

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

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.”

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:

2033rd Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon Casualties

2033rd Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon

ATCHLEY, MONROE A. ASN 35579833	Fire Fighter DIED	Sgt.	Anderson, Indiana
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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.”

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.

66th SQUADRON:

66th Sq., #41-28690 I+, 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

Note: Colonel Vance was Command Pilot and Commanding Officer of the 489th BG. He later was awarded the Medal of Honor. Colonel Vance was killed in the crash of a hospital aircraft that was returning to the U.S.

Captain Mazure was piloting this aircraft, flying Lead for the 489th BG and the 2nd Division. The primary target was coastal installations at Boulogne-Sur-Mer. The mission was rather routine as Lt. Bail, Radar-Navigator, guided the formation via his radar “Mickey” toward the target. At the IP, he turned control over to Lt. Segal, bombardier, for the bomb run. As “Bombs Away” was called, nothing happened due to some faulty equipment, and no bombs were dropped by any of the aircraft in their formation.

Colonel Vance immediately issued orders to circle and to approach the target again, at both the same altitude and speed. This time, however, the flak gunners were alerted and waiting.

Lt. Bail gave me this report, “By now the German 88s were pretty much zeroed in on us and by the time we got on target again and let our bombs drop, we caught it. Almost immediately the plane was rocked by direct hits and started to fall. Captain Mazure was killed instantly as he was struck by flak in the left temple. The Colonel, who was standing between the pilot and co-pilot and directly in front of me, looked down to see that his foot was hanging by a mere shred of skin!

“Our bomb bay doors were still open and I could see that a couple of bombs were still hung up. About the 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.

“As the 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 wasn’t 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 Margate 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 both legs when he hit the ground.

“Later, 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 the water, the bombs exploded and destroyed the aircraft, somehow not killing the Colonel. Finding himself still alive and conscious, the Colonel began swimming toward shore, injured leg and all, until rescued by a ship in that vicinity.

“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.

Although Lt. Bail believes that he was the last to jump, Lt. Nathaniel Glickman, the bombardier, disagrees. Glickman was in the nose turret. He said, “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 Airforce Telex that 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! I crawled to the nose wheel area, snapped on my chest chute, and because my legs were useless, crawled to the bomb bay catwalk. The only two men aboard that I could see on the flight deck were Col. Vance and the dead pilot, Capt. Mazure. In fact, I had to push the bombardier, Milton Segal off the catwalk before I rolled off the catwalk myself.

“Since we were flying the high, high lead squadron, I withheld opening my chute for about 5,000 feet until I cleared the other flights. I was lucky in that I landed on the lawn of the Royal Marine Hospital at Deal, on the cliffs of Dover.

“I triggered the bombs on the second run via my turret, which had a secondary special switch. The German tracking flak was accurate on the second run and hit us often. Our airplane received the following damage:

One propeller shaft snapped off and the other three engines stopped when the fuel lines were hit. (Or power cut by co-pilot) The hydraulic, electric and gas lines were all shot out. The right rudder and elevator was off; the wings peppered with holes. The radio room was destroyed. My nose turret had all the glass blown off and a portion of the door was bent. The top turret had the plexiglass blown off and there was a hole adjacent to the waist window that you could put a Jeep through. And we had one bomb hung up in the forward port bay – the one that exploded during ditching.”

“Injuries included Lt. Leon Vance with his right leg shot off above the ankle, T/Sgt. Skufca had a severe flak wound to his right ankle and upper legs. Lt. Glickman had flak wounds in his left arm, cuts above his eyes and forehead, and suffered flak hit to the base of his spine with semi-permanent nerve damage. Skufca, Kilgore and Hoppie broke their legs upon landing. Sgt. Hoppie broke his left ankle, Skufca his right ankle, and Lt. Kilgore broke his left leg in two places. This injury most likely saved his (Kilgore’s) life, as he landed in a minefield and could not walk.

“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 AFB 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 Dec 18, 1944 he was evacuated to the U.S. for further grafts and treatment. He never walked again normally.

Harry Secrist wrote: “We formed up as the lead of the 489th Bomb Group, and headed out across the Channel. We had perfect weather and good visibility. It was on the bomb run that Col. Vance announced we would not release our bombs and were to go around again to make sure we hit our target. Dave [Davis Evans] and I were surprised, to say the very least, to hear his order on our intercom. So, there were no “bombs away” called the first time we passed over the target. Captain Mazure then started circling for the second run.

