

# 303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 364

The Last 303rd BG (H) Combat Mission of World War II

25 April 1945

Target: Skoda Armament Works at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia

Crews Dispatched: 42

Crews Lost: 1Lt. Mauger - 3 KIA, 4 POW, 1 EVD

Length of Mission: 9 hours, 21 minutes

Bomb Load: 10 x 500 lb G.P. bombs

Bombing Altitudes: 22,000, 21,500 & 23,000 feet

This was the mission that men of the 303BG(H) had been waiting for since the group flew its first mission on 17 November 1942. Climaxing the end of the air war over Germany, the 303BG(H) attacked one of the most renowned targets in Europe—the Skoda armament works in Pilsen (Plzen), Czechoslovakia. Allied radio had broadcast a warning to the Czech workers to stay away from the factory since it was the target. Such an advance mission warning was unprecedented.

Forty-two aircraft were dispatched, including six spares, with assigned targets as follows: #1 – Skoda Armament Works, Pilsen, Czechoslovakia (visual); #2 – Munich, Germany marshalling yard (visual) and #3 (H2XO). New group commanding officer, Lt. Col. William C. **Sipes**, led the 41st CBW-A and 303BG(H) as Air Commander. No aircraft returned early. There was no Scouter or Weather B-17 for the Group or Wing.



*Col Sipes viewing Stars and Stripes*



*Final Tally for the 303rd - 25 April 1945*

Forty-one aircraft dropped 400 500-lb. G.P. bombs and ten leaflet units on target No. 1. Bombing results were good. The lead Squadron bombs hit about 500 feet south of the assigned MPI. Smoke from the lead Squadron bombs hit close to their MPI and hit a power point. Practically every bomb was in the target area and one large explosion was seen. Overall results were very good.

Target weather was 6/10th low clouds, tops at 8,000 feet. Since the target could not be seen on the first bomb run, all three Squadrons decided to make another run from a different angle. Strike photos showed direct hits on the huge factory. Later reports from plant workers revealed much devastation, and the plant was rendered inoperative.

There was no enemy air opposition and 188 P-51s provided good air support. In the target area anti-aircraft fire was meager to moderate and inaccurate on the first bomb run and became intense and very accurate on the second bomb run. Every returning aircraft sustained battle damage – twenty-four major and fifteen, minor. Five men in one crew were wounded. Many aircraft landed without gear or flaps. The end of the runway looked like a parking lot.



**ERNEST A. BAILEY, JR. CREW - 358th BS**  
**B-17G #43-38999 Emma VK-F**  
 (crew assigned 358BS: 01 Apr 1945 - photo: 03 April 1945)  
 (Back L-R) Sgt Alexander F. Masson (R), Sgt Frank L. Farmer (TG),  
 Sgt Austin D. Deaver (TOG), Sgt Leo W. Fogarty (RWG), Sgt Gerald L. Bacon  
 (BT), Sgt Richard P. Beamer (E) - (Front L-R) 2Lt Fred D. Dornblaser, Jr. (N),  
 2Lt Ernest A. Bailey (P), 2Lt Lawrence L. Fries, Jr. (CP)

B-17 #43-38191 *Shasta*, 358BS (**Bailey**) landed at Wurzburg, Germany (field R-24). The No. 2 gas tank and radio compass was damaged after being hit by gunfire from the chin turret of #43-39450, piloted by 1Lt. **McKimmie**. The nine man crew returned to Molesworth a week later. The B-17 was salvaged.

#42-107206 *Old Black Magic*, 427BS, (**Damon**) landed at Brussels, Belgium on one engine. T/Sgt **Mikkelson** (TG) was hospitalized at a field hospital at Y-29 in Belgium. He lost a portion of his toe on his right foot.

Four aircraft that returned to Molesworth had wounded men aboard: #43-38842 (*No Name*), 360BS (2Lt. **Maker**) – S/Sgt. Nolan **Hebert** (BT) had glass in his hand; #44-6516 *My Darling*, 360BS (1Lt. **Magee**) – Lt. **Magee** was hit by flak just above his elbow. The co-pilot flew back to Molesworth. Lt. **Magee** was placed in 303rd Station Hospital and spent the next six months recuperating; #43-38621 *50 Ragged*, 427BS (2Lt. F. **Miller**) – Sgt. Vincent A. **Buonpane** (SJ) had a wounded right hand that was treated in the Dispensary; #43-38870 (*No Name*), 360BS (2Lt. **Welshon**) – 2Lt. **Inman**'s (BOM) shoulder was injured by flak. He was placed in the 303rd Station Hospital.



