

303rd BG(H) Combat Mission No. 12

27 January 1943

Target: Wilhelmshaven Naval Base, Germany

Crews Dispatched: 11

Length of Mission: 5 1/2 hours

Bomb Load: 4 x 1000 lbs H.E. Demolition bombs

Bombing Altitude: 23,000 ft

Ammo Fired: 14,142 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 1 Destroyed, 1 Damaged

Germany, for the first time, was bombed with U.S. bombs, from U.S. airplanes, with U.S. crews. Maj. **Green** and Lt. **Von Schmidt** conducted the briefing at 0545 hours.

Only eleven aircraft were available for the mission and they took off at 0930 hours led by Lt. Col. **Marion** flying as co-pilot for Capt. **Lyle**. Three aircraft aborted:

#41-24541, *Spook*, 358BS-G, piloted by Lt. **Oxridner**, had a harrowing experience in keeping with the aircraft's name. A life raft, released by the vibration from the firing of the top turret by T/Sgt. Frederick B. **Ziemer**, struck the left waist gunner, Sgt. Wilmer G. **Raesley**. The left waist gun went wild, shooting holes in the side of the aircraft and wounding the tail gunner, S/Sgt. James K. **Sadler**. Sgt. **Sadler** received two bullet holes (not serious) in his right buttock and was hospitalized. These events caused Lt. **Oxridner** to return home when ten miles over the English Channel.

Both waist guns and the ball turret fuse went out on #41-24558, *Hunga Dunga*, 358BS-F, piloted by Lt. **McDonald**.

#41-24605, *Knockout Dropper*, 359BS-R, piloted by Lt. **Roller**, turned back when the interphone system stopped working.

The eight remaining 303rd BG(H) B-17s and 45 others from the 91st, 305th, and 306th Bomb Groups, bombed the secondary target at Wilhelmshaven. The primary target, a power house at Vegesack, Germany, was obscured by clouds. The 2BW B-24s failed to bomb when they were unable to locate the target because of cloud cover and poor navigation.

Moderate, heavy and inaccurate anti-aircraft fire was observed in the target area while dropping 1,000-lb. bombs from 25,000 feet. Ten to fifteen ME-109s were observed by the crews and about 30 encounters ensued. There were many claims for aircraft destroyed, and gunners were credited with one destroyed that crashed into the sea and one damaged. All aircraft returned safely with only a few battle scars. Gunners declared that most of the German pilots were "Greenhorns" and made constant tactical mistakes, many of which would not be made again. Two crewmen suffered from frostbite.

Correspondents, press photographers, and newsreel cameramen from leading U.S. and U.K. newspapers, magazines, and newsreels were at Molesworth when the crews returned. They were covering this history-making event for the free world. Everyone at Molesworth was highly elated over this successful mission, although the crews on the abortive airplanes and on the B-17s that were out of commission were disappointed in not being in on the show.

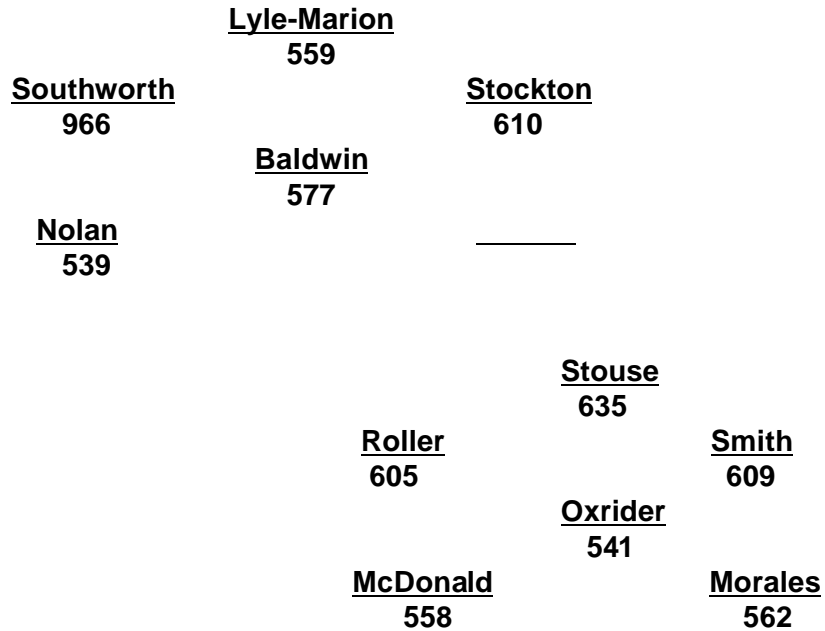
1Lt. Jesse H. **Elliott**, navigator, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for destroying a ME-109 German fighter.

NOTE: Due to heavy cloud cover, the lead 306th BG(H) formation, led by B/Gen. Frank A. **Armstrong**, Jr., was unable to bomb the primary target at Vegesack, Germany. The fifty-five B-17s of the 91st, 303rd, 305th and 306th BGs were ordered to head for the last resort target at Wilhelmshaven. 303rd BG(H) bombs were dropped at 11:11 hours. The VIII Bomber Command mission report indicates that the 306th BG(H) dropped their bombs at 11:10, making them the first 8th AF bomb group to bomb Germany. Controversy exists, however, over the accuracy of the 306th BG(H) reported bombing time and which group and aircraft held the honor of being the first to bomb German soil.



