

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 116

3 March 1944

Target: V.K.F. Ball Bearing Works, Erkner (Berlin), Germany

Crews Dispatched: 27

Crew Members Lost or Wounded: 1 crewman frostbitten,
1 crewman injured from accident in A/C

Length of Mission: 6 hours, 10 minutes

Bomb Load: 42 x M47 Incendiaries

Bombing Altitude: Failed to reach target due to weather

Ammo Fired: 120 rounds

Colonel Kermit D. **Stevens** lead the 41st Combat Wing. Lt. R.W. **Sheets** was scheduled to lead the 303BG-A formation, but aborted the mission. LtCol. Lewis E. **Lyle** (DCO 303BG) flew as pilot with 1Lt. Jack **Watson** in *Ole George* #42-31574 358BS-G, leading the 358BG high Squadron 303BG-A formation. Maj. Jesse M. **Barrett**, Group S-2 Officer, went along as a passenger. There were twenty aircraft in the lead group of the 41st CB Wing and seven aircraft in the low squadron of the high group of the 41st CB Wing. Three aircraft returned early:

#42-31224 *Hell in the Heavens*, 358BS-F (**Snyder**) - the No. 2 prop governor failed.

#42-39875 *Buzz Blonde*, 427BS-S (**Sheets**) - Nos. 3 and 4 generators out.

#42-37875 *Empress of D Street*, 427BS-A (**Melton**) - #3 engine failure.

There was 8/10 cloud cover at the Danish coast with mounting clouds and poor weather over the target. There were dense, persistent contrails at altitude. The Group turned back before reaching the target and no bombs were dropped. Scattered meager and inaccurate flak was seen, but no enemy aircraft were seen. All aircraft returned safely and there were no casualties.

Returning crew members reported a collision between 91BG and 94BG B-17s at 27,000 feet. The aircraft exploded and crashed two miles northeast of Hamburg at 1125 hours. No parachutes were seen.

FOR THE FIRST TIME: TARGET-BERLIN

3 March 1944 — Mission # 116

Ed Miller's Memories & Recollections

The Eighth Air Force selected Berlin as its target for the first time. There would be five (5) Combat Wings of B-17s and B-24s striking targets in the Berlin suburbs. The 41st Combat Wing was to strike the V.K.F. Ball Bearing Works in Erkner, which is about 7 miles from the center of Berlin. The Eighth Air Force will be led by the 94th Combat Wing, followed by the 1st Combat Wing, then the Composite Combat Wing, then the 40th Combat Wing, with the 41st Combat Wing bringing up the rear of the 1st Air Division's strike force. Each of the Wings will maintain a 4 minute separation.

The 3rd Air Division, with 4 Combat Wings will follow the 1st Air Division and strike the Robert Bosch A.G. Plant in the outskirts of Berlin. The 2nd Air Division's B-24s will strike the Heinkel Plant in Oranienburg (11 miles from center of Berlin).

Over 800 single engine and twin engine fighter aircraft would provide cover for the Bomber Strike force and were scheduled to appear along the route in and out and cover an area within 100 miles of the "flight plan."

These targets were to be bombed visually, but for all Divisions, if bombing was by PFF (Pathfinder) then the target would be the Center of the City of Berlin. The 41st CBW was carrying the M47 Incendiaries. So, if the Ball Bearing Factory, which was at that time producing over 1,000,000 bearings per month, could not be hit, a bit of torching of the City was the planned order of the day.

But as the circumstances turned out, it had to be scrapped due to weather and vicious contrails that prevented the bomber force from maintaining their assigned 20,000 feet altitude. Even attempts to go higher was prevented by excessive cloud cover.

The 41st Wing, lead by Colonel Kermit D. Stevens, turned the Wing around just after passing the Heligoland Islands.

This was an exciting time at the briefing as it was the first scheduled time for Berlin. Little did we know how many more time we would be sent there before we finished our missions.

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

MISSION #16

Date; March 3, 1944

Target: Berlin (Weather prevented us from reaching the target.)

