernberg, and turned for home base. With the loss of power, the plane lost altitude quickly, with all of the crew being forced to abandon ship. The men came down safely in the Alsace-Lorraine area of northeastern France. Snavelly landed in Saarburg, with no one seriously injured, but four of the men sustained cuts and bruises. Capt. Testa broke blood vessels in his ankle, and Sgt. Frady also with an ankle hurt. Lt. Dubowski's heel was injured, and Sgt. Stedghill cut his head while being assisted from the plane, requiring five stitches.

Captain Testa's crew, along with nine others from the 492nd BG, had been transferred into the 44th BG when it was disbanded in August, 1944. Col. Snavelly had come with them. Capt. Testa's crew had completed 9 missions with the 492nd BG and went on to complete 20 more with the 44th. They led the 44th BG as well as the entire 8th Air Force on the last mission of the war to Hallien, Austria on 25 April 1945.

Captain Lester Arms stated that he was the group bombardier in the 492nd BG when they arrived in England in April, 1944.

67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-52293 G, Hinman	JUDY'S BUGGY	Salvaged 4 February 1945
67th Squadron Crew:		
HINMAN, HOWARD L.	Pilot Injured	2nd Lt.
MUNRO, MILTON L.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
SPRAGUE, EDMUND K.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
WATKINS, HORACE L.	Nose Gun./Toggler	Sgt.
JOHNSON, CALVIN F.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
WOLFE, ADOLPH A.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.
ARTHURTON, LESLIE A.	RW Gunner Injured	Sgt.
VANNESTE, ROBERT L.	LW Gunner Injured	Sgt.
DOYLE, MARTIN E.	Tail Turret	Sgt.

The pilot, Howard L. (Lewie) Hinman, wrote: "Berlin was the primary target and this was a target of opportunity. It had over 300 guns to protect the plant. As you know, a four-gun battery is rough, but 300 is hell. I didn't see any flak as the first flak up got our plane and apparently John Testa's plane. My co-pilot was Milton Monroe who later took over our crew. We followed the bomb stream and finally had to bail out over Alsace Lorraine. In the jump, I got a broken back and two of the other men were hurt. This was my last mission.

“Everything was going perfect till the old black stuff came up and took out the lead element, which our plane was part of. Really, I was so busy that I didn’t know about the other planes.”

The entire crew bailed out over Rimmely, France. Flak had hit and disabled #3, and #2’s prop governor was out 10 degrees after #3 was lost. The aircraft left the formation at this time and headed for France. The aircraft crashed 10 miles southeast of Metz, but did not burn. Lt. Hinman, Sgt. Vanneste, and Sgt. Arthurton were injured. All three were awarded the Purple Heart.

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One 68th Squadron aircraft was abandoned over England – out of gas

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-110095 G	HELLZA DROPPIN’	Abandoned due to fog
68th Squadron Crew:		
LINDSAY, GERALD G.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
GRANEY, DONALD H.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
	Injured	
OLIVER, ARTHUR P.	Navigator	Flt. Off.
	Injured	
KING, ROBERT P.	Nose Gun./Toggler	Sgt.
	Injured	
CARLSON, DONALD	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
	Injured	
MARQUEZ, WILLIAM E.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
	Injured	
WOOLMAN, JOSEPH S.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
	Injured	
TYNDALL, THEODORE B.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
WOLF, HOWARD C.	Tail Turret	Sgt.
	Injured	

*Note: Five of the crew members (Graney, Oliver, King, Carlson, and Marquez) were sent to the Station 231 hospital at Wymondham. Woolman and Wolf were treated at the base hospital at Shipdham.*

On return to Shipdham, 2nd Lt. G. G. Lindsay found the airfield fogged in solid as were other fields in the area. The crew bailed out, successfully (albeit with some injuries), approximately 7 miles east of Norwich. The aircraft, on autopilot, is believed to have crashed into the North Sea.

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As an example of the many planes that landed in France, here are some comments by pilot Bill A. Rosser: “We landed at Orly on 16 January. Had fields on the continent not been available, it is doubtful that the mission could have been completed as flown because a great many planes were low on fuel. I don’t remember how many landed at Orly, but there were a lot of them. Someone ran off the taxi strip into deep mud and stranded several planes. Since there was no equipment available to free him, we were ‘stuck’ in Paris for three days. I told you we were lucky!”

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## 21 January 1945

### Pforzheim, Germany

Only eleven aircraft were dispatched on a limited operation to attack Heilbronn Marshalling Yards. Equipment malfunctioned, so Pforzheim Marshalling Yards were hit visually, with excellent results. Several aircraft left the formation, low on fuel, to land in France. One 68th Squadron plane and crew failed to return.

68th SQUADRON:

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68th Sq., #42-50725 M, Franks	Returned to base later
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68th Squadron Crew:

FRANKS, WALTER O. ASN 0-818784	Pilot Returned to duty	1st Lt.	
BURLINGAME, WILLIAM A. ASN 0-1997881	Co-pilot Returned to duty	2nd Lt.	
DELONG, FRANKLIN ASN 0-722285	Navigator Returned to duty	1st Lt.	
HUEY, WILLIAM E. ASN 34601283	Engineer Returned to duty	T/Sgt.	
WALKER, DONALD E. ASN 38468759	Radio Oper. Returned to duty	T/Sgt.	
POTTS, JAMES A. ASN 14100400	RW Gunner Returned to duty	S/Sgt.	
GLANZ, CLARENCE I. ASN 37706564	LW Gunner Returned to duty	S/Sgt.	
ENNIS, DONALD H. ASN 33355461	Nose Turret/Toggler Returned to duty	S/Sgt.	
STENSTROM, ROBERT W. ASN 16129841	Tail Turret Hospitalized due to parachuting injuries	S/Sgt.	Huntington Beach, Illinois

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This aircraft was MIA on the 21st, but the crew returned on the 29th. The #4 engine had a runaway prop and the pilot, Walter Franks, could not feather it. This caused high fuel consumption and they ran low on gasoline, with both #1 and #2 engines running dry. The electrical system was out, and the aircraft also iced up, so the pilot ordered his crew to bail out. Only one crewman was injured, and he was hospitalized in Station Army Hospital #067.

S/Sgt. Robert W. Stenstrom told me that he was the injured crewman. He stated that he thought the plane had been hit by flak, causing the difficulty. When ordered to bail out, he and all the others got out fine and they all landed unhurt except Stenstrom, who landed in a tree and was injured when one of the limbs punctured his cheek. He also broke three ribs. Military personnel from the First Tactical A.F. Provincial #374 took him to the 51st Station hospital for treatment. He was there for three days and then joined the others from his crew at Hotel Francois and on the 24th, were flown back to London. A train brought them back to Norwich and they were back on their next mission on 6 February. The crew completed their tour of 35 on 6 April 1945.

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## 28 January 1945

### Dortmund, Germany

The Coking Plant at Dortmund was attacked but results of the bombing were poor, due to several circumstances. One 66th Squadron aircraft crash-landed on the continent, but with no injuries. One 68th Squadron aircraft did not return.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-51101 H, Corwine	CORKY	MACR #12007
68th Squadron Crew:		
CORWINE, MAURICE D. ASN 0-771320	Pilot POW	1st Lt. Sedalia, Missouri
LOUGH, ROBERT L. ASN T-126827	Co-pilot KIA, buried Ardennes (D-16-13)	Flt Of. Mt. Clare, West Virginia
SCOTT, WAYNE S. ASN 0-206605	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt. West Palm Beach, Florida
HOWSER, EARL P. ASN 0-864127	Radar-Nav. KIA	1st Lt. Kansas City, Missouri
WALKER, JOSEPH H. ASN 14135751	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Sycamore, Alabama
COLOSIMO, PATRICK N. ASN 13061725	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt. Branchton, Pennsylvania
KIRKEY, VERNON O. ASN 31166867	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Plymouth, Massachusetts
MACE, GLENN E. Jr. ASN 17151925	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Washington, Iowa
STEINMILLER, WILBERT R. ASN 12239759	LW Gunner KIA, buried Ardennes (D-4-5)	S/Sgt. Rochester, New York
WEINMAN, EDWARD I. ASN 32828525	Tail Turret KIA, buried Ardennes (B-23-16)	S/Sgt. Long Island, New York

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The MACR briefly states that this aircraft was flying at 21,000 feet, encountering intense, accurate flak. It was seen to take a direct hit in the bomb bay. At this time, 1200 hours, aircraft was seen to fall out of formation with a fire in its bomb bay. Three chutes were observed coming out. One was on fire. The aircraft staggered, continually losing altitude, and then blew up.

The following details come from a lengthier article that appeared in the Winter 1995 edition of 8 Ball Tails: "CORKY was hit by flak with a direct hit in the bomb bay shortly before 12:00 just prior to bombs away, she pulled out of formation, losing altitude and exploded several thousand feet below. Maurice Corwine, the pilot, and Patrick Colosimo, the radio operator, were the only two survivors. Three parachutes had been reported from the plane.

"While on the bomb run, Patrick Colosimo had gone down off the flight deck to open the bomb doors, as there apparently had been some technical problems with one of the doors which was partly stuck open. Glenn Mace had also come forward from his mid-ship position and was assisting him in opening the door. The gears were apparently stripped and the door on one side was only open about a foot. Corwine had told them to leave it and they were going to salvo the

bombs later. Mace was returning to his waist position and Colosimo turned to go back up to the flight deck. At that point, the ship shuddered and there was severe heat on his back and flames all around him. His clothes caught on fire, and as he was disconnected from the intercom, he didn't know what was said following this. Apparently he was pushed out by someone else through the bomb bay. He was not aware of what happened for a period till he came around, his parachute deployed, with no signs of any other parachutes, but a large fire on the ground. Patrick indicated that he had been picked up by Germans and thrown into a village prison where the news of his crew was variable and was told that six were dead and then later that they were all alive. He was moved to several different prison camps following this, and on the 5th of May, his prison camp was liberated coincidentally by the 82nd airborne to which his brother was attached. Being injured, he was shipped out by ambulance to a hospital. His brother, Jim, only missed him by 20 minutes. He returned to the U.S. in late May where he contacted the relatives of his crew. Maurice Corwine returned home shortly after and his story was basically similar, having been blown clear of the plane in the explosion and having been taken prisoner.

[According to] some copies of captured German documents...the story is that just before noon on a clear and cold wintry day, the American bombers flew over Dortmund. The anti-aircraft batteries hit a silver plane; the right wing, which went on fire, broke off, and the plane spun down. The witnesses only saw one parachute, though later information indicated that there were two survivors. The east wind blew the parachute towards Dortmund, suburb of Mengde, and the remains of the plane came down in Dortmund-Derne. Colosimo landed on a street called Am Ammerbaum. At this point, there was a flak unit 88mm crewed by members of the Arbeitsdienst (young men too young for military service) and 105-mm battery of the Luftwaffe.

There was some argument as to who should take him prisoner and in the meantime, two police officers arrived and lifted him up and carried him approximately 1.5 km. to the local police station. He was wounded and bleeding from the head and his right leg was broken. On the way, they passed a number of civilians who were standing on the street, screaming "murderer" and who spat and kicked him. One of them kicked his broken leg and Patrick screamed. At this point, the police officers did not take any action and the witness said that the journey was like (running the gauntlet). One of the little boys grabbed a heated glove that he was carrying. When they reached the police station, he was left on the steps and the police officers went inside. The two young boys came up to Patrick and saw that he was covered in sweat and that there were tears running down his face.

