

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 163

28 May 1944

Target: Molbis Hermal Electric Power Station, Leipzig, Ger.

Crews Dispatched: 16

Crews Lost: Lt. Determan, 7 KIA, 3 POW

Length of Mission 7 hours, 15 minutes

Bomb Load: 500 lb G.P. RDX bombs

Bombing Altitude: 23,000 ft

Ammo Fired: 1,960 rounds

The Luftwaffe, comparatively quiet for several weeks, rose in force in an apparent all-out effort to smash Fortresses as they returned from targets in the neighborhood of Leipzig, Germany. The 8th Air Force lost a total of 32 bombers on this mission.

The 303rd BG(H) had 18 B-17s scheduled for the second mission of the day. Sixteen aircraft took off about an hour after 19 aircraft departed for the Glide Bomb mission to Cologne.

Two aircraft failed to take-off and one returned early:

#42-37893 *Bam Bam*, 358BS-O (J.P. **Watson**) - Flat tire

#42-97405 *Mary Cary*, 360BS-H (**Williams**) - Tokyo tank leak

#42-107048 (*No Name*), 360BS-M (**Eisele**) - The pilot's and co-pilot's oxygen systems developed leaks and they were forced to return.

Fourteen aircraft dropped 140 500-lb. G.P. RDX bombs from 23,000 feet on a target of opportunity at Rotha, Germany, when both the primary and secondary targets were obscured by clouds, haze and smoke.

The Group found moderate but very accurate flak in the Leipzig area and over the target. Crews reported seeing from 15 to 50 enemy fighters with some attacks on the Group. There were no enemy aircraft claims by Group gunners. Three aircraft sustained major battle damage and nine received minor damage.

Captain Peter L.M. **Packard**, who led the Group, described the mission as "a little rougher than usual. We had some vicious fighter attacks near the target and a lot of flak at various other places. Our fighter escort was good, but they were too busy to help us at one time." Waist Gunner S/Sgt. Sheldon A. **Stafford** said, "There were from 15 to 20 FW-190s on our Group at one time and I saw about 70 attack a Fortress formation off in the distance. It looked like they were having a big battle and several Forts and fighters went down while I was watching. Tail Gunner T/Sgt. F.H. **Stender** said he heard 20mm shells for the first time in weeks. "I only saw seven German fighters and they made only one attack on our formation, but they sure kept us busy then. The fighter escort drove them off right away, though, and a lot of dogfights started."



ALVIN G. DETERMAN CREW - 358th BS

B-17G #43-97298 The Floose 358BS (VK-H)

(crew assigned 358BS: 21 April 1944 - photo: May 1944)

(Back L-R) 2Lt Alvin G. Determan (P-POW), 2Lt Ervin J. Pfahler (CP-KIA),

2Lt Jackson Palmer, Jr. (N-KIA), 2Lt Lamar E. Ledbetter (B)

(Front L-R) S/Sgt Milton C. Hendrickson (E-KIA), S/Sgt Robert H. Asman (R-POW),

Sgt Manuel Vasquez (BTG-KIA), Sgt Acel A. Livingston (WG-KIA),

Sgt Wayne E. Cope (TG-POW), Sgt Albert R. Carroccia (WG-KIA)

2Lt Ledbetter was replaced by 2Lt J.A. McCamy (B-KIA)

Aircraft #42-107028 (*No Name*), piloted by 2Lt. Alvin G. **Determan**, was lost to anti-aircraft fire. It received a direct flak hit close to the No. 4 engine at 1435 hours in the vicinity of Leipzig. The right wing immediately caught fire. The aircraft slid under the formation, the right wing came off, it rolled over on its back and went down. The tail came off at the rear entrance door. Some parachutes were reported. Lt. **Determan**, S/Sgt. Robert H. **Asman** and Sgt. Wayne E. **Cope** were captured by German soldiers. Lt. **Determan** was told by the German officer that captured him, "If you were English, I would have shot you." He parachuted with only one of his two chute snaps attached. 2Lt. Ervin J. **Pfahler**, 2Lt. Jackson **Palmer**, Jr., 2Lt. James A. **McCamy**, S/Sgt. Milton C. **Hendrickson**, Sgt. Manuel **Vasquez**, Sgt. Albert R. **Carroccia** and Sgt. Acel E. **Livingston** were killed in the crash. Lt. **Pfahler**, Lt. **Palmer** and S/Sgt. **Hendrickson** are buried in Netherlands American Cemetery at Martgratten, Netherlands.

