

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 48

4 July 1943

Target: Gnome Rhone Aircraft Works, Le Mans, France

Crews Dispatched: 24

Crews Lost: Lt. R.S. O'Connor - 3 KIA, 4 POW, 3 ESC,

Crew Members Killed or Wounded - 1 KIA

Length of Mission: 4 hours, 25 minutes

Bomb Load: 10 x 500 lb H.E. M43 bombs

Bombing Altitude: 22,300 ft

Ammo Fired: 47,534 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 4 Destroyed, 5 Probable, 3 Damaged

Independence Day was celebrated in fine fashion as 303rd BG(H) Flying Fortresses attacked Le Mans, France.

Three aircraft aborted the mission:

#42-29640 *Old Ironsides* 359BS (Lt. **Kruse**). The ship could not get into formation and turned back half way across the channel.

#42-5221 *Son* 427BS (Lt. **Casello**). The oxygen system and interphone system failed.

#42-5392 *Stric Nine* 427BS (Lt. **Strickland**). The No. 3 supercharger induction system cracked.

Weather on the way to the target was good with 1/10 cloud cover and unlimited visibility. The approach to the Initial Point (IP) was as planned. A left turn was made at the IP and when the bombing run began, it was noted that the 303rd BG(H) formation was flying on a collision course with the 379th Group. "S" turns were executed by Maj. **Lyle** to allow the 303rd BG(H) to fall in behind. This action caused our Group to scatter somewhat and the lead bombardier, Lt. M.S. **Fonorow**, had to hold his bombs a few seconds after the release line to prevent bombing aircraft passing under the lead Squadron. As a result, the bombing results were only fair with most bombs believed over the target. Eighteen aircraft bombed the primary target and two bombed the marshalling yards at Le Mans, the secondary target.

Enemy aircraft opposition was considerable with 35 to 50 encounters reported. Flak was meager and inaccurate. The Group claimed four German aircraft destroyed with five probables and three damaged.

Sgt. Joseph B. **Paiva**, right waist gunner on #41-24562 *Sky Wolf*, piloted by Lt. Jack C. **Timken**, was killed by gunfire from enemy aircraft. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, VA. The other waist gunner, S/Sgt. George R. **Redhead**, found *Sky Wolf* under attack from a FW-190. It came from underneath the B-17 at nine o'clock in front of his waist window. It turned belly up and started to pull away. Sgt. **Redhead** fired 30 rounds and continued to fire until the FW-190 was 80 yards off. The pilot bailed out and the plane fell out of control.



Stone memorial at Melicorne-Sur-Sarthe, France. Honors KIA Pilot 1Lt **Robert S. O'Connor**, who managed to avoid crashing B-17 *The Mugger* in the town of Melicorne-Sur-Sarthe and KIA Bombardier 2Lt **Richard W. Peterson**.

The inscription reads: *Here on 4 July 1943 an American Fortress crashed. In the memory of the aviators who found death and those who gave their life to succor the survivors of the crew. France is grateful to those who gave their life for liberty.*

Another aircraft was lost to enemy air action just before reaching the Initial Point (IP) with the No. 1 engine completely in flames. Seven parachutes were seen to open as *The Mugger* #42-5792 went down, apparently still under control. The aircraft crashed two to three miles outside the town of Malicorne and the townspeople believed that Lt. O'Connor stayed with his stricken ship so that it would not hit the town. A small granite monument was erected on the site of the crash after the war. It has the American and French flags with an inscription that commemorates the sacrifice of Lt. **Robert S. O'Connor** and his bombardier, Lt. **Richard W. Peterson**, who died in the air combat. Both are buried in Normandy American Cemetery near Coleville-sur-Mer, France overlooking Omaha Beach.

Lt. Donovan B. **Manifold**, F/O Andrew N. **Halioris**, T/Sgt. Earl **Hogue**, S/Sgt. John **Zioance** and Sgt. Harry **Thompson-Brundidge** and were captured by the enemy and taken prisoner. S/Sgt. **Zioance** managed to escape and evade re-capture. T/Sgt. Bernard H. **Koenig**, S/Sgt. Albert V. **Carroll** and Sgt. Edward F. **Chonskie** evaded capture.

Reporting on the mission, Maj. **Lyle** said, "It was really OK. The weather over the target was good. There was very little flak and the bombs were well in there." 1Lt. Milton **Fonorow**, bombardier on Maj. **Lyle's** plane, remarked, "The Groups ahead really smeared the aiming point. Our bombs were well in the target area." Lt. **Fonorow** completed his operational tour by flying his 25th mission. 1Lt. Ripley W. **Joy** flew the famous *Hell's Angels* on its 35th combat mission and reported, "I didn't see my own bombs, but all the other planes ahead hit it on the nose. There were only 35 to 40 enemy fighters and they didn't make any direct hits on the old *Hell's Angels*. It was really an easy do."