At that point, the local Ortsgruppen Leiter (local Nazi party official) Franz Land arrived on his bicycle, ran up the stairs towards the prisoner. Patrick must have gotten a shock when he saw this real Nazi in his brown uniform coming towards him after what had happened on his journey from the street. However, Land entered the police station and there was a loud argument, the basis of which was that the policemen had not carried out their duty to protect the prisoner who had been abused. The police officers defended themselves saying that Dr. Goerbels had said (no mercy for the terror flyers). Patrick was then carried inside and put in a detention cell in the basement and the two boys saw him through a window. He was moaning, "Help me, help me." One of the police officers left the police station and fetched Dr. Hallermann, the local doctor, who came and gave him medical treatment."

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #44-10542 G+, Perrault	TALLY HO II	No MACR required
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew returned	
PERRAULT, ROBLEE A. ASN 0-718741	Pilot Returned	2nd Lt. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
HAGAN, JACK L. ASN 0-829720	Co-pilot Returned	2nd Lt. Huntington, West Virginia
PETERS, WADE D. ASN T-132351	Navigator Returned	Flt Of. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
LAROCCO, THOMAS C. ASN 12093731	Engineer Returned	T/Sgt. East Bayonne, New Jersey
HELLEIN, GAULT M. Jr. ASN 33671241	Radio Oper. Returned	T/Sgt. Baltimore, Maryland
VAN HORN, NORMAN E. ASN 13188024	Nose Turret Returned	S/Sgt. New Castle, Pennsylvania
FOSTER, VIRGIL L. ASN 36900323	RW Gunner Returned	S/Sgt. Princeton, Illinois
IHNACIK, JOHN J. ASN 35061436	LW Gunner Returned	S/Sgt. Cleveland, Ohio
CLARK, WILLIAM N. Jr. ASN 35229520	Carpet Blk. Returned	Sgt. Toledo, Ohio
DESCAMPS, JULES ASN 36957756	Tail Turret Returned	S/Sgt. Detroit, Michigan

Lt. Roblee A. Perrault, pilot, crash-landed this aircraft 20 miles from Brussels (Bonneff-Gernblou). #2 engine ran away, #3 supercharger had failed. No field was in sight when #1 engine started to go out, so he lowered wheels and landed in a field. The plane broke up, but the crew was not injured.

Navigator Wade D. Peters added, "Yes, we did crash-land outside of Brussels and was this crew's first mission. We had just bombed over Dortmund when #2 engine had a runaway prop, which was eventually feathered, I think. We lost considerable altitude, so headed south to avoid the large concentration of flak. Then we turned west, and then north to the Brussels area.

"After letting down a bit, we made a 180 degree turn in order to turn back into Brussels, when we just ran out of engines. It happened so fast that the wheels were only partially down and less than 100 feet altitude, and the crew had no warning.

"We crash-landed in a large, open field which had about two feet of snow covering it – luckily, thank God! The only injury that I can recall is that someone in the waist had a bruised knee. Several of us made our way to a farmhouse where we spent the night. The next day an American Railway outfit picked us up, and we were taken to a large Gym-type building in Brussels, which housed crews and fighter pilots who had had accidents or emergency landings in Europe.

"The first plane assigned for us to fly back had only three propellers, so we took another to get back to England. I do not recall where we landed."

Pilot Roblee A. Perrault added, "Just at bombs away, a burst of flak just in front of #2 engine caused the prop to run away. It would not feather, but kept windmilling until the crash. We had lost the #3 supercharger, and with only two good engines, could not keep up with the formation.

We proceeded west bound, eventually crash-landing about 20 miles east of Brussels. At that time, #2 was still windmilling, #1 was OK, #3 had power only at low altitude, but #4 was on fire.

“I don’t know if there was other battle damage as the aircraft broke up to some extent when the nose gear collapsed and the right main gear did not lock and failed, too. The #4 engine was burning and continued to burn, eventually cutting through the wing just inside of #4. Both outside props came off and we didn’t see them again. The bullet-proof windshield broke out and away, providing a convenient exit route for the ‘front office’ crew members.”

Lt. Jack Hagan, co-pilot, remembered, “One ship in our squadron received heavy flak damage and left the formation before we did. The briefed route was for us to turn east after bombing, into Germany, then north to the North Sea. But after incurring our damages, Lt. Perrault decided we were too badly hurt to follow those plans, so we turned west toward a possible emergency field. We were having trouble maintaining our altitude, so all unnecessary equipment was jettisoned. Radio contact was made with the emergency field and a heading was given to us.

“Overcast was from 10,000 feet to approximately 1500 feet. We were told we were over the field at an altitude of approximately 4,000 feet and were directed to proceed on heading and turn back to the airfield when we had visibility enough to do so. After breaking clear, we started a turn to the right and lost another engine. I spotted an open area and directed our pilot to it. Our windshield had frosted, making forward visibility very difficult, but being in the right seat and a right turn I could see out the side window. I engaged the landing wheels due to habit, but by this time, we were through some trees and very near to touchdown. Our crew in the waist area were not alerted as we didn’t have the time.

“When the nose wheel, and then the right main collapsed, it put us in a slow ground loop – very fortunate for us, as we were heading into a large drainage ditch and we missed it. “Luckily, too, the fire burned through the wing without setting off an explosion. After getting out, three of us left to find help. We were directed to a nearby farm, where a phone was available. Contact was made with a railroad group, who picked us up the next day.”

Engineer Thomas C. LaRocco added that with the loss of #3 engine, all hydraulically operated equipment failed – prop feathering, flaps, and landing gear. He had attempted to lower the landing gear mechanically, but the right gear did not come all the way down and lock.

Lt. Perrault and the others stayed with the plane until 11 PM guarding it and waiting for the fire to burn out. Sgt. Norman Van Horn said that the main landing gear melted from the heat, the magnesium alloy running in a stream. Help arrived at 11 PM and all of the crew stayed overnight at the farm. The railroad men failed to notify the base, so this crew was listed as MIA until they returned almost a week later.

None of the crew could clearly remember Sgt. Clark, except Lt. Peters. He told me that he thought that Clark was later KIA – and that is true. Sgt. Clark was killed on 19 March 1945 with Lt. Podojil.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-52618 V+, Muldoon	CHIEF WAPELLO	Crashed in Allied territory
66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew returned	
MULDOON, JOHN J.	Pilot	2nd Lt.



DUERKSEN, OLIVER E.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
GROSSMAN, KARL D. Jr.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
JACOB, WALTER A.	Nose Gun./Togglier	Sgt.
HREBAR, ADOLPH J.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
WILNER, EDWARD A.	Eng./Top Turret	Sgt.
WILLIS, GEORGE K. Jr.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
ALBERADO, JOHN A.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
SCHONFELD, EDWIN L.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

*Note: Walter Jacob did not fly again.*

On withdrawal, southwest of Majmegese, this aircraft lost its #3 engine and was breaking up, so the crew bailed out. Ground witnesses (identified as 12th REA, 43rd battery, 3rd Canadian Div.) reported that they observed nine chutes and noticed a formation of enemy aircraft diving on the damaged aircraft, which crashed in woods near Berg-en-dal, Holland.

The co-pilot, Oliver Duerksen, told me a bit about the plane starting to break up in the air, so all crewmembers were trying to get out. He did not know the sequence of the crewmen as they jumped, but he was one of the last. He saw the plane crash and explode, so was happy that the bombsight was destroyed. He said a few of the men landed in a pocket occupied by Canadian Artillery Units close to the front line and in 'no man's land.' These troops got them to safety.

Duerkson was wearing his Lt. bars on his shoulder, and upon landing, his chin came down on the bars and cut his chin and part of his cheek. So he was bleeding a bit, and a Canadian military man took him to a nearby village, possibly a church where a "Mother Superior" took him inside for medical attention. He said she went to a locked medical cabinet, opened it, took out another key and opened another door, took out a bottle of Schnapps for a drink. He said he needed that.

One of the crewmen, nose gunner and togglier Sgt. Walter A. Jacob, broke his leg when landing, even though there was about a foot of snow on the ground. He did not fly more missions, but was sent home for medical treatment. The other members of the crew continued on active combat status.

### Test Flight, Shipdham, England

One 68th Squadron aircraft was attempting a test flight on this date, presumably after the operational formation had left for their mission. The runway was slushy from snow.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-50349 F, Almonia	FLAK MAGNET	Crashed on takeoff
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#### 68th Squadron Crewman:

ALMONIA, VINCENT	Pilot	2nd Lt.	
CORNELY, WILLIAM F.	Co-pilot	Flt. Off.	
FERRARA, MICHAEL J.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
SCOTT, LAYTON W. ASN 39468984	Nose Gun./Togglier	Sgt.	Westfall, Oregon
	DIED, buried Cambridge (B-2-18)		
KIRSCHLING, ROBERT J.	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.	
RICHARDSON, OSCAR A.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	

CHAMBERLAND, NORMAND H.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
WALTON, ELBERT B.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
MANKUS, MATTHEW	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

*Note: This crew had been assigned as a 68th Squadron spare for this mission.*

This aircraft was on takeoff in bad weather, severely cold. Ice built up on wings and fuselage from mist thrown up by previous planes that had taken off, the spray froze on contact with this aircraft, destroying lift. It mushed down after rising to about 50 feet of altitude, and crashed approximately two miles east of field. It caught fire and burned completely.

Sgt. Scott was crushed when the top turret fell from its mounting. Though he was rescued and was still alive, he died on 4 February from his injuries. The other crewmembers sustained minor injuries as well.

## 7 February 1945

### Aircraft Fire and Explosion, Shipdham, England

One 68th Squadron combat man was killed by a bomb explosion in the early morning hours when a fully loaded aircraft accidentally caught fire and burned.

#### 68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #42-50509 Y	WANA		Fire and explosion at base
68th Squadron Crewman: (Gunner from Lt. J. R. Collins' crew)			
DUCKI, STANLEY H.	Tail Turret DIED	S/Sgt.	East Berlin, Connecticut

An ordnance crew was loading this 68th Squadron aircraft for the planned operations, when one of these workmen found it necessary to fill the gas tank on the aircraft's auxiliary electrical power unit (APU) which was providing power for their lights. In doing so, he spilled a bit of gasoline and when he turned on the main line and battery switches in order to re-start this auxiliary power unit located beneath the flight deck, the spilled fuel ignited. As the APU was located under the flight deck, out of sight, the fire was not immediately apparent, and when discovered, could not be extinguished.

There were ten 500-pound General Purpose bombs lined up beneath the aircraft in preparation for loading. Seven of them were moved before the plane blew up. Two of the bombs detonated while the fire fighting units were moving into position to fight the fire. A large part of one bomb casing, three feet long and two feet wide, was hurtled over 300 yards, tearing through a line shack in the 67th Squadron area, and killed Sgt. Ducki, who was warming himself during guard duty.

Sgt. Frank Chowanski, a 67th Squadron crew chief, investigated the damaged shack and found Sgt. Ducki still sitting on a bunk, but without a mark on him. The casing had nearly demolished the shack, going completely through it, but there was no immediate evidence to indicate that it had struck Sgt. Ducki.

Sgt. Ducki had completed his tour of duty of 29 missions as part of Lt. James R. Collins' crew and was assigned guard duty pending arrangements for him to be returned to the States, as was the generally accepted procedure for most combat men. It was most ironic that this man could complete 29 missions over Europe and then be killed by one of our own bombs and on our own base.

