

# 303rd BG(H) Combat Mission No. 32

1 May 1943

Target: Harbor Installations, St. Nazaire, France

Crews Dispatched: 19

Crews Lost: Lt. Walsh, Lt. Sterling

Crew Members Wounded or Killed: 15 Killed & 3 Wounded

Length of Mission: 5 hours, 50 minutes

Bomb Load: 2 x 2000 lb G.P. M-34 bombs

Bombing Altitude: 22,700 ft - Ammo Fired: 56,350 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 9 Destroyed, 7 Probables, 4 Damaged  
(23 different attacks made on 303rd formation)

**T**wo other 351BG officers also accompanied 303rd BG(H) crews on this mission. The 351 BG(H) air and ground echelons arrived at Polebrook on 12 April 1943. They had not yet flown their first Group combat mission. Maj. T.R. **Milton**, operations officer, flew with 427BS Capt. **Broussard** in #42-5221. Capt. W.R. **Forsythe**, CO 510BS, flew with 360BS Capt. J.W. **Farrar** in #42-5260, *Yardbird II*.

Nineteen aircraft took off loaded with two M-2 2,000-lb. bombs. Number 42-5483, *Red Ass*, 360BS(H), piloted by Lt. **Hayes**, aborted the mission. The crew was forced to change airplanes and was unable to catch the formation after a late take-off. Ten aircraft dropped their bombs, one jettisoned bombs and six brought their bombs back to Molesworth. Bomb results were poor, since the few aircraft that bombed had less than 10 seconds on their bomb run.

Moderate accurate flak was encountered. Heavy fighter opposition was experienced with 40 to 50 seen and 20 to 25 encounters. Crews claimed nine enemy aircraft were destroyed, with seven probables and four damaged. Several reports indicated that enemy aircraft were painted to resemble P-47s. The Group experienced enemy aircraft dive bombing with exterior pre-fused aerial bombs.



1Lt Jay R. Sterling

Two 303rd BG(H) aircraft crashed at St. Nazaire, France, #42-5780, *Black Swan*, piloted by 1Lt. Jay R. **Sterling**, and #41-24610, *Joe Btfsplk*, piloted by 1Lt. Vincent X. **Walsh**. *Black Swan* was seen to explode in mid-air over the sea and four parachutes were observed opening, three after the aircraft blew up. *Joe Btfsplk* was last seen heading toward Belle Isle with one engine on fire. *Black Swan* crew members killed in the crash were: 1Lt. **Sterling**, T/Sgt. Harley W. **Fields**, S/Sgt. A.R. **McCormack**, S/Sgt. Daniel J. **Cashman**, Sgt. William R. **Whalen** and S/Sgt. Jesse C. **Cleavelin**. S/Sgt. **Cleavelin** is buried in Brittany American Cemetery near Manche, France. 2Lt. John L. **Neil**, 2Lt. Harry E. **Roach**, Jr., 2Lt. David M. **Parker** and T/Sgt. P.E. **Griffin** survived the crash. All were captured by the enemy and taken prisoner, except Lt. **Roach**, who was able to evade the enemy.

The *Joe Btfsplk* crew members killed in the crash were: 2Lt. John V. **Franklin**, 2Lt. Edward A. **Zieminski**, 2Lt. John B. **Walker**, T/Sgt. Emory L. **Knotts**, S/Sgt. James H. **Carithers**, S/Sgt. J. **McMahon**, and S/Sgt. Leroy H. **Moyer**. 1Lt. **Walsh**, T/Sgt. David E. **Lee**, Jr., and S/Sgt. Anthony J. **Peklinsky** were captured by the enemy and taken prisoner.

**Events of the crash of 427BS *Joe Btfsplk* - Vincent X. Walsh Crew**  
**Related by David E. Lee to the mother of James H. Carithers in August 1945:**

We had made our target and released the bombs, but were badly crippled by anti-aircraft fire—both motors shot out under one wing, the communication system out, the plane otherwise damaged and ‘Pek’ [Peklinsky] was badly shot up in one leg between the thigh and knee.

We were limping behind formation and badly crippled, but we were going home. Walsh had very expertly dived from 18,000 feet to 4,000 feet to take cover from the clouds. We were really going home—had passed out the cigarettes and relaxed when the clouds parted. In getting from one cloud to another, two German fighter planes stationed on Belle Isle to get stragglers saw us and got us. The plane and guns were in such condition that we were practically helpless. We couldn’t get altitude or speed and most of the guns were out of commission. The pilot told me to tell the boys to leave their guns and brace for the crash because we were going to crash in the ocean. We did not have time to get braced for the crash and to release more than one rubber raft. I was knocked unconscious and remained so for two hours. Walsh badly wrenched his ankle climbing out through a window, but he got the raft and saved me (unconscious) and Pek (crippled).

