

# 303rd BH (H) Combat Mission No. 188

22 June 1944

Target: Military Installations at Wizernes, France

Crews Dispatched: 14

Crews Lost: Lt. Erickson

Length of Mission: 4 hours, 25 minutes

Bomb Load: 2 x 2,000 lb G.P. bombs

Bombing Altitude: 24,000 ft

Ammo Fired: 0 rounds

**D**uring the morning, Capt. Robert J. **Lynch**, 360BS, took a small Group of 14 B-17s to attack a "No Ball" target in the Pas de Calais area. The formation dropped their 26 2,000 lb. G.P. M34 bombs from 24,000 feet. There were 5/10 clouds over the target. Following a two-minute bomb run, the bombs fell short in a wooded area to the east of the target.

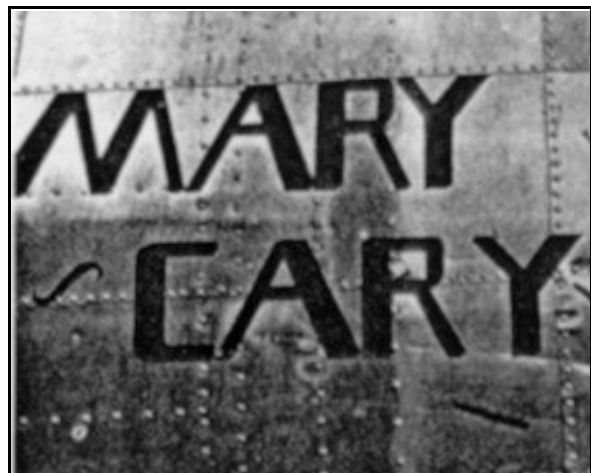
No enemy aircraft were seen. Friendly fighter support was poor with only one aircraft appearing. Meager but accurate flak was encountered at Dunkirk and at the target. Three aircraft sustained major battle damage and eight sustained minor damage.



1Lt Roger W. Erickson

The lead B-17, #42-97405 *Mary Cary*, piloted by 1Lt. Roger W. **Erickson**, received direct flak hits on the Nos. 1 and 2 engines over the target. The No. 2 engine went out and could not be feathered. Capt **Lynch** signaled the deputy leader, 1Lt. John T. **Williams**, to take over the formation. Upon reaching the enemy coast on the way home, the *Mary Cary* began to vibrate badly. They headed for Beachy Head, the nearest point of the English coast, rather than the briefed route.

As they were nearing the English coast, the No. 2 engine exploded and the crew was ordered to bail out over the English Channel. The aircraft exploded shortly before it hit the water. Partly due to clear weather with unlimited visibility, crewmen were in the water for only 45 minutes before being spotted and rescued. Capt. **Lynch** was rescued by a nearby corvette and T/Sgt. Thomas M. **Roszell**, T/Sgt. Frank H. **Schuler**, S/Sgt. Josef R. **Chudej** and S/Sgt. Kenneth R. **Krogh** were rescued by two destroyers. The Navigator, 1Lt. Emilio M. **Sbrolla's**, body was recovered by one of the destroyers. The other four crewmen, Lt. **Erickson**, 1Lt. Lawrence D. **Ross**, 1Lt. Dick W. **Merz** and S/Sgt. Elwood **Schoonmaker**, were missing in action.



Nose Art on B-17G #42-97405 *Mary Cary* 360BS (PU-H)

**Mission Number 20, June 22, 1944 - Morning**  
from the book "25 Milk Runs" by Richard R. "Dick" Johnson

Again we are doing tactical work to "No Ball" targets trying to slow the rate of Buzz Bomb launches. My diary for the day reads: "St. Omar, France. (Calais area) robot plane installations. Flew low squadron lead. Flak meager, but VERY accurate. Lost two ships, one was leader. Three tenths CAVU. Only 14 went out...Rough!"



*Unknown 359th BS Ground Crewman on a 2000 LB Bomb*

I have no idea why we were carrying two, two thousand pound bombs on each airplane to bomb a small target, such as a launching site for buzz bombs. Perhaps it was a mission changed from a bridge to a buzz bomb site. My own idea would have been to carry a bunch of smaller bombs inside the bomb-bay. Of course I had no authority in the matter. And it didn't matter anyhow, since all we did was dig ponds for some farmer.

