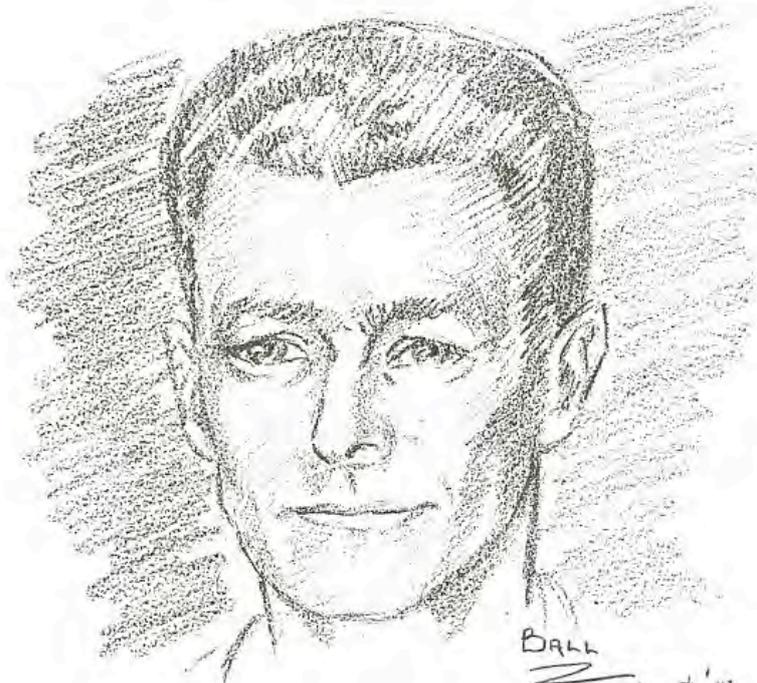


BLUE MONDAY



Lt John D Mattie's 21 February 1944

By Thierry Kleinprintz – Chris Mattie – Steve Blake – Erik Mombeeck

Contact : thierry.kleinprintz@wanadoo.fr

“ Nur Die, die man vergisst, sind wirklich tot ” - “ Only those we forget are really dead ”

So, I wrote and drew a part of this work to keep John D Mattie's and Heinz Bär's memory alive.

They met only once over the skies of Germany as enemies. I think, like Chris, they would have love to meet again in other circumstances after World War II.

Also to thank Chris Mattie and all his Family, for allowing me to have access to John Mattie's War Diary and for their commitment and their kind and generous help.

I would thank too, the historians Steve Blake and Erik Mombeeck for their help and documents, the historians Claude Archambault and Horst Jeckel for more details, Walt Fink who guided me to make the first move and Daniel Carrizales who bravely faced my files...

Thierry, August 2010

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FORMING UP

FROM TONOPAH TO BOXTED

John D Mattie served with the newly formed 354th Fighter Group flying the P-39N Airacobra. During the year 1943, he followed his 353rd Fighter Squadron from Tonopah, Nevada, to Santa Rosa, California, and in May moved to Portland, Oregon. Finally, on October 21, the men of the 354th FG departed the United States aboard the HMS *Athlone Castle* for the twelve days trip to England. In mid-November, now based in Boxted, Lieutenant John Mattie was one of the first pilots in the USAAF to fly the brand new P-51B fighter. Only two weeks later, the 354th Pioneer Mustang Group was on his first mission over the skies of Germany, with the only 24 available Mustangs. On December 5, 1943 John flew the P-51 first in Combat for the Group's second mission. His career nearly put an end as he force landed at Cheddington, England, on his 13th mission, on February 6, 1944.



353rd FIGHTER SQUADRON B.B.G. RANGE TONPAH, NEVADA 29 JULY 1943 Left to right

Front Row : Major Owen M Seaman, Lt Col Jack T Bradley

Middle Row : James Cannon, Willie Y Anderson, J J Baird, Grant Logan, Carl C Carson, Robert G Silva, David B O'Hara, Don M Beerbower, Wah Kau Kong, Felix M Rogers, W Franck Alford, **John D Mattie**, Ridley E Donnell, Carl Lind

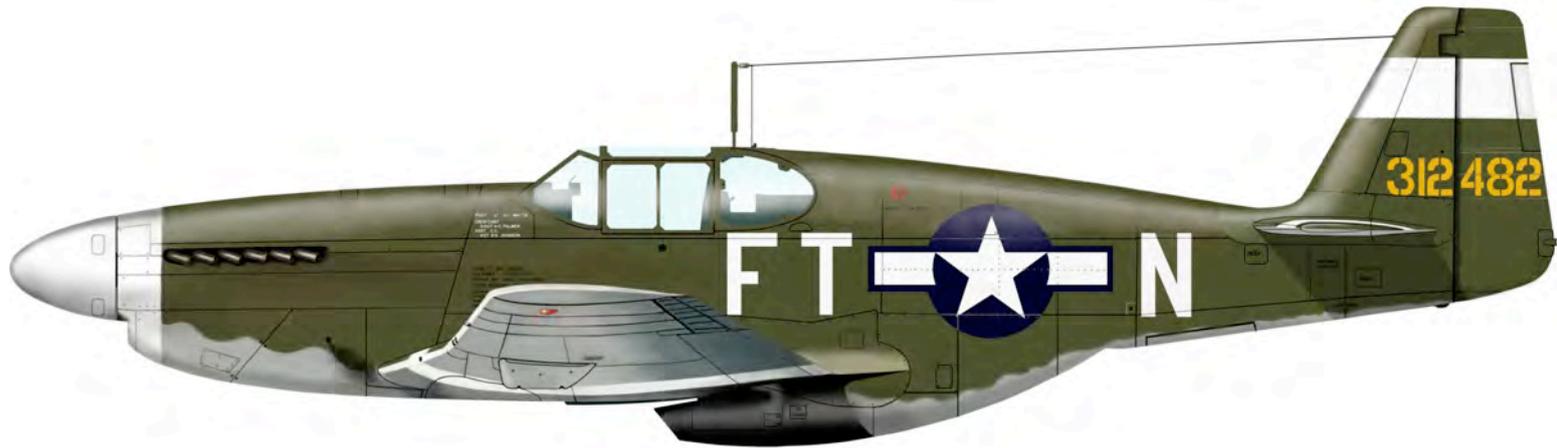
Back Row : Buford M Eaves, Carl Frantz, Richard H Klein, Thomas S Varney, Carl G Bickel, Don McDowell, James J Parsons, Wallace M Emmer, Glenn E Eagleston, Donald W Stretz, Edward R Regis, Charles L Uhlenberg, Edward E Hunt

Not Pictured : Arthur W Owen, Charles W Koenig, James W Kerley, James P Keane

www.cybermodeler.com/history/354fg/353fs.shtml

FORMING UP

PIONEERS AND MUSTANGS



P-51 B-1-NA 43-12482 FT - N
assigned to 1st Lt John D Mattie, 353rd FS, 354th FG, 9th USAAF,
Boxted, December 1943

John D Mattie flew 43-12482, FT-N, his first assigned Mustang and his first mission, on 5 December 1943. It was only the 354th's second mission. 36 Mustangs flew their first bomber support mission in bad weather, escorting B-17s and B-24s over France to the Amiens area. On 13 December John Mattie still flying FT-N was part of the 41 P-51s of the "Pioneer Mustang Group" sortied to the German port of Kiel still escorting "big friends". His third mission flown on FT-N saw him head for Bremen and Wilhelmshaven on 20 December. This time the group ran into heavy opposition and 353rd FS lost his Squadron Leader Maj Owen Seaman after an engine failure. John Mattie flew FT-N the fourth and last time on 22 December. Two days later Lt Felix M Rogers crashed 43-12482 in a landing accident at Boxted. Due to major damage (Cat 4) FT-N was not repairable on site.

CAUTION : ARTWORK ONLY, we can't find any photo of the entire side of FT-N



Lt John D Mattie in 43-12482, FT-N,
his first assigned P-51. In front of
the cockpit the crew names are
white stenciled :
PILOT LT. J. D. MATTIE
CREW CHIEF S/SGT H. C. PALMER
ASST CREW CHIEF R. S. JOHNSON
Below, black stenciled : serial 43-
12482 . The same crew names will
be stenciled on 43-12380 in January
1944 when it is assigned to Lt
Mattie and named "MY BUDDY"
(Chris Mattie's collection)

SOURCES :

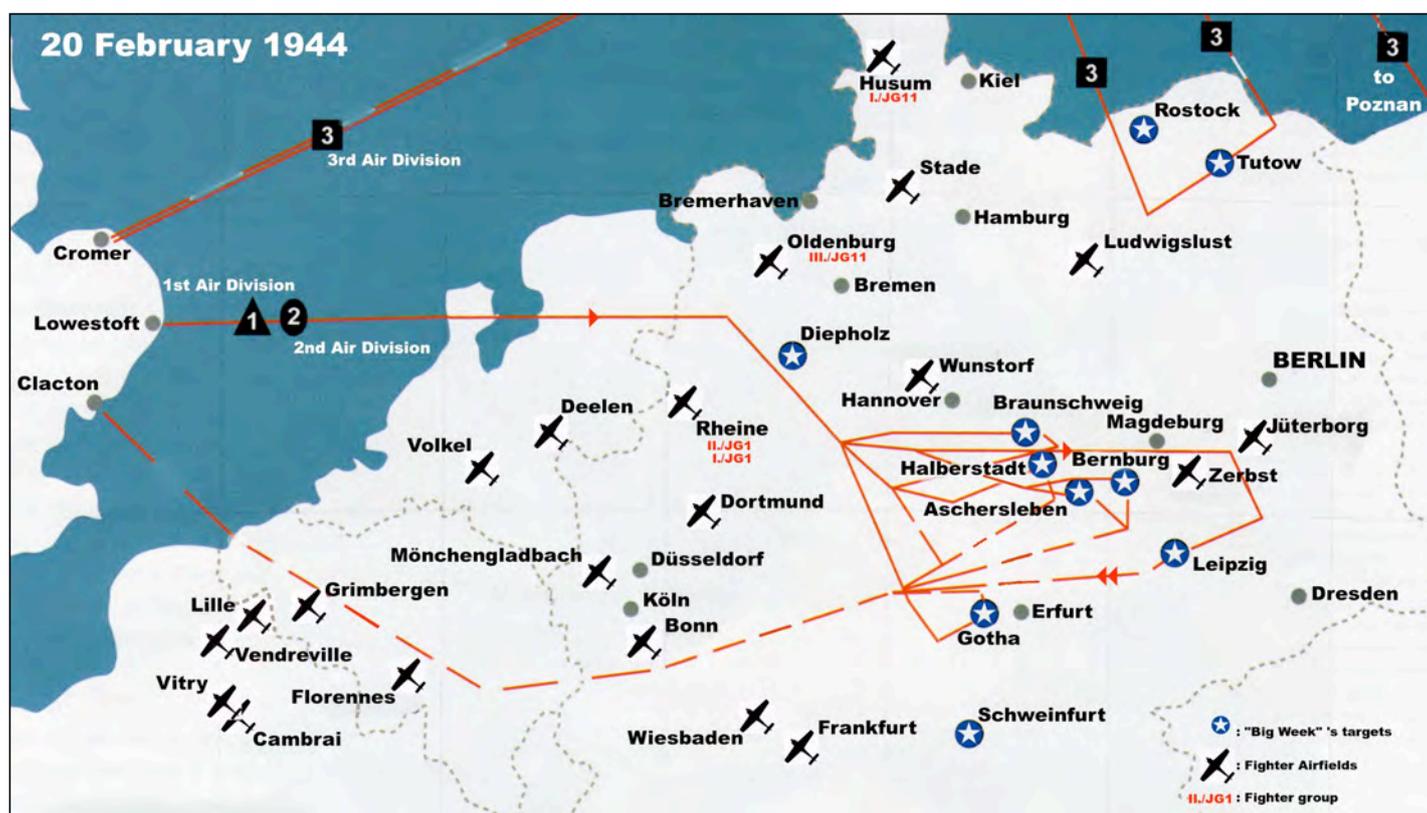
Lt John D Mattie's War Diary, with Chris Mattie's agreement, for part of caption
"The Pioneer Mustang Group" by Steve
Blake, Schiffer Publishing and Steve
Blake's e-mailed additional information
about serials, codes, pilots... of 353rd FS,
and more.

WHITE STARS SUNDAY

TRIP TO LEIPZIG ON FEBRUARY 20 1944

1st Lieutenant John Duane Mattie told simply about his trip to Leipzig :

“ The day before had been a very busy and exciting day for me – a story in its own - ...”



MISSION n° 226 is the first of Operation “ Argument ”. Relying on favourable weather forecast over Germany for the beginning week Brigadier General Frederick L Anderson informs 8th and 15th AFs COs that “ Argument ” will be launched on February 20, 1944. Five days of uninterrupted attacks are planned, a series of raids which will go down in History as “ **Big Week** ”. The most of targets is in an area between Leipzig and Brunswick. To launch this first mission, Anderson like John Mattie says simply :

“ Let'em go ”.

WHITE STARS SUNDAY

MY BUDDY



**P-51 B-1-NA 43-12380 "MY BUDDY" FT - A,
assigned to 1st Lt John D Mattie, 353rd FS, 354th FG, 9th USAAF,
Boxted, February 1944**

43-12380 went first to RAF as Mustang III FX 891 and returned to USAAF 30 December 1943. It was assigned to 1st Lt John D Mattie who named it "MY BUDDY", after his brother Dave, in January 1944. Lt John D Mattie was flying this plane 20 February 1944 in mission n° 26 to Leipzig (Germany), when he was credited with 1,5 FW 190 kills and one damaged. This victories are possibly anusual represented below the name "My Buddy" by two white stars and one only bordered for the damaged. Lt Mattie had shot his first enemy plane down for his brother and had wanted to get #5 that Dave could look on his brother as an ace. During airfight, his ship was damaged and returned to home base with three 30 cal shells through the engine and left wing tip blown off. As 43-12380 was being repaired, Lt John D Mattie flying another ship was missed in action 21 February. "My Buddy" was so reassigned to Lt Charles Koenig who renamed it "Little Horse". Its last mission (with the 354th FG at least) was on 23 June 1944. 43-12380 was declared unfit for service and finally destroyed in a take off accident by Reid T Porter on 29 January 1945 at Chantilly (France).

CAUTION : ARTWORK ONLY, we can't find any photos showing an entire side view



... and "MY BUDDY" s "owner, 1st Lt John D Mattie
(Chris Mattie's collection)

**Lt Warren Emerson and Lt Edward Hunt in front of
Lt John D Mattie's well named "MY BUDDY"**

(p 85 The Pioneer Mustang Group by Steve Blake, Schiffer Publishing,
with Steve Blake's agreement)



SOURCES :

Lt John D Mattie's War Diary, personal information, with Chris Mattie's agreement, for part of caption and crew names on colour plate : PILOT LT. J. D. MATTIE, CREW CHIEF S/SGT H. C. PALMER, ASST CREW CHIEF R. S. JOHNSON. J Baugher's USAAF serial numbers database. "The Pioneer Mustang Group" by Steve Blake, Schiffer Publishing : nose art from photo p 85, serial 43-12380, code FT-A in appendix E,D and G and especially e- mailed additional information about 353rd FS serials, codes, pilots and more. Steve has been a very great help, thank you very much. Thanks also to Walt Fink of IPMS for his precious help and good advices.

WHITE STARS SUNDAY

FIRST VICTORIES

SUNDAY 20 FEBRUARY 1944. Brigadier General Frederick L Anderson is in charge of Operation "Argument". Relying on favourable weather forecast over Germany for the beginning week he informs 8th and 15th AFs COs that "Argument" will be launched that day. Five days of uninterrupted attacks are planned, a series of raids which will go down in History as "Big Week". The most of targets is in an area between Leipzig and Brunswick. Anderson says simply : "Let'em go" and right in the middle of the night, targets, schedules, engaged units and all detail of MISSION n° 226 reach the sixteen Combat Wings of 8th AF.

FIRST ROUND OF "BIG WEEK"...

All of the targets are Airfields and aircraft factories for the 1003 heavy bombers which will take part. 417 B-17s of 1st Bomb Division and 272 B-24 of 2nd Division will simulate an attack on Berlin, then heading for their targets at last minute.

Fighter escort is provided in a large part by 668 P-47s, 94 P-38s and 73 P-51s from 8th and 9th AFs. 54 P-51s from 354th Fighter Group have to provide close support to 1st Division.

But 1st Division's crafty trick don't work as *Generalmajor* Max Ibel, commanding fighter units since 1936 ! and now commanding 2. *Fliegerdivision*, is too experienced. So, although urged by Galland to do take off his fighters, he's waiting the last moment to order it – just as the B-17s head for Leipzig, avoiding Berlin.

However, once more the escort fighters in combat so far over Germany are 354th and 357th FGs' P-51s. Their intervention protects efficiently the "Big Friends" and is minimizing the losses. Only 13 B-17s are shot down (~ 2%).

357th FG led by Don Blakeslee, claims two victories for the loss of one pilot. It needs to say that the group was on his first mission only nine days before.

354TH FG CORNERS THE LION'S SHARE...

With 14 confirmed victories and no losses. Deputy group CO Lt Col Bickell is leading the 54 P-51s of the Group, which arrive early at the briefed RV point. Just then they have in sight 50+ incoming German fighters which swoop down on the bomber stream. 354th's pilots go immediately into combat in defence of the B-17s and a massive fighter battle ensued.

Texan Capt Jack T Bradley 353rd FS' leader remembers :

"We had rendezvoused (RV) with the 1st Task Force about 30 minutes early south of Hannover. The group leader assigned our squadron to the middle box of bombers. The first box was under attack when we made our RV, and I called this information to my group leader. I assigned half my squadron to the right of the bomber formation and I lead the other eight in support of the left side. About 20 minutes after the RV Blue Flight attacked four Me 109s coming in at eight o'clock to the bomber formation. At 1300 hrs I saw a B-17 straggler from the first bomber box being stalked by a '109. I gave my flight instructions to drop belly tanks and attack the E/A. As I closed into range, Blue Flight cut me off and shot the E/A down. I saw the E/A in flames and out of control. I assembled the flight and rejoined the bomber formation at 1320 hrs." (1)

The German fighters will harass bombers and escort during all the trip back home but by suffering heavy losses, 44 pilots are killed, 29 wounded, 74 aircrafts are destroyed and 29 damaged. (2)

The first objective of "Big Week" begins to be effective : to destroy enemy air forces everywhere they are found.

LT JOHN D MATTIE OF 353RD FS SCORES...

He is flying 43-12380, coded FT-A and nicknamed "MY BUDDY" after his young brother Dave, and takes an active part in reaching the mission's objectives that day.

Jumped by six FW 190s, he destroys two and damages one. He will tell later in his Diary that he shot down his first enemy plane for his brother and had wanted to get #5 that Dave could look on his brother as an Ace. Unfortunately he is only credited with 1,5 FWs kills and one damaged, and "MY BUDDY" is seriously damaged during the airfight. However, Lt Mattie succeeds in taking it back to his home base in Boxted with three 30 cal shells through the engine and left wing tip blown off.

The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to him. The citation is as follows :

"For heroism and outstanding achievement while serving as element leader of a formation of P-51 type aircraft participating in a long range bomber escort mission on 20 February 1944. While engaged in providing close escort for the bombers, Lieutenant Mattie engaged a hostile aircraft and destroyed it. During the attack, all but one of his guns ceased functioning. Nevertheless he later attacked two other enemy aircraft and shared in the destruction of one of them and immediately thereafter attacked alone another two, in the course of which engagement he was set upon by an additional four, one of which he damaged and the remainder of which he drove off. The courage and tactical skill displayed by Lieutenant Mattie in aggressively attacking superior numbers of enemy aircraft despite the reduced firing power of his aircraft and the battle damage which it had sustained are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Army Air Forces."

¹ In "354th Fighter Group" by William N Hess, Osprey Aviation Elite n° 7

² Tony Wood's Combat Claims and Casualties Lists



Lt. John D. Mattie

Lt. Mattie Bags 2 Planes

AT A U. S. FIGHTER STATION IN ENGLAND, Feb. 20—(AP)—The greatest number of American Air Force fighters ever dispatched to escort a heavy bombing mission destroyed a record number of 61 German fighters today in the massive assault against German airplane factories in central Germany.

The previous record was 55 shot down Feb. 10 over Brunswick. One American fighter was shot down and three are missing from today's raid.

Some of the fighter pilots said they were within sight of Berlin during the massive daylight operations.

Lt. John D. Mattie of Beaverdale, Pa., destroyed two Focke-Wulf-109s and damaged others when six German planes jumped him.

Lt. Mattie, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mattie, Beaverdale, was commissioned a lieutenant in the Army Air Force early in Oct., 1942. He was graduated from the Air Force Advanced Flying School at Luke Field, Phoenix, Ariz.

On German side, I./JG11 (1st Fighter Group of 11th Fighter Wing) has one pilot wounded, 2 FWs destroyed and 7 damaged. III./JG11, 2 FWs destroyed and 2 damaged. I./JG1 and II./JG1 take the heaviest toll. Two pilots are killed, one wounded and 3 FW 190s are lost in I./JG1. II./JG1 deplores two killed pilots and the loss of 4 destroyed FWs.

It seems that 6./JG1 (6th Fighter Squadron of 1st Fighter Wing) is not taking part in the fight with 354th. Major Heinz Bär its *Staffelkapitän* (Squadron Leader) wrote down in his logbook : "*Feindberührung mit Boeing, Thunderbolt*", (enemy contact with Boeing, Thunderbolt) .

These four groups are the only flying Focke Wulf FW 190 that day.

Lt Mattie's victims have to be among one of these units. His own objective for the next day is again in perfect compatibility with "Big Week's" one : to destroy enemy air forces.



WELL DONE, FELLA—Lt. John D. Mattie of Beaverdale, left, is greeted by his crew chief, Sgt. Reinold S. Johnson of Lake Stevens, Wash., as he returns to his A. A. F. fighter base in the European Theater of Operations from a mission as escort to American heavy bombers during a daylight raid on Germany's war industrial centers. Lt. Mattie pilots one of the recently announced P-51 (Mustang) fighters which have made an outstanding record of victories against the Luftwaffe while giving Yank Fortresses and Liberators fighter-cover over target areas. Since the above picture was taken Lt. Mattie was shot down during a raid over Berlin and according to latest word is a prisoner of the Germans. (Official Ninth U. S. Air Force photo.)

By irony of fate he will have to fight again against the same adversaries the next day,

on Blue Monday...



JOHN DUANE MATTIE

John Mattie was born on July 23rd, 1915. He was raised in the coal mining town of Beaverdale, Pennsylvania during the Great Depression. He joined the Army Air Corps (later to become the United States Air Force) as an Aviation Cadet, on September 29th, 1942. As one of 10 children, he was one of 5 brothers to serve in World War II at the same time. His oldest brother Mac was a paratrooper in the Army, his brother Steve a member of the US Navy. Gus served as a tail-gunner in the B-17 over Germany, and his brothers Yordy and Dave both served in the Marines.

In 28 years of service to his country, he amassed over 8000 hours of flying time. He was stationed in 5 different countries. His travel throughout the world was extensive in both his military and civilian life. He moved his wife and family 47 different times. Early in 1942, he was assigned to Class 42-1 at Luke Field in Arizona for Air Corps Advanced Flying School flying the BT-13. It was here where he would learn the advanced fighter tactics that would serve him well in aerial combat over Germany.

John learned to fly many different aircraft throughout his career. He was qualified to fly the P-38 Lightning, and was one of the first pilots in the USAF designated to fly the F-86 Sabre jet in Combat during the Korean War. But he is most well known for his prowess as a fighter pilot in the famed P-51 Mustang. Most of his time flying the P-51 was with the 354th Pioneer Mustang Group. This was the first Air Group to fly the Mustang in combat over the skies of Germany.

On February 21st, 1944 he was shot down. Due to the extensive research of Thierry Kleinprintz, a noted Air War Historian, it has been determined that he was most likely shot down by the famous German Fighter Ace, Heinz Bär. John Mattie was a Prisoner of War at Stalag Luft-1 in Barth Germany for over 15 months. His prisoner serial number was #2837. It was here where he made a few daring escape attempts, but that is a story for another time.

He retired on January 1st, 1967 with a distinguished career in the Air Force. His last tour of duty was with the Alaskan Air Command in Anchorage. His personal decorations include the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal with two Oak-Leaf Clusters. His highest decoration was the Distinguished Flying Cross which he earned for acts of heroism while escorting long range bomber missions in to enemy territory over Germany.

In 1967, he moved his family to Wilmington Delaware, where he started a second career as an Elementary School Teacher and a Certified Public Accountant for small business owners.

In 1978, he moved to Tollhouse California. This was to be one of his best decisions of all time. It is here where he became a farmer and valued member to the small community in the foothills of the Sierra Mountains. It was also here where he made many new friends and for over 28 years was a revered leader in the community.

John, a devout Catholic, became active in the Church as did his wife Edna, and was instrumental in starting a building fund that resulted in the construction of the Infant Jesus of Prague Church in Tollhouse California. He was always generous with his time and labor to family, friends, and anyone in need. A more humble and honest man would be hard to find.

John Mattie passed away on February 13th, 2007 at the age of 91. He is famous for his aerial combat in the skies over Germany and the sacrifices he made as a Prisoner of War. He flew combat missions in the Korean War. But if you ever asked him what his most valued treasure was, he would tell you that it was his Family. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Edna Mattie and his children, Janet Dowis, Jeanne Patrican, Kathy Schneider, Barbara Mertz, Michael and Chris Mattie.

P-51B-1-NA " MY BUDDY "
February 1944



By Chris Mattie

BLUE MONDAY

FEBRUARY 21 1944

John Duane Mattie, started his War Diary with these words :

“ This is a story which I wish to God I'd never had the experience to write about. During my Army life in the States and more true of the time I spent in England as a Combat fighter-pilot, it never once crossed my mind that anything could happen to me outside of the possibilities one, that I would be killed in combat ; and the other, that I would get through my missions unscathed. Of course, I had no doubt that it would be the latter. So, imagine, if you can, the humility with which I tell this tale of woe - my life as a Kriegsgefangen...”

“ It all began on the fatal date of February 21st 1944 – Blue Monday...”



353rd Fighter Squadron's board. Lt Mattie (first row, third from the left) was missed in action near Hannover and the next day 2-21-44. His usual wingman Lt Kong (first in the second row) was also missed in action on 2-22-1944.

www.cybermodeler.com/history/354fg/

BLUE MONDAY

THE LOST FT-D



**P-51 B-1-NA 43-12161 FT – D
of the 353rd FS, 354th FG, 9th USAAF,
lost with 1st Lt John D Mattie 21 February 1944 over Germany**

43-12161 was the original FT-D which flew his first mission on December 1943. Lt Jim Cannon was the original pilot of FT-D but switched to FT-K in early January. On 21 February 1944, now Capt, Jim Cannon was leading Green Flight in his FT-K and Lt John D Mattie flying 43-12161 FT-D led the second element.

According to Steve Blake it's possible that FT-D was Lt Donohoo's assigned ship as John Mattie wrote : "As my ship " MY BUDDY " was being repaired, I flew Lt Donohoo's ship that Monday". But as this plane had been flown from 7 January to 20 February by at least six different pilots of 353rd Sq. and never by Lt Donohoo, John flew the Mustang which may very well have been used as the spare fighter for the squadron.

Near Hannover, he damaged one and downed another FW 190 (not confirmed, no eye witness) and few seconds later was shot down himself, probably by German ace Maj Heinz Bär. Lt John D Mattie could have been Bär's 183rd victim.

A 20 mm shell hit FT-D's left wing tank and just after getting on his back the whole cockpit was immersed on flames. Lt Mattie succeeded in bailing out at 18 000 ft, drifted towards Wunstorf, landed in the city and was captured. He spent the rest of the war as a POW at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth. The out of control wreck of FT-D finally crashed at Luthe, 2 miles North East of Wunstorf.

CAUTION : ARTWORK ONLY, we can't find any photo of FT-D



With 75 US gallons wing drop tanks, here being installed on GQ-U "Peggy" from 355th FS, the Mustang was able to escort the bombers all the way to the targets, deep in enemy territory and back to home.
(Steve Blake's collection)

SOURCES :

Lt John D Mattie's War Diary, with Chris Mattie's agreement, for part of caption
"The Pioneer Mustang Group" by Steve Blake, Schiffer Publishing and Steve Blake's e-mailed additional information about serials, codes, pilots... of 353rd FS, and more.
Tony Wood's Combat Claims and Casualty Lists about Major Bär.

BLUE MONDAY

AIRFIGHT OVER GERMANY

At 21.00 hrs, the evening before, mission orders and this message were delivered by the teletypewriters of 8th Air Force's Bomber and Fighter units :

“ Favourable weather forecast tomorrow. We will do a maximal offensive effort ”

Major General James H Doolittle, at the head of VIII Air Force had also given on December 1943 the missions guidelines to 8th and 15th AF's C.Os :

“ Destroy enemy Air Forces everywhere you find them, in the air, on the ground and in the factories ”

SECOND ROUND OF “ BIG WEEK ” ...

MISSION 228 is launched.

It will not in particular go down in history of 8th and 9th AFs, but for those who take part, from one or another hand, it will remain nothing more than memorable.

As bad climatic conditions are raging over Italy, 15th AF's planned presence will abort.

So, only 8th Air Force's three Bomber Divisions are dispatched on three targetted areas in Germany.

