

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 168

2 June 1944

Target: Railroad Marshalling Yards at Juvisy, France

Crews Dispatched: 14

Length of Mission: 5 hours, 15 minutes

Bomb Load: 6 x 1,000 lb G.P. M-44 bombs

Bombing Altitude: 18,700 ft

Ammo Fired: 250 rounds

This was another double-header mission that started "Operation Cover" – a campaign to convince the enemy that the invasion would be in the Pas de Calais area.

Weather over the target was 4/10 to 8/10 cloud cover with poor visibility. The target was approximately 11 miles south of Paris. The secondary target was the Coulommiers, France airfield and the last resort, the Cormellies-En-Vexin, France airfield. The original instructions designating marshalling yards as targets of opportunity were rescinded. New instructions designated the only targets of opportunity as airdromes in enemy-occupied territory not adjacent to a built-up area.

Bombing was done visually from 18,700 feet and 72 1,000-lb. G.P. M-44 bombs were dropped. The altitude had to be changed on the bomb run because of prop wash. Crews reported the target as "knocked out."

As in the morning mission, no enemy aircraft were observed, although friendly fighters cruised around the area in a fruitless effort to flush any German aircraft. Anti-aircraft fire was spotted at several points, but it was moderate and inaccurate. All aircraft returned with no damage and no casualties.

THE FIRST TIME I SAW PARIS

from the book "25 Milk Runs" by Richard R. "Dick" Johnson

June 2nd, 1944, my Mother's 44th birthday, and the first anniversary of my first airplane ride at Darr Aero Tech in which I "decorated" the side of the primary trainer.

Today we are to bomb a large marshaling yard in the outskirts of Paris, our aim being to delay German movement to the front lines during the up-coming invasion. My diary for that day reads, "Paris, France (Marshaling yards) five tenths cloud cover. Moderate flak-no damage. Saw hundreds of landing craft on English coast. Invasion soon maybe."

Fourteen B-17s from our 303rd Bomb Group were furnished for the 41st Combat Wing. The 427th Squadron, to which I was a part, was to lead our group. Each of our B-17s had been loaded with six 1000 pound bombs and 1700 gallons of gas. Our target was the Juvisy Marshaling Yards eleven miles to the southwest of downtown Paris.

Our time schedule for this mission was pretty tight, as we were to take off at around 5:30 pm, double war time, and arrive at the target before dark. The days were long at this time of year, so we were confident that we could make this schedule. We departed the English coast over Selsey Bill, at an altitude of 18,500 feet. Selsey Bill is a point of land just east of Portsmouth. We crossed the English Channel, climbing to 22,000 feet, hitting the enemy coast just across the harbor from Le Havre, France.



Betty Jane Ground Crew
B-17G #42-32027 427BS (GN-E)
(Top to Bottom) unknown, Frederick H. Randall,
unknown, unknown, Oldrich Fojt (Crew Chief)

We encountered a layer of clouds at our altitude, and decided to drop down to 18,000 feet. We made a feint toward Chartres, and just before reaching their outer defenses, made a dog-leg to the left, and made a direct flight to our target. We bombed at 8:32 pm well before the sun went down. England was on double war savings time which made our bomb drop at the real time of 6:32 pm. We flew a circle around Paris at 21,000 feet and headed toward Le Havre, where we departed the enemy coast a few miles north of that town. It was starting to get pretty dark on the ground by then, and no lights could be seen anywhere. There was still plenty of daylight at our altitude and just before dark we saw a large group of British Lancasters below us, heading out to do their nightly bombing.

This had been the first day of "Operation Cover" during which we were trying to convince the Germans that the invasion would be at Calais. The morning mission had been a tactical one for the first time for the 303rd Bomb Group.

Our track to Molesworth took us a mile west of London, which was so totally blacked out that it could hardly be seen, even though there was still a glimmer of daylight. We landed at nearly 11:00 pm, double war time, and headed to the debriefing room and later, to the mess hall for a late snack, having eaten our box lunches on the way to the target. I was somewhat miffed to find that the mess hall personnel had gone to bed, leaving a large pot of coffee into which they had put too much cream and too much sugar. I was unable to drink it, since I always drank mine without sugar. This was my only gripe about food, since the Mess Sergeant had always done a great job.