My diary was wrong about the loss of two B-17s that morning, as only one didn't return. That was our leader, 1st Lt. R.W. Erickson who had Capt. R.J. Lynch flying as mission commander in his aircraft named "Mary Cary." They received a direct hit before bombs were away. Engines number one and two on the left wing were badly damaged, and number two had a runaway prop that couldn't be feathered.

The mission deputy, 1st Lt. J.T. Williams took over the lead and completed the bomb run, but was himself hit by flak. He managed to get to the field of one of our other groups, (Grafton Underwood), which caused me to think that he had been shot down. We carried 1700 gallons of gas for this four and a half hour flight, being over enemy territory for thirty minutes.

The original lead plane was last seen headed for the English coast at Beachy Head. They never made it, as the airplane was vibrating very badly, and finally the runaway number two engine exploded. The crew was ordered to bail out over the channel, but before they could all get out, the airplane exploded and half the crew members were killed. Five, including the mission commander, Capt. Lynch were rescued by naval vessels, but the Pilot, Roger W. Erickson was killed, as were the other officers in the front of the plane. There were two navigators on the lead plane for this mission, 1st Lt. Emilio M. Sbrolla and 1st Lt. Lawrence D. Ross, both killed. Bombardier 1st Lt. Dick W. Merz was also killed as was the right waist gunner, Staff Sergeant Elwood Schoonmaker.

Our 427th squadron had supplied the weather plane for this mission. This was our old "F" Model that had been stripped and sealed. The ground crews had installed 21 high intensity lights on the airplane which flashed the letter "C" in Morse code while it was acting as formation ship. It was painted with red and white stripes that were ten feet wide in a diagonal pattern. As a combat bomber it had been named "Vicious Virgin." This was changed to "Scarlet Harlot" after the paint job, and I sometimes referred to her as "The Virgin Harlot." Mostly though, we referred to the plane as "The Barber Pole," which we dearly loved to fly.

# Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

Erickson-Lynch  
405

Coats  
546

Farthing  
841

Beiser  
281

Williams  
340

Roy  
9875

Wardowski  
099

S. Fisher  
654

Vitale  
432

Ligino  
411

D. Fisher  
055

Oranges  
7875

Gallagher  
027

Lehmann  
060



**ORIGINAL ROBERT J. LYNCH CREW - 360th BS**  
**(crew assigned 360BS: 15 February 1944)**

(Back L-R) Capt Robert J. Lynch (P), Lt Jules R. Cohl (CP), 1Lt Emillo M. Sbrolla (B), 1Lt Dick W. Merz (N)  
(Front L-R) T/Sgt Frank H. Schuler (R), S/Sgt Joseph R. Chudej (BT), S/Sgt Kenneth H. Pleasanton (RWG),  
S/Sgt Elwood Schoonmaker (LWG), S/Sgt Kenneth R. Krogh (TG), T/Sgt Thomas M. Roszell (E)

## 360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17G #42-31055 Aloha**

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P	Fisher, Dale M., 1Lt
CP	Johns, Carlos H., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Felton, Carl H., 2Lt
BOM	Gaskin, Carthel O., 2Lt
ENG	King, John M., S/Sgt
RO	Johnson, Robert H., S/Sgt
BT	McKeever, Bernard E., Sgt
WG	Cooper, Robert M., Sgt
TG	Crandell, Victor P., Sgt

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

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P	Vitale, Hector F., 2Lt
CP	Boyle, Leo J., F/O
NAV	Hardwick, Jack C., 2Lt
BOM	Cassidy, Charles F., 2Lt
ENG	Reale, Joseph C., Sgt
RO	Miller, Hilary C., S/Sgt
BT	Thomas, Hal B., Sgt
TG	Younger, Andrew H., Sgt
WG	Nordberg, Francis E., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-97405 Mary Cary CR-S**

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P	Erickson, Roger W., 1Lt	KIA
CP	Lynch, Robert J., Capt	BO/RES
NAV	Sbrolla, Emilio M., 1Lt	KIA
NAV	Ross, Lawrence D., 1Lt	KIA
BOM	Merz, Dick W., 1Lt	KIA
ENG	Roszell, Thomas M., T/Sgt	BO/RES
RO	Schuler, Frank H., T/Sgt	BO/RES
BT	Chudej, Josef R., S/Sgt	BO/RES
TG	Krogh, Kenneth R., S/Sgt	BO/RES
WG	Schoonmaker, Elwood, S/Sgt	KIA