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## 23 February 1945

Rail Center, Weimar, Germany

### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-51552 F, Bakanic

Crash-landed

#### 67th Squadron Crew:

BAKANIC, GEORGE Jr.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
BOUGHNER, JACK L.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
FLAHERTY, F. I.	Navigator	Flt. Off
ROBBINS, JEAN B.	Bombardier	Sgt.
LARAMORE, JAMES L.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.
LINDGREN, MORTON G.	Eng./Top Turret	Sgt.
WEBER, HERMAN P.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
BUHLER, THEO W.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
MANZER, CLYDE F.	Tail Turret	Sgt.

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Clyde Manzer, the tail gunner, wrote: "That mission, I believe it was our fifth, scared the hell out of me and I guess Robbins too. From a tail gunner's point of view, this is what happened. I don't know where we were going, but it was a routine mission. We had turned on the IP and we were on the bomb run when we lost the #2 engine. With the loss of power, we dropped under the formation. The pilot and/or co-pilot tried to feather the prop. It wouldn't feather, and started to windmill. It windmilled the rest of the way.

"I am guessing that the pilot, George Bakanic, made a decision to fly to France, rather than try to fly back to England because of the additional fuel demands of flying on three engines. While we were under the formation, I happened to look up into the open bomb bays filled with what looked like 1,000-pound bombs. I pressed my intercom button and said, 'Bakanic, get the hell out of here.' He said, 'Why?' I said, 'Look up.' The next thing that I knew, the plane was standing on its right wing and we were out of there.

"There was cloud cover under us and somehow we had picked up an escort of P-51s. The pilots of the P-51s saw the windmilling prop and thought that we were flying normally. They stayed with us until the cloud cover disappeared and we were over the twin cities of Mannheim and Ludwigshaven on the Rhine River.

"They shot the hell out of things. We were their only target. They shot 88s, 105s, and 155-mm anti-aircraft guns at us. They shot black flak, white flak, and red flak at us.

"I was still in my tail turret when the pilot started to take evasive action. I thought that we had been hit and that we were going down. I pulled the ripcord on my flak suit. It fell off and I rolled

backward out of the tail turret and grabbed my parachute and tried to hook it to my parachute harness. I was so nervous (scared) that I couldn't hit the hooks. I was trembling from the tips of my toenails to the ends of the hair on my head.

"I finally got the parachute hooked and headed for the escape hatch. Buhler and Weber pointed out to me that we were still flying. There I stood with my flak suit on the floor in three pieces. (I used to sit on the apron). I did wear my flak helmet though. Somehow we got through all of that flak. They must have had their second string in.

"We flew on to St. Dizier. I remember looking down at crossed runways. One ran into a canal. The other ran into a field. As the pilot prepared to land, he tried the flaps. They didn't work. He tried the landing gear. They didn't work. The engineer, Morton Lindgren cranked down the flaps and the landing gear. We knew that the hydraulics were damaged. The pilot didn't want to test the brakes in case there was a little pressure left. The pilot and co-pilot put it down rather gently. I don't remember a big bump. We coasted smoothly for awhile until we went off on the end of the runway, across the field, and hit a ditch. The ditch sheared off the landing gear and we were on the belly for awhile. The brakes didn't work. I set an unofficial record of the 100-yard dash getting away from that airplane. B-24s had a reputation for blowing up. I was in full flying gear, too.

"The whole crew was standing away from the plane, looking at it, when a column of Jeeps and ambulances drove up. A medical officer looked us all over and asked if we were hurt. When we all said no, he said, "What do you want, bourbon, scotch or cognac?" The navigator had a cut over one of his eyes. He was offered a Purple Heart, but declined. We left the aircraft there, fully armed, with only our personal belongings removed."

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## 25 February 1945

### Marshalling Yards, Aschaffenburg, Germany

Thirty-five of the 44th BG aircraft attacked this target with excellent results. The weather was clear, no flak in the target area, and our fighters offered excellent cover. Yet one aircraft did not return – and it was not recorded in the official records of the Group.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #42-51258 J+, Derrick	BEVERLY JEAN	Low on fuel, parachuted
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#### 66th Squadron Crew:

DERRICK, JAMES V. ASN 0-721660	Pilot Returned	1st Lt.	Jacksboro, Texas
MEYERS, JOSEPH G. ASN T-128326	Co-pilot Broken Back/Evacuated	Flt Of	Baltimore, Maryland
THOMAS, ROGER J. ASN 0-2066074	Navigator Neck injury	2nd Lt.	Wheaton, Illinois
ANTHONY, ROBERT I. ASN 13141785	Nose Turret Returned	S/Sgt.	Baltimore, Maryland
BROWN, CLARENCE J. ASN 32938216	Engineer Broken Leg/Evacuated	T/Sgt.	Wallingford, Vermont

BROWN, HARRY R. ASN 19203793	Radio Oper. Broken leg	T/Sgt.	Long Beach, California
HORTON, STARR W. ASN 34910189	Waist Gun. Returned	S/Sgt.	Miami Shores, Florida
STROH, DONALD E. ASN 36822565	Waist Gun. Minor injuries	S/Sgt.	Denver, Colorado
ANDRES, ROBERT J. ASN 36784563	Tail Turret Returned	S/Sgt.	Kildier, Illinois

Sgt. Donald E. Stroh wrote that, "I always was under the impression that we ran out of gas while looking for an airfield at Charleroi in the fog, to set down in. But Lt. Meyers and navigator Lt. Thomas told me that we had been hit, (probably by flak) and we had lost fuel out of one engine. They had been transferring gas to the other three supply tanks in order not to lose all of it."

Co-pilot Joseph Meyers added, "We were very close to an auxiliary landing field in Charleroi, Belgium, but did not have time to locate the field. So Lt. Derrick and I took the plane back up to 3,000 feet and we all jumped.

"I landed in an open field after believing that I was going to hit a wire fence, pulled the shrouds to miss the fence and landed hard. I was rescued from the very beautiful local girls by some GIs from an AA Station. On the way to town, we picked up other crewmembers and we all met at a local hospital where we were attended by American physicians.

"I carried Harry Brown's parachute as he was limping – his leg was broken. Upon the insistence of the physicians, I had to be X-rayed – walked into the X-ray room – and left on a stretcher and spent the next three months flat on my back and six more recuperating. Ended up in Plattsburg, New York, along with Clarence Brown and his badly broken leg.

"Most of the crew returned to duty but did not fly again as a crew until 19 March. I was finished on this, my eighth one. Lt. Derrick continued flying till end of hostilities."

25 February continued:

68th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-110031 H-Bar, Warner	PHYLLIS	Crash-landed
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*Note: This was a 67th Squadron aircraft flying with a 68th Squadron crew.*

68th Squadron Crew:

WARNER, WILLIAM L.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
DRAKE, DUDLEY D.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
KAY, ROBERT P.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
BENGSTON, CLIFFORD	Nose Gun./Toggler	Sgt.
LEIBNER, AL	Radio Oper.	S/Sgt.
GRAU, BILLY E. ASN 18194464	Eng./Top Turret Shoulder injury, sent to U.S.A. 11 March 1945	Sgt.
SPRENGER, KEITH W.	RW Gunner	Sgt.
SCORPIO, ANTONIO	LW Gunner	Sgt.
SWEGEL, ROBERT V.	Tail Turret	Sgt.

*Note: This crewman was originally identified as Graube [no first name] but it appears from later research that this is Billy E. Grau, whose last mission is listed on 25 February 1945 in the database.*

Lt. William Warner, low on fuel, headed toward an A-26 field near Laon, but he came up short by about a half of a mile and crash-landed in an open field. Billy Grau, the Engineer, received a broken shoulder when the top turret broke loose. Grau ended up in a field hospital and was finally sent back to the States; his combat days were over. The balance of Warner's crew had only minor scratches and bruises.

The 67th Squadron war diary reports indicate that three of their planes landed on the continent this mission. The pilots were: Lt. Bethel landed at Brussels due to gas shortage, while Lts. Stephen C. Harris and Hildebrand landed at Verdun, in France. No further information can be located. Six other 44th aircraft that were low on fuel landed on the continent. All returned later.

## 1 March 1945

### Marshaling Yards, Ingolstadt, Germany

This aircraft was abandoned over or near the French town of San Quentin.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #42-95049 O-Bar, Crandell	FEARLESS FOSDICK	Crew bailed out
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#### 67th Squadron Crew:

CRANDELL, LEONARD J.	Pilot	2nd Lt.
CROLL, WILLIAM B.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.
CARLBERG, BERTIL	Navigator	2nd Lt.
ROACH, JAMES E.	Nose Gun./Toggler	S/Sgt.
FEENEY, LARRY L.	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
OGILVIE, ROBERT. B. Jr.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
GERMOLUS, IRWIN E.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
BATTENBERG, WALTER R.	LW Gunner	S/Sgt.
BROWN, JAMES M. Jr.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.

*Note: This aircraft went down at Vermand, France (Ingolstadt). It was salvaged 30 March 1945 on the continent by five SAD. The entire Crandell crew, with the exception of Bertil Carlberg, was KIA on 24 March 1945.*

The following account is by Bertil Carlberg, the navigator. "The mission was to bomb a target in the vicinity of Munich – quite a long mission timewise in those days. The flight was uneventful until we left the target area and headed home. After about an hour into the return trip the flight engineer and co-pilot reported that our fuel gauges (sight gauges) were showing that we were or had been using more fuel than anticipated. At the same time I reported that we were encountering much stronger headwinds than we had been briefed on that morning. Another hour passed and we dropped behind the formation to conserve fuel. By this time it was apparent that we did not have enough fuel to make it back to Shipdham so Lieutenant Crandell asked me for a course heading to a friendly alternate in France. Paris was the best alternate; but we decided against it because, since liberation of that Capital, too many bomber crews had, on the slightest pretext, landed there in order to have a brief fling with the French beauties. This had resulted in a stern

warning issued at briefings that Paris was more or less off limits. I selected an airfield 90 miles north of Paris near a town named San Quentin because it was located in an area, shown on our topographical map, that was low countryside free of any high hills where a crash landing would be more survivable.

“We descended into a solid cloud cover that we soon found out extended right to within 100 to 200 feet of the ground. The only means of navigation I had during the descent was the G box (RADAR) and that only from one blip radiating from the master station giving me a course reading. We became quite concerned when we were still in the clouds at 500 feet on the altimeter; however, we broke out at about 300 feet flying in and out of some low scud clouds. The course heading brought us over the portion of the airfield where there were parked B-26 aircraft, but the pilots could not line up for an approach to the runway due to the low clouds. Finally we lost sight of the airfield altogether, so I asked Lieutenant Crandell to take a reciprocal heading back towards the direction we had come from. After a few minutes I picked up the course blip reading again on my G box, and we headed back to the airfield a second time. Again we experienced the same problem: crossing over a portion of the airfield but not being able to make a visual approach to the runway. By this time our fuel indicators were hovering just above the empty mark.

“While all of this maneuvering is going on the gunners were just sitting listening to our conversation over the intercom realizing that we are running out of fuel and not able to land. After we were not able to make our second approach, they pleaded with Lieutenant Crandell to climb up to a safe altitude so that they could have the opportunity to bail out safely. At this point he also felt that we probably did not have enough fuel to continue to circle the field any longer, so he started an ascent north of this weather-bound alternate. We climbed to 11 or 12 thousand feet where we finally broke out on top of all clouds. The aircraft was leveled off on a westerly heading, and the evacuation began. The gunners and radio operator bailed out, then the flight engineer was crouching on the catwalk ready to jump, and I to follow, when he looked up at me and shook his head. I took this to mean that he did not want to jump, so I just pushed him out. We were about 1,000 feet over the cloud layer, and I watched him tumble down and disappear into the clouds without his chute opening. With this on my mind I jumped and pulled my ripcord at the same time barely clearing the aircraft. I floated down into the clouds watching the aircraft flying serenely on as if on a routine flight. I found out the next day that as soon both pilots bailed out the engines stopped and the aircraft crashed into an open field.