Parts from B-17G #44-83447

One aircraft was missing in action. B-17G #44-83447 (*No Name*) 427BS, piloted by 1Lt. Warren E. **Mauger**, had the dubious honor of being the last 303BG(H) B-17 and crew to be lost on the last day of 8th Air Force bomber operations. It was hit by anti-aircraft fire immediately after "bombs away." When flak hit in the No. 3 engine nacelle, flames shot up enveloping the



**WARREN E. MAUGER CREW - 359th BS**

**(crew assigned 359BS: 24 Dec 1944)**

(Back L-R) 2Lt Norman T. Gadlois (B), 1Lt Warren E. Mauger (P), 1Lt William T. Burgess (CP),  
2Lt Bernard J. Brown (N) - (Front L-R) S/Sgt Matthew W. Grden (R), S/Sgt Glenn R. Walling (E),  
Sgt Gerald H. Craven (WG), Sgt Francis H. Kelley (BT), S/Sgt James W. Haley (TG)

entire nacelle. The fortress was out of control and fell sharply off to the right and almost straight down. Lt. **Mauger** ordered his crew to bail out, righted the stricken Fortress the best he could, and went to the nose hatch to bail out. The aircraft then exploded and disintegrated and Lt. **Mauger** found himself tumbling toward earth. With some difficulty he managed to open his parachute and float to earth. Fires in the cockpit had burned his face and hands. After he landed on some soft ground, a farmer assisted him and gave him directions to the friendly battle lines. He then spent 10 days evading capture by German troops. Assisted by several farmers and although coming close to capture, he managed to reach the American troops. Killed in the crash were 2Lt. Henry G. **Moss**, S/Sgt. Glenn R. **Walling**, and S/Sgt. Francis H. **Kelley**. S/Sgt. **Walling** was a cousin of 358BS Ball Turret Gunner, S/Sgt. James A. **Walling**. 2Lt. William T. **Burgess**, 2Lt. George E. **Knox**, S/Sgt. Matthew W. **Grden** and Sgt. Earl M. **Dugan** were captured and became Prisoners of War.



*Mauger Crew Museum Exhibit in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia*

The aircraft fell not far from the target, west of Pilsen. A group has been excavating the crash site along with other crashes in the area. They will erect a memorial in a crematorium building that was abandoned in 1974. Over 60 airmen died in the Pilsen area. The Skoda works is compiling a history of attacks on their factory that will include the **Mauger** crew and aircraft.

## Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group A

	<u>Sipes-Geile</u> 869 - PFF	
	<u>Milman</u> 999	<u>Rapp</u> 710 - PFF
<u>Cunningham</u> 258		<u>Bailey</u> 191
	<u>McKimmie</u> 450	<u>Bohle</u> 233
	<u>Woodard</u> 351	<u>Scott</u> 608
<u>Fountain</u> 006		<u>Griffith</u> 590
	<u>Burton</u> 285	<u>Bashor</u> 778
<u>Kentsbeer</u> 875		



*The Bombing of Pilsen, Czechoslovakia*

## Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group B

Hewitt-Roche  
912 - PFF

Welshon                      Magee  
870                                      516

Van Geyten                      Peterson  
672                                      127

Call  
609

Fowler                      Maker  
517                                      842

McGuffin                      Breslin  
532                                      453

Wirth  
523

Wall                      Leister  
563                                      645

## Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point - Group C

Aagesen-Baker  
876 - PFF

Denison                      Chuba  
937                                      977

Mauger                      Krohn  
447                                      534

Miller  
621

Ketner                      Damon  
883                                      206

Barr                      Flanigan  
287                                      483

Danna  
885

Donalson  
824

Von Aesch  
692

Lowry  
682

### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CREW POSITIONS</b> 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 WG - Waist Gunner LWG - Left Waist Gunner RWG - Right Waist Gunner GUN - Gunner VI - Voice Interpreter OBS - Observer	PAS - Passenger PHO - Photographer Y - Y-Operators (YRO,YO) RCM - Radio Cntr Measures SJ - Spot Jammer  <b>RESULTS OF MISSION</b> KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action	POW - Prisoner of war DOW - Died of wounds EVD - Evaded the enemy 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 #43-38258 *Forget Me Not Olly***

P	Cunningham, Neil E., 2Lt
CP	Thornton, Everett H., 2Lt
NAV	Kuester, Edward F., 2Lt
TOG	Reimche, George K., T/Sgt
ENG	Sprinkles, Leburn D., Sgt
RO	Ennis, Charles S., S/Sgt
BT	Carter, William J., Sgt
TG	Crigger, Richard S., Sgt

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

P	Fountain, Clarence M., 2Lt
CP	Bowman, George B., 2Lt
NAV	Widener, Howard H., F/O
TOG	Hackney, Carl R., Sgt
ENG	Grocki, John J., Sgt
RO	Riehl, William F., Sgt
BT	Darley, Ralph J., Sgt
TG	Powell, George A., Sgt

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

P	Woodard, John M., 2Lt
CP	Laubhan, Bob, 2Lt
NAV	Correale, Fortunato G., F/O
TOG	Jackson, Thomas W., Sgt
ENG	Walley, Glen B., S/Sgt
WG	Sloan, Walter E., Sgt
RO	Foreman, Dennis E., S/Sgt
TG	Johnson, Robert H., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-37590 *Neva-The Silver Lady***

