

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 55

29 July 1943

Target: Airfield on Heligoland Island, Germany

Crews Dispatched: 20

Length of Mission: 5 hours, 40 minutes

Bomb Load: 250 lb British Incendiaries

Bombing Altitude: 29,560 ft

Ammo Fired: 18,051 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 2 destroyed, 2 probables

On July 28th, a day prior to Mission No. 55, the 303rd BG(H) took part in a fourth "Blitz Week" mission, though no mission credit was given. The primary target was industrial plants in Kassel, Germany, the secondary target was Muenster and the last resort was any German industrial target.

The weather over Germany was poor with a solid overcast above the formation and 8/10 to 10/10 cloud cover below. The weather got worse further into Germany. The 384th BG was the lead formation, with the 303rd BG(H) flying low and the 379th flying high. The lead Group had trouble keeping its Squadrons in formation. A number of ships aborted until only 12 were left. The Wing leader (384th BG) then aborted and the new lead ship could not keep his small, ragged formation together. Finally, the entire wing formation turned back. En route home, four Group aircraft bombed a target of opportunity at Wettrup, Germany. Eleven aircraft jettisoned their bombs in the water near Terschelling Island. No enemy aircraft were encountered and flak was meager and inaccurate. The 14 remaining Group aircraft returned to Base with no damage or casualties.

Eighth Air Force Headquarters decided not to give the 303rd BG(H) credit for this unsuccessful mission. Other 8th Air Force Bomb Groups that bombed their targets lost 22 aircraft and experienced heavy fighter attacks. Three of the aircraft losses were attributed to air-to-air bombing. This was the first known success of German air-to-air bombing. The 8th Air Force effort to provide more effective, longer fighter escort proved successful on this mission. P-47s met the B-17s 260 miles from the English coast and shot down nine of the 60 attacking German fighters. The P-47s used auxiliary fuel tanks.

Mission Number 55 on July 29th was the fifth "Blitz Week" raid. The 303rd BG(H) had 20 aircraft take off one minute late after the take-off time had been moved up 45 minutes. The 384th BG(H) was unable to depart on its scheduled time.

The primary target was Kiel Naval Dockyard, the secondary target was the Flensburg shipyard and the last resort was any target in the area. There were no aborted missions. Twenty aircraft attacked the last resort target and returned safely to Molesworth. Skies were heavily overcast, with a Base around 18,000 feet and a top at about 30,000 feet, stretching from the German coast. It could not be penetrated. The Combat Wing leader (379th BG) turned back and led the formation over Heligoland. Bombs were released after a manual bomb run. Forty tons of British 250-lb. incendiary bombs were

released. Most bombs hit in water to the left of the airdrome target. The British bombs used did not fall according to their anticipated characteristics. Flak was moderate and inaccurate. From 45 to 50 enemy fighters were observed but their principal attacks were directed at the low 384th BG.

Crew Report of Enemy Aircraft Destroyed or Damaged

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| S/Sgt. A.L. Longo (158) | FW-190 | Destroyed |
| S/Sgt. T.S. Ponder (738) | ME-109 | Destroyed |
| S/Sgt. P.J. Davis (788) | FW-190 | Destroyed |
| S/Sgt. Leo R. McConaghy (482) | FW-190 | Damaged |
| S/Sgt. Leo R. McConaghy (482) | FW-190 | Destroyed |
| S/Sgt. R.A. Horvath (640) | FW-190 | Destroyed |

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

| | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| | | <u>Strickland</u> 341 | | |
| | <u>Shope</u> 754 | | <u>Rolfson</u> 131 | |
| | | <u>James</u> 158 | | |
| | <u>Cote</u> 002 | | <u>Shelhamer</u> 846 | |
| | <u>Clifton</u> 931 | | <u>Timken</u> 635 | |
| <u>Way</u> 434 | | <u>Bradbury</u> 393 | <u>Thompson</u> 360 | <u>Clark</u> 571 |
| | <u>Casello</u> 738 | | <u>McClung</u> 605 | |
| <u>Baker</u> 854 | | <u>Cogswell</u> 788 | <u>Loughnan</u> 482 | <u>Brown</u> 257 |
| | <u>Pratt</u> 955 | | <u>Pentz</u> 640 | |

