

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 34

13 May 1943

Target: Potes Aircraft Factory, Meaulte, France

Crews Dispatched: 21

Length of Mission: 4 hours, 15 minutes

Bomb Load: 10 x 500 lb G.P. M-43 bombs

Bombing Altitude: 24,000 ft

Ammo Fired: 3,976 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 2 Destroyed

Mission Number 34 of the 303rd Bomb Group (Heavy) marked two very important historical events:

25th Combat Mission of B-17F #41-24577 *Hell's Angels* 358th BS (VK-D)

The 358th BS B-17F #41-24577 *Hell's Angels* (VK-D), from which the 303rd BG(H) later named itself, completed its 25th combat mission on 13 May 1943. It became the first 8th Air Force B-17 to complete 25 combat missions, winning the race for this honor with the 359th BS B-17F *Knockout Dropper*, the 91st BG(H) B-17F *Memphis Belle* and several other B-17s that were striving to be the first to complete 25 missions.

Era of the "Four Horsemen" Ends

On 13 May 1943 the number of the VIIIth Bomber Command bomber groups doubled. Three 4th Bomb Wing B-17 Groups entered combat - 94th, 95th and 96th Bomb Groups plus the 1st Bomb Wing 351st Bomb Group. The "Four Horsemen" era of the 91st, 303rd, 305th and 306th Bomb Groups being the only VIII Bomber Command B-17 Groups ended. The "Four Horsemen" flew 34 combat missions together since the 303rd flew its first mission on 17 November 1942. They lost 97 B-17s while claiming 473 enemy aircraft destroyed, 164 probably destroyed and 112 damaged. The U.S. gunners confirmed claims were impressive, even when discounted for the known and suspected gunner claim exaggerations. During the "Four Horsemen" period (Missions 1 through 33), the 303rd BG(H) lost 18 B-17s with enemy aircraft claims of 99 destroyed, 38 probables and 31 damaged.

This was a perfect mission from an engineering standpoint--21 aircraft off the ground, 21 attacked the target, and 21 returned to Base safely with no aborted flights.

"One of the finest examples of high altitude precision bombing done by the U.S. Army Air Force in this Theater of War to date," was the general opinion expressed by most crew members of the 21 Flying Fortresses led by Maj. Glenn E. **Hagenbuch**, which bombed enemy targets in northern France. The Meaulte-Potes Aircraft Factory, which specialized in the manufacture of parts for Germany's leading aircraft, was completely devastated and plastered by American B-17s. The bombers flew high, completely protected by U.S. Thunderbolts (P-47s) and RAF Spitfires in very good weather conditions to make an ideal bomb run and completely smother the target with their lethal load.

Some bursts of heavy flak were observed over the target, but it wasn't enough to require evasive action. Light flak was seen below, apparently aimed at the fighters which were protecting the bombers. On the way out from the target, more bursts were seen before the planes reached the English channel. None of the bursts caused any aircraft damage. The US and RAF fighter support was so good that not more than six FW-190s could come in close enough to attempt an attack on the bombers. One pilot, 1Lt. Fort W. **Liye**, commented, "Those Spitfires came in so close that one of the pilots tipped his cap. Boy, it was marvelous protection and what a nice feeling."

Maj. **Hagenbuch**, formation leader stated, "We flew in about 3/10 to 4/10s clouds, but could see everything. My crew claims the bombing was OK." Other commentaries were:

Capt. Billy B. **Southworth**, son of the manager of the world champion St. Louis Cardinals baseball team, said, "It was a pretty soft touch for us. No enemy fighters could get in range of us. The bombing was really good."

1Lt. Parley W. **Madsen**, navigator on the *Fortress Hell's Angels*, described the trip, "Our bombs hit right on the nose. It was one of the best and easiest that we have done."

Lt. Robert S. **O'Connor**, pilot of *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, said, "It was a piece of cheese. All we did was test fire our guns, the fighter cover was so good. They came so close I could almost tell what the pilots looked like. The bombing was excellent and the fighter cover wonderful."

S/Sgt. Francis J. **Ryan**, waist gunner on the *Cat-O-Nine Tails*, said, "The bombing looked wonderful. The whole area was blown up. There was so much smoke and flame, we couldn't see the buildings after we left." Also on this B-17 was Sgt. Martin **Kagey**, photographer, who commented, "I saw a few fighters away out. There was so much smoke on the target, it must have been knocked out. However, my pictures will tell the story."

Sgt. Robert **Morgan**, waist gunner on the ship *Fast Worker MK II*, said, "The target was completely obscured by smoke and flame. It was really plastered. I saw a couple of enemy fighters being chased all over the sky by Spits."

One of the Group veteran bombardiers, 1Lt. Earle A **Steele**, flying in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, remarked, "I never brag about my own bombs, but I'll say mine and nearly everyone else's were right on the target. It was really good."