P	Griffith, Rudolph L., 2Lt
CP	Stockton, Charles F., 2Lt
NAV	Besharian, Joseph, F/O
TOG	Pearce, Roscoe L., Sgt
ENG	Wilson, Warren J., Sgt
RO	Ruff, Merle H., Sgt
TG	Jarrett, Robert W., Sgt
BT	Hogan, Walter B., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38875 *Redwing***

P	Kentsbeer, William F., 2Lt
CP	Tableman, Glen A., 2Lt
NAV	Rankin, Earl W., F/O
TOG	Roddey, Francis M., Sgt
ENG	Savage, Francis L., Sgt
RO	O'Donnell, John J., Sgt
BT	Levie, Benjamin H., Sgt
TG	Hague, John C., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38999 *Emma***

P	Milman, Jerome, 1Lt
CP	Sichley, Clarence W., 2Lt
NAV	Wilson, Benjamin H., F/O
BOM	Kruckemayer, Thomas J., 1Lt
ENG	Eygabroad, Robert J., S/Sgt
RO	Strouse, Jacob J., T/Sgt
BT	Fox, Raymond H., Sgt
TG	Geyer, Henry, Sgt

### **B-17G #43-39285 (No Name)**

P	Burton, Richard B., 2Lt
CP	Ludlow, Harold K., 2Lt
NAV	Brough, Clyde W., F/O
TOG	Blondeau, Alexander L., Sgt
ENG	King, Cecil J., T/Sgt
RO	Salm, Edward P., Sgt
BT	Amos, Harmon E., Sgt
TG	Strahan, Everette E., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-39450 (No Name)**

P	McKimmie, William L., 1Lt
CP	Sims, Allen R., 2Lt
NAV	Hopkins, William B., 2Lt
BOM	Bradshaw, Charles A., 2Lt
ENG	Farmer, Evert L., T/Sgt
RO	Little, Gerald G., S/Sgt
TG	Mogusar, John F., Sgt
BT	Kampa, Vernon L., Sgt

## 358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

### **B-17G #43-39233 (No Name)**

P	Bohle, Loren W., 2Lt
CP	Gordon, Joseph, 1Lt
NAV	Gerhardstein, Eugene M., F/O
TOG	Sproule, Wayne O., Sgt
ENG	Bigelow, Robert F., S/Sgt
RO	Genter, Norman, S/Sgt
BT	Aldous, George C., Sgt
TG	Smith, Jack C., Sgt
PAS	Morrill, Charles K., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38191 Shasta**

P	Bailey, Ernest A., 2Lt
CP	Boardman, Robert, F/O
NAV	Dornblaser, Fred D., Jr., 2Lt
TOG	Deaver, Austin D., Sgt
ENG	Beamer, Richard P., Sgt
RO	Masson, Alexander F., Sgt
BT	Bacon, Gerald L., Sgt
TG	Farmer, Frank L., Sgt
PAS	Taylor, Walter, Sgt. (303rd Hqtrs)

### **B-17G #43-38608 Lucille**

P	Scott, Charles F., Jr., F/O
CP	Volz, Raymond J., F/O
NAV	Blackwell, Samuel D., F/O
TOG	Loftin, Lloyd D., Sgt
ENG	Gale, James C., Jr., Sgt
RO	Gilmer, Billie G., Pvt
BT	Fanguy, Floyd J., Cpl
TG	Hills, Raymond E., Sgt
RCM	Haley, James W., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38778 (No Name)**

P	Bashor, Oliver L., 2Lt
CP	Pinkert, Paul A., 2Lt
NAV	Johnson, Herbert G., 2Lt
TOG	Hansen, Robert S., Sgt
ENG	Reed, Paul E., S/Sgt
RO	Smith, Lloyd D., Sgt
BT	Greene, Norman S., S/Sgt
TG	Theisen, Robert J., Sgt

## 359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17G #44-8876 (No Name) - PFF**

P	Aagesen, Donald C., 1Lt
CP	Baker, Ira B., 2Lt
NAV	Hoida, Donald J., 2Lt
MN	Harrouff, Kelly F., 2Lt
BOM	Marshall, Alexander F., 1Lt
ENG	Ellis, Paul R., T/Sgt
RO	Berly, Joel A., Jr., S/Sgt
TG	Vuksinich, Louis F., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #44-8710 *Idle Wheel* - PFF**

P	Rapp, John W., 1Lt
CP	Judd, Dudley F., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Moeller, Floyd E., 1Lt
MN	Fournier, Ernest R., 1Lt
BOM	Steinberg, Clifford, 2Lt
ENG	Dreblow, George P., S/Sgt
RO	Mahoney, Denis J., T/Sgt
TG	Evans, William A., Sgt