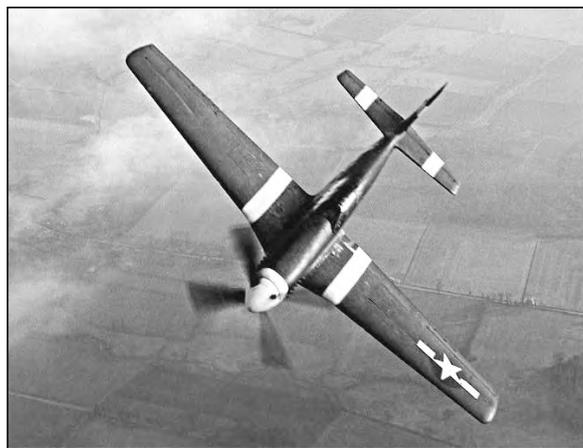
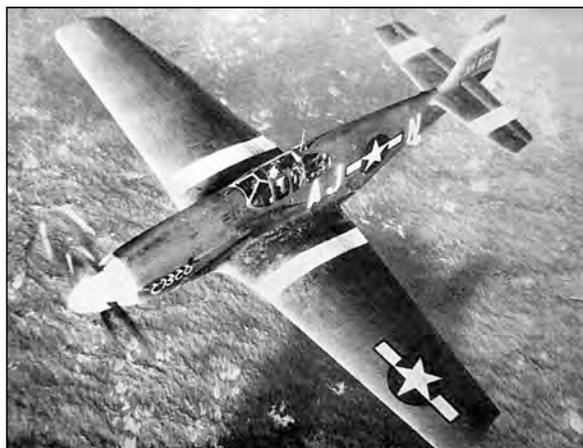
Fighter escort is provided by no fewer than 679 fighters, 69 P-38s and in largest part the 542, Eight and Ninth AF's, P-47s. The 68 P-51s, are part of 9th AF's 354th FG, the Pioneer Mustang Group, “ borrowed ” by 8th AF and 8th AF's own 357th FG. These two Groups are at that time, the only flying P-51s in the ETO and with wing drop tanks are able to escort the bombers all the way to the targets, deep in enemy territory and back to home.



75 US gallons drop tanks are installed on John Mattie's P-51B “ My Buddy ” , from 354th Fighter Group in Boxted, January or February 1944, for a long range mission over Germany. Lt Mattie checks carefully his parachute before boarding.

(Chris Mattie's collection)

New tactical rules are current too. Order is given to the fighters, no more to fly close the bombers – like the Germans had done during the Battle of Brittain with Freiejagd (“ free hunting ”) – but to systematically go into combat with enemy fighter planes. The weather forecast is however favorable, but Weather Service is once more a little bit inadequate. Thick overcast and heavy clouds over Germany will significantly affect mission achievement. In positive, bad conditions are also disturbing the action of German fighters and so the losses are relatively light, (1,5%). However 13 B-17s, 3 B-24s, 5 fighters, 2 P-47s and 3 P-51s, go down.



Mustangs recently sprayed with the white identification bands of the 354th Fighter Group, over the North Sea and England.
(Steve Blake's collection)

Mission 228 is in fact made up of three distinct missions.

A first formation of 336 B-17s from 1st Bomb Division have been sent against *Luftwaffe* airfields. 285 hit *Achmer, Hopsten, Diepholz, Quakenbrück, Bramsche* airfields and *Rheine* airfield, II./JG1 (2nd FG/1st Fighter Wing) and *Major Heinz Bär's* home base. 8 B-17s are lost, including 91st Bomb Group's " Miss Ouachita " we will meet again further... One P-51 of 357th FG's fighter escort is claimed shot down over *Almelo* and crashes at *Zwolle* (Holland). (43-6723, B6-S, "Bud" Anderson's first "Old Crow" flown by Lt Alfred R. Boyle)

The second formation, 224 B-24s of 2nd Bomb Division have been sent too against airfields, and as 1st Division, hit secondaries or targets of opportunity. 3 ships are lost.

The last formation, consisting of 281 of 3rd Bomb Division's B-17s, is heading for *Diepholz* airfield and aircraft factories in *Braunschweig* (Brunswick).

Thick overcast is disturbing the mission there as well. The targets in *Braunschweig* will have to be bombed with radar assistance. As a result, the bombs are falling down in town and sparing the outlying factories, in particular the two engineering industry sites which produce Bf 110 elements.

175 B-17s still hit the primaries and 88 others, *Hannover* and two airfields.

5 B-17s are lost as well as 2 P-51s of 353rd FS/354th FG, one of them Lt Mattie's ship.

Lt Col Jim Howard, already an Ace, leads the escort from the 354th FG. This group is one of the best USAAF's fighter groups in Europe and is shaping up to produce many present and futur aces.

1st Lt John D Mattie of 353rd Fighter Squadron, with two FW 190s kills and one damaged the day before, is on the way to become one of them, receiving credit for 1,5 only.

The first enemy plane he had shot down was for his younger brother Dave and now he aspires to get #5, that Dave could look on his brother as an ace.

A PERFECT MISSION...

At his home base in Boxted on the morning of 21 February, he is so completely oriented toward the previous engagements that he would have flown anything which looks like a plane, just to take part in the mission.

Indeed, his normally assigned P-51B-1-NA, 43-12380, " MY BUDDY ", coded FT-A, was damaged during the victorious airfight on the day before, returning to home base with three 30 cal shells through the engine and left wing tip blown off, and therefore is under repairs.

But Lt Mattie will not have to abort as Lt Donohoo's ship, 43-12161, coded FT-D, is available for him.

According to Steve Blake (3) : it's possible that FT-D was Lt Donohoo's assigned ship, but also this plane had been flown by at least six different pilots of 353rd Squadron and never by Lt Donohoo from 7 January to 20 February.

This ship may very well have been used as the spare fighter for the squadron.

What's more, that day's mission to *Braunschweig* is not the first. The Group had always clashed with numerous German fighters in the same area. This would be a good chance for John Mattie to raise his score to five victories and to become an Ace.

All that looks like a perfect mission...

³ Author of "The Pioneer Mustang Group", in e-mailed additional information

HOWEVER, ALL IS NOT GOING WELL...

Lt Mattie has told the story of his Blue Monday in his Diary :

“ As my ship “ MY BUDDY ”, was being repaired, I flew Lt Donohoo’s ship that Monday.

A pet superstition of mine was that bad luck followed you when you borrowed anybody’s ship or equipment.

But I was so hopped from the previous engagements that I would had flown a Ryan PT just to get to go on the mission. That day the mission itself – Braunschweig was the target – promised to be an exciting one as we had always run into stuff opposition going to that target before. So my superstitions were forgotten and I felt nothing but the thrill of the hunt as I “ gave my kite the gun ” and sped down the runway that unforgettable day. The sky held few clouds : the visibility was good and the trip over the channel uneventful. The scattered flak that met us as we crossed in served to put us only more on the alert. Even the crazy driving hum of Jerry’s radar was missing that morning...

...It was the start of what looked like a perfect mission.

HOWEVER ALL IS NOT GOING WELL... ACT II ...

The first sign I had that all was not going well that day was when Lt Wah Kau Kong left my wing and was replaced by Lt Burke who was on his first mission.

Kong and I had flown together back in the States and were on many missions together over Germany so we more or less understood each other and could predict beforehand almost the others moves.

...I hated to see him go

The next indication that all was not well was when we received the information over our RT that the bombers were ten minutes late. ”

According to the “ combat mission schedule ”, (passed on to by Steve Blake), showing the original positions of the various 353rd FS pilots on the 21 February mission, Lt Kong in his FT-F was the “ spare ” pilot that day and did complete the mission, which means he must have replaced one of the five pilots who aborted the mission but the schedule does not indicate what position he took. Also, Lt Burke, indeed on his first mission, was the wingman of Capt Emmer in Blue Flight, Lt Billy B Bronston was the wingman of White leader Lt Meserve, and Lt Keane in FT-L the wingman of Lt John D Mattie in Green Flight.

That all changed as the mission progressed. With numerous position changes, during the mission, will most likely remain a mystery as to what is described in John Mattie’s Diary.

What is certain, is that he will go into combat without his usual and experienced wingman and that will have serious consequences for what happens next.

For Lt Kong too, in that he will be killed in combat the following day.

SHORT WAIT TILL " BIG FRIENDS " SHOW UP...

354th FG is now circling around the RV point covering a 30 miles radius between *N/Hannover* and *Dümmer See* (Lake) with 353rd FS holding down the tail end of the Group.

According to Steve Blake : The Squadron leader, Captain Jack T Bradley (353rd's Ace) with Red Flight has the lead, followed by White leader Lt Meserve, his wingman Lt Bronston in 43-12372 coded FT-O and White Flight’s second element, followed by Blue Flight which had been reduced to Lt Eagleston and Lt Burke. Capt Emmer had aborted because he was sick. He was escorted home by Lt Regis the #4 man of Blue Flight. Green Flight would have the difficult task of bringing up the rear.



“ Big Friends ” from 96th Bombardment Group (USAF)



Green Flight's leader Capt Jim Cannon on February 21, 1944. On April 29, James Cannon and the German ace Heinz Knoke will shot them mutually down and will be evacuate in the same truck, Knoke toward the infirmary and Cannon toward a jail !
 (Steve Blake's collection) www.heinzknokewebsite.com (English version available)

Capt Jim Cannon in his FT-K is leading Green Flight with Lt Leach in FT-H as wingman, Lt Mattie leads the second element in 43-12161, FT-D and Lt Keane is Mattie's wingman in FT-L. All of these men will complete the mission except Lt Mattie.

Green Flight is so holding down the tail end of the entire Air Group, the most exposed and dangerous position.

That day, the bomber stream was held up by the thick overcast. Of course the formation had to be split up. 175 B-17s were to hit the primaries in *Braunschweig* but also 88 others to bomb secondary and opportunity targets, including *Hannover*. All of these units are now heading back home, but the requirement to re-form the stream has delayed the 3rd Bomb Division.

As the "Big Friends" nearly join the RV point, they are hit hard in lightning strikes by over 200 enemy fighters.

354th comes to its bombers rescue leaving Green Flight on his tail end but it's intervention is minimizing the damage.

Indeed, only one ship is shot down.

It is 42-39814 "Black Hawk" of 96th BG/337th BS, the pilot Alver R Smith and four crew members are killed, the five others bail out and are captured. According to Hey/Bishop in "Losses of the US 8th and 9th Air Forces, Vol 2", 42-39814 was "attacked by fighters past the IP hitting the gas tanks. At 14.30 hrs exploded in mid air and crashed at *Gross Munzel*, 4 miles South of *Wunstorf*".

By irony of fate, John D Mattie after his own capture, will meet the surviving members of the crew, co-pilot J F Lynn, navigator B T Moynahan and three sergeants, as PoWs in *Luftwaffe II./JG11* home base, about 7 miles from *Wunstorf*. Just then, they recognize knowing each other from a chance meeting several weeks before when their ship had made a forced landing at Mattie's base returning from a mission to *Frankfurt*!



Bomber crews of 401st Bomb Group discover 353rd Fighter Squadron new "Little Friend" (43-12172, FT ⊕ T) at Deenethorpe (Station 128), on December 17, 1943. The crew of the B-17 "Black Hawk" had probably a similar experience when they met John Mattie at Boxted.

(Steve Blake's Collection)

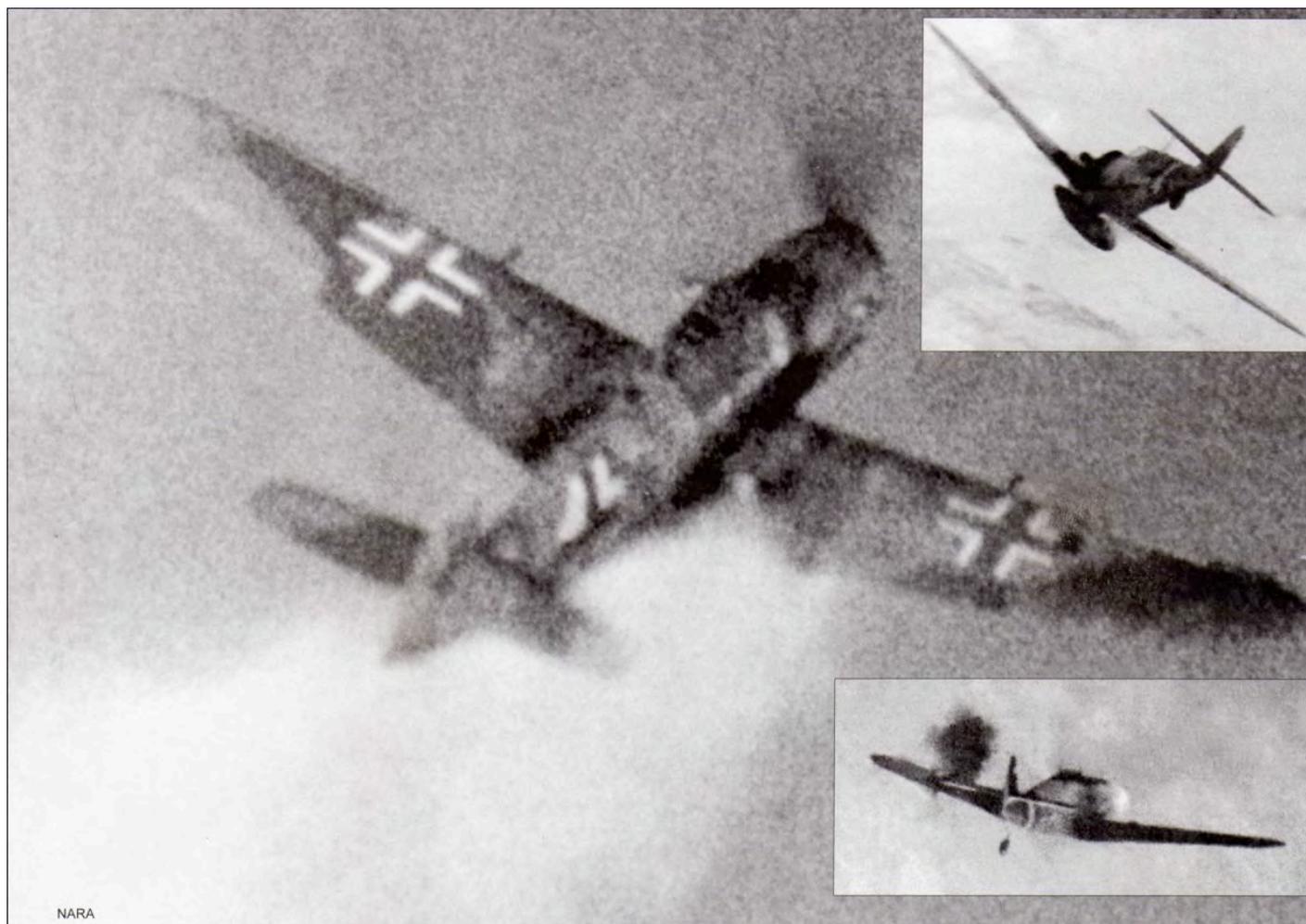
They informed also John Mattie that their B-17 have been brought down in the vicinity and they have been picked up about an hour before.

Now, as the bombers are under solid protection, the German fighters go for the escort...

ONLY GREEN FLIGHT FIGHTING...

Lt John D Mattie continues the relation of events in his Diary:

" We hit our RV point and swung north of Hannover to kill a little time till our " Big Friends " showed up. Over Donner Lake (*Dümmer See*, NoA) we began a 180 and were half-way through it when the call " 25+ bandits at 12 o'clock high " came over the RT.



I immediatly picked them out and watched them as they swiftly passed over the lead squadron, the middle squadron, and began their turn onto the tail of our squadron.

As we were flying Green Flight that day, we were holding the tail end of the Group and were lagging further than what we should have been-thereby, presenting the most vulnerable target.

As soon as it was no longer questionable that the FW 190's – which they proved to be – were selecting our flight for their target, Cannon signaled to drop wing tanks and we turned into the attacking Jerries, while the rest of the group proceeded on a straight course to the bomber RV.

Making a sharp left turn I lost my wingman, who I later found out spun out on the turn and hit the deck and headed for home.

We found ourselves in a head-on attack with the FW's and in a few seconds within range.

I selected one of the leading attackers, placed him in my Ring Sight and squeezed the trigger.

I observed hits on its fuselage and as he broke from the attack I pulled up sharply to the left and followed Cannon and his wingman who were completing a 360 and striking out after the group which was a considerable distance ahead by now. I had fallen back slightly during my encounter so I gave my ship the gun and began closing the distance between Cannon and myself. There were Focke-Wulfs on all sides of me attempting to position themselves for an attack.

As I was slowly approaching my flight leader from behind I detected a 190 making a low rear quarter attack on his element. Having a slight altitude advantage and the bigger advantage of being undetected as yet by the plane making the attack, I dropped my nose, had him in my sight, gave the proper lead and let go. My first few tracers appeared directly in front of the nose and then cut back through the length of his fuselage.

The ship made a few wild uncontrolled skids and then went into a screaming vertical dive.

In the thrill and excitement of watching him plummet to the earth another 190 had positioned himself on my tail in those few seconds and was firing at me as I pulled up off the kill.

The next instant a 20 mm shell hit my left wing and a large hole miraculously appeared over my wing tank.

I immediately kicked left rudder, flopped the stick over against the side and flipped over on my back headed straight down. No sooner did I get over on my back when my whole cockpit was immediately immersed in flames. They began licking at my hands, my clothing, and my face before I could say " Kriegsgefangen ".

Unconsciously I reached for the emergency release and gave a pull. Nothing happened. I pulled the release again with still no result . I began beating at the top of the canopy with my fists while the plane continued his downward plunge. The thought that flashed trough my mind at that moment was " well, Mattie, you have had it. " But the next instant the canopy suddenly came off and I blindly fumbled with my safety strap lock. It came undone and I raised myself slightly out of the seat.

John Mattie takes his downfall humorously...

(War Diary, Chris Mattie's collection)



The next instant I was whisked out of the cockpit as if by a mighty hand and found myself hurtling earthward free of the ship.

After a few seconds of free-fall I yanked my rip cord release handle and was brought to what seemed like a full stop in mid air by the opening of my chute. At the time it opened I was falling so swiftly that the sudden shock of the opening blacked me out for about 30 seconds. (later, when I had the opportunity to check over my body I found painful bruises on my hips caused by the harness buckles cutting in when the chute opened)

Regaining my sight, the first thing I observed was the group slowly fading to a speck in the distance.

That, perhaps, is the most melancholy moment of my life. Everything had happened so quickly that it was difficult for my mind to grasp the fact that I was actually floating earthward in a chute and that the ground below me was the land of the enemy – Germany.

After my thoughts had gradually settled, the thing that impressed me most was the deathly stillness that pervades the atmosphere at 18,000 feet.

Not a sound was to be heard outside of the occasional rustle of the chute above me. That sound and the broad expanse of silk above me were very assuring indeed.

This silence was soon broken by reappearance of 3 FW 190's who circled me once and left with a cheery dip of the wing.

CAPT CANNON'S OWN STATEMENT OF FACT :

"I was leading Green flight with squadron, providing close escort for bomber task force over target at Braunschweig on 21 February, 1944. 1st Lt. John D. Mattie was my second element leader. The group had just completed a wide left turn prior to RV with bombers. this was at 1340 hours in the area north-east of Dummer Lake. I saw about 20+ FW-190s in a good position for a high side attack on our squadron. They dived for attack on our flight which was on the outside of the squadron formation. I turned into them, dropping wing tanks at the same time. I continued the tight turn toward the e/a which were now in a Luftberry. After I had gained considerable altitude and was out of immediate danger, I looked down and saw e/a in a Luftberry below with some aircraft on various sorts of acrobatics. I thought this rather strange and checked my flight, noting one member missing. I learned later that Lt. Mattie's wingman had lost contact with him when wingman's engine cut out as he dropped wing tanks. Lt. Mattie apparently followed the FW-190s down, and I never saw him again following this encounter. I proceeded on to rendezvous with bombers."

WHILE LT MATTIE IS STILL DRIFTING TOWARD GERMANY...

"I was alone again in that eerie silence with only my thoughts as company. I began to give the terrain below me a close inspection and saw that I was being carried towards a small city. There were several wooded areas in the vicinity and I tried manipulating my shroud lines so that my chute would carry me to a wooded section – but to no avail. The wind was against me and I continued floating gently earthward in the direction of the town. As I descended lower and lower, the earth seemed to slowly to come to life. Soft noises were now discernible and I could see people grouping together and pointing upward. I could see now that I would land in or near the town and hoped that I would miss the large canal which bordered the town. The long descent from altitude had left me with frozen limbs and I wasn't too eager for a swim just then. As I got lower and lower my speed seemed to increase greatly and I was no longer floating gently downward but was skimming over the earth's surface at a surprising speed. I skimmed over the dreaded canal, passed swiftly over the tops of some houses in the outskirts of town and over the heads of large crowds of people.

I dropped down between two buildings, hitting the side of one and then the ground. I rolled over twice and came to a stop on hitting a fence.

Slightly dazed and bruised, I picked myself up off the ground and began unbuckling my harness when the civilian population descended upon me. A large bewhiskered individual seized me by the collar of my flying suit with his right hand and made as if to strike me with his left, all the while shouting abuses in a foreign tongue.

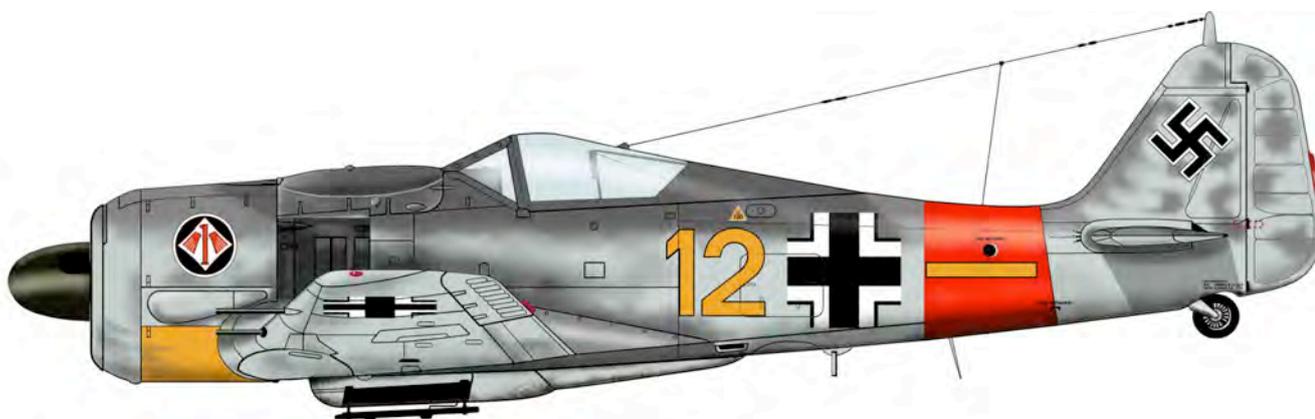
I put up my guard and expected anything to happen, when a blue uniformed figure with rifle unslung dashed around the corner, backed off the crowd and made me his captive...

...I then asked her the name of the town I was in and she informed me it was Wunstorf, near Hannover.

NORTH AMERICAN P-51 B-1-NA 43-12161 FT-D 1st Lt John D Mattie 353rd FS 354th FG 21 February 1944



FOCKE WULF FW 190 A-7 "yellow 12" Maj Heinz Bär 6/JG 1 (6th FS, 1st Fighter Wing) 21 February 1944



In brief : only Green Flight is taken to task by 25+ FW 190s in the vicinity of *Wunstorf*.

Lt Mattie damages one of the leading fighters in a head on attack with them.

He shoots down the FW 190 making a low rear quarter attack on his leader's element.

He himself is shot down by a FW 190 few seconds later, bails out at 18000 ft, is drifting toward and drops down in *Wunstorf*.

A second P-51 of 353rd is also lost that day, 43-12372 coded FT-O, with Lt Billy B Bronston who is killed in action. Lt Bronston is the wingman of White leader Lt Meserve and flying close to Red Flight leading the Squadron, which is proceeding on a course to the bomber RV while only Green Flight tangled with incoming enemy fighters. He was last seen chasing a Ju 88 and FT-O crashed at 14.20 hrs, 100 yards South of *Kissenbrück*, East of the railroad track from *Wolfenbüttel* to *Bornum*. Around 12 miles South of *Braunschweig* and so more than 50 miles South-East of Lt Mattie's crash site. As no P-51 was claimed by the German fighters in that area, it can be assumed that Lt Bronston was probably victim of the Ju 88's defensive fire or hit by the German *Flak*. (4)

21 February 354th FG's pilots also claim a further ten aircraft destroyed.

Victorious are Lt Albert Redfern of 356th FS with one FW 190, and squadronmate Lt Frank O'Connor who is credited with one FW 190 and damaging a second.

Unfortunately, Lt John D Mattie is missing and his victory claim with him.

A TOO SHORT GERMAN BLANKET...

Let us look now at German side.

At the beginning of 1944, fighting on two fronts, the *Jagdwaaffe's* (Fighter Command) situation is serious but not yet hopeless. As German historian Cajus Bekker will write, it is likely to be in the shoes of a man who tries to protect himself with a too short blanket : whenever he keeps his feet warm, he has a cold head and vice-versa. Though by constant units' transfers from one front to the other, it holds out.

So the fighter units on western front line up about 700 single engine ships to face up to 1295 bombers and 2528 American fighters, including around a hundred P-51B, only to have enough range to contest air superiority over the Reich.

Against that totally new aircraft, the *Jagdwaaffe* line up two already old models, the *Messerschmitt* Bf 109G which has reached the limits of his potential and the *Focke Wulf* FW 190.

The standard versions of the FW 190s are still A-5 and A-6, and the new A-7 version comes into service only in January 1944.

NO P-51S OVER GERMANY...

Still the system holds out but a lot of people are aware that will not go on forever.

Except *Reichsmarschall* Göring, who day after day cuts one-self off from reality, and even rearrange it, among others about P-51's presence over Germany.

Albert Speer, minister of armement, wrote down in his memoirs an anecdote showing a personality clash between Göring and Adolf Galland commanding general of Fighter Command, dated in the Summer of 1943.

However, according to Rolf Steiner (5), it seems that the events would be happen more later, end of 1943, or even beginning of 1944, when the first P-51Bs were shot down, probably not East of *Aachen* as he told, but in the vicinity of *Hannover*.

“ That day, Galland had informed Hitler that some fighters, which protected American bomber units had being shot down near Aachen... Hitler had immediatly reported this worry to Göring... ...*It's well, Herr Galland*, cutted Göring to close the debate, *I give you official order that not any American fighter is reaching Aachen...* ...The general made a last attempt, *and though, Herr Reichmarschall they were there*. Göring lost one's composure : *...The American fighters were not there ! Do you understand ? And it is exactly what I will tell to the Führer. ...It's an official order !* With an unforgettable smile, Galland replied : *yes sir !, Herr Reichmarschall.*”

So, Lt John D Mattie's FT-D could have been one of those planes which were not there...

⁴ Losses of the US 8th and 9th AIR FORCES, Vol 2 by Hey/Bishop, thanks to French and German historians Claude Archambault and Horst Jeckel

⁵ Aerojournal n°6 October-November 2008, Adolf Galland's biography

Nevertheless the German pilots' morale remained high, but to fight against the bomber boxes, above all with a P-51s escort is left a very dangerous sport. In a large part many young inexperienced pilots but too *Experten*, often aces and commanding officers, will go missing during that period.

General Galland chief of Fighter Command will admit the loss of 1000 pilots during the three first months of 1944.

The Mustang is taking part in 425 of 3839 missions and is claiming 67 of 212 victories credited to American fighters, 11% of missions and 31% of victories. No comment

BUT THE FIRST P-51 FOR MAJOR HEINZ BÄR...

After "Big Week"'s first raid the day before and favourable weather forecast, all fighter units are expecting a new raid today and are ready again to shoot back.

Major Heinz Bär is at time *Staffelkapitän* of 6./JG1, ie squadron leader of 6th FS/ 1st Fighter Wing. (JG1 will be named "Oesau" in May 1944, after his Kommodore's, Walter Oesau, death.)

Strangely Bär has a high rank for an ordinary squadron leader. In fact, after the disaster in Tunisia in the Spring of 1943, Reichsmarschall Göring is looking for people to blame.

So, Group Commander of I./JG77, *Major* Bär, ill and exhausted by endless combat is first sent into exile to South of France, officially to rest, but also to take command of a second rate training unit as punishment. Nevertheless, he scores two times on 2 December...

At last he returns to Germany at the end of 1943. However, once home, his plain speaking on tactical policies is not at all liked by Göring who is posting him again as an ordinary squadron leader in JG1.

But which other "ordinary" squadron leader could score three times that day ?



Almost all concerning Bär is nothing than "ordinary", so in February 1944, he is always dressed in his favorite "borrowed" American A-2 flight jacket, on which he has affixed the yellow epaulettes with silver braid, showing his Major rank and at the front, the Iron Cross 1st class awarded during the Battle of Britain. And that, in total disregard for *Luftwaffe's* rules and regulations, as to fly too by personal choice the squadron's spare planes since 1939 ! Of course, in the German *Staffel* of 12 aircrafts, number 13 is usually the spare ship. But as Bär has shot down his first adversary flying "white 13" he decided then it will be his lucky number.

(Christer Bergström, Claes Sundin "Luftwaffe Fighter Aircraft in Profile" Schiffer 1997)

Though on 21 February, like for Lt Mattie, all is not going well and *Major* Bär will have to fly "yellow 12" that day.

According to Bär's logbook, at our disposal thanks to Erik Mombeeck (6):

On 21 February at 8.24 hrs, *Major* Bär takes off in a FW 190 coded "12" from *Rheine* Airfield, his home base, for flight n° 183, a test flight until 8.40 hrs.

At 12.45 hrs, he moves on to serious matters in flight n° 184. Always flying "yellow 12" he is leading his squadron in *Alarmstart* (scramble). Later he will noting down as comment about the mission : "airfight with Boeing, Liberator, Mustang, Thunderb. 1 Boeing 1 Mustang". Of course, 6./JG1 is needing no fewer than 1h15 to cover the 90 miles to reach the area around *Hannover* due to several fruitless airfights but also to bad weather conditions.

⁶ Belgian historian, author of JG1's history



HEINZ BÄR

"In meiner Kiste bin ich Kommodore" *

*" in my crate I'm Wing Commander "... In researching Bär's life he is appearing as a singular pilot. He is one of only a small handful of " First to Last " pilots, flying from the first day to the last. Also fighting and scoring on every front, from Holland and France, to the English Channel, to Russia, to the Mediterranean, to North Africa and back to defend Germany. And this in both of propeller fighters : Me 109 E/F/G, FW 190 A-7/A-9, D-9 them Me 262 A/C, the first in combat used jet fighter. He is flying about 1000 missions, shot down of 18 times, taking to his parachute 4 times and making 14 belly landings. To survive this type of combat career is maybe due to his lucky " 13 ", carried on several of his planes, but is nothing short of remarkable.

Heinrich " Heinz " Bär is born on 25 May 1913 at Sommerfeld near Leipzig. He learns to fly gliders as a teenager and by 1930, he obtains his private pilots license. He wants to become a pilot for Lufthansa. So in 1935 he joins the emergent *Luftwaffe* to afford required additional schooling for an airline pilot. By 1938 he is promoted to *Unteroffizier* (Sgt) and assigned to 1./JG51 at Bad Aibling. He will never fly for Lufthansa, the incoming conflict will make of him a *Jagdflieger*...

