

303rd BG(H) Combat Mission No. 11

23 January 1943

Target: Lorient Port Area & Brest U-boat Pens, France

Crews Dispatched: 21

Crews Lost: O'Connor, Haas, Robey, Reber, Sanderson

Crewmembers Lost: S/Sgt. B.L. Staner, S/Sgt. J.L. Markiewicz

Length of Mission: 5 hours, 43 minutes

Bomb Load: 2-SQ-5 x 1000 lbs, 2-SQ-10 x 500 lbs

Bombing Altitude: 23,000 ft

Ammo Fired: 26,817 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 3 Destroyed, 5 Probables, 3 Damaged

Col. **Robinson** led the 303rd BG(H) attack. Twenty-one B-17s took off. One aircraft aborted the mission: #41-24605 *Knockout Dropper*, 359BS (1Lt **Eyster**). Both waist guns failed to fire, the tail gun would not fire after test, excessive window frosting was experienced and the prop pitch had control problems. #41-24569, *Memphis Tot*, 427BS (Capt. **Cole**), experienced severe aircraft damage, the radio went out, and the bombs were jettisoned when the bombardier determined that they wouldn't drop near the target.

Intense heavy flak was encountered. About forty-five enemy fighters were seen with twenty-five attacks. Gunners claimed nine destroyed, five probables, and three damaged.

Thirteen Group aircraft bombed the primary target at Lorient. One Group aircraft, #41-24587, *Bad Check*, 427BS (Capt. **Southworth**), dropped its bombs near Brest. Twelve of the aircraft returned to Molesworth. Several had one engine feathered. One aircraft had two engines out and feathered. Five were damaged by flak and enemy aircraft, three extensively.

Four aircraft landed at other fields:

#41-24606 *Werewolf* 358BS: Lt. **Oxridor** ordered his crew of nine to bail out over the south coast of England after limping home with only one engine operating. He landed *Werewolf* on the grounds of a mental hospital at Dawlish. It was originally thought to be beyond repair. The VIII Service command later decided to repair the B-17 and fly it out. They changed three engines, and cleared trees, walls, and hedges to make a 2,500 foot runway. The take-off was successful and it was flown to Honington Air Depot for further major repairs. On 22 April, after repairs were completed, it was transferred to 91BG/401BS where it remained for two months. There were no bailout or mission injuries.

#41-24565 *Idaho Potato Peeler* 359BS: Lt. **Bales** and his crew crash-landed their badly damaged B-17 at Chipping Warden. The aircraft made a safe landing with no injuries.

#41-24579 *Thumper* 360BS: Lt. John **Castle** and Lt. **Fitzsimmons**, the co-pilot, made a belly landing in *Thumper* at Lulsgate Bottom. The hydraulic system and two engines were out. During the landing the rear fuselage twisted when the ball turret suspension frame was forced up through the spine aft of the radio room. The other eight crewmen bailed out before the emergency landing. S/Sgt Billie L. **Staner** was killed when his parachute failed to open. Lt. C.L. **Herman** and S/Sgt. M.A. **Semonick** were slightly injured, and T/Sgt **Levin** and S/Sgt Craft were badly injured. Sgt Yannie's legs were crushed. He was found by a farmer and hospitalized.

#41-24587 *Bad Check* 427BS: Capt. **Southworth** made a safe, normal landing at Exeter with no injuries. The starboard inner engine had failed after being damaged by flak and both wings were damaged by cannon shells from FW-190s and ME-109s.

Five aircraft were lost over the target. The losses were partly caused by the formation breaking up over the target when another Group was bombing over the 303rd BG(H) B-17s. The five aircraft lost were:

#41-24580 *Hell Cat*, 358BS (1Lt. **Connor**) was shot down by enemy fighters. It was seen with the No. 4 engine feathered and the No. 1 engine smoking. The aircraft went down in the region between Brest and the coast. Eight parachutes were seen to open. Lts. **Ruppe** and **Gordon** evaded capture and returned on 14 Mar 1943. The other crewmembers became prisoners of war.