### **B-17G #44-8912 (No Name) - PFF**

P	Hewitt, Donald I., 1Lt
CP	Roche, John E., F/O
NAV	Wilhelm, Frederick H., 2Lt
MN	Perry, Franklin W., 2Lt
BOM	Reed, Andrew T., 2Lt
ENG	Sabo, Stephen R., Sgt
RO	Kamen, Roland K., T/Sgt
TG	Agrifoglio, Benjamin M., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #44-8869 (No Name) - PFF**

P	Sipes, William C., LtCol
CP	Geile, Thomas A., 2Lt
NAV	Cheney, James S., Maj
NAV	Dwyer, Marion J., 2Lt
MN	Bowes, Jerome P. III, 1Lt
BOM	Orvis, George T., Capt
ENG	Bielecki, John B., Jr., Sgt
RO	Gibbons, Francis M., T/Sgt
TG	Olson, John L., 2Lt

### **B-17G #44-83447 (No Name) (427BS) CR-L**

P	Mauger, Warren, 1Lt	EVD
CP	Burgess, William T., 1Lt	POW
NAV	Knox, George E., 1Lt	POW
BOM	Moss, Henry G., 2Lt	KIA
TT	Walling, Glenn R., S/Sgt	KIA
RO	Grden, Matthew W., S/Sgt	POW
BT	Kelley, Francis H., S/Sgt	KIA
TG	Dugan, Earl M., Sgt	POW



## 360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17G #43-38532 (No Name)**

P	McGuffin, Jack, Jr., 2Lt
CP	Van Beek, James C., 2Lt
NAV	Cochran, Gomer W., F/O
TOG	Edgar, Thomas O., Sgt
ENG	Martens, Raymond J., Sgt
RO	Mahan, Bernard M., Sgt
BT	Lee, Oscie O., Jr., Sgt
TG	Sutton, Floyd H., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38870 (No Name)**

P	Welshon, Frank E., 2Lt
CP	Sumpter, James A., 2Lt
NAV	Robinson, Truman, 2Lt
BOM	Inman, James O., 2Lt
ENG	Jackson, James L., Sgt
RO	Selberg, Maurice K., Sgt
BT	Paris, Russell C., Sgt
TG	Mangum, Henry L., Jr., Sgt

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

P	Lester, Jack L., 2Lt
CP	Gaspar, Robert V., F/O
NAV	Sutherland, James M., 2Lt
TOG	Faulkner, Leroy, S/Sgt
ENG	Livingston, Edward B., Sgt
RO	Rachel, Frank R., Sgt
BT	Keenan, Alexander J., Sgt
TG	Donner, Eugene D., Sgt

### **B-17G #44-6523 (No Name)**

P	Wirth, Gordon L., 1Lt
CP	Frook, Stanley F., 2Lt
NAV	Winfield, Robert P., 2Lt
BOM	Vinovich, Ralph, 1Lt
ENG	Beck, Cyrus C., Sgt
RO	Siegel, Edwin, T/Sgt
BT	Nassau, Norman, Sgt
TG	Kaufmann, William R., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #43-39127 (No Name)**

P	Peterson, Robert C., 1Lt
CP	Kirkpatrick, Roy A., 2Lt
NAV	Mollman, Charles A., 2Lt
TOG	Wilson, Robert P., Sgt
ENG	Reed, Denver E., Sgt
RO	Strigle, Paul C., Sgt
BT	Hunsucker, John E., S/Sgt
TG	Borsody, William L., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38609 (No Name)**

P	Call, Fred E., 1Lt
CP	Wilson, Carl V., 2Lt
NAV	Udy, Donald M., F/O
BOM	Puryear, James D., 1Lt
ENG	Myers, Ernest L., S/Sgt
RO	Sussman, Martin, S/Sgt
TG	Tanner, Henry C., S/Sgt
BT	Hager, Mark I., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38842 (No Name)**

P	Maker, Eugene L., 2Lt
CP	Kaltenbacher, Robert F., 2Lt
NAV	Strassburger, Harvey D., F/O
TOG	Moren, Owen W., S/Sgt
ENG	Smith, Paul R., Sgt
RO	Wisniewski, Andrew J., Sgt
BT	Hebert, Nolan, S/Sgt
TG	Martis, Joseph A., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38563 *Jackie***

P	Wall, James A., F/O
CP	King, Roy L., F/O
NAV	Hamilton, James E., F/O
BOM	Olinger, Charles F., F/O
ENG	Cochran, Frank H., Sgt
RO	Pratt, William A., Sgt
BT	Booe, Billy L., Sgt
TG	Shipp, B.J., Sgt

## 360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

### **B-17G #43-38672 (No Name)**

P	Van Geyten, John J., F/O
CP	Payne, Harry, F/O
NAV	Brauchle, John G., F/O
BOM	Pherson, Wilbert C., Jr., F/O
ENG	Fischer, Herman W., Sgt
RO	Sole, John A., S/Sgt
BT	Nicklas, Henry P., Cpl
TG	Clem, Billy J., Cpl
VI	Brenner, Seymour, S/Sgt (427th)

