

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 92

24 December 1943

Target: Construction works at Vacqueriette, France

Crews Dispatched: 27 plus 3 spares

Length of Mission: 4 hours, 25 minutes

Bomb Load: 16 x 300 lb G.P. bombs

Bombing Altitude: 14,000 ft

Ammo Fired: 230 rounds

The twenty-seven aircraft of the 303rd BG(H) carried sixteen 300-lb. G.P. bombs. There were no abortives and all aircraft returned. Anti-aircraft fire was negligible and 303rd BG(H) aircraft suffered no attacks.

Major **Snyder** led the 41st CBW. Eighteen of his aircraft made their bomb run, but Lt. J.E. **McCormick** the bombardier, could not locate the target. The formation flew one mile north of the target and Navigator Lt. P.W. **Scroggins** tried to put the formation back on course for another run on the target. Other Squadrons, however, were running on targets on each side of the 303rd BG(H), so the bombing attempt was abandoned. On *Connecticut Yankee* 358BS, piloted by Lt. E.S. **Harrison**, Jr., Bombardier, Lt. E.J. **Biedanski** (427BS crew) believed that he positively identified the target and their bombs were dropped with unobserved results. The other seventeen B-17s of the formation returned with their bombs to Molesworth.



Captain John Casello

The nine aircraft led by Captain John **Casello**, flying as lead for the 41st CBS Composite Group, dropped their bombs on the target with excellent results. Capt. **Casello** reported that the mission was a breeze. "There were no enemy fighters and no flak. I think that there were so many of our fighters over the target that the Germans couldn't get off the ground," he said. Capt. Louis **Schulstad**, lead ship co-pilot, said it was "just like flying to Liverpool, only the weather was better than it would have been at Liverpool." T/Sgt. Neal F. **Felder**, top turret gunner on *Alley Oop* said, "If I had to do one of my missions over in order to finish up, I'd pick this one any day." Capt. Jack **Fawcett**, lead Squadron bombardier, was certain that his bombing results were good. "We had a perfect bomb run and I am sure that we smashed the target. We had no interference from anything," he said.

From the Journal of 2Lt Vern L. Moncur, 359th BS Pilot

MISSION #2

Date: December 24, 1943

Target: Vacqueriette, France

Plane: N-029 "Wallaroo"

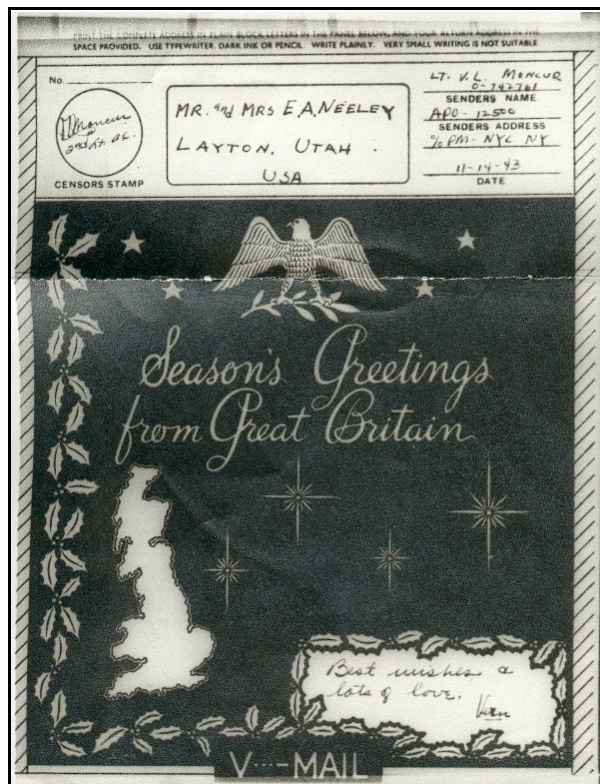
Position: No. 3, Lead Squadron

Altitude: 12,000 feet

This was our first mission into France. The target was the German "secret weapon" installation in the Pas de Calais area. We encountered no fighters or flak - apparently the Germans didn't know just how much our bombers knew about their targets and they didn't want to reveal their flak installations and aerial defenses.