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-29571 *Charley Horse*

P Clark, Elmo E., F/O
CP DeCamp, Donald F., 2Lt
NAV Haddock, Ralph M., 2Lt
BOM Galbraith, Robert E., 2Lt
ENG Hembree, William T., T/Sgt
RO Brooke, Curtis O., T/Sgt
RWG Doback, Charles R., S/Sgt
BT Mathews, Frank M., S/Sgt
TG Jenkins, William H., S/Sgt
LWG Tracy, Richard J., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29635 *Augerhead*

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

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

P Thompson, Frank H., 1Lt
CP Emerson, Aubrey L., 2Lt
NAV McConnen, James R., 2Lt
BOM Spencer, Charles W., 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

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-5482 *Cat-O-Nine Tails*

P Loughnan, Victor J., 2Lt
CP Gredvig, Winfield H., 2Lt
NAV Maxwell, James L., 2Lt
BOM Robinson, John M., 2Lt
ENG High, Eugene W., T/Sgt
LWG Knorpp, Billy F., S/Sgt
RO Daley, Russell M., T/Sgt
BT McGee, Kenneth L., S/Sgt
RWG Barr, Gordon E., S/Sgt
TG McConaghy, Leo R., S/Sgt

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

P McClung, Guy H., 1Lt
CP Bolsover, Harold S., F/O
NAV Street, Benjamin B., 1Lt
BOM Rothman, Theodore I., 2Lt
ENG Powell, Marvin F., S/Sgt
RO Roberts, Raymond K., T/Sgt
LWG Robb, Charles W., Sgt
TG Piatek, Casimir P., S/Sgt
BT Joubert, Francis M., Sgt
RWG Robichaud, Joseph E., Sgt

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

P Pentz, Arthur H., 1Lt
CP Mulligan, Thomas E., 2Lt
NAV Antman, Jack, 2Lt
BOM Philpit, Russell O., 1Lt
ENG Dougherty, John A., T/Sgt
BT Edwards, Hurd L., 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 #42-5257 *Miss Bea Haven*

P Brown, Malcolm E., 2Lt
CP Szelwian, Felix T., 2Lt
NAV Alloway, Hillard C., 2Lt
BOM Schreidell, Matthew, 2Lt
ENG Kress, Beryl W., T/Sgt
RO Cirello, Ralph T., T/Sgt
LWG Wright, Malcolm, S/Sgt
BT Wernet, Charles E., Sgt
TG Boggs, Calvin E., S/Sgt
RWG Boucher, Henry C., S/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-29738 *Upstairs Maid*

P Casello, John J., Lt
CP Huguenin, Wesley V., Lt
NAV Henderson, Paul E., Sgt
BOM Cobb, Edward L., Lt
ENG Carnathan, Hugh S., T/Sgt
RWG Gray, Johnnie E., S/Sgt
RO Calco, Anthony, T/Sgt
LWG Frost, Carlyle A., S/Sgt
TT Ponder, Truly S., S/Sgt
TG Stout, Otis T., S/Sgt

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

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
LWG Stachowiak, Martin G., S/Sgt
RO Jillson, John S., S/Sgt
RWG Fisher, George C., S/Sgt
TG Kelly, Thomas F., T/Sgt
BT Ford, Ray D., S/Sgt
PHO Luman, Morton, Sgt

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

P Cogswell, Robert W., Lt
CP Tippet, Paul S., Lt
NAV Kennedy, John D., Lt
NG Stamper, William B., M/Sgt
ENG Bengston, Gilbert E., T/Sgt
RWG Etheredge, Alvin, S/Sgt
RO Deerfield, Eddie, S/Sgt
BT Davis, Paul J., S/Sgt
LWG Brundage, Augustus V., S/Sgt
TG Timm, Harold R., S/Sgt
PHO Kagey, Martin I., Jr., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29931 *Satan's Workshop*