Altitude: 27,000 feet

Plane: U-050 "Thunderbird"

Position: No. 5, Lead Group, Low Squadron

The target was the "Big B." The weather was so bad that we were forced to climb to 27,000 feet over the North Sea and were unable to get completely out of the clouds and poor visibility. This excessive altitude took a lot of extra gasoline since we had been briefed to go in at 20,000 feet. Therefore, because of the weather and shortage of gasoline, we were unable to get to the target.

We crossed over the Heligoland Islands and got moderately accurate flak. The combat leader decided to turn around and go back to England just after we had crossed over Heligoland. On our turn around in the haze, two Forts collided and exploded in mid-air. It was quite a spectacular sight. The bombs in these two planes went off like a Fourth of July fireworks display. None of the crew had a chance of getting out of either ship because it happened so quickly. Even had they gotten out, they would have been no better off because they were out over the water when the accident took place.

Upon our return to England, we found fairly decent weather for a change. This was a very welcome exception to the rule of English weather. This was the first mission that we had brought the old "Thunderbird" back without a few holes in it. None of the crew was injured. Our bombs, 12 five-hundred pounders, were dropped over the Heligoland Islands.

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group A

<u>Sheets</u> 9875			
<u>Stevens-Ashwell</u> PFF #42-3511 482BG		<u>Estes</u> 616	
<u>McGarry</u> 051			
<u>Mars</u> 929		<u>Headlee</u> 060	
<u>Goolsby</u> 168		<u>Lyle - Watson</u> 574	
<u>Moncur</u> 050	<u>Blossom</u> 386	<u>Hofmann</u> 739	<u>Snyder</u> 224
<u>Hybert</u> 830		<u>Taylor</u> 622	
<u>McManus</u> 405	<u>Dahleen</u> 183	<u>Melton</u> 7875	<u>Maxey</u> 037
<u>Bech</u> 483		<u>Flesh</u> 020	
		<u>Wood</u> Spare - 200	

Three (3) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. Snyder in 224
Lt. Sheets in 9875
Lt. Melton in 7875

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<p>CREW POSITIONS</p> <p>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>RESULTS OF MISSION</p> <p>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 cntry 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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Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group B

	<u>Wilson</u>			
	340			
<u>McGrath</u>		<u>Holdcroft</u>		
754		204		
	<u>Long</u>			
	432			
<u>Thomas</u>		<u>Edwards</u>		
756		213		
	<u>Glass</u>			
	471			



B-17G #42-31830 Marie 359BS (BN-N) Ground Crew
 (Back L-R) Robert E. Vastine, unknown, Steven A. Kamerance,
 Charles A. Vardy, Arthur H. Rydell, Blaine R. Ruark
 (Kneeling) Charles E. Nichols, Louis J. Cataldo, Lester C. Hansen (Crew Chief)

358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-97622 *Paper Dollie*

P Taylor, James B., 1Lt
CP Hall, Charles M., 2Lt
NAV Levy, Herbert E., 2Lt
BOM Feinman, Milton, 2Lt
ENG Jones, Douglas J., S/Sgt
BT Kennard, Royal G., Sgt
RO Dulin, Woodroe G., S/Sgt
RWG Schweinebraten, Leslie H., Sgt
TG Cox, James B., S/Sgt
LWG Loveland, William H., Sgt
PAS Taber, Robert W., Capt

B-17G #42-32037 *(No Name)*

P Maxey, Frank, 2Lt
CP Knight, R.A., 2Lt
NAV Shamban, Marcus F., 2Lt
BOM Spatt, Arnold I., 2Lt
ENG Gonsalves, John D., S/Sgt
LWG Johnston, Wendell B., Sgt
RO Rabun, Clifford G., Sgt
BT Czeczotka, Theodore R., Sgt
TG Angelo, George L., S/Sgt
RWG Hodgins, Robert A., Sgt

B-17G #42-31224 *Hell in the Heavens*

P Snyder, Robert W., 2Lt
CP Putiri, John G., 2Lt
NAV Williams, Jack N., 2Lt
BOM Morrison, James P., 2Lt
ENG Haggerty, Jerome J., S/Sgt
LWG Delaney, Jessie L., Sgt
RO Rumpf, Charles W., S/Sgt
RWG Balzano, Christopher, Sgt
TG Hunt, John L., Sgt
BT Chadick, Neal T., Sgt
(Abortive)