Ooold Soljer #41-24559 (360BS) PU-C
102nd PBCW #2 (360BS) - Pilot Capt L.E. Lyle / CoPilot LtCol C.E. Marion

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point



Three (3) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. McDonald in 558

Lt. Oxrider in 541

Lt. Roller in 605

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CREW POSITIONS CMP - Command Pilot P - Pilot CP - Co-Pilot NAV - Navigator ANV - Ass't. Navigator MNV - Mickey Navigator ENG - Engineer BOM - Bombardier RO - Radio Operator	TOG - Toggler 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	VI - Voice Interpreter OBS - Observer PAS - Passenger PHO - Photographer RESULTS OF MISSION KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action POW - Prisoner of war	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
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358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24539 *Jersey Bounce*

P Nolan, Robert J., 1Lt
CP Kruse, Richard L., 2Lt
NAV Anderson, William J., 2Lt
BOM Hopper, Richard R., 2Lt
ENG Hively, Roy J., T/Sgt
BT Kinney, Jesse R., Sgt
RO Hamill, Milton, Sgt
RWG Koenig, Bernard H., T/Sgt
LWG Isham, Lawrence W., Sgt
TG Bitter, Emile V., Jr., Sgt

B-17F #41-24562 *Sky Wolf*

P Morales, Carl H., 1Lt
CP Swaffer, Calvin A., 2Lt
NAV Miller, Hubert E., 1Lt
BOM Zasadil, Frank E., 2Lt
ENG Hinds, Francis G., T/Sgt
BT Carroll, Albert V., Sgt
RO Burns, Francis J., S/Sgt
RWG Hill, John E., Sgt
TG Blake, Robert C., Sgt
LWG Westfall, Max M., 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
PAS Schwartz, David, 2Lt
PHO Whitney, Leroy F., S/Sgt

B-17F #41-24541 *Spook*

P Oxrider, George J., 1Lt
CP Hurlburt, Donald W., 2Lt
NAV Grant, Donald L., 2Lt
BOM Thomas, Thomas R., 2Lt
ENG Ziemer, Frederick B., T/Sgt
TG Sadler, James K., Sgt
RO Dasher, Everett A., S/Sgt
LWG Raesley, Wilmer G., Sgt
BT Kuffel, Mathias A., S/Sgt
RWG Heaps, Theodore C., Sgt
(Abortive)

B-17F #41-24558 *Hunga Dunga*

P McDonald, James M., 1Lt
CP Rogan, Dave L., 2Lt
NAV Clement, Richard W., 1Lt
BOM Schieble, Robert O., 1Lt
ENG Fanning, David D., T/Sgt
RWG Bridges, Alvin A., Sgt
RO Carpenter, Glenn S., S/Sgt
BT Bruskotter, James E., S/Sgt
TG Sterling, Robert W., S/Sgt
LWG Martin, James C., Sgt
(Abortive)

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

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

P Stouse, Harold L., 1Lt
CP O'Connor, Squire T., 2Lt
NAV Elliott, Jesse H., 2Lt
BOM Mathis, Jack W., 2Lt
ENG Audiss, Eldon W., T/Sgt
RO Richardson, Donald R., T/Sgt
LWG Tupper, Theron S., S/Sgt
BT Garriott, John A., S/Sgt
TG Owen, Calvin H., S/Sgt
RWG Brown, Houston B., Jr., Sgt
PHO Trojan, Joseph E., Lt

B-17F #41-24605 *Knockout Dropper*

P Roller, Jack, 1Lt
CP Cline, William J., 2Lt
NAV Henson, Walter C., 2Lt
BOM Shoup, John R., Jr., 2Lt
ENG Marcelonis, Joseph G., T/Sgt
BT Ketron, Frank M., S/Sgt
RO Terry, Charles R., T/Sgt
RWG Beringer, John L., Jr., S/Sgt
TG Murphy, Murel A., S/Sgt
LWG Nicosia, Eugene A., Sgt
(Abortive)

B-17F #41-24609 *Holy Mackerel*

P Smith, Sanford T., 1Lt
CP Dooley, Walter E., 2Lt
NAV Summers, Thomas E., 1Lt
BOM Dwyer, Robert P., 1Lt
ENG Perkins, Homer W., S/Sgt
BT Hardaway, Sidney T., S/Sgt
RO York, Robert F., S/Sgt
LWG Adams, Ralph B., S/Sgt
TG Winter, Raymond K., Jr., T/Sgt
RWG Locke, Paul L., Sgt
GUN Snell, Jack D., S/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew List

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

P Lyle, Lewis E., Capt
CP Marion, Charles E., LtCol
NAV Anderson, Samuel H., Lt
BOM Saiz, Reinaldo J., Lt
OBS Bartlett, Keith O., 1Lt
ENG Smith, Gene K., T/Sgt
RO Balcombe, Clayton S., S/Sgt
BT Sangster, Robert A., S/Sgt
TG Smith, Woodrow W., S/Sgt
RWG Bradford, Edward A., Sgt
LWG Herbert, Joseph M., T/Sgt