“It was a thick cloud mass that we descended through. What fixed in my mind, even after 51 years, was the stillness and complete silence that I experienced as I floated to earth. When I was able to see the ground, I attempted to stop pendulating, but the base of the clouds and the ground itself were not far apart so when I hit, I was apparently on top of my swing coming down and hit the ground with my entire body. I was knocked out for a short time, and on awakening my parachute was lying limp because there was no ground wind blowing. It was early evening and still light, but it must have been a rainy day because my impact on the wet ground left an entire body imprint which was still there the next morning when I returned to look for a couple of lost items. With my flight clothing I weighed about 230 pounds so the soft ground most likely saved me from serious injury. Some days later the boys in the parachute shop voiced some concern that I should have been issued a larger chute!

“This area of France had been taken from the Nazis some months earlier and, being an agricultural region, it was being prepared for the spring planting. In the waning light I spotted a farmhouse and out buildings about a half-mile away and walked to them carrying my silk parachute. I knocked on the door of the farmhouse, and it was opened by a farmer’s wife who registered some alarm upon seeing on her doorstep a large airman whom she could not immediately identify as friend or foe. A couple of younger women, presumably daughters, crowded around her and spoke to me in French. Not speaking the language, I kept repeating “American” which finally registered. They indicated by sign language for me to come in and sit down in the kitchen while one of the daughters went to the nearby village by the name of Fresnoy-Griscourt, for assistance in communicating with me.

“While I waited they prepared for me a cup of ersatz coffee, at least it was hot and supposed to taste like coffee. The daughter soon returned from the village with a man who spoke English very well. We spoke briefly, and then he asked me to come with him to the village. Before we left the farm house I told him that I appreciated the hospitality given to me by that particular family and that I would like to leave the women my parachute as a token of appreciation. He told me not to do it because that particular family had been quite friendly with the Germans during the occupation, so they were not very popular with the rest of the villagers. This French gentleman was truly a gentleman and, in addition, was a bonefide Count by the name of Comte de Tacher de la Pagerie with a most beautiful home dominating the countryside.

“In the center of the village was a small café, which we entered. There I found the flight engineer Bob Ogilvie who I had pushed off of the bomb bay catwalk about an hour earlier, wolfing down a meal! He had been picked up earlier but none of the other crewmembers showed up. We assumed that they found their way to the airfield that we had tried to land at but eventually had to abort our attempts. Inasmuch as it was now dark and getting late our new friend invited us to stay in his home overnight. He did however call the airfield and tell the authorities that he had us under his wing and that he would bring us there in the morning. The evening was a memorable one for Ogilvie and myself. Comte de Tacher brought out some of his food and drink that he was saving for the war’s end celebration. We spent a wonderful evening with this fantastic person and finally went to bed in goose down pillow and comforter covered beds.

“During our evening of relaxation Comte de la Pagerie told us about the conditions that they lived under during the German occupation. He advised that his home, which we were enjoying at the moment, had been requisitioned by the Germans and used as officers’ quarters. We certainly agreed that they had good taste. In the morning we were taken to the airfield, rejoined with the rest of the crew and, a few days later, flew a spare B-24 back to Shipdham, England.

“I am the sole survivor [of this incident] because three weeks later, on March 24, 1945, Lieutenant Crandell’s crew flew on a low level supply dropping mission over the Rhine River in support of Field Marshall Montgomery’s thrust across the Rhine. They received a fatal hit from ground fire that caused the aircraft to go out of control and crash leaving no survivors. Two weeks prior I had been transferred to Captain Ed Reynolds’ crew as a lead navigator, so my replacement on Len’s crew [William M. Hummer] suffered the fate that I escaped. After all this time the details of my experiences on that March day remain vivid in my mind, but time will eventually wipe out this memory.”



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## 12 March 1945

### Marshaling yards, Wetzlar, Germany

Captain Mack led 33 ships from the Group to the marshaling yards at Wetzlar, Germany, on 12 March. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Enemy opposition was nonexistent. Fighter support was good. There were 33 ships in the formation.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

67th Sq., #44-49323, Mack

Crewmember bailed out

*Note: This was a 506th Squadron crew flying a 67th Squadron aircraft.*

#### 506th Squadron Crew:

MACK, FIRMAN B.	Pilot	Capt.
SAYLER, DAVID E.	Command Pilot	Capt.
FUSS, CLARENCE	Co-pilot	1st Lt.
MARGOLIES, MURRAY G.	Navigator	2nd Lt.
CODY, RICHARD E.	Navigator-PFF	1st Lt.
LINDSTROM, ALFRED Jr.	Bombardier	1st Lt.
HESELINK, GARRITT	Radio Oper.	T/Sgt.
TEWKSBURY, ROGER L.	Eng./Top Turret	T/Sgt.
RIGGAR, DEWEY Jr.	RW Gunner	S/Sgt.
ASSELTA, GEORGE A. Jr.	LW Gunner	Sgt.
LOGAN, GROVER C.	Tail Turret	S/Sgt.
	Injured	

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In the August 1988 issue of the 44th Logbook, Firman Mack wrote: "Our mission to Wetzlar got complicated almost at once. At some point on the way to the Group forming area, the airplane suddenly filled with acrid smoke. Everyone except me was coughing and hacking and gasping, trying to put on their oxygen masks. Fortunately, I had put on my oxygen mask before we left the ground because I was usually pretty busy during form-up. After the people got their masks on, someone in the waist told me that Logan had triggered a smoke bomb accidentally while walking through the bomb bay. After a certain amount of confusion, we got the bomb bay doors open and dropped the 100-pound smoke bomb into the 10/10-cloud cover below us. I never could find out where that bomb landed. Either the people didn't know or they didn't want to tell me.

"After we got rid of that bomb, the smoke cleared out of our drafty old B-24 pretty rapidly. However, our troubles were not over. I received a call from the waist that the acid from the bomb had sprayed Logan in the face and he was unable to wear an oxygen mask. If he continued on the mission with us, he would surely die of anoxia. It shouldn't happen to a nice guy like Logan. We had a little pow-wow in the cockpit. The guy that was riding Command Pilot that day said, "You can't go back!" I guess we already knew that because we knew that we were expendable. On the way to the target, you were working for the Government, but after you dropped your bombs, you had the luxury of working for yourself.

"While I was still trying to figure out what to do about this situation, the waist called me and said 'Logan wants to bail out!' I had another short pow-wow with the navigator who said, 'If he's

going to do it, he had better hurry because we are approaching the coast.' I called the waist and told Logan to go ahead, but he shouldn't open his chute until he hit the clouds below us, which were at about 5,000 feet. (We were then about 13,000 feet.) The wind was behind us and if he drifted too far, he might end up in the drink. Logan said, 'Okay,' and shortly after that he bailed out. The guys in the waist said he opened his chute almost before he got out of the airplane. I think he came down somewhere around Ipswich.

"I don't remember much about the mission, but when we returned to Base, our revetment was swarming with staff cars. I seem to remember that General Johnson was among those present. In the uproar someone said, 'We found one of the people who bailed out, but we can't find the other two!'

"It took a little while to figure that out, but it seems that someone in the formation had reported that we bailed out three people. The 'two people' who were missing were Logan's pants and jacket, which had been thrown out because they were smoldering from the acid.

"Shortly after this mission, at a meeting, which Colonel Snively was addressing, someone commented that Capt. Mack and his crew were to be congratulated for the way they handled the Logan incident. Colonel Snively said, 'I don't know whether they should be congratulated or whether Capt. Mack should be court-martialed.' To which I responded, 'I'm right here, Sir.' Colonel Snively and I never liked each other."

I spoke by telephone with Grover Logan and got the following information: This was Logan's 24th mission. While gaining altitude, smoke bomb pins were being removed before reaching high altitude. A bomb was activated when the arming pin was removed and Logan's face was badly burned. Smoke filled the bomb bay. Bomb was on the rear bomb racks.

To get Logan ready to parachute, his crew stripped him down, as his leg straps were too loose. They got him ready to go out shortly before the plane was nearing Great Yarmouth, and as they had taken off his Mae West gear, it was necessary that he got out before going out over the North Sea. Finally ready, he bailed out and managed to come down on land. He was a mess upon landing, face burned, clothes burned a bit, and was quite a sight when people came to his rescue, got him to Yarmouth and called military help. He spent over two weeks in the hospital.

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## 19 March 1945

### Neuberg, Germany

A Jet Plane Assembly Factory was bombed this date by thirty-three of the 44th Bomb Group's planes, with excellent results. Enemy opposition was nil, while our fighters furnished very good support. However, one of the 66th Squadron's aircraft did not return.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

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66th Sq., #42-51907 B+, Podojil	MACR #13574
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#### 66th Squadron Crew:

PODOJIL, ROBERT J. ASN 0-720346	Pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Shaker Heights, Ohio
RITTER, FREDERICK M. Jr. ASN 0-719431	Co-pilot KIA	1st Lt.	Springfld. Gdns, Long Is., N.Y.

CHASE, DUDLEY S. ASN 0-1051904	Navigator KIA	1st Lt.	Cleveland, Ohio
CRANE, WALTER W. ASN 0-785168	Bombardier KIA	1st Lt.	Santa Ana, California
BAIL, BERNARD W. ASN 0-807964	Radar-Nav. POW, wounded	1st Lt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
REICHENBACK, THEODORE H. ASN 6860263	H. Engineer KIA, buried Margraten	T/Sgt.	Duluth, Minnesota
VEITCH, MAX ASN 15140229	Radio Oper. POW	T/Sgt.	Toledo, Ohio
CLARK, WILLIAM N. Jr. ASN 35229520	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt.	Toledo, Ohio
WEST, JOHN W. ASN 35917694	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt.	Dennison, Ohio
MOSEVICH, WALTER F. ASN 16081757	LW Gunner POW	S/Sgt.	Broadview, Illinois
SCHMITZ, NORBERT J. ASN 35224546	Tail Turret Wounded, POW, died later	S/Sgt.	Miamisburg, Ohio

Very little was learned at Headquarters as to exactly what happened to this crew. At 1503 hours, this crew was heard from at a point approximately ten miles southwest of Stuttgart, Germany, and 55 miles east of the bomblines. At this time, the pilot thought he would be able to make it back to friendly territory. He was observed to have two feathered engines. No further word was heard over VHF, and no additional information had been received at Headquarters.

Lt. Bernard Bail, radar navigator and survivor of another bail out in June 1944, stated, "On this, my 25th mission, our plane was jumped by a couple of Me 109s. The entire crew, with the exception of four of us, was killed over Germany, near Stuttgart. The tail gunner, S/Sgt. Norbert J. Schmitz, sustained a leg injury that necessitated amputation, which I witnessed. This young tail gunner later died of gangrene. I was present at his burial in the little town of Goppingen. The following day, Easter, services were held by the Germans and the three of us were permitted to attend.

"As for myself, I was wounded in my head and neck. I spent some time as a POW; later freed. Max Veitch and Walter Mosevich were freed separately, but all three of us by the 10th Armored Division."

Max Veitch added: "We became a lead crew and were on our 18th mission when we were shot down over Germany. We were flying B+ a PFF ship (#42-51907). We had an 11-man crew on board. We were on the bomb run when we lost our #3 engine. After dropping our bombs on the target, we lost our #1 engine and had to leave the formation as we were losing altitude rapidly.