Some of the veteran crew of *FDR's Potato Peeler Kids*, piloted by Capt. Ross C. **Bales**, were quick to comment on the mission. T/Sgt. Raymond **Kilgore**, left waist gunner, said, "I couldn't see the target for all of the dense smoke from our bombs. There were a few bursts of flak, but nothing to speak of. Saw two enemy fighters blow and 'chutes come out. The fighters hit the ground soon after."

S/Sgt. Joseph **Zsampar**, ball turret gunner, stated, "It was a pushover as far as our bombing was concerned. You would see the smoke and flames for miles after we left the target. There were plenty of P-47s and Spits. Every now and then you would see an FW-190 being chased by seven or eight of our own fighters." T/Sgt. Ed **Van Ravenstein**, waist gunner, said, "There wasn't anything to do but watch. We could have slept or played cards. The bombing was terrific." S/Sgt. Jack D. **Snell**, tail gunner, said, "It was my 22nd raid and it was the best bombing I have seen on any so far. Our own bombs went right in the middle of the smoke made by the ships in front of us."

Maj. Glenn **Hagenbuch**, who led the 102nd PBCW on the mission, was awarded the Silver Star medal for "Gallantry in Action" on this Mission.

Crew Reports on Enemy Aircraft Destroyed or Damaged

S/Sgt. V.E. Brown (432)	ME-109F	Destroyed
S/Sgt. C.R. Bagwell (432)	FW-190	Destroyed

