

**STATS AND FACTS**  
**303rd BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)**  
**MOLESWORTH, ENGLAND**  
**12 September 1942 to 11 June 1945**

**ACTION AGAINST ENEMY**

364 Combat Missions Flown  
10,721 Aircraft Sorties Flown  
26,346 Tons of Bombs Dropped

**ENEMY FIGHTER CLAIMS <sup>(1)</sup>**

378 (57%) Destroyed  
104 (16%) Probably Destroyed  
182 (27%) Damaged  
664 (100%) Total Fighter Claims

**PERSONNEL CASUALTIES <sup>(2)</sup>**

TOTAL CASUALTIES: 1,748

**KILLED IN ACTION (KIA)**

769 On MIA B-17s  
32 In returned B-17s  
8 Training Flights - USA  
32 Training Flights - UK  
841 (48%) Total KIAs

**PRISONERS OF WAR (POW)**

739 POWs in prison camps  
9 Evaded capture then POW  
11 Repatriated while a POW  
4 Died while a POW  
1 Escaped while a POW  
764 (44%) Total POWs

**OTHER MIA SURVIVORS**

67 Evaded capture from Enemy  
64 B-17 ditched. Crew rescued  
29 Switzerland Internees  
160 (9%) Total Other Survivors

**AIRCRAFT LOSSES <sup>(3)</sup>**

**TOTAL B-17 LOSSES: 210**

**LOST IN ENEMY TERRITORY**

65 Downed by German Fighters  
52 Downed by Flak  
13 Unknown causes  
10 Mid-Air Collisions  
140 (67%) Total MIAs

**LOST IN FRIENDLY TERRITORY**

3 Flown to Switzerland-Interned  
1 Flown to Italy - Salvaged  
3 Flown to Russia - Salvaged  
6 Crash landings  
3 Abandoned - Crew bailed out  
16 Total (8%)

**LOST AT SEA**

23 Ditchings  
1 B-17 in Sea-Crew bail out  
24 (11%) Total Lost at Sea

**LOST IN UNITED KINGDOM**

7 Abandoned - Crew bailed out  
13 Crash landings  
6 Mid-air collisions  
4 Crash after Molesworth take off  
30 (14%) Total U.K. Losses

<sup>(1)</sup> There may have been other B-17s that were seriously damaged, with no loss of lives, that were later salvaged. They may have landed at Molesworth or other U.K. airfields, in friendly continental Europe locations, following a combat mission. Also, not included are B-17s involved in non-combat accidents or crash landings in the United Kingdom.

<sup>(2)</sup> Casualties do not include: Crewmen who were wounded or injured in action, survivors of bailouts or crash landings in the U.K. or friendly Continental Europe who returned to Molesworth, ground personnel or combat crewmen who were injured, killed or died from non-combat accidents or illness.

<sup>(3)</sup> Includes only those enemy aircraft claims that were reviewed and confirmed following the combat mission where claims were made.

## **303RD BG(H) AIRCRAFT AND COMBAT CREW FIRSTS**

### **38th Reconnaissance Squadron (Later designated as 303rd BG(H) 427th BS)**

#### **07 Dec 1941**

- ▶ First USAAF aircraft in combat against the enemy (Hickam Field, Hawaii) B-17s arrived during the Japanese attack

### **Flights from the Molesworth, England Airfield with RAF 226 Squadron flying RAF Boston (A-20) aircraft**

#### **29 June 1942**

- ▶ First U.S. crew to bomb occupied Europe - Molesworth based Captain Kegelman

#### **04 Apr 1942**

- ▶ First U.S. combat crew loss - Lt Loehrl and crew
- ▶ First U.S. POW - Lt Marshall Draper

#### **11 July 1942**

- ▶ First 8th AF Distinguished Service Cross Award - Major Kegelman for his 4 April 1942 flight
- ▶ First 8th AF Distinguished Flying Cross Awards - to three members of the Kegelman crew

### **Crews and aircraft of the 303rd BG(H) that were transferred to the 97th BG(H) on May 18-20, 1942**

#### **22 June 1942**

- ▶ First 8th AF B-17 rescued from a temporary runway to permit takeoff - B-17 #41-9129, 1stLt Schmoldt at Bathurst, New Brunswick

#### **01 July 1942**

- ▶ First 8th AF B-17 to arrive in the United Kingdom - #41-9085 Jarrin Jenny, Lt Johnson

#### **17 Aug 1942**

- ▶ First 8th AF (VIII BC) combat mission - #41-9125 Prowler, Lt Blair, to Rouen/Scotteville, FR

#### **17 Sept 1942**

- ▶ First 8th AF B-17 to be salvaged as a result of combat mission damage - #41-9074 at Burtonwood

### **Crews and aircraft of the 303rd BG(H) at Molesworth, England**

#### **17 Nov 1942**

- ▶ 303rd BG(H) enters combat - One of the 8th AF's pioneer Bomb Groups

**27 Jan 1943**

- ▶ First 8th AF mission to bomb Germany - 303rd BG(H) mission #12 to Wilhelmshaven. (Also 91st, 305th and 306th BGs) 303rd formations led by 306th BS Capt Lewis E. Lyle, Pilot, and Colonel Charles E. Marion, CoPilot.

**18 Mar 1943**

- ▶ First 8th AF Medal of Honor - earned by 1stLt Jack W. Mathis, 359th BS Bombardier flying in The Duchess on 303rd BG(H) mission No. 24 to Vegesak, Germany

**31 Mar 1943**

- ▶ First 8th AF fatal mid-air collision while forming for a mission - 303rd BG(H) mission No. 27 to Rotterdam, Holland. Involved #41-29573, Two Beaus, Lt James R. Dunn and #41-24599 Oold Soljer, Lt Keith O. Bartlett

**14 May 1943**

- ▶ First 8th AF bomber to complete 25 combat missions - 358th BS #41-24577, Hell's Angels
- ▶ First 8th AF mission on which over 200 bombers participated - to Kiel, Germany

**16 Nov 1943**

- ▶ First 8th AF heavy bomber to complete 50 combat missions - 359th BS Knockout Dropper on 303rd mission #82 to Knaban, Norway

**27 Mar 1944**

- ▶ First 8th AF heavy bomber to complete 75 combat missions 359th BS - Knockout Dropper on 303rd mission No. 129 to Chartes Airfield, France

**15 June 1944**

- ▶ First 8th AF Distinguished Service Cross Award for "Outstanding Leadership and Overall Superior Job" - To Lt.Col Lewis E. Lyle for 303rd BG(H) services from 17 Nov 1942 to 5 June 1944

**09 July 1944**

- ▶ First 8th AF Bomb Group to complete 200 missions - to Chatteaudon Airfield, France

**10 Jan 1945**

- ▶ First 8th AF Bomb Group to complete 300 missions from the U.K. - 303rd BG(H) mission #300 to Bonn/Hangelar Airfield, Cologne Brillion and Euskirchen. 1st Air Division commander was 358th BS Commander Major George T. Mackin

**25 April 1945**

- ▶ Final 8th AF combat mission - To Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

303rd BG(H) flew the most 8th AF combat missions from England -- 364  
303rd BG(H) had second highest 8th AF total sorties flown -- 10,721  
303rd BG(H) dropped second highest 8th AF tons of bombs -- 26,346