Lieutenant **Ellsworth**, co-pilot of the High Squadron lead ship #42-97329 *Flak Hack*, 360BS, told a harrowing story: "Everything was going along fine until 1435 hours when Leipzig flak came up and Lt. **Determan** of the 358th Squadron, flying No. 3 in the lead Squadron, went down with two engines on fire, spinning and losing his tail. At the moment, the formation was just straightening out from a turn." This became a flak-assisted turn for

Lt. **Ellsworth's** aircraft: a flak shell came up at an angle, through the bottom of the fuselage between the pilot and co-pilot, straightening the aircraft out with its impact. It was fortunate that S/Sgt. **Goland**, in the top turret, was standing erect. He had a very small margin of safety, and if he had been relaxed or even shifting his weight at the moment, his buttocks would have gone with the flak shell, which went out the port side of the fuselage just above the wing root. As it was, everybody was thrown about. **Ross** and **Cascio** disentangled themselves from each other in the nose. The entire crew found, to their surprise, that they were still flying and were reassured to hear Lt. **Ellsworth** tell them that everything was OK. The aircraft continued the mission, dropped its bombs on the target, and returned to Base with the Group.

AN INCH IS AS GOOD AS A MILE
A GERMAN 88 mm COULDN'T GET ME
Ed Miller's Memories and Recollections



Damage from flak on 1Lt Miller's B-17 #42-97329 Flak Hack. It was hit by an 88mm shell while in a sharp turn. The flak came in the bottom of the plane between the pilot's seats. Colonel Lewis E. Lyle, 303rd Deputy Commanding Officer, is shown sticking his head out of the flak hole.

Had I turned a millisecond later, or zipped when I should have zagged, it would have been all over. As we were bearing down on the target I made a slight turn to correct my heading before turning the aircraft over to our bombardier, 1Lt Cascio. Just at that moment, a German 88 mm anti-aircraft shell hit the bottom of our aircraft, right in the middle between the two pilot's seats. It came up just missing the heavy metal base of the top turret and went out just behind my seat.

The impact of the shell raised the aircraft up considerably and the navigator, 1Lt Lawrence D. Ross was tossed over the top of Cascio and into the plexiglass nose of the front of the airplane. A couple of our 500 lb general purpose bombs were dislodged from their shackles and logged against the radio compartment door, blocking it so it would not open.

I was flying with Lt Paul Ellsworth again, and as this was our third flight together both as first pilots, it was my turn to sit in the left seat. He had sat there on our last mission to Mannheim, Germany.

The shell came into the aircraft right under me and hit my GI shoes. I always tied the laces together with the intention of tossing them over my arm if I had to jump out — hoping I might be able to take them with me to replace the heated shoes and heavy boots that I was wearing. It tore the front of the shoe off and it ended up in the bomb bay where the men in the back of the aircraft saw it and thought we were all killed up front.

The shell also hit the oxygen system that supplied the right side of the aircraft and so the first order of business was to get walk around bottles to those on that side of the system. I threw on the automatic pilot, which caused the aircraft to go up a few feet and

then dive a few feet. This made everyone in the back very concerned. In fact, they were getting on their parachutes and ready to jump when Sgt William Flenniken, one of my original crew and a big old Pennsylvania Dutchman, grabbed a shell box, sat in front of the back escape door and said, "No one is jumping out until Miller say to jump."

T/Sgt Harry Goland came out of the top turret to help with getting oxygen to those in need, and helped Lt Ross who had been tossed over the top of Lt Cascio on the impact of the shell.

A lot of wires were severed when the shell went out the side of the aircraft but the control cables were intact. After we got things settled down, taking the aircraft off of automatic pilot, we were able to get the bombs dislodged so that we could get to the back of the aircraft. The interphone system was out so we had to get word to the guys in the back of the aircraft that we were all right up front. T/Sgt Victor W. De Witte, also one of my original crew members, and serving as the radio operator, helped to settle the other crew members down.

We had to drop the bombs, but we had two bombs that were hung up by one end and would not drop. With the hole in the side of the aircraft, it got so cold that we had to drop down to about 10,000 feet. But there we were in clear skies, so we had to drop down further to keep clear of enemy aircraft. On the way home we flew at tree top level and received ground fire all across Germany and The Netherlands.

Over the English channel, with difficulty, Goland, with the help of De Witte and Flenniken, were able to dislodge the two bombs that were hanging by just one shackle. When we arrived back at Molesworth, I was shocked to find that my flying suit was bloody when I got out of the aircraft. I had evidently been hit with a piece of oxygen bottle when it exploded, as it went through the bottom of my flak suit and hit me in my scrotum. But I never realized it until after I had jumped out of the aircraft and "thanked God" for being on the ground again.

But with all of the bleeding, they made me go to the station hospital, while the rest of the crew went to the de-briefing. When I got to the hospital it was determine that I had just a superficial wound, just enough to make it bleed but hardly disabling. They wanted me to report the wound so that I could get the "Purple Heart Medal," but no way was I going to do so. What if someone asked me where I was wounded during the war?

