

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 74

4 October 1943

Target: Aircraft Components Mfg. & Assembly Plant, Frankfurt, Germany

Crews Dispatched: 21

Crews Lost: 1Lt V.J. Loughnan crew, 2 minor casualties

Length of Mission: 6 hours, 15 minutes

Bomb Load: 12 x 1,000 lb G.P. plus M47A1 Incendiary bombs

Bombing Altitude: 23,500 ft

Ammo Fired: 51,360 rounds

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 6 Destroyed, 3 Probables

Frankfurt, Germany was today's target. Six Group B-17s aborted the mission:

#42-29894 *Baltimore Bounce* 359BS (**Clifford**) - The 427BS crew transferred to a spare aircraft and the pilot didn't have an oxygen mask.

#42-5854 *Alley Oop* 360BS (**Cogswell**) and #42-5177 *Fast Worker MK II* 359BS (**Hanselman**) - The pilots thought they were short on gas.

#42-5788 *A.O.G. Not in Stock* 360BS (**Baker**) - The No. 3 engine had a runaway prop.

#41-24629 (*No Name*) 358BS (**Hartigan**) - The interphone was out and the supercharger was lagging.

#42-5257 *Miss Bea Haven* 359BS (**Brown**) - The waist gunner became ill.

The lead bombardier, 1Lt. Byron K. **Butt**, overshot the IP when industrial haze and smoke made it difficult to observe. After several right turns they were back on the bomb run course. Bombs were dropped using the bombsight after a 25-second bomb run.

The fifteen remaining Group aircraft dropped 1,000-lb. bombs plus M47A1 incendiary bombs from 23,500 feet. Four aircraft also carried leaflets. The formation was escorted part of the way into enemy territory by P-47 fighters. However, for the roughest part of the trip—into Germany proper—the bombers flew unescorted. Fortunately, fighter opposition was not too intense at any time. There were about 20 to 25 enemy fighters observed during the unescorted portion of the trip. Most of the attacks came in head on, but not too close. ME-110s made rocket attacks from the rear but caused no damage. Moderate and inaccurate flak was encountered periodically on the way to the target and back.