#41-24603 *Green Hornet*, 359BS (1Lt. **Sanderson**), was first hit by flak, causing loss of three engines. After leaving the formation, it was hit by FW-190s head-on from 12 o'clock. The crew, except for the pilot and co-pilot, bailed out. Lts. **Sanderson** and **Bowman** had only one parachute between them and they both elected to stay with the B-17 for a crash landing. Lt. **Sanderson** lost some of his fingers. *Green Hornet* crash landed on the side of a hill at Kergolay, in Motreff, France. Lt. **Spence** and T/Sgt. **Devers** found a friendly family in Paule, France, who welcomed them into their home, put them in contact with the Underground and kept them hidden for fifteen days. They then walked by night following a canal, slept by day, and arrived near Chateau de Quellenec, in St. Gilles de Vieux Marche. They boarded a train, ended up in Paris, and, with the help of brave Frenchmen, took a risky journey by train to Spain. The final journey was back to Molesworth. T/Sgt. **Devers** returned on 23 Mar 1943 and Lt. **Spence** on 3 Apr 1943. Two others also evaded capture: T/Sgt. **Jones** returned on 13 May 1943 and S/Sgt. **Greene** on 21 Aug 1943. S/Sgt. J.L. **Markiewicz**, who parachuted and landed, died on 12 Feb 1943.

#41-24567 *Beats Me*, 360BS (1Lt. **Haas**), was hit by bombs from aircraft above. Lt. J.E. **Haas**, Lt. R.W. **Christianson**, T/Sgt. A. **Pacheco**, S/Sgt. P. **Soria**, Sgt. J.W. **Dobbins**, S/Sgt. J.H. **Sherman**, and S/Sgt. W.O. **Stevens** were killed and are buried as a group at Rock Island, IL National Cemetery. Lt. J.H. **Embach**, Lt. E.R. **McCright** and S/Sgt. C.L. **Roth** were captured by the enemy and taken prisoner. Lt. **Embach** was killed in action in Korea on 28 Feb 1954.

#41-24584 *Susfu*, 427BS (1Lt. **Robey**), was shot down by a FW-190 two-thirds of the way between Lorent and Brest. The aircraft was seen going down under fair control. Lt. H.A. **Robey** and Lt. R.R. **Moser** were killed. Lt. M.L. **McDermott** and S/Sgt. S.L. **Vogel** evaded capture by the enemy. The other members of the crew evaded capture for a period of time, but were subsequently captured and held as prisoners of war.

#41-24607 *Jerry Jinx* 427BS (1Lt **Reber**) was believed shot down by enemy fighters. The aircraft ditched in the Bay of Biscay. All crew members were killed. S/Sgt. I.D. **Blankenship** and Sgt. R.W. **Milford** are listed on the Wall of Missing at Brittany American Cemetery near Manche, France. Lt. E.H. **Reber**, Lt. A.D. **Mitchell**, Lt. J.J. **Byrom**, Lt. R.J. **Swindle**, T/Sgt. D.L. **Hamilton**, S/Sgt. D.A. **Mayo**, S/Sgt. L.N. **Gross** and Sgt. V.G. **Hand** and are listed on the Wall of Missing at Cambridge Cemetery, England. The airport at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas was named "Swindle Field" in honor of Lt. **Swindle**.



We Made it Again by Robert Morris (2000)

The 427th BS 1Lt Ehle H. Reber Crew in a jeep departing their aircraft Jerry Jinx B-17F #41-24067 (427BS) GN-W following an unknown 1943 combat mission. The entire crew were KIA when they ditched their B-17 on 23 January 1943 (courtesy of Robert Morris, used by permission)

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

		<u>Robinson</u> 610		
		<u>Reber</u> 607		<u>Cole</u> 569
			<u>Hagenbuch</u> 619	
		<u>Robey</u> 584		<u>Southworth</u> 587
			<u>Lyle</u> 559	
	<u>Calhoun</u> 635			<u>Wurzbach</u> 541
<u>Sanderson</u> 603		<u>Smith</u> 177		<u>O'Connor</u> 580
	<u>Eyster</u> 605			<u>Baldwin</u> 577
<u>Castle</u> 579		<u>Bales</u> 565		<u>Fredericks</u> 967
	<u>Farrar</u> 602			<u>McDonald</u> 360
				<u>Oxriker</u> 606
				<u>Haas</u> 567