When I regained consciousness, we were on Belle Isle. The plane evidently broke in two when it hit the water, for I don’t know how else I could have gotten out. After the crash, I never saw any of the boys but Walsh and Pek. The other seven were very likely knocked unconscious in the crash and went down with the plane. They were a wonderful bunch of boys and we all loved each other like brothers. The two years we were prisoners, we prayed every day for the other seven.



**Black Swan Crash Site**

Lt. **Roach** was assisted by the French resistance, who led him 250 miles to an Escape Assistance group. He then joined a group of refugees who were led over the Pyrenees into Spain. The U.S. consul in Madrid arranged for movement to Gibraltar and then to England on 29 June. He was the VIII Air Force's 44th airman to get out of Nazi-occupied territory. After a stay in a hospital for leg injuries, he was assigned the task of briefing aircrews on escape and evasion. In 1944, he returned to the U.S. for pilot training. He was killed in 1954. Joseph **Monnier**, a 19-year-old French farm boy who assisted Lt. **Roach**, and who had earlier helped Lt. Dave **Parker**, was given a citation by Gen. **Eisenhower** for his efforts in aiding downed Allied flyers during the war.

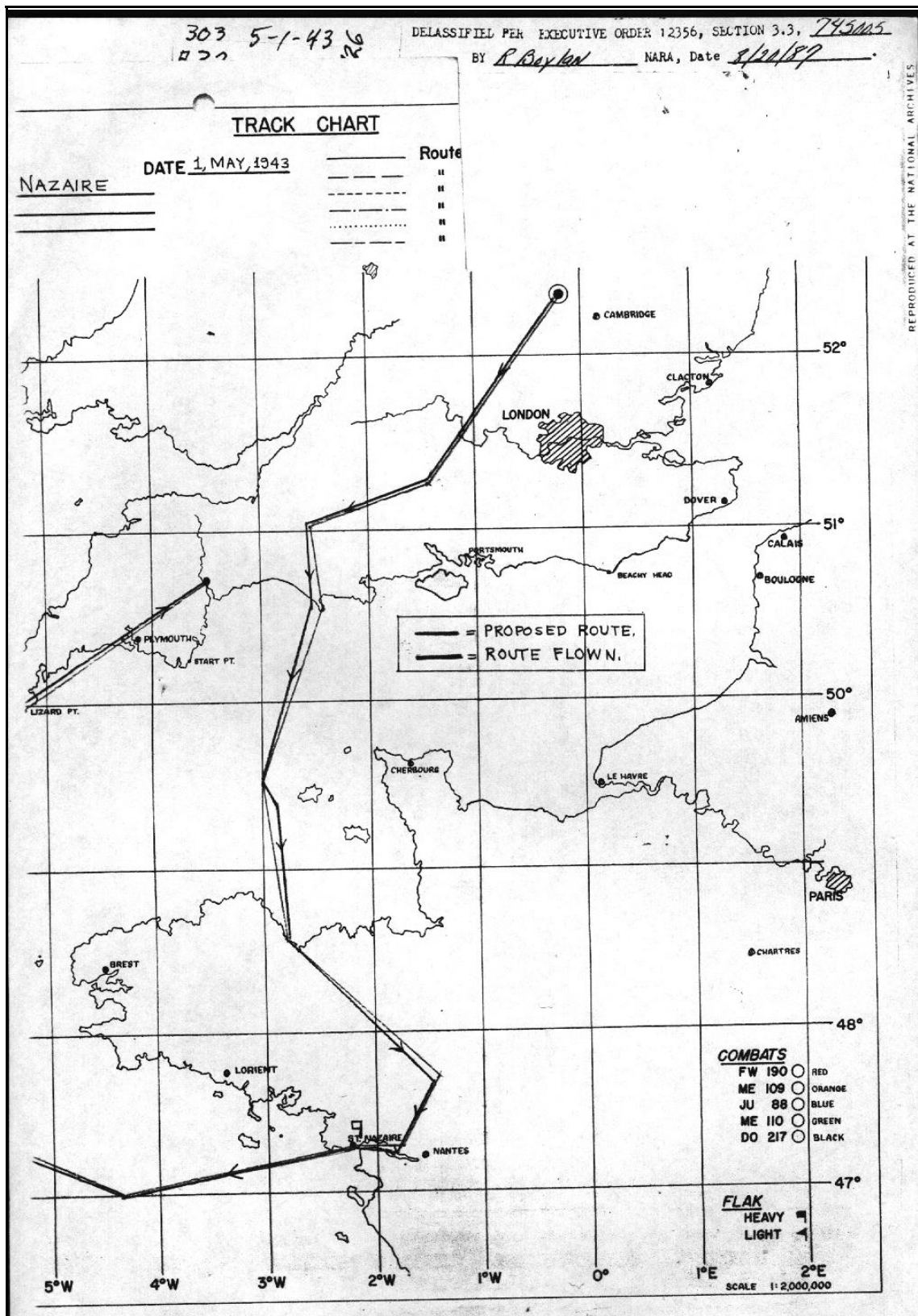
Also killed on this mission were: Lt. Sumner L. **Roberts**, navigator on #42-29520 (*No Name*), who was killed by flak; and T/Sgt. Gerald T. **Lauffer**, left waist gunner on #42-5390 *The Avenger*, who was killed by enemy aircraft fire. Capt. John W. **Farrar** and Lts. Rictor H. **Auman** and Roland M. **Smith** were slightly wounded by anti-aircraft gunfire.