S/Sgt. Wayne E. **Briggs**, waist gunner on *Charley Horse* said, "Never saw so much smoke before." T/Sgt. Caryl **Zeller**, radio operator, remarked, "I started the camera to take pictures of the bombing and then I looked down through the bomb bay to see how it was. It really looked good. There was plenty of smoke down there."

1Lt. Fort W. **Lipe**, pilot of *Flak Wolf*, completed his combat flying and commented, "It really is the happiest day of my life. It was a good mission. A little rough in spots, but short and sweet. I didn't have time to see the bombing because those fighters were messing around about then, but the boys said it was pretty good." T/Sgt. Lucian W. **Means**, Jr., top turret gunner and S/Sgt Jack **Belk**, ball turret gunner also finished their operational flying. Sgt. **Means** said, "It wasn't fast and it wasn't hard. Just right. It was a

good raid and it was better when I think of how it's my last." Sgt. **Belk** remarked, "Had to run my turret by hand the whole trip. The electricity went out. It certainly looks better to see all those B-17s up there now, than the few that we used to have."

Crew Reports of Enemy Aircraft Destroyed or Damaged

S/Sgt. E.L. Aubrey (791)	FW-190	Destroyed
Sgt. J. Baxter (562)	FW-190	Destroyed
T/Sgt. J.R. Welch (791)	FW-190	Destroyed
S/Sgt. C.J. Fulanovich (791)	FW-190	Destroyed
S/Sgt. W. Gasser (577)	FW-190	Destroyed
S/Sgt. G.R. Redhead (562)	FW-190	Destroyed
S/Sgt. G.W. Vogel (177)	ME-109	Destroyed
1Lt. D.G. Stettler (605)	FW-190	Damaged
S/Sgt. C.M. May (124)	ME-109	Probable/Damaged
S/Sgt. A.L. Longo (944)	ME-109	Destroyed
S/Sgt. F.L. Misiak (944)	ME-109	Destroyed
S/Sgt. G.R. Allen (955)	FW-190	Destroyed



Fourth of July Fireworks

Bomb Strike Photo of Gnome Rhone Aircraft Works, Le Mans, France



A.O.G. Not in Stock #42-5788 (360BS) PU-H
103rd PBCW #3 High - Pilot Maj L.E. Lyle / CoPilot Capt L.D. Griffin

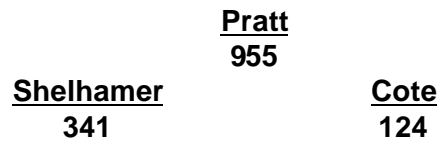
(Back L-R) Capt L.D. Griffin (CP), Col Lacy (103rd Wing Observer),
Lt W.M. Preston (N), Lt Swanson (TG-O), Maj L.E. Lyle (P), Lt M.S. Fonorow (B)

(Front L-R) S/Sgt S.L. Edwards (WG), T/Sgt W.M. Eason (E), S/Sgt P.E. Henderson (WG),
S/Sgt L.D. Wiegand (TG), T/Sgt V.E. Schwartz (R), S/Sgt R. Plummer (BT)

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point



To take the place of Abortive A/C:



Three (3) aircraft aborted this mission:
 Lt. Kruse in 640
 Lt. Casello in 221
 Lt. Strickland in 392

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 #42-29571 Charley Horse

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

B-17F #41-24562 Sky Wolf

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

B-17F #42-29791 Memphis Blues

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

B-17F #42-5792 The Mugger CR-L

P	O'Connor, Robert S., 2Lt	KIA
CP	Manifold, Donovan B., 2Lt	POW
NAV	Halioris, Andrew N., F/O	POW
BOM	Peterson, Richard W., 2Lt	KIA
ENG	Koenig, Bernard H., T/Sgt	EVD
LWG	Thompson-Brundidge, Harry, Sgt	POW
RO	Hogue, Earl, T/Sgt	POW
BT	Carroll, Albert V., S/Sgt	EVD
TG	Zioance, John S/Sgt	ESC
RWG	Chonskie, Edward F., Sgt	EVD