By 1939, Heinz Bär is now flying a Me 109 E-1, his first lucky " 13 ", and scores his first victory, a French flown Curtiss H-75 A-2 on 25 September 1939. Promoted to *Leutnant* (2nd Lt) in September 1940 during the Battle of Britain, he is one of the *Luftwaffe*'s top scoring NCO pilots at the end of 1940 with a total of 13...

He is yet shot down himself for the first time over the Channel on 2 September flying a Me 109 E-3 too, but less luckily " 13 " and is enduring a two hour swim before being picked up by German sea rescue.

Bär with 17 victories follows Werner Mölders JG 51 in its trek East to join the fight against the Soviet Union 22 June 1941. He is awarded the Knights Cross 2 July after 27 victories and takes command of 12./JG 51 as *Staffelkapitän* (Squadron leader) on 19 July. In less than five weeks he runs his score up to 60... is promoted to *Oberleutnant* (1st Lt) and awarded the Oakleaves to his Knights Cross on 14 August. He has multiple victory days with five 30 June, six 30 August, 79th and 80th on 31 August...

When he is shot down again behind enemy lines. Perhaps as the Me 109 F-2 he is flying is coded " 1 " ? But despite injured back and ankles, Bär also returns to the German lines two days later and is spending the next three month in the hospital. Back to front end of November he is promoted to *Hauptmann* (Capt) and awarded the Swords to his Knights Cross after his 90th victory on 16 February 1942.

On May, Heinz Bär is transferred to Crimea to become *Gruppenkommandeur* (Group Commander) of I./JG 77. When he leaves Russia to join the Mediterranean at the start of July, the scoreboard on the tail of his Me 109 F-4 is of 113...

He is flying first over Malta and then over North Africa until August 1943. Bär is scoring 65 victories more, despite malaria, stricken by gastric ulcers and apparently difficult relationship with JG 77's Kommodore. Now *Major*, but ill and exhausted by endless combat, he's first sent into exile to South of France to take command of an operational training unit EJGr. Süd until December 1943, but all at the same Heinz Bär claims a B-17 and a P-38 on 2 December...

At last he returns to Germany. However, once home, his plain speaking on tactical policies is not at all liked by Göring, who sees fit to "demote" him, thus his first posting, end of December, is as *Staffelkapitän* of 11./JG 1, disbanded unit early January 1944...

Leading now 6./JG 1 he fights against heavy bombers and the new P-51s long range fighters during "Big Week" on February 1944. With tenacity and undeniable combat record, he is finally appointed *Kommandeur* of II./JG 1 on 15 March and flying a FW 190 A-7 " 13 ", exceeds 200th victory on April. He is briefly acting as *Kommodore* (Wing Commander) of JG 1 after Walter Oesau's death.

Bär is *Kommodore* of JG 3 since five days on D-Day, and leads JG 3 during operation "Bodenplatte" on New Years Day, 1945 and on a FW 190 D-9 adds 204th and 205th victories to his scoreboard.

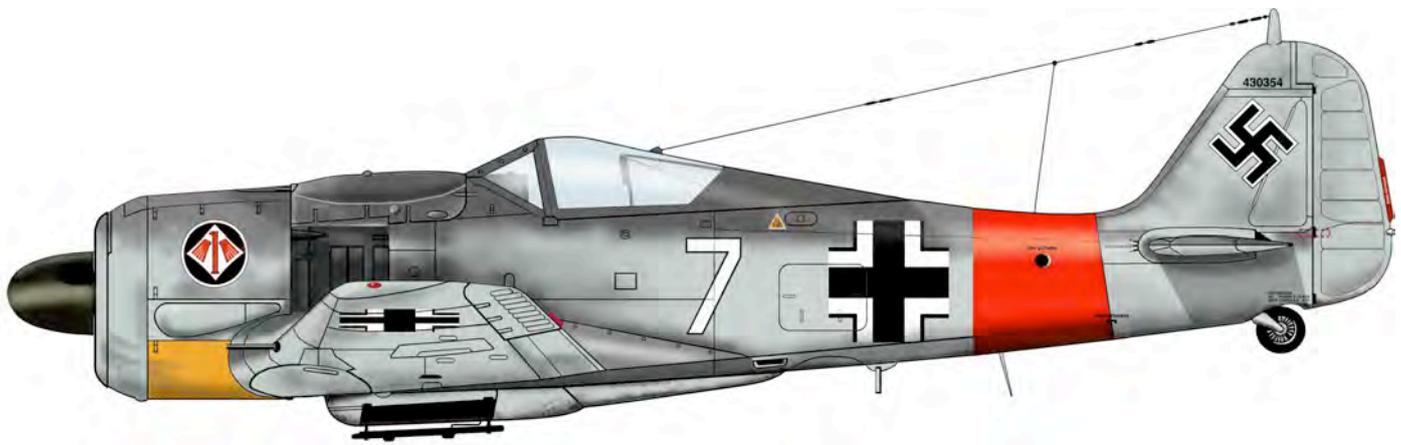
In February *Oberstleutnant* (Lt Col) Bär becomes *Kommandeur* of III./EJG 2 an advanced training unit on Me 262 jet , but this unit is also flying combat missions credited to at least 20 victories of which 13... to Bär, flying now his first jet, Me 262 A-1a of course " 13 "...

On 23 April 1945 he joins JV 44, the so called " Squadron of Aces " or " Squadron of Outcasts ". Three days later, as Adolf Galland is wounded Bär becomes *Kommodore* of JV 44, his 220 or 221st and last victim is a downed P-47 over Bad Aibling, where his career began with 1./JG 51 six years ago...

Postwar, he is working as aviation consultant. On 28 April 1957, 13 years after his 200th victory, good fortune in the air leaves him when Heinz Bär is killed in light plane accident in Braunschweig, at the age of 44 years.

FW 190 A-7 "red 13"
April 1944
200 victories mark on the tail





Focke Wulf FW 190 A-7 430354 “ White 7 ” from I./JG1 lost 21 February 1944, pilot : **Uffz Fritz Rathofer**, probably shot down by Lt John Mattie. Rathofer was wounded and bailed out, his “ White 7 ” crashed at *Steinheim*, around 30 miles South of *Stadthagen*. Rathofer will claim nine victories at all before been killed during aerial combat at Caen (Normandy) on 30 June 1944.

Then, some pilots of 6./JG1, 4./JG1 and 3./JG11 claim their first victories around 14.00 (13.00 GMT), west of *Hannover*. Therefore 20-30 FW 190s of two, possibly three, *Staffeln* (squadrons) go into combat in that area, as a German squadron usually line up 12 fighters, but often few than 12 are available for taking off in 1944.

The day's top scorer is too the first to claim a B-17 at 13.58 hrs, 8-9 miles W/*Hannover* and at 21,300 ft.

The victory will be confirmed and credited to Major Heinz Bär, of 6./JG1, as his 182nd. (7)

Uffz (Sgt) Rau of 4./JG1 claims a B-17 “HSS” (*Herausgeschoss* “ shot out of the bomber box”) at 14.00 hrs in the same area. His first victory is nor confirmed nor credited. Maybe as Hans Rau will be shot down and killed a few time later the same day...

A confirmed B-17 is on the other hand is credited to *Fw* (warrant officer) Hans-Georg Güthenke of 3./JG11 at 14.01 hrs, west of *Hannover* and at 22,966 ft.

In fact only 96th BG's “ Black Hawk ” is lost in that area, possibly shot down by *Major* Bär as he is the first to claim, possibly the victory will have to be shared...

Only three minutes have passed and the FW 190's continue their lightning strike, now going for the escort.

Major Bär again, claims the first P-51 shot down that day. The first Mustang in his career...

The aircraft is claimed shot down only two minutes later, in “*Jagdtrapez*” GT-58,(8) no height, 5km (~3miles) North of *Stadthagen*, at 14.03 hrs.

The victory is confirmed, Anek : Nr.62, Film C. 2025/I, and credited to *Major* Heinz Bär, 6./JG1, as his 183rd victory.

Oberleutnant (1st Lt) Heinrich Koenig of 3./JG11 is claiming too a not confirmed P-51, no location, no height, no time, but as his 9th victory. Only that 3./JG11 is present in that area is certain.

Leutnant (2nd Lt) Leopold Münster of 5./JG3 is claiming the third P-51, once more not confirmed, no location, no height, no time, 88th victory, but two groups of JG3 are present in the vicinity of *Holzminden*, 40 miles South and about half an hour later.

The fourth and last goes to *Oberfeldwebel* Siegfried Zick of 7./JG11, 17th victory, claimed shot down over *Almelo* (Holland).

Now it's time for Bär and 6./JG1 to go back home. Meanwhile *Rheine* Airfield is suffering 1st Bomb Division's raids, so the squadron is heading east toward *Berlin*, and landing in *Stendal* airfield, 95 miles from the combat area at 14.25 hrs.

Heinz Bär will shoot down seven other P-51s including four downed flying Me 262 jet fighter. Very few comparative to his 220 victories. His explanation for that in Toliver and Constable's “Luftwaffe fighter aces”:

“The P-51 was maybe the most difficult of all allied planes met in airfight. The Mustang was fast, maneuvering and difficult to see and to identify because it looked like the Me 109 in the air... ..if he had a tactical advantage, he had a good chance to win the combat”

As a result II./JG1's (4th, 5th and 6th squadrons) casualties are heavy that day.

Unteroffiziere (Sgts) Harald Feist of 5./JG 1 and Hans Rau of 4./ JG 1 are killed, *Leutnant* (Lt) Helmut Proff of 4./JG 1 and *Feldwebel* (warrant officer) Otto Schmid of 5./JG 1 are wounded and four FW 190s are 100-60% damaged, in other words destroyed. One FW is damaged. Probably the plane that John Mattie tells to have hit first.

I./JG1 reports too one pilot wounded and one FW 190 destroyed...

JOHN MATTIE VS FRITZ RATHOFER ?

According to the German historians Horst Jeckel and Jochen Prien, *Unteroffizier* (Sgt) Fritz Rathofer of 3./JG1, flying FW 190 A-7 *Werknummer* (serial) 430354, “White 7”, is wounded and bails out. “White 7” crashes at *Steinheim*, around 30 miles South of *Stadthagen*.

1st Lieutenant John D Mattie tells to have shot down “ the FW 190 making a low rear quarter attack on his leader's element ” near *Stadthagen* as he was himself shot down there only few seconds later.

Rathofer's “White 7” loss location seems to correspond to John Mattie's never registered claim.

⁷ Tony Wood's Combat Claims and Casualty Lists downloadable on the web

⁸ Luftwaffe victory claims in geographic coordinates, see map in Appendices, more detail on www.gyges.dk

DAY'S LAST VICTORY

Unfortunately for us Bär is well known to have a deep aversion for the "*Papierkram*" (paperwork), so his logbook is showing any strangenesses. (9)

Therefore after getting events in order : New scramble for flight n° 185 from *Stendal* probably at 14.44 hrs (instead of 13.44 as he wrote down). With a cruise speed of 365 mph, after half an hour to cover the 188 miles to *Rheine*, 6./JG1 is in view of his home base and preparing for landing at 15.20 hrs.

Just then as B-17 "Miss Ouachita", by result of incorrect turn of her partner "Miss Minookie" which exposed them, is flying directly over the German airfield and finds oneself face to face with Bär's squadron which is quick to exploit the opportunity. The top turret gunner and the co-pilot are killed, the pilot Spencer K Osterberg is wounded but succeeds in doing a belly landing on pastureland at *Bexten*, few miles from *Rheine*. (10)

New irony of fate and History, like "The Blake Hawk" crew members, Lt Osterberg is captured and will become a PoW in *Stalag Luft 1*, the same camp where Lt Mattie is spending too the rest of war. In this way, almost all of Bär's victims of that day, are or could be meeting each other.

Major Heinz Bär of 6./JG1 is credited for his 184th victory, a confirmed B-17, downed N/NW/*Rheine*, no height, at 15.25 hrs. (He wrote down in his logbook : landing at 15.20 !) It is B-17F, 42-3040, "Miss Ouachita", coded OR-Q, 91st BG/323rd BS.



Photo probably taken 21 February late in the afternoon or 22 February. Indeed, "as the Germans gloated over their prize, Allied fighter aircraft spotted Miss Ouachita on the ground and strafed it until fire took a hold and damaged the plane beyond repair, leaving it fit only for scrap." (11)

Behind Bär, his wingman Leo Schuhmacher (an other American flight jackets fan ?)
(Bundesarchiv)

WAS JOHN D MATTIE HEINZ BÄR'S 183rd VICTIM ?

Let's sum up :

- Lt Mattie was shot down by a FW 190
- In that area, only Green Flight was going into combat
- The number of incoming FWs coincides with strength of 6./JG1 and 3./JG11 and John Mattie's story
- Casualties of II./JG1 (12) coincide with Mattie's one FW damaged, one shot down and two others destroyed by 354th FG
- Bär's P-51 was confirmed
- Bär's claim location is ~ 8 miles South West distant of *Wunstorf*
- Mattie during his long chute drift from 18 000 ft crossed *Mittellandkanal*, so drifted North East towards *Wunstorf*

Therefore Lt John D Mattie was most probably shot down by Maj Heinz Bär, 21 February 1944, near *Wunstorf*

But without detail about *Oblt* Koenig's not confirmed claim, a very little doubt will still remain.

The reader will come to a decision in his deep conviction.

⁹ Original copy by Erik Mombbeck in Appendices

¹⁰ In "Plane Names & Fancy Noses" by Ray Bowden

¹¹ In "Plane Names & Fancy Noses" by Ray Bowden

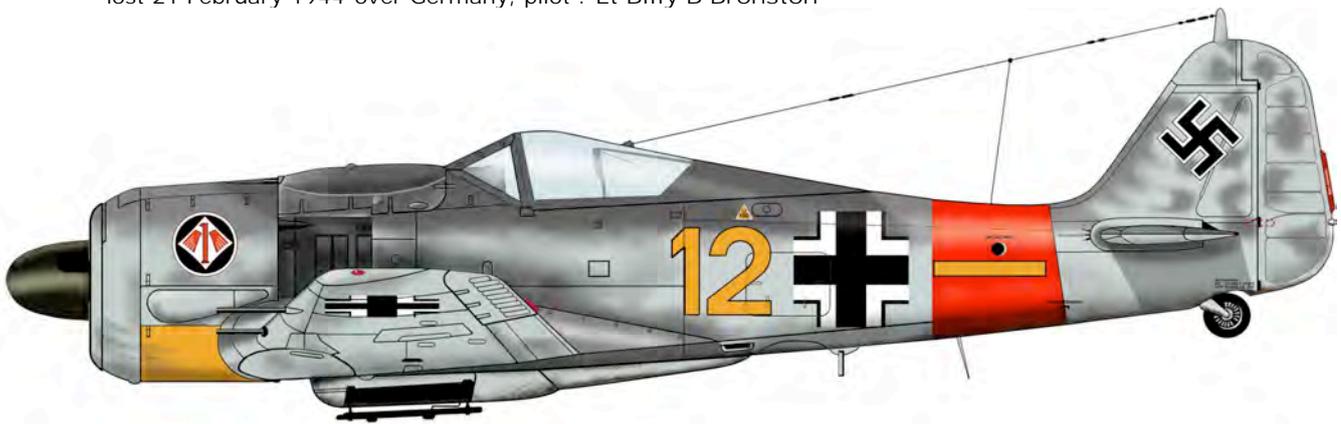
¹² Tony Wood's Combat Claims and Casualty Lists



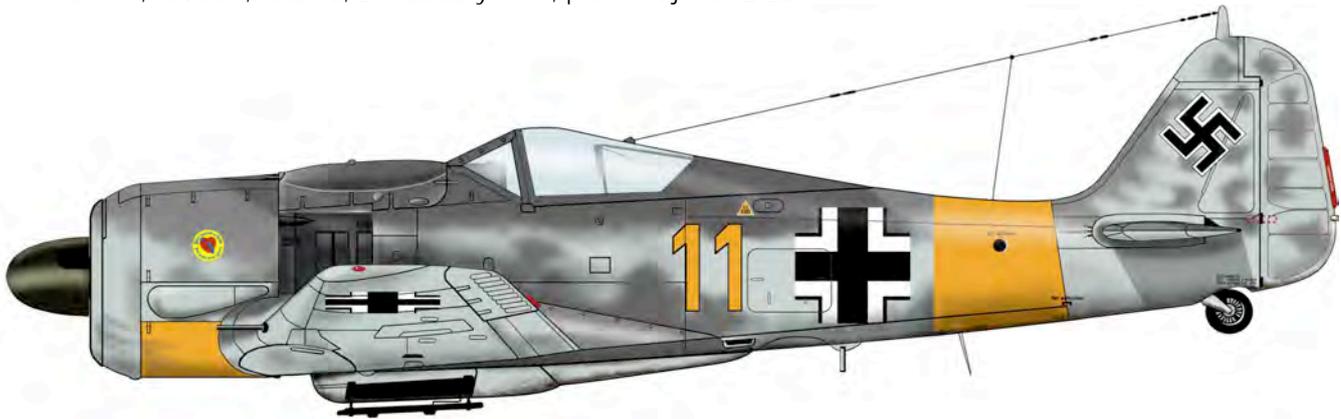
P-51 B-1-NA 43-12161 FT-D, 353rd FS, 354th FG, lost 21 February 1944 over Germany, pilot : Lt John D Mattie



P-51 B-1-NA 43-12372 FT-O, 353rd FS, 354th FG, assigned to Lt Felix M Rogers, possibly his first "Beantown Banshee", lost 21 February 1944 over Germany, pilot : Lt Billy B Bronston



FW 190 A-7 , 6./JG1, Rheine, 21 February 1944, pilot : Maj Heinz Bär



FW 190 A-7, 3./JG11, Husum, February 1944

KRIEGSGEFANGEN

WAR DIARY

The original War Diary, as John Mattie wrote and drew it, first on Red Cross notebooks...



My Buddy

Mattie - 110
Barb - 110



BALL

April 6th '93

Strafing: The Most Perilous Game



By Bud Hutton

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Some 100 feet above the runways and hardstands of Germany's airfields American fighter pilots in the last four months have perfected the third arm of a tri-pronged weapon designed to annihilate Nazi air power.

It is strafing, aerial attack at as close to zero altitude as an airplane can get and still fly. It was invented 30 years ago by the Germans, who gave the technique its name from the Germanic verb "strafe," to punish.

It is the most dangerous maneuver in fighter pilots' repertoire and probably has claimed more of the top aces of Eighth and Ninth Fighter Commands than any other form of attack. But it is one of the most valuable weapons in the Allied aerial arsenal because it destroys the last refuge of the Luftwaffe—Mustang, Thunderbolt and Lightning pilots have come back from strafing targets on the Continent with the tips of their propellers folded back from chewing into the ground or into the mired runways of Luftwaffe airdromes. Day in and day out ground crews find chunks of high-tension wire in air scoops, or around wing bomb racks, and the commentary is sufficient that it means the pilot wasn't flying low enough. One P51 ace came back to base with a turret in his air scoop.

Strafing began with the Nieuports and Sopwiths, the Fokkers and Junkers of World War I. It was used against ground troops in trenches. The Allies took over the German verb to describe it, and "strafe" (shtrahf) it became. When Rickenbacker and Prince, Lufberry and Hall started flying for Gen. Billy Mitchell's fledgling air force of 1917-18, the practice remained the same, the verb became "strayf."

In World War II, what strafing there was early in the war was eclipsed by the technique of dive-bombing, and the Stuka became the symbol of aerial assault on tactical ground targets. The Luftwaffe strafed, when it was necessary, and so did the RAF. As cannon came into use in twin-engine fighters, such as the Beaufighter and the early Mosquito, low-level gun attacks were carried out against enemy shipping.

When, last autumn, the RAF and the USAAF began the first real phase of their offensive to smash the Luftwaffe—necessary prelude to invasion by ground—they had two weapons with which to work the trick: Bombing and aerial combat. They would bomb the factories and the material sources which turned out German airplanes. And when the Nazis flew up to try and prevent them, they would destroy what they could of the German air force in the air.

This picture of a German airfield being strafed was drawn by S/Sgt. Nathan H. Glick, of Ninth Air Force, on the basis of strike photos taken by pilots.

It worked with no drawbacks, for a time. From every source came repeated indications that German aircraft production strength was being blasted to pieces. The strain began to show in Luftwaffe reserves—although not in first-line combat craft. Then Reichsmarschall Goering and his staff put into effect a strategy which completely nullified one of the Allies' two weapons. They chose to keep their defending fighters grounded, except under the most favorable circumstances.

In the waning months of 1943, and the first days of 1944, pilots here and there throughout fighter units had been turning in occasional reports of "beating up" enemy airfields after they had been forced to hit the deck by engine trouble and came home at zero altitude. Now and then they would fly over a Luftwaffe drome, spray it in passing and go on.

Gradually the technique evolved. Pilots learned to hug the ground, hiding their planes with the contours as they approached the target. They learned how to avoid flak so far as is possible. They learned a lot more navigation than they'd ever known.

In January it became obvious that Goering was going to keep his fighters on the ground unless the dividends for sending them up were obvious. The proper counter-move was ready: Strafing. It was obvious, however, that with the withdrawal of Nazi fighter Luftflotten to the Reich itself, short range fighters would do little good strafing empty airdromes in France or Belgium.

On Feb. 8 the heavy bombers went to Frankfurt, and the Mustangs made the target leg of the run with them, left the flak of Frankfurt behind and handed over the escort job to other fighters. Over the RT came the voice of Jim Howard, the major from the old Flying Tigers: Those who had gas to spare could hit the deck and look for targets.

Two squadrons of P51s went down to German soil. They dived beneath the undercast of clouds, scoured the terrain for targets and found them. They shot up an airdrome, destroyed a Do217 and hit other planes. 1/Lt. John Matjie, of Beldersdale, Pa., got three locomotives in a station. 1/Lt. Charles Gunn Jr. of Spokane, Wash., who was the first P51B pilot to destroy an enemy aircraft—in the Dec. 16 raid on Bremen—claimed the first strafing victim for the 31s, a locomotive.

1/Lt. Clayton Cross, also of Spokane, got two locomotives, a truck, a power station and flew his P51 Live Bait through a telephone line and brought back a 40-strand cable in his air scoop. It wasn't all a piece of cake, however. Pilots came in to base to report: "Flak was hell. We hit an airfield at 450 miles an hour after a dive from 6,000 feet and the barrage was too thick to see through. The group lost the first long-range Mustang to enemy action that day, the first in 24 missions. Both of them were hit as they strafed, one by flak and one bounced by four FWs as he lit the deck.

But it was a tactical surprise of the first magnitude, the Air Force decided. Last month, the swarms of Eighth Air Force fighter planes which swept almost

daily across Europe at high, medium and low levels confirmed those first indications. Eighth fighter pilots alone destroyed 478 enemy aircraft on the ground during the month of April, and the Ninth, whose strafing parties were considerably smaller in numbers, added 31 more, which meant that more than one-third of all enemy aircraft losses in Europe by the RAF and the USAAF were achieved by strafing.

After four months or so of war on the deck, most pilots—including the P51 men—figure that the best strafing airplane ever built is the Republic Thunderbolt P47. Heavy, eight-gunned, armored and 1500-hp pulling out twice as much lead as a Mustang, can absorb a good deal more punishment and its radial engine will frequently keep cooking with one or two cylinders shot right out.

Attack formations for strafing vary but the basic is to go in fairly close to the ground, cover the field and despatch areas with a stream of fire and get home.

1/Lt. Lowell Brueland, of Callander, Iowa, describes a typical strafe. "You spot your target field as far off as possible. Then you get the direction and get down flat on the deck, live to ten feet. Revving up, you hug the terrain on the way in.

"As you reach the field, you start firing. "What most of the boys like best is to catch some Jerry coming in for a landing just as you start to strafe, and beat the hell out of him."

Capt. Richard E. Turner, of Shawnee, Okla., who has flown Short Fuse Salutes to nine and one-half victories in air combat, brings up the point of "personal warfare."

"When we get down there and get a shot at Jerry flak positions, that's personal. It's the only chance to get back at the flak gunners. But best is to destroy enemy planes. That's the job we're there for, but it's no picnic. They lay down heavy and light flak on the field and we have to fly through it."

All the pilots prefer high-altitude fighting. "They feel that up there it's more a business of the better pilot," says Brueland, "but on the deck, strafing, it becomes a problem of mathematics as to how many planes are going to run into how much of that flak."

"Shooting down enemy planes in the air is sort of impersonal," Turner cuts in. "You're fighting machines. But down on the deck, maybe, you catch flak gunners running to their positions, as happened to me at an airfield south of Chartres, in France. You think twice about mowing them down, but if you don't they'll be firing at you in a few seconds."

Equally personal, but one of the things that keeps the fighter pilots going back again and again to the dirty job of hitting the Luftwaffe when it won't fly is the reaction of the people of the occupied countries.

Invariably as they cruise the low-levels of France and Belgium and Holland, the pilots see farmers and children, who wave and point and until the pilots have gone on to German fields.

Somerset Man Killed in Crash

David W. Gibbs, 39,
Loses Life as Truck
Hits Post and Upsets

Somerset man was killed and
her one injured early yesterday
ing when the light truck in
h they were riding crashed
a guard rail and overturned on
asselman Rd., about two miles
of Rockwood.

vid Wister Gibbs, 39, Somerset
D. I. driver of the truck, was
1 instantly when he was
led s t the steering wheel.
ter i s 43, Somerset, was
tted to Somerset Community
ital about 1:35 a. m. for treat-
of lacerations of the head
contusions of the chest. He
the hospital after receiving
ment, but returned and was
tted at 9 a. m. His condition
today was listed as fairly

k Taken Without Permission
puty Coroner C. S. Beck,
twood, said Gibbs sustained a
en neck, fractured skull and
hed chest.
Ms. Police from Jennerstown



WELL DONE, FELLA—Lt. John D. Mattie of Beaverdale, left, is greeted by his crew chief, Sgt. Reinold S. Johnson of Lake Stevens, Wash., as he returns to his A. A. F. fighter base in the European Theater of Operations from a mission as escort to American heavy bombers during a daylight raid on Germany's war industrial centers. Lt. Mattie pilots one of the recently announced P-51 (Mustang) fighters which have made an outstanding record of victories against the Luftwaffe while giving Yank Fortresses and Liberators fighter-cover over target areas. Since the above picture was taken Lt. Mattie was shot down during a raid over Berlin and according to latest word is a prisoner of the Germans. (Official Ninth U. S. Air Force photo.)

FDR, Pope Honor Father Martvon



Lt. John D. Mattie
**Lt. Mattie
Bags 2 Planes**

AT A U. S. FIGHTER STATION
in IN ENGLAND, Feb. 20.—(AP)—The
bougreatest number of American Air
\$350 force fighters ever dispatched to
escort a heavy bombing mission
Destroyed a record number of 61
pair German fighters today in the mass-
of the assault against German airplane
ques factories in central Germany.

The previous record was 53 shot
down Feb. 19 over Brunswick. One
American fighter was shot down
and three are missing from today's
raid.

Some of the fighter pilots said
they were within sight of Berlin
during the massive daylight opera-
tions.

Lt. John D. Mattie of Beaverdale,
Pa., destroyed two Focke-Wulf-109s
and damaged others when six Ger-
man planes jumped him.

Lt. Mattie, son of Mr. and Mrs.
Michael Mattie, Beaverdale, was
commissioned a lieutenant in the
Army Air Force early in Oct., 1942.
He was graduated from the Air
Force Advanced Flying School at
Luke Field, Phoenix, Ariz.

GOOD BOOKS I READ AS A KRIEGER
AND
BOOKS WORTH RE-READING

Crazy Like a Fox - S. J. Perelman
Trelaway - Margaret Armstrong
The Adventures of a Younger Son - E. J. Trelaway
Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte
Wuthering Heights - Anne Bronte
The Great American Novel - Clyde Davis
Magnificent Obsession - Lloyd C. Douglas
Dr. Hudson's Secret Journal - Lloyd C. Douglas
Russian Fables - Ivan ?
Country Lawyer - Bellamy Partridge
The Citadel - A. J. Cronin
Keys of the Kingdom - A. J. Cronin
Ten Years in a Quandry - Robert Benchley
Lorna Doone - Blackmore
Tortilla Flat - John Steinbeck
Don Quixote - Cervantes
Ivory Coast - A. Horn
The Four Million - O'Henry
Rebecca - Daphne du Maurier
Vanity Fair - Wm. M. Thackeray
My Friend Flicka - Mary O'Hara
Life in a Putty Knife Factory - H. Allen Smith
Low Man on the Totem-Pole - H. Allen Smith
The Mayor of Casterbridge - Thomas Hardy
The Tenderfoot - W. H. B. Kent
Mutiny on the Bounty - Nordhoff and Hall
The Moonlight Traveler - Philip Van Doren Stern
Without Armor - James Hilton
Winds of Spring - Walter Harighurst
Jeeves - P. G. Wodehouse
Lost Horizon - James Hilton
Albion's An Artists England - Stephen Bone
The Rolling Years - Agnes Sligh Turnbull
Remember the End - Agnes Sligh Turnbull
Goodbye Mr. Chips - James Hilton
The Robe - Lloyd C. Douglas
Collective Short Stories - Ring Lardner
Trees - Conrad Richter
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn - Betty Smith
Bugles in the Afternoon - Ernest Haycox
Excuse My Dust - Bellamy Partridge
The Hunchback of Notre Dame - Victor Hugo
Death Comes for the Archbishop - Willa Cather
None But the Lonely Heart - Richard Llewelyn
How Green was My Valley - " " "
Rivers of Glory - F. Van Wyck Mason
The Dynamiter - Robert Louis Stevenson
Corner Druggist - R. B. Wixon, Jr.
Broadsides - R. W. Daly
And Down the Days - John Louis Bonn, S.J.

Good Books I Read as a Krieger (Cont'd.)