"We called for fighter support, but none came. Our pilot ordered us to get rid of all the excess weight that we could. We headed back towards our lines. I was in the bomb bay throwing out all the excess stuff that I could, when I felt a large explosion and heat coming toward me from the rear of the ship. I grabbed my chest chute to dive out as the ship started down. I was able to get only one side hooked, but it carried me down okay.

“As I was floating down, I saw three German Me 109s following the ship down. I did not see it crash. I also saw only three other chutes going down on the other side of a river. I did not know who got out until that night when the German civilians got us together and took us to a town and put us in a small jail cell.

“Our tail gunner’s leg [Schmitz] was shot up from his foot to his knee. Mosevich, our waist gunner, was shot in the arm and I was hit below the eye and in the hand. The G. Navigator [Lt. Bail] did not receive any injuries.

“After about a week in that jail cell with only a loaf of bread and some water, two German soldiers came and escorted us to the railroad station in Stuttgart. We got on a train and were taken to the town of Goppengen where there were four German hospitals. Sgt. Schmitz was operated on April 1, 1945 and died shortly afterwards. He was buried in a cemetery near the hospital.

“We were liberated on 21 April 1945 by the 44th infantry. Sgt. Mosevich died a few years ago. As a side note, our navigator, Lt. James Haney, was in the 44th base hospital at that time and did not fly with us on this mission. Lt. Dudley Chase was his replacement. It was the first time for Lt. Bail to fly with our crew also.”

The following statement was made on 2 October 1947 by Willi Wagner, a lumberjack from Neubaerenthal: “On 19 March 1945 while working in the Hagenschiess forest, I observed an American bomber pursued and fired on by three German fighter planes. Thereupon the planes disappeared. Several minutes later, however, the bomber returned flying upside down at an altitude of approximately 40 meters only. As far as I could see a piece of the right wing with one motor had broken off. When the plane was just over the road leading from Wurmberg to Pforzheim-east I saw one crewmember falling out of the plane. On visiting the place where he crashed I discovered one deceased American whose parachute had failed to open. The plane itself continued its flight for approximately 2,000 meters and then crashed into the so-called ‘Hartheimer Rain.’ I heard a strong detonation and saw a dark smoke cloud at the place concerned.

“On the next day I found the charred remains of five or six bodies of the place of crash. The crewmember who had fallen out of the bomber was buried at the spot where he had crashed by Rudolf Sigricht, former postman and two other men from Neubaerenthal three or four days later as I have learned.

“Nothing is known to me with regard to the burial of the five or six bodies found among the plane wreckage.

“In June 1945 the deceased American who fell out of the plane was disinterred, examined and evacuated on a truck most probably to Pforzheim by a French team. I believe no identification was possible.”

*Note: This statement’s identification number is AGRC case #4785, Evacuation #1F-1750.*

Rob Fisk, a navigator who flew thirty missions with Howard Hinshaw’s crew, believes that Dudley Chase was killed by German civilians. Fisk’s son, Bradley Fisk, wrote: “Dudley Chase and my father were good friends at Shipdham. They had adjacent bunks in the same Quonset hut. Mrs. Chase would occasionally send cookies. To keep her son honest she would frost them with a D for Dudley or an R for Robert. Around the time my father rotated home, he received word that Dudley Chase had been shot down. Parachutes were seen, and my father held out hope for

his friend. However, after Dad came home, he heard that when that section of Germany was occupied by the Allies, the locals pointed out the location of the graves of several Allied airmen. One of these turned out to be Dudley Chase...Dad had heard that Chase had landed safely near another crewmember but that they had separated for safety. My Mom and Dad were told at Cambridge cemetery [during a 1983 visit] that Chase was captured and killed by civilians. His body was exhumed after the war and Dad was told that he bore the marks of multiple pitchfork wounds."

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## 24 March 1945

### Low-level supply on Rhine River, Wesel, Germany

This day's effort was one of the most important since the invasion of France. It was imperative that the ground forces gain a crossing of the Rhine and our support to them came in the form of supplies that were dropped in an area west-northwest of Wesel, on the east bank of the Rhine. To assure accuracy, this drop was made at rooftop height – and without machine guns for protection. The decision was made not to shoot at opposition on the ground as we might hit our own troops. The crews were unable to protect themselves from heavy ground fire. Two aircraft and crews did not return – one each from the 67th and 506th. One other 506th crewman died, as well, in a related accident.

#### 67th SQUADRON:

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67th Sq., #42-100314 G+, Crandell		MACR #13601
67th Squadron Crew:		Entire crew KIA
CRANDELL, LEONARD J. ASN 0-720197	Pilot KIA, buried Netherlands (H-16-26)	1st Lt. Peoria, Illinois
CROLL, WILLIAM B. ASN 0-2058627	Co-pilot KIA	2nd Lt. Larchmont, New York
HUMMER, WILLIAM M. ASN 0-783265	Navigator KIA, buried Netherlands (C-15-4)	2nd Lt. Dover, New Jersey
ROACH, JAMES E. ASN 17147154	Nose Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Denver, Colorado
OGILVIE, ROBERT B. Jr. ASN 32736724	Engineer KIA	T/Sgt. Auburn, New York
FEENEY, LARRY L. ASN 39466210	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Netherlands (H-17-27)	T/Sgt. Spokane, Washington
GERMOLUS, IRWIN E. ASN 39047565	RW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Albany, New York
BATTENBERG, WALTER R. ASN 36832427	LW Gunner KIA	S/Sgt. Milwaukee, Wisconsin
BROWN, JAMES M. Jr. ASN 34316177	Tail Turret KIA	S/Sgt. Rosehill, North Carolina

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The MACR states that this aircraft was in #11 position in the second squadron, high on the low lead squadron. At 1314 hours, after supplies had been dropped, this aircraft took a sudden, climbing attitude, nose high, and at the same time, number one engine was smoking. This aircraft

then stalled out and nosed directly into the ground, exploded immediately. The 44th BG's film of this mission includes the view of this aircraft going down and crashing.

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The second aircraft lost on the 24th was that from the 506th Squadron and piloted by 2nd Lt. Max E. Chandler.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-50896 Bar-R, Chandler	SOUTHERN COMFORT IV	MACR #13600
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*Note: This was the fourth SOUTHERN COMFORT, but it had "III" painted on the aircraft.*

506th Squadron Crew:

CHANDLER, MAX E. ASN 0-2059456	Pilot KIA	2nd Lt.	Monticello, Indiana
O'DONNELL, HUGH X. ASN T-65165	Co-pilot KIA	Flt Off.	Brooklyn, New York
DANTZLER, ROBERT T. ASN 0-207265	Navigator KIA	2nd Lt.	Birmingham, Alabama
CORDES, THOMAS H. ASN 1 2 100 2 5 8	Nose Turret KIA, buried Netherlands (K-7-15)	Sgt.	Oradell, New Jersey
NEDDER, SARKICE T. ASN 31360823	Engineer KIA	Sgt.	Hyde Park, Massachusetts
ELLIOTT, EUGENE L. ASN 31378866	Radio Oper. KIA, buried Netherlands (K-7-14)	Sgt.	Hartford, Connecticut
DEBLASIO, LOUIS J. ASN 12145683	RW Gunner POW, severe injuries	Sgt.	Brooklyn, New York
CLARK, THOMAS W. ASN 12100209	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Hutley, New Jersey
VANCE, ROBERT D. ASN 35605905	Tail Turret POW/Injured	Sgt.	Empire, Ohio

The MACR states that, "This aircraft was flying as number three in second squadron of a force re-supplying paratroopers, at very low altitude, in an area over 2 miles west-northwest of Wesel. At 1314 hours, this aircraft was observed to lose control momentarily. It struck the ground and came back up to about 100 feet, under control. It flew along for about 90 seconds, then the right wing dipped and struck the ground, causing it to pinwheel and hit the ground again. It disintegrated as it started to burn."

Sgt. Richard V. Lynch stated, "I was flying nose gunner on Lt. Lee's aircraft, I-Bar 193. We were flying at approximately 300 feet and dropped our supplies at 1314 hours. Immediately after this, I noticed number four engine on R-Bar 896, Lt. Chandler's ship, begin to smoke and then noticed the plane hit the ground with its belly and bottom part of the rudders, then bounce up into the air and maintain level, controlled flight at approximately 100 feet – for about a minute and a half.

"The plane, then apparently out of control, banked sharply to the right with the right wing hitting the ground and continued to revolve to the right in a clockwise direction, pivoting on the right wing tip and ending up skidding along on its belly, 180 degrees to our path of flight. The plane started to burn immediately as it hit the ground and I was unable to determine whether or not there were any survivors."

One cannot imagine anyone escaping from that terrible scene, but two of them did! Sgt. Robert Vance stated in his interrogation later, "Immediately after dropping our supplies, we were under intense small arms fire. Sgt. DeBlasio, Sgt. Clark and myself were in the waist section. Sgt. Clark was standing between the ball turret well and the bomb bay, while DeBlasio and myself were standing at the waist windows. Shortly after this, we heard a rather large explosion and right after that, we noticed flames in the bomb bay. We heard nothing over the interphone nor did we call the pilot. Sgt. DeBlasio and myself laid down on the flak suits lying on the floor in the waist of the ship. I don't remember anything after this until I woke up some time later. (It was determined the time to be several hours later near 1730 hours) "

The plane split at the waist, and DeBlasio and Vance found themselves partially thrown clear. DeBlasio's arm was badly injured and his left eye was bloody and beginning to swell. Vance had a deep head laceration, a fractured clavicle, and had lost one tooth. Bleeding and in semi-shock, they crawled away from the plane, minutes before it exploded.

Louis DeBlasio recalled, "Knowing the Germans would be watching to see if anyone got out of the plane, we crawled across a field, and hid under a wagon. I bandaged Bob's bleeding head and he bandaged my eye. I never lost consciousness, but due to his head wound, Bob was incoherent for some time."

They tried to take off their parachute harness, but weren't able. Vance's right clavicle was fractured, and DeBlasio's left arm was practically non-functional. Neither had the strength nor coordination to open the buckle.

German soldiers were hiding in the woods nearby, but they would not come out for fear of being strafed by our fighters. Instead, they sent civilians to find the survivors.

Louis DeBlasio wrote: "Immediately, they took our guns. One ordered me to take mine apart. I took out the clip and field stripped it. Then they told me to put it back together. I pretended that I didn't know how. I decided that if they were going to shoot me, it would not be with my own weapon. They carefully wrapped the parts in a handkerchief, creating a little sack. They studied our escape kits, taking the pain pills, chocolate and other candy. I had five English Pound notes, which they took out. To my amazement, they returned them to me.

"Actually, they were surprised to learn that we were Americans. They kept asking us if we were Canadians, knowing that the British were operating in that area."

A German officer who had been hiding in the woods, took command of the two, along with a pilot from a P-47 that had crashed nearby. The officer spoke a little English, and was able to provide some first aid to their wounds. The fighter pilot had managed to bail out of his upward spiraling craft, but had a badly injured leg. The three prisoners were kept hidden in the woods, presumably to avoid the continuous strafing. When night fell, they were put on a horse-drawn wagon to be transported to where? They had no idea. Both recall the driver's commands to his horse, shouted out in the darkness, "Hooh hot."

