

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 56A

4 August 1943

Crew Loss

The 303rd BG(H) suffered a tragic crew and aircraft loss on 4 August 1943. B-17F #42-3124 (*No Name*), piloted by 1Lt. James N. **Pratt**, crashed on the summit of Arenig Fahr, a 2,800 ft mountain in Snowdonia, Wales (six miles due east of Bala), while on a night cross-country flight. Little is known about why they were flying in this area or about the purpose of the flight.

Eight men in the makeshift 427BS crew were killed. Lt. **Pratt** is buried in Idaho. Co-pilot 2Lt. William A. **Bowling** is buried in Kentucky. Gunner Sgt. Philip **Simonte** is buried in Michigan. Navigator Allen M. **Boner**, Radio Operator T/Sgt. Frederick J. **Royar**, Engineer S/Sgt. Walter J. **Johnston** (whose normal crew position was Left Waist Gunner), Gunner Sgt. Walter B. **Robinson** and Passenger Pfc. Alfred B. **Van Dyke** are buried in Cambridge American Cemetery, England.

Sgts. **Robinson** and **Simonte** and Pfc. **Van Dyke** were not regular members of the 427BS(H) **Pratt** crew. It is not known why they were on the night cross-country flight. Regular **Pratt** crewmen who were not on the night cross-country flight were: 1Lt. Leonard B. **Bierman** Bombardier, S/Sgt. Glen R. **Allen** Ball Turret Gunner; S/Sgt. Joseph E. **Scheuerer** Engineer, S/Sgt. Robert R. **Humphreys** Tail Gunner and Sgt. D. E. **Schilling**, Right Waist Gunner.



427BS Engineering Officer Capt. Quentin **Hargrove** and Capt. Louis A. **Lame**, 303rd Medical Officer, were dispatched to the crash site to investigate.

A group of caring people erected a memorial at the crash site to pay tribute to this unlucky 303rd BG(H) crew that hit the mountain that stood away from the population center of Snowdonia.

Tinley Park



Resolution

A RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION AND FRIENDSHIP
TO THE PEOPLE OF BALA, WALES

Whereas, on August 4, 1943, an American B17 Flying Fortress flying as part of the allied defense of England, crashed and burned in Bala, Wales in the northern mountainous part of that country; and

WHEREAS, the townspeople in an attempt to save the lives of these heroic young men from the United States did immediately go into the mountains to the crash site but regrettably found that all eight crew members had perished; and

WHEREAS, the townspeople from that day to this for over 50 years have recognized the sacrifice of these young Americans with an annual observance and religious service and among those 8 crewmen was 2nd LT. Allan M. Boner of Tinley Park, one of the many Tinley Park men that served in the U. S. Army Corps during the Second World War; and

WHEREAS, this truly extraordinary commitment on behalf of the citizens of Bala, Wales, the Air Crew Association, the Royal British Legion and the Sea Cadets represent the highest standard for international friendship, allied understanding and underscore the special friendship between the peoples of the United States of America and the peoples of the United Kingdom.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, on behalf of the 42,000 citizens of Tinley Park herein represented and the American people that: (1) a plaque of recognition in Appreciation to the citizens of Bala, Wales, be placed in that Village by the people of Tinley Park; and (2) a Resolution of Appreciation be passed by this government with copies presented to the Mayor of Bala, Wales, the Air Crew Association, the Royal British Legion in Bala, the Sea Cadets from the Bala area, the British Consul General in Chicago and to the Welsh American Societies in Illinois.

Edward J. Zabrocki
Village President

Thomas M. DiBernardo, Trustee

Kenneth J. Fulton, Trustee

Gregory J. Hannon, Trustee

Patrick E. Rea, Trustee

Resolution of Appreciation and Friendship to the People of Bala, Wales from the citizens of Tinley Park, Illinois

Presented in June 1995 by Jack Dunn, Mayor of Tinley Park to Chancellor Gwyndaf Hughes, Mayor of Bala and members of the Town Council and the Penllyn Royal British Legion.

The Resolution was initiated by Don Konley of Tinley Park when he discovered a resident of Tinley Park, 2Lt Allen M. Boner, was one of the men killed in the crash.