Just before reaching our target, the No. 4 supercharger began to over-speed. Soon afterward, oil poured out over the cowlings and the No. 4 engine caught fire. The propeller was feathered and the engine stopped immediately. The crew was alerted to be ready to abandon ship. But luckily, the fire was apparently blown out by the slipstream. We could not hold our position in formation as the group made a 2000 foot climb immediately after passing over the target. We had to drop out of formation. It was impossible to stay in position on three engines with a full load of bombs while making this rapid 2000 foot climb. We fell back to "tail-end Charlie" (sometimes known as "coffin corner" or "Purple Heart Alley") and stayed in this position from the target back to our base.

We returned to base on three engines with a full load of bombs. To further complicate an already ticklish situation, we found our base completely covered with haze and fog. This made it almost impossible to locate the field and get in. We made our return flight over England at an altitude of 500 to 600 feet. Our bomb load was 16 three-hundred pound demolition bombs. There was no injury to crew, or battle damage to the plane. This was a rather novel way of celebrating Christmas Eve.



Christmas V-Mail
from 2Lt Vern L. Moncur to his in-laws

MY 24TH MISSION—VACQUERIETTE, FRANCE
Unusual Experiences of Lt. Jack Fawcett—Group Bombardier

Becoming a bombardier was my first choice for combat training. I went directly from pre-flight training at Santa Ana, California to Bombardier School at Albuquerque, New Mexico. And when, upon graduating, I was selected as an instructor, I asked for an assignment to combat training. Hence, England and the 303rd Bombardment Group in early May of 1943—and eventually Group Bombardier.

We were one of the earliest replacement crews and were assigned to the 360th Bomb Squadron. I was fortunate to be a member of Lt John Casello's crew. Fortunate, because John was a first class pilot besides being an intelligent, thoughtful person. Under the aegis of his skill—plus a generous portion of good luck—John and crew came through their tour of duty unharmed.

On 27 August 1943, my 18th mission we went to Watten, France. The 303rd led with me as Bombardier with (then) Major Calhoun piloting "Satan's Workshop." The bomb run was at a dangerously low altitude into a murderous barrage of accurate flak. But we hit our target!

On 24 December 1943, on my 24th mission we went to Vacqueriette, France. This was a maximum effort with several composite groups and squadrons—again, flying in at perilously low altitudes. The 360th Bomb Squadron led a second composite group — John Casello and crew was in the lead plane. Visibility was terrible, but teamed with our navigator, Lt. Larry Effinger, I was able to spot the target in time to make a hurried bomb run to place our bomb load on the target.

Our 360th Composite group was the only element that day to find and to hit the assigned target—a V-1 site.



Vicious Virgin #42-5341 (427BS) GN-Q
41st CBW Lead - Pilot Maj E.E. Snyder / CoPilot 1Lt R.J. Hullar

Maj E.E. Snyder (P), 1Lt R.J. Hullar (CP), Lt P.W. Scroggins (N),
Lt E.L. Brown (N), Lt J.E. McCormick (B), Lt E.G. Greenwood (TG-O)
T/Sgt D.W. Rice (E), S/Sgt N.A. Sampson (BT), T/Sgt G.F. Hoyt (R,
S/Sgt M.D. Miller (WG), S/Sgt C. Fullem (WG)
(crewmen are not in order)

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

		<u>Snyder-Hullar</u> 341		
		<u>Harrison</u> 629		<u>McGarry</u> 081
			<u>Humphreys</u> 060	
		<u>Hoeg</u> 823		<u>Simmons</u> 786
			<u>Sheets</u> 264	
		<u>Barnes</u> 795		<u>Fowler</u> 619
			<u>Carothers</u> 893 - Spare	
	_____			<u>Manning</u> 314
_____		_____		<u>Moncur</u> 029
	_____			<u>Bolsover</u> 605
_____		_____		<u>Daub</u> 894
	_____			<u>Quinn</u> 306
_____		_____		<u>Shoup</u> 561
	_____			<u>Goolsby</u> 448 - Spare
				<u>Stoullil</u> 177
				<u>Young</u> 213
				<u>Newell</u> 807