B-17G #42-31574 *Ole George*

P Lyle, Lewis E., LtCol
CP Watson, Jack W., 1Lt
NAV Minkowitz, Samuel, 1Lt
BOM Mack, Austin J., 2Lt
ENG Hoffman, Robert W., S/Sgt
RWG Daniels, Herbert A., Sgt
RO Kistulentz, Paul, Sgt
BT Gibbs, Paul M., Sgt
TG McArthur, Robert G., Sgt
RWG Hickey, Thomas P., Sgt
PAS Barrett, Jese M., Maj

B-17G #42-31739 *Pugnacious Peter*

P Hofmann, Raymond, 2Lt
CP Brothers, Calvin S., 2Lt
NAV Binder, Carroll, 2Lt
BOM Israelson, Elmo P., 2Lt
ENG Blakeney, William R., Jr., S/Sgt
BT Crenshaw, Ollie G., Sgt
RO Berman, Seymour, S/Sgt
LWG Galloway, John B., Sgt
TG Jensen, Bob, Sgt
RWG Williams, James O., Sgt.

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-31830 *Marie*

P	Hybert, Arthur J., 1Lt
CP	Calwell, Lucien B., 2Lt
NAV	Ramsey, Elijah W., 1Lt
BOM	Kelly, James H., Jr., 2Lt
ENG	Broderick, George V., S/Sgt
RO	Ratford, Edward V., S/Sgt
RWG	Gilcrease, Roland L., Sgt
BT	Jaehne, Charles R., S/Sgt
TG	Barmak, Paul J., S/Sgt
LWG	Neathery, Ralph P., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31183 *Bad Penny*

P	Dahleen, Howard D., 1Lt
CP	Rice, Charles M., 2Lt
NAV	Klingensmith, Russell, 2Lt
BOM	Gauthier, Raymond W., 2Lt
ENG	Newman, John F., S/Sgt
RO	Swanson, Charles E., T/Sgt
RWG	Smith, Harding W., S/Sgt
LWG	Hermann, Kurt J., II, T/Sgt
BT	Hirn, Edward M., S/Sgt
TG	Covington, Charles G., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31483 *Bonnie B*

P	Bech, G. Neil, Jr., 1Lt
CP	Hall, Franklin M., 2Lt
NAV	Carey, William D., 2Lt
BOM	Van Zandt, Roland, 1Lt
ENG	Sanelli, Floyd L., T/Sgt
RWG	Boatwright, Edward C., S/Sgt
RO	Dennis, Julian E., T/Sgt
BT	Johnson, Lawrence G., S/Sgt
LWG	Cundiff, Robert W., Sgt
TG	Murphy, Carl B., Sgt

B-17G #42-31405 *Wallaroo MK II*

P	McManus, Henry, F/O
CP	Gorecki, Victor T., 2Lt
NAV	Carroll, Charles P., 2Lt
BOM	Cecot, Chester R., 2Lt
ENG	Row, Robert A., T/Sgt
RO	Colburn, Robert P., T/Sgt
RWG	Doezema, Albert, S/Sgt
LWG	Jewett, William B., S/Sgt
BT	Davies, John W., S/Sgt
TG	Cowles, Clifton G., S/Sgt
PHO	Mahaffey, William B., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-38168 *Dear Mom*

P	Goolsby, Billy M., 1Lt
CP	Sassone, Joseph C., 2Lt
NAV	Susskind, Harold A., 2Lt
BOM	Ulbricht, Walter E., 2Lt
ENG	Bumgarner, Donald, T/Sgt
RWG	Rothrock, Harry J., S/Sgt
RO	Greenhalgh, Chester W., T/Sgt
BT	Chraniuk, William, S/Sgt
TG	Strobel, William A., S/Sgt
LWG	Cueto, Frank Z., S/Sgt

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

P	Edwards, Kenneth C., 1Lt
CP	Peterson, Edwin V., 2Lt
NAV	Sanders, Coleman, 2Lt
BOM	Anderson, Everett J., 2Lt
ENG	Johnson, Kenneth V., S/Sgt
RO	Kennedy, Herbert W., S/Sgt
BT	Guzman, Abel G., Sgt
LWG	Champagne, Adam, Sgt
TG	Kowalk, Francis H., Sgt
RWG	Abernathy, Fay S., Cpl