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

P	Rogan, Dave L., 1Lt
CP	Gamble, Donald, 1Lt
NAV	McSween, William D., 2Lt
BOM	Coburn, Ralph F., 2Lt
ENG	Wagner, Clyde E., T/Sgt
LWG	Vaughn, Norville, S/Sgt
RO	Bland, Hugh N., T/Sgt
BT	Scharch, Richard G., S/Sgt
TG	Gilbert, Bill A., S/Sgt
RWG	Schmeltzer, Charles S., Sgt

B-17F #42-5360 Old Faithful

P	Swaffer, Calvin A., 1Lt
CP	Johnston, John R., 1Lt
NAV	Karraker, William H., 2Lt
BOM	Sweet, William D., 2Lt
ENG	Lopez, Rudolph S., T/Sgt
RWG	Mills, James E., S/Sgt
RO	Matthews, James O., T/Sgt
BT	Griffin, Edward W., S/Sgt
TG	Moody, John F., S/Sgt
LWG	Cobb, Edward N., Sgt

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

P	Joy, Ripley W., 1Lt
CP	Monahan, William J., 1Lt
NAV	Maher, William P., 2Lt
BOM	Hargrove, Walter, 2Lt
ENG	Ignaczewski, Marion D., T/Sgt
RWG	Gasser, Walter, S/Sgt
RO	Kimotek, Frank, T/Sgt
BT	Buinicky, Alfred R., S/Sgt
TG	Miller, David, S/Sgt
LWG	Comer, James H., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29640 Old Ironsides

P	Kruse, Richard L., 1Lt
CP	Hendry, John W., Jr., 1Lt
NAV	McNamara, Bernard T., 2Lt
BOM	Webster, Richard E., 2Lt
ENG	Biddle, Loran C., T/Sgt
LWG	Doherty, John J., S/Sgt
RO	Brown, James J., T/Sgt
BT	Humphries, Olwin L., S/Sgt
TG	Abney, Howard L., S/Sgt
RWG	Arasin, John C., S/Sgt
	(Abortive)

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24565 *Idaho Potato Peeler*

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 McCauley, Patrick N., Sgt
TG Quick, George D., S/Sgt
LWG Wilson, Benton, S/Sgt

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

P Mattison, Robert L., 1Lt
CP Case, Spencer F., 2Lt
NAV Rich, David A., 1Lt
BOM Shafer, John H., 1Lt
ENG Green, Frederick J., T/Sgt
RO Nordyke, Lloyd E., T/Sgt
TG McEachern, David C., S/Sgt
BT Schneider, James E., S/Sgt
LWG Rettinhouse, Robert A., S/Sgt
TT Vogel, George W., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5257 *Miss Bea Haven*

P Nix, James S., 1Lt
CP Phelps, Robert L., Jr., 1Lt
NAV Street, Benjamin B., 1Lt
NAV Summers, Thomas E., 1Lt
BOM Gordon, LeRoy V., 1Lt
ENG Doran, Arnold S., T/Sgt
RWG Howard, Earl R., S/Sgt
RO York, Robert F., T/Sgt
TG Burnham, Arthur L., S/Sgt
BT Mulgrew, William C., S/Sgt
LWG Fortunak, Richard C., S/Sgt
PHO Kagey, Martin I., Jr., S/Sgt

B-17F #41-24561 *The Duchess*

P Pentz, Arthur H., 1Lt
CP Reeder, D.M., 2Lt
NAV Jacobsen, Norman N., 2Lt
BOM Philpitt, Russell O., 1Lt
ENG Dougherty, John A., T/Sgt
BT Lemann, Paul C., S/Sgt
RO Murray, Robert L., T/Sgt
RWG Horvath, Robert A., S/Sgt
TG Knudsen, Elmer T., Sgt
LWG Howard, George Z., S/Sgt

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

P McClung, Guy H., 1Lt
CP Loughnan, Victor J., 2Lt
NAV Stettler, Donald G., 2Lt
BOM Rothman, Theodore I., 2Lt
ENG Coykendall, Ralph A., T/Sgt
RWG Traban, James J., S/Sgt
RO Roberts, Raymond K., T/Sgt
TG Piatek, Casimir P., S/Sgt
BT Tibbles, Russell F., S/Sgt
LWG Ryan, Francis J., S/Sgt
PHO Williams, Lemuel R., T/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-29606 *Butch*

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 Swanson, Theodore G., S/Sgt
TG Bridges, Robert C., S/Sgt
OBS Baker, William T., 1Lt

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

P Clifton, David S., Lt
CP Shayler, Walter K., Capt
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
RWG Jameson, Jimmie E., S/Sgt
TG Villarreal, Rodolfo A., S/Sgt
OBS Garvey, John L., Lt

