

303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 305

21 January 1945

Target: Marshalling Yard at Aschaffenburg, Germany

Crews Dispatched: 13

Crews Lost: Lt. Duffield, 9 KIA, 1 POW; Lt. Tasker, 8 KIA, 1 POW

Length of Mission: 7 hours, 46 minutes

Bomb Load: 10 x 500 lb H.E. M43 & 8 x 500 M17 Incendiaries

Bombing Altitude: 21,300 ft

Ammo Fired: 100 rounds

A single Squadron of thirteen Fortresses was dispatched to attack a locomotive shed at Aschaffenburg, Germany. The secondary target was the marshalling yard itself. B-17G #42-97546 *Idaliza*, 360BS (Lt. **Goodberlet** 358BS) returned early with engine problems.

Ten aircraft dropped 90 500-lb. H.E. M43, 18 500-lb. M17 incendiary bombs and nine units of T29 leaflets on the secondary target from 21,300 feet. The PFF bombing results were unobserved. There was no enemy opposition, no flak, no battle damage and good 1st AD support by 112 P-52s.



Nose Art on B-17G #42-97058
Scorchy II 360BS (PU-L)

What started out as a "milk run" mission turned deadly when two aircraft collided at 48E27'N- 80E20'E, the turning point before reaching the IP. The left wing of Squadron lead aircraft #44-8137 (*No Name*), 359BS, piloted by 1Lt. Richard B. **Duffield**, caught the right wing of #42-97058, *Scorchy II*, 359BS, piloted by 2Lt. Richard E. **Tasker**, the lead aircraft of the 2nd flight. The wing of #44-8137 came off and the aircraft rolled over on its back and went down. *Scorchy II* also lost its wing and went down. No parachutes were spotted by other 303rd BG(H) crews, although some crews of the nearby 39BS reported seeing some parachutes and bodies falling out. Sgt. David **Garza**, in #44-6316, 358BS,

observed the disabled aircraft as it fell to the ground. The aircraft crashed near Rottweil, Germany. 1Lt. Jack W. **Weaver**, Deputy Leader, took over the lead in #44-8676 (*No Name*), 427BS with a 360BS, crew after the collision of the lead aircraft.

1Lt **Duffield**, 1Lt Richard H. **Cambron**, 1Lt Gene K. **Shipp**, 1Lt Thomas E. **Wilson**, T/Sgt Raymond **Levine**, T/Sgt Donald R. **Christ**, S/Sgt John C. **Elliott**, S/Sgt Phillip W. **Hensel** and 2Lt. Raymond E. **White** were killed in the crash. Lt. **Cambron** is buried in Lorraine American Cemetery near Moselle, France. 1Lt James C. **Flemmons** was captured and became a Prisoner of War.



1Lts Duffield and Shipp

2Lt **Tasker**, 2Lt Angelito **Francis**, F/O Clyde **Meadows**, 2Lt William D. **Toon**, S/Sgt Bruce H. **Hinnershots**, Sgt Paul B. **Kapczynski**, Sgt Charles S. **Van Ornum** and Sgt. Carl R. **Hurlbutt** were killed in the crash of their aircraft. Sgt **Van Ornum** is buried in Lorraine American Cemetery near Moselle, France. Sgt Arthur H. **Driver** was captured and became a Prisoner of War.

Sgt Donald F. **Geng**, a 359BS ball turret gunner shot down on 9 February 1945, met Sgt. Arthur H. **Driver** in the POW airman transit camp at Wetzler, Germany. Sgt **Driver** gave Sgt. **Geng** an account of his escape in the loss of *Scorchy II*: Sgt. **Driver** saw the tail of *Scorchy II* severed from the main body by a wingman flying slightly behind it as the turn was being on to the IP. Sgt. **Driver** managed to exit the tumbling tail through the tail escape door. He fell with his quick, attachable 'chute pack tied to the parachute with a three-foot piece of rope. He hauled in his 'chute and attached one side to the harness. He then pulled the rip cord without attaching the other side since the ground was very close. He made a hard landing, but was not injured. He was captured shortly after landing. Several days after his capture, the Germans showed him several identification dog tags that were recovered from a B-17 wreckage. They were the tags of his crew members. He believed that he was the only crew member to survive.