B-17G #42-31386 *Sky Duster*

P	Blossom, George N., 1Lst
CP	Marsh, Richard K., 2Lt
NAV	Walsh, Myles J., 2Lt
BOM	Joyce, John D., 2Lt
ENG	Davis, Eugene B., S/Sgt
RO	Minks, George B., S/Sgt
BT	Munson, James E., S/Sgt
TG	Moessner, Raymond J., S/Sgt
LWG	Rogers, Warren G., Sgt
RWG	Ferrell, William R., Sgt

B-17G #42-38050 *Thunderbird*

P	Moncur, Vern L., 1Lt
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., S/Sgt
RWG	Baer, Richard K., S/Sgt
LWG	Dickman, Thomas J., S/Sgt
TG	Wike, Leonard L., S/Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-31340 *Miss Liberty*

P	Wilson, Fred F., 1Lt
CP	Bowen, James W., 2Lt
NAV	Przybyszewski, Henry S., Lt
BOM	Fahlbusch, Joseph F., 2L
ENG	Goland, Harry, T/Sgt
RO	Mirkin, Herman H., T/Sgt
LWG	Petree, Wendell R., S/Sgt
BT	Webbink, Elvin F., S/Sgt
TG	Roads, Dwight W., Jr., S/Sgt
RWG	Hublely, Warren G., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31471 *Doolittle's Destroyer*

P	Glass, Henry F., 1Lt
CP	McMahan, Eugene A. 2Lt
NAV	Pepe, Nicholas A., 2Lt
BOM	Robrock, Paul A., 2Lt
ENG	Carbillano, Dominick J., Sgt
LWG	Stellato, Francis A., S/Sgt
RO	Miller, Gordon R., T/Sgt
RWG	Patrone, Frank, S/Sgt
BT	Michael, David O., S/Sgt
TG	Roberts, James E., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31756 (No Name)

P	Thomas, Earl N., 1Lt
CP	Miller, Edgar C., 2Lt
NAV	Walenta, Clarence V., 2Lt
BOM	Scott, Harold L., 2Lt
ENG	Mason, John W., T/Sgt
RWG	Flenniken, William, S/Sgt
RO	Bonn, Charles J., Sgt
TG	Bacon, Charles N., Sgt
BT	Johnston, Harold A., Sgt
LWG	Books, Carl O., Sgt

B-17G #42-38204 (No Name)

P	Holdcroft, Lloyd L., 1Lt
CP	Bradley, Clyde W., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Pace, Charles M., 2Lt
BOM	O'Donnell, John J., 2Lt
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

B-17G #42-31432 *Old Glory*

P	Long, John A., Lt
CP	Ellsworth, Paul R., 2Lt
NAV	Becker, Sylvester J., 1Lt
BOM	Finley, Robert A., 2Lt
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	Logan, Frank C., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31754 (No Name)

P	McGrath, Leo B., 2Lt
CP	Chapman, John M., 2Lt
NAV	Volk, Anthony D., 2Lt
BOM	Peterson, Elmer L., S/Sgt
ENG	Green, Jack E., S/Sgt
RO	DeWitte, Victor W., S/Sgt
BT	Mayfield, James E., Sgt
RWG	Friedman, Szymon A., Sgt
TG	Laible, Gilbert N., Sgt
LWG	Hosso, Harry V., Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-31060 *Poque Ma Hone*

P	Headlee, Dale C., Lt
CP	Fogerson, Joseph E., F/O
NAV	Schweitzer, Jerome D., Lt
BOM	Handley, Donald J., Lt
ENG	Klunk, James A., S/Sgt
BT	Almanzor, Berton F., Sgt
RO	Moberg, Chester H., S/Sgt
TG	Bell, Alton R., Sgt
LWG	Wilson, Robert J., Sgt
RWG	Kyle, Clarence, Sgt
OBS	Geyer, H.M., Maj

