

## OFFICERS

Roland Sargent-Pres. & Vice Pres.  
Sheldon W. Kirsner-Sec./Treas.

## REPRESENTATIVES

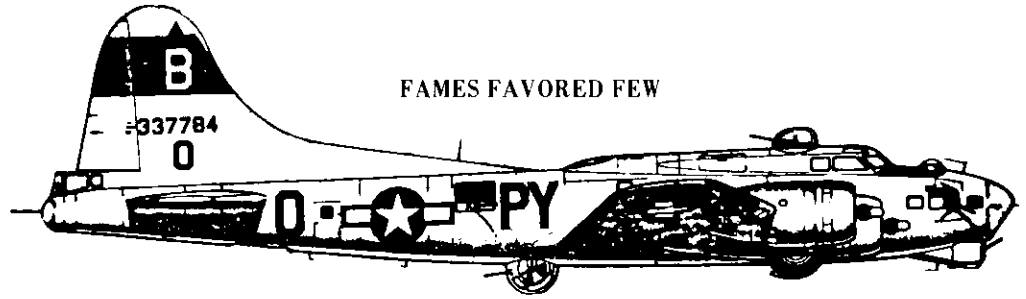
Earl Gauthier-325th  
Jack Massmann-326th  
John Bosko-327th  
Robert Naifeh-407th  
Raphael Kernan-HQ  
Thomas Griesbaum-CCRC  
John Shorrock-446th

## EDITORS

Sheldon W. Kirsner

# 92nd Bombardment Group NEWS

FAMES FAVORED FEW



VOL. VII

LETTER 8

DECEMBER 1983

## MISSION REPORT KIEL

By: Perry Burnham

5 January 1944

January of any year at latitude 52 degrees North and up and down the Greenwich Meridian is a month of socked-in drizzle, rain, fog and an occasional snow flurry. Solid overcast in layers up to 20,000 feet is the norm. In addition, it's a month of bad weather — very bad!

In that environment during January 1944 the 92nd Bomb Group was alerted 17 times, proceeded to briefing only 12 times and then flew only 8 missions. In *Route As Briefed*, John Sloan picked up these statistics but said nothing much more to remind us of the absolute nadir of operational weather conditions existing over England during almost any January — let alone the one for 1944. Still, war against the Germans was, by consensus, a fairly serious piece of business which seemed to justify operational take-offs in the fog in the blackness before dawn around 0700 hours. Just such a field order was received at 0010 hours the morning of 5 January in Group Operations.

The 92nd Bomb Group was directed to take-off commencing at 0700 and lead both the 40th Combat Wing and the entire 1st Air Division effort to the submarine and shipbuilding operations at Kiel. Colonel William M. Reid, Group CO would command the mission.

This was a repeat mission of the previous day when 15 B-17s from the 92nd attacked Kiel over solid undercast, bombing by radar with uncertain results, and losing two aircraft in the process. This time weather over the target, some 450 miles east by northeast of the socked-in bomber bases, was rated slightly better than a 50-50 chance of being open for visual bombing. In the strategic sense it was essential and a matter of high priority to put Kiel out of business.

Seventeen B-17s, each loaded with twelve 500 pound bombs, were scheduled from the 92nd Group. In addition, two B-17s from the 482nd Group arrived the previous day and were similarly loaded and scheduled to fly with the 92nd. All aircraft were able to take-off and assemble except two B-17s from the 92nd which collided in the darkness while maneuvering for take-off. This closed the active runway temporarily. Thereafter, one B-17 from the 92nd Group which had just taken off developed engine failure and had to land at another base.

Due to continuing darkness, the Group experienced considerable difficulty in forming up over Splasher Four and no respectable formation could be achieved until daylight. One of the Group's airborne B-17s could not find the 92nd formation until after the Group departed the English Coast.