“[Around this time] Skuf” was hit while in the radio room. He was wounded and could not stand up. Gasoline was spraying all over us in the waist, and Skuf was lying on the waist floor in the gas. I put the spare parachute under his head and immediately after I stood up, a large burst of flak came through the side of the waist and passed between Skuf and I. It made a hole in the wall about ten inches wide, then it made several holes in the left side of the waist.

“All of the tail assembly was intact, but the left rudder and vertical stabilizer had a lot of holes in them. However, with all of the raw gasoline, we were in great danger of catching fire or exploding. So Dave opened the rear hatch just behind the waist area and was sweeping some of this pool of gas out with his foot!

“When we got near the coast of England, I threw the left waist gun out of the waist window, turned to get Wiley Sallis and Evans to help me get Skuf to the open window so that he could bail out. But when I turned around from the window, Wiley already had Skuf, dragging him toward the bomb bay. They both exited from there. Dave then went out the right window and I went out the left.

“I fell about half a mile before opening my chute to get rid of the gasoline all over me, as I was concerned that static electricity might ignite me when the chute opened. I was about a thousand feet above a large cloud and I quickly passed through it. When I came out of it, there was a barrage balloon directly below me but luckily, I missed it by about one hundred feet. Below that was the balloon cable and I was drifting toward that, too, and my luck continued good, as I missed it by about 50 feet.

“As I neared the ground, I could see from 20 to 30 men running along a dirt road toward me. Suddenly, I was down, approximately 60 to 70 feet from the edge of a cliff, and less than ten feet from a fence that ran parallel to this cliff. Uninjured by the landing, I got up and released my chute harness and started to walk down to the dirt road. But I had taken only a few steps when I heard the British sergeant shouting for me to stand still – there were land mines. I had landed in a minefield! The other men had stopped 100 yards or so up that dirt road, not wanting to get too

close to me. The sergeant kept shouting that help was on the way to show me a safe way out of that field. Quite obviously, I stood in my tracks, not taking another step for nearly 20 minutes or so.

“Then an English lieutenant and sergeant arrived in a small car, had a detailed map of the minefield, and shortly led me out of that area. Somehow, I was the only man from my crew that landed among these mines.

“I ended up at a little Red Cross tent near the base. I entered the tent, told them that I was Sgt. Harry Secrist. The man in charge looked at some papers and finally said, ‘Oh, yes. He got killed this morning!’ It only took a few minutes to get that important error straightened out. Then he gave me a small box of fudge, told the driver to take me onto the base, and that I’d find some friends there! It was only a short trip, dropped me off at a small building. I thanked him for his kindness and he left.

“When I entered this building, I found that it had a small bar room and a lounge for the British airmen. Two airmen were standing at the bar, not talking or drinking. As I got closer, I recognized them to be two of my crewmates, Dave and Wiley, so I went up and placed my hands on their shoulders. When they turned and saw me, I thought they would go through the ceiling! It was a noisy gathering for a few minutes.

“When they got through all of the greetings and excitement, the airman acting as bartender asked Wiley and Dave if I was the bloke that ‘bought the farm’ that morning. When they said ‘Yes!’ he gave us an ample amount of Scotch.

“When we got to the hospital, we went in to visit with Hoppie and Skuf. The others were still in intensive care, no visitors allowed. But it was great to see both of them for at least a bit, and to learn that they were doing okay.”

Lt. John Kilgore contributed the following account: “To put things into context, the original crew consisted of: Earl Carper, Earl Hoppie, Q. Skufka, Harry Secrist, Davis Evans, Wiley Sallis and myself, along with a pilot and bombardier which was formed at Gowen Field, Utah. We trained at Casper, Wyoming and Scotts Bluff, Nebraska. We embarked from Topeka, Kansas and ferried a plane via the southern route to England where the crew was assigned to the 93rd Bomb Group 330th Squadron. While with them, I flew 16 missions but the rest of our crew completed only 14. We were assigned to Capt. Mazure. Why two crewmembers were taken from the original pilot and assigned to Capt. Mazure, I don’t know. We were shipped to the 564th Squadron of the 389th Bomb Group for PFF training. There, we were joined by Bail and Glickman, while the original bombardier went back to the 93rd as he didn’t have Sperry Bombsight training. After a week of training, we were transferred to the 44th Bomb Group, 66th Squadron on 1 May 1944.