Two (2) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. Eyster in 605

Lt. Cole in 569

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<p>CREW POSITIONS</p> <p>CMP - Command Pilot P - Pilot CP - Co-Pilot NAV - Navigator ANV - Ass't. Navigator MNV - Mickey Navigator ENG - Engineer BOM - Bombardier RO - Radio Operator</p>	<p>TOG - Togglier BT - Ball Turret Operator TT - Top Turret Operator TG - Tail Gunner NG - Nose Gunner RG - Radio Gunner WG - Waist Gunner LWG - Left Waist Gunner RWG - Right Waist Gunner GUN - Gunner</p>	<p>VI - Voice Interpreter OBS - Observer PAS - Passenger PHO - Photographer</p> <p>RESULTS OF MISSION</p> <p>KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action POW - Prisoner of war</p>	<p>DOW - Died of wounds EVD - Evaded the enemy INT - Interned in neu cntry. REP - Repatriated RES - Rescued ESC - Escaped BO - Bailed out DCH - Ditched CR-L - Crashed on land CR-S - Crashed at sea</p>
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358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24541 *Spook*

P	Wurzbach, Clemens K., Maj
CP	Dunnica, Lawrence G., 1Lt
NAV	Thornton, Leonard E., 1Lt
BOM	Montgomery, James H., Jr., 2Lt
ENG	Tucker, Harry W., T/Sgt
RWG	Dew, Robert L., Sgt
RO	Holland, Bertis W., Sgt
BT	Cascio, Philip T., Sgt
TG	Taylor, Claude P., Sgt
LWG	Harker, Wayne E., Sgt

B-17F #41-24606 *Werewolf*

P	Ox rider, George J., 1Lt	
CP	Hurlburt, Donald W., 2Lt	BO
NAV	Grant, Donald L., 2Lt	BO
BOM	Steele, Earl A., 2Lt	BO
ENG	Ziemer, Frederick B., T/Sgt	BO
TG	Sadler, James K., Sgt	BO
RO	Dasher, Everett A., S/Sgt	BO
RWG	Maxwell, Samuel P., Sgt	BO
BT	Smith, Robert H., Sgt	BO
LWG	Heaps, Theodore C., Sgt	BO

B-17F #42-5360 *Old Faithful*

P	McDonald, James M., 1Lt
CP	Rogan, Dave L., 2Lt
NAV	Anderson, William J., 2Lt
BOM	Schieble, Robert O., 1Lt
ENG	Fanning, David D., T/Sgt
RWG	Haney, James E., S/Sgt
RO	Carpenter, Glenn S., S/Sgt
BT	Bruskotter, James E., S/Sgt
TG	Sterling, Robert W., S/Sgt
LWG	Martin, James C., Sgt

B-17F #41-24577 *Hell's Angels*

P	Baldwin, Irl E., Capt
CP	Joy, Ripley W., 2Lt
NAV	Madsen, Parley W., 1Lt
BOM	Bone, Donald R., 1Lt
ENG	Rodriguez, James E., Jr., T/Sgt
RWG	Meddaugh, Allerton F., Sgt
RO	Warren, Russell M., Sgt
BT	Brody, Harry J., Sgt
LWG	Weiskopf, Dennis, Sgt
TG	Godwin, Harold E., Sgt

B-17F #41-24580 *Hell Cat - DCH*

P	O'Connor, Oran T., 1Lt	POW
CP	Ruppe, Eldon T., 2Lt	EVD
NAV	Gordon, Bruce W., 2Lt	EVD
BOM	DuMont, Earle J., 2Lt	POW
ENG	Mullendore, Merle S., T/Sgt	POW
BT	Fincher, Clifton E., Sgt	POW
RO	Hughes, Norman, Sgt	POW
LWG	Lucas, Jack, Sgt	POW
TG	Batterson, Frank L., S/Sgt	POW
RWG	Robuck, Lester M., Sgt	POW

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24603 Green Hornet CR-L

P	Sanderson, Ellis J., 1Lt	WIA/POW
CP	Bowman, Horace D., Jr. 2Lt	POW
NAV	Spence, John W., 2Lt	BO/EVD
BOM	Ward, Grady B., 2Lt	BO/POW
ENG	Devers, Sidney, T/Sgt	BO/EVD
RO	Jones, Miles B., T/Sgt	BO/EVD
BT	Greene, Frank W., S/Sgt	BO/EVD
RWG	Swanson, Harry F., S/Sgt	BO/POW
TG	Markiewicz, Joseph L. S/Sgt	BO/DOW
LWG	Silva, Carlos J., Sgt	BO/POW