### **B-17G #44-6516 My Darling**

P	Magee, Jack R., 1Lt
CP	Briody, Lawrence J., 2Lt
NAV	Chennault, Paul E., Jr., 2Lt
TOG	Flandermeyer, Omer J., Sgt
ENG	Dow, Jacob E., Sgt
RO	Dittmar, John F., S/Sgt
BT	Bauer, Herbert, Cpl
TG	Meyer, Wilbur H., Jr., Cpl

### **B-17G #44-6517 Old Cock**

P	Fowler, Robert R., 1Lt
CP	Boyles, Kenneth L., 2Lt
NAV	Sarkis, George A., F/O
TOG	Bice, Lowell E., S/Sgt
ENG	Bryson, Emil M., T/Sgt
RO	Ahland, Walter F., T/Sgt
BT	Henager, Rudolph M., S/Sgt
TG	Yepes, William J., S/Sgt
RCM	Pons, Armand S., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-39453 (No Name)**

P	Breslin, Jack D., 1Lt
CP	Bischofs, Hans, 2Lt
NAV	Morgan, Clinton J., 2Lt
TOG	Perry, Gordon W., S/Sgt
ENG	Moore, Harley E., T/Sgt
RO	Kirtner, Billy L., T/Sgt
BT	Mason, Millard E., S/Sgt
TG	Barlow, Grover C., Sgt
RCM	Carl, Lewis E., S/Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38645 (No Name)**

P	Leister, Francis E., 2Lt
CP	Timmons, James A., 2Lt
NAV	Maso, Salvatore J., F/O
TOG	Cibor, Walter, Sgt
ENG	Smith, Philman C., Sgt
RO	Shaunnessy, William I., Sgt
BT	Crum, Roy E., Cpl
TG	Stevens, Wilfred O., Sgt

## 427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17G #44-8824 (No Name)**

P	Donalson, David S., 2Lt
CP	Pittard, Thomas W., Jr., 2Lt
NAV	Cahill, William F., 2Lt
TOG	Lenhard, Robert H., Sgt
TT	Knight, Ernest E., Sgt
BT	Brehl, Ralph C., Jr., Cpl
RO	Kaliel, Wilfred L., Sgt
TG	Parr, Robert E., Cpl

### **B-17G #44-83483 (No Name)**

P	Flanigan, Lloyd J., 2Lt
CP	Bennett, Ralph S., F/O
NAV	Heaney, Edward J., F/O
TOG	McDonald, Francis E., Sgt
TT	Gilkes, Beresford B., S/Sgt
BT	Safley, Delbert A., Sgt
RO	Lestonga, John W., Sgt (358th)
TG	Neiswender, John J., Sgt

### **B-17G #44-6977 Better Do'er**

P	Chuba, Francis B., 1Lt
CP	Rogers, Ennis L., 2Lt
NAV	Wolf, Robert J., 2Lt
TOG	Malmo, Robert C., Sgt
TT	Ayers, Francis H., Sgt
RO	Harkey, Charles I., S/Sgt
TG	Huckabay, Harvey H., Sgt
BT	Paananen, Uhlo J., Sgt

### **B-17G #44-8692 Little Tillie**

P	Von Aesch, Edward J., F/O
CP	Suich, Andrew W., 2Lt
NAV	Lieberman, Leon, F/O
BOM	Osmundson, Arthur E., 2Lt
TT	Kenney, William C., Sgt
BT	Batts, Bert, Pfc
RO	Anderson, Martin L., Sgt
TG	Caputo, Harrison D., Sgt

### **B-17G #44-6937 El Sereano**

P	Denison, William A., 2Lt
CP	Abbott, Robert E., 2Lt
NAV	Zabilecky, John W., F/O
TOG	Mack, William H., Sgt
TT	Eckert, Clair E., S/Sgt
BT	Conyer, Roy, Jr., Sgt
RO	Kiggens, William P., Sgt
TG	O'Hearn, Walter D., Sgt

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

P	Damon, Malcolm F., 2Lt
CP	Whitford, Milton G., 2Lt
NAV	Burr, Howard G., 2Lt
TOG	Leenstra, John M., Sgt
TT	Kaseric, John, Sgt
BT	Braun, Donald K., Sgt
RO	Mullen, John P., S/Sgt
TG	Mikkelsen, Delbert M., Sgt

### **B-17G #44-85534 (No Name)**

P	Krohn, Robert W., 2Lt
CP	Kindig, Paul B., 2Lt
NAV	Christen, Louis M., 2Lt
TOG	O'Sullivan, Henry T., Sgt
TT	Peterson, Herman O., Sgt
BT	Minoff, John, Sgt
RO	McKenzie, Malcolm L., Sgt
TG	Naylon, Dale R., Sgt

### **B-17G #43-38682 (No Name)**

P	Lowry, William J., 2Lt
CP	Farland, Eugene H., 2Lt
NAV	Wood, Stuart K., 2Lt
BOM	Wort, Irving, 1Lt
TT	Anderson, Donald W., S/Sgt
RO	Thomas, William B., Sgt
BT	Warcholak, Emanuel, Sgt
TG	Moots, Merritt L., Sgt