On 17 October 1984, a beautiful stone monument was unveiled and dedicated near the small village of St. Pere-en-Retz, where B-17 #42-5780 had crashed. The name of each crewman--the six who died and the four who survived--is incised in the stone.

Weather conditions prevented Group airplanes from landing at Molesworth. Landings were made without difficulty at advanced Bases at Exeter and Davidstow.

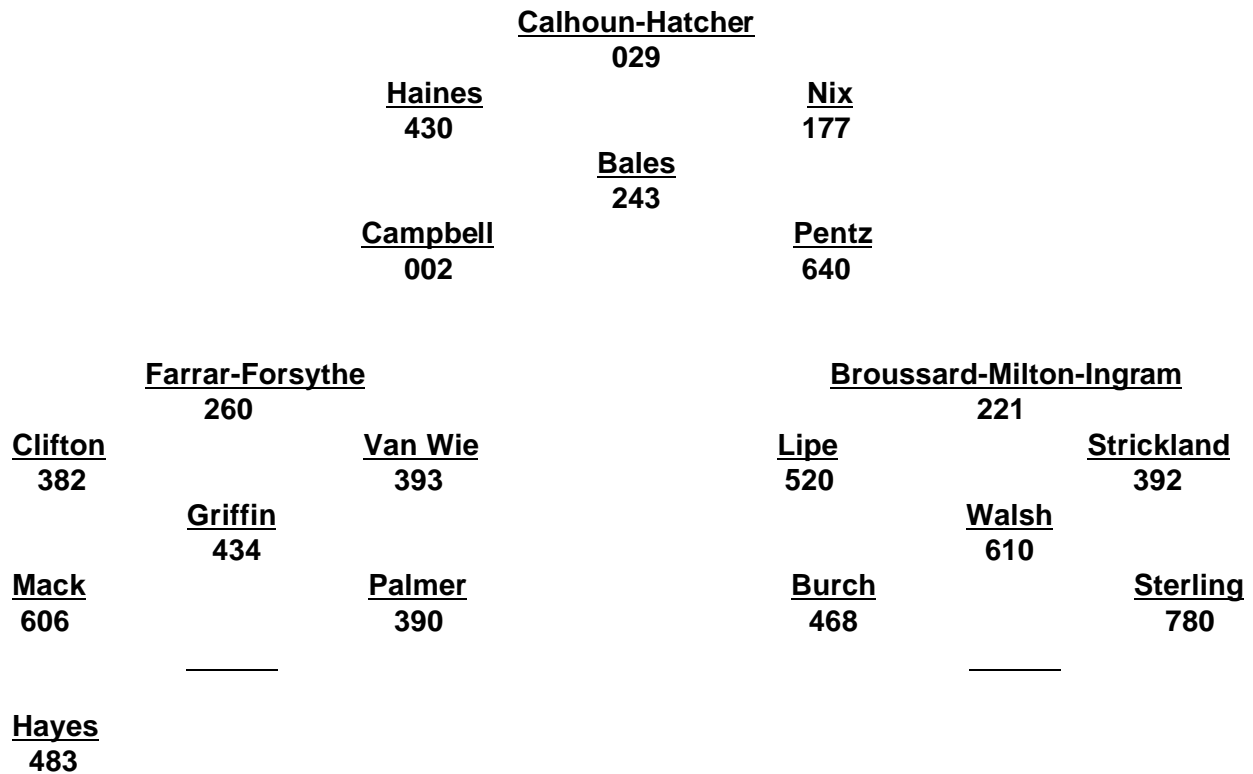
### Crew Report of Enemy Aircraft Destroyed or Damaged