“After one month of additional training, we flew our first PFF mission on 2 June 1944, followed by our second on the 3rd of June. Our bomb loads on both missions consisted of 6 500-lb. and 4 100-lb Skymarkers, and I assume that our load on the 5th was the same.

“As was customary, on the 5th, the lead navigators of the 66th remained in the Briefing Room to receive the latest changes in weather or bombing runs. As we were about to leave, a change was made in our I.P. We were to continue to the south of the target in order to approach it from the south on a northerly heading which would put us on a direct return route to England, rather than keeping us over France to make a greater than 90 degree turn.

“As I was briefing Mazure and Vance of the change in plans, Vance became rather upset that he was not personally advised and I thought for a moment that he would ignore the change until Capt. Mazure intervened. He, Vance, also advised us that he would not fly in the copilot position as on his last missions he caught quite a lot of flak. Normally, the command pilot flew as copilot and the copilot flew in the waist, acting as an observer, reporting on the status of the Squadron to him (Vance). Carper was very pleased with this change, as it was cold and miserable in the waist position.

“As we left the South Coast of England, the Germans began to jump by ‘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 for the two previous missions. We turned at our I.P. and headed north and as we approached the target Glickman said he could see it through 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 after the bombs were released and even then I don’t recall hearing the cruuump of the ack-ack, but I do recall, and very vividly, the left side of the plane pressing inwardly against my right arm, the flak jackets jumping 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 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 his other hand.

“About this time, Glickman came over the intercom announcing that he had been hit in the head and blood was streaming down 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 and to assist Skufca out of the plane when the time came.

“Apparently, we had experienced to several near 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 was there any sudden diving, stalling or yawing motions. I turned to Bail and told him to turn on the I.F.F. switch, which was directly above his head and had a red safety cover over it. As we had left the formation and as we were approaching the English Coast alone, we must be identified. This was not the first time that I had had the opportunity to use it. Vance told him, ‘No – it was on.’ But I finally convinced Bail to lift the cover and activate the unit – if we had the power.

“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 alongside 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 earth, the doors began to close. Hoppie grabbed the manual crank to open them, and I reconnected my intercom, yelled for someone not to close the doors. Apparently the message got through...

“I do not recollect anyone giving the order to bail out or hear a bell. While standing in the well, I did turn around and became aware that Vance’s foot had been severed and was still attached to what appeared to be the Achilles tendon, and that Bail was administering first aid. As I turned around, all I saw of Hoppie was his rear-end as he dived head first out of the bomb bay. That was my cue, so I gingerly stepped onto the catwalk and dropped feet-first, didn’t count to ten, either.

“As I was floating down, I saw the plane gliding off very smoothly. Only one man was observed jumping and I thought he would never pull his chute. He must have fallen a 1,000 feet at least as he was well below me when it opened. I landed in a plowed field adjacent to a minefield and broke both bones in my left leg. I was picked up by the home guard and taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital. Two days later I was transferred to the 93rd General Hospital near Oxford where my leg was set and put in traction. Later, I was transferred back to the states (August 1944) and spent the next eight months in hospitals until I could walk without a brace.”

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.”

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.

"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 specific 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.

68th SQUADRON:

68th Sq., #41-24109, Smith	FLAK MAGNET	Crash-landed
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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.	Centralia, 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

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

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

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 #1.”

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 salvaging 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.”

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:

506th Sq., #41-29496 Bar-Q, Scudday ARIES MACR #6744

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

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 gunsight, 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.	
[I NEED TO COME BACK TO THIS CREW. I REPLACED DINE WITH TRUDEAU, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WILLWANTS HESS OUT TOO. THEN WHO IS THE NAVIGATOR? AND WHY IS REAVES IN TWICE? ONCE AS NOSE TURRET AND ONCE AS A WAIST GUNNER]			
HESS, JOHN A. ASN 0-444153	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Hillsboro, Illinois
WILSON, ALFRED R. ASN 0-753096	Bombardier	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	Ball 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
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.

Note: The 44th Bomb Group database indicates that D.H. Dine [Trudeau? ask Will] was the pilot that day, but it may be that Dine was actually co-pilot.

“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).

 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, Strange 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 Crael raid with a bad ear that was damaged on landing on another raid. So I didn't fly on the 25 June mission.

"The Crael 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 Scuddy'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 Scuddy 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 Scuddy’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.”

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 K, Landahl	CAPE COD SPECIAL	MACR #7088
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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
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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: