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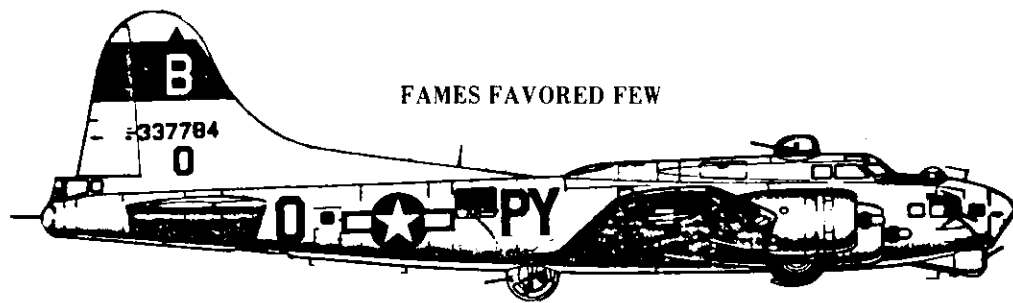
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Gene Wiley-407th
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92nd Bombardment Group NEWS



FAMES FAVORED FEW

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LETTER 7

DECEMBER 1981

MISSION TO HANOVER, JULY 26, 1943

This report was reconstructed from archive files donated to our organization by Col. David Besbris. The mission is also reported in "The Route As Briefed". The mission was a multi-combat Wing effort to attack Hanover-Nordhafen Continental Gummiwerke Tyre Factory).

Seventeen B-17 F and two YB-40 aircraft were scheduled from the 92nd Bomb Group. All aircraft took off from Alconbury at 0845, climbed to 5,000 feet over the vicinity of the base, and assembled with the 305th Bomb Group near Cromer. Departure from the English Coast was made at 1015 with the 92nd flying as low Group, the 305th as high Group and the 306th as lead Group of the 102nd Combat Wing effort. The target was reached and bombed successfully at 1227, and the group information returned to base at 1501.

Gene Wiley led the group formation to the target and back with crews reporting mixed bombing results. Only sixteen days later Gene Wiley and his crew crashlanded in Germany just a mile from the Dutch border after their B-17 F was crippled by flak in the vicinity of the target on a mission to the Ruhr. That episode is vividly recalled by Bob Broach, Navigator of the crew in the March 1981 issue of the "NEWS".

Of the nineteen aircraft departing on the mission, one YB-40 and one B-17 F returned early. Three B-17 F aircraft landed away from home base on the group's return, two B-17 F aircraft were forced to ditch in the North Sea on return, but the crews were rescued. One B-17 F was missing. One B-17 (probably the missing aircraft) was reported knocked out of formation by four twin-engine fighters some 34 minutes after bombs away over the target and while on route to home, heading for Holland and the North Sea. This aircraft was last seen in a smoking glide and crashing into the ground. Ten chutes were observed to open from this aircraft during the glide.

Near the English Coast at a point some ten miles off Great Yarmouth a B-17 F was observed to successfully ditch in the sea. This aircraft was later determined to be one of the two Group aircraft forced to ditch, and all ten crew members were rescued by high speed launch and brought in to Great Yarmouth.

From Nordernay on the enemy coast to a point over the sea, some 30 miles westward, three other B-17 aircraft were observed to crash or turn back to land in crippled condition.

Enemy defenses were active and effective. From the enemy coast to the target area flak was intermittent and generally inaccurate at flight altitude of 25,000 feet. In the target area, flak was moderate to heavy but accurate. Enemy fighters were estimated at from 75 to 150 attacking or maneuvering around

the Group and consisted of both single and twin-engine types. These aircraft met the Group ten miles off the enemy Coast and harrassed the formation all the way to the target. Over the target, the fighters withdrew and the flak intensified. Leaving the target, the fighters returned and continued attacking until the formation was about 50 miles off the enemy coast. B-17 crews made a significant observation that some FW-190 aircraft and one JU-88 had a large calibre gun mounted under the fuselage which fired a large projectile with a great flash and much smoke. Two of the crews reported seeing two of the low velocity shells of 3 to 4 inch size pass by the B-17 fuselage from the rear. Shell bursts were observed to compare in size and color to flak bursts. Other crews observed an FW-190 attempting to bomb the formation from above. The time-fused bomb-burst was again compared to the color and size of a flak burst.

Crews claimed 8 E/A destroyed, 6 probably destroyed and 3 damaged for a total expenditure of 32,000 rounds of 50 calibre ammunition.

Bombing Results:

Of the 160 G.P. 500 pound bombs carried on the mission, 150 were dropped (salvoed) on the target and ten were dropped off-target at a target of opportunity. An effective enemy smoke screen plus smoke and explosions generated by the previous group over the target made assessment of the bombing results difficult. Ground speed over the target was 230 knots and true airspeed 240 knots at a Mag heading of 32 degrees. Bombing by the lead aircraft from an actual altitude of 26,200 feet under conditions indicated, resulted in a free fall time of 42 seconds from release of bombs to impact.

Battle Damage:

- 1 A/C missing
- 2 A/C ditched in North Sea

Considerable damage from 50 calibre gunfire and ejected shell casings was noted to aircraft returning to Base. Rudders, stabilizers, elevators, engine cowls, wings, wing spars and plexiglass were affected. Flak damage was moderate but widespread. A number of command and liaison radio antennas were shot off.