Recon photos the next day showed that we had done a good job on the railroad marshalling yards. Our total flight time was five and a half hours, with one hour and forty minutes over enemy territory. In the next few days, the weather turned really bad, but the 303rd flew missions on June 3rd and 4th, but our crew got a reprieve until June 5th.

We learned later that the invasion of France was scheduled for June 5, after having been canceled from its original schedule of early May. Of course, we didn't know the exact day until being briefed for the actual D-Day invasion. In retrospect, it might have been better in May except for logistic problems in getting poised along the English coast. Also, it was not considered prudent for May since we had not yet achieved mastery of the air. It is incredible that the Germans were not expected to know the exact place of the invasion, since the thousands of ships were easily seen from the air and from the sea.

We also suspected that there might be a spy on our field since some of our planes seemed to be compromised. In the mess hall was a worker who came and went with the rest of the civilian workers. We called him "The Limey" because of the way he acted. If we did indeed have a spy, he was never found out as far as I know.

I don't know that a spy could have gotten much information since the air crews seldom had any hints of tomorrow's destination. And we never discussed plans outside our own crew.

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

<u>Sheets-Dubell</u>					
311					
		<u>Beiser</u>			<u>Allen</u>
		027			200
		<u>Jones</u>			<u>Mitchell</u>
		432			096
<u>Flick</u>			<u>Johnson</u>	<u>Ligino</u>	<u>Oranges</u>
423			885	051	569
		<u>Johnston</u>			<u>Lehmann</u>
		546			Spare - 272
<u>Thompson</u>			<u>Carpenter</u>		
496			206		
		<u>Bailie</u>			
		Spare - 739			

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<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	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 <u>RESULTS OF MISSION</u> 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 cuntry 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 List

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

P Bailie, Homer P., 2Lt
CP Markos, Costa, F/O
NAV Waterland, Edward L., 2Lt
BOM Barkin, Herbert L., 2Lt
ENG Kapes, Paul 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
(Spare-Returned)

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #42-107206 *Old Black Magic*

P Carpenter, Arthur G., 2Lt
CP Reed, John W., 2Lt
NAV Reid, George E., F/O
BOM Day, Dean K., 2Lt
ENG Pordham, Jack F., S/Sgt
RO Bortolotti, Barney J., S/Sgt
BT Dean, Raymond N., S/Sgt
TG Nichols, Dalbee, Sgt
WG Vanlandingham, John C., Sgt

B-17G #42-102496 *Special Delivery*

P Thompson, Lawrence C., Capt
CP Johnson, Richard O., 2Lt
NAV Young, Warren I., F/O
BOM Champ, William J., 2Lt
ENG Hammons, Charles G., S/Sgt
RO Hamann, Delos, H., S/Sgt
BT Stephan, Kenneth R., Sgt
TG Held, Armin C., Sgt
WG Lemley, Jack A., Sgt

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew List

B-17G #42-97546 *Idaliza*

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
LWG Turner, Kenzie H., S/Sgt
RWG Rein, William E., S/Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

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

P	Allen, Charles R., 1Lt
CP	Parham, James S., 2Lt
NAV	Thurmon, John A., 2Lt
BOM	Bourgeault, Louis H., 2Lt
TT	Bourlier, Donald W., Sgt
BT	Knedler, Lee F., Sgt
RO	Reed, John H., S/Sgt
TG	Stansbury, Edward P., Sgt
RWG	Foerster, LeRoy H.M., Sgt
LWG	Bohenstiel, Robert L., Sgt

B-17G #42-97096 (*No Name*)

P	Mitchell, Fred E., 1Lt
CP	Raistrick, Albert G., 2Lt
NAV	Rafferty, Henry E., Jr., 2Lt
BOM	Isaac, Kenneth W., 2Lt
TT	Cavagnol, Joseph J., S/Sgt
BT	Landa, Hyman J., Sgt
RO	Parr, Joe A., S/Sgt
LWG	O'Neill, Austin J., Sgt
RWG	Byers, William R., S/Sgt
TG	Carpenter, Robert R., Sgt