While I was at the hospital, Lt/Col Lewis E. Lyle, our Deputy Commander, came out to the aircraft and stuck his head and shoulders out the hole in the side of "Flak Hack" for a picture. And it wasn't until that evening that I found out what had happened at the de-briefing. De Witte and Flenniken were quick to tell me that Paul Ellsworth had claimed that he was flying the aircraft. But they knew that was not true.

When my Squadron Operations scheduled me to fly with Ellsworth the next morning, I refused to fly with him. Evidently he wanted to fly fighters, as he volunteered to fly the British made Mosquito, when he completed his tour. How long he lasted over there, I do not know.

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

<u>Packard-Moreau</u> 453				
<u>Determan</u> 028		<u>Way</u> 037		
<u>Knight</u> 272				
<u>Oliver</u> 298		<u>McMillan</u> 997		
<u>Benham</u> 574		<u>Miller</u> 329		
<u>Bailie</u> 006	<u>Maxey</u> 496		<u>Evans</u> 841	<u>Long</u> 546
<u>Johnston</u> 805		<u>O'Beirne</u> 187		
<u>Bartholomew</u> 099	_____		<u>Eisele</u> 048	_____

One (1) aircraft aborted this mission:
Lt. Eisele in 048

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 - Togglier 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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358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-107028 (No Name) CR-L

P	Determan, Alvin G., 2Lt	POW
CP	Pfahler, Ervin J., 2Lt	KIA
NAV	Palmer, Jackson, Jr., 2Lt	KIA
BOM	McCamy, James A., 2Lt	KIA
ENG	Hendrickson, Milton C., S/Sgt	KIA
RWG	Livingston, Acel E., Sgt	KIA
RO	Asman, Robert H., S/Sgt	POW
TG	Cope, Wayne E., Sgt	POW
LWG	Carroccia, Albert R., Sgt	KIA
BT	Vasquez, Manuel, Sgt	KIA

B-17G #42-97298 The Floose

P	Oliver, Sam, 1Lt
CP	Shankweiler, Stanley R., 2Lt
NAV	Contos, Spiros P., 2Lt
BOM	Chapple, Harry, 2Lt
ENG	Haskell, Whitney, S/Sgt
RWG	Imbrogno, Americo S., Sgt
RO	Kissling, John P., S/Sgt
BT	Russell, Francis H., T/Sgt
TG	Humphries, Wayne, Sgt
LWG	Scalco, Robert, Sgt

B-17G #44-6006 (No Name)

P	Bailie, Homer P., 2Lt
CP	Markos, Costa, F/O
NAV	Waterland, Edward L., 2Lt
BOM	Barkin, Herbert L., 2Lt
ENG	Ham, William J., S/Sgt
TT	Martinez, Gregorio, Sgt
RO	Sawyer, Robert B., S/Sgt
BT	Oss, Frank E., Sgt
TG	Naylor, Richard G., Sgt
RWG	Munn, Charles F., Sgt

B-17G #42-102496 Special Delivery

P	Maxey, Frank, 1Lt
CP	Satre, Leland H., 2Lt
NAV	Hamm, Willard A., 2Lt
BOM	Ney, Russell L., F/O
ENG	Rodgers, John E., S/Sgt
RO	Kustic, Mark S., S/Sgt
BT	Stone, Robert L., Jr., Sgt
TG	Lappo, Teddy, Sgt
RWG	Mikola, Robert, Sgt
LWG	Wagner, William H., Sgt

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

P	Way, Henry G., 1Lt
CP	Raese, Warren G., 2Lt
NAV	Sigurdson, Elden A., 2Lt
BOM	Bell, Julian P., 2Lt
ENG	Lynam, Stanley A., S/Sgt
TT	Paolino, Vincent C., Sgt
RO	May, James G., S/Sgt
BT	LaFleur, Paul L., Sgt
TG	Parks, Robert E., Sgt
RWG	Manning, Robert L., Sgt

B-17G #42-31574 Ole George

P	Benham, Philip O., 2Lt
CP	Lojewski, Telesphor, 2Lt
NAV	Shamban, Marcus F., 2Lt
BOM	Larson, Albert W., 2Lt
ENG	Van Drunen, Cornellius, S/Sgt
RWG	Garcia, Roert L., Sgt
RO	Downs, Reginald, S/Sgt
BT	Hill, Reginald L., Sgt
TG	Dellinger, Lenoir E., Sgt
LWG	Stafford, Sheldon A., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-97272 Duchess' Daughter