S/Sgt. J.G. Zsamper (243)	FW-190	Probable
S/Sgt. J.D. Snell (243)	FW-190	Damaged
T/Sgt. R.A. Coykendall (243)	FW-190	Damaged
T/Sgt. J.A. Dougherty (640)	FW-190	Probable
S/Sgt. C.C. Stewart (606)	FW-190	Claimed
S/Sgt. B.F. Spring (393)	FW-190	Claimed
T/Sgt. G.T. Lauffer (KIA)(390)	FW-190	
(claimed by crewmates Holder & Hodges)		
S/Sgt. A.E. Hodges (390)	FW-190	Claimed
S/Sgt. L.T. O'Connell (260)	FW-190	Claimed
S/Sgt. J.R. Sunderlin (260)	FW-190	Claimed
T/Sgt. E.K. Lindewall (260)	FW-190	Claimed
S/Sgt. H.T. Brown (468)	FW-190	Possible
S/Sgt. J.E. Serpa (520)	FW-190	Probable
S/Sgt. C.R. Storer (221)	FW-190	Claimed
T/Sgt. B. Barlow (468)	FW-190	Probable
S/Sgt. L.F. Bourdon (468)	FW-190	Probable
T/Sgt. E.L. Smock (221)	FW-190	Probable
S/Sgt. B. Jurosek (221)	FW-190	Possible damaged
Sgt. A.W. Sherg (392)	FW-190	Probable



Route Map

## Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point



Seven (7) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. Nix in 177                      Lt. Calhoun in 029  
 Capt. Bales in 243                Lt. Haines in 430  
 Capt. Broussard in 221        Lt. Burch in 468  
 Lt. Hayes in 483 - took off late and didn't catch the formation

### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

## 359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17F #42-3002 *The Old Squaw***

P	Campbell, Claude W., 1Lt
CP	Miller, Arthur W., 2Lt
NAV	Ririe, George M., 2Lt
BOM	Boutelle, Winston E., 2Lt
ENG	Hernan, Howard E., T/Sgt
RO	McCoy, Gordon K., Sgt
RWG	Bachert, Kurt W., S/Sgt
BT	Catozza, Peter P., S/Sgt
TG	Quick, George D., S/Sgt
LWG	Wilson, Benton, Sgt

### **B-17F #42-29640 *Old Ironsides***

P	Pentz, Arthur H., 1Lt
CP	Wallace, Robert W., 2Lt
NAV	Henson, Walter C., 1Lt
BOM	Philpitt, Russell O., 2Lt
ENG	Dougherty, John A., T/Sgt
RO	Murray, Robert L., S/Sgt
LWG	Horvath, Robert A., Sgt
BT	Bruns, William H., Jr., Sgt
TG	Piatek, Casimir P., S/Sgt
RWG	Howard, George Z., S/Sgt

### **B-17F #42-5243 *FDR's Potato Peeler Kids***

P	Bales, Ross C., Capt
CP	Dooley, Walter E., 1Lt
NAV	McColl, Daniel A., 1Lt
BOM	Cargill, William D., 2Lt
ENG	Coykendall, Ralph A., T/Sgt
RG	O'Reilly, Francis W., S/Sgt
RO	Kilgore, Raymond H., T/Sgt
BT	Zsamper, Joseph G., S/Sgt
TG	Snell, Jack D., S/Sgt
RWG	Van Ravenstein, Edward A., S/Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

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

P	Nix, James S., 1Lt
CP	Konsmo, George E., Capt
NAV	Stettler, Donald G., 2Lt
ENG	Zaorski, Roman R., T/Sgt
NG	Vogel, George W., Sgt
RO	Terry, Charles R., T/Sgt
BT	Mulgrew, William C., S/Sgt
TG	Murphy, Murel A., S/Sgt
RWG	Ryan, Francis J., S/Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