TWO B-17s COLLIDE IN MID-AIR

by Lt. John S. Proffitt, Jr

During my crew's combat tour at Molesworth, we had several exciting experiences, all of which were thankfully rather mild. We lost an engine over the target – we had to abort because of a sheared propeller shaft – we had to land without a tailwheel when the worn gear was damaged by flak – we ran off the runway when landing because the hydraulic line between the brakes pedal and the wheels had been damaged by flak – we landed at English bases on several occasions because of low gas and we had a bomb snag up in the bomb bay over the target which we had to kick out. But, the most unusual experience was witnessing the collision of two B-17s on our 21 January 1945 mission to Aschaffenburg, Germany.

We were flying on Lt. Tasker's left wing, and I was consciously observing the situation before and at the time of the collision. Lt. Duffield, the squadron leader, let his IAS increase to about 160 miles per hour in the left turn. Upon completion of the turn, he immediately reduced his airspeed, and Tasker put down some flaps, causing the left side of his plane to raise up and made contact with Duffield. While I had been watching this entire event develop right in front of me, the actual collision was unexpected.

My first realization of the seriousness of the situation was when a landing gear wheel from one of the planes nearly hit my right wing. My instant reaction was to peel off to the left, so both planes were on their way down by the time I saw them again.

Since we generally expected that everyone involved in the collision had perished, my tail gunner, S/Sgt Howard F. O'Neal, was surprised to encounter Tasker's tail gunner, S/Sgt A. H. Driver, on the ship when returning to the U. S., a few months later. Witnessing two B-17s colliding in mid-air, only a hundred or so, feet ahead of you certainly qualifies as an unusual experience.

Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

Duffield-Cambron

137 - PFF

Weaver
576 - PFF

Holtorf
647

Tasker
058

Proffitt
608

Rogers
206

Goodberlet
546

Wertz
621

Greenbaum
462

Poole
316

Petersen
763

Ayers
060

Barrat
734



CLEM W. ROGERS, JR. CREW - 359th BS

(crew assigned 359BS: 25 Nov 1944 - photo: 08 Dec 1944)

(Back L-R) 2Lt Albert Simon (N), 2Lt Clem W. Rogers, Jr. (P), F/O Vernon F. Powlus (CP),
F/O Arthur C. Kraft (B) - (Front L-R) Sgt Rudolph Palsa (TG), Sgt Bobbie B. Reese (E),
S/Sgt John F. Wysocki (R), unknown (WG), Sgt Byron D. Westfall (WG)

358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #43-38462 *Teddy's Rough Riders*

P Greenbaum, Richard D., 2Lt
 CP Balkcom, Robert E., 2Lt
 NAV Nicasastro, John J., F/O
 TOG Stevenson, John L., S/Sgt
 ENG Bruce, Leonard F., Sgt
 TG Hawes, Kenneth D., Sgt
 RO Dalton, Denver, Sgt
 BT Dooley, Patrick, Sgt
 WG Armstrong, Henry L., Sgt

B-17G #42-97546 *Idaliza*

P Goodberlet, Clarence J., 2Lt
 CP Magid, Malcolm J., 2Lt
 NAV Boland, Anthony J., 2Lt
 TOG Cooper, Ray R., S/Sgt
 ENG Cotter, William J., Sgt
 WG Middleton, James C., Sgt
 RO LaPerch, William J., T/Sgt
 BT Walling, James M., Sgt
 TG Schultz, Frederick W., S/Sgt
 (Abortive)

B-17G #44-6316 (No Name)

P Poole, Lawrence E., 2Lt
 CP Cannon, Harley E., 2Lt
 NAV McCorkle, Robert W., F/O
 TOG Smith, Donald P., Sgt
 ENG Pullen, Rayford E., Sgt
 WG Kinsland, Harry D., Sgt
 RO Hoke, Marvin L., Sgt
 BT Garza, David, S/Sgt
 TG Kindred, Beryl E., Sgt

B-17G #44-8351 (No Name) - PFF

NAV Heiser, Kenneth, 2Lt
 (Flew with Deenethorpe)

359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #43-38608 *Lucille*

P Proffitt, John S., 1Lt
 CP Ogborn, Maurice E., 2Lt
 NAV Finke, John C., 2Lt
 TOG McKinley, A.B., T/Sgt
 ENG Young, James W., Sgt
 RO Norris, Cornie, Jr., Sgt
 BT Bechtold, Robert E., Sgt
 TG O'Neal, Howard F., Sgt
 WG Rose, G.L., Sgt

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

P Rogers, Clem W., 2Lt
 CP Powlus, Vernon F., F/O
 NAV Simon, Albert, 2Lt
 TOG Fogle, Jerome W., Jr., S/Sgt
 ENG Reese, Bobbie B., Sgt
 RO Wysocki, John F., Sgt
 BT Simpson, James A., S/Sgt
 TG Palsa, Rudolph, Sgt
 WG Westfall, Byron D., Sgt