P	Knight, R.A., 1Lt
CP	Baker, John M., 2Lt
NAV	Coe, Charles F., 2Lt
BOM	Belles, Frank G., 2Lt
ENG	Kishbaugh, Warren L., S/Sgt
TT	Reichman, Fred P., Sgt
RO	Judd, Fred H., S/Sgt
BT	Bertasso, Joseph S., Sgt
TG	Peters, Archie D., Sgt
RWG	Parker, Stanton A., Sgt

B-17G #42-102453 Princess Pat

P	Moreau, Joseph A., 1Lt
CP	Packard, Peter L.M., Capt
NAV	Mikulich, Louis F., 1Lt
NAV	Krouskup, Wayne E., 2Lt
BOM	Armstrong, Charles C., Capt
ENG	Rossmann, Carl H., Sgt
RWG	Tate, Royce G., Sgt
RO	Lowe, Gareth W., Sgt
LWG	Tomasini, Michael, Sgt
TG	Stender, Francis H., T/Sgt
BT	Ross, Ben A.,

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-97546 *Idaliza*

P	Long, Paul H., 2Lt
CP	Cohl, Jules R., 2Lt
NAV	Vell, Ona L., 2Lt
BOM	Beasley, Edward E., 2Lt
ENG	Mours, John D., S/Sgt
RO	Habich, Arthur L., S/Sgt
BT	Flammia, Joseph E., S/Sgt
TG	Olson, Keith R., Sgt
WG	Abbott, Wesley C., Sgt

B-17G #42-97805 (*No Name*)

P	Johnston, Donald M., 1Lt
CP	Heussler, Robert W., 2Lt
NAV	Schultz, Milo R., 2Lt
BOM	Sudderth, Ralph M., 2Lt
ENG	Barnum, Abraham E., M/Sgt
RO	Treece, Charles E., T/Sgt
BT	Pesetsky, Paul W., S/Sgt
TG	Nestok, Frank, S/Sgt
WG	Turner, Kenzie H., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-97187 *Miss Umbriago*

P	O'Beirne, Nelson B., 1Lt
CP	Duffield, Richard B., 2Lt
NAV	Shipp, Gene K., 2Lt
BOM	Clark, Fred T., 1Lt
ENG	Henselman, Miles A., S/Sgt
RO	Blumberg, Marvin R., S/Sgt
BT	Faraone, Sam S., Sgt
TG	Studt, Allo L., Sgt
RWG	Rogers, Winford E., Sgt
LWG	Cammack, Francis C., Sgt

B-17G #42-107099 *Old 99*

P	Bartholomew, Dale E., 2Lt
CP	Ross, James A., 2Lt
NAV	Blume, William H., III, 2Lt
BOM	Andreason, Joseph G., 2Lt
ENG	Litwiller, Harold D., S/Sgt
RO	Allard, Charles G., S/Sgt
BT	Pope, Carey G., Sgt
TG	Blackwell, Haywood E., Jr., Sgt
GUN	Lowe, Ralph R., Sgt

B-17G #42-97329 *Flak Hack*

P	Miller, Edgar C., 1Lt
CP	Ellsworth, Paul W., 1Lt
NAV	Ross, Lawrence D., 1Lt
BOM	Cascio, Guiseppe, 1Lt
ENG	Goland, Harry, T/Sgt
RO	DeWitte, Victor W., T/Sgt
BT	Weaver, Thomas E., S/Sgt
TG	Roads, Dwight W., S/Sgt
WG	Flenniken, William, S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31997 (*No Name*)

P	McMillan, Murdock B., 1Lt
CP	Polezoes, Stanley, 2Lt
NAV	Shaw, Marvin E., 2Lt
BOM	Prince, James R., 2Lt
ENG	Kuczewski, William J., S/Sgt
RO	Noller, Paul J., S/Sgt
BT	Karp, Harold, Sgt
TG	Cain, Leroy H., Sgt
WG	Herr, Allen H., Sgt

B-17G #42-37841 *Banshee*

P	Evans, Ernest N., 1Lt
CP	Fisher, Stanley L., 2Lt
NAV	Cottrell, John W., 1Lt
BOM	McDevitt, Theodore D., 2Lt
ENG	Bachman, Clifford D., T/Sgt
RO	Smith, Benjamin H., T/Sgt
BT	Kepics, George, S/Sgt
LWG	O'Hearn, Robert J., S/Sgt
RWG	Cogdell, Clarence L., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-107048 (*No Name*)

P	Eisele, Roy, 1Lt
CP	Girard, Louis F., 2Lt
NAV	Schenker, Murray, 2Lt
BOM	Gladstone, Melvin, 2Lt
ENG	Cowley, Louis M., S/Sgt
RO	Millard, Ralph, S/Sgt
WG	Friedman, Szymon A., S/Sgt
BT	Longoria, Efrain, Sgt
TG	Vallee, Edward J., S/Sgt
	(Abortive)