

1943

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 Puncheston, 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	1st Lt.	Shreveport, Louisiana
SWANSON, CLARK E. ASN 0-728034	Co-pilot	2nd Lt.	Burns, Oregon
DEAVENPORT, THOMAS G. ASN 0-443161	Navigator	2nd Lt.	Dallas, Texas
GAVIN, JOHN J. ASN 0-727332	Bombardier	2nd Lt.	Hospitalized, returned to U.S.

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.

27 January 1943

44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties

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.

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
WILKINSON, 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 Ardennes (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
OTTOMAN, 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

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
------------------------------------	--------------	------------------

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

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.

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	
MOTT, CHARLES M.			Sarasota, Florida
WAITE, EDWARD R.	Eng./Top Turret	S/Sgt.	
STRANDBERG, CLARENCE W.		T/Sgt.	
BRZOZOWY, ADOLPH E.			
KRUTSCH, HENRY ASN 16067220	Observer DIED	Sgt.	Chicago, Illinois

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.”

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

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...”

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 KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt. Chester, South Carolina
WILKES, CHARLES E. ASN 0-728042	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Ardennes	2nd Lt. Nashville, Tennessee
FRANKLIN, CHARLES B. ASN 0-789463	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt. Elizabeth, New Jersey
BRYANT, CHARLES W. ASN 0-727309	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Freeport, Ohio
LITTELL, CLYDE ASN 16041884	Engineer KIA, WOM Ardennes	T/Sgt. Detroit, Michigan
BURNS, HARRY B. ASN 13044534	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Absecon, New Jersey
DOUTHIT, WILLIAM E. ASN 34261978	Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Ellijay, Georgia

FRYE, RICHARD E. ASN 39092033	Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Palo Alto, California
GODDARD, CECIL D. ASN 34265714	Asst. Eng. KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt.	Atlanta, Georgia
BOUTIN, ALBERT L. Jr. ASN 20135511	Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	Hartford, Connecticut
LAWLEY, WOODROW ASN 34198246	Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	Sgt.	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 KIA, WOM Cambridge	1st Lt. May, Oklahoma
McCORMICK, JOHN F. ASN 0-728010	Co-pilot KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Minnesota
COOK, HAROLD C. ASN 0-662333	Navigator KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Sterling, Illinois
FRAZEE, WINTHROP T. ASN 0-727328	Bombardier KIA, WOM Cambridge	2nd Lt. Buffalo, New York
STEPHENS, RAYMOND C. ASN 18074552	Engineer KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Lakeview, Texas
COTTINGTON, ORNA E. ASN 20649538	Radio Oper. KIA, WOM Cambridge	T/Sgt. Reedsburgh, Wisconsin
McGINNIS, DONALD C. ASN 16039337	Asst. Rad. KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Kalamazoo, Michigan
PARKER, STEPHEN E. Jr. ASN 11045788	Asst. Eng. KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Brockton, Massachusetts
LAURENCE, RALPH C. ASN 36124604	Gunner KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. Northville, Michigan
CRIGGER, WILLIAM C. ASN 16041926	Belly Gun KIA, WOM Cambridge	S/Sgt. 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 Billing'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

20 February 1943

44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties

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.

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
----------------------------------	-------------------	------	--------------------------

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. Snavelly 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.”

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."

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.”

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:

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

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