B-17F #42-5788 *A.O.G. Not in Stock*

P Lyle, Lewis E., Maj
CP Griffin, Loyd D., Capt
NAV Preston, William M., Lt
BOM Fonorow, Milton S., Lt
ENG Eason, William M., T/Sgt
RO Schwartz, Vernon E., T/Sgt
TG Wiegand, Lynwood D., S/Sgt
LWG Edwards, Samuel L., S/Sgt
BT Plummer, Robert, S/Sgt
RWG Henderson, Paul E., S/Sgt
XTG Swanson, Walter C., Lt
OBS Lacey, J.K., Col

B-17F #42-5221 *Son*

P Casello, John J., Lt
CP Huguenin, Wesley V., Lt
NAV Effinger, Lawrence E., Lt
BOM Fawcett, Jack B., Lt
ENG Carnathan, Hugh S., T/Sgt
RWG Gray, Johnnie E., S/Sgt
RO Calco, Anthony, T/Sgt
LWG Frost, Carlyle A., S/Sgt
BT Ponder, Truly S., S/Sgt
TG Stout, Otis T., S/Sgt
OBS Cogswell, Robert W., Lt
(Abortive Sortie)

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

P Way, Arthur C., Lt
CP Fyler, Carl J., Lt
NAV Molnar, George, Lt
BOM Gibson, Steve M., Lt
ENG Addison, Bill J., T/Sgt
TG Stachowiak, Martin G., S/Sgt
RO Crowder, Gayther B., T/Sgt
RWG Jillson, John S., S/Sgt
LWG Fisher, George C., S/Sgt
BT Ford, Ray D., S/Sgt
OBS Collins, Harvie L., S/Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-3131 *Flak Wolf*

P	Lipe, Fort W., Lt
CP	Rolfson, Jack G., Lt
NAV	Herman, Charles L., Lt
BOM	Smith, Abbott M., Jr., Lt.
ENG	Means, Lucian W., Jr., T/Sgt
BT	Belk, Jack, S/Sgt
RO	Ashworth, George W., T/Sgt
LWG	Storer, Charles R., S/Sgt
TG	Fleming, William W., S/Sgt
RWG	Cooney, Robert M., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-3124 (*No Name*)

P	Cote, Addell A., Lt
CP	Eckhart, Alan, Lt
NAV	Barnhill, Wilbur R, Lt
BOM	Hull, John W., Lt
ENG	Arter, John R., T/Sgt
BT	May, Cecil M., S/Sgt
RO	Reaves, Vaughan, T/Sgt
TG	Gunsauls, Paul, S/Sgt
LWG	Micek, John M., S/Sgt
RWG	Keaton, Joe J., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29944 *Winning Run*

P	James, Jacob C., Lt
CP	Ness, Howard C., Lt
NAV	Scroggins, Paul W., Lt
BOM	Witt, Walter E., Lt
ENG	Johnson, Otto D., S/Sgt
BT	Longo, Angelo L., Sgt
RO	Hamilton, A.J., S/Sgt
TG	Misiak, Frank L., S/Sgt
LWG	Kesky, Leonard A., S/Sgt
RWG	Smith, Delvyn, S/Sgt

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

P	Shelhamer, David P., Jr., Lt
CP	Tucker, Frederick W., Lt
NAV	Kotz, Warren C., Lt
BOM	Lewis, William L., Lt
ENG	Willet, John K., S/Sgt
BT	Garrett, Frank O., Sgt
RO	Harvie, Warren L., T/Sgt
TG	Vateckas, Coster R., S/Sgt
LWG	Barlow, Elmer O., T/Sgt
RWG	Volz, Robert J., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29955 *Mr. Five by Five*

P	Pratt, James H., Lt
CP	Bowling, William A., Lt
NAV	Boner, Allen M., Lt
BOM	Bierman, Leonard B., Lt
ENG	Scheuerer, Joseph E., Sgt
RO	Royar, Frederick J., S/Sgt
BT	Allen, Glen R., Sgt
TG	Johnston, Walter J., S/Sgt
LWG	Schilling, D.E., Sgt
RWG	Humphreys, Robert R., S/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	Strohsack, R.R., S/Sgt
BT	Peck, Raymond R., S/Sgt
RO	Martel, Albert E., Jr., T/Sgt
TG	Sherg, Anthony W., S/Sgt
LWG	McGill, Edward E., S/Sgt
RWG	Baart, James C., T/Sgt

(Abortive)