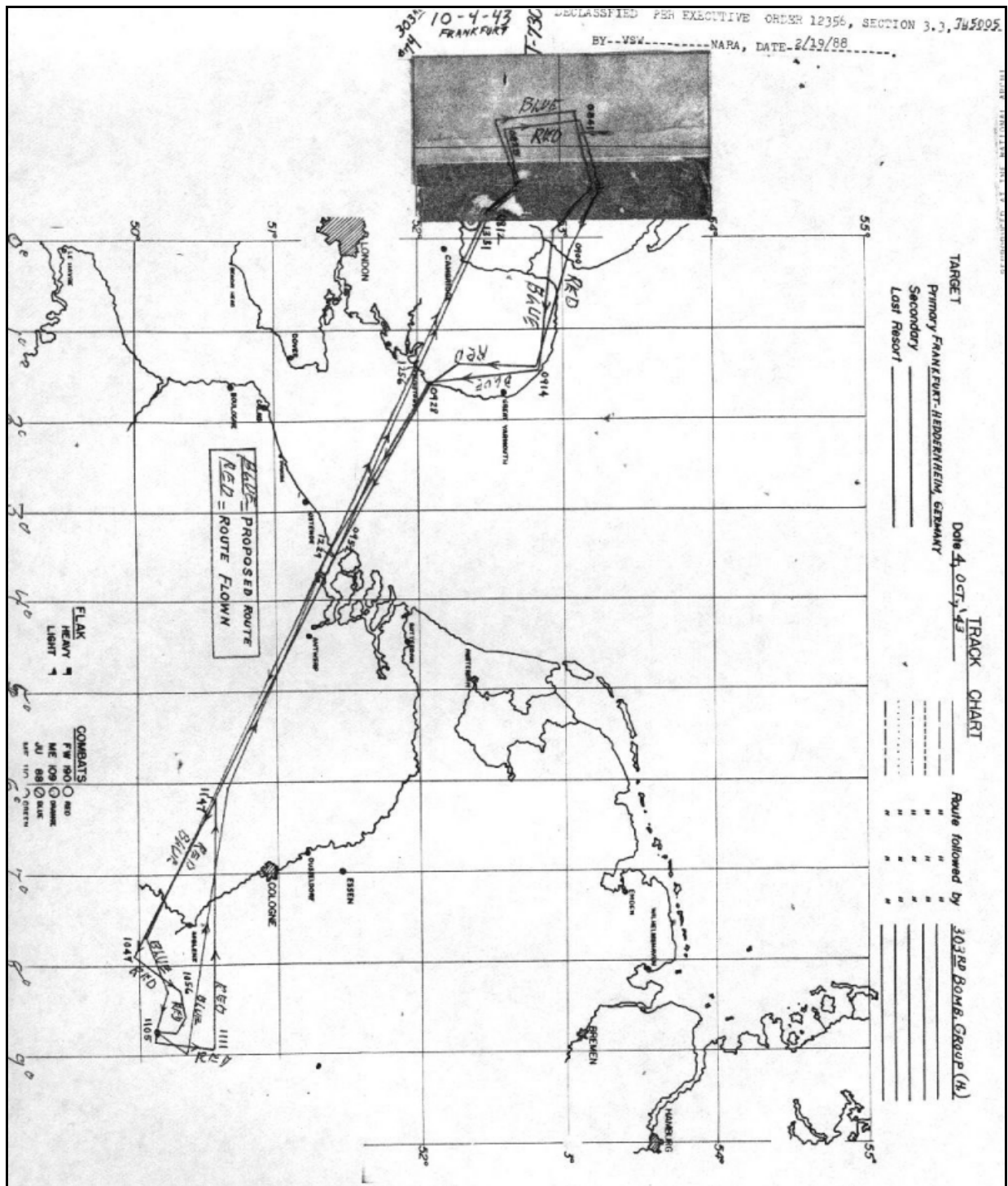
Col. **Stevens** was pleased with the mission, stating, "It was a pretty good show. Those P-47s took us pretty well in and we went on from there alone. We flew into the target without too much trouble from the German fighters, although they were around. They didn't press their attacks as much as they have in the past. We dropped our bombs in a good pattern and got out." His pilot, Capt. Jacob C. **James**, added, "It was a good trip and I think that we did some good."

1Lt. **Sumarlidason**, pilot of the *Meat Hound* 359BS reported, "We saw about 20 to 25 fighters around and during the time we didn't have our P-47 escort. They would attack us off and on singly, but they didn't seem too eager. The P-47s really mixed it up with those Nazis. The bombing looked pretty darned good to me." S/Sgt. Jesse E. **Trip**, waist gunner on *Mr. Five by Five* said, "Fighters certainly gave us swell protection. Those Germans were amateurs compared to the ones up north."

One aircraft, #42-29846 (*No Name*) 359BS piloted by 1Lt. Victor J. **Loughnan**, was reported missing. It was last reported under control, flying on three engines about 12 miles south of Aachen. Returning crewmen believed it had been hit by anti-aircraft fire. It was later learned that it was made inoperative when crewmen tossed out machine guns to lighten their load and one gun hit the No. 3 engine propeller. The crew parachuted southwest of Aachen, Germany, close to the Belgian lines. They were captured and taken to an air base near Aachen. Their B-17 crashed near St. Vith, Belgium. The crewmen were: 1Lt. **Loughnan**, 2Lt. Winfield H. **Gredvig**, 1Lt. James L. **Maxwell**, 1Lt. Edward J. **Pullman**, T/Sgt. Eugene W. **High**, T/Sgt. Russell M. **Daley**, Jr., S/Sgt. Kenneth L. **McGee**, S/Sgt. Gordon E. **Barr**, S/Sgt. Paul C. **Robillard** and S/Sgt. Billy F. **Knorpp**.