Leading the 40th Combat Wing, the 92nd made rendezvous with the high composite Group (305th and 306th) along with assembly leg departing Splasher Four at 9,000 feet. However, the low Group (305th aircraft only) never found the 40th Combat Wing Groups and later joined up with another Combat Wing. Organized thus as a two-Group Combat Wing the 92nd departed the English Coast at Cromer at 10,000 feet. Being five minutes early the 40th Wing flew a single circle to the northward to allow the 41st Combat Wing as well as the rest of the Air Division effort to rendezvous behind them. Thereafter start of climb commenced en-route to target.

The enemy coast of Denmark was crossed at 1108 hours at 24,600 feet with a flak reception. Moderate flak followed the formations to the target and on out to the enemy coast with Heligoland letting go with a repeated, three-gun barrage of intense, black bursts as the lead formation passed off to one side.

The I.P., well north of the target, was reached at 1127 hours and a right turn effected to approach the target on a heading of 172 degrees magnetic at 25,000 feet. To the credit of the advance weather predictions, visual conditions prevailed from the enemy coast onward and it could be seen well ahead that the enemy was making an all-out effort to cover the Kiel harbor and industrial facilities with a dense and heavy smoke screen. So effective was the smoke screen that the lead bombardier, during a full minute bomb run, was unable to identify the aiming point. However, he synchronized on a protruding church steeple, used a visible portion of the Kiel harbor inlet as a second reference point and estimated his aiming point. The entire Group bombed on the lead aircraft and as bomb bursts shot above the smoke screen our crews observed many bursts in the area of the aiming point together with several, large, resulting explosions, extensive developing fires and much black smoke. A prompt, right turn off the target kept the bomber stream away from the intense flak defenses of Hamburg to the South and took them out over the enemy coast just north of the Elbe River estuary and on a course just missing Heligoland to the west.

The enemy coast was crossed at 1150 hours at 20,000 feet with let-down en-route to 12,500 feet. The English coast was crossed at Cromer at 1353 hours and 4,000 feet after which the lead aircraft landed at Base at 1442 hours. All aircraft of the 92nd Group landed safely.

Continued on page 2

03827  
06430  
07009  
10305  
13208  
re, PA  
2  
66  
102  
lanta,  
32769  
3142  
2  
MN  
659  
Little  
o, CA  
alley,  
inson  
rhees  
446  
RG.  
E  
O  
26

## Mission Report *Continued from page 1*

Although flak intensity was generally moderate over enemy territory, it became extensive and more determined in the target area where accuracy noticeably improved. Increased accuracy then continued until departing the enemy coast. Contemporaneous with improved flak accuracy enemy fighter attacks commenced at the target and were continued with vigor and determination for approximately forty-three minutes until the formations departed the vicinity of Heligoland. Persistent nose attacks were made by FW 190s and ME 109s. Rocket and cannon-firing ME 110s and JU 88s attacked from various directions, occasionally in coordination with attacks by several FW 190s or ME 109s approaching in line. Friendly fighter support was seen in the target area where P-38s were observed for a short period of time attacking concentrations of enemy aircraft. However, they were insufficient to substantially blunt the enemy fighter attacks.

Under the circumstances the 92nd Group's loss of no aircraft to flak or to fighters was noteworthy, particularly since the Group returned to the same target attacked only the previous day with the loss of two aircraft. All of this, coupled with excellent bombing results while leading the entire 1st Division effort, made the Kiel mission of 5 January 1944 one of the 92nd's highly successful ones.

The matter of early morning take-offs during darkness was the subject of a pointed comment by the Group Commander in his mission report. The Operations portion of the report contained the following:

"Take-off and assembly during darkness has proven very difficult and puts an undue strain on inexperienced pilots and navigators. On every mission where assembly was attempted before daylight considerable confusion and distaste has been prevalent among pilots. Results of these attempts leave, on every occasion, at least three or four planes unable to make the assembly, thus jeopardising the Group defensive formation. It is felt that the thirty or forty minutes time saved in night assembly does not warrant the loss in the security of the formation, confidence of the pilots, and the assurance of a successful mission."

Following this report Bomber Command and Air Division planners did indeed begin to reduce the excitement of night-time take-offs to the immense relief of all concerned. That's right! Chalk up another one for "Fame's Favored Few"

## 446 REUNION

August 26 thru 28, 1983, twenty-four members of the 446th Sub Depot Repair Squadron and their wives met at the Boston Marriott Hotel Newton for our best reunion to date.

At this reunion at the suggestion and handled by Mrs. Frank Sagio several wives of deceased members were invited to attend. Six accepted and along with the rest of us had a real good time.

Saturday morning the wives were bussed to the Boston Quincy Market. Even though it was exceptionally hot out they all enjoyed the trip. Several of them found tour trains and really saw historical Boston.

At our business meeting it was decided to reduce the time between reunions to two years instead of our usual five years. We all feel we're getting too old and losing too many of the members. We also added five more volunteers to the reunion committee: Harvey Riley, Tom Purcell, John Deschenes, Les Noyes and Ray Holloway.

Riley is trying to compile a short thumbnail history of each man from his date of discharge until the present. If he gets enough cooperation from the guys he'll make it up into a little booklet.

Everyone enjoyed the weekend, the good food, pleasant surroundings and especially meeting each other again.

The best part of the weekend was being able to spend some time with the ones attending their first squadron reunion, such as, Tom and Charlie Atomonczyk, Texas; Chuck Turnbloom, Indiana; John and Bernice Bradford, Illinois; Nick DiSalvo. Also this time Harvey Riley and Tom Purcell were able to stay for the weekend.

Harold Miller drove up in a 1925 Ford Model T truck that he had completely rebuilt. It sure attracted a good deal of attention parked out in front of the hotel. Loyal Hoffman cruised up from Oklahoma in a 34 foot Pace Arrow motor-home, the rest of us were more conventional, but we don't care how they travel as long as they get there.

Sunday morning, after a gut popping brunch, it was hard to let go and head for home.

I'm still trying to catch up on all the notes and letters I have to write so I can put this reunion to rest.

The Marriott has already called me about planning the next reunion. Gad, there's no rest for the wicked, weary or whatever.

Thanks, Shel, for the squadron insignias, the guys all liked them as you can tell by the order I sent you.

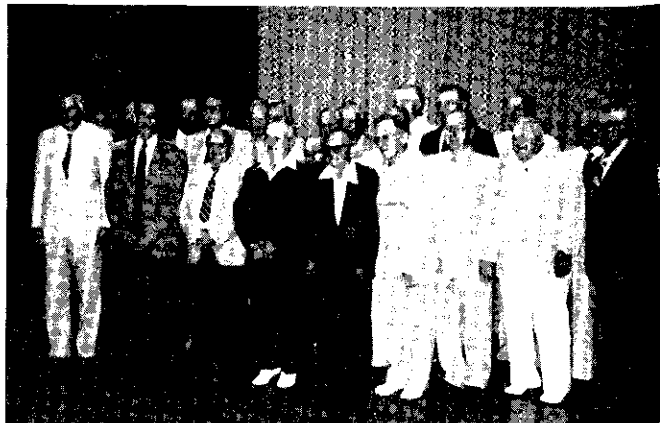
Til we meet again.

*By: John Shorrock*



Front Row — Marge Holloway, Ada Shorrock (sitting), Nick DiSalvo, Rejane Perreault, Dorothy Siwakoski, Barbara Jones

Standing — Ruth Harbaugh, Jo Servadio, Cecile Deschenes, Ruth Miller, Charlie Atomanczyk, Carol Sagro, Helen Rylander (white hair), Caroline Sagro, Kay Holmes, Betty Hoffman, Joyce Riley, Bernice Bradford, Florence Noyes, Marie Purcell, Marcia Metzger, Ruth Ann Metzger



Harold Miller, Tom Atomanczyk (rear), Claude Relford, Loyal Hoffman, Charles Turnbloom, Short Holmes, Norm Rylander, Tom Purcell, Joe Servadio, Nick DiSalvo, Ray Holloway, Steve Ranney, John Shorrock, Harvey Riley, Ed Siwakoski, Les Noyes, Al Krumen, Armand Perreault, Ben Gauthier, John Deschenes.