B-17G #42-31423 *Jigger Rooche*

P	Flick, Chester E., 2Lt
CP	Keating, Donald W., 2Lt
NAV	Curley, Walter A., 2Lt
BOM	Fontaine, Clifford F., S/Sgt
BT	Forry, Harvey W., S/Sgt
RO	Abeyta, J. Charles, S/Sgt
TT	Eberly, Charles P., S/Sgt
TG	Brock, Charley F., Sgt
LWG	Wilson, Robert J., S/Sgt
RWG	Miller, Norman L., Sgt

B-17G #42-102432 *Tiny Angel*

P	Jones, Wilbur H., 2Lt
CP	Wallace, Walstein W., 2Lt
NAV	Skarsten, Albert B., 1Lt
BOM	Kennedy, William J., 2Lt
TT	Duerr, William P., T/Sgt
BT	Calnon, Frederick N., S/Sgt
RO	Cohen, Leo, T/Sgt
TG	LaFrenier, James E., S/Sgt
RWG	Thompson, Frederick A., Sgt
LWG	Dimowitz, Morris, Sgt

B-17G #42-102569 *Miss Lace*

P	Oranges, Chester N., 1Lt
CP	Lawrenson, George C., 2Lt
NAV	Whitman, John H., 2Lt
BOM	Harper, Kenneth L., 2Lt
TT	Eisenhauer, James A., Sgt
BT	Gentry, Richard A., Sgt
RO	Sorese, Leonard V., S/Sgt
TG	Franklin, Robert E., Sgt
RWG	Korpi, Walfred J., S/Sgt
LWG	Ward, Homer J., Jr., Sgt

B-17G #42-97311 *Shoo Shoo Baby*

P	Sheets, Robert W., Capt
CP	Dubell, Richard P., Capt
NAV	Olsen, Kenneth L., 1Lt
NAV	Shupe, John W., 2Lt
BOM	McCormick, James E., Capt
TT	Neuner, Francis X., T/Sgt
BT	King, Earl J., S/Sgt
RO	Kuehl, Fred T., T/Sgt
TG	Ferguson, Gilbert L., 2Lt
LWG	Smith, Leonard C., S/Sgt
RWG	Donnelly, James F., S/Sgt

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

B-17G #42-32027 *Betty Jane*

P	Beiser, Theodore R., 2Lt
CP	Johnson, Richard R., 2Lt
NAV	Gepner, Isadore, 2Lt
BOM	Cooper, Edward G., 2Lt
TT	Buchanan, Lonnie J., T/Sgt
BT	Latta, Charles W., Sgt
RO	Gorchesky, Benny J., S/Sgt
TG	Brackey, Carroll H., Sgt
LWG	Haines, James W., Sgt
RWG	Glass, David, Sgt

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

P	Ligino, Steve, 1Lt
CP	Tyler, Frederick B., 2Lt
NAV	Smith, Arthur M., 2Lt
BOM	Dugger, William A., 2Lt
TT	Rau, Harvey L., S/Sgt
BT	Howard, George R., Sgt
RO	Dahms, Edward R., S/Sgt
TG	Dudley, Howard E., Sgt
RWG	Czerwonka, Joseph A., Sgt
LWG	Gainer, Philip B., Sgt

B-17G #42-39885 *Sweet Rose O'Grady*

P	Johnson, Charles E., Jr., 2Lt
CP	Gable, Richard E., 2Lt
NAV	Pero, Aloyius R., 2Lt
BOM	Dombrowski, Alexander, 2Lt
BT	Hollritt, Alfred K., Sgt
RO	Yonge, Walter C., Sgt
TT	Alston, Madison I., T/Sgt
TG	Bell, Alton R., S/Sgt
RWG	Conlan, Thomas J., Sgt
LWG	Wilson, Robert J., Sgt

B-17G #42-97272 *Duchess' Daughter*

P	Lehmann, Elroy C., 2Lt
CP	Heil, Lee C., 2Lt
NAV	Gast, William J., 2Lt
BOM	Miller, Charles F., 2Lt
TT	Sydor, Joseph, S/Sgt
BT	Koon, Bennie, Sgt
RO	Kelley, James D., S/Sgt
TG	Ruhge, Wayne L., Sgt
LWG	Garlick, Darrell L., Sgt
RWG	Swanson, Charles A., S/Sgt

(Spare - Returned)