Crew Reports of Enemy Aircraft Destroyed or Damaged

Sgt. Jack L. Perryman (416)	ME-110	Destroyed
S/Sgt. Marvin F. Powell (416)	ME-110	Destroyed
T/Sgt. Ralph M. Holper (029)	FW-190	Damaged
2Lt. Harvey M. Salk (565)	ME-109	Destroyed
Sgt. W.E. Rein (477)	ME-110	No Claim
Lt. George Molnar (931)	ME-109	Destroyed
S/Sgt. O.T. Stout (931)	ME-110	Destroyed
S/Sgt. G.R. Allen (221)	ME-110	Probable
T/Sgt. David Tempesta (587)	ME-110	Destroyed
S/Sgt. C.E. Dugan (587)	ME-110	Destroyed



Route Map

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

<u>Stevens-James</u> 955			
<u>Ness</u> 158	<u>McClellan</u> 587		
	<u>Cote</u> 341		
<u>Woddrop</u> 221	<u>Clifford</u> 894		
<u>Sumarlidason</u> 524			
<u>Loughnan</u> 846			<u>Casello</u> 931
<u>Brown</u> 257	<u>Hanselman</u> 177	<u>Baker</u> 788	<u>Heller</u> 973
	<u>Phelps</u> 416		<u>Cogswell</u> 854
<u>Reeder</u> 565	<u>Quinn</u> 029	<u>Hartigan</u> 4629	<u>Brinkley</u> 477
	<u>Hendry</u> 9629		<u>DeCamp</u> 571

Six (6) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. Clifford in 894	Lt. Cogswell in 854
Lt. Hanselman in 177	Lt. Baker in 788
Lt. Hartigan in 4629	Lt. Brown in 257

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<p><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</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>VI - Voice Interpreter OBS - Observer PAS - Passenger PHO - Photographer</p> <p><u>RESULTS OF MISSION</u> KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action POW - Prisoner of war</p>	<p>DOW - Died of wounds EVD - Evaded the enemy INT - Interned in neu cuntry REP - Repatriated RES - Rescued ESC - Escaped BO - Bailed out DCH - Ditched CR-L - Crashed on land CR-S - Crashed at sea</p>
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358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-29629 Connecticut Yankee

P Hendry, John W., Jr., 1Lt
CP Wise, Calder L., 2Lt
NAV McNamara, Bernard T., 2Lt
BOM Webster, Richard E., 2Lt
ENG Biddle, Loran C., T/Sgt
TG Doherty, John J., S/Sgt
RO Brown, James J., T/Sgt
BT Hargrave, Alfred J., Sgt
RWG Raesley, Wilmer G., Sgt
LWG Arasin, John C., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29524 Meat Hound

P Sumarlidason, Arni L., 1Lt
CP Clark, Martin L., 2Lt
NAV Nothstein, John P.D., 2Lt
BOM Spencer, Charles W., 2Lt
ENG Backiel, Stanley J., T/Sgt
RWG Wisniewski, Alexander, Sgt
RO McGuire, Robert J., Sgt
BT Brooks, John W., Sgt
TG Cassidy, Edward J., S/Sgt
LWG Hoy, James F., Sgt

B-17F #42-29571 Charley Horse

P DeCamp, Donald F., 2Lt
CP Emerson, Aubrey L., 2Lt
NAV Haddock, Ralph M., 2Lt
BOM Galbraith, Robert E., 2Lt
ENG Hembree, William T., T/Sgt
RO King, Robert E., Sgt
LWG Hitt, William T., Sgt
BT Witherwax, Leon J., Sgt
TG Tracy, Richard J., S/Sgt
RWG McLawhorn, Jerry C., Sgt

B-17F #41-24629 (No Name)

P Hartigan, William R., 2Lt
CP Goddard, Edward N., 2Lt
NAV Douthett, Lorin F., 2Lt
BOM Dorsey, Bernard F., 2Lt
ENG Resto, Clement, T/Sgt
LWG Lowther, John W., S/Sgt
RO Ward, Robert L., T/Sgt
RWG Dove, Charles J., S/Sgt
BT Stoddard, Val F., S/Sgt
TG Ince, James T., S/Sgt
(Abortive)