### **B-17G #42-37841 Banshee**

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P	Farthing, Harold C., F/O
CP	Page, Frank N., F/O
NAV	George, James P., 2Lt
BOM	Carson, John D., F/O
ENG	Sweetie, William M., S/Sgt
RO	Postles, Francis W., S/Sgt
BT	Viles, Ernest A., Sgt
TG	Melnyk, Joseph, Sgt
WG	Greig, Leonard C., Jr., Sgt

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

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P	Williams, John T., 1Lt
CP	Tellinghuisen, Oscar A., 2Lt
NAV	Fazio, Joseph, 2Lt
BOM	Sudderth, Ralph M., Jr., 2Lt
ENG	Schwenke, Howard A., T/Sgt
RO	Barber, Stewart L., T/Sgt
BT	Whitten, Cleveland W., Sgt
TG	Ott, John E., S/Sgt
WG	Mitchell, John B., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #42-97546 Idaliza**

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P	Coats, Neil, 1Lt
CP	Carlman, Harold L., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Dunn, Robert L., 2Lt
BOM	Kleppner, Clarence J., F/O
ENG	Goggin, Joseph F., S/Sgt
RO	Dennerle, Almo W., S/Sgt
BT	Pesetsky, Paul, W., S/Sgt
TG	Harvey, Roy D., S/Sgt
WG	Teran, Arthur, Sgt

### **B-17G #42-37654 (No Name)**

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P	Fisher, Stanley L., 2Lt
CP	Cohl, Jules R., 2Lt
NAV	Cotner, Nyle E., 2Lt
BOM	McDevitt, Theodore D., 2Lt
ENG	Bachman, Clifford D., T/Sgt
RO	Smith, Benjamin H., T/Sgt
BT	Kepics, George, S/Sgt
WG	O'Hearn, Robert J., S/Sgt
TG	Cogdell, Clarence L., S/Sgt
(Abortive Sortie)	

## 427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

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

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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
WG	Garlick, Darrell L., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-102411 *Miss Lace***

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P	Ligino, Steve, 1Lt
CP	Tyler, Frederick B., 2Lt
NAV	Gepner, Isadore, 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
WG	Gainer, Philip B., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-97281 *Queenie***

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P	Beiser, Theodore R., 2Lt
CP	Johnson, Richard R., 2Lt
NAV	Smith, Arthur M., 2Lt
BOM	Coughlin, George A., 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

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

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P	Gallagher, John W., Jr., 2Lt
CP	Bitel, Peter, 2Lt
NAV	Hibbard, Troy W., 2Lt
BOM	Tow, Weyman J., 2Lt
TT	Lynn, William V., Sgt
BT	Kail, Nicholas F., Sgt
RO	Glass, David, Sgt
TG	Soltero, John, Sgt
WG	Joyce, Jess, Sgt

### **B-17G #42-37875 *Flying Bison***

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P	Oranges, Chester N., 1Lt
CP	Newman, Vernon V., 2Lt
NAV	Whitman, John H., 2Lt
BOM	Harper, Kenneth L., 2Lt
TT	Barnes, Charlie, S/Sgt
BT	Paterson, Richard E., Sgt
RO	Jarvis, Robert F., S/Sgt
TG	Coleman, Warren M., Sgt
WG	Butler, Edward B., S/Sgt

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

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P	Wardowski, Stanley, 2Lt
CP	Hainlin, Neal E., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Birnbaum, Warren G., Jr., 2Lt
BOM	Eisel, Charles F., 2Lt
ENG	Kowatch, Raymond J., Sgt
BT	Calnon, Frederick N., S/Sgt
RO	Willard, Albert, S/Sgt
TG	Wagner, Donald G., Sgt
WG	Snedde, John I., Sgt

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

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P	Roy, Arnold K., 2Lt
CP	Quint, Ralph E., 2Lt
NAV	O'Brien, William P., 2Lt
BOM	Weiss, Leonard E., 1Lt
TT	Noah, Norbert O., Sgt
BT	Black, Leslie K., Sgt
RO	Johnson, George N., Sgt
TG	Kahnert, Olaf F., Jr., Sgt
WG	On, Chan K., Sgt