## 427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists - Cont'd.

<b>B-17G #43-38621 50 Ragged</b>		<b>B-17G #44-83287 (No Name)</b>	
P	Miller, Forrest E., 2Lt	P	Barr, Thomas J., 2Lt
CP	Woodworth, Kenneth R., F/O	CP	Pauling, Verlin C., 2Lt
NAV	Higgins, Harold W., 2Lt	NAV	Walker, Raymon G., 2Lt
TOG	Bulbach, Walter, S/Sgt	BOM	Wentworth, Richard H., F/O
TT	Conroy, Thomas R., S/Sgt	TT	Daspit, Thomas M., Sgt
BT	Burns, Jerry E., Sgt	BT	Laza, Benney F., Sgt
RO	Retzlaff, Robert R., Sgt	RO	Zierk, George W., Sgt
TG	Rogers, Herbert B., S/Sgt	TG	Byers, McClellen, Sgt
SJ	Buonpane, Vincent A., Sgt	SJ	Higginbotham, John M., S/Sgt

  

<b>B-17G #43-38883 Lady Beth</b>		<b>B-17G #42-39885 Sweet Rose O'Grady</b>	
P	Ketner, Wilbert L., 2Lt	P	Danna, Joseph, 2Lt
CP	McColl, John R., Jr., 2Lt	CP	Rich, Richard H., 2Lt
NAV	Metsopoulos, William, 2Lt	NAV	Hansen, Arnold A., F/O
TOG	Geary, Joseph P., Sgt	TOG	Chornyie, Frank, Sgt
ENG	Sears, Glenn W., Sgt	TT	Madden, James D., T/Sgt
RO	Mohn, Grover C., Sgt	BT	Callicott, William M., Sgt
BT	Cutter, Harrison F., Cpl	RO	Bilski, Peter P., Sgt
TG	Drennan, Thomas A., Sgt	TG	Loy, Arthur M., Sgt

### **TEN DAYS of EVASION and HOME AGAIN !!**

by Warren E. Mauger

As the farmer got closer, I could see that he was waving a white cloth. Somehow, by gestures and words, I asked him the way to travel west to get to our lines. He told me the best he could and offered his old farm jacket for me to wear. The jacket not only helped me keep warm, but also made me appear as one of the local farmers. My pants were all stained and burnt and no longer resembled an Air Force officer's uniform.

As I approached a river crossing, I saw a reconnaissance car approaching. I jumped down along the bank and lay there. It passed. Just before I got to some woods in the hills, another German soldier came out of a bomb shelter and spotted me. He walked on.

It was 1:00 p.m. I crawled into a drainage ditch and pulled a great quantity of leaves over myself. I moved out at about 5:00 p.m. Ahead of me sat a German soldier with his girlfriend. I strolled by them practically unnoticed. At the bottom of the hill was a set of railroad tracks. I followed the tracks in the darkness for about a mile. When it looked like I was coming to a city, I left the tracks and struck out cross-country.

In the first faint glimmer of sunlight, I could see a small town looming up. I heard the roar of some trucks coming up from behind. I dove for the drainage ditch at the side of the road. A convoy of German army trucks passed.

Once on the outskirts of town, I started looking for farm houses. I got into the barn unnoticed but, as I climbed into the hay loft, on my heels was the farm's dog. It barked and howled until the farmer got up. The farmer said I could not stay on his property for if the German police found me there, he and his family would be shot. He did show me a spot to hide during the day. He left me there and, most important of all, left a small amount of food.

Progress the second night heading west was pretty slow. When the sun rose, I was glad to bed down. By sundown I was feeling well rested, and walked through the night. About 5:30 in the morning, a farmer overtook me with his horse and wagon. He bid me hop aboard. After about a half hour, he pointed up the road. Through the trees, there was a military check point. Everyone passing had to produce proper identification credentials. I jumped from the wagon and headed for the hills. The farmer moved off at a slow pace and the soldiers at the check point did not see me or suspect anything.

The sun was setting now. I would sleep this night. I found a wooded area with a lot of leaf cover. As in the past, I awoke very hungry. I approached a house and was welcomed at the door. I told the farmer that I was an American flyer. He apparently understood and bid me come in. A family of six lived in one room of this farm house. I shared a meal with these kind and generous folks and was again on my way.

At about noon I came to a mountain stream, and just beyond the bridge, I could see a small town. After crossing the bridge, I rapped on the door of one of the houses. A young lad, about 12 years of age, answered the door and let me in the house. It appeared he was the only one home. He offered me some sour milk soup. He told me he was a member of the Hitler Youth and showed me his uniform. He said that it was all but mandatory to belong. Somehow I believed him and left feeling that he would not notify anyone of my being there.