Useful Quotations - Tyron Edwards
The Forest and the Fort - Hervey Allen
Bedford Village - " "
1 & 2 Introduction to Social Science - Attebury, Auble & Hunt
Johnny Tremaine - Esther Forbes
Danger in the Cards - Michael MacDougall
Western Star - Stephen Vincent Benet
Big Rock Candy Mountain - Wallace Stegner
Hell on Ice - Commdr. Edw. Ellsberg
Technique of Handling People - Donal A. Laird - McGraw-Hill Book Co.
Forward the Nation - Donald Culruss Peattie
There's No Place Like Home - James Lee Ellenwood
The Remaking of Modern Europe - 1789 to 1878 - J.A.R. Marriott
Secrets of Closing Sales - Charles B. Roth
So Little Time - John P. Marquand
Poems I Remember - John Kieran
Doctors on Horseback - James Thomas Flexner
Chicken Every Sunday - Rosemary Taylor
Call the New World - John Jennings
The Great Smith - Edison Marshall
Random Harvest - James Hilton
Hunchback of Notre Dame - Victor Hugo
Saddle and Ride - Ernest Haycox
Jamaica Inn - Daphne du Maurier
Explorations in Literature (American) - Edwin L. Miller
The Editor and His People - William Allen White
Gone With the Wind - Margaret Mitchell
The American Sporting Scene - John Kieran - Golinkin
Lively Lady - Kenneth Roberts
Ordeal by Hunger - George R. Stewart, Jr.
Three Harbors - F. van Wyck Mason
Reveille in Washington - Margaret Leech
Drums - James Boyd
Captain Paul - Commander Edward Ellsberg
Innocent Merriment - F. P. Adams
Four Feathers - A. E. W. Mason
Decline & Fall of Roman Empire - Gibbons
Captain Caution - Kenneth Roberts
Botany Bay - Nordhoff & Hall
Cardigan - R. W. Chambers
A Book of the Short Story - E. A. Cross - American Book Co.

From "Heart of Darkness" - Joseph Conrad

"No fear can stand up to Hunger, no patience can wear it out; disgust simply does not exist where hunger is. Don't you know the devilry of lingering starvation, its exasperating torment, its black thoughts, its somber and brooding ferocity? It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly. It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonor, and the prediction of one's soul, than this kind of prolonged hunger."

A Combat Airman's Prayer

Please, Dear God, just let me soar,
O'er green and yellow fields once more.
Where there will be no dirty clouds of black
Bringing forth that anguished cry of "Flak"!
Where sight of a speck out in the blue
Will not mean - "Watch it, Fighters at two!"
Where no screaming demons from out of the sun
Make every man jump - and with blazing guns
Endeavor to pay another life
To the devil who started this world wide strife.
If you don't think this is too much of a boon,
Well, Please Dear God, Please make it soon.

From "Gyfford of Weare" - Jeffery Farnol

The mind of a woman can never be known
You never can guess it aright.
Shall I tell ye the reason? - She knows
not her own.
It changes so often ere night.

Thanks for the memory

of flak guns on the Rhine.
Those Me-109's,
They did their bit,
And we were hit,
To end our good times

we hate them so much.

We drifted out of formation
We jumped and what a sensation
We're here to "sweat out" the duration
Our job is done, we've had our fun.

Oh, thanks for the memory
of Stalag LUft 1A
of German stew today
which had to do
when bites were few
till Red Cross Parcel Day
How thankful we were.

For You The War Is Over

"For you the war is over!" - The flier heard the phrase, but it took a while to sink in, for he still felt slightly dazed. Short hours ago his plane had roared thru the skies above still blue, with tons of lead in her belly - and a damned good fighters' crew. "For you the war is over! - You can make it what you please: Solitary Confinement, get treated rough, or else - a life of ease. The information that you give can hurt you not at all - so ---- what is that phrase you Yankee's use - oh yes - How's about playing ball? We can give you food and cigarettes and quarters as good as our own, or lese-: Some lead from a firing squad and a grave just marked unknown. Your Commander we know to be Col. Blank; you flew with the umpteenth Group; All your training was done out west - so you see have most the poop." The Jerry told him so damned much that the pilot's head just reeled; then the voice again "Now just where is your field?"

He was still a kid with his life ahead and he didn't want to die, but just as he opened his mouth to speak a scene flashed past his eye. The "boys" of the "Group" were back at the bar and the old toast rang on high. "Here's to those who have gone before--and here's to the next man to die." Then the bombs rained down from darkened skies adn the craters where they fell were the gates thru which his Buddies poured - to swell teh ranks of Hell. He tried to laugh but it wouldn't work; he hoped it was just a bluff - but if this Kraut was telling the truth it certainly was going to be rough! He was scared it's true - but what the Hell, he'd played the game and lost. He had laughed at death up in the sky, so now he'd pay the cost-!

"For me the war is over! - Bud, you've sure got something there, but there's a million more just like me, and they'll still be in your hair! You've got me where you want me, so you can put me neath the grass but the last words you'll hear from me are Major, Blow It out Your - - -!

That "Stuff" Called Love

Love is a nuisance nowadays
Like a dampened match, you cannot strike it
It bothers my dreams in a number of ways
But ----- I like it.

Love is no more than a fable now.
And a can of coffee ranks above it.
It's silly to dream of a beautiful girl,
But ----- I love it.

From Trelawny - Shakespearean Quote

"Come what come may
Time and the Hour runs through the Roughest Day"

From Rebecca -

I should say that kindness, and sincerity, and if
I may say so - modesty - are worth far more to a man,
to a husband, than all the wit and beauty in the world.

From "The Woodlanders" - Thomas Hardy

"If I forget
The salt creek may forget the ocean,
If I forget
The heart whence flowed my heart's bright motion,
May I sink meanlier than the worst,
Abandoned, outcast, crushed, accurst,
If I forget

Though you forget,
No word of mine shall mar your pleasure;
Though you forget,-
You filled my barren life with treasure;
You may withdraw the gift you gave
You still are queen, I still am slave,
Though you forget.

A Fighter's Toast

Stand by - Hold your glasses ready
Here's to the Fighters that fly
Drink a toast to those dead already
And here's to the next man to die!

The best is yet to be -
The last of life, for which the first was made;
Our times are in his hand who said:-
"A whole I planned
Youth shows but half.
Trust God - See all - nor be afraid.

Robert Browning

Now a cosy bunk and a loaf of bread,
And a Nescafe with fluffy cream in,
Are better than dreams of a double bed
But ----- I go on dreamin'.

You can get more lovin from a Grand Baby
Than you can from a Baby Grand
There is more harmony in a hug & a squeeze
Than there is in the whole Navy Band
Now a Steinway has a wonderful tone
But whoever heard of a piano-leg breakin up a home
You can get more lovin from a Grand Baby
Than you can from a Baby Grand

To An Elegante Caporal

When I have fears that I may cease to smoke,
Because my ration for the week is gone
I look about for some unseeming "bloke"
To grant a Camel or a Capstar loan,
And having failed, I turn at last to you,
My last resort, my all unerring friend,
Oh, Elegante Caporal so true!

Thou combination straw and sawdust blend
I clear my throat, strike a match and draw.
My roommates raise the windows, air the room,
And one by one silently withdraw,
Unable to appraise thy rare perfume.
But I will stay with you, my trusty friend,
Until the Monday rations come again.

From Krieger "Life"
By 2nd Lt. J. P. Crowley

Kriege Tidbits

From Trewlany -

"The fatal noose was cast around my neck, my proud
crest humbled to the dust, the bloody bit thrust into my mouth,
my shaggy mane trimmed, my hitherto untrammelled back bent with
a weight. I coul neither endure nor shake off, my light and
springy action changed into a painful amble - in short, I was
married.

From Shakespeare's "Rape of Lucrece"

Though men can cover crimes with bold stern looks,
Poor women's faces are their own faults' books."

This is a story which I wish to God I'd never had the experience to write about. During my Army life in the States and more true of the time I spent in England as a Combat fighter-pilot, it never once crossed my mind that anything could happen to me outside of the possibilities one, that I would be killed in combat; and the other, that I would get through my missions unscathed. Of course, I had no doubt that it would be the latter. So, imagine, if you can, the humility with which I tell this tale of woe - my life as a Kriesgefangen.

It all began on the fatal date of February 21st, 1944 - Blue Monday. The day before had been a very busy and exciting day for me - a story in its own - and I returned to my home base with 3 - 30 cal shells through my engine and my left wing tip blown off. As my ship - "My Buddy" - was being repaired, I flew Lt. Donohoo's ship that Monday. A pet superstition of mine was that bad luck followed you when you borrowed anybody's ship or flying equipment. But I was so hopped up from the previous day's engagements that I would have flown a Ryan PT just to get to go on the mission. That day the mission itself - Brunswieg was the target - promised to be an exciting one as we had always run into stiff opposition going to that target before. So my superstitions were forgotten and I felt nothing but the thrill of the hunt as I "gave my ~~rite~~ the gun" and sped down the runway that unforgettable day. The sky held few clouds; the visibility was good and the trip over the channel uneventful. The scattered flak that met us as we crossed in served to put us only more on the alert. Even the crazy driving hum of Jerry's radar was missing that morning. It was the start of what looked like a perfect mission.

The first sign I had that all was not going well that day was when Lt. Wau Kau Kong left my wing and was replaced by Lt. Burke - who was on his first mission. Kong and I had flown together back in the States and were on many missions together over Germany so we more or less understood each other and could predict beforehand almost the others moves. I hated to see him go. The next indication that all was not well was when we received the information over our RT that the bombers were ten minutes late. We hit our RV point and swung north of Hannover to kill a little time till our "Big Friends" showed up. Over Donner Lake we began a 180 and were half-way through it when the call "25+ bandits at 12 o'clock high" came over the RT. I immediately picked them out and watched them as they swiftly passed over the lead squadron, the middle squadron, and began their turn onto the tail of our squadron. As we were flying Green Flight that day, we were holding down the tail end of the Group and were lagging further than what we should have been - thereby, presenting the most vulnerable target. As soon as it was no longer questionable that the FW190's - which they proved to be - were selecting our flight for their target, Cannon signaled to drop wing tanks and we turned into the attacking Jerries, while the rest

of the group proceeded on a straight course to the Bomber RV. Making a sharp left turn I lost my wingman, who I later found out spun out on the turn and hit the deck and headed for home. We found ourselves in a head-on attack with the FW's and in a few seconds within range. I selected one of the leading attackers, placed him in my Ring Sight and squeezed the trigger. I observed hits on his fuselage and as he broke from the attack I pulled up sharply to the left and followed Cannon and his wingman who were completing a 360 and striking out after the group which was a considerable distance ahead by now. I had fallen back slightly during my encounter so I gave my ship the gun and began closing the distance between Cannon and myself. There were Focke-wulfs on all sides of me attempting to position themselves for an attack. As I was slowly approaching my flight leader from behind I detected a 190 making a low rear quarter attack on his element. Having a slight altitude advantage and the bigger advantage of being undetected as yet by the plane making the attack, I dropped my nose, had him in my sight, gave the proper lead and let go. My first few tracers appeared directly in front of the nose and then cut back through the length of his fuselage. The ship made a few wild uncontrolled skids and then went into a screaming vertical dive. In the thrill and excitement of watching him plummet to the earth another 190 had positioned himself on my tail in those few seconds and was firing at me as I pulled up off the kill. The next instant a 20 mm shell hit my left wing and a large hole miraculously appeared over my wing tank. I immediately kicked left rudder, flopped the stick over against the side and flipped over on my back headed straight down. No sooner did I get over on my back when my whole cockpit was immediately immersed in flames. They began licking at my hands, my clothing, and my face before I could say "Kreigsfegangen." Unconsciously I reached for the emergency canopy release and gave a pull. Nothing happened. I pulled the release again with still no result. I began beating at the top of the canopy with my fists while the plane continued its downward plunge. The thought that flashed through my mind at that moment was "well, Mattie, you have had it." But the next instant the canopy suddenly came off and I blindly fumbled with my safety strap lock. It came undone and I raised myself slightly out of the seat. The next instant I was whisked out of the cockpit as if by a mighty hand and found myself hurtling earthward free of the ship. After a few seconds of free-fall I yanked my rip cord release handle and was brought to what seemed like a full stop in mid air by the opening of my chute. At the time it opened I was falling so swiftly that the sudden shock of the opening blacked me out for about 30 seconds. (later, when I had the opportunity to check over my body I found painful bruises on my hips caused by the harness buckles cutting in when the chute opened.) Regaining my sight, the first thing I observed was the group slowly fading to a speck in the distance. That, perhaps, is the most melancholy moment of my life. Everything had happened so quickly that it was difficult for my mind to grasp

the fact that I was actually floating earthward in a chute and that the ground below me was the land of the enemy - Germany. After my thoughts had gradually settled, the thing that impressed me most was the deathly stillness that pervades the atmosphere at 18,000 feet. Not a sound was to be heard outside of the occasional rustle of the chute above me. That sound and the broad expanse of silk above me were very assuring indeed. This silence was soon broken by the reappearance of 3 FW190's who circled me once and left with a cheery dip of the wing. I was alone again in that eerie silence with only my thoughts as company. I began to give the terrain below me a close inspection and saw that I was being carried towards a small city. There were several wooded areas in the vicinity and I tried manipulating my shroud lines so that my chute would carry me to a wooded section - but to no avail. The wind was against me and I continued floating gently earthward in the direction of the town. As I descended lower and lower, the earth seemed to slowly come to life. Soft noises were now discernible and I could see people grouping together and pointing upward. I could see now that I would land in or near the town and hoped that I would miss the large canal which bordered the town. The long descent from altitude had left me with frozen limbs and I wasn't too eager for a swim just then. As I got lower and lower my speed seemed to increase greatly and I was no longer floating gently downward but was skimming over the earth's surface at a surprising speed. I skimmed over the dreaded canal, passed swiftly over the tops of some houses in the outskirts of town and over the heads of large crowds of people. I dropped down between two buildings, hitting the side of one and then the ground. I rolled over twice and came to a stop on hitting a fence. Slightly dazed and bruised, I picked myself up off the ground and began unbuckling my harness when the civilian population descended upon me. A large, bewhiskered individual seized me by the collar of my flying suit with his right hand and made as if to strike me with his left, all the while shouting abuses in a foreign tongue. I put up my guard and expected anything to happen, when a blue uniformed figure with rifle unslung dashed around the corner, backed off the crowd and made me his captive. I felt relieved to be in the hands of the German Army as the crowd did not in the least appear to be friendly. I was marched between the hostile lines of citizens to the Burgomaister's office which was only a few blocks away. I appeared to be something of an attraction for the street was lined on both sides with the crowd and the windows and doors of the houses along the way held spectators. A group of children followed me all the way while the guard kept prodding me with his rifle and every now and then uttered some guttural sounds which I took to be questions about my pistol. He had searched me and was surprised to find me unarmed. We finally reached the Burgomaister's office into which the guard escorted me. The Burgomaister, a short, fat, typical looking German, was evidently informed of my coming for he and his family were gathered there awaiting my arrival. He



Don Ross
Spring 1944

motioned me to empty my pockets of all personal belongings onto his desk. These included a handkerchief, comb, my rosary beads, and a Vicks inhaler which I was in the habit of carrying with me. After a silent examination of these he motioned me to a seat and began phoning several parties. I guessed that he was notifying the proper authorities of my capture. After sitting there for half an hour in silent contemplation of the foregoing events, a young lady of approximately 25 years stepped demurely into the office. She exchanged words of greeting with the people there and then addressed me in halting English.

"We would like to know what type of plane you were flying," she said. I answered her that was only the concern of the military authorities and I could not tell her. She appeared confused by my statement and translated my answer to the Burgomaister. After a short interchange of words she again addressed me - "Are you American or English?" Seeing no harm in telling that, I admitted being an American. She then attempted several times to have me disclose the type of ship I was flying and after meeting with the same refusal to divulge any information she gave up questioning me. I then asked her the name of the town I was in and she informed me it was Wunstdorf near Hannover. She lingered there a while longer and after having a short confab with the Burgomaister, left with a backward glance at me. Immediately following her departure a young man oozing authority stepped into the room. My guard "popped to" - Heil Hitlers were exchanged between the Burgomaister and himself and he turned his attention to me. He swiftly searched me, looked over my personal belongings, motioned me to put them in my pocket and made me understand I was to go with him. We passed through the town and its crowds of people still waiting and took a road out of town which after a 20 minute walk brought us to a small German camp. I was led into a shed-like building and was surprised to see three American Sergeants there. They informed me that their B-17 had been brought down in the vicinity and they had been picked up about an hour before. We then recognized knowing each other from a chanced meeting several weeks before when their ship "The Black Hawk" had made a forced landing at our base returning from a mission to Frankfurt. We remarked about the strangeness of fate throwing us together again in such an undreamed of fashion. They were all injured in some fashion or other while one was worse off than the other two with a badly sprained leg, and cuts on his forehead and face which he had obtained from flak fragments. They then informed me that my eyebrows and eyelashes were gone and that I had burns on my forehead and about the eyes. I knew that I had been burned but felt it wasn't too serious as it wasn't giving me very much pain. A German officer arrived at this time in a small car. Salutes flashed everywhere, heels clicked innumerable times, I was relieved of my gloves, flying boots, dog tags, and escape equipment and with the wounded sergeant placed in the car and driven to a Me109 base about 7 miles distant. Upon our arrival there we were placed in separate cells and left alone with our thoughts for company. The

cell was approximately 5'x10' with a wooden bench and a stool its only furnishings. The bench was to serve as my bed. There was a small window, firmly barred, about 6' off the floor but any outside view was cut off by a cement wall built just a foot away from the window leaving only a patch of blue sky to look at. It was in a mixed state of bewilderment that I surveyed my surroundings and took stock of my condition. This being my first confinement of any sort I could sympathize with the feelings of which I had read being expressed by men imprisoned for any time. The time was 6:00 p.m. and as I lay on the hard bench I began to feel the first pains of hunger. I had not eaten since breakfast that morning before setting out on the mission. After a half hour's time, I was taken into an office in the jail building and there found my sergeant acquaintances, sitting on the floor talking to an Australian boy, who I later found out was flying with the RAF on a night mission to Berlin. His plane had been shot down on the return trip and he had managed to bail out and evade capture for two nights, sleeping in the snow, and getting along with only one shoe - having lost the other bailing out. An English speaking officer then questioned me following a blank form he had before him. I gave him my name, rank, and Serial No. and refused to disclose anything more though many schemes were tried attempting to have me give up information about the ship I was flying and where I was going to. My wings, fountain pen, watch, and foot locker key which I had with me and neglected to mention were taken from me and sealed in an envelope with the instructions that I would receive them later. I was taken back to my cell where the guard there handed an object which after careful examination I discovered to be bread. Can anybody ever forget their first experience with German bread? The piece handed to me was 2 inches thick and regular height. Its color was almost black and was of leaden weight. I had no knife nor was any offered to me so I began to gnaw at it like some wild animal. As hungry as I was my stomach could not endure the digestion of the whole piece so a half of it was left for my breakfast.

That night was spent in pacing my cell in an effort to keep warm as it was bitter cold on the outside and no heat in my room. Then my thoughts too would not let me sleep. I thought over a hundred things I should have done that day - from staying at the base and letting Lt. Donohoo fly his appointed mission instead of taking his place to hitting the deck and scrambling for home as soon as the FW's attacked our flight. Then my thoughts turned to how the news of my missing in action would affect the folks at home. My mother, especially I was worried about as she had not been well these past few years and I hated being responsible for bringing additional worry and care to her. Then I wondered how Edna, my wife, would take it. Would she quit her work in Detroit and return to her family or would she carry on hoping for the best? I hoped that it would be the latter as that would give her something else to think about. Then I wondered how Dave would feel

about his big brother being shot down. We were great pals and though I had shot my first plane down for him I had wanted to get #5 so that he could look on his brother as an ace. My other brothers, Andy, Mac, George, and Steve - I wondered what effect it would have on them. These thoughts and many more raced through my mind. I tried to sleep but the cold would not permit it. I'll always remember that and the following night as the two most miserable nights I have spent. Daylight finally came and at 0800 o'clock I had my breakfast - a black liquid poured into a tin pan. It was supposed to be coffee but a few sips convinced me otherwise and I gave it up taking a cold drink of water instead. I sat in my cell all that morning counting the bricks in the wall, the nails in the door, and despairing of that began singing snatches of songs I could remember. At noon the air raid sirens blew and I was taken from my cell down into the cellar of the building. There I met Lts. Monyhan and Lynn, navigator and co-pilot of the downed Black Hawk. There also I met a squadron leader from the RAF who had been picked up near there dressed in civilian clothes. His plane had been brought down near Berlin on a night raid a week before and he had been making his way back towards France when he was picked up in a small town north of Hanover. In that cellar we had our dinner brought to us which was a thick soup made of turnips, potatoes and barley. There was but one spoon for the four of us so it proved rather awkward eating passing this spoon back and forth. However, it was hot and filling and we felt much better about eating it.

We were informed later in the afternoon that we were to be taken to Frankfurt in the morning and we were all pleased to hear this as we couldn't imagine a worse place than the one we were at. And too, we were curious as to what disposition was to be made of us. For supper that night we had the hunk of bread and coffee. Spent another cold, restless night and was glad to see the dawn heralding the approach of a new day.

We had our breakfast - black coffee - early that morning - 07:00. At 08:00 we were taken out of our cells, lined up outside with the sergeants who had been kept in the guards quarters, had 4 guards with machine guns placed over us, and began our walk of 2 miles to the railroad station of Pfoffingen, where we entrained for Hanover. A 15 minute ride brought us to the outskirts of Hanover and I began to notice the bomb damage on both sides of the track. The damage was heavy but it in no way prepared me for the damage I was to see a few minutes later when we pulled into the huge Station of Hanover. As we drew nearer to the Center of the city, the damage grew heavier until when I stepped out of the car onto the platform in the heart of the city the scene of destruction and desolation that met my eye was unbelievable. As far as I could see in any direction there was not one building remaining that was now practically leveled to the ground. The great Station itself was merely newly formed platforms and all the streets of the City were lined with torn debris. The Station alone was the only place where

there was any activity and most of the people there were in some uniform or other, waiting for a train, or just disembarking. We waited there for 15 minutes for our train to arrive and in that time were joined by another group of P.O.W.'s who had been captured in Denmark and were also on their way to Frankfurt.

We were crowded into a car filled with German soldiers of all types. There were no seats unoccupied so we stood in the aisle for the whole journey. Our road took us along the Rhine River through Kassel and the Country was very pretty. We passed through many towns which showed the force of Allied Bombings and passed many Russians, French, and Italians working on the railroads. We reached Frankfurt at 6:00 that evening. The city had undergone many bombings during the past weeks and evidence of destruction was seen everywhere. A corner of the large Station had been blown off and there were hundreds of holes in all parts of the roof. As at Hanover there were large crowds of people at the Station. The citizens of Germany seemed to be constantly on the move. There were soldiers going to fronts and others returning. The civilians, with worried looks on their faces and large packs on their backs seemed to be endlessly moving - going to one city, being bombed out and hopelessly moving to another. Every Station along the line was crowded with these refugees from the terror which fell from the skies. At Frankfurt, due to the more recent bombings, they were very bitter and we were pushed and knocked about, spit upon, and had curses hurled onto us by the crowd. I felt thankful for the protecting ring of German guards about us.

Our camp or rather the interrogation center which we were being taken to was known as Dulag and was situated 7 miles NW of Frankfurt. We boarded another train at the Station and were soon on our way again. A few miles short of our destination we left the train and made the rest of our journey in a trolley car. It was dark by this time and biting cold with snow covering the ground. I did not see much of what my new home and its surroundings looked like as I stumbled up the half mile of road leading to it. We passed some low, barn-like dwellings and through a barbed wire gate into a circle of buildings. We were here at last.

We were marched into one of these buildings and there a sight caught my eyes that I will never forget. There in a long hall, lining both sides, some sitting, some standing, others lying down and most just leaning against the walls, was the strangest assortment of men I had ever seen. There were American airmen from both fighters and bombers. There were RAF airmen, among which were English boys, Australians, Canadians, and South Africans. There were paratroopers from the Italian front and an Indian boy who had been flying spitfires there for the U.S.S.S.F. There were all types of dress and uniform. The British blue and brown battle jackets, their blue trousers; U.S. bomber crews in the blue electric-heated suit that looked like a bunny-rabbit

costume; some in brown leather jackets, heavy wool-lined winter flying suits, big flying boots; others wearing pinks, dark green shirts, the good-looking American battle jacket; a few like myself, wearing the tank jacket and coveralls; several men in civilian clothes who had been seized while waiting in Paris for the underground to get them out of the Country; the big majority with bare heads having lost their hats on the way down or had their helmets taken by the Jerries. All of them tired looking, dirty, hungry, in need of shaves, and half or 75% of them had injuries of some type. A serious looking case was an American bomber man whose face was swollen 1/4 again its normal size from burns. His ears looked as though they were ready to drop off, his eyes mere slits in a bloated, badly burned face. He was held up by two of his comrades and was in dire need of medical aid but was forced to wait just as the rest of us. This was just one instance of inhumane treatment I was to witness while being a Kriege. Another stretcher case was carried in among us and laid on the floor. It was a miserable looking crowd.

After about an hour's wait in that hall, listening to strange tales being told on all sides of me - and each man had a story that beat many thrillers made up out of the imagination of professional story tellers - nine of us were taken and put into a room which seemed smaller - if possible - than the one we had occupied the previous nights. We sat on the bed and the floor not knowing whether we were to spend the night there together or be taken to separate rooms. We were all starved, having eaten nothing since that morning. A guard came around and we asked him for food telling him we had no supper. He informed us that the kitchen was closed and we could not expect any that night. It was a weary, discouraged, hungry, and Jerry-hating bunch of nine men who arranged themselves, seven on the floor and two on the bed and dropped off to sleep.

We were awakened at 07:00 the next morning, taken singly before a German with a Brooklyn accent, made to undress to the naked skin while he searched each article of clothing minutely. He confiscated my warm tank coveralls against my vehement protests. My boots, gloves, and helmet had been taken from me at Wunstdorf and now I saw my coveralls go. I was being stripped piece by piece of my flying equipment. Then I was taken away by a guard and placed in solitary confinement in Room C-21.

The German Army had a standard size for their cells. Of all the cells I inhabited - and it seems as though most of my Kriege life was spent in a cell - I found none that was larger than 5'x10'. Room C-21 conformed to this size. Its furnishings were a stool and a bed with a straw, sack cloth mattress. The one window in the room had frosted glass and I could not see anything but shadows through it. After I had made repeated attempts to open it, my door was opened by a German guard who informed me in precise English - "You will be shot without warning if you make another attempt to open the window."

"But it's stuffy in here and I'd like some air," I replied.

"The people in Frankfurt who were bombed out and are now living in small shacks, barns, and anywhere they can are not complaining about the stuffiness," was his answer.

It was on the tip of my tongue to tell him about the bombed out people in England and who had started this whole mess, anyway, when I thought better of it as I was in no position to argue just then.

I laid on that bed for days, seeing no one but the guard as he stuck his head in at meal times. Our breakfast consisted of two thin slices of bread stuck together with a thin coating of margarine. The coffee, I still could not drink, so I substituted water instead. At noon we had a thin carrot soup - 95% water - or a soup made of coarse grains which I think the chickens and hogs back home would have refused to eat. As it was the only thing we would receive till evening, we managed to eat it somehow. Between 1700 and 2000 that night was supper time with its two thin slices of bread possibly stuck together by a smattering of Jerry Beet Jam. Its only claim to jam was its appearance. And so I existed through these days lying on my bed wondering what was to happen to me and a million thoughts of home and Edna racing through my mind. Occasionally, I would get up and do what exercises I could in that limited space.

On the third morning of my stay the "Hotel" - as it was affectionately called by its inmates - an interpreter came to my room with a blank form to be filled out. I filled in the space requesting my name, serial #, and rank. The other questions about my squadron, group, plane, home address, and several others I left unanswered. He gave me a song and dance about my prolonging my stay here by not filling in the form completely and that the questions were harmless since they knew all the answers but just wanted me to confirm them. He also said they needed the information so that they could inform my folks that I was a P.O.W. I told him I had complied with Geneva Conventions regarding information given which consisted of the three items I had already given and that no other information was to be gained from me. He left with the advice to think it over and call him when I was ready to talk.

Late that afternoon I was taken from my cell by a guard to the large building next to it which housed the offices of the camp. After walking down a long corridor, passing many office doors of which girls and military clerks passed in and out, we came to stop in front of one of them. The guard knocked, entered, and I followed, standing apart as they exchanged salutes and greetings. He turned to me and asked my name. I told him and he asked whether I was a fighter or bomber pilot. I said, "I can't answer that." He shrugged his shoulders and said that he only

interrogated fighter pilots and, if I were a bomber man he could have nothing to do with me. It was an ill-concealed scheme for getting me to admit I was not a bomber pilot and to disclose my position; however, I saw through it and smiled letting him guess what he wished. He ordered the guard to take me next door to the next interrogator's office. As their offices had connecting doors I surmised they also must be connected in some way. The interrogator in the next office upon hearing my name stood up, extended his hand, led me to a chair and said, "Ah, yes, I have been expecting you." He began his conversation with questions as to what date I was brought down and where. As this was no secret I told him. He then intimated that they knew everything about me but it was necessary that I confirm their records before I could leave here. He also used the argument as to how were they to know I was an American officer and not a spy if I could not or would not tell them my squadron, my group, my Station in England, and other information. I told him they had my dog tags and that would identify me. We sat there for an hour with his patience wearing thinner each minute as I resolutely handed him the answer "I cannot answer that question." All the while this interrogation was going on a young lady clerk kept coming and going with files which she laid before him and discussed in German. He at one time proceeded on the theory that I was flying thunderbolts and began mentioning P-47 squadrons and groups trying to catch a sign of recognition in me. Finally, he gave up in despair wondering why it was we made it so hard for ourselves by concealing information which they already possessed and was of no great importance. Just as I was being ushered into the hall preparatory to being taken back to my cell, the girl came in with a smile on her face and another file in her hand. The interrogator bade me sit down again while he quickly ran through the file. His face lit up and turning to me said - "Say that is what has been wrong. You are a Mustang man instead of Thunderbolt!" Then he proceeded to give me an accurate listing of my group and squadron naming each officer in it and their duties. He informed me as to what flying schools I attended, the date I graduated, the date of our departure from New York, our arrival date in England, our first base, our second base and the date we moved, our squadron code call-name, our station number, and most astonishing of all, the fact that I had only a few weeks previously changed flights naming the flight I was in at the time I was shot down. It amazed me the amount of information they had about me and our group. Then he mentioned the names of Lts. Eaves, Kerley, Barris, McDonald, Logan, Klein, Payne, and that of Col. Martin. All of these were men missing in action from previous engagements and of whose final circumstances we had no knowledge. In short, there was nothing about the squadron that I knew which they didn't. It amazed me and seeing no point in remaining silent any longer I confirmed the information he had given me. I then questioned him as to what had befallen some of the previous mentioned fellows. He informed me that Lts. Eaves, Payne, Klein, Barris, and McDonald were at the POW camp. Lt. Logan had been killed, his plane a 100% wreckage and only his dog tags identified

him. Col. Martin was at a Frankfurt hospital recovering from a broken leg, broken arm, and internal injuries received from a head-on collision with a Me-109. I was sorry to hear about Logan, as he had been in my flight the day he went down and we had been good friends. I was glad and surprised to hear that the others were alive for we had given most of them up for dead. After a few more questions about new squadrons and groups of which I knew nothing about, the interrogation was closed. On leaving, he returned my watch, my pen, and other personal articles with the exception of my foot locker key, which they kept. He told me that I would leave for the Clearing Center in Frankfurt where I would spend a few days before being sent to an American officers' POW camp. I left that office in a more relieved frame of mind knowing now what lay ahead of me.