B-17G #42-37875 *Empress of D Street*

P	Melton, James H., 2Lt
CP	Belknap, Robert W., 2Lt
NAV	Frechter, Harry G., 2Lt
BOM	Clapp, Keith W., 2Lt
ENG	Rusinak, John C., S/Sgt
BT	Moore, John J., Jr., Sgt
RO	Stoberl, Donald L., S/Sgt
TG	Anderson, Ralph R., Sgt
LWG	Miller, Norman L., Sgt
RWG	LaPlant, Willard R., Sgt
PHO	Gervais, Joseph R., Sgt

B-17G #42-31929 *Tennessee Hillbilly*

P	Mars, Charles W., Lt
CP	Dallas, William J., Lt
NAV	Clark, James G., Lt
BOM	Webster, Charles M., Lt
ENG	Foster, Raymond L., Sgt
BT	Dunlap, Charles W., Jr., Sgt
RO	McGinnis, Eddie, Sgt
TG	Angione, Vincent A., Sgt
RWG	Senechal, Albert J., Sgt
LWG	Nivens, Delbert S., Sgt

B-17G #42-38020 *V-Packet*

P	Flesh, William R., 1Lt
CP	Combs, Americus V., III, 2Lt
NAV	Doyle, Robert V., 2Lt
BOM	Reeder, John J., 1Lt
ENG	Albright, Glenn N., T/Sgt
RO	Murphy, John J., T/Sgt
BT	Price, Richard M., S/Sgt
TG	Williams, John P., Jr., S/Sgt
LWG	Strough, Kenneth C., S/Sgt
RWG	Kossin, Jack, S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31200 *Old Crow*

P	Wood, Vere A., 1Lt
CP	Knutson, Wilmer A., 2Lt
NAV	Pinnette, William S., 2Lt
BOM	Brown, Thomas G., 2Lt
ENG	Souder, Lee F., Jr., Sgt
BT	Grant, Thomas V., S/Sgt
RO	Brooks, Winnie R., S/Sg
TG	McGrew, Robert H., S/Sgt
RWG	Helton, Edward, S/Sgt
LWG	Tevis, John E., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31616 *Spirit of Flak Wolf*

P	Estes, Shirley W., Lt
CP	Byers, Ballard T., Lt
NAV	Shemwell, John T., 2Lt
BOM	Minter, Thomas W., Lt
ENG	Price, Jack J., S/Sgt
BT	Wiley, Nathan H., Sgt
RO	Wagner, Wayne, S/Sgt
TG	Stone, Vernon W., S/Sgt
RWG	Silrum, Orvis K., Sgt
LWG	Fontaine, Clifford F., Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

B-17G #42-38051 *My Yorkshire Dream*

P McGarry, John J., Jr., 1Lt
CP Cotham, Willie C., 2Lt
NAV Arvanites, George L., 2Lt
BOM Foe, Kenneth D., 2Lt
ENG Grace, Henry J., T/Sgt
BT Friedman, Ira, S/Sgt
RO Stuphar, Stephen, S/Sgt
TG Kowalonek, Walter A., Sgt
LWG Musashe, Michael, S/Sgt
RWG Hilborn, Ervin, S/Sgt

B-17G #42-39875 *Buzz Blonde*

P Sheets, Robert W., 1Lt
CP Jenkins, Elton L., 2Lt
NAV Halligan, Robert W., 2Lt
BOM McCormick, James E., 1Lt
ENG Neuner, Francis X., S/Sgt
BT King, Earl J., S/Sgt
RO Kuehl, Fred T., T/Sgt
TG Sullens, Tom C., S/Sgt
LWG Donnelly, James F., S/Sgt
RWG Smith, Leonard C., S/Sgt
(Abortive)

PFF B-17F #42-3511 482BG/812BS

P Stevens, Kermit D., Col
P Ashwell, Silas B., 1Lt
CP Pierce, M.R., 1Lt
NAV Culpin, John J., Jr., 1Lt
NAV Owen, John, 1Lt
BOM Cooper, M., 1Lt
ENG Todars, S.F., T/Sgt
RO Sasser, T.D., T/Sgt
TG Kendall, Dallas, 2Lt
LWG Harmes, D.D., S/Sgt
RWG Lester, J.F., S/Sgt