Composite Group with 384th Group

Casello-Schulstad

841

Holdcroft

927

Gahimer

854

Long

055

Glass

054

Crook

794

Bergeron

795

Bordelon

787

Wilson

788

Burkitt

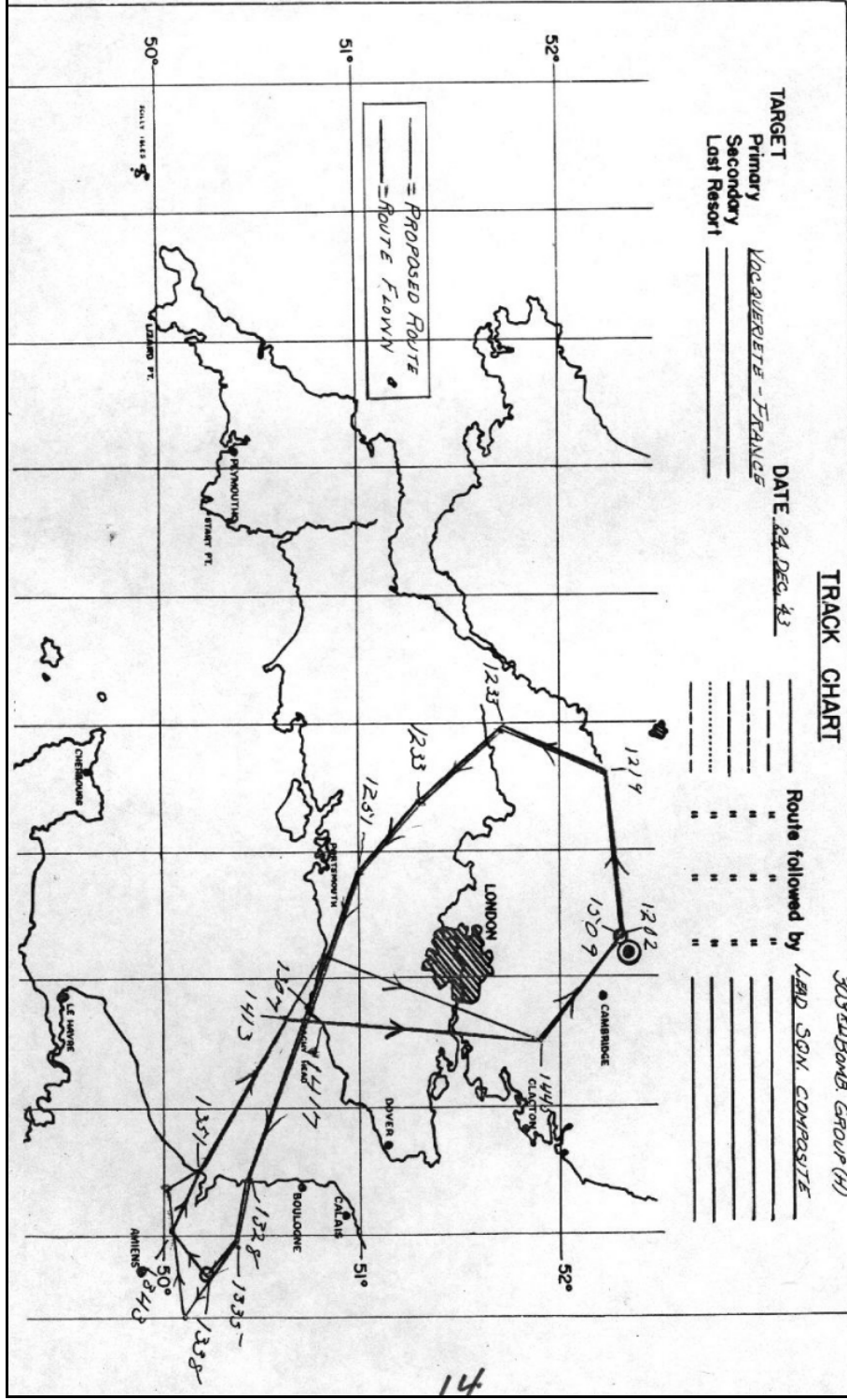
810 - Spare

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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303 12-24-43
#02 VARQUERIE T-733

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12256, SECTION 3.3, 745005
BY VSW NARA DATE 5/18/88



TARGET
Primary
Secondary
Last Resort

VARQUERIE - FRANCE

DATE 24 DEC 43

TRACK CHART

Route followed by

LEAD SQN COMPOSITE

303 BOMB GROUP (H)

Route Map

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

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

P	Daub, Leroy E., 2Lt
CP	Harrison, Weldon O., 2Lt
NAV	Palmer, Gerald M., 2Lt
BOM	Marlatt, Ray G., 2Lt
ENG	Haman, Ray T., Sgt
RO	Kelly, Victor S., S/Sgt
TT	McConaghy, Leo R., S/Sgt
LWG	Carter, Edward K., Sgt
BT	Gilmore, Charles E., Sgt
TG	Considine, Louis W., S/Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17G #42-39807 *Nero*

P	Newell, Noel N., 2Lt
CP	Donalson, Douglas C., 2Lt
NAV	Rhoads, Lester A., 2Lt
BOM	Hoover, William L., 2Lt
ENG	Freinwald, Earl C., S/Sgt
LWG	McGee, Richard, Sgt
RO	Weepie, Robert F., S/Sgt
TG	Atkinson, William E., Sgt
BT	Munson, James E., Sgt
RWG	Mendel, Myron R., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

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

P	Shoup, Noel E., 2Lt
CP	Litherland, James, 2Lt
NAV	Clark, Byron F., 2Lt
BOM	Ulbricht, Walter E., 2Lt
ENG	Bragg, Ben W., S/Sgt
RWG	Gribble, Robert F., Sgt
RO	Harrison, Donald B., Sgt
LWG	Asvestos, Nick, S/Sgt
BT	Hostetter, William L., Jr., Sgt
TG	Ross, Harry C., Sgt
PHO	Green, William H., Jr., T/Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-5306 (*No Name*)

P	Quinn, Thomas J., 2Lt
CP	Eisenhart, William E., 2Lt
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., S/Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

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

P	Bolsover, Harold S., 2Lt
CP	Rice, Charles M., 2Lt
NAV	Ramsey, Elijah W., Jr., 2Lt
BOM	Stein, William G., 2Lt
ENG	Hayes, John J., S/Sgt
TG	Robb, Charles W., Sgt
RO	Mouser, Lloyd C., S/Sgt
BT	Joubert, Francis M., S/Sgt
LWG	Hull, Kenneth W., S/Sgt
RWG	Hermann, Kurt J., II, T/Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-3029 *Wallaroo*

P	Moncur, Vern L., 2Lt
CP	Cunningham, Billy A., 2Lt
NAV	Brooks, James, 2Lt
BOM	Chang, David K.S., 2Lt
ENG	Rosier, Robert L., S/Sgt
RO	Andrus, James S., S/Sgt
BT	Hein, Walter E., Sgt
RWG	Baer, Richard K., Sgt
LWG	Dickman, Thomas J., Sgt
TG	Wike, Leonard L., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

B-17F #42-3448 (No Name)

P	Goolsby, Billy M., 2Lt
CP	Savage, John N., 2Lt
NAV	Towberman, P.E., Lt
BOM	Bowen, Richard R., 2Lt
ENG	Bumgarner, Donald, T/Sgt
LWG	Rothrock, Harry J., Sgt
RO	Greenhalgh, Chester W., S/Sgt
BT	Chraniuk, William, S/Sgt
TG	Strobel, William A., Sgt
RWG	Cueto, Frank Z., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie - Spare)

B-17G #42-31177 Lonesome Polecat

P	Stoulil, Donald W., 2Lt
CP	Callahan, Edward F., 2Lt
NAV	Susskind, Harold A., 2Lt
BOM	Trawicki, George J., 2Lt
ENG	Romer, Eugene A., Sgt
LWG	Brown, William F., Jr., Sgt
RO	Owen, James C., Sgt
BT	Holder, Kenneth L., Sgt
RWG	Greene, George P., Jr., Sgt
TG	Turkington, Calvin G., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17G #42-31314 Scorchy

P	Manning, John P., 1Lt
CP	Blossom, George H., 2Lt
NAV	Jacobsen, Norman N., Capt
BOM	Clark, Fred T., 1Lt
ENG	Keesling, George R., T/Sgt
TG	Jennings, Harley F., S/Sgt
RO	Fitzsimmons, Kenneth P., T/Sgt
RWG	Santella, Albert C., S/Sgt
BT	Mace, LeRoy L., S/Sgt
LWG	McKenna, Robert I., S/Sgt
PAS	Barrett, Jesse M., Maj

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17G #42-31213 Pistol Packin' Mama

P	Young, Elmer W., 2Lt
CP	Sassone, Joseph C., 2Lt
NAV	Schoner, George R., 2Lt
BOM	Yelsky, Fred B., 2Lt
ENG	Steele, John C., S/Sgt
RO	Dulick, Steve, S/Sgt
BT	Lebeck, Richard H., Sgt
RWG	Rohaly, Andrew, Jr., Sgt
LWG	Withrow, John W., Sgt
TG	Stapelton, Bill, Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-39787 *Wanton Woman*

P	Bordelon, Berton A., Lt
CP	Coons, Charles L., Lt
NAV	Cromwell, Frederick P., Lt
BOM	Cottrell, John W., Lt
ENG	Barker, Forrest, S/Sgt
RWG	Adams, Donald K., Sgt
RO	Fontana, Joseph L., S/Sgt
LWG	Patterson, Harry L., Sgt
BT	Harrington, Joseph F., Sgt
TG	Couch, Ted, Sgt

(Sortie)

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

P	Gahimer, Loyd D., 2Lt
CP	Underwood, George E., Lt
NAV	McLane, Joseph T., Lt
BOM	Stamper, William B., M/Sgt
ENG	Fielder, Neal F., T/Sgt
RWG	Bowman, Vergil E., S/Sgt
RO	Bonn, Charles J., Sgt
BT	Deffinger, John P., S/Sgt
TG	Bacon, Charlie M., S/Sgt
LWG	Borrer, Norwood D., S/Sgt

(Sortie)

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

P	Wilson, Fred F., Lt
CP	Bowen, James W., Lt
NAV	Przybyszewski, Henry S., Lt
BOM	Fahlbusch, Joseph F., Lt
ENG	Goland, Harry, S/Sgt
RWG	Pierson, Lawrence C., S/Sgt
RO	Mirkin, Herman H., S/Sgt
LWG	Petree, Wendell R., Sgt
BT	Webbink, Elvin F., Sgt
TG	Huble, Warren G., Sgt

(Sortie)

B-17G #42-31055 *Aloha*

P	Long, John A., Lt
CP	Earhart, Amon E., Lt
NAV	Carroll, George M., Lt
BOM	Cascio, Guiseppe, Lt
ENG	Wilson, Clarence G., T/Sgt
LWG	Ledley, Albert J., S/Sgt
RO	Jennings, Ralph T., T/Sgt
RWG	Henson, Mace, S/Sgt
TG	Orlando, Anthony T., S/Sgt
BT	Ayres, Arthur B., S/Sgt

(Sortie)

B-17G #42-39794 *(No Name)*

P	Crook, Charles D., Lt
CP	Evans, Ernest N., Lt
NAV	Davis, Roscoe, Lt
BOM	DeLuca, Joseph, F/O
ENG	Tharp, Willard L., S/Sgt
RWG	Chavez, Salvador, Sgt
RO	Hannan, Robert J., S/Sgt
LWG	Williams, Norris R., Sgt
BT	Cheek, Roy A., Sgt
TG	Hensley, James H., Sgt

(Sortie)

B-17F #42-5054 *Belle of San Joaquin*

P	Glass, Henry F., Lt
CP	McMahan, Eugene A. Lt
NAV	Pepe, Nicholas A., Lt
BOM	Robrock, Paul A., Lt
ENG	Patrone, Frank, S/Sgt
LWG	Stellato, Francis A., Sgt
RO	Miller, Gordon R., S/Sgt
RWG	Carbillano, Dominick J., Sgt
BT	Michael, David O., Sgt
TG	Roberts, James E., Sgt
PHO	Nilson, Arthur C., Jr., Sgt

(Sortie)

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

B-17G #42-37841 *Banshee*

P	Casello, John J., Capt
CP	Schulstad, Louis M., Capt
NAV	Effinger, Lawrence E., Capt
BOM	Fawcett, Jack B., Capt
ENG	Carnathan, Hugh S., T/Sgt
TG	Huguenin, Wesley V., Lt
RO	Calco, Anthony, T/Sgt
LWG	Frost, Carlyle A., S/Sgt
BT	Ponder, Truly S., S/Sgt
RWG	Gray, Johnnie E., S/Sgt

(Sortie)

B-17G #42-39795 *Ladies Home Companion*

P	Bergeron, Willard H., Lt
CP	DeWall, Hershel R., Lt
NAV	Noland, James B., Lt
BOM	DeFeis, Robert N., Lt
ENG	Serwa, Alphonse B., T/Sgt
RWG	Oxendine, Simeon, S/Sgt
RO	Cline, Leroy, T/Sgt
BT	Hemmings, Norman A., S/Sgt
LWG	Wilson, George W., S/Sgt
TG	Appleton, Vernon R., S/Sgt

(Sortie)

B-17G #42-39810 *Big A Bird*

P	Burkitt, Benajah G., Lt
CP	Kuhn, Harold J., Lt
NAV	Foote, Herbert A., Jr., Lt
BOM	Reith, Fred J., Lt
ENG	Brown, Lee C., Sgt
TG	Rush, Cleve C., Sgt
RO	Cantrell, A.D., S/Sgt
BT	Berntzen, Arthur O., Sgt
RWG	Friedman, Szymon A., Sgt
LWG	Stoffregen, W.E., Sgt

(Abortive - Spare)

B-17G #42-37927 *(No Name)*

P	Holdcroft, Lloyd L., Lt
CP	Bradley, Clyde W., Jr., Lt
NAV	Pace, Charles M., Lt
BOM	Riley, Milton S., Lt
ENG	DeMarco, John A., S/Sgt
RWG	Hustus, Walter L., Sgt
RO	Francis, Walter G., S/Sgt
LWG	Slusser, Walter C., Sgt
BT	Kern, Lloyd F., Sgt
TG	Krumholz, Robert A., Sgt

(Sortie)

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17F #42-29823 (No Name)

P	Hoeg, Kenneth A., F/O
CP	O'Hare, Phil W., Lt
NAV	Olsen, Kenneth L., Lt
BOM	Cronin, Ernest L., Lt
ENG	Relyea, Ralph R., S/Sgt
BT	McMahan, Bonnar P., Sgt
RO	Cohen, Leo, S/Sgt
TG	Vargas, Michael A., Sgt
LWG	McFall, Leonard C., Sgt
RWG	McLaughlin, Jesse W., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17G #42-31060 Poque Ma Hone

P	Humphreys, Fred C., Lt
CP	Clemons, James H., Lt
NAV	Culpin, John J., Jr., Lt
BOM	Orvis, George T., Jr., Lt
ENG	Janisch, Ferdinand J., T/Sgt
LWG	Madak, Edward P., S/Sgt
RO	Woods, Arthur H., T/Sgt
BT	Ross, Madison H., S/Sgt
RWG	Dare, Melvin M., S/Sgt
TG	Sparks, William C., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-5081 Luscious Lady

P	McGarry, John J., Jr., Lt
CP	Cotham, Willie C., Lt
NAV	Halligan, Robert W., Lt
BOM	Foe, Kenneth D., Lt
ENG	Grace, Henry J., S/Sgt
BT	Friedman, Ira, Sgt
RO	Wilson, Elmer A., S/Sgt
TG	Kowalonek, Walter A., Sgt
LWG	Brown, Edgar S., Sgt
RWG	Hilborn, Ervin, Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-5341 Vicious Virgin

P	Snyder, Edgar E., Maj
CP	Hullar, Robert J., Lt
NAV	Scroggins, Paul W., Lt
NAV	Brown, Elmer L., Lt
BOM	McCormick, James E., Lt
ENG	Rice, Dale W., S/Sgt
RO	Hoyt, George F., S/Sgt
BT	Sampson, Norman A., S/Sgt
LWG	Miller, Merlin D., S/Sgt
RWG	Fullem, Charles, S/Sgt
TG	Greenwood, Ernest G., Lt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-5264 Yankee Doodle Dandy

P	Sheets, Robert W., Lt
CP	McCall, Robert S., Lt
NAV	Peacock, Lawrence A., Lt
BOM	Wallen, George A., Lt
ENG	Souder, Lee F., Jr., S/Sgt
BT	King, Earl J., Sgt
RO	Du Bray, Ernest D., S/Sgt
TG	Sullens, Tom C., Sgt
LWG	Donnelly, James F., Sgt
RWG	Smith, Leonard C., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

B-17F #42-29795 Flying Bitch

P	Barnes, Deane L., Lt
CP	Raistrick, Albert G., Lt
NAV	Randall, Everett Z., Lt
BOM	Roode, William A.T., Lt
ENG	Sparks, Willie T., S/Sgt
BT	Chancellor, John R., Sgt
RO	Doyle, Edward J., S/Sgt
TG	Underwood, Clifford B., Sgt
LWG	Winters, Craig W., Sgt
RWG	Price, John B., Sgt

(Abortive Sortie)

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

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

P	Fowler, James F., Lt
CP	Rawlings, Bernard W., Lt
NAV	Eccleston, Edward F., Lt
BOM	Taylor, Alvin L., Lt
ENG	Finley, Curtis E., T/Sgt
BT	Jackson, Miller O., Sgt
RO	Dinwiddie, Donald J., S/Sgt
TG	Ferguson, Jack D., Sgt
LWG	Arrington, Richard, S/Sgt
RWG	Zimmer, Loren E., Sgt
(Abortive Sortie)	

B-17F #42-29629 *Connecticut Yankee*

P	Harrison, Emmittes S., Jr., Lt
CP	Jenkins, Elton L., Lt
NAV	Kurnik, Walter F., Lt
BOM	Biedanski, Edmund J., Lt
ENG	Rombach, Joseph H., S/Sgt
BT	Dye, James W., S/Sgt
RO	Volmer, Lawrence O., S/Sgt
TG	Burkett, Albert S., Sgt
LWG	Campbell, Walter C., Sgt
RWG	Hawk, Kenneth L., Sgt
(Abortive Sortie)	

B-17G #42-39786 *G.I. Sheets*

P	Simmons, Thomas L., Lt
CP	Reichel, Fred E., Lt
NAV	Clyatt, William L., Jr., Lt
BOM	Vaughan, R.W., Lt
ENG	Elliott, W.S., S/Sgt
BT	DiPietra, Dante C., Sgt
RO	Bennett, Joseph A., S/Sgt
TG	Hasty, Wesley L., Sgt
LWG	Stewart, Robert D., Sgt
RWG	Livingston, Robert F., Sgt
(Abortive Sortie)	

B-17G #42-37875 *Bam Bam*

P	Carothers, John W., Lt
CP	Frost, Charles E., Lt
NAV	Linnehan, Arthur, Lt
BOM	Barriscale, Howard W., Lt
ENG	Scott, Harvey E., S/Sgt
BT	Peavy, Robert T., Sgt
RO	Rajcula, George S., S/Sgt
TG	Ziegler, Roland R., Sgt
LWG	Morneau, Francis J., Sgt
RWG	Hadley, Owen W., Sgt
(Abortive - Spare)	

RAF COMMENDATION

The following commendation was received from a Sergeant of the Royal Air Force

On behalf of the boys and myself of this Squadron, I wish to show my appreciation and admiration for the boys of the US Army Air Corps for the way they carried out their hazardous undertakings in the present conflict.

When we are given a target at briefing, for instance-I quote Manheim-it so happens on one occasion the USAAC boys had been in the vicinity the day before our attack took place. On reaching the target, much to our surprise, we found very few fighters there. Our thanks went out to your boys for the splendid job they had done the previous day. So, now if we are given a target to which your boys have been on the previous day or so, our thanks go out silently to them for we realize they have made our job easier.

We wish to congratulate them on the marvelous job they have done, and we look forward to the day when, as a happy throng, we can celebrate a job well done and brought to a victorious close.

Wishing you good hunting, good luck, and more than anything else, safe returns. Hit them hard where it hurts the most..



24 Dec 1943 Children's Christmas Party
Colonel Kermit Stevens and smiling children
surround Father Christmas (1Lt Wightman A. Roach)

24 DECEMBER 1943--303RD BOMB GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY

A lone Flying Fortress circled for a landing at Molesworth, wildly shooting red and green flares, while 200 British children between the ages of five and 14 stood and gazed up with awe and anticipation on their faces. Early in the afternoon of 24 December, kids gathered from local schools and churches by Chaplain **Edmund J. Skoner** were sweating out the arrival of Father Christmas, who was aboard the American bomber dispatched to ferry him from the North Pole.

As the Fort landed and taxied around the perimeter, it took the combined efforts of 40 soldiers to prevent the kids from swarming over the ship before it stopped. But, when the waist door opened and the red-cloaked Father Christmas stepped out with his bag of toys, not even the Fifth Army could have held back the charge of the children. Just try to hold on to five to eight-year-old kids when they want to go anywhere.

Earlier in the day, the kids had stuffed themselves on G. I. chow and laughed at Mickey Mouse in the Base theater. Old Pappy Christmas was the climax of the party and led his young guests back to the Red Cross Aero Club via jeep. Here the kids queued up to get their Christmas gifts, contributed by the G. I.s who had scoured shops on leave and shared their own Christmas packages. Candy, saved from PX rations, was a big hit with the kids and the ice cream disappeared faster than the Red Cross girls could dish it out. The English kids favored sweets the same as American kids and probably had a lot of tummy aches that night.

The queen of the party, by mutual consent, was Miss **Monique Hoefrons**, a petite and radiantly glowing nine-year-old young lady. The host for the day was Colonel **Kermit D. Stevens**, who escorted Monique to lunch and to the party. Monique said, "It was a very nice party. I am sure that we all had a lovely time." 1Lt **Wightman A. Roach**, who played Father Christmas, liked kids and was perfect for this part. Sgt **Henry C. Pendl**, T/Sgt **Harold E. Rush**, Sgt **Byron J. Openshaw** and Pvt **Alfred Tornlino** also served on the entertainment committee. The Base Assistant Director of the Red Cross Aero Club, Miss **Lucille H. Parker**, of New York City, took charge of the party.