When I got back to the cell I found my supper - the bread - waiting for me. I downed it with relish and settled down to my dreams. They routed me out of my bed, however, and told me that I was to change rooms. They took me to Corridor A - Room 2 where I was put in with Lt. B. Ross. I could see no reason for the room change or being put in with someone else unless they had the room wired and expected us to talk revealing information. I told Ross of my suspicions and he agreed with me. He told me they had no record of him and were probably using this method hunting for a clue. We agreed to say nothing concerning military matters and began talking about the States. It was swell to talk to someone after being alone for several days. I surmised this solitary confinement was part of the German System of garnering information. Its a great temptation to talk with anyone after being cooped up alone with nothing or no one to carry on a conversation with but yourself.

About 2100 hours that Friday night I was taken from the cell and marched into the corridor where about 50 other men were congregated getting ready to leave. After a short time spent in receiving personal articles by those who had as yet not received theirs, we were marched out into the cold winter night. However, we were only taken to another barracks where we were to spend the night before leaving for Frankfurt. It was a cold, unheated building already filled with men taken there earlier in the day. We stumbled over them in the dark, found an unoccupied bit of floor and laid down shivering and waiting for the morning.

At 09:00 o'clock the following morning - Saturday - we saw the last of Dulag I as we marched to the small station near there, boarded 2 trolly cars and were off for Frankfurt. We passed right through the center of the city and bomb damage was everywhere. The business section was hard hit with whole blocks nothing but rubble. We received many a black stare and many fists were shaken at us as we slowly passed through towns. We soon reached the "getting-off" point of our journey and after a 5 minute walk down tree-lined avenues, past an enormous office building, housing chemical offices, we reached our destination. We must have made a

fine appearance coming through town as not one of us had shaven or washed in more than a week and we had slept in the clothes we had on us. Half of us wore bandages on every part of the body, several men were more or less carried along and quite a few just hobbled along. We did not look at all like the remnants of an army that had victory almost in sight. I could explain now why it was so easy for the inhabitants of Germany to believe we were all gangsters. We were a motly looking crew.

The first thing that struck our eyes as we came around the corner and beheld the clearing camp was the large barbed wire fences which cut the camp into several small compounds. They were double fences, 10 ft. high and 6 ft. apart. Between each fence was loose barb wire strewn to a depth of about 3 ft. It made an impregnable looking enclosure. Guards were stationed in each corner of the compound in tall towers fully equipped with spotlights and machine guns. I'll go more into the detail of construction of these camps a little later on as they all followed a pattern and the one I was subsequently sent to was similarly constructed.

We were taken to a long building just outside the enclosure and were read the rules of the camp by a cocky little sargeant who had spent quite some time in the States where he had been sky writing for Pepsi Cola over New York and New Jersey and in all probability whose main purpose there was to take aerial photographs for the German Army. The latter is my own conjecture. He told us we would be here just a short while. During our stay we would have the freedom of the camp, that is, we could walk about in the confines of the camp at our own will, but that we would be shot without warning if we crossed the warning wire, which was a small barbed wire fence, 3 ft. high and about 8 ft. from the main fence. The barracks were closed each evening at 6 p.m. and we were expected to be in our rooms at that time. A roll call would also be taken then. We were prohibited from speaking or whistling at any German girls we might see near the camp. His final instructions consisted of our behavior during an air raid and what shelter we were to occupy. We were then taken to a room, two at a time, thoroughly searched once more, then to another room where a form was filled out giving rank, name, serial #, home address, and the date brought down. Also, a description of hair, eyes, height, weight and complexion was entered on this record. Then to another room where we were photographed and fingerprinted and finally to the last room where a British Sgt. gave you a shirt, shoes and trousers, if you were in need of them and a box resembling a suitcase which was the gift of the American Red Cross to P.O.W.'s.

I don't believe that there was any man there who didn't appreciate that gift more than anything he had ever received before in his lifetime. I look back now on many moments in my life where I have been overjoyed and surprised at receiving a gift either from my family or Edna, but the excitement, the pleasure

the warm feeling that there was somebody who had not forgotten, did not equal that which these Red Cross packages gave everyone of us. We couldn't wait to find out what was in them and we were highly pleased to see necessary items of clothing and toilet. There was a change of underclothes, which we were all in dire need, 4 handkerchiefs, 2 pair of socks, a pair of pajamas, a sweater, a comb, toothbrush, toothpowder, razor, blades, shaving cream, hair brush, soap, vitamin pills, 3 packs of cigarettes, sewing kit, a pipe and 5 packages of Chicklet gum. It was all God sent and we felt like rich men as we tramped into the Compound with the packages under our arms.

Our arrival was greeted with shouts and calls from friends and crew members recognizing each other and only too glad to see the other alive. I recognized Lt. R. M. McDonald among them, a member of our group who had gone down on February 11 and nothing heard of since. We greeted each other with glad cries and immediately began to swap stories. He had been shot down the same time as Col. Martin had his collision with the 109, by one of the 109's they were attacking. He showed me a barracks in which I could find a bunk and said he'd give me a chance to clean up and then we would talk later. I found an unoccupied bed in a room with several bomber boys, whom I was later to come to know very well. Charles Hawley and Lt. Williams were among these and had been flying from Italy and been shot down over Austria while on a raid to Regensburg. I was told that I could get a shower here but decided to postpone it as it was dinner time and I was starved.

The dinner consisted of good tea, a piece of corned beef, hot mashed potatoes, and bread. After the meals at the "Hotel" this was a sumptuous feast. To top it all off each man was given a 1/4 lb. bar of Argentine chocolate. It was a gift from Heaven. There were many happy hearts and cheerful persons among the Krieges in Frankfurt that day.

After dinner, my long awaited shower became a reality. What a feeling of pleasure to be clean once more and proudly sport clean clothes! I was a human being once more.

The rest of that Saturday and the following day, Sunday, were spent in complete relaxation of listening to other fellows' stories and recounting my own experiences. Many a remarkable tale was told and I'm ready to believe now that anything can happen in the air. I hope to get a written collection of these strange tales.

Monday morning a notice was posted listing the men to leave that day for Stalag I, Barth, Germany. I was among those listed and in a few minutes had my worldly belongings packed in my Red Cross suitcase. Before we left, a new bunch of Krieges arrived

from Dulag and we had the pleasure of seeing the picture of what we must have looked like when we strolled into camp, with their newly acquired Red Cross packages their arms, a happy gleam in their eye, and a weekly growth of beard on each smiling face. Lt. Ross was among these and he told me they finally ran across his record and surprised him with what they knew about him.

We left camp that afternoon but not until another search was completed and a warning given to us by the Commandant not to arouse the civilian population in any manner as the guards could not be responsible for what might occur. Another long wait for our transportation to the station where we finally arrived at 20.30 that evening. We found that our conveyances to the camp were to be the famous 40 and 8 cars of the last war - "40 hommes et 8 chevaux." Small almost square, windowless boxcars for a trip from one end of Germany to the other in mid-winter. A bale of wood shavings, resembling straw, was distributed to each of the seven cars and this was strewn over the floor and comprised our beds. Half of each car was allotted to 22 prisoners while the other half was occupied by 6 German guards armed with sub-machine guns. The center of the car held a small coal stove which provided the inadequate heating. The car that I happened to be in was also the one occupied by the young "Unter-Leutnant" in charge of the guards and Major Fischer the American officer in charge of the prisoners. Our car was to carry the rations, bread and sausage supplied by the Germans, and 1 Red Cross Food Parcel per each two men. These rations took up considerable space so that our car contained only 10 Kriegers. It was a comical sight to see 4 big healthy men struggling with the loading of one box of Jerry bread. Each loaf weighs approx. 4 lbs. so the load was quite heavy. What a comparison to the soft white, light American loaf!

We pulled out of Frankfurt that night and I think everybody heaved a sigh of relief to get out and away from the marshalling yards as the RAF was expected nightly and I didn't relish the idea of being caught there when RAF bombs were dropping all around. I can imagine now how these people must feel who expect nightly to have their city bombed into a heap of rubble.

It was a miserable night. The straw matting was wet, there were large air holes in the car, and the stove's heat was felt only by standing directly over it. To make matters worse, the guards had taken our shoes, and trouser belt, as a preventive measure to escape, so we all had trouble keeping our feet above the freezing temperature. The guards changed every two hours and there were two on guard at all hours. They seemed to be fairly comfortable in their half of the car with blankets to cover them. And so the train jerked on through the night with its human cargo of frozen Kriegers.

So we travelled for four days and nights going west, then north, then east, and north again, taking the roads that were open at the time for our bombers were still busy overhead sowing destruction and the railroads were receiving a large share of it. Erfurt, Gothe, Leipzig, Munster - all showed signs of our bombers' visits and as we passed through Leipzig I couldn't help but think how short a time it was that I myself had flown over that city as free as the air itself and now I was passing through under entirely different circumstances. We knew our route lay somewhere near Berlin and we were all anxious to see what the city looked like after all the enormous raids of the past few weeks. However, we passed through it at night and Berlin was a sea of darkness with nothing visible. We were nearing our destination and we all felt glad for our food was practically gone, we were cold, none of us had had an opportunity to wash even our hands during the entire journey, most of us were badly in need of shaves and a shower, and last but not least in need of decent toilet facilities. We had urinated on practically every mile of the Country along the racks our of the open car door and we had dropped nature's bad waste in every German railroad yard we had stopped in. So when we heard Friday morning that we were almost there, none of us felt sad that the trip was over.

Barth on the Baltic. In pre-war days this was one of Germany's most popular summer resorts and the former Kaiser had a large estate near here. It was situated on a small peninsula which jutted out into the Baltic while a longer, narrow peninsula curved from east to west just north of Barth forming a beautiful, pine bordered bay, which was ideal for sailing, fishing, or swimming. Such was the location and history of the place where Stalag I, the American officers' Prison Camp, was located.

But it looked little like a summer resort the day we clambered out of our box cars - Friday, March 3 - for it was snowing, with a cold wind driving the wet snow before it. Four additional escorts with huge German police dogs straining at their leashes met us as we got out. Then we began our 2 mile walk to the camp. As we marched up the Main Street of Barth, we noticed the many empty shop windows, the absence of any young people on the streets, and the quiet, dead appearance of the town as a whole. The hand of war had left its heavy mark on the village it was plain to see.

Our first glimpse of the camp was the large barbed wire fences, the tall towers on each corner, and the long, low buildings which by this time we had come to recognize as the standard German barracks. And flying on a flagpole in the center of the camp was the first German war flag, with its huge black swasticka mark on a red background, that I had ever seen. In the upper right hand corner was the square cross, the mark of the German State. Near the camp we passed a huge brick building which looked like an enormous dormitory. We learned that this was a Flak School. The

The weather continued bad as we marched along the outside of the wire enclosure and we had only occasional glimpses of prisoners who shouted words of greeting to us. We finally entered the enclosure and the beginning of a long imprisonment. We were taken into an empty barracks and the slow and tedious process of classification began again. Armies of all countries have something in common when it comes to records and red tape. We were searched once more - this must be a pet army pasttime - had the same questions asked of us again and put down on another form, and then given an opportunity to send a radiogram home. As we were warned about these radiograms as being more grist for their propaganda mill most of the boys refused this service. We were then marched off to the shower room where I once again experienced the wonderful feeling of a bath which is long overdue. We also had our clothes deloused and were forced to shave off our pubic hairs, a painful process, to prevent bringing any "animals" into camp. After this was completed, we visited the clothing warehouse where each of us was issued a heavy blue RAF overcoat, heavy woolen socks, long underwear, and RAF blouses to those who had no jacket or blouse of any kind. My jacket was taken from me in order to have the large red letters "USA" painted on the front. It was returned to me several days later. This completed our classification and we were now full-fledged Krieges.

Darkness was falling as we entered the North Compound and my stomach was clammering for attention. We were led to the large Communal Mess Hall which was filled with the noise of several hundred Krieges talking, laughing, and carrying on like a group of school boys at home. I had just reached my table when I heard my name called and saw Lt. A. W. Barris from my group coming toward me with outstretched hand, a big smile. We had just finished shaking hands when Eaves and Klein came up and it was with a great deal of joy that I greeted them. They said they would wait till I was through eating and then we would have an old squadron reunion. It sure felt good to be among old buddies again and to be finally settled in one place. I was in excellent spirit as I ate my salmon patty, mashed potatoes, and bread. I was, what could be called, home once more.

Eaves, Klein, Barris, and I exchanged stories about how each became a Kriege after supper that night. Eaves, who had been the first one from our squadron to go, just disappeared while returning from a mission to Kiel on December 13th, 1943. No one could say what had happened to him although the report was that a 51 was seen following a Ju-88 down through the clouds and did not reappear. We surmised that that must have been Eaves, but according to his story, he followed no one and in fact had tried to attract the attention of Col. Blakeslee, whose wing he was flying that day, to the fact that he was having engine trouble. His radio was out and as he gradually kept losing altitude he swung south, as we were over the North Sea at the time, and headed for land. There was a heavy overcast and ground fog so it was impossible for him to know whether he was over land or water. When he reached 5,000 ft. he began to get out and after a little difficulty where he was stuck half in and half out of the ship by his dinghy pack catching on

some part of the plane, he finally managed to get free from the ship at approximately 1000 ft altitude. He did not see the ground due to the fog until only a few feet above it so he hit with quite a thump. He wrenched his knee and bruised his shoulder from the force of the contact. It was only a few minutes later that he was picked up by German soldiers.

Lt. Richard Klein also had engine trouble on our way out to Wilhemshaven on Feb. 3rd. He bailed out of his ship at 1,500 ft. and landed in the Zuider Zee. After swimming for 2 hours he reached shore where the German soldiers were waiting for him. Broken skin bore burns cut on way out of chute.

Lt. Barris got his returning from a raid on Frankfurt. FW190's jumped his flight, knocking him down with a 20 mm hit in his engine. He bailed out and came down near Antwerp and was also immediately picked up by the Germans.

That was their stories and after giving them the latest news from the squadron and the group, I located my room in Barracks 7, and turned in for the night.

The next morning, Saturday, I was up at 0800 and after breakfast looked Lt. Eaves up and we began a walk across the Compound discussing means of escape. Escape had been my main thought on the journey up to the camp but with no clothes, no food, no compass or map, it was almost impossible in that weather and season. Now that I had some warm clothes, a good night's sleep, and more important of all a companion with the same thing in mind, I was ready to attempt anything. We finally decided on the simplest form of escape, but dangerous - that of climbing over the North fence midway between the towers. To cross the six ft. of barbed wire strewn space between the double fence we were going to use a long board. We consulted the Escape Committee who advised us to wait till an accurate check of the guards and their rounds could be made. I volunteered to check the guard inside the Compound that night while another barracks was delegated to check the activities of the guard outside the fence. From my observation that night through a small hole used as a ventilator, I found that there was but one roving guard within the Compound with a dog that was loose. There also was reported as being a guard on each section of fence with approximately 5 minutes passage of time from one end of his beat to the next which was each corner of the fence. We were also informed that the guards in the towers were rather eager with the spotlights and flashed them almost every minute up and down the fence. However, we decided to chance it and picked Monday night, March the 6th, as the time. Three days after my arrival I was ready to leave.

Monday evening came and after a final briefing by the Escape Committee, from which we secured maps, compass, and extra food, we were ready to leave. We had donned all the clothes we had and I was wearing three suits of underwear, 2 shirts, a sweater, my tank jacket, 3 pairs of socks with a dry pair in my pocket, and

my RAF coat whose brass buttons I had blacked so they would not show. We had matches, razor, razor blades, and soap so were well equipped for a long stay if necessary. Now the roll call was held each night on the parade ground at 1800 hours. Immediately after roll call the barracks were locked up and the window shutters closed and barred. After roll call, we went into Block 4 instead of our own, as it was nearer to the fence, and soon as it was sufficiently dark - 7:30 that time of the year - we forced open the latrine shutter and our lookout informing us the inside guard had passed, with fast beating hearts we stepped out of the window, went down on our hands and knees and crawled alongside of the building. We picked up our board which we had left at the corner of the building, crossed under the warning wire, and made a dash for the open door of Block 2, passing directly under a light at the corner there but gaining the inside of the vacant barrack unseen. Our plan was to observe the actions of the Sentry outside the fence, then when he was at the far corner to crawl out the open window, gain the fence, lay our board across the top, climb over, remove the board and slip into the outer darkness without being seen. This all was to take only a minutes time. Just as even the best laid plans go astray so even our hair-brained scheme struck a snag. That night, for some reason or other, the guard had been doubled, and walking toward each other from one corner of the fence they met at the center almost every minute. After discussing the situation, we gave up the idea of attempting going over at that spot and decided to reconnoiter about the camp and see what our chances were in some other part. We crawled about the camp and noticed that the guard had been doubled all around so we returned to Block 2 to decide our next move. Crawling thru a side window I accidentally knocked one of the window frames down and it made quite a clatter but we remained undetected. We sat on the floor and cursed our luck, deciding to give it up as a bad job for tonight and to try again some other night. We got up preparing to sneak back through the window we had come out of when the inside guard with the dog came through the barracks on a routine check. I slid back of the door and as the room was bare, Eaves had no choice but to stay where he was. The dog passed the open door of the room we were in without pausing. The guard passed down the hall flashing his light into each room. He came to our door flashed his light on and it fell directly on Eaves who rose from the floor with his hands in the air. The guard taken by surprise, was dreadfully frightened for a moment and let out a terrible screaming call for the dog - "Fritz , Fritz" he yelled and he fumbled to draw his gun out of his holster. He had as yet not seen me as he had his back directly to me, and I believe he would have fallen in a dead faint if I would have said "Boo." The dog came rushing in and the guard pointed at Eaves with a trembling finger. The dog, trained to attack only something that is moving, merely barked at Eaves. The guard, a bit more calm now, but still visibly excited snapped the leash on the dog and motioned Eaves toward the door. As they were passing out his eyes fell on me and he had another fright. I fell into step alongside of Eaves and with hands up-raised we were marched up to the gate with the dog barking like mad, the guard shouting for assistance and every light in the Compound trained on us. Several guards came running up, took charge of us and trotted us over to the cooler. We did manage to get rid of

To all Prisoners of War!

The escape from prison camps is no longer a sport!

Germany has always kept to the Hague Convention and only punished recaptured prisoners of war with minor disciplinary punishment.

Germany will still maintain these principles of international law.

But England has besides fighting at the front in an honest manner instituted an illegal warfare in non combat zones in the form of gangster commandos, terror bandits and sabotage troops even up to the frontiers of Germany.

They say in a captured secret and confidential English military pamphlet.

THE HANDBOOK OF MODERN IRREGULAR WARFARE:

"... the days when we could practise the rules of sportsmanship are over. For the time being, every soldier must be a potential gangster and must be prepared to adopt their methods whenever necessary."

"The sphere of operations should always include the enemy's own country, any occupied territory, and in certain circumstances, such neutral countries as he is using as a source of supply."

England has with these instructions opened up a non military form of gangster war!

Germany is determined to safeguard her homeland, and especially her war industry and provisional centres for the fighting fronts. Therefore it has become necessary to create strictly forbidden zones, called death zones, in which all unauthorised trespassers will be immediately shot on sight.

Escaping prisoners of war, entering such death zones, will certainly lose their lives. They are therefore in constant danger of being mistaken for enemy agents or sabotage groups.

Urgent warning is given against making future escapes!

In plain English: Stay in the camp where you will be safe! Breaking out of it is now a damned dangerous act.

The chances of preserving your life are almost nil!

All police and military guards have been given the most strict orders to shoot on sight all suspected persons.

Escaping from prison camps has ceased to be a sport!

our compasses and maps on the way over. We were searched and then questioned by the German Captain who had been notified of our attempt. They took all of our food, confiscated my cadet trousers, claiming they resembled civilian trousers, and put us into solitary confinement cells - oh, solitude - here I was once more with nothing but a brick wall to stare at. The cell was different from the other solitary cells I had been in only in that it contained a heating stove, which was fed from the outside. But the same hard bed, with no mattress the first two nights, and the same small space. However, they did allow us to read and books were sent in by the boys on the outside. This was a life-saver for I read practically all of my stay there. We were taken before the Commandant of the Camp, an oberst (colonel), on the second day of our imprisonment and he informed us through an interpreter - "For being found beyond the warning wire with intent to escape, you are sentenced to 8 days of solitary confinement. Warning is given that you are liable to be shot on crossing the warning wire. Any questions?"

As we had no questions, we filed out of his office and back to the cell to spend the remainder of our time in reading and sleeping. Not much eating was done as the menu never varied from day to day. Breakfast consisted of black coffee or a brown liquid which was supposed to represent tea. Lunch was our biggest meal with mashed potatoes and a terrible tasting and smelling lump of ground up horse meat which I could not eat at all. Supper brought us tea or coffee again with 4 slices of bread and some margarine. Sometimes they varied the bill of fare and included a little syrup with the bread at night. However, as we received only an hour of exercise in the open air each day - if the weather permitted - we were quite weak when our time was up. But our stay in the cooler did not dampen our ardour to escape but in fact only strengthened it, as my further escapades will show. We also had the satisfaction of having made the first escape attempt in the North Compound.

When we returned to the Compound after our stay in the cooler, we gradually settled into normal Kriege life. A day by day or serial form narrative of this life would be quite difficult to comprise so the rest of my story about my Kriege life will be dealt with in more or less a subject form. I'll try to describe to the best of my ability how life went on in camp by treating each subject of camp life separately. Food, music, entertainment, sports, escape attempts, and general camp life will be some of the activities I'll attempt to describe.

GENERAL CAMP LIFE

Life in a Kriege Camp becomes more or less of a set routine after a certain period of time. You have your time of getting up in the morning, your roll calls during the day, sports - if the weather permits - and "lying in the sack" if it doesn't. You are locked in each night at a certain time and after a few hours of cards, reading, or just "shooting the bull", its lights out and bed time. And so each day passes by, while every once in a while

the monotony is broken by an escape attempt, Allied planes overhead, a play or a concert by the Kriegas, or a sudden search by the "_____ " or security section of the Germans. However, even the latter could be expected almost anytime and were accepted in time as another routine of camp life. And so each Kriege lived from day to day with thoughts of food and when the war would be over uppermost in his mind.

The Kriege Camp, or Stalag I, was composed of three compounds - The North, South and West. The South and West were connecting compounds while the North was separate from the two and visits from one to the other could only be made in the company of a guard. My compound was the North compound and my narrative will deal mostly with it.

The compound itself consisted of eleven barracks, or blocks as they were called, numbered consecutively from 1 to 11. Also included in our compound was the communal mess hall, which was used also as our theatre, meeting place, church, schoolroom, and practice room for both the orchestra and Glee Club. For some unknown reason it was fenced off in a section of its own but was accessible to us during the day by means of a connecting gate which was open most of the daylight hours. Each block held 16 rooms, 4 of which were four-man rooms, one a six-man room, eight were fourteen-men rooms, and 2 were washrooms, while one was a latrine. The majority of the beds were wooden double-decker affairs with wooden slats over which was thrown a sack cloth, excelsior filled mattress. A pillow of the same quality and make was provided, while each Kriege was issued a pillow cover, a mattress cover, one flour-sack cloth sheet, and two blankets.

The sheet, mattress cover, and pillow slip were exchanged once monthly or bi-monthly, as the case might be, for clean ones. The blankets were too short and thus made it very uncomfortable sleeping. It was impossible to stretch out for your feet stuck out at the end and grew cold. It necessitated a curled up sleeping position and a constant changing of sides when one got tired sleeping on one side. So much for the bed, or should I say something about the hardness of the mattress. No, that is something I want to forget, so the less said the better.

A stove, a table, two benches or a few small chairs, completed the furnishing of each room. The table and benches were of plain wood and sturdy enough for the use they were put to. The stove was a miserable affair neither fit for cooking or heating. The coal was rationed to us every other day and it was necessary to use it sparingly in order to keep a fire going during the day. In the winter months you piled all your extra clothes on your bunk and at night crawled into your sack and tried to keep warm till next morning when a fire was made in the stove and a little heat gained in the room. However, if the wind blew against your side of the barracks, it was impossible to keep your room warm. When we realized that our coal supply was inadequate the members of our

room decided we must use wood to offset the shortage in coal. Consequently, the bracings on the roof supports met a flaming fate and when that supply ceased to exist we cut a hole in our floor and began to use the insulating floor which was wooden pieces placed underneath the regular floor. That supply lasted us till summer and even then when a bit of cooking was necessary we used that source for our fuel. Of course, Jerry didn't like it when it became known to him but we had to have fuel.

I managed to get into the six-man room in Block 5 along with Lt. Eaves, Capt. Lanigan, Lt. Foster, Lt. Rierson, and Lt. Smutko, who incidentally was from Windber, Pa. The latter 3 flew P-38's while Lanigan, or "Spanky" as he was more affectionately known, was a "bomb toggiler" in a B-17. He had a fighter pilot's heart but had washed out in advanced and wound up a bombardier. We later managed to get Lt. Ricci, another member of my squadron who was shot down in March, to move in with us and complete our happy circle.

Our daily routine followed the pattern of arising at 08:15 and roll call followed immediately at 08:30. Breakfast began at 09:00 and it was usually 11:00 or 11:30 before the last man had eaten. Supper was at 1700 and then roll call at 1800 during the winter months and 20:30 in summer. Barracks locked up after evening roll call.

Roll call was a ceremony in itself and the Germans were very exact about it. Each block formed a separate squadron of its own lining the sides of the parade grounds in columns of five. A Jerry guard was posted at the door of each barracks to prevent anyone going in or coming out after the count had begun. Our commanding officers lined up at the head of the parade ground with the bugler. Col. Byerly or Col. Spicer, the camp C.O.'s would call us to attention after a call from the bugler. The German captain then walked across the parade ground, stopped before the big-wigs, saluted and after we were given "At-Ease" was ready for the count. Beginning with Block 1, he would salute the Block Commanden who had brought his company to attention just before, and walked down along the front of the block counting each rank. A German sergeant followed down along the back of the same squadron also counting and as they both came to the end the sergeant would give his count with which the officer would agree if he had arrived at the same figure. The same procedure was followed with all 17 blocks. In the meantime, other German Sergeants made a count and inspection of the barracks, counting those who were ill or crippled and not able to stand roll call. All these counters then would meet with the captain and they would total their figures. If they arrived at the figure which they had as to the correct number of men being in camp at the time, the captain would cross over to the Allied Senior Officers, salute, and we were dismissed. However, 5 times out of 10, they would miscount, somebody had overslept and was not discovered by the inspecting guard, or somebody would be missing and the count would be taken all over again. But as roll call was the hardest work we were called on to do we could stand the hardship of waiting in ranks for another 15 minutes or more. Such were the roll calls at Stalag I.

One exception was made in this routine and that was in case of a heavy rain at roll call time then it was made inside each block.

It is an accepted fact that the most talked of subject among a bunch of young men is women. That is true of anyplace but a Kriege camp. Not that Kriege's are a moral lot but because a subject of more importance is constantly on the mind - that is food. The trend of the conversation is either a gripe about the food and its scarcity or, in the evening after lights out while you are lying peacefully in the sack, you begin visualizing the first breakfast you will order when you get back to the States and what each person's dinner will consist of. Food is a pleasant subject to think and talk about, even though it does only increase our appetites the more. Of course, girls and wives receive their share of conversation also. Nearly everyone here has a girl or a wife that they hope are still waiting.

Mail or a package from home is an eventful moment in a Kriege's life. The average time for the first letter or package from home is 7 to 8 months after you are down and for some even longer so that when that first letter does come it's a treasured joy that is read and reread. Everybody is anxious to know how the news of their M.I.A. affected the folks and they all are glad for the merest scrap of news about home. The package also always brings some wanted article of clothing or better yet food. A man joins the capitalist and plutocrat class of the camp after he has received his first package.

This life of living and doing without has brought out the inventive genius of many minds. Toasters, utensils, reading lamps, irons for pressing clothes, wire cutters, tunneling tools, clothes washing devices, strange smoking pipes, roulette wheels and table and many other odd contraptions were originated from bits of wire, scrap metal, and tin cans. Clothes also came in for their share of originations and changes. The strangest types of Kriege hats were seen, gloves and mittens were made from coat linings or wornout clothes, and during the summer months the boys outdid even the creative imagination of our bathing suit designers in the States with creations from loin-cloths to imitation of Jantzen's famous style of trunks. Moccasins and socks also received attention, along with quite a few wood-soled bath slippers.

On days when the weather kept us within our barracks, reading and bridge playing were second in popularity to the time-honored recreation of sack-time. Cards, however, were at a premium and a deck on which the numbers could be read with little effort, was highly prized.

During the months of April and May our bombers and fighters swung overhead many times on their way to Berlin, Stettin, or Rostuck and the wail of the air-raid sirens in Barth was a signal for a mass exodus of the barracks. The sight of our formations was always a sign for wild cheering and huge grins on everybody's faces. Each eye closely followed the formations until they disappeared and each man would have given a lot to be up there

once again. It seemed ironic that there only a few miles above us were free men a few hours from home bases while here below were imprisoned men waiting for the end of the war in God-only-knew-how-long. But who of us can forget the Sunday afternoon that P-51's strafed the Heinkel field near us and left columns of smoke mounting in the sky, or the late evening raid of two musquitoes on the same airdrome with same results. Then there was the day when I saw a musquito knock a German plane down in a ball of fire into the bay before our surprised eyes. Those were morale builders of the highest type and the topic of conversation for many days after.