B-17F #41-24635 The '8' Ball MK II

P	Calhoun, William R., Jr., Capt
CP	O'Connor, Squire T., 2Lt
NAV	Strickland, Joseph M., 2Lt
BOM	Yonkman, Robert J., 1Lt
ENG	Zaorski, Roman R., T/Sgt
LWG	Tupper, Theron S., S/Sgt
RO	Terry, Charles R., T/Sgt
BT	Mulgrew, William C., S/Sgt
TG	Stephen, Willard W., S/Sgt
RWG	Murphy, Murel A., Sgt

B-17F #42-5177 Fast Worker MK II

P	Smith, Sanford T., 1Lt
CP	Farrell, Lawrence C., 2Lt
NAV	Summers, Thomas E., 1Lt
BOM	Dwyer, Robert P., 1Lt
ENG	Stoner, Charles M., T/Sgt
BT	Hardaway, Sidney T., S/Sgt
RO	York, Robert F., S/Sgt
LWG	Adams, Ralph B., S/Sgt
TG	Howard, Earl R., S/Sgt
RWG	Farrell, Vincent, Sgt

B-17F #41-24605 Knockout Dropper

P	Eyster, Ercil F., 1Lt
CP	Hayward, Fred H., 2Lt
NAV	Elliott, Jesse H., 2Lt
BOM	Cargill, William D., 2Lt
ENG	Powell, Marvin F., S/Sgt
LWG	Brown, Houston B., Jr., Sgt
RO	Roberts, Raymond K., T/Sgt
BT	Davis, Marcus K., S/Sgt
TG	Owen, Calvin H., S/Sgt
RWG	Altizer, Robert C., S/Sgt
	(Abortive)

B-17F #41-24565 Idaho Potato Peeler CR-L

P	Bales, Ross C., 1Lt
CP	Dooley, Walter E., 2Lt
NAV	Browning, Richard C., 2Lt
BOM	Mathis, Jack W., 2Lt
ENG	Winter, Raymond K., Jr., T/Sgt
TT	Perkins, Homer T., Sgt
BT	Zsampar, Joseph G., Sgt
RO	Kilgore, Raymond H., T/Sgt
TG	Snell, Jack D., S/Sgt
RG	Van Ravenstein, Edward A., S/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24559 *Ooold Soljer*

P	Lyle, Lewis E., Capt
CP	Bartlett, Keith O., Lt
NAV	Moore, Paul G., Capt
BOM	Saiz, Reinaldo J., Lt
ENG	Smith, Gene K., T/Sgt
RWG	Bradford, Edward A., Sgt
RO	Balcombe, Clayton S., Sgt
BT	Sangster, Robert A., Sgt
TG	Smith, Woodrow W., S/Sgt
LWG	McGiffin, Tom, Sgt
PHO	Stringer, James L., Sgt

B-17F #41-2967 *Shak Hak*

P	Fredericks, Jacob W., Capt
CP	Way, Arthur C., Lt
NAV	Fonorow, Milton S., Lt
BOM	Hoyt, Otis A., Lt
ENG	Hlastala, Michael S., T/Sgt
RWG	Schneiderman, Henry G., S/Sgt
RO	Smith, Richard J., T/Sgt
BT	Nardine, Howard H., S/Sgt
TG	Murray, Gilbert A., Jr., S/Sgt
LWG	Collins, Harvie L., Sgt

B-17F #41-24567 *Beats Me - CR-L*

P	Haas, Joseph E., 1Lt	KIA
CP	Christianson, Roy W., 2Lt	KIA
NAV	Embach, John H., 2Lt	POW
BOM	McCright, Ewell R., 2Lt	POW
ENG	Pacheco, Antone, T/Sgt	KIA
RO	Roth, Charles L., S/Sgt	POW
RWG	Sherman, John H., S/Sgt	KIA
BT	Soria, Peter, Sgt	KIA
LWG	Dobbins, Jerry W., Sgt	KIA
TG	Stevens, Wayne O., S/Sgt	KIA

B-17F #41-24579 *Thumper - CR-L*

P	Castle, John E., 2Lt	
CP	Fitzsimmons, Kent M., 2Lt	
NAV	Herman, Charles L., Lt	BO
BOM	Sinopoli, Louis B., 2Lt	BO
ENG	Levin, Meyer, S/Sgt	BO/WIA
RWG	Staner, Billie L., S/Sgt	BO/KIA
RO	Yannie, Emilio J., Jr., S/Sgt	BO
BT	Craft, Cecil E., Sgt	BO/WIA
TG	Semonick, Martin A., S/Sgt	BO
LWG	Klasnick, Joseph S., Sgt	BO
PHO	Loll, James F., Sgt	BO