They woke up the next morning on the kitchen floor of a farmhouse, with German guards standing by. Louis DeBlasio's strongest memory was of suffering from overwhelming thirst; and with his multiple contusions, could hardly walk. From there, they were moved to a First Aid Station where a German doctor ordered a tetanus shot for both. Because they were wearing so many clothes, the injection was placed in the pectoral muscle in their chests. DeBlasio had a

grossly abnormal reaction, tremendous swelling at the needle site and a case of hives that lasted five days. The misery of the itch kept him awake for five nights without relief. Next, they were marched across a field and into the woods to an artillery unit. Fully expecting to be shot, they were relieved that their luck continued to hold. Once again darkness brought another move. The next morning, they woke up on the straw-covered floor of a dance hall, along with other wounded soldiers, German and Allied side by side. Bob Vance's memory upon waking up was seeing a Coca-Cola sign on the wall. It took him a minute to remember he was a POW.

After eight days of being a POW, the two men were liberated by the 2nd U.S. Armored Division. DeBlasio remained at the hospital on the continent for treatment, while Vance, who had received head wounds and a fractured arm, was soon returned to Shipdham.

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The 506th Squadron suffered yet another casualty on the 24th when one of their combat men was killed on this low-level mission.

506th SQUADRON:

506th Sq., #42-50535 Bar-O, Pyle	JOPLIN JALOPY		Returned to base
506th Squadron Crew:			
PYLE, LEONARD G.	Pilot	2nd Lt.	
SCHAKE, DONALD M.	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	
SOLOMAN, ED. M.	Navigator	2nd Lt.	
GOHL, HARRY G.	Nose Gun.Togglier	Sgt.	
WOLFSON, MURRAY R.	Radio Oper.	Sgt.	
WEISS, PAUL	Eng./Top Turret	Sgt.	
CLARK, PAUL J.	RW Gunner	Sgt.	
DIAZ, ANIBAL C. ASN 34530358	LW Gunner KIA	Sgt.	Tampa, Florida
ALLEN, DONALD B.	Tail Turret	Sgt.	

*Note: Sgt. Diaz was on his fourth mission.*

Sgt. Diaz was flying as left waist gunner on Lt. Pyle's aircraft Bar-O. The supplies were dropped at 1314 hours, at approximately 300 feet. Sgt. Diaz was standing between the open ball turret well and the bomb bay, facing the rear of the ship. He was hauling in the static lines that had been attached to the parachute-packed supplies. Sgt. Diaz was wearing a chest pack type parachute at the time and it is unknown in what manner, but his parachute was spilled open and went out the open ball turret well. The force of the air in the open chute pulled him down into the well and out of the plane. The low altitude and excessive speed at which all aircraft were flying, made it impossible to ascertain the effectiveness of the spilled chute in breaking Sgt. Diaz's fall or of his actually hitting the ground.

The Germans later reported him as dead.



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## 5 April 1945

### Transportation Network, Plauen, Germany

Thirty eight of the Group's aircraft bombed this secondary target via H2X method as extremely adverse weather conditions were encountered at the Primary, Plauen Marshalling Yards; and one aircraft bombed visually. Enemy opposition was nil, so it was surprising that one 506th aircraft did not return. It crashed near Wipperfurst.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #44-40158 Bar-Q, Brown	TINKER BELLE	MACR #14110
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#### 506th Squadron Crew:

BROWN, GEORGE F. Jr. ASN 0-831104	Pilot Wounded, KIA	2nd Lt.	
FLOWERS, HARL N. ASN 0-834782	Co-pilot Returned	2nd Lt.	
THOMAS, ROBERT S. ASN T-133888	Navigator Returned	Flt Of.	
BARRY, JAMES J. Jr. ASN 0-727299	Bombardier Returned	1st Lt.	Flushing, L.I., New York
OTTO, JAMES E. ASN 13200898	Nose Turret Returned	Sgt.	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
BURKHART, HOWARD M. ASN 37347802	Engineer Returned	S/Sgt.	Denver, Colorado
NASH, TRAVIS E. ASN 36851997	Radio Oper. KIA	S/Sgt.	
SAMPLEY, ROBERT E. ASN 35299849	Waist Gun. Returned	Sgt.	Marion, Ohio
McALPINE, EARNEST E. ASN 38608646	Tail Turret Returned	Sgt.	Earth, Texas

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Quoting the MACR, "Aircraft Bar-Q (158) was last seen at 1217 hours, 5 April 1945 at 14,000 feet, 11 miles northeast of Frankfurt. The aircraft was in radio contact with the formation which was flying at 18,000 feet and approximately three miles ahead of this aircraft. He was reported to be under control with number one engine feathered and was letting down through the 8/10 to 10/10 undercast, so as to land at an airdrome in friendly territory. He was observed to have a fighter escort of three P-51s and under complete control. Weather at this time was 8/10 to 10/10 cumulus tops, generally 10-12,000 with CAVU conditions above the undercast. No other word has been heard from this aircraft nor its occupants since 1217 hours on 5 April 1945."

No word was heard from these men until 10 days later, when Lt. Barry, bombardier, telephoned the 44th Base and asked for a plane to come and pick up the returnees. Lt. Barry reported that, "We let down through the overcast to about 3,000 feet. We were over the Ruhr pocket, and they opened up on us with machine gun and small arms fire. Our gunners fired back, and we could see the Germans running for cover. Right after that they really opened up on us."

The engineer, Howard M. Burkhart, continued, "We had lost one engine before arriving at the target – mechanical failure was the reason. Losing power and altitude after target, we were soon

on our own as the formation pulled ahead. #1 engine was feathered, #2 was on fire and the pilot, Lt. Brown, was wounded. #3 and #4 engines were smoking, and the radio operator, Travis E. Nash was killed by flak. The decision was made to try to land at Brussels, Belgium. We didn't make it! Flak, along with small arms fire, got us about sixty miles east of Koln. I was busy transferring gasoline when the pilot rang the bail-out signal, and we all hit the silk."

"George F. Brown and Travis E. Nash both had been hit in the head. Brown was hit just above the ear, and he was never heard from after he parachuted. Travis went down with the plane, which crashed near Wipperfurth."

One man did not take to his parachute immediately, however. He was Sgt. James E. Otto, who was busily strafing enemy troops from his nose turret position. This 19 year old gunner had not heard the bail out signal, and when he turned around to look, he found he was all alone in the Liberator except for the dead radio operator. He bailed out immediately, with his chute opening at about five hundred feet. He landed in a tree, and was hanging in mid-air for about five minutes until a German soldier climbed up to cut his straps, so that he could fall to the ground.

While Otto was immediately taken in hand by the German soldiers, his fellow crewmates were going through a series of adventures that kept them well occupied. Lt. Barry had three bullet holes put in his parachute by a German soldier. Sgt. Robert E. Sampley had been caught in a tree also. When he tried to unharness his parachute, he lost his balance and suddenly found himself hanging upside down from a branch some twenty feet in the air, precariously suspended by one foot caught in the straps of his chute. Gingerly, he pulled himself upright and slid down the tree to momentary safety. Within thirty seconds, he had his hands in the air and a number of bayoneted rifles were pointed at him.

The fifth member of the group landed in the midst of a band of Hitler's Youth. Sgt. Ernest McAlpine, 19 years old and a tail gunner, reported that he had never thought much of that Nazi organization, but that he owed them a debt of gratitude now. "They kept a bunch of angry civilians away from me and brought me to the military authorities. These civilians were all for taking care of me right then and there."

All five crewmen eventually ended up in a large prison camp that had French and Russian slave laborers in it. "The Russians and French were wonderful to us," said Lt. Barry.

"They couldn't do enough for us. Some of the Frenchmen had been there for five years and when we arrived, they broke out food they had been saving all that time and gave us a party. They even told the Germans that they wouldn't work the next day, either."

On the morning of the ninth day, the first platoon of American soldiers, members of the 78th Division, arrived in camp and set them free. Two days later, the men were in Paris; shortly after that, back in England.

Sgt. Burkhart said that the pilot, Lt. Brown, had bailed out with the rest of the crew, but no one saw him again. No other information has been found to clear up the mystery of what happened to him. He eventually was determined KIA, so it is possible that he was killed while parachuting, or was killed by civilians or soldiers trying to avoid capture, or even died from his head wound.

The other two crew members, co-pilot Flowers and navigator Thomas, also returned to military control – Flowers on the 18th, and Thomas on the 14th of April.

Lt. George F. Brown's plane and crew were the last recorded combat casualties of the war in Europe so far as the 44th Bombardment Group's Operations were concerned, and for the men shown in the Roll Of Honour Book located in the American room, central library, Norwich, England. But there were further casualties sustained, and they are included in the following pages.

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## 11 May 1945

### Air Transport Command Practice Flight, Watton, England

With the European phase of the war completed, efforts were begun to get our planes and crew readied for their return flights back to the States. On this date, a 506th Squadron crew had made a four to five hour practice flight in preparation for the over-water return to the U.S. and were then returning to base when the plane crashed.

#### 506th SQUADRON:

##### 506th SQUADRON:

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506th Sq., #44-50698 Bar-C, Edkins

Crashed

##### 506th Squadron Crew:

EDKINS, DONALD	Pilot Badly injured	Capt.	Johnstown, Pennsylvania
WHITTLE, JAMES L. Jr.	Co-pilot Badly injured	1st Lt.	Sacramento, California
SMITH, EDWARD	Navigator Injured	1st Lt.	Lansdowne, Pennsylvania
JONES, CHARLES K.	Engineer Badly Shaken	T/Sgt.	Los Angeles, California
HEYBURN, WILLIAM	Radio Oper Badly Shaken	T/Sgt.	Louisville, Kentucky
CZARNECKI, VICTOR	Asst. Eng. Badly Shaken	S/Sgt.	Dover, New Jersey

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(Now) Lt. Colonel James L. Whittle Jr. wrote, "Although I was a regular 1st pilot, this day I was in the co-pilot seat as we were returning from southern England fulfilling certain ATC (Air Transport Command) requirements. I had completed 28 missions as had most of my crew and was preparing for our flight home.

"One of the drills was to practice feathering procedure to test the pilot's reaction to engine failure and the subsequent change in flying characteristics, etc. We were probably near 5,000 feet, with lots of airspeed, since we were descending to our base at Shipdham, so the loss of one engine would create no danger at all. One outboard engine was feathered, with nothing more than a slight drop in airspeed.

"As soon as that simulated emergency was under control, the opposite outboard engine was feathered. That simulated emergency, too, was handled with no difficulty because of the experience of the pilot and the higher than normal airspeed. But from that point on, things get a little vague, but I believe that a pretense was made of feathering one of the two remaining

engines, and in fact, I think that feathering button was momentarily depressed, but without any intent of actually feathering it.

“Unfortunately, at that time, everything began to happen very quickly and very unexpectedly. When that feathering button was pulled out, which should have either stopped the feathering and returned it to normal, or if it had actually feathered, it should have immediately unfeathered. For some reason or reasons still unknown, neither of those things happened. Both of us reached for an outboard button to unfeather them immediately. But neither of those worked, either (Murphy’s Law), and after a few very rapid, but futile, attempts to unfeather any of them, our attention turned to finding the nearest airfield.

“From the co-pilot’s seat, I remember seeing an airfield off of our right wing, and took over the controls since I was in the better position to see the field. By this time, we were rapidly losing both airspeed and altitude, and in a matter of minutes, we would be on the ground – airfield or not!

“The events happened so fast that there was no time to alert the three airmen in the rear of the aircraft, nor did we even have the time to broadcast MAYDAY. Fortunately, our men in the rear realized that there was an emergency and took up the appropriate positions for a crash-landing. We now had emergency military power on the one remaining engine (#3) but it was a constant fight to keep from stalling.

“By now I had managed to get lined up with the runway, and since the field had been off the right wing, it meant having to make two turns into the one good engine. Although we were lined up with the runway, it was now a question of whether we would make it to the runway before our altitude and airspeed ran out.