I would sleep the rest of the day and walk this night. I bedded down in the dense undergrowth along a field. By the time I awoke it was dark. I walked along rolling fields. Before the night was over I was again looking for someplace to bed down. I spotted a large farm house and a very inviting hay stack. Their dog was chained, and its barking seemed not to disturb the farmer so I approached the hay stack. As I was digging, I came across a sleeping man in a German army uniform. I made a fast exit and found some other place to sleep.

Toward late afternoon the next day, I came upon a large river that could not be crossed except by the bridge. Again the military check-point was there. I had not waited long when there approached a group of six men. I got on the road ahead of them and let them catch up to me before I came to the bridge. All seven of us walked by the guards without a hitch.

I hadn't walked very far into the city, when I became aware that I was being followed by two German soldiers. My pace did not increase for fear that they might suspect something in my actions. They were closing the gap. I mounted the steps of a church and gave a slight backward glance. To my relief, the soldiers continued down the street.

Entering the church, I slipped into one of the back pews. When the church was empty I went to the front and identified myself. The priest understood immediately and motioned for me to follow him. We went outside the back of the church and onto a small street. He called to a woman in a second story window. She disappeared and returned in a minute with her arms full of bread. She threw them down, with myself and the priest doing the catching. I thanked both of them and headed down the street with my shirt bulging with large pieces of black bread.

Now I was coming to the end of my fifth day – or was it the sixth? One loses track of time after a while in these situations. I was up pretty early the next morning and was anxious to get going. As I walked along, I had breakfast—a fine meal of hard black bread. The farmers paid little attention to me. The ones that did look my way probably thought me a vagrant for I certainly looked the part, dirty and unshaven.

Late in the afternoon I approached a village. The road leading into this village again had soldiers. Going past the soldiers in a group had worked so well before, I decided I would try it again. Some farmers from the neighboring fields were heading for their homes now. I fell in with one of the groups and again passed by the soldiers. Things didn't go so well though. Shortly after passing the sentries, a soldier on a motorcycle caught up to the group and looked us over pretty well. He proceeded on about a half block and wheeled around. He was coming back pretty fast. This was time to leave.

I bolted across a front lawn of one house, into the back yard and over a large picket fence. I must have jumped it like a hurdler. Up a large terraced hill I raced. The first terrace I hit head first. I lay there a few minutes, my heart pounding and finding it hard to breathe. Slowly I raised my head. Down the road the German motorcyclist drove back and forth, stopped at every house and searched. I was afraid to proceed up the hill for fear of being seen. It was getting near dark, so here I would stay for awhile.

I had no sooner stretched out on the ground when another German soldier came strolling up a small path toward my hiding place. It was too late to run. I had to do something fast. I put on the act of a man completely stoned. I got up, staggered around and fell down a couple times. He smiled while watching this and then turned and strolled up and over the hill.

When it was good and dark I headed west. As the sun started to heat things up the next day, I began to feel better. I walked along the edge of some woods. About a half mile ahead two farm hands were working with hoes. As I approached, they moved to intercept my path. Both men appeared to be friendly, judging by their gestures. I made an attempt to identify myself. It was successful. They were elated at this discovery. This meeting proved to be one of the greatest pieces of good fortune in this whole adventure.

One of these two was a young lad of about 15, the other a man in his 20s who introduced himself as Andre Vesille. Andre was to be the key to my survival for the next several days. We walked to the crest of a small hill. Spread out below us was a village of not more than 15 houses. Off to one corner of the field on this hill was a large hay stack. Upon getting to the stack, the two men began to pull large clumps of straw out of the base.

In a short time they had hollowed out a sizable cave. They motioned for me to crawl in. Once I was in, they covered up the opening, leaving me a small air hole to the outside. Andre said that he would come back later. The hay stack was dry and warm-not half bad really.

At sundown, Andre was back. He beckoned for me to come out. We sat there by the stack and tried to communicate. I munched on the small lunch he had brought. I found out that he was a Russian who had been captured at the front. He and his wife and child had been shipped to this small village to help with the farm work. He was very talkative and was a joy to have around. Before he left, he said he would return the next day. I then settled down to a fine nights sleep with the first distant rumble of artillery.

My little Russian friend showed up and again he brought supper. This time my meal consisted of two pieces of black bread, two raw eggs and a small bottle of milk. I had never eaten raw eggs before, but they tasted fine. After supper we again sat and chatted. The little spot in the haystack was out of view of the village, so we felt quite safe. After he left, I settled back for the night and again listened to the rumble in the west. The artillery roar was closer this night. Again I quickly fell asleep.

The next morning was bright and clear. About 2:30 in the afternoon, I looked out the little hole and saw a stranger looking in at me. He was an old man with a cane, well dressed in a black suit and a gray hat, apparently someone of importance in the village. Andre came at about sundown. I told him what had happened. He told me the man was the Burgermeister and that he was placed in the village because of his sympathetic feelings toward the Germans. He had the only telephone in the village and would call the military if he sighted any enemy in the area.