B-17F #41-24602 *Yardbird*

P	Farrar, John W., 1Lt
CP	Trojan, Joseph E., Lt
NAV	Auman, Rictor H., 2Lt
BOM	Stewart, Jack W., 2Lt
ENG	Hassler, Kenneth C., S/Sgt
RWG	Prescott, Paul H., S/Sgt
RO	Lindewall, Erick K., T/Sgt
BT	Sunderlin, Joseph R., Sgt
TG	Bartlett, Frank W., Sgt
LWG	Stevenson, Robert L., Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24610 Joe Btfspk

P	Robinson, George L., LtCol
CP	Le Fevre, William G., Lt
NAV	Grant, Lawrence H., 2Lt
NAV	Anderson, Samuel H., Lt
BOM	Dieffenbach, Albert W., Lt.
ENG	Good, James K., T/Sgt
RO	Karanson, William A., Jr., S/Sgt
BT	Choice, Hudson, S/Sgt
LWG	Bridges, Alvin A., Sgt
TG	Smock, Edmund L., T/Sgt
RWG	Goff, James P., Sgt

B-17F #41-24584 Susfu - CR-L

P	Robey, Harry A., Jr., Lt	KIA
CP	McDermott, Mark L., Lt	EVD
NAV	Grice, Charles R., Lt	EVD/POW
BOM	Moser, Roy R., Lt	KIA
ENG	Sulcofski, Francis, T/Sgt	EVD/POW
RO	Vogel, Sebastian L., S/Sgt	EVD
RWG	Morrison, Thomas H., Sgt	POW
TG	Levering, Edward T., Sgt	EVD/POW
BT	Hummel, Wilbur F., Sgt	EVD/POW
LWG	Hannon, Val B., Sgt	EVD/POW

B-17F #41-24619 S For Sugar

P	Hagenbuch, Glenn E., Capt
CP	Barker, John C., Lt
NAV	Soha, Walter M., Lt
BOM	Sherwood, Lyle D., Lt
ENG	Zipfel, Charles E., T/Sgt
RO	Miller, Gordon D., T/Sgt
RWG	Hinds, Durward L., S/Sgt
BT	Pennington, James L., Sgt
LWG	Meyer, Marines H., Sgt
TG	Jansky, Milton, Sgt

B-17F #41-24587 Bad Check

P	Southworth, Billy B., Jr., Capt
CP	Dillinger, John L., 2Lt
NAV	Schueler, Jon R., 2Lt
BOM	Conver, Milton K., 2Lt
ENG	Means, Lucian W., Jr., T/Sgt
RO	Doughty, Edward J., S/Sgt
BT	Brandt, Waldo B., Sgt
TG	Kirkpatrick, Ward M., SGt
LWG	Fleming, William W., Sgt
RWG	Barron, Dante G., Sgt

B-17F #41-24607 Jerry Jinx DCH

P	Reber, Ehle H., 1Lt	KIA
CP	Mitchell, Allan D., 2Lt	KIA
NAV	Byrom, Jarold J., 2Lt	KIA
BOM	Swindle, Robert J., 2Lt	KIA
ENG	Hamilton, Duke L., Jr., S/Sgt	KIA
BT	Blankenship, Irwin D., Sgt	KIA
RO	Mayo, Donald A., S/Sgt	KIA
TG	Milford, Roger W., Sgt	KIA
RWG	Hand, Victor G., Sgt	KIA
LWG	Gross, Luther N., Sgt	KIA

B-17F #41-24569 Memphis Tot

P	Cole, Lloyd R., Capt
CP	McCune, Robert N., 2Lt
NAV	Driggs, Robert P., 2Lt
BOM	Bryant, Edward N., 2Lt
ENG	Purinton, Bliss D., S/Sgt
RO	Brandfas, Dale F., S/Sgt
LWG	Callery, Phillip J., Sgt
BT	Witte, Arch, Jr., S/Sgt
RWG	Coomes, Clarence S., S/Sgt
TG	Van Etten, James R., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)