### **B-17F #42-5430 *Pappy/Good Snuf***

P	Haines, Rolland M., 1Lt
CP	Kramer, Mayer, 2Lt
NAV	Delorenzo, D.D., 2Lt
BOM	Morse, Anthony E., 2Lt
ENG	Garcia, Robert A., S/Sgt
RO	Kalk, Kenneth T.M., T/Sgt
TG	Davis, Charles E., S/Sgt
RWG	Martin, Raymond W., S/Sgt
BT	Foster, Allen G., S/Sgt
LWG	Morgan, Robert L., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

### **B-17F #42-3029 *Wallaroo***

P	Calhoun, William R., Jr., Capt
CP	Hatcher, W.A., LtCol (351BG)
NAV	Strickland, Joseph M., 1Lt
BOM	Yonkman, Robert J., 1Lt
ENG	Marcelonis, Joseph G., S/Sgt
RO	Williams, Lemuel R., T/Sgt
TT	Ketron, Frank M., S/Sgt
BT	Beringer, John L., Jr., S/Sgt
TG	Burnham, Arthur L., Sgt
LWG	Gonsalves, John D., S/Sgt
PAS	Barrett, Jesse M., Capt.

(Abortive Sortie)

## 360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17F #42-5260 *Yardbird II***

P	Farrar, John W., Capt	WIA
CP	Forsythe, W.R., Capt (351 GP)	
NAV	Auman, Rictor H., 2Lt	WIA
BOM	Stewart, Jack W., Lt	
ENG	Hassler, Kenneth C., T/Sgt	
LWG	Prescott, Paul H., S/Sgt	
RO	Lindewall, Erick K., T/Sgt	
BT	Sunderlin, Joseph R., S/Sgt	
RWG	Bartlett, Frank W., S/Sgt	
TG	O'Connell, Lincoln T., S/Sgt	

### **B-17F #42-5382 *The Witches Tit***

P	Clifton, David S., Lt	
CP	Garvey, John L., Lt	
NAV	Wright, Howard R., Lt	
BOM	Currie, Herman C., Lt	
ENG	Doss, Carroll P., T/Sgt	
LWG	Compo, Anthony, S/Sgt	
RO	Morrison, Eugene D., T/Sgt	
BT	Mitchell, John B., S/Sgt	
TG	Villarreal, Rodolfo A., S/Sgt	
RWG	Jameson, Jimmie E., Sgt	

### **B-17F #42-5393 *Thumper Again***

P	Van Wie, John A., Lt	
CP	Walsh, James D., Lt	
NAV	Blank, Paul, Lt	
BOM	Rice, Bernard, Lt	
ENG	Hlebasko, Albert, T/Sgt	
BT	Morton, Eugene L., S/Sgt	
RO	Noll, Robert W., T/Sgt	
RWG	Spring, Benjamin F., S/Sgt	
LWG	Dioquardo, Fred J., Sgt	
TG	Bridges, Robert C., S/Sgt	

### **B-17F #42-29606 *Butch***

P	Mack, David W., Lt	
CP	Barhaug, Ragnar, Lt	
NAV	Smith, Roland M., Lt	WIA
BOM	Saiz, Reinaldo J., Lt	
ENG	Deitch, Daniel T., T/Sgt	
BT	Peterson, Andrew C., S/Sgt	
RO	Cicinelli, Salvatore J., S/Sgt	
TG	Biernacki, Joseph J., S/Sgt	
LWG	Stewart, Carl C., S/Sgt	
RWG	Spitzfaden, Robert E., Sgt	

### **B-17F #42-5390 *The Avenger***

P	Palmer, Joseph F., Lt	
CP	Sheldon, Robert M., Lt	
NAV	Rosenblum, Nathan J., Lt	
BOM	Kieffer, Claude M., Lt	
ENG	Lauffer, Gerald T., T/Sgt	KIA
TT	Duffey, Elmer E., S/Sgt	
RO	Gullage, Edmund, T/Sgt	
BT	Owen, Burl M., S/Sgt	
TG	Hodges, Alva E., S/Sgt	
RWG	Holder, Samuel A., S/Sgt	