Andre rushed me off to another hiding place. My new refuge was a one man bomb shelter about 300 yards from the haystack. These shelters were four-foot square holes approximately six feet deep. They were filled with straw to within three feet from the top. Over the top were placed logs. The logs were raised on one end so a person could slide in on his stomach. He bid me farewell. I ate the small lunch he left and settled back for the night.

Early in the following afternoon, some small children arrived at the shelter and decided to play inside. They laughed and bounced all over, chattering and really enjoying themselves. When they finally discovered that they weren't the only ones there, they fled, terror stricken. It wasn't long before they came back, but this time with their mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles. The people seemed more curious than angry. I showed myself at the entrance which seemed to satisfy their curiosity. They soon left and I was wondering if they would bring back the Burgermeister, the police, or worse, some German soldiers.

It wasn't long before Andre arrived, this time with his young friend whom I had seen on our first encounter. I quickly explained what had happened. In a minute, I was racing across the fields with each man pulling me on either arm. I found it very difficult to run because I had been off my feet for a long period of time. The new hiding place was the same old hay stack. Andre explained to me that the previous day the Burgermeister had called the authorities and that they had searched the hay stack. When they found no trace



of me, they assumed I had moved on. This was indeed a good place to hide in again. That night the rumble of artillery was much louder.

The next morning, it must have been Sunday, for Andre had with him his wife and son. She had brought a nice lunch and a wash cloth, soap and a towel. We walked to a small brook where I cleaned up. After this we settled back to a fine picnic lunch. Andre's wife and son never took their eyes off me. I must have presented a curious sight to them. The rest of the day I spent in my cave. The artillery bursts were now getting so close that the ground shook. I could hear the distant sound of the cannon, the whine through the air and the explosion when the missile landed. I also heard something else now, machine gun fire.

Sometime after midnight, the machine gun fire on both sides became intense. You could distinguish the American fire by its low pitch and slower rate than that of the Germans. The artillery on both sides were now firing. Toward morning I could hear many voices of German soldiers. I heard another sound, one I could not reconcile with the once mighty German army. Teams of horses were moving the biggest share of German equipment for this retreat. Evidently, the bombing of oil refineries had taken its toll. The army had no fuel to move its mechanized equipment. This lack of fuel had knocked out most of its tanks also.

Finally, the artillery bombardment stopped. It was now about sun-up. Intermittent machine gun fire was still present though. All of a sudden, Andre was peering in the peep hole. He told me he and his family were going into the hills. He said he would be back as soon as the fighting subsided.

Most of the day was filled with sporadic sounds of small arms fire, with an occasional larger report from heavy artillery. Tanks could also be heard rumbling about. I had always been happy to see Andre and it was no exception when again I saw him at the peep hole. Excitedly he told me that the Americans were at the intersection of the village roads. We ran down the hill together. I couldn't keep up too well, so Andre helped me along.

At the intersection stood three light tanks firing down the road. Behind these tanks were two jeeps. I approached the last jeep and was about to identify myself when I took a second look at the helmets these soldiers were wearing. They had netting over them and their shape was hard to distinguish. Then, a G.I. spotted me and tossed me two packages of Camel cigarettes. THANK GOD, it was all over!

I turned to Andre, but how do you thank a man who has probably saved your life? The words we exchanged were superfluous, but he somehow understood my feelings. I gave him my watch, something he had admired many times. What a small price to pay for his great service.

## **A NEAR MISS – BUT WE LANDED OK**

**27 APRIL 1945 — CONTINENTAL EXPRESS**

**by of Sgt Leon H. Hoegh**

It was two days after the war was over. All the ground crews were flown over the areas that had been bombed throughout the War. It was called, "The Continental Express" and was an attempt by the Group Leaders to show the Ground Support Personnel what they had been working, day and night, to help the fly boys do.



Today, two days after the war was over, a bunch of us guys had a low level view of the destruction that had taken place. Few roof tops were still in place. Many buildings were gutted by the resulting fire from bomb explosions. There were bomb holes on several of the airfield runways that we passed over. Bridges were out everywhere and railroad marshalling yards were in a shamble. I counted 27 ships in the channel — and they were all allied ships.

As we returned to the base, I decided to walk forward into the cockpit. As we approached Molesworth to land, the flaps were lowered and the engine speed had been cut. Suddenly I saw a B-17, directly beneath us. "Lookout," I screamed, "There is a plane under us!"

The pilot and co-pilot struggled to change our course, but the plane did not respond, because we were caught in the prop wash of the plane beneath us. With the engine full throttle, and the plane down to about light pole height, the props finally found the air they needed. We

started breathing a little easier.

We landed with a reverence for those who waged the battles, an indelible memory of those who served in the many foxholes we viewed from above — and a respect for those who had piloted the planes we saw crashed in enemy territory.

As a front line nurse once said, "We lost the best and the brightest that we had." Now that I had seen the destruction — I was ready to come home to my family.

# ***THE WAR IS OVER !!***

**V-E DAY – 08 May 1945**