For its religious contribution to Kriege life the Camp boasted a Protestant minister and a Catholic priest. Services were held every Sunday in the mess hall while the Catholics also had mass during the week on Fridays when Father Hall could get over from the South Compound. Easter services were held outside alongside the mess hall and were well attended. Attendance at all religious services was quite large and much above that for a similar group in civilian life.

Shower day was another important day in camp life as it only came once a week. A fellow gets to really appreciate a good shower after going without for a week. They were very skimpy with their hot water, however, as the showers were strictly timed to a five-minute duration with the men using one shower.

Hair cutting was mostly done by the Krieages themselves. Short haircuts were the vogue.

FOOD AND THE RATIONING SYSTEM

Our camp life centered about this very important item of food. Each man looked forward to Ration Day with more eagerness than any man has looked to Pay Day or some other important day in civilian life. It was a red letter day for every Keirge.

The South and West Compounds differed from our Compound in the fact that they did all their cooking in their own rooms while we in the North Compound had the Communal Mess. Therefore, on Ration Day, the members of the South and West Compounds received a full Red Cross Box of rations and were issued daily their German ration of bread, potatoes, turnips, and occasionally cheese, sausage, and Jerry jam. We however, received only a small share of our ration as the kitchen took the meats, raisins, coffee, and other items for use in preparing the meals. As it did away with the majority of individual cooking of meals and created more of a fraternal spirit with a mass of men eating at the same time, we felt it held an advantage over the other system.

At the beginning of my Kriege life we were being issued American, Canadian, and British parcels. That is, we received a different type each week. However, shortly after all the

Canadian and British Parcels were used up and the majority of parcels we received after that were American. In the beginning also, that is to say during Feb. March, and April, due to a sufficient stock of parcels on hand we used to receive one each week but when a Red Cross shipment failed to arrive for several months and the supply on hand diminished alarmingly with no relief in sight, we received only one parcel in two weeks. But a shipment of 12,000 parcels arrived in June and we began receiving parcels every 10 days.

I'll list the contents of a Red Cross package here so that some idea may be gained as to the diet we existed on, for we lived chiefly on the contents of these boxes plus the bread and potatoes of the German ration - the contents were as follows:

1 - 1 lb. can of klim (powdered milk)	
1 - 12 oz. can of Spam	
1 - 12 oz. can of corned beef	
1 - 6 oz. of Pate	
1 - small can of sardines	1 - box of soap
1 - 1/2 lb box of sugar	1 - box of raisins or prunes
1 - 1/2 lb box of cheese	1 - box of crackers
1 - 6 oz. can of jam	1 - 1 lb. can of margarine
1 - 2 oz. can of soluble coffee	
2 - 4 oz. D ration chocolate bars	
5 to 6 packs of cigarettes	

Of the contents listed above, we received 3/4 can of Klim, the sugar, the cheese, the crackers every other week, the margarine, jam, and the cigarettes. We received one bar of chocolate one week and two the next. The rest of the food went to the kitchen.

The Communal Mess served 2 meals each day - breakfast & supper. Due to the number of men in Camp and the limited seating space of the mess hall, it was necessary to have 3 sittings for each meal with the first sitting of breakfast at 0900 hours and of supper at 1700 hours with approximately 15 to 20 minutes allowed for each sitting and about 20 minutes between sittings.

Breakfast consisted of cooked barley, 5 to 6 prunes, and coffee. Many times when no barley was to be had we ate our 6 prunes and like it. Occasionally we had creamed corned beef and coffee. Our bread ration, 1/6th of a loaf one day and 1/5 the next, was delivered to us in the barracks so individuals desiring bread with their meals brought it with them along with their milk and sugar for their coffee.

Supper, or dinner, if you are of the elite, was of course a more substantial meal. Potatoes or turnips formed the main bill of fare, while either a 3 oz. piece of spam, or corned beef the meat item - and of course coffee. Occasionally we had cooked pate or salmon patties instead of the spam or corned beef. And I must not forget German stew at intervals also. Once a week we had a chocolate pudding made up of milk, chocolate, and crackers which tasted very good and was looked upon as a rare treat.

As it was quite a stretch from 9 in the morning to 5 at night, quite a bit of eating was done in the rooms by individuals as long as their rations managed to hold out. Quite a few fellows couldn't resist having so much food on hand that they would eat practically all of their rations on the day they received them and then look forward hungrily to the next ration day. The members of our room-Zimmer 4- decided to pool certain items of our food and have a communal mess of our own. Each one of us put his ration of bread, margarine, jam, klim, and one chocolate bar for trading purposes, into the communal pool. Being seven of us in the room, each one of us was appointed K.P. for one day of each week. The K.P.'s duties were to keep the room clean and most important of all, prepare two light lunches each day. From the English boys we had gotten into the habit of "having our brew" in the afternoon so each day at 1400 hours we had a hot cup of tea or coffee, and if none available a hot cup of milk. Along with this the K.P. would prepare 2 slices of bread which he fried on the grill we had made on our stove. Jerry bread is much more eatable when fried or toasted and with a piece of cheese melted on it, it was quite tasty. This same little meal was had each night at 2120 hours and always put the finishing touches to our day for we sat around the table sipping our milk - and sometimes we made hot chocolate by dissolving 2/3 of a chocolate bar into the milk - and having a lively discussion on most any subject. Using our bread this way, we of course, had to do without at meal times, but these two little snacks between meals allayed our hunger considerably and was the opportunity for a social tete-a-tet each day. On days that we had both barley and prunes for breakfast we used to bring the prunes from the mess hall, remove the seeds, put them into a pan we had for cooking purposes, add water or better still, prune juice if we could get it, set it on the stove and let it boil for several hours with constant stirring by the K.P. This would eventually produce a spread which tasted right good on our bread. Many attempts were made at cake making and some of them proved very successful. The ingredients used were margarine, cocoa, sugar, powdered milk and crushed crackers. This at first produced a flat, heavy cake until the bright idea of using Pycopay tooth paste as a rising agent was thought of. The toothpaste was 90% baking soda so it reacted very favorably without having any harmful result on the taste of the cake.

As a great deal of trading in food went on in Camp, a Food Acco was set up whose purpose was to supply a stock of food items most in demand for those who wished to trade one item of food for another or wished to buy some item. The medium of exchange throughout the whole camp was cigarettes. One cigarette was equal to 1 point and had the value of one German mark which is equivalent to 27 cents of American money. This value was based on what the cigarettes brought on the German Black Market. American cigarettes were, of course, desired above all others with English cigarettes next. The Germans smoked a French cigarette, the Elegante, which was made of a cheap tobacco mixed with sawdust and which had a

trade value of 5 to 1 American cigarette. They also smoked a Polish weed that could not be called a cigarette, which went by the name of Audigen. Their trade value was nil.

A certain point value was assigned to all articles in order to create a standard market. Following is a list of these articles with their point value.

Kilm	-	100	Cheese	-	80
Sugar	-	65	"D" Bars	-	60
Jam	-	60	Crackers	-	40
Oleo	-	40 (not Elgin)	Coffee	-	60
Bread	-	60	Pate	-	40

The majority of the trading was carried on between the fellows themselves and those fellows who did not smoke could always find food to trade for their cigarettes. They consequently ate a little better.

American and English cigarettes were in great demand by the German guards. Although there was an order put out by their high command that no trading would be done with Krieges, they still managed to do it on the sly. We had certain men appointed whose sole duty was to trade with the Jerrys for articles which we were in need of such as playing cards, benzidrene for cigarette lighters, pipes, and even some types of escape equipment.

So much for the food and trading system. I'll describe the bribe value of cigarettes in escape purposes in little more detail when I cover the subject of tunnels and escape.

EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Camp's Educational Program was organized and carried out by the Krieges themselves. Classes were held in the mess hall every afternoon of the week except Sunday. Krieges were the instructors. On an average, there was but one text book for each class. Notebooks and pencils were supplied through the Canadian Red Cross. Each class was of an hour's duration with 10 minutes between classes and three classes in an afternoon. Some of the classes were held but once a week while others were held two or three times. The following list is that of the subjects taught.

Elementary French	Shorthand
Advanced French	Agriculture
Spanish	Navigation
Bookkeeping & Accounting	Calculus
Life Art	Physics
Sketching	

German classes had been started earlier and was a block project. Each block held its own classes in the evening and the instructor was from his respective block. However, for some unknown reason, these were given up and not started again. All in

all, the program ran along smoothly and was the means of spending many an intellectual hour in each Kriege's life.

In the way of entertainment, we had an excellent orchestra - again the Red Cross had come to our rescue by supplying us with musical instruments - and a well-drilled Glee Club. The South Compound Orchestra and also their band periodically came to our compound and gave us concerts, supplying both swing and classical music. The too we had plays, quiz shows, and take-it-or leave it programs which added immeasurably to the morale of the camp.

Our orchestra, under the leadership of Mike Spodar, advanced from a small aggregation of four players to a smooth playing, 9-piece orchestra which played both sweet and swing tunes with a professional air. Several of the men had played for big-name bands in the States and after a few weeks' practice they really could "send us." There were three trumpets, a drummer with all his traps, three saxes which also played clarinets, a guitar, piano, and base-viol. They practiced every day in the mess hall from 11:30 to approximately 1400 and then played at the evening meal every other night. They also made their appearance at all the shows that were given in camp. As can be seen, they were a pretty busy outfit.

The Glee Club was another organization which devoted a lot of hours to practice and who showed the value of this practice by the wonderful rendition of both old and new songs. Lt. Kelly, the soloist, has an especially fine base voice. They also contributed to many joyful musical hours which were thoroughly appreciated by everyone in camp.

The South Compound's orchestra was built around "Shady" Lane and his saxophone, and "Buzz" Frishett and his trumpet. Lane was really good with his sax while "Buzz" had played his trumpet for Jimmy Dorsey's Band before getting into the Air Corp, which speaks for itself. They had several good arrangements of some "hot" tunes and were well received anytime they came to our compound. The South Compound's band was another musical aggregation which deserves a lot of credit for the classical and martial music which they brought to us. Their solo violinist, name unknown to me, was exceptionally good.

For our play entertainment, we depended upon the South Compound's British lads who produced "The Man Who Came to Dinner" and "Dangerous Corners" with professional zeal. The boys who took the girls parts came in for a lot of razzing but no one could deny the good job that they did. It was remarkable to witness how they transformed the stage of their theatre into a lavishly furnished setting for their scene and all with nothing to work with but Red Cross boxes, scrap wire and metal that they could pick up around the camp. They really showed a lot of ingenuity in the manner with which they handled this difficult problem.

Then who of us can forget the Quiz Show with Col. Spicer as master of ceremonies and the bomber pilots contesting the fighter pilots for intellectual honors! Col. Spicer was a man's man and entered any undertaking with great spirit. He was liked by everyone in camp. I can't say much about the "Take-it-or-Leave It" program which followed the Quiz Show by several weeks, for I was spending 14 days in the Cooler at the time with Lt. Eaves again. But from all accounts it proved very successful. However, as extra entertainment while in the Cooler, we heard the Russian prisoner's of war string orchestra almost nightly as they had their rooms in the building adjoining the Cooler. Their fast, tangy Russian songs played on their strange looking guitars, were pleasing to listen to.

And finally, in the entertainment list we had one portable phonograph donated by the Y.M.C.A. and 25 old records which were worn out from constant playing and had lost their tone. This machine was shared by each block for a week at a time and saw much use.

SPORTS

Through the International YMCA, we received a vast assortment of athletic goods by means of which an extensive athletic program was carried out. Softball, basketball, football, volleyball, soccer, boxing, horse shoes, and several other games were among those played quite often.

A National & American League were organized in softball and games were played daily - as weather permitted - Kriege Cats, Terror Fliegers, Luft Huns, Oleo Kids, Blockbusters, Baltic Bums, and Stalag Dodgers were among the names of teams in both leagues. The games were well played and provided many an interesting afternoon for all.

Outdoor basketball was another favorite with the Kriege's and the outdoor court was seldom without somebody on it cavorting around the baskets.

The three volleyball courts came in for much attention also with regularly scheduled games between blocks taking place frequently.

Then anywhere about the camp P.O.W.'s could be seen squaring off with boxing gloves, throwing the shot put, high jumping, pitching horse shoes, or throwing a football. The British boys played soccer and even tried cricket although they were short on cricket equipment having only a bat and ball.

Yes, the camp was very athletic minded. Each day after morning roll call, 15 minutes were spend in calisthenics, and then throughout the day in different sports. During the summer months we ran around wih as little clothes on as possible and yet retain decency, so that the camp took on a resemblance to a nudist colony inhabited by a select clientele of bronze, young American Airmen.

Although we had baseballs and gloves we had no field large enough to play hardball in, so that game was confined to just pitching and catching among the fellows.

JULY 4TH

In commemoration of this day, the Krieges of Kriegeland went all out to make this a real holiday with sports events featuring most of the entertainment. The program started off with a series of obstacle races which provided a lot of entertainment and laughs for everyone. Cigarettes were given as prizes to individual winners while the winning block was to be excused from Saturday inspection. Our block won with a 2 point edge over the next block. The following events were run off - three-legged race, leap frog race, wheelbarrow race, heel and toe race, potato race, backward race, piggy-back race, and a free for all piggy-back fight. Then a boxing match was featured with Lt. Griffiths matched against Lt. Reder. It was a very good bout with Lt. Reder taking the decision on points. After the boxing bout, we had a parade and revue which was run off in short order. The band then came in for its share of the entertainment by staging an open-air concert with the assistance of the Glee Club. Short talks were given by Col Byerly and wing Co. Ferrers. The day's program was topped off by a fast, well-played basketball game between the All Stars of Group 1 & 4 with the game ending in a victory for the Group 4 team by a score of 22-20. And so ended July 4th, 1944 in Kriegeland in Barth, Germany.

During the month of July the Germans made the magnanimous offer of allowing the Krieges to go swimming. This news was received with great joy by all as the weather at the time was hot and also because it gave us the opportunity of leaving the confines of the camp and to behold once again a world without a barbed wire fence surrounding it. The conditions under which the proposed plan was to be carried out were these; - each man was to sign a parole stating that no attempt would be made at escape while he was a member of the swimming party. One block at a time was the maximum allowed and the time limit was two hours beginning from the time of leaving camp till that of the return. These conditions were readily agreed to and Block 5's day came on Sunday, July 9. We left the camp at 1500 that afternoon accompanied by two interpreters and after a short walk were among the pine trees which bordered the small inlet in which we were to swim. It was heavenly to walk underneath those towering pines and breathe the fresh, free, pine-scented air. It reminded me of my boyhood which a great part of had been spent in the woods. Emerging from the woods we came upon the inlet and our swimming area. It was a beautiful scene - the green waters touching the slopes of the pine forested bank upon which we stood and lapping softly against the opposite banks which were covered with fields of golden, waving grain. A few fishing boats with their sails flying bravely were to be seen off in the distance while nearer to us were several sail boats tied to their moorings rocking gently back and forth. In the center of the small bay was another sailboat occupied by two guards from the camp and which marked the boundary of our swimming area.

With a whoop, the 114 of us immediately divested ourselves of our clothing and in the suits that nature gave us, ran down the bank and with great splashing and laughing threw ourselves into the water. Its brackish taste, and peculiar odor did not in the least dampen our spirits and we sounded like a group of school girls on an outing. The water was warm so the time allotted for our swimming was spent in the water by most of the fellows with a few of the lazier spending some of their time lying in the grass on the bank watching the antics of the others. I guess I'll never forget the fun Lt. Casey and I had just acting the perfect fools. We were mermaids, then acrobats, and divers. The bottom was covered with empty clam shells and we picked up quite a few only to throw them all away a little later on. I was one tired boy when I climbed out of the water and plenty hungry. On the way back we filled our pockets with pine cones to burn in our stove with the hope we could get the pine smell into our room. We arrived just in time for supper which was a perfect way to end a perfect day. I hope we get to go swimming again this summer although I doubt the probability of it happening again as it will take quite some time to go through the entire compound so that each man will have the opportunity of going once.

MOVIES

During my second stay at the Cooler, the Camp received several movie films from the YMCA. Before they could be shown to the Krieges, they had to be censored by the Germans as it happened, this censorship delay held up the showing of the first movie so that the first news that reached me upon being set free again was that the first movie to be shown in the Camp was to be shown that afternoon. It was a pleasant welcome, for its hard to realize how much a person misses the pleasure of witnessing a good movie until he has had to go several months without seeing one. Movie Day became as important in Camp as Ration Day and when the two of them fell on the same day as it conce did, it was a veritable Holiday. The movies were shown in the mess hadd and three showings were held for each picture with four blocks attending each showing. The first picture we had the privilege of seeing was a western thriller - "The Iron Road" with Richard Dix. What an impression we Americans must have made on the few _____ that attended the movie - wild shooting and indiscriminate killing featured every scene while we Krieges shouted wih glee each time a villian bit the dust. I've never enjoyed a movie more than that first one shown in Camp although it wouldn't rate high on the list of best movies back home. Our second show was Judy Garland in "Presenting Lily Mars," while our third was Jack Benny and Ann Sheridan in "George Washington Slept Here." Both of them "brought down the house" and each movie was the subject for weeks afterwards. At this date - July 12, we are hopefully looking forward to the next showing.

On August 12th, we were treated to a showing of "Andy Hardy's Double Life" - a picture I had seen in the States but which nevertheless was more appreciated and enjoyed at this time than when I first saw it. Something now was added to our movie program - a

short feature. It was a silent short comedy called Mickey McGuire's Northwest Mounted. We all got quite a kick out of this old film.

December 4th was the next date that the Kriegies were treated to a movie, the picture - Deanne Durbin - "Spring Parade."

KRIEGIE'S KRAFT KARNIVAL

This Karnival was to have had its opening July 4th but due to a large number of entries not being completed a postponement was made and the big day came on July 24 and continued for 3 days. The purpose of the Karnival was to put on display of all types of Krieger Handiwork. Airplane models, ship models, wood plaques, water color paintings, crayon drawings, pastel portraits, cartoons, clay and soap models, and architectural plans and drawings of homes were among the crafts displayed. Of course, airplane models were in the majority with large and small models of all types of bombers and fighters. It was amazing to witness what could be done with a piece of wood, a razor blade or knife, some imagination, and a lot of time - for many painstaking hours were put into each model displayed. Col. Greening's drawings of combat planes and his pastel portraits are among the finest I have seen anywhere while Lt. Haskins' paintings would have brought prizes at any art show.

The mess hall was used for the Karnival - the back room housing the handicrafts exhibits while the main mess room was used for a Midway with gambling games lining both sides. Poulette, operated by the gamblers of Zimmer 4 - horse racing, black Jack, dice, Krego - our version of bingo - and chuck-a-luck were some of the games at which the Kriegies had an opportunity of testing their luck. Thousands of cigarettes changed hands daily.

A large cake was given as door prize each day, and as a grand prize a letter was given which entitled the bearer to have a pastel portrait made of himself by Col. Greening.

The exhibit was a huge success providing a pleasant diversion for all the Kriegies and an opportunity for the camp to become conscious of the talent hidden among its 1300 inhabitants. Plans were made to tour the crafts exhibit in the States when we got home and donate the profits accrued to the YMCA and the Red Cross.

Sept. 2 - Hello to my darling Edna on her 23rd birthday. Just to let you know I'm thinking of you and wishing so much I could be there with you to celebrate the event.

HIGHLIGHTS OF AIR-RAIDS

Our camp, being situated in the Berlin, Rostock Station area, seemed to be on the route of our bombers to these cities, so we saw quite a bit of action in the air overhead. Following is a list of the more spectacular events in chronological order.

April - 2: Mosquitoes hit the airfield 3 miles from camp, late in the evening and destroyed 3 He-111's sitting on the ground and also killed several Russian prisoners working at the airfield together with German personnel.

May - 16: Mosquitoes on another evening raid shot an FW190 down in flames over the bay at an altitude of approximately 1000 ft and only a mile away from us. A thrilling sight. Smoke columns observed in the distance where they hit Straaslund Sea Base.

4 P-51's came low over Barth and strafed the airfield.

P-51's again strafing the airfield and then shooting up a train just outside of Barth.

Aug. 4th: Saw three "Fortresses" get it returning from a raid on Stettin. One crashed and burned just SE of Barth, another crashed and burned due south of the camp while the third fort was observed heading south with the crew bailing out. 7 chutes observed.

Aug. 4th: Two flights of 51's hit the airfield again. One 51 hit by flak and pilot bailed out just north of the camp. Is here now.

Aug. 27: A Fort hit and came down in one mass of flame on the peninsula. 3 chutes observed.

Aug. 26: The big RAF show on Stettin. Plenty of fireworks lasting for over an hour - from midnight till about 1:30 a.m.

Oct. 6: Largest raid in history - 5000 planes bomb Berlin - Straaslund - Rostock - flew over the camp - quite a show.

Nov. : Mosquito dropped out of 3000 ft cloud level and hit Barth - the boom-boom-boom of his 20 mms was a sweet sound - sure wish it could have been me up there instead of here. Not much space separated a free man from a bunch of Kriegies tied to one spot as securely as though they had chains around their necks. Well, we still have some hope left and will continue to live as long as we have that.

Sept. 26 - A red letter day - my first mail - 3 letters from Edna. What a relief to know she's OK.

MORE SPORTS

During August, Sept. and October I played quite a lot of softball and basketball. Our softball team, the Modly Cheese Kids, wasn't so hot but our basketball team was fairly good. My main reason for mentioning either one is to list the names of the opposing teams in each league as there really were some original titles hooked on to most of the teams. In the basketball league we were the Baltic Celtics and played against the Pohlkatz, Weak

Sisters, Crows, Butt Pickers, and Five Fickle Fingers. We were tied for first half honors with the Butt Pickers at the time of this writing - Sept. 21, 1944. We had many hot games and I really enjoyed playing basketball more than any sport in Kriegieland.

In softball, I played nearly all positions from pitcher, catcher, third base, second base and fielder. Some of the teams we played against - Odds & Ends, Wet Dreams, Midwives, Candy Bars, Barth A.C., and others.

Football - six men teams only - was organized in October and I wound up on the Baltic Barb Cats aggregation. Our main claim to any recognition was the fact that Gus Pffeifer - a Missouri College Star who had played against Army - was a member of our team. The Piccadilly Commanders, South Pacific Dodgers, Sexy Six, Busserkanabes Timid Ten Tuffies, and a few others were our opponents. We lost several games, won a few and tied a few - nothing sensational but we had fun, exercise, and quite a few bruises.

Ice skating - The area between Block 4 and 5 was flooded during January and February and a skating rink resulted. With skates sent in by the YMCA, we had some swell hours of fun on the ice.

Oct. 11: 2 letters fom home - Mom and Mary - loads of good news - Gus finished and going home - one of my happiest moments in Kriegieland.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY

Sept. 29th - Two years ago today the class of 42-I graduated from Luke Field and were commissioned as pilots into the U.S. Army Air Force. That was a milestone in my life of major importance and to celebrate the memory of the occasion the class members of Stalag I - of which there are a goodly number - got together in Hall's room in Block 11 and had a real gab-fest. The walls of the room literally vibrated all that afternoon as our voices were raised in recounting and recapturing past experiences. Paine Field, Everett, March Field, Pendleton, Tonupah, Santa Rosa, Portland, England, Africa, Italy, P-39's, P-38's, and P-51's were the main topics of conversation. Pardon me for forgetting to mention girls and London in the list for they also came in for their share of the "bull". It was a real 42-I meeting and we were wishing that many of our best buddies who have gone the way of all good airmen, could have been there. "Stud" Hall, "Bu" Eaves, Donnell, Payne, Barris, Hanzo, MacFall, and James W. Griffis plus myself were the members present. Eaves and I made the prediction that a year from today we would be in San Francisco on our way to the South Pacific. I wonder how close we'll come to that prediction?

MISC. ITEMS

Col. Spicer thrown in solitary for indefinite stay, charged with attempts to arouse mutiny. Is being held for Court Martial. Wing Co. Ferris and Group Captain sentenced to 9 months and 3 yrs. of solitary, respectively, for same charge. Jerries aroused Spicer's anger by throwing a U.S. major into Cooler for refusing

to salute a Jerry Capt. and also throwing him out of barracks late the night before while they conducted a search. At morning roll call Spicer called the Jerry's attention to the fact that he was not attempting to arouse mutiny among the Kriegies but was only voicing his own opinions. He then made a speech to the Compound, telling the Krieies in no uncertain terms what he thought of the Germans - the atrocities they committed in Belgium, on their retreat - and wound up with the statement he was willing to stay here and rot as long as the Allies would exterminate every Jerry in the Country.

After the speech, he was taken to the Cooler and is still there now - Dec. 8.

October - New shower deal - 1 minute of hot water allowing time for getting wet - water shut off - 2 minutes allowed for soaping - hot water on again for 1 minute to allow rinsing. 1 minute of cold water - shower over. Impossible to get clean with a mere dampening like this.

December 8 - Red Morgan taken for Court Martial proceedings. Charge - attempted assault of a German Guard. What a farce!!

January - Cold! Snow! Coal ration cut! Food ration gone! Germans confiscating extra clothes! Kitchen out of potatoes! More new Kriegies which results in overcrowding of all rooms! What a month!

The only bright spot is the Russian front and to date - Jan. 28 they have accomplished miracles 90 miles from Berlin - Can they keep it up?? - COME ON JOE.

Feb. 16 - Since my last writing, conditions have gone from bad to worse. Disregarding chronological order or relationship of subjects to one another, following are some of the events which have increased our woes and darkened an already black and gloomy life -

1500 Sergeants arrived on the 7th from their distant camp at Heyedekrug, near Memol in East Prussia. They were evacuated in the face of the threatening Russians and after unprintable hardships and base, inhumane mistreatment, arrived at our camp in sorry shape. More overcrowding resulted - food ration, now down to half rations at irregular periods, to take drastic cuts so that all may share equally.

German bread ration cut to 1/7 (one-seventh) per man - not much when that is our main food item. Salt all gone - no hopes for any to be received - in fact the Germans - due to the shortage have ceased putting it in the bread and that item tastes worse than before, although it doesn't seem possible. Instead of salt - ground glass is being found in the bread and orders have been issued from Allied HQ that all bread must be sliced very thin and examined carefully before consumption. A little ground glass can't hurt us too much - not after some of the food, we've been forced to eat to keep that spark of life burning.

Last few nights we have been fortunate in having lights. We are all out of margarine so of necessity have been unable to use our Kriegie light and if there is anything more demoralizing than being without lights, I don't know what it is. Water has been a problem also.

Mail in camp - 3000 letters but none for J.D. - sure hope Edna and the folks are fine - haven't had any word from them since December and that last letter was dated October.

Uncle Joe is still going great guns and the Kriegies are all pinning their hopes for the long-awaited liberation to him. Please, COME ON JOE!! [Began 1 meal a day Feb. 7.]

Feb. 28 - Conditions still bad - rations cut to 1/4 parcel. Had 1/4 parcel in 2 weeks and German rations cut 12 1/2% making a 30% cut in the last few months. Lights have been out for the past week and we have been informed that there will be no more lights till the end of the war. Great!!

Still having difficulty obtaining food. Red Cross representative here last few days and states that parcels are plentiful at the Red Cross warehouse but no transportation available from Germans for the parcels. Allied powers have supposedly donated 100 trucks for this purpose so we may eat again.

Glass was found in the peas the other night - didn't make the meal any more enjoyable but too hungry to turn away food in any form.

German Guard committed suicide the other night. HARD LUCK.

RAF night intruder made a visit to this area last night and caused quite a commotion in camp by firing a short burst of 20's at a locomotive near the camp.

Days are getting longer and weather more agreeable and the news is picking up again. Opinion in camp is that war will be over by July of this year. Lord, I hope so.

Received a letter from Edna today - dated Dec. 4. This is the first in a long time and sure made me feel great to know she is still OK and thinking of me a little.

March 8th - No parcels - no rations - ran out of potatoes for several days last week but hear that some came in today. Stew every evening now for our only meal of the day - a little horse meat thrown in with a lot of turnips and occasionally some "Purple Passion" is what we exist on now. We're all praying that the Red Cross Parcels come in soon. Weather has been cold but clear and air action at night in this area has increased. Air raids on successive nights now keep the Kriegies awake and watching the fireworks to the south and east.

News still continues Good - both west and east fronts active - Allies in Cologne and have a large front all along the Rhine River north of Cologne. The Russians are attacking Stettin from North, South, and East and we fervently hope for a breakthrough from the Kustrin Bridgehead. This is our hope for a quick liberation by the hands of the Russians.

Still waiting for a letter from home and hoping that all is well with Mom, Dad, and the family.

April 7th - My book was confiscated by the Germans during a search shortly after my last entry - that accounts for the month gone by without any entries being put in here. And a lot of things have happened in this intervening time. Here they are.

Our food shortage continued acute all through the most of March and in fact kept getting worse. We lived on our one meal a day - stew - and were glad to get it. Several men were courts-martialed for refusing to obey the order of "no scavenging in the garbage pile". Morale in camp was very low and tempers were on edge constantly.

Cigarettes are scarce again and are bringing exorbitant prices - Kross, Ric, and Lanigan bought some at 3 cargon per \$25.00. They are also selling for \$10 a carton if you can find them for sale.

March 12th - Lt. Cassell, North 3, died at hospital. Insufficient white corpuscles in blood caused by malnutrition and weak resistance.

March 18th - Two men in South Compound shot by guards during air raid. American officer killed by shot through head. Leaving barracks going to church when he noticed that the alarm was in effect. He immediately retraced his steps and reached the barracks door when he was shot through the back of the head by guard in tower. Canadian officer leaning out of window shot through body - he is recovering.

Notice on our bulletin board read - "Lt. Weymer was killed yesterday by a German guard, while in a moment of forgetfulness he attempted to go to church during an air raid." - The Jerries can't mistake the irony in that statement.

March 25-26 - The news and weather are working hand in hand and both are swell. There have been several crossings of the Rhine by Patten in the South and Montgomery in the North. Spectacular gains are the order of the day and this Looks Like IT.

March 27th - A Red Cross Parcels came in today. Spirits of camp up 2000 per cent - we eat again. The Red Cross Detail is working like mad to get the parcels in Camp and we expect a 1/4 issue tonight. Outside of the war ending, this is the best possible news we could have. After 3 months on the barest rations on which I believe it possible to exist, this food sure looks good. On top of that the news continues good. We may all be seeing the States and home soon now.

Here's a record of a weekly German ration allowance that we have been receiving when they have it available.