### **B-17F #42-5434 *Lady Luck***

P	Griffin, Loyd D., Lt	
CP	Swanson, Walter C., Lt	
NAV	Preston, William M., Lt	
BOM	Taylor, Robert L., Lt	
ENG	Eason, William M., T/Sgt	
LWG	Edwards, Samuel L., S/Sgt	
RO	Schwartz, Vernon E., T/Sgt	
TG	Wiegand, Lynwood D., S/Sgt	
BT	Plummer, Robert, S/Sgt	
RWG	Henderson, Paul E., Sgt	
OBS	Kagey, Martin I., Jr., Sgt	

## 427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17F #42-5392 *Stric Nine***

P	Strickland, Alexander C., Lt
CP	Olsen, Curtis M., Lt
NAV	Hokans, Carl A., Lt
BOM	Lamme, Edwin G., Lt
ENG	Baart, James C., T/Sgt
BT	Peck, Raymond R., S/Sgt
RO	Martel, Albert E., Jr., T/Sgt
RWG	Strohsack, R.R., S/Sgt
TG	Sherg, Anthony W., S/Sgt
LWG	McGill, Edward E., Sgt

### **B-17F #41-24610 *Joe Btfsplk* - CR-L**

P	Walsh, Vincent X., Lt	POW
CP	Franklin, John V., Lt	KIA
NAV	Zieminski, Edward A., Lt	KIA
BOM	Walker, John B., Lt	KIA
ENG	Lee, David E., Jr., T/Sgt	POW
BT	Carithers, James H., S/Sgt	KIA
RO	Knotts, Emory L., T/Sgt	KIA
TG	Moyer, Leroy H., S/Sgt	KIA
LWG	McMahon, J., S/Sgt	KIA
RWG	Peklinsky, Anthony J., S/Sgt	POW

### **B-17F # 42-5780 *Black Swan* - CR-L**

P	Sterling, Jay R., Lt	KIA
CP	Neil, John L., Lt	POW
NAV	Roach, Harry E., Jr., Lt	EVD
BOM	Parker, David M., Lt	POW
ENG	Griffin, P.E., T/Sgt	POW
BG	McCormack, A.R., S/Sgt	KIA
RO	Fields, Harley W., T/Sgt	KIA
RWG	Cashman, Daniel J., S/Sgt	KIA
TG	Cleavelin, Jesse C., S/Sgt	KIA
LWG	Whalen, William R., Sgt	KIA

### **B-17F # 42-5483 *Red Ass***

P	Hayes, Ralph S., Jr., Lt
CP	Mackin, George T., Lt
NAV	Illgen, Frederick, J., Lt
NAV	Shirley, Lloyd A., Lt
ENG	Good, James K., T/Sgt
TG	Bednarchuk, Antonio, S/Sgt
RO	Jessee, Jesse J., T/Sgt
LWG	Smith, Delvyn, S/Sgt
RWG	Hairr, Elwood F., S/Sgt
BT	Johnson, Otto D., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

### **B-17 #42-5468 *Quinine-Bitter Dose***

P	Burch, Armand F., Lt
CP	Cardwell, Burt J., Lt
NAV	Noblin, John D., Lt
BOM	Butt, Byron K., Lt
ENG	Barlow, Benjamin, T/Sgt
BT	Bourdon, Louis F., S/Sgt
RO	Ashworth, George W., S/Sgt
LWG	Arnold, Robert W., S/Sgt
TG	Brown, Howard T., S/Sgt
RWG	Cooney, Robert M., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

### **B-17F #42-5221 *Son***

P	Broussard, Edward J., Jr., Capt
CP	Milton, T.R., Maj (351 GP)
NAV	Herman, Charles L., Lt
BOM	Sherwood, Lyle D., Lt
ENG	Smock, Edmund L., T/Sgt
RO	Karanson, William A., Jr., T/Sgt
BT	Choice, Hudson, S/Sgt
LWG	Bryant, Carson, S/Sgt
RWG	Storer, Charles R., S/Sgt
TG	Jurosek, Bernard, Sgt
OBS	Ingram, D.E., Col

(Abortive Sortie)

### **B-17F #42-29520 (*No Name*)**

P	Lipe, Fort W., Lt	
CP	Woodley, Robert F., Lt	
NAV	Roberts, Sumner L., Lt	KIA
BOM	Smith, Abbott M., Jr., Lt	
ENG	Gray, J.R., T/Sgt	
BT	Sink, Robert K., S/Sgt	
RO	Brandfas, Dale F., T/Sgt	
TG	Serpa, Joseph E., S/Sgt	
LWG	Hinds, Durward L., S/Sgt	
RWG	Barron, Dante G., Sgt	