“One of the last things I remember was wondering whether we would be able to top the big trees which loomed between us and the field. The airspeed was now just slightly above stalling speed and my last conscious thought was that if I hauled back on the yoke at the very last moment, we could zoom over the tree tops and I then would be able to get the nose back down quickly enough to keep from stalling. None of us remember exactly what happened, but we obviously had not gotten over the trees because my very next recollection was that we were on the ground.

“Through the haze, I can remember the navigator walking – or trying to walk – and complaining about his back. He had been standing between the two pilot’s seats and never had a chance to move before we impacted, and was propelled through the bulletproof glass that surrounded the cockpit.

“Next hazy recollection was opening my eyes in a hospital bed and feeling like every bone in my body was broken. Luckily, that wasn’t the case, as the only broken things were a rib and a tooth. Next to me was our navigator who had broken his back and was encased in plaster of paris from his neck to his hips.

“Don Edkins had sustained the most severe injuries of any of us which included the shattering of most of the bones in his face, and head injuries which were life-threatening. The three men in the rear were limited to cuts and bruises that did not require hospitalization.

“It hardly seems possible that any of us survived, especially since the trees had sheered off our outer wings between #1 & 2 on the left and between #3 and 4 on the right. This “short wing”

modification has a tendency to be very unstable! Best of all, the very volatile fuel did not ignite when the fuel cells were torn open, and probably should have been ignited by the hot engines or superchargers.

“To this day, no one has been able to explain why none of the props would unfeather...”

“Although the three of us eventually recovered from our injuries to the extent that we were able to carry on a normal life, we all suffered various degrees of physical incapacity. I remained in the Air Force and retired in 1966.”

Although Capt. Whittle thought the crash occurred on the approach to the Shipdham runway, they actually were approaching Watton, several miles to the south of Shipdham, according to records found at Watton.

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## 13 June 1945

### Scottish Highlands (Non-Operational), Gairloch, Scotland

Unfortunately, the end of the war in Europe was not the end of death and loss of aircraft for the 44th BG. A writer of fiction could not have conceived a scenario with a situation any worse than this one. This event involved one combat crew of nine that had, at last, completed their long tour of combat duty exceeding 30 missions and covering a period of more than six months. The other passengers were all “old” veterans who had served heroically in the dangerous air over Europe with Troop Carrier units and Bomber Units. Each of these men had accumulated many combat experiences that he could not divulge to anyone due to the strict censoring of all correspondence. For the few days that these men were held at the Redistribution Center awaiting passage on ship they had written letters home with the super news that they were alive, had survived the war, would soon be home, and could then tell everyone about their dangerous experiences. Likewise, the families were so thankful that their loved one had survived the war, were just fine, and very soon would be together again. What a truly crushing blow it was to these families to then receive a telegram telling them he had been killed!

All fifteen of them had been assigned to slow surface transport back to the US, but orders were changed when a B-24 from the 93rd BG that had just been repaired at a Sub Depot, was then available for a fast trip back to the U.S. and home. Combat men were given top transportation priority as the war with Japan still existed, and all combat units (ground personnel included) were scheduled for a month leave and then return for assignment to the Pacific War Zone.

Official records for the 44th BG do not extend beyond the month of April 1945, and consequently, they did not contain information about the loss of this 66th Squadron Air Crew when returning to the States. I did not learn about it until nearly 40 years later when Ian Shuttleworth from Yorkshire, England contacted me for data to help him in his research concerning an aircraft and the fifteen men that had crashed on their way back to the U.S. All fifteen men had perished.

The Shuttleworth family, from Eastern Yorkshire, England, had discovered the crash site while on “holiday,” had “adopted” it and wanted to place a memorial marker there. Ian was a teenager at that time, wanted to contact the next of kin to obtain personal data about each of these veterans

and to share with them the data that he had collected about this accident. The Shuttleworth family even offered to guide anyone who was interested to visit the remote crash site.

Irene and I met Ian and his father in Yorkshire to get acquainted the net time that we visited Norwich, and each of us shared the data that we had acquired independently. That was the beginning of our joint efforts to learn as much as possible about the crash, the combat crew, and the passengers. Since then we have visited Gairloch and the crash site several times, including twice with the entire Shuttleworth family on their summer vacations.

On one of these visits, both Ian and his father, David, took me a few miles from the site and showed me several pieces of the stricken aircraft that had come off from it a few miles from the actual point of impact. We spent considerable time examining these large pieces, searching for any clue that might indicate a possible reason for the crash. These parts were in remarkably good shape and condition for having withstood the many cold winters they had been exposed.

All three of the bomb bay doors had no evidence of a glancing contact with any high ground, as some had speculated, when the airplane circled Gairloch and the surrounding mountain tops. The front portions of the tops of the two vertical stabilizers had no marks or dents that any of the three bomb bay doors would have made had they been the cause of those stabilizers breaking loose. But whatever the cause for those tops to break off, the crash was inevitable as nearly all control was then lost, the pilots helpless in their desperate fight to seek a safe landing area.

Ian has compiled a booklet about these facts and has placed it near the crash site at the Shieldaig Lodge Hotel south of Gairloch. His purpose was to make all possible data about this incident readily available to guests, any hikers or others who might want to learn more about the men, the airplane, or the circumstances.

Ian also designed, paid for and installed a memorial plaque on a rock wall facing the site in 1987, replaced it with a larger, more durable one in 1991. At that same time he organized an official Gairloch Memorial Service to make it an official Memorial Site. As a result, Ian recently advised that now many people now visit it, bring flowers, American flags, etc., in honor of these heroes.

#### 66th SQUADRON:

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93rd Bomb Group, #42-95095, Ketchum	SLEEPY TIME GAL	Crashed
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*Note: The crash site is near Gairloch, Scotland.*

66th Squadron Crew:	Entire crew perished	
KETCHUM, JACK B. ASN 0-720263	Pilot 1st Lt. DIED, buried Topeka, Kansas	Topeka, Kansas
SPENCER, JACK H. ASN 0-777858	Co-pilot 1st Lt. DIED, buried Ionia, Michigan	Ionia, Michigan
ROBAK, RICHARD J. ASN 0-2015143	Navigator 2nd Lt. DIED, buried Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
CHEEK, HILLBURN L. ASN 39333461	Engineer T/Sgt. DIED, buried Cambridge, England (E-0-78)	
STAMMER, JAMES C. ASN 17152057	Radio Oper. T/Sgt. DIED, buried Casey, Iowa	Casey, Iowa
GILLES, ELDON J. ASN 36275004	Gunner S/Sgt. DIED, buried Cambridge (E-0-56)	Plum City, Wisconsin

RIEFEN, HERMAN ASN 16028870	Gunner DIED, buried Cambridge (D-2-26)	T/Sgt.	Bronx, New York
DAVIS, RAYMOND E. ASN 35151144	Gunner DIED, buried Washington, Indiana	S/Sgt	Oak Grove, Indiana
NATKIN, ALBERT L. ASN 38558214	Gunner DIED, buried Cambridge, England	S/Sgt.	San Antonio, Texas

This aircraft was on a redeployment ferry flight from Prestwick, Scotland to Meeks Field, Iceland, when it went off course and crashed into the ground in the highlands of western Scotland. The pilots had been flying in heavy clouds, probably on instruments, had mechanical, equipment or severe weather problems that took them off course.

The weather in this area often was subject to severe up and down drafts, radio transmission very poor. In this instance, there was no radio contact, and very severe damage was done to the aircraft while in the air. It will never be known how or why the aircraft itself was disintegrating when it arrived over Gairloch, but the pilots could not have had any possibility of gaining enough control to land safely.

This combat crew was assigned to the 66th Squadron in November 1944. Lt. Ketchum, being the first pilot, flew his first mission as a co-pilot for experience, then with the full crew flying as a unit on 10 December 1944. Their last mission was dated 25 April 1945, and also was the last mission of the war in Europe for the 44th Bomb Group. Lt. Ketchum completed 34, while most of his crew received credits for 33. Several of these missions proved difficult, with two of them ending with emergency landings on the Continent due to battle damage or other problems.

In late April, four entirely new B-24s equipped with the super secret Loran radar equipped, were assigned to the 66th Squadron. The Ketchum crew was selected to train in one of them. These new aircraft required careful handling due to the addition of a small wing-like platform near the nose wheel in which this new equipment was housed. During the last of their several test flights with their new aircraft, a "hard" landing occurred that damaged this airplane, and it had to be taken off flying status. That is the reason that the Ketchum crew did not have a plane with which to fly back to the U.S. They were then transferred to the Redeployment Base to return to the U.S. via a boat.

Lt. Leo D. Crooks, 66th Sq. pilot, said, "I knew Jack (Ketchum) well enough to shoot the breeze with him frequently, but not well enough to have any real background information about him. Since his crew and mine were two of the "older" crews, we were not shipped back to the States for delay-in-route to the Pacific. I do not remember how many missions Jack had, but he left earlier than I to fly a ship back to the States. I remember Jack Spencer as being an officer who came up through the ranks.

"I knew Jack Ketchum as a good pilot. He wore a mustache, always smiling, quick-witted and ready with a one-liner remark most of the time. He was always well groomed and I always thought, a credit to the uniform."

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Passengers:	All passengers perished		
HALLISEY, JOHN H. ASN 12046305	Passenger DIED, buried Framingham, Mass.	S/Sgt.	93rd Bomb Group

FRANCIS, ROBERT J. ASN 31309090	Passenger	S/Sgt.	323rd Bomb Group
	DIED, buried Cambridge, England (E-0-88)		
EINARSEN, EMIL ASN 32455476	Passenger	S/Sgt.	314th TC Grp.
	DIED, buried Cambridge, England (G-7-7)		
ELLIS, JOHN B. Jr. ASN 34038466	Passenger	S/Sgt.	314th TC Grp.
	DIED, buried Cambridge, England		
HARVEY, JAMES D. ASN 32433806	Passenger	S/Sgt.	314th TC Grp.
	DIED, buried at Calvary Cemetery, New York City, NY		
HASTINGS, ALEXANDER W. ASN 12153113	Passenger	S/Sgt	314th TC Grp.
	DIED, buried at Cyprus Hills, St. Albans, Kings County, NY		

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*Note: Casualties included members of the 314th Troop Carrier Group.*

Sgt. John Hallissey had flown combat missions with the 93rd Bomb Group. He and his crew had completed their tour of duty of 50 missions. His crew had received their orders to return to the U.S. earlier but Sgt. Hallissey's papers were missing, not in order, so he could not leave with his crew when they flew home.

Sgt. Hallissey flew his combat missions in the period between 24 July 1944 to 9 April 1945. He was waiting at the same Replacement Depot waiting his assignment on a ship to return to the U.S. when he learned plans were changed and he would be flying back to the U.S. after all.

Earlier, he had written to his sister that one of his crew was very good playing an accordion, and another was a good singer, so they kept everyone pleasantly entertained, morale high.

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Sgt. Robert Francis was a member of the 323rd Bomb Group. He was born 14 July 1924 in North Plymouth, MA. He was raised in a Portuguese/Italian/German neighborhood where most of the people worked for the Plymouth Cordage Co. After high school, he worked as a delivery truck driver for Danforth's Bakery in Plymouth. Later, he worked at the Fore River shipyards in Quincy, Massachusetts.

He was drafted into the Army Air Force in 1942. "Chipper" received training at Fort Meyers, Florida, and also in Texas. He was sent to overseas as a replacement to join the 455th Bomb Squadron of the 323rd Bomb Group, which operated with the US Ninth Air Force from bases in France and Belgium. Sgt. Francis served as a Tail Gunner flying on B-26 Marauders. He had completed over 65 missions by the time the war in Europe was won.