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

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

P	Loughnan, Victor J., 1Lt	BO/POW
CP	Gredvig, Winfield H., 2Lt	BO/POW
NAV	Maxwell, James L., 2Lt	BO/POW
BOM	Pullman, Edward J., 2Lt	BO/POW
ENG	High, Eugene W., T/Sgt	BO/POW
TG	Knorpp, Billy F., S/Sgt	BO/POW
RO	Daley, Russell M., T/Sgt	BO/POW
BT	McGee, Kenneth L., S/Sgt	BO/POW
LWG	Barr, Gordon E., S/Sgt	BO/POW
RWG	Robillard, Paul C., Sgt	BO/POW

B-17F #42-3029 Wallaroo

P	Quinn, Thomas J., F/O
CP	Eisenhart, William E., F/O
NAV	Howlett, Oscar D., 2Lt
BOM	Van Zandt, Roland, 2Lt
ENG	Holper, Ralph M., T/Sgt
RWG	Kalafut, Joe J., S/Sgt
RO	Vieira, Joseph, T/Sgt
BT	Bergman, Harvey F., S/Sgt
LWG	Reynolds, James B., S/Sgt
TG	Pelkey, Elwood R., S/Sgt
PHO	Hunter, Robert G., Sgt

B-17F #41-24416 Black Diamond Express

P	Phelps, Robert L., Jr., 1Lt
CP	Bolsover, Harold S., F/O
NAV	Johnson, Lloyd S., 2Lt
BOM	Rothman, Theodore I., 1Lt
ENG	Powell, Marvin F., S/Sgt
TT	Robb, Charles W., Sgt
RO	McGee, Paul P., S/Sgt
BT	Joubert, Francis M., Sgt
TG	Perryman, Jack L., Sgt
LWG	Robichaud, Joseph E., Sgt
PHO	Luman, Morton, S/Sgt

B-17F #41-24565 Idaho Potato Peeler

P	Reeder, D.M., 1Lt
CP	McLean, Ralph C., 2Lt
NAV	Salk, Harvey M., 2Lt
BOM	Vermillion, Earl E., 2Lt
ENG	Herod, Henry W., T/Sgt
RWG	Hayes, John J., S/Sgt
RO	Mowery, Ellis D., T/Sgt
LWG	Hull, Kenneth W., S/Sgt
BT	Wright, Samuel S., S/Sgt
TG	Swan, Henry, S/Sgt

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

P	Hanselman, Charles F., 2Lt
CP	Calwell, Lucien B., 2Lt
NAV	Ramsey, Elijah W., Jr., 2Lt
BOM	Livermore, William D., 2Lt
ENG	Fouss, Howard E., T/Sgt
TT	Laubert, Robert J., S/Sgt
RO	Zitzler, George A., T/Sgt
RWG	Williams, Walter S., S/Sgt
BT	Armstrong, Keith N., S/Sgt
TG	Tybuszewski, Mitchel J., S/Sgt
(Abortive Sortie)	

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	Wright, Malcolm, S/Sgt
RO	Cirello, Ralph T., T/Sgt
LWG	Boucher, Henry C., S/Sgt
BT	Konecko, John, Sgt
TG	Boggs, Calvin E., S/Sgt
RWG	Nordyke, Lloyd E., T/Sgt
(Abortive)	

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

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

P Casello, John J., Capt
CP Jackson, Theodore M., Lt
NAV Molnar, George, Lt
BOM Gibson, Steve M., Lt
ENG Carnathan, Hugh S., T/Sgt
TG Stout, Otis T., S/Sgt
RO Calco, Anthony, T/Sgt
LWG Frost, Carlyle A., S/Sgt
BT Ponder, Truly S., S/Sgt
RWG Gray, Johnnie E., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29477 *Joan of Arc*

P Brinkley, Pharis C., Lt
CP Parrott, John H., Lt
NAV Becker, Sylvester J., Lt
BOM Petrolino, James S., Lt
ENG Worthington, Arthur J., T/Sgt
LWG Lance, Guy A., S/Sgt
RO Snyder, Richard N., T/Sgt
RWG Ferguson, Charles R., S/Sgt
BT Reid, Harold C., S/Sgt
TG Rein, William E., S/Sgt