P Clifton, David S., 1Lt
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
RWG Jameson, Jimmie E., S/Sgt
TG Villarreal, Rodolfo A., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5854 *Alley Oop*

P Baker, William T., Lt
CP Gahimer, Loyd D., Lt
NAV McLane, Joseph T., Lt
NG Deffinger, John P., Sgt
ENG Fielder, Neal F., T/Sgt
RWG Bowman, Vergil E., S/Sgt
RO Bonn, Charles J., T/Sgt
BT Dioquardo, Fred J., Sgt
LWG Borrer, Norwood D., S/Sgt
TG Bacon, Charlie M., S/Sgt

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

P Bradbury, Joseph E., Lt
CP Crockett, George W., Jr., Lt
NAV Millner, Israel, Lt
BOM Cramsie, William J., Lt
ENG Tepper, Morris, T/Sgt
RWG Homer, Eddie D., Sgt
RO Jaynes, Allen D., T/Sgt
BT Clarke, Benjamin, Jr., S/Sgt
LWG Williams, Eugene F., S/Sgt
TG Burke, James C., S/Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-3158 Max

| | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 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 |
| RWG | Misiak, Frank L., S/Sgt |
| LWG | Kesky, Leonard A., S/Sgt |
| TG | Tripp, Jesse E., Sgt |

B-17F #42-3002 The Old Squaw

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 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 | Bednarchuk, Antonio, S/Sgt |
| LWG | Micek, John M., S/Sgt |
| RWG | Keaton, Joe 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 |
| LWG | Johnston, Walter J., S/Sgt |
| RWG | Schilling, D.E., Sgt |
| TG | Humphreys, Robert R., S/Sgt |

B-17F #42-29846 (No Name)

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| P | Shelhamer, David P., Jr., Lt |
| CP | Tucker, Frederick W., Lt |
| NAV | Hokans, Carl A., Lt |
| BOM | Lewis, William L., Lt |
| ENG | Willett, John K., S/Sgt |
| BT | Garrett, Frank O., Sgt |
| RO | Harvie, Warren L., T/Sgt |
| TG | Sherg, Anthony W., S/Sgt |
| LWG | Barlow, Elmer O., T/Sgt |
| RWG | Volz, Robert J., S/Sgt |

B-17F #42-29754 Shangrila Lil

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| P | Shope, George W., Jr., Lt |
| CP | Ashwell, Silas B., Lt |
| NAV | Doyle, Robert V., Lt |
| BOM | Reeder, John J., Lt |
| ENG | Walsh, Charles E., T/Sgt |
| BT | Tambe, Angelo J., S/Sgt |
| RO | Ratliff, Leonard E., T/Sgt |
| TG | Hoover, G.W., S/Sgt |
| RWG | Smith, Frank D., S/Sgt |
| LWG | Burns, Arthur J., S/Sgt |

B-17F #42-3131 Flak Wolf

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| P | Rolfson, Jack G., Lt |
| CP | Woddrop, Edward M., Lt |
| NAV | Herman, Charles L., Lt |
| BOM | Smith, Abbott M., Jr., Lt |
| ENG | Good, James K., T/Sgt |
| BT | Bourdon, Louis F., S/Sgt |
| RO | Brandfas, Dale F., T/Sgt |
| TG | Serpa, Joseph E., S/Sgt |
| RWG | Smith, Delvyn, S/Sgt |
| LWG | Fleming, William W., S/Sgt |

B-17F #42-5341 Vicious Virgin

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------|
| P | Strickland, Alexander C., Lt |
| CP | Snyder, Edgar E., Jr., Maj |
| NAV | Illgen, Frederick J., Lt |
| BOM | Butt, Byron K., Lt |
| ENG | Strohsack, R.R., S/Sgt |
| BT | Peck, Raymond R., S/Sgt |
| RO | Martel, Albert E., Jr., T/Sgt |
| TG | Olsen, Curtis M., Lt |
| RWG | McGill, Edward E., S/Sgt |
| LWG | Baart, James C., T/Sgt |