B-17G #42-97058 *Scorchy II* CR-L

P Tasker, Richard E., 2Lt KIA
 CP Francis, Angelito, 2Lt KIA
 NAV Meadows, Clyde, F/O KIA
 BOM McDonnell, John J., 2Lt KIA
 ENG Toon, William D., Sgt KIA
 RO Hinnershots, Bruce H., S/Sgt KIA
 BT Kapczynski, Paul B., Sgt KIA
 TG Driver, Arthur H., Sgt POW
 WG Van Ornum, Charles S., Sgt KIA
 Y Hurlbutt, Carl R., S/Sgt (Hqtr) KIA

360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #44-8576 (No Name) - PFF

P	Weaver, Jack W., 1Lt
CP	Chalmers, John D., F/O
NAV	Polkadla, William J., 2Lt
BOM	Shelley, David R., 1Lt
PFF	Gibson, Cater M., 1Lt
ENG	Murphy, Jason, S/Sgt
RO	Cole, Robert L., S/Sgt
BT	Lardie, Thomas D., Sgt
TG	Bailey, Arthur L., Sgt
WG	Yepes, William J., Sgt

B-17G #44-8647 (No Name)

P	Holtorf, Ernest H., 2Lt
CP	Hardy, James H., F/O
NAV	Divine, Fred H., 2Lt
BOM	Valdes, George J., S/Sgt
ENG	Lewis, William J., T/Sgt
RO	Clarke, Frank W., T/Sgt
BT	Macy, Edward J., S/Sgt
TG	Terreri, Joseph, S/Sgt
WG	Killelea, Raymond J., S/Sgt

B-17G #44-8137 (No Name) - PFF CR-L

P	Duffield, Richard B., 1Lt	KIA
CP	Cambron, Richard H., 1Lt	KIA
NAV	Shipp, Gene K., 1Lt	KIA
MN	Wilson, Thomas E., 1Lt	KIA
BOM	Flemmons, James C., 1Lt	POW
ENG	Levine, Raymond, T/Sgt	KIA
RO	Christ, Donald R., T/Sgt	KIA
TG	White, Raymond E., 2Lt	KIA
WG	Hensel, Phillip W., S/Sgt	KIA
WG	Elliott, John C., S/Sgt	KIA

B-17G #44-8125 Sparky - PFF

NAV	Hitt, Kenneth S., F/O (427th)
	(Loaned to Polebrook)

427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

B-17G #43-38763 Jackie

P	Petersen, William H., 1Lt
CP	Candido, Anthony N., 2Lt
NAV	Bason, William A., 2Lt
BOM	Prince, John B., T/Sgt
TT	Zarella, Anthony A., S/Sgt
BT	Hartog, Samuel S., S/Sgt
RO	Whitely, Cull W., Jr., S/Sgt
TG	Mussi, James L., Sgt
WG	Tanner, Loyd H., S/Sgt

B-17G #42-31060 Poque Ma Hone

P	Ayers, Roger D, 2Lt
CP	Danna, Joseph, 2Lt
NAV	Wagner, Charles D., 2Lt
BOM	Cohen, Leonard, F/O
TT	Rys, Valentine J., Sgt
BT	Bailey, George E., Sgt
RO	Morris, Allen L., Sgt
TG	Turkovich, Charles J., Sgt
WG	Clarkson, Robert T., Sgt

B-17G #43-38734 Cheshire Cat

P	Barrat, Robert J., 2Lt
CP	Harvey, Dean, 2Lt
NAV	Best, Shirl P., F/O
BOM	Karp, William T., Sgt
TT	Reiss, Raymond F., Sgt
BT	Linhart, Louis N., Sgt
RO	Lazarowicz, Matthew, Sgt
TG	Emerson, George H., Sgt
WG	Link, Herbert D., Sgt

B-17G #43-38621 50 Ragged

P	Wertz, Robert M., 1Lt
CP	Durst, Melvin A., 2Lt
NAV	Leavell, Adelbert D., Jr., 2Lt
TOG	Simon, Lawrence E., S/Sgt
TT	Warne, Ralph W., Sgt
BT	Jensen, Kenneth E., Sgt
RO	Giering, Edward J., S/Sgt
TG	Karr, Leslie E., S/Sgt
WG	Campbell, Walter C., Sgt
Y	Brody, John J., Sgt