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

P Baker, William T., 1Lt
CP Gahimer, Loyd D., 2Lt
NAV McLane, Joseph T., Lt
NG Dioquardo, Fred J., Sgt
ENG Fielder, Neal F., T/Sgt
RWG Bowman, Vergil E., S/Sgt
RO Bonn, Charles J., Sgt
BT Stevens, A.S., T/Sgt
TG Borrer, Norwood D., S/Sgt
LWG Pierson, Lawrence C., S/Sgt
(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-2973 *Iza Vailable*

P Heller, William C., Lt
CP Coppom, John F., Lt
NAV Zwayer, James P., Lt
BOM DeSousa, John, Jr., Lt
ENG Huston, William J., T/Sgt
RWG Payne, George S., S/Sgt
RO Spoerri, Felix, T/Sgt
LWG Lanier, Leo, Jr., S/Sgt
BT Schultz, Melvin E., S/Sgt
TG Laurinitis, Anthony, S/Sgt

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

P Cogswell, Robert W., Lt
CP DeWall, Hershel R., Lt
NAV Cobb, Edward L., Lt
BOM Clark, Fred T., Lt
ENG Bengston, Gilbert E., T/Sgt
RWG Oxendine, Simeon, Sgt
RO Deerfield, Eddie, S/Sgt
BT Davis, Paul J., S/Sgt
LWG Peterson, Elmer L., Sgt
TG Deffinger, John P., Sgt
(Abortive)

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #41-24587 *Bad Check*

P	McClellan, George S., Jr., Lt
CP	Greenwood, Ernest G., Lt
NAV	Kaliher, John C., Lt
BOM	Cornish, Merlin L., Lt
ENG	Tempesta, David, T/Sgt
RWG	Chiles, Alfred B., Jr., S/Sgt
RO	Callihan, George A., T/Sgt
BT	Yarian, Robert G., S/Sgt
LWG	Heaton, Barnell S., Sgt
TG	Dugan, Charles E., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-5221 *Son*

P	Woddrop, Edward M., Lt
CP	Henderson, Grover C., Lt
NAV	Iverson, Ingvald M., Lt
BOM	Witt, Walter E., Lt
ENG	Watts, William A., Sgt
BT	Allen, Glen R., S/Sgt
RO	Mulholland, John J., T/Sgt
LWG	Baggs, Charles C., S/Sgt
TG	Valis, William, S/Sgt
RWG	Priestly, Van B., S/Sgt

B-17F #42-3158 *Max*

P	Ness, Howard C., 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 L., S/Sgt
RO	Ratliff, Leonard E., T/Sgt
LWG	McGrew, Robert H., S/Sgt
RWG	Sparks, William C., S/Sgt
TG	Ferguson, Jack D., Sgt

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

P	Stevens, Kermit D., Col
CP	James, Jacob C., Capt
NAV	Strickland, Alexander C., Capt
NAV	Scroggins, Paul W., Lt
BOM	Butt, Byron K., Lt
ENG	Scheuerer, Joseph E., T/Sgt
TG	Misiak, Frank L., S/Sgt
RO	Hamilton, A.J., Sgt
RWG	Whitcomb, Ralph E., Lt
BT	Knight, Frederick B., Sgt
LWG	Tripp, Jesse E., Sgt

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

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	Gomes, Theodore, S/Sgt

B-17F #42-29894 *Baltimore Bounce*

P	Clifford, Bernard J., Lt
CP	Jahn, Charles O., Lt
NAV	Stata, Charles M., Lt
BOM	Bruce, Robert V., Lt
ENG	Dyke, Andrew A., T/Sgt
TT	Horning, A.E., S/Sgt
RO	Hartzog, F.G., T/Sgt
BT	Gale, Charles L., S/Sgt
TG	Heller, W.O., S/Sgt
LWG	McLarty, J.L., S/Sgt

(Abortive)

The day following Mission No. 74, October 5, 1943, was the day 303rd BG(H) Pilots 2Lt **Jack W. Watson** and 2Lt **Robert W. Sheets** gained fame when they buzzed the World Series game at Yankee Stadium in New York City. Watson, Sheets and two other crews were en route to England bases to fly combat missions. The following account was written by the son of Navigator 2Lt Harold Rocketto.