Meat	- 200 gr.	- .44 lb.	(Note: 453 grams = 1 lb.)
Margarine	- 140 gr.	- .30 lb.	
Coffee, ersatz	- 28 gr.	- .06 lb.	
Sugar	- 140 gr.	- .30 lb.	
Cheese	- 75 gr.	- .05 lb.	
Potatoes	- 480 gr.	- 1 lb.	
Vegetables	- 960 gr.	- 2 lbs.	
Barley - (when avail)	- 40 gr.	- .09 lbs.	
Bread	- 257 gr.	- .56 lbs.	

March 28-29-30 - Mail and personal parcels in - I hope I hit on both of them. Haven't had a letter from Mom & Dad for a long time now. A personal parcel would sure go good now too. We went through our Red Cross issue in short order and I can't wait till the next issue comes out. I don't believe I'll ever get enough to eat again.

April 3 - May Schneling visited the Camp. He has been reported killed many times but he sure looked in good health now.

April 9th - We were roused out of bed this morning at 0530 by the cry of "Everybody Out - the Mess Hall is on fire. Take all your buckets over" - After hurriedly dressing and grabbing up our two buckets, I rushed over to the Mess Hall to find flames and smoke issuing from the center ventilator on the roof. A "bucket brigade" was already in operation attempting to put the fire out. However, it wasn't long before we could see that our efforts would never stop the fire from gaining so we turned our efforts to saving the rations shed which is just east of the Mess Hall. Other Kriegies were salvaging as much food and equipment as they possibly could from the burning building - In 3/4 of an hour the Mess Hall was completely destroyed. We lost our breakfast and some other food supplies which are to be replaced now that we have plenty of food in Camp. The band lost all of their instruments which is quite a loss to the Camp as a whole.

The loss of the Mess Hall - causes unknown as yet - will necessitate our cooking in our rooms now. Will let you know how this works out.

April 8th - Cooking in our rooms has been working out swell. We are trying all types of dishes and are eating like kings - two meals a day and a few snacks in between. Everybody in Camp is doing a lot of cooking and baking. Seems like the whole camp has gone on a cake and pie diet. Everybody trading recipes and strange concoctions are the order of the day. News is still good but the war continues on. I hope Joe gets going soon again. I want to go home!

April 13th - Friday - A black day for all Americans - we heard today that President Roosevelt died last night. At first we refused to believe it, thinking that it was possibly just another nasty rumor the Jerries have a habit of spreading to keep down our morale, but confirmation came later in the day and we had to accept it as fact. He was a great man and his loss will be felt in the future peace negotiations.

April 18th - Had quite a boxing show today. The featured bout was the battle between Col. Zenke and Major Manierra but the main bout turned out to be the one between two Sgts. - Cavanaugh and Handy. Zenke won by decision and Cavanaugh beat Handy easily.

The news continues excellent. Opinion about Camp very optimistic. Betting is that it will be over by May 1st. Somehow I just can't visualize the end being so near. Too many times in the past did the future look as bright and then nothing came of it. ~~I'm not going to come of it.~~ I'm not setting my hopes up too high but Dear God Please let it be soon.

April 24th - For the past few days we have been hearing the dull rumble of guns to the southeast and southwest. Could be the Russians and the British - Come on Joe. Also for the past few days activity at the airport has increased considerably. It has been turned into a Ju-88 night fighter base and the 88's are pretty thick about here during the evening and night hours.

April 25th - A big day for Room 4 - the boxing match this week was held in North 3 and the main bout was the fight between Cavanaugh and Sgt. Wolf of North 3. We decided to bet all we had in the room on Cavanaugh so proceeded to put up \$2000.00 and our 7 food parcels on him. We were either going to starve or eat like kings the following week. Unfortunately, we were able to get only one food parcel covered and only \$1100 of the money bets. \$1000 of this was taken by Col. Gabreski the famous fighter ace. Of course, we won - but it was close. The \$1000 check with Gabreski's signature looks good and we intend to have photostatic copies made of it so that each of us can have one for a memento of this day. The distribution on the check was Ric - \$300, Spank - \$300, Willie - \$200, Cap - \$800, myself \$100. We are also planning a big meal for Saturday night in celebration of this day and are having Cavanaugh as our guest - Incidentally, the war looks as though it may end soon - How soon, I'm not going to say for I've been disappointed too many times in my previous predictions and to judge the staying power of these Germans is impossible.

April 28th - We had our big feed tonight. Funny, but even after all that food - spam, potatoes, turnips, and dessert (pie) I still feel hungry. I guess I'll never really fill up until I get home. Come on Joe, Please make it soon. We hear that the Russians have broken out of the Stettin bridgehead and are headed this way. That's the best news of the war for it directly affects us. We can hear the rumble of guns constantly to the south now and air

activity at the airport here has increased a 100 per cent. 31 FW190's and Me109's plus a Feisler Storch and a 111 flew into the field today. Looks as though they are being forced up to this section. Looks good, sounds good - I hope we're out of here soon.

April 30 - An exciting day - the demolition squads have gone to work in Camp and in Barth today - explosions follow each other in rapid order and rumors try to keep pace with them. The Russians are reported to be in Straaslund - 15 miles away - wheee - Come on Joe - Air activity terrific - 109's, 190's Blom and Voss flying boats - Ju52's, Hell's - Ju88's, Me210's, and even Feesler Storch's have been flying around like mad. Explosions, gun fire and smoke to the SE. Looks like we may finally start for home soon. How long we've waited for this - Thanks, Lord, for seeing me through it all safely.

Orders have come through to dig slit trenches alongside the barracks just as a precaution. We have 2 holes 4 ft deep outside our window and are ready for anything that may come.

April 30 - The Germans are actually pulling out of Camp and are to turn it over to the Americans. 5 German officers to stay - Major Steinhaver in Command. They have been blowing up everything of military importance in sight and the same thing is happening in town and at the airfield. Fire started at the flak school and looting of our Red Cross parcels stored in a building there begun by German soldiers and civilians. Col. Zemke and Greening organized groups of Kriegies to march to the warehouse and bring the parcels into Camp. I managed to make two of these trips and it was an experience I won't forget. The sight of the German civilians and refugees - women, men, and children all clustered around the warehouse attempting to get food, - fighting, crying, and begging for it was a sight that made a deep impression on me as to what horrors they must be going through now with the Russians only a few days or possibly hours away. What's in store for these people and the many millions like them in this Country? They must have broken into a German Air-Corp Supply Depot here for women and children had flying boots, helmets, and other flying paraphernalia strung over their shoulders and in their arms trying to barter with the Kriegies for food. A young lad came up to me and as a friendly gesture gave me a pair of flying boots - a wonderful souvenir and they fit perfectly.

Flash - The Camp was officially turned over to us at 11:00 p.m. - 2300 hours today. The Germans have gone and our sentence or term as P.O.W.'s has come to an end although we are still restricted to Camp by American orders and our position hasn't changed much except that our own men now man the Guard towers - how long we've waited for this - now comes the most trying wait of our stay here - our actual departure from this Camp. Hours will seem like days and days like weeks till that moment comes.

May 1st - We stayed up all last night waiting for something to happen and just celebrating. It's early morning now and all we have to do is wait - Come on Joe - Come on Ike.

9:00 p.m. - Rumors - False Reports - Contradictions and opinions have been flying thick and fast all day - Kriegies have been climbing on the roofs of the barracks and incinerator tops looking for the Russians and expecting them any minute. A notice was posted on the bulletin board stating they were only 3 kilometers from Barth and proceeding slowly on their way here. They also stated that a Russian liaison officer was at the camp and in conference with Zemke but both of these rumors were reported as false reports a short time later.

No water all day - rough on cooking and it gets thirsty at times. They are working on both electrical power and water supply and expect to give us both tonight.

11:00 p.m. - What a night!! Will go down in my history as one of my most memorable -

First of all heard my first radio program from the States in 15 months and it was the Hit Parade - can't express the emotion it aroused to hear real American music and program - The Hit Parade was interrupted by the startling announcement - "the Russians are Here" - It's true this time - Several half-tracks with a Russian officer in command entered the Camp this evening - This is what we've waited for for a long, long time. Too excited to say much more - I'm up in the clouds and dreaming of home, Mom, and Edna already. Can't be too long till it will become a reality.

Another startling announcement just came over BBC - Hitler is reported dead. AMEN. The war will come to a close soon now that their fanatic leader has received what he so justly deserves - His crimes have finally caught up with him and justice has been meted out although the mark of his hand will take a long time to efface and that only through a period of suffering and starvation which the people of Germany will have to bear.

Oh shucks - I can't collect my thoughts. I'm too happy and in no mood for writing. I'm gonna hit the sack and dream of Home.

May 2nd - It will be impossible to set down here all that has happened today. It began inauspiciously in the same Kriegie humdrum of monotony - we were confined to the Camp and nobody knew anything. The Russians were in Barth in force and we could see their flag flying from the church steeple. About noon the rumors began to fly and things happened thick and fast. First we heard that the Russian Colonel ordered Col. Zemke to tear down the fences and let the Kriegies out. He said we were liberated and he wanted to see the Kriegies happy - that of course met with approval with the Kriegies as we wanted to get out and feel free. We were ordered to tear down the fences and tour the area. Just as this order was given, assembly was called and the startling announcement

made that the Russians wanted us to get out of the area and wanted us to march to Rostock where the 9th U.S. Army was. We were ordered to get ready for a march at 7:00 this evening. That sounded good to me as it would give us an opportunity to really see Germany in the wake of a victorious Russian Army. It promised to be exciting and I was all for it. It didn't take long for me to prepare what little I had to take along with me and after this was done Smut, Ric, and I took off for the Flak School where there was an enormous amount of German Army equipment stored - thousands of Kriegies were headed the same way with the same idea - getting some German loot. I picked up some flying helmets, both winter and summer, flying vest, goggles and gloves. It was an education going through that enormous building and watching Kriegies, free for the first time in years, having a hey-day picking up loot. We returned to our barracks, ate, and Willie and I took off for town. I wish I could tell what I saw and did there - Russian, drunk, sober, dirty, clean, men, children and women, on horses, in wagons, G.I. trucks, and every possible type of conveyance imaginable. They were very friendly to Americans and saluted and shook hands constantly and "Tavarich" was the password on everyone's tongue. There were more Red flags flying from every window of every house in town than I've ever seen at any celebration at home. Also in town were all the Polish, Greek, Russian, Latvian, Ukrainian, French, and every nation that had ever been invaded by the Germans, forced labor forces were roaming the streets. Frenchmen from the concentration camp near here were also there and I've never seen anyone who looked more like walking skeletons than what these men did. After a several-hour stay in town, every minute of which seemed like a dream, we returned to Camp. Kriegies who had picked up horses, bicycles, and even cars were streaming back ready for a good night's sleep and hurrying to get back by the dead-line of 9:00 p.m. set by the Group. All in all an exciting day. Incidentally, the Russian order to march out of here has been cancelled and we're standing by waiting to be flown out. We just received word that a radio message has been sent to our forces telling of our liberation and we're waiting for word from them now - must go to sleep - wonder what tomorrow will bring.

May 3rd - Quite a few boys were killed in town last night. One stepped on a land mine when he was returning to Camp and 4 others were mistakenly killed by Russians or Germans. The boys were pretty all lit up and I imagine they brought it on themselves. However, it's a sad end to come to after having waited so long.

Willie and I took off on a long hike this morning to the northern tip of the peninsula. We tried to find a boat or some other way of getting across to the mainland so that we could wander around the farms and see what we could pick up. After about a six-mile hike we found no boat but had a swell time just being free and feeling and acting like a human being once again. We made several other attempts to get off our peninsula but were foiled each time by camp M.P.'s. The Russians have given us a small area in which to stay and gave warning they could not be responsible for anyone outside the area being shot as they are beginning a round-up of German prisoners and don't want the Kriegies running around the countryside. However, my inquisitive nature won't let me rest and I want to see what is going on and how the Russian troops operate.

Ric and I finally met with success when we talked ourselves into a ride across the bay in a boat. We eluded the M.P.'s and reached the other side safely. This was approximately 2000 hours. We immediately began to run into adventure. We ran across Germans with their families hiding in the fields and along the edges of the bay trying to keep out of the Russian's sight. The Russians are beginning a systematic house to house search for Nazis and Gestapo men. There are many quartered in this area as a concentration camp and a forced labor camp are both situated near here. I've heard some horrible stories of what has happened to these Germans when found but as yet have seen no actual evidence. Innumerable suicides taking place among whole families - we just arrived on the scene of one shortly after we landed. Next we ran into some excited Kriegies who had seen a German shot because a Russian's ire had been aroused by an American officer and he vented his spleen on the first German he found - these Russians are a rough and tough lot. We followed the road to Zingst when we ran into some more Kriegies who were leaving the area hurriedly as someone else had been shot up the road a way. They said the Russians were fairly lit up and were in a dangerous mood so we decided it was no place to be fooling around, especially it being dark by now and past curfew time of 9:30 set by the Russians. We got back to our boat and had quite a time crossing the bay as we had no paddles but we finally made it.

May 4th - Had definite word that we would be flown out - All we're doing now is waiting for the planes to show up - Come on Ike - we want to go home.

Things are settling down to a normal routine although 6 more Kriegies met their fate last night.

EPILOGUE

January 15, 1993

Found this booklet relating my last days in German POW camp Stalag Luft I Barth, Germany and thought I'd better update it.

The following day of the narrative above, 5 May, several of us decided not to wait on our promised liberation and return to allied hands and we decided to leave camp in the boat we had hidden in some bushes near the camp. Al Ricci, Spanky Lanigan, Willie Rierson and myself packed anything of value that we had and what food we could scrounge and got into the boat about mid-morning and headed across the bay to the mainland. Without paddles and using flat boards to propel our way across was tiring and slow work. Then we began to take water into our boat from a leak. We could see that it was only a matter of time before we sank so we prepared to abandon the boat and swim to shore approximately several hundred yards away. The water was cold and impeded by our clothing we all struggled to get to shore. Fortunately we all made it and with some dry matches, we had thought of bringing with us in a waterproof container, we were able to make a fire and dry out.

We then started walking along the first road we came across in a westerly direction. We managed to get a ride from a friendly German farmer in his horse and wagon for a few miles and then, as evening was setting, started walking again hoping to find some lodging for the night. We came to a farmhouse and as we approached it we were met by an older lady in the yard of the house. We explained the best we could with a smattering of German picked up in our POW camp and gestures, that we were American POW's trying to make contact with our units and were seeking shelter for the night. She welcomed us with great joy and explained she at first thought we were Russian troops who had been terrorizing the area. She gladly offered us shelter and food and begged us to spend the night as it would offer some protection for her from the marauding Russian soldiers. She prepared a well appreciated dinner for us and appeared to be living alone but as the evening advanced, and no signs of any threat from us, other members of the family began appearing from where they had been hiding upstairs and joined us. We spent a comfortable and memorable night with this family. They were reluctant to see us leave the following morning and again recounted their terrifying fear of the Russian troops. We bid them good by and with directions from them, headed in the direction of Rostock.

We came into a small village about mid-morning and saw that it was occupied by Russian troops. The Russians had established their headquarters in the largest and most impressive house in the village. The dirt alleyway leading to the house was all carpeted with rugs taken from the homes of the villagers. We made ourselves known as American POW's on the way to join allied forces to the commander of the unit.

We requested a confiscated car or truck to help us get to our destination. He replied that they were using all the operable vehicles but would commandeer a horse and wagon for our use from the owner of the house they occupied but asked us to stay for awhile and join them in an early dinner they would prepare for us. We were eager to spend some time with them to get a first hand look at Russian troops.

They immediately had the farmer kill a young calf and prepared a festive dinner for us with a soldier playing the unique Russian instrument (Bellalaika-spelling?) and other soldiers doing Cossack acrobatic dances. This all accompanied by vodka, wine and a lot of hilarity and good will. We finally excused ourselves and indicated we would like to continue our journey. The commander immediately ordered the owner of the house to take us to the barn and prepare a wagon and horse for our journey. The farmer accompanied us to the barn and I still remember the tight grasp of his hand on my elbow and his frightened expression as he said "Amerikanske". I don't believe that I have ever seen another human being as frightened as this man was and hoping that we might be an advance party of the American Army which would bring him salvation. We explained our situation as best we could and drove off in the horse and wagon.

That same evening we entered the outskirts of Rostock not knowing what to expect but after several attempts at getting some information we were directed to a German house that was occupied by a Russian tank commander and his staff. Again after lengthy explanations of our status as American POW's trying to rejoin our forces they invited us to spend the night with them and had the German owner see to our horse and wagon which he placed in a field adjoining the house.

During the evening we refused several offers from Russian officers to accompany them on a night of fun with German females. We begged off indicating we had had a long trip from early morning and would be leaving again early the next day. When I asked how they expected the German women to cooperate with them he quickly reached into his combat boot and pulled out a knife and with a smile indicated that any resistance would mean the loss of a breast. This only firmed our resolve to get a good nights sleep. But with all the different occupants in the household none of us slept much that night.

May-6

We arose early and hitched up our horse to the wagon and noticed that he was acting very skittish. We had received information from the German householder that he had knowledge of a British force occupying the nearby town of Wismar. About midway in our journey our horse became erratic and uncontrollable. He trotted into a large ditch skirting the road and the wagon overturned. We all escaped unscathed and set about releasing the horse from his harness and as soon as he was free he galloped across the fields and we could see we would never catch him again.

As we stood alongside our wrecked buggy deciding our next course of action a Russian Army truck stopped on seeing our predicament. Again we managed to explain the situation and they offered to take us to the British camp in Wismar, which they did. The British were easier to communicate with and put us up for the night in German barracks they were occupying. That night became a nightmare for the four of us and we spent our time running from the bed to the latrine. The Russian feast on veal and the vodka and wine had so upset our stomachs, which were not used to the rich fare, that we were vomiting at the same time we were beset with diarrhea. I won't forget that night as I kept hoping that I could die and afraid that I would.

The following day the British drove us to a nearby airfield and we boarded a Lancaster bomber which flew us to London where they turned us over to U.S. military authorities who placed us in a hospital for check and observation. I weighed 105 pounds when they checked my weight but suffered no other disabilities.

We spent a week or so in London and celebrated 'VE' day there before boarding a U.S. Navy LST bound for Norfolk, Virginia. A two week trip but I was glad to be on American soil again and to be reunited with my family.

John D. Mattie

From "Broadsides"

"It was a man's world and there was nothing women could do to keep their husbands, sons, and lovers by their sides and at their service, when the glorious call of drum and trumpet lured them from the double pathways of peace to the exultant, insane highways of war."

----Seen on a Kriegies's Door----

Knock

Be perpared to listen as well as talk-
We have six gallant men who have bailed out of every type ship; under every type of chute; from emvery altitude, with any number of engines feathered; have seen more flak and enemy fighters, all types of weather and completed many daring missions. We have eaten better and worse food than you have; know more women, more generals, more night clubs in London and undoubtedly have a better rumor than what you have.

So - Come in Friend

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

1944 NEWSPAPER ARTICLES (in John D Mattie's War Diary)

DEMOCRAT

The Weather: Partial clearing, cool.



WELL DONE, FELLA—Lt. John D. Mattie of Beaverdale, left, is greeted by his crew chief, Sgt. Reinold S. Johnson of Lake Stevens, Wash., as he returns to his A. A. F. fighter base in the European Theater of Operations from a mission as escort to American heavy bombers during a daylight raid on Germany's war industrial centers. Lt. Mattie pilots one of the recently announced P-51 (Mustang) fighters which have made an outstanding record of victories against the Luftwaffe while giving Yank Fortresses and Liberators fighter-cover over target areas. Since the above picture was taken Lt. Mattie was shot down during a raid over Berlin and according to latest word is a prisoner of the Germans. (Official Ninth U. S. Air Force photo.)



Lt. Mattie Bags 2 Planes

AT A U. S. FIGHTER STATION IN ENGLAND, Feb. 20—(AP)—The greatest number of American Air Force fighters ever dispatched to escort a heavy bombing mission destroyed a record number of 61 German fighters today in the massive assault against German airplane factories in central Germany.

The previous record was 55 shot down Feb. 10 over Brunswick. One American fighter was shot down and three are missing from today's raid.

Some of the fighter pilots said they were within sight of Berlin during the massive daylight operations.

Lt. John D. Mattie of Beaverdale, Pa., destroyed two Focke-Wulf-109s and damaged others when six German planes jumped him.

Lt. Mattie, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mattie, Beaverdale, was commissioned a lieutenant in the Army Air Force early in Oct., 1942. He was graduated from the Air Force Advanced Flying School at Luke Field, Phoenix, Ariz.

APPENDIX B

JOHN D MATTIE'S MISSIONS (by Steve Blake)

COMBAT MISSIONS OF LT. JOHN D. MATTIE (353rd Sq., 354th FG):

Date	Aircraft	Comments
December 5, 1943	FT-N	
December 13, 1943	FT-N	
December 20, 1943	FT-N	
December 22, 1943	FT-N	
December 30, 1943	FT-A	DNTO (Did Not Take Off)
January 4, 1944	FT-R	
January 7, 1944	FT-A	
January 14, 1944	FT-A	
January 24, 1944	FT-A	Aborted (Landing Gear)
January 29, 1944	FT-A	
February 3, 1944	FT-K	
February 4, 1944	FT-K	
February 6, 1944	FT-P	Force landed at Cheddington, England
February 8, 1944	FT-A	
February 11, 1944	FT-A	Aborted (Rough Engine)
February 20, 1944	FT-A	Aircraft damaged by enemy fighter
February 21, 1944	FT-D	Missing in Action/POW

APPENDIX C

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT 2329 (AFHRA)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classification changed to ~~RESTRICTED~~ by E. A. SWADLOW, Lt. Col., AO by F. W. MURPHY, Capt., AO Date MAR 15 1948

WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON

2329

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an airplane is officially reported missing.

- ORGANIZATION: Location: AAF Station 150 U.K. Command or Air Force 9th AF, IX SQ
Group 354th Fighter Group Squadron 355rd F Sq Detachment None
- SPECIFY: Point of Departure AAF Station 150, U.K. Course 270°;
Intended Destination AAF Station 150, U.K.; Type of Mission Penetration,
Target and withdrawal support.
- WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT TIME OF CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: 10/10 to 3/10 strato cumulus tops 5,000 feet, visibility aloft good
- GIVE: (a) Date 21 FEB 44; Time 1340; Location in vicinity
of Dammer Lake, Germany or last known whereabouts of missing
airplane.
(b) Specify whether (X) Last Sighted; () Last contacted by radio;
() Forced Down; () Seen to Crash; or () Information not available.
- AIRPLANE WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check
only one (X) Enemy Airplane; () Enemy Anti-Aircraft; () Other Circum-
stances as follows: _____
- AIRPLANE: Type, Model and Series P51-B-1A; A.A.F. Serial Number 43-12161
- ENGINES: Type, Model and Series V-1650-3; A.A.F. Serial Number (A) 43-49342
_____ (b) _____ (c) _____ (d) _____
- INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number)
(a) Make Browning Type A.C. M-2 Serial No. 566394
(b) Make Machine Gun Type 50 calibre Serial No. 566333
(c) Make " Type " Serial No. 887775
(d) Make " Type " Serial No. 566472
- THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty Yes
(b) Non-Battle Casualty No
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRPLANE: Crew 1; Passengers 0; Total 1
(Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars; if more than 10
persons were aboard airplane, list similiar particulars on separate sheet
and attach original to this form).

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number
1. Pilot:	<u>Kettle, John Duane</u>	<u>1st Lt AC</u>	<u>0-730555</u>
2.			
3.			

- IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LOST KNOWLEDGE OF AIR-
PLANE, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted		Saw	
			by Radio	Last Sighted	Saw Crash	Forced Landed
1. <u>Cannon, James</u>	<u>Capt</u>	<u>0-725377</u>		<u>XXX</u>		<u>None</u>
2.						
3.						

- IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING
STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used unknown; (b) Persons were seen walking
away from scene of crash None; or (c) Any other reason (Specify) None

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

674-I

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

13. ATTACH SERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION WHERE AIRPLANE WAS LAST SEEN. (Overlay or plotting series (Third Edition) English Channel Sheet W. 40/4 enclosed herewith).
14. ATTACH EYE WITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRPLANE. (Statement of Captain James Cannon Air Corps, enclosed herewith).
15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNER OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE No search conducted.

Date of Report: 23 February 1944


WALLACE F. HANCE,
Lt. Colonel, Air Corps,
Executive Officer
(Signature of Preparing Officer)

Incls:
Incl 1 - Statement (Capt Cannon).
Incl 2 - Overlay of plotting series.

MAR 10 1944



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Air A. G.

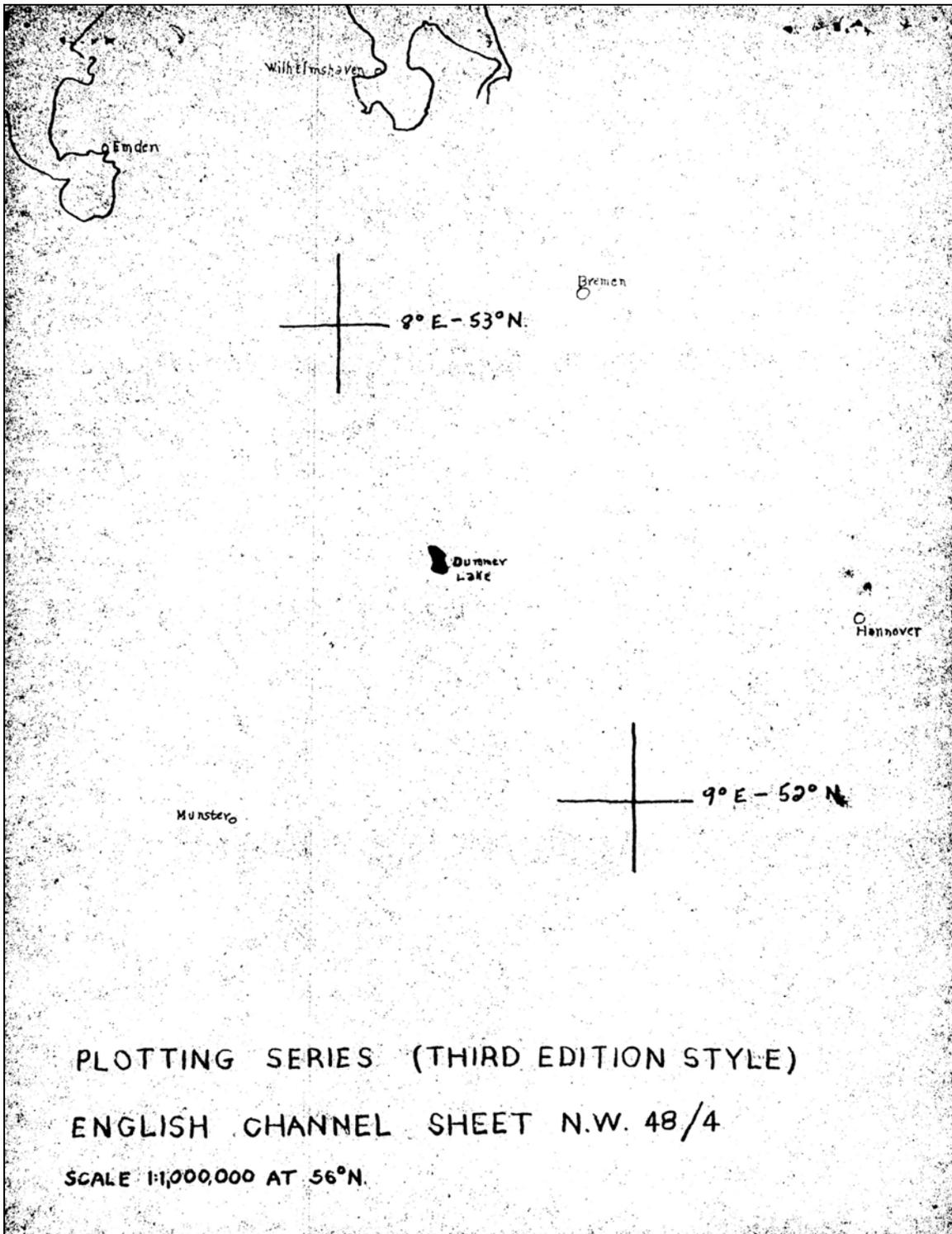
CONFIDENTIAL

353RD FIGHTER SQ.,
354TH FIGHTER GP.,
Army Station No. 150
A.P.O. No. 638

S T A T E M E N T

I was leading Green flight with squadron, providing close escort for bomber task force over target at Braunschweig on 21 February, 1944. 1st Lt. John D. Mattie was my second element leader. The group had just completed a wide left turn prior to RV with bombers. This was at 1340 hours in the area north-east of Dummer Lake. I saw about 20 plus FW-190s in a good position for a high side attack on our squadron. They dived for attack on our flight which was on the outside of the squadron formation. I turned into them, dropping wing tanks at the same time. I continued the tight turn toward the e/a which were now in a Luftberry. After I had gained considerable altitude and was out of immediate danger, I looked down and saw e/a in a Luftberry below with some aircraft on various sorts of acrobatics. I thought this rather strange and checked my flight, noting one member missing. I learned later that Lt. Mattie's wingman had lost contact with him when wingman's engine cut out as he dropped wing tanks. Lt. Mattie apparently followed the FW-190s down, and I never saw him again following this encounter. I proceeded on to rendezvous with bombers.

James Cannon
JAMES CANNON,
Capt., Air Corps.



CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE

2329

1. Your name John D. Mattie Rank Capt. Serial No. 0-730556
2. Organization 354th Gp Commander Marlin, K Rank Col Sqn CO Bradley, J Rank Col.
(full name) (full name)
3. What year 1944 month Feb. day 21 did you go down?
4. What was the mission, escort, target, Brunschweig, Germany, target time, 1400, altitude, 22,000 route scheduled, dir.
route flown dir.
5. Where were you when you left formation? NW of Hannover
6. Did you bail out? Yes
7. Did other members of crew bail out? No other members in crew. Flying P-51
No answers to following questions as they are not applicable in my case/
8. Tell all you know about when, where, how each person in your aircraft for whom no individual questionnaire is attached bailed out. A crew list is attached. Please give facts. If you don't know, say: "No Knowledge".