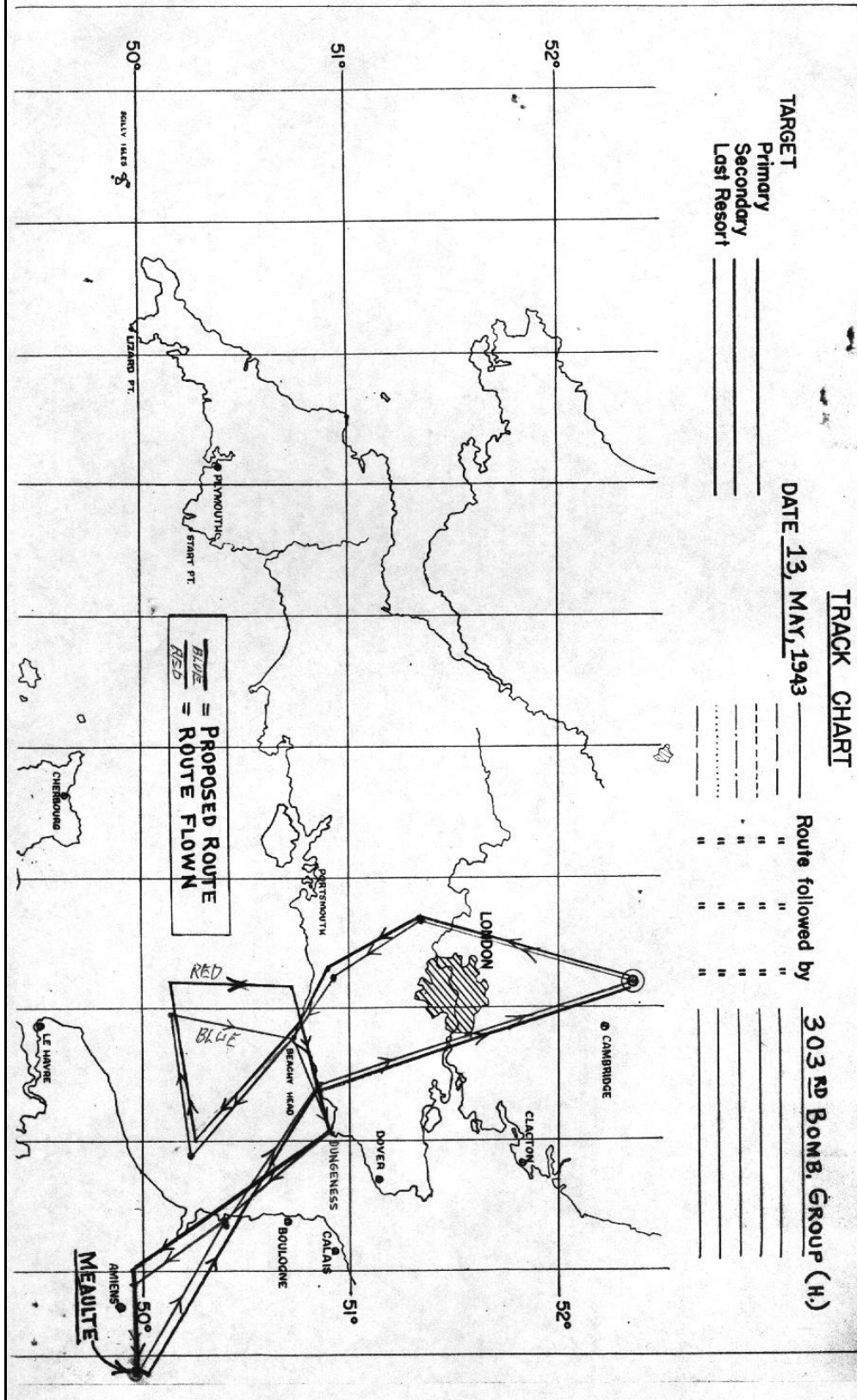


S-for-Sugar #41-24619 (427BS) GN-S
102nd PBCW Lead (427BS) - Pilot Maj G.E. Hagenbuch / CoPilot E.E. Snyder, Jr.

303 5-13-43
#34 MEADITE T.726

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, SECTION 3.3, 745005
BY R. Baylan NARA, Date 8/24/87

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



TARGET
Primary
Secondary
Last Resort

DATE 13, MAY 1943

TRACK CHART

Route followed by

303 RD Bomb. Group (H.)

Route Map

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

<u>Hagenbuch</u> 619			
	<u>Lipe</u> 520	<u>Strickland</u> 392	
<u>Southworth</u> 221			
	<u>Burch</u> 612	<u>Jaques</u> 081	
<u>Stockton</u> 341			
	<u>Roller</u> 605		<u>Baldwin</u> 577
<u>McClung</u> 482		<u>Haines</u> 177	<u>Thompson</u> 635
	<u>Bales</u> 243		<u>Timken</u> 656
			<u>Morales</u> 562
<u>Campbell</u> 002		<u>Cline</u> 624	<u>McDonald</u> 792
	<u>Lemmon</u> 432		<u>O'Connor</u> 264
			<u>Nolan</u> 664

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<u>CREW POSITIONS</u> 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	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
		<u>RESULTS OF MISSION</u> KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action POW - Prisoner of war	

358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-5792 *The Mugger*

P	McDonald, James M., 1Lt
CP	Rogan, Dave L., 1Lt
NAV	Clement, Richard W., 1Lt
BOM	Solverson, Robert K., 2Lt
ENG	Fanning, David D., T/Sgt
RWG	Zioance, John, S/Sgt
RO	Carpenter, Glenn S., T/Sgt
BT	Bruskotter, James E., S/Sgt
TG	Sterling, Robert W., S/Sgt
LWG	Martin, James C., S/Sgt

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

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

B-17F #42-29635 *Augerhead*

P	Thompson, Frank H., 2Lt
CP	Sumarlidason, Arni L., 2Lt
NAV	McConnen, James R., 2Lt
BOM	McCord, Lawrence E., 2Lt
ENG	Welch, James R., S/Sgt
TT	Fulanovich, Charles J., S/Sgt
RO	Hogue, Earl, T/Sgt
BT	Nakaniski, Ralph, S/Sgt
TG	Aubrey, Eldred L., S/Sgt
RWG	Wilson, Donald R., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29664 *Jersey Bounce, Jr.*

P	Nolan, Robert J., Capt
CP	Joy, Ripley W., 2Lt
NAV	Anderson, William J., 2Lt
BOM	Hopper, Richard R., 1Lt
ENG	Hively, Roy J., T/Sgt
BT	Mathews, Frank M., Sgt
RO	Hamill, Milton, T/Sgt
TG	Bitter, Emile V., Jr., S/Sgt
RWG	Isham, Lawrence W., S/Sgt
LWG	Goff, James P., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29656 *The Terrible Ten*

P	Timken, Jack C., 1Lt
CP	Wright, George E., 2Lt
NAV	Chamberlain, William V., 2Lt
BOM	Koenig, Bernard H., S/Sgt
ENG	Knuth, Leland N., S/Sgt
RWG	Paiva, Joseph B., Sgt
RO	Baxter, Jack, T/Sgt
BT	Toy, James E., S/Sgt
TG	Giassullo, Criscienzo N., S/Sgt
LWG	Redhead, George R., Sgt

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

P	Morales, Carl H., Capt
CP	Swaffer, Calvin A., 2Lt
NAV	McElwain, Richard E., 2Lt
BOM	Zasadil, Frank E., 1Lt
ENG	Hinds, Francis G., T/Sgt
BT	Carroll, Albert V., S/Sgt
RO	Burns, Francis J., T/Sgt
LWG	Hill, John E., S/Sgt
TG	Blake, Robert C., S/Sgt
RWG	Westfall, Max M., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5264 *Yankee Doodle Dandy*

P	O'Connor, Robert S., 2Lt
CP	Hurlburt, Donald W., 2Lt
NAV	Grant, Donald L., 2Lt
BOM	Steele, Earl A., 2Lt
ENG	Ziemer, Frederick B., T/Sgt
BT	Maxwell, Samuel P., S/Sgt
RO	Dasher, Everett A., T/Sgt
RWG	Smith, Robert H., S/Sgt
TG	Sadler, James K., S/Sgt
LWG	Heaps, Theodore C., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5432 *The Hunting Club*