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S/Sgt. Emil Einarsen was 49 years old! He had a most unique situation, having served nine months in WW I, with six months overseas in France. He was again drafted for WW II, in error, but after reaching his induction center he decided to again serve his country. He was a member of the 61st Squadron of the 314th Troop Carrier Group.

His last letter to his sister Evelyn was dated 26 May 1945 when he told her "that after his last infrequent letter he had spent several days on the Riviera (Nice); also a bit at Cannes. Must come back again as a civilian. Now, I've been in England for more than a week. Needless to say, I've seen quite a bit of Germany from the air. Unfortunately, my duties did not take me further than the airstrips, so did not get into their towns. The mills of the Gods grind slowly, you see. I have a furlough home, but how soon I will see you, I don't know. It looks discouraging and we have



plenty to do in the meanwhile. Guard duty and K.P. are with me again. Regards to all. P.S. Don't write (Will be home soon)"

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John Ellis was a member of the 32nd Squadron of the 314th Troop Carrier Group. One of Ellis' colleagues had this to say about him: "John acted as our radio operator several times and occasionally as our radar operator. He was very competent, friendly, and a true gentleman. On the second day of the Normandy invasion, my plane was being flown by our Squadron Commander, Col. Wilson. We were the lead aircraft in the lead squadron. We took off in dense fog and lost the other 35 planes that were to be following us. Thanks to 'Red' Ellis, we were able to fly the course which took us out over the Atlantic Ocean and then across the English Channel. We actually made a one-plane invasion of Normandy.

"By that time we had reached Normandy and it was early in the morning. The sun was just coming up and everything looked peaceful. We pushed out the parachute-equipped load and triggered off the parapacks attached to the underside of the plane. Col. Wilson began a climb to get a better view of the territory, but then dove for the ground just as a German machine gun nest opened up on us. Because we were so low, the Germans could not use their anti-aircraft guns. So they got only a few shots at us. Just then a .30 cal. Bullet struck the piece of armor plate I was sitting on and passed through the radar compartment where Red Ellis was, and buried itself in a parachute right behind the pilot. An inch or two one way or the other, the bullet would have hit me, Art Roberts or Red Ellis."

John was an only child. After graduating from high school, he went on to Mars Hill College, and earned a degree in accounting from the University of North Carolina. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942, became a Radio Operator on a glider-towing C-47 aircraft. His hometown was Greyer, North Carolina.

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S/Sgt. James Harvey was born 30 September 1914. His home address was: 5406 Tibbit Avenue, Bronx, New York. Sgt. Harvey served with the 9th Troop Carrier Command as a member of the 314th Troop Carrier Group. He had the honor of spearheading the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Normandy, Holland and the invasion of the Rhineland. His chief work was dropping paratroopers behind enemy lines, towing gliders, and evacuating wounded from battle areas.

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S/Sgt. Alexander Hastings was born on 5 April 1922. His home address was: 514-201 P 1, St. Albans, Long Island, New York. He was a member of the 314th Troop Carrier Group.

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## Died in Service But Not KIA

In 1987 when this book was first printed, it was researched to provide answers basically for our men who were listed as KIA on the official Roll of Honor in the Memorial Room in the new Central Library in Norwich, England. However, as the years passed and searches for data continued, other deaths were identified which were not caused by enemy action, and so had not been shown on the official listing except in error.

The Jack Ketchum crew was lost while returning to the US (the war had ended in Europe) so the crew and the six passengers were not shown, either. Consequently, it now seems appropriate that we honor their sacrifice, their loss of lives, whatever the cause.

Now, these men who died in incidents other than action against the enemy are being included in this new section. Their names will appear in date of death order.

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Lt. Ben Collier, 68th Squadron, 17 January 1943

COLLIER, BEN V. ASN 0-727317	Bombardier Died of pneumonia, 17 January 1943	2nd Lt.
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Lt. Collier was a member of the Robert A. Norsen crew, 68th Squadron that arrived in England in early October 1942. They were one of the 27 original 44th BG crews that flew to England that month.

Lt. Collier was a member of the Norsen crew that flew the second mission of the war on 9 November 1942, were one of the six crews to bomb a target in Europe. Unfortunately, Lt. Collier later became ill, never flew again due to health reasons, and died from pneumonia on 17 January 1943.

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Sgt. Earl Hancock, 66th Squadron, 19 April 1943

HANCOCK, EARL W. ASN 32254108	Ground crew Died of cancer on 19 April 1943	Sgt.	Buffalo, New York
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*Note: Hancock is buried in the American Cemetery at Cambridge (F-5-48)*

Sgt. Hancock was a member of the Ground Echelon that crossed the Atlantic on the HMS Queen Mary in early September 1942. Records do not provide any data as to his job classification.

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Lt. George Blumanthaler, 68th Squadron, October 1943

BLUMANTHALER, GEORGE W. ASN 0-8011154	Navigator Killed in a collision with truck in October 1943	2nd Lt.
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Lt. Blumanthaler was a member of the 2nd Lt. Robert E. Rose crew, 68th Squadron that had been assigned to the 44th BG but had not yet reported. They were staying at an airfield at Cheddington, England. On the first day there, Lt. Blumanthaler decided to try to ride the bicycle provided him for transportation on that large base. Evidently, he forgot or did not know that traffic travels on the left side, opposite side from the US, was struck by an Army truck and killed.

The Lt. Rose crew finally arrived at Shipdham on 8 December 1943.

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Pvt. Floyd Maynard, 66th Squadron, 28 April 1944

MAYNARD, FLOYD H. ASN 13028712	Ground Personnel Killed in fight	Pvt.	Springvale, Pennsylvania
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Sgt. Maynard was with the ground echelon that went overseas to England in early September, 1943 on board the HMS Queen Mary. Apparently, he had Air Gunner training so he flew four combat missions between 6 December 1942 to March 13, 1943. Following that assignment, he again was assigned to activities on the ground.

On 28 April 1944, at 2345 hours, Pvt. Maynard lost his life. Investigation as to the cause of his death eventually disclosed that an unidentified 392nd BG man was involved in an argument and attempted to hit another man with a large piece of wood. Unfortunately, his aim was bad and he accidentally hit Sgt. Maynard on the head, fractured his skull, and death was almost immediate.

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T/Sgt. Daniel Mattis, 66th/506th Squadrons, 16 July 1944

MATTIS, DANIEL A. ASN 32453451	Radio Operator Died in automobile accident 16 July 1944	T/Sgt.
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*Note: Mattis is buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Linden, NJ.*

Sgt. Mattis' combat record shows that he flew a total of 14 missions overall. Available records do not show when Sgt. Mattis arrived in the 66th Squadron or with which crew he was assigned but they do show that his first few combat missions flown were with the 66th Squadron. The first mission was flown on 13 August 1943 with the Flaherty crew, apparently as a replacement radio operator. Three days later, he was again a replacement radio operator on Lt. Comey's crew.

The Group returned to Shipdham after the 1 October 1943 mission, and Sgt. Mattis did not fly another mission until 11 December, then again on 30 January 1944. He flew more often in February, but then transferred to the 506th Sq. for reasons unknown. All of his combat missions were with different crews apparently filling in for an absent radio operator. Then, his last mission flown was completed on June 23, 1944. Unfortunately, on the night of 16 July, he was involved in a vehicle accident off the base and was killed.

1st Lt. Robert B. Weatherwax, a 67th Sq. Navigator who had completed his tour had received orders to supervise the transportation of some young women to a dance at a base nearby. Their vehicle was a large canvass covered truck, and they were on a country road when they collided with a "recon" vehicle. The severe collision knocked the recon into a ditch, and Lt. Weatherwax was knocked unconscious. When he recovered, he checked the passengers, two of the women were cut a bit, but not serious.

However, T/Sgt. Daniel Mattis had suffered a broken back, and did not recover. Two of his friends were cut and bruised, but not life-threatening.

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S/Sgt. Kenneth James, Finance Section, 30 August 1944

JAMES, KENNETH D.	Gunner Died after collision with truck 30 August 1944	S/Sgt.
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On the evening of 29 August, S/Sgt. James was riding his bicycle near the base. He was involved in an accident with a large truck and was so seriously injured that he died the next day, 30 August 1944.

## *44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties*

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Sgt. Cecil Stone, 68th Squadron, December 1944

STONE, CECIL F.

Gunner

Sgt.

ASN 18179190

Died of cardiac arrest in December 1944

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Sgt. Stone joined the 68th Squadron as a gunner on the Robert A. Edmonson crew 18 April 1944. He flew his four missions between 26 April and 1 May 1944. Apparently, he was then removed from combat status, was assigned to groundwork. It is possible that he was transferred to the 464th Sub Depot at Shipdham, but no further details could be located. He died of a cardiac arrest in December of 1944.

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# Summaries

## Summary of Crewmen Casualties

	<b>66th</b>		<b>67th</b>		<b>68th</b>		<b>506th</b>	
	<b>KIA</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>KIA</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>KIA</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>KIA</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>1942-3</b>	125	83	162	110	98	59	35	43
<b>1944</b>	70	93	79	116	137	173	96	228
<b>1945</b>	23	22	9	1	10	23	10	15
<i>Totals</i>	<i>218</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>250</i>	<i>227</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>141</i>	<i>186</i>

<b>Total KIA</b>	859	Includes other than 44th personnel.
<b>Total Other</b>	866	Includes WIA, POW, Internees, etc.
<b>Total Casualties</b>	1725	

## Summary of Aircraft Incidents

	<b>66th</b>	<b>67th</b>	<b>68th</b>	<b>506th</b>	<i>Total</i>
<b>1942-3</b>	24	29	14	8	75
<b>1944</b>	17	18	30	33	98
<b>1945</b>	4	1	5	3	13
<i>Total</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>186</i>

## Detail of Aircraft Incidents

	<b>66th</b>	<b>67th</b>	<b>68th</b>	<b>506th</b>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Ditched</b>	1	6	2	2	<i>11</i>
<b>Collided</b>	1	3	1	1	<i>6</i>
<b>Crashed</b>	6	0	4	2	<i>12</i>
<b>Crash landed</b>	7	4	5	4	<i>20</i>
<b>Interned</b>	3	4	7	3	<i>17</i>
<b>Shot down</b>	27	31	30	32	<i>120</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>48</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>186</i>

*Note: Statistics based upon subjective classification of elements.*

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KING, JAMES L. (KIA) .....	229	LAPLACE, ROBERT B. ....	61
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KIRSCHLING, ROBERT J. ....	418	LARSON, GAIL W. ....	217
KIRSCHNER, WALLACE E. ....	284	LARSON, JOHN H. (KIA) .....	175
KISER, WILLARD (KIA) .....	406	LASCO, HENRY A. Jr. ....	94
KISSINGER, LOUIS L. ....	70	LASKOWSKI, THOMAS A. ....	41
KLEIN, ALFRED M. ....	187	LATIMER, BYRON H. (KIA) .....	157
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LAIN, CHARLES H. ....	362	LINDGREN, MORTON G. ....	420
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LOUGH, ROBERT L. (KIA).....	414	MAY, CHARLES A. ....	336
LOUISA, VICTOR P.....	400	MAY, GORDON L. (KIA) ....	225
LUCAS, HOWARD M. ....	93	MAY, ROY P.....	216
LUCAS, ROBERT R. ....	252	MAYEN, THOMAS C. (KIA).....	60
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MAHANEY, FRANCIS X.....	272	McBRYDE, WILLIAM H. (KIA).....	400
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