9. Where did your aircraft strike the ground? _____
10. What members of your crew were in the aircraft when it struck the ground? (Should cross check with 8 above and individual questionnaires) _____

11. Where were they in aircraft? _____
12. What was their condition? _____
13. When, where, and in what condition did you last see any members not already described above? _____

14. Please give any similar information on personnel of any other crew of which you have knowledge. Indicate source of information. _____

(Any additional information may be written on the back)

APPENDIX E

GERMAN COMBAT CLAIMS AND CASUALTIES LISTS (by Tony Wood)

Air Defence of the Reich [RLV]: 20. February 1944

Unit	Commander	Division	Base	Luftkampf Claims	KiA	WiA	100-60%	↓60%
III./JG 54	Hptm. Klemm	1. Jagddivision	Ludwigslust	6 B-17: 2 B-17 HSS	3	3	8	1
I./JG 302	Hptm. Lewens	1. Jagddivision	Jüterbog-Waldlager	-	-	2	5	3
I./NJG 5	Hptm. Hoffmann	1. Jagddivision	Stendal	-	3	-	3	-
II./NJG 5	Hptm. Fellerer	1. Jagddivision	Parchim	1 B-17	1	2	1	-
Jasta. Erla	Hptm. Laube	1. Jagddivision	Delitsch	3 B-17: 2 P-51	-	1	4	-
Jasta. AGO	n.n.	1. Jagddivision	Gotha	1 P-51	-	-	-	-
Stab/ZG 26	Obstlt. Boehm-Tettelbach	1. Jagddivision	Wunstorf	-	-	-	-	-
I./ZG 26	n.n.	1. Jagddivision	Völkenrode	2 B-17	6	2	6	2
II./ZG 26	Hptm. Tratt	1. Jagddivision	Hildesheim	2 B-17: 1 P-38	3	1	2	-
III./ZG 26	n.n.	1. Jagddivision	Wunstorf	-	11	7	10	3
Stab/JG 11	Oberst. Graf	2. Jagddivision	Husum	1 B-17	1	-	1	-
I./JG 11	Hptm. Hermichen	2. Jagddivision	Husum	2 B-24: 1 B-24 HSS: 6 B-17: 1 B-17 a.s.m.	-	1	2	7
II./JG 11	Hptm. Specht	2. Jagddivision	Wunstorf	-	-	-	1	1
III./JG 11	Maj. Hackl	2. Jagddivision	Oldenburg	-	-	-	2	2
II./JG 3	Hptm. Rohwer	2. Jagddivision	Rotenburg	3 B-24	1	3	4	-
Stab/JG 1	Oberst. Oesau	3. Jagddivision	Deelen	-	-	-	-	-
I./JG 1	Hptm. Schnoor	3. Jagddivision	Rheine	1 B-17: 1 P-51	2	1	3	1
II./JG 1	Hptm. Segatz	3. Jagddivision	Rheine	2 B-17: 1 P-38	2	-	4	-
III./JG 1	Hptm. Eberle	3. Jagddivision	Volkel	-	-	1	2	-
I./JG 3	Hptm. Haiböck i.V.	3. Jagddivision	Mönchengladbach	1 B-17	-	-	1	-
IV./JG 3	Hptm. Lang i.V.	3. Jagddivision	Venlo	1 P-47	-	1	1	1
II./JG 27	Hptm. Schroer	3. Mittelrhein	Wiesbaden-Erbenheim	-	1	-	2	1
I./NJG 6	Maj. Reschke	3. Mittelrhein	Mainz-Finthen	1 B-17	-	-	1	-
II./NJG 6	Maj. Leuchs	3. Mittelrhein	Stuttgart-Echterdingen	2 B-17	3	-	1	1
II./JG 26	Hptm. Naumann	4. Jagddivision	Cambrai/Epinoy	1 B-17: 1 B-24: 1 P-47	-	1	1	3
III./JG 2	Hptm. Huppertz	5. Jagddivision	Cormeilles	1 B-17	1	-	2	-
Stab/JG 3	Oberst Wilcke	7. Jagddivision	Neubiberg	-	-	-	-	-
III./JG 3	Maj. Dahl	7. Jagddivision	Leipheim	2 B-24	2	1	5	-
I./JG 301	Maj. Brede	7. Jagddivision	Neubiberg	1 B-17 e.V.	-	-	-	-
Stab/ZG 76	Obstlt. Kowalewski	7. Jagddivision	Ansbach	-	-	-	-	-
I./ZG 76	n.n.	7. Jagddivision	Ansbach	1 B-17: 1 B-24	2	-	1	1
II./ZG 76	Maj. Kaminski	7. Jagddivision	Neubiberg	-	-	-	-	-
III./ZG 76	n.n.	7. Jagddivision	Oettingen	1 B-17	2	2	1	1
I./JG 27	Hptm. Franzisket	JaFü Ostmark	Fels-am-Wagram	-	-	-	-	1
Combats & Casualties Reichsverteidigung 20.2.44:					44	29	74	29

21. February 1944

U.S. VIII Bomber Command F.O. # 228: BRUNSWICK, DIEPHOLZ, RHEINE, WERL,
GUTERSLOH, HANDORF & ACHMER
16 Bombers & 5 Fighters Lost

JaFü I. Jagdkorps/Lfl. Reich:

21.02.44 Nr.14	Major Günther Specht: 28	Stab II/JG 11	P-47	<input type="checkbox"/> Leteln: 8.000 m. [N.E. Minden]	13.54	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.61	Major Heinz Bär: 182	6./JG 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 12-14 km. W. Hannover: 6.500 m.	13.58	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.94	Uffz. Wenzel	4./ZG 26	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Luchtringen: 6.5-7.000 m. [Holzminden]	14.00	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.4	Fw. Hans-Georg Güthenke: 4	3./JG 11	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> W. Hannover: 7.000 m.	14.01	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.62	Major Heinz Bär: 183	6./JG 1	P-51	<input type="checkbox"/> GT-58: no height [5 km. N. Stadthagen]	14.03	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.95	Uffz. Wenzel: KiA	4./ZG 26	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Bad Driburg: 6.5-7.00 m. [E. Paderborn]	14.05	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.1	Oblt. Herbert Kutscha: 36	12./JG 3	B-17 HSS	<input type="checkbox"/> Raum Holzminden: 7.000 m.	14.35	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.1	Ofw. Robert Roller: 12 e.V.	6./JG 3	B-17 e.V.	<input type="checkbox"/> Raum Holzminden: 7.000 m.	14.35	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 ASM	Ltn. Hans Weik: 15	10./JG 3	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Raum Holzminden: 6.000 m.	14.38	Film C. 2025/I	VNE:
21.02.44 Nr.1	Ltn. Kilian: 20	7./JG 11	B-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Horstel GQ-7: 6.500 m.	14.50-55	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.1	Hptm. Erich Weitke: w.b.	Stab II./JG 300	B-24	<input type="checkbox"/> N.N.E. Fl.Pl. Achmer: 5.000 m.	14.55	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.1	Ltn. Ernst-Erich Hirschfeld	5./JG 300	B-24	<input type="checkbox"/> Raum Achmer: 5.500 m.	14.45	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.-	Uffz. Kurt Röhrich: 2	Sturmstaffel 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 km. W. Quakenbrück: 6.500 m.	15.00	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 ASM	Fw. Heinz Stöwer: 6	3./JG 11	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> HK-4: 6.000 m. [Leiden]	15.00	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.5	Uffz. Kurt Röhrich: i.z.W.	Sturmstaffel 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> FQ-1: 5.500 m. [E. Haselünne]	15.00	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.4	Fw. Gerhard Marburg: 1	Sturmstaffel 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> GM-4: no height [Harderwijk]	15.10	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.1	Obfhr. Zulauf: 1	8./JG 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> FM-9: 4.000 m. [W. Zwolle]	15.21	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.63	Major Heinz Bär: 184	6./JG 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> N.N.W. Rheine: no height	15.25	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 ASM	Fw. Gerhard Marburg: 2	Sturmstaffel 1	B-17 HSS	<input type="checkbox"/> FM-9: 6.500 m. [W. Zwolle]	15.25	Film C. 2025/I	VNE:
21.02.44 Nr.2	Fw. Fritz Haspel: 3	8./JG 1	P-47	<input type="checkbox"/> FN-2: 4.000 m. [Meppel]	15.50	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:

JaFü II. Jagdkorps/Lfl. 3:

21.02.44 ASM	Ofw. Adolf Glunz	5./JG 26	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 km. W. Bergen-aan-Zee: 7.000 m.	15.50	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:
21.02.44 Nr.-	Uffz. Loschinski: i.z.Arb.	7./JG 26	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 km. W. Amsterdam: 1.000 m.	16.05	Film C. 2025/I	Anerk:

Supplemental Claims from Sources:

21.02.44	Ofw. Karl-Emil Demuth: 8	2./JG 1	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> -	-		
21.02.44 1202	Uffz. Rau: 1	4./JG 1	B-17 HSS	<input type="checkbox"/> 05 Ost S/ westlich Hannover	14.00	Reference: JG 1 List f.	
21.02.44 1202	Hptm. Hermann Segatz: 34	Stab II./JG 1	B-24	<input type="checkbox"/> 05 Ost S/GR-2 5 km. S. Damme	14.50	Reference: JG 1 List f.	
21.02.44 1202	Oblt. Kirchmayr: 7	5./JG 1	B-24 HSS	<input type="checkbox"/> 05 Ost S/GO-GP Hengelo	14.55	Reference: JG 1 List f.	
21.02.44 1202	Oblt. Hans-Heinrich Koenig: 9	3./JG 11	P-51	<input type="checkbox"/> -	-	Reference: JG 11 List f.	
21.02.44 1202	Fw. Alwin Doppler: 12	2./JG 11	B-24	<input type="checkbox"/> -	-	Reference: JG 11 List f.	
21.02.44 1202	Ofw. Siegfried Zick: 17	7./JG 11	P-51	<input type="checkbox"/> GO Almelo-Hörstel 6.500 m.	-	Reference: JG 11 List f.	
21.02.44	Ofw. Robert Roller: e.V.	6./JG 3	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> -	15.05	Reference: JG 3 List f. 452	
21.02.44	Ltn. Leopold Münster: 88	5./JG 3	P-51	<input type="checkbox"/> -	-	Reference: JG 3 List f. 452	
21.02.44	Ltn. Franz Ruhl: n.b.	4./JG 3	B-17	<input type="checkbox"/> -	14.24	Reference: JG 3 List f. 452	

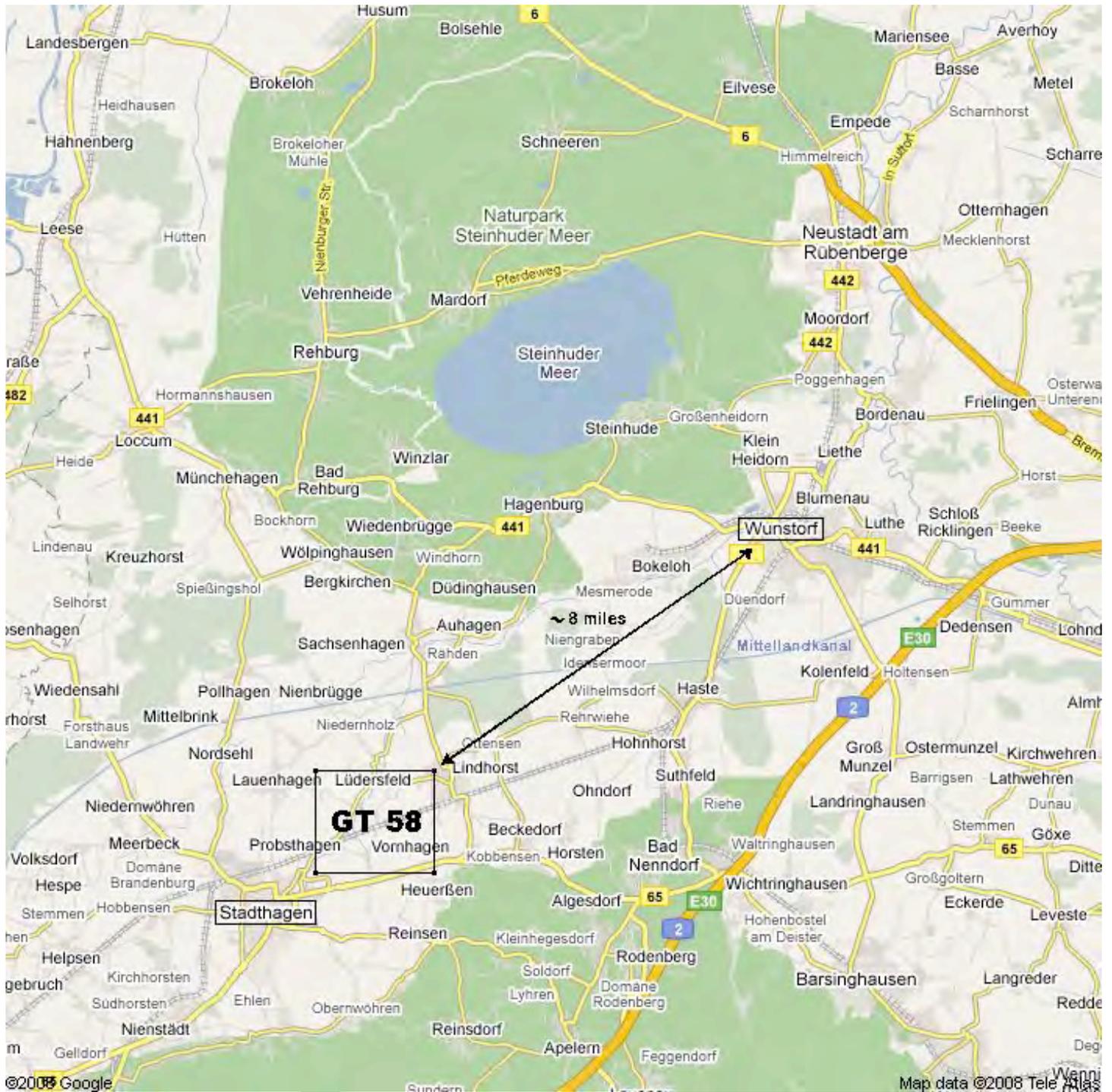
Air Defence of the Reich [RLV]: 21. February 1944

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Division</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Luftkampf Claims</u>	KiA	WiA	100-60%	↓60%
Stab/JG 1	Oberst. Oesau	3. Jagddivision	Deelen	-	-	-	-	-
I./JG 1	Hptm. Schnoor	3. Jagddivision	Rheine	1 B-17	-	1	1	-
II./JG 1	Hptm. Segatz	3. Jagddivision	Rheine	2 B-17: 1 B-17 HSS: 2 B-24: 12 B-24 HSS: 1 P-51	2	2	4	1
III./JG 1	Hptm. Eberle	3. Jagddivision	Volkel	1 B-17: 1 P-47	3	1	6	2
I./JG 3	Hptm. Haiböck i.V.	3. Jagddivision	Mönchengladbach	-	1	1	2	1
IV./JG 3	Hptm. Lang i.V.	3. Jagddivision	Venlo	2 B-17	-	-	2	-
II./JG 300	Hptm. Peters	3. Jagddivision	Rheine	2 B-24	-	-	-	-
Sturmst. 1	Maj. Kornatzki	2. Jagddivision	Langenhagen	3 B-17: 1 B-17 HSS	2	-	-	2
II./JG 3	Hptm. Rohwer	2. Jagddivision	Rotenburg	1 B-17 [e.V?]	1	1	2	2
Stab/JG 11	Oberst. Graf	2. Jagddivision	Husum	-	1	-	1	-
I./JG 11	Hptm. Hermichen	2. Jagddivision	Husum	1 B-17: 1 B-17 a.s.m. 1 B-24: 1 P-51	-	-	-	2
II./JG 11	Hptm. Specht	2. Jagddivision	Wunstorf	1 P-47	1	-	1	-
III./JG 11	Maj. Hackl	2. Jagddivision	Oldenburg	1 B-24: 1 P-51	-	-	-	1
Stab/ZG 26	Obstlt. Boehm-Tettelbach	2. Jagddivision	Wunstorf	-	-	-	-	-
I./ZG 26	n.n.	2. Jagddivision	Völkenrode	-	4	-	3	-
II./ZG 26	Hptm. Tratt	2. Jagddivision	Hildesheim	2 B-17	1	1	2	-
III./ZG 26	n.n.	2. Jagddivision	Wunstorf	-	-	-	-	2
III./JG 54	Hptm. Klemm	1. Jagddivision	Ludwigslust	-	4	-	4	3
Ind. Erla	Hptm. Laube	1. Jagddivision	Delitsch	-	1	-	1	-
Stab/ZG 76	Obstlt. Kowalewski	7. Jagddivision	Ansbach	-	-	-	-	-
I./ZG 76	n.n.	7. Jagddivision	Ansbach	-	4	-	2	-
II./ZG 76	Maj. Kaminski	7. Jagddivision	Neubiberg	1 B-17: 1 B-17 e.V.	-	-	-	-
Combats & Casualties Reichsverteidigung 21.2.44:				-	25	7	30	16

APPENDIX E : COMBAT CLAIMS AND CASUALTIES LISTS (Tony Wood)

APPENDIX F

21 FEBRUARY 1944 EVENTS' LOCATION



Lat : 52° 21' 40" Long : 9° 13' 20"

Lat : 52° 21' 40" Long : 9° 16' 40"

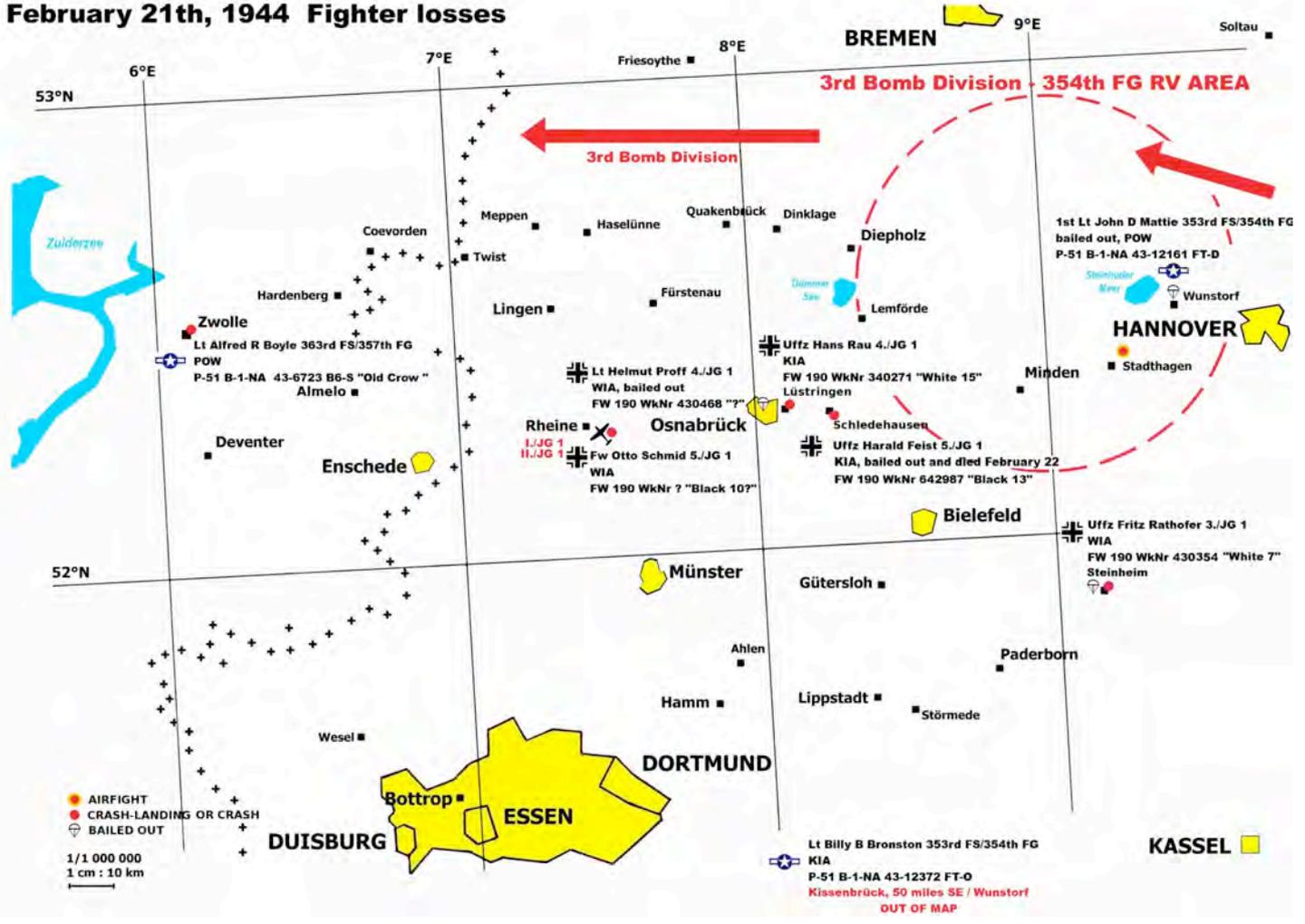
GT 58

Lat : 52° 20' 00" Long : 9° 13' 20"

Lat : 52° 20' 00" Long : 9° 16' 40"

Hannover ~ 19 miles N/E ↗

February 21th, 1944 Fighter losses



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www.crashplace.de crash locations in Germany

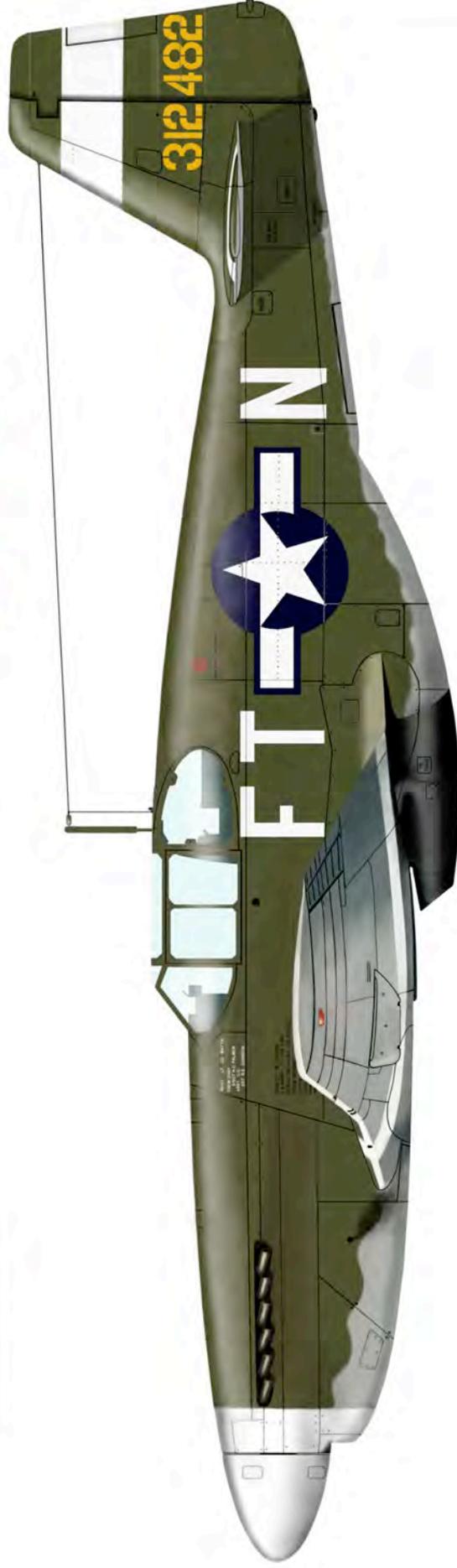
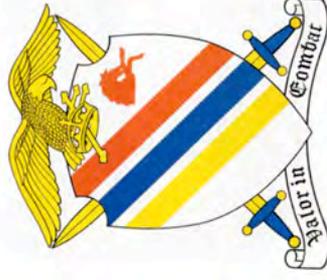
www.luftwaffe.be Erik Mombeeck's site

www.b17database.de about crashed b-17s in Germany, Miss Ouachita

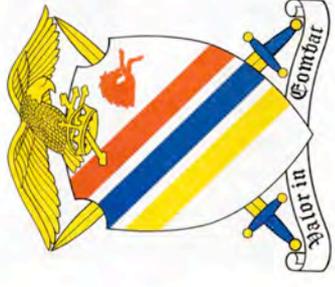
www.lesbutler.ip3.co.uk/tony/tonywood claims and casualties lists

www.91stbombgroup.com about Miss Ouachita

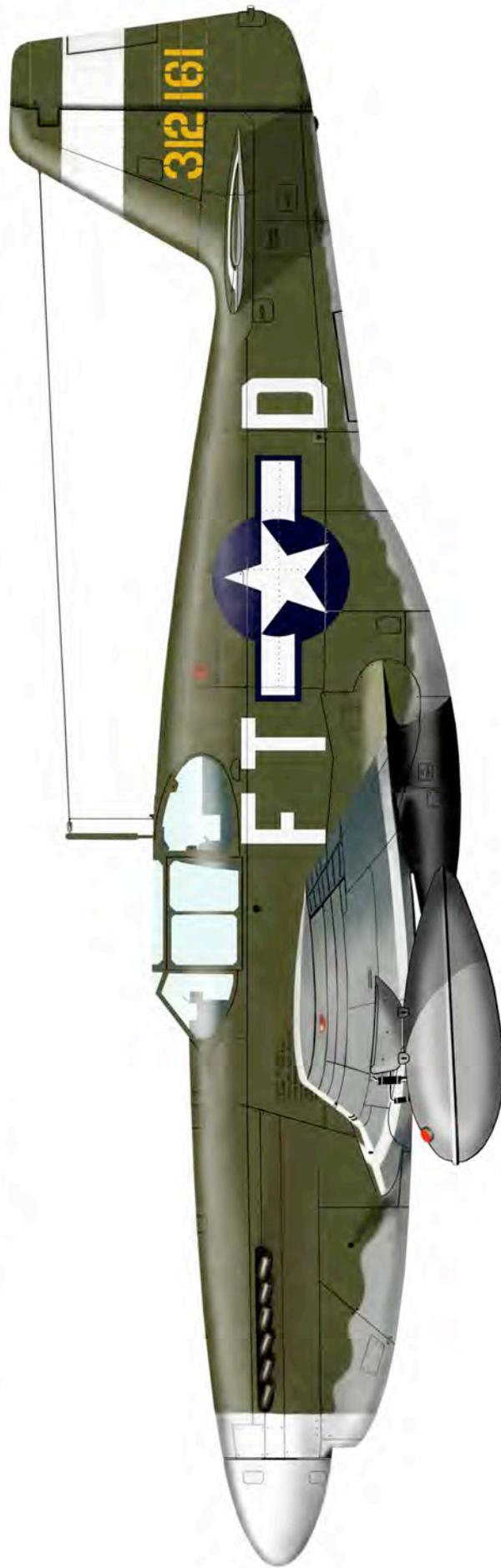
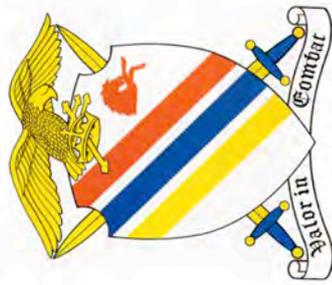
www.merkki.com POWs' web site, where I met Chris



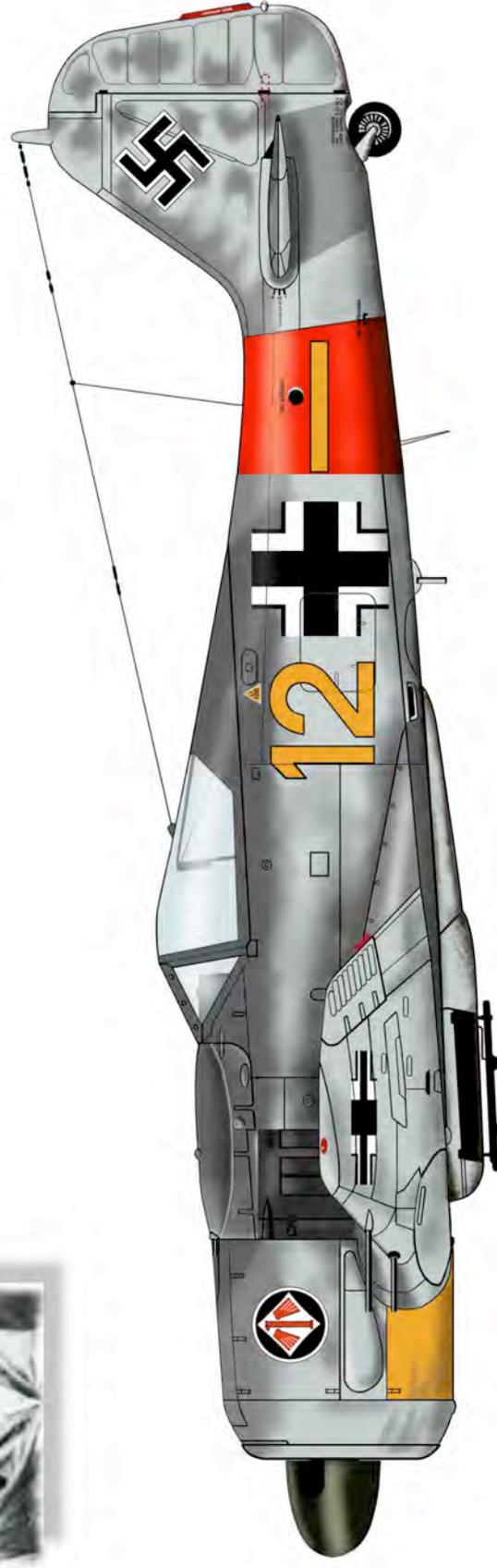
**North American P-51 B-1-NA 43-12482 FT-N
assigned to Lt JOHN D MATTIE, 353rd FS, 354th FG, 9th USAAF
Boxted, December 1943**



**North American P-51 B-1-NA 43-12380 " MY BUDDY " FT-A
assigned to 1st Lt JOHN D MATTIE, 353rd FS, 354th FG, 9th USAAF
Boxted, February 1944**



**North American P-51 B-1-NA 43-12161 FT-D
1st Lt JOHN D MATTIE, 353rd FS, 354th FG, 9th USAAF
lost near Hannover, Germany, 21 February 1944**



**Focke Wulf FW 190 A-7 "yellow 12"
Maj HEINZ BÄR, 6./JG 1 (6th FS, 1st Fighter Wing)
Rheine, 21 February 1944**