P	Lemmon, John V., 1Lt
CP	Clark, Elmo E., F/O
NAV	Gust, Darrell D., 2Lt
BOM	Stone, Elbert E., 2Lt
ENG	Berzansky, Andrew, T/Sgt
RWG	Beavers, Albert T., S/Sgt
RO	Zeller, Caryl C., T/Sgt
BT	Bagwell, Clayton R., S/Sgt
TG	Brown, Virgil E., S/Sgt
LWG	Briggs, Wayne E., S/Sgt

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	Kraft, Harold A., T/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 #42-5482 *Cat-O-Nine Tails*

P	McClung, Guy H., 1Lt
CP	Mattison, Robert L., 1Lt
NAV	Stettler, Donald G., 2Lt
BOM	Rothman, Theodore I., 2Lt
ENG	Coykendall, Ralph A., T/Sgt
RWG	Traban, James J., S/Sgt
RO	McCoy, Gordon K., Sgt
TG	Piatek, Casimir P., S/Sgt
BT	Phillips, Carl W., S/Sgt
LWG	Ryan, Francis J., S/Sgt
PHO	Kagey, Martin I., Jr., 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	Mathis, Rhude Mark, 1Lt
ENG	Winter, Raymond K., Jr., 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

B-17F #42-29624 *Pappy*

P	Cline, William J., 1Lt
CP	Mulligan, Thomas E., 2Lt
NAV	Street, Benjamin B., 1Lt
BOM	Gordon, LeRoy V., 1Lt
ENG	Doran, Arnold S., T/Sgt
RO	McGee, Paul P., T/Sgt
TG	Milliff, Mike C., S/Sgt
RWG	Jordan, Lloyd L., S/Sgt
BT	Lemann, Paul C., S/Sgt
LWG	Kerr, Joseph, Sgt

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

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

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

P	Roller, Jack, Capt
CP	Konsmo, George E., Capt
NAV	Henson, Walter C., 1Lt
BOM	Shoup, John R., Jr., 2Lt
ENG	Marcelonis, Joseph G., S/Sgt
RO	Williams, Lemuel T., 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

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24612 *The Devil Himself*

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
 RWG Arnold, Robert W., S/Sgt
 TG Brown, Howard T., S/Sgt
 LWG Cooney, Robert M., Sgt

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

P Lipe, Fort W., Lt
 CP Woodley, Robert F., Lt
 NAV Scroggins, Paul W., Lt
 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

B-17F #42-5081 *Luscious Lady*

P Jaques, Chester D., Lt
 CP Holder, Alvin D., Lt
 NAV Bradshaw, John W., Lt
 BOM Carlson, Robert C.A., Lt
 ENG Means, Lucian W., Jr., T/Sgt
 TG Clapshaw, Keith L., S/Sgt
 RO Vassel, Warren T., Sgt
 BT Longo, Angelo L., Sgt
 RWG Storer, Charles R., S/Sgt
 LWG Ryan, Clayton W., Sgt

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
 TT Strohsack, R.R., S/Sgt
 RO Martel, Albert E., Jr., T/Sgt
 BT Peck, Raymond R., S/Sgt
 TG Sherg, Anthony W., S/Sgt
 LWG McGill, Edward E., Sgt

B-17F #42-5341 *Vicious Virgin*

P Stockton, Donald E., Capt
 CP Barker, John C., Lt
 NAV Grant, Lawrence H., 2Lt
 BOM Shirley, Lloyd A., 2Lt
 ENG Smith, Roy Q., S/Sgt
 RO Amos, Lee H., S/Sgt
 LWG Bryant, Carson, S/Sgt
 RWG Coomes, Clarence S., S/Sgt
 TG Koch, Vernon E., S/Sgt
 BT Jenkins, Robert R., Sgt

B-17F #42-5221 *Son*

P Southworth, Billy B., Jr., Capt
 CP Rolfson, Jack G., Lt
 NAV Illgen, Frederick, J., Lt
 BOM Witt, Walter E., 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

B-17F #41-24619 *S for Sugar*

P Hagenbuch, Glenn E., Maj
 CP Snyder, Edgar E., Jr., Capt
 NAV Soha, Walter M., Capt
 NAV Anderson, Samuel H., Capt
 BOM Dieffenbach, Albert W., Capt
 ENG Zipfel, Charles E., T/Sgt
 RO Doughty, Edward J., T/Sgt
 BT Belk, Jack, S/Sgt
 TG Henderson, George W., S/Sgt
 LWG Brandt, Waldo B., S/Sgt
 RWG Harmon, Edward Z., S/Sgt