Outfield Fly

by **Hap Rocketto**

first published in

Air & Space Magazine August/September 1993

The 1943 World Series had all the hallmarks of a classic. In a rematch of the previous year's antagonists, the St. Louis Cardinals would attempt to repeat their resounding win over the New York Yankees. The 1942 Cardinals had not been given much of a chance against the New York powerhouse, but with the batting of rookie Stan Musial and the pitching of Johnny Beazley they defeated a team that had won six league championships in seven years.

But the nation's war effort was gobbling up manpower at a prodigious rate. No one knew who might be playing ball in 1944, or if there would even be a 1944 season. It looked as if this might be the last great series for the duration of the war, which is why the first game drew over 68,000 fans to Yankee Stadium.

As the teams took batting practice and the pitchers warmed up, four Army Air Forces B-17 bombers were droning toward New York City on their way to combat bases in England. At the navigator's station of *Thru Helen Highwater* [42-39785], sat my uncle, Second Lieutenant Harold Rocketto of Brooklyn. Second Lieutenant Jack Watson was the pilot; the other bombers were piloted by Second Lieutenants Robert Sheets, Elmer Young, and Joseph Wheeler.

As Rocketto, a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, scanned the landscape trying to pick out boyhood haunts in the Bensonhurst section, the idle chatter on the intercom turned to the World Series. No one is sure what sparked the next move. Perhaps it was Rocketto's desire to seek revenge against the Yankees for their 1941 victory over the Dodgers. Then again, perhaps it was just the high spirits of young men facing a dangerous future. Whatever the reason, the fans at Yankee Stadium were about to be treated to an impromptu demonstration of the nation's bomber force.

As the aircraft crossed the Hudson River, the pilots headed for the Bronx and put the formation into a shallow dive. Picking up speed, the bombers thundered over Yankee Stadium in a low pass from home plate to center field. After they climbed out the B-17s wheeled about and circled the field while Watson returned for an encore. He cleared the upper-deck flagpoles by a mere 25 feet, prompting the Associated Press to later report that "an Army bomber roared over Yankee Stadium so low that Slat Martin could have fielded it." Watson then rejoined the formation and headed east.

"We knew we were heading for a combat zone and dropping in on the World Series seemed like a good idea at the time," Wheeler told a reporter months later. "The announcers must have thought it was part of the show because after we went over the first time we could hear them on the plane radio talking about the big Air Force review. We figured they were enjoying it so we turned around and came over a second time. We thought nothing about it until later when we found we had caused a sensation."

New York mayor Fiorello La Guardia, a World War I Army pilot, was watching as the bombers swooped overhead. La Guardia initially appreciated the panache of the young men, but admiration quickly gave way to his greater duty as mayor. Outraged, he burned up the phone lines to the Army Air Forces brass. "That pilot should be properly disciplined, endangering the lives of the citizenry of New York in that manner," he fumed.

When they landed at Presque Isle Airfield in Maine, Watson and the three other pilots were confined to quarters while court martial proceedings were undertaken. They were released a few days later when the Army realized it was foolish to keep four badly needed aircraft and crews out of combat because of a youthful indiscretion. "Besides," a general told Watson, "you and your crew will probably be killed anyway."

Five days after the buzzing brouhaha the four aircraft continued their journey to England, each pilot's military record heavier by a letter of reprimand and his wallet lighter by a \$75 fine - no small sum to a second lieutenant back then.

Because of wartime news restrictions so tight that sports announcers were forbidden to comment on the weather lest the enemy pick up valuable intelligence, the buzzing incident went almost entirely unreported. The names of the crews were unknown to all but the authorities until three months later.

January 11, 1944, was one of the costliest days of air combat in history. Some 60 U.S. bombers were destroyed and more than 600 airmen were killed, wounded, or reported missing. On that terrible day, Watson, flying with the 303rd Bomb Group, single-handedly returned his badly shot-up and burning bomber to England. In a radio interview he brought up the stadium incident by voicing hope that the mayor of New York was not still sore at him. After hearing the interview, La Guardia sent Watson a message: "All is forgiven. Congratulations. I hope you never run out of altitude. Happy landings. We'll be seeing you soon."

"Thank you, Mr. Mayor, and it can't be too soon for me." Watson replied, then added, "We'd sort of like to go back together some day and drop in on the Rose Bowl game."