Ammunition Expended:

- 326th Sqdn. - 11,015 rounds of calibre 50 ammo.
- 327th Sqdn. - 14,000 rounds of calibre 50 ammo.
- 407th Sqdn. - 6,925 rounds of calibre 50 ammo.
- 31,940

continued on page 2

Mission to Hanover *continued*

The mission, while not the toughest nor the easiest accomplished by the 92nd, was anything but a lark. Eleven men were missing, one man was killed in flight, and another was seriously wounded. Two crews were plucked from the North Sea. The gunners were firing almost continuously over enemy territory. We lost three aircraft and suffered considerable battle damage. It was a slogging but spirited effort to do the job we were trained to do and it was one of those important battles of ever-increasing weight in the vital strategic key to victory over a very tough and determined foe. It was an open challenge to the best that the enemy had and he did his best. In this round at the opening bell he came out swinging. He got knocked down for a count of nine and even lost a rubber shoe. When the bell sounded for the end of the round he knew he couldn't go the distance. From now on it would be a defensive fight - trying to keep from being kayoed. We were getting stronger every round. Our haymakers were getting through more often. We were more effectively blocking his jabs and hooks. Sure, we had a bloody nose, and a cut over one eye - but we knew now that if we stayed in there the fight was ours - no matter how many rounds we had to keep answering the bell.

8th AF REUNION SUCCESS

The annual reunion of the 8th AF Historical Society held October 15-18 in St. Paul, Minnesota was enjoyed by 92nd Bombardment Group attendees. The 92nd Contingent was hosted by Steve Sorenson of Toronto, South Dakota. Here is Steve's report:

The 7th annual convention of the 8th AF Historical Society is now history. The "higher, faster, farther" people of "Fames Favored Few" were well represented and gave a good account of themselves, as is our tradition. I witnessed no real dominance of any group in this gathering of America's best of the finest.

Yet, through it all, one could sense the winningness and continued determination so inherent in all our servicemen and women. Confidence, patriotism and a quiet pride, surely the way a successful convention of this kind should be.

For me as unit contact, the highlight and most gratifying event was the memorial service at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. The unit contacts decorated the graves as part of the ceremony. It was a reverent experience. I am thankful for the opportunity to have had a part. I will cherish it well. So Thanks again, 92nd.

It was here at Fort Snelling that it all began for me in 1941. So it was somewhat of a homecoming. I had an enjoyable time. It was good to get together with some old, and many new friends.

Spokane will of course be the big one in '82. - The 40th Anniversary. Those in attendance were as follows:

Ralph & Joan Andler	John McGuire
John & Betty George	Ray Zapuloi
Irv & Maria Baum	Steve Sorenson
Bill & Vera Brockmeyer	Mike O'Hearn, Jr.
Joe & Erma Campbell	Ed Bielinski
Art & Mary Belkowski	Art Roth, Jr.
Murray Kitt	Jim Whiting
Jim & Eva Haney	Wendell Ringheim
John & Inez Maloney	Martha Wolverson
John Ford	Mike Koretski

Steve further reports that he would be remiss if he did not thank those who attended, especially Joe & Erma Campbell, John & Betty George, John & Inez Maloney and Art Belkowski. In fact he says, everyone on the sign-in sheet shared in the success.

Steve Sorenson

Note: Many thanks Steve for a job well done. The Board of Directors appreciates your dedication.



John & Betty George, Joe & Erma Campbell

EDITORIAL

On January 1, 1982, thirty-eight years will have passed since the midpoint of the 92nd's wartime operations, January 1, 1944. Most of the men in the Group and in 1/11 CCRC on this date were at least twenty years of age, and the average was more like 23 or 24. By virtue of the force of passage of time alone, the average age of our membership will be about 60 years. That's barely two years from initial social security retirement and five years from full social security retirement under current law. Yet more than 25% of the members have already reached social security retirement age. However, only about 25% of the members have current wills and only a few have troubled themselves to accomplish any effective and thorough estate planning. In short, the membership, as a group, are at a critical time phase with respect to putting their affairs in order.

Only a handful know enough about estate planning to even recognize the problem or the options available, let alone use the proper techniques to achieve desired results. Economic conditions and the investment climate today are in a state of flux and disarray seen only once in approximately every fifty years.

Having in mind the timely, strong community of interest of our members in obtaining the benefit of basic, sound estate planning techniques - especially in terms of the many beneficial tax provisions of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, this editorial proposes that an important segment of time during the program for the 1982 reunion should be devoted to the subject.

Of almost equal value and importance to our unique membership is a clear understanding of the available opportunities under present law to establish substantial income tax deductions for an important portion of travel expenses in attending the reunion where a tax oriented seminar or period of instruction on tax matters is part of the pre-planned program.

This is therefore to propose to the 1982 Reunion Co-Chairmen that a minimum seminar schedule of two hours be programmed at the 1982 Reunion to the end that members and their spouses be allowed both to hear and to learn the basics of current and timely estate planning for today, and in addition to understand the principles of achieving valid travel deductions in this and similar situations.

Beginning at the 1982 Reunion with a basic but current program will permit succeeding reunions to enjoy updating presentations as well as special attention to more complicated special situations affecting all or a substantial number of the membership. A basis for regular, valid travel deductions will thus accrue to the membership.

As an attorney involved in will, trusts and estates, your editor will volunteer to head a panel to provide the appropriate instruction as well as (if feasible) provide instruction handout materials.

Comments from the members are invited and should be sent to the Secretary, Shel Kirsner.

Your Editor,
Perry Burnham