

THE LAST MISSION

ARTHUR E. FARNHAM. 766th Squadron. A member of the 461/484th B.G. Association, a much decorated pilot. His 16 decorations included the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Soldier's Medal, Air Medal and Purple Heart. He passed away on 25 February 1984, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. Art received the DFC for the action described below:

It all happened over Vienna. We received a direct hit in the waist and two very close hits – one under the bomb bay and one just outside my window.

"Total damage caused was: One man killed, two men badly injured, the rest cut up, one of whom passed out from lack of oxygen; severed rudder and elevator cables, loss of oxygen supply in the waist, fire under the flight deck, gas leak in No. 3 tank, runaway prop on No. 3 engine, a big hole in the waist (two men could have stood in it) plus about roughly speaking 200 small holes, loss of electrical power (no auto-pilot to use for rudder elevator control plus no radio to call escorting fighters for help) and loss of our hydraulic system."

At this moment, T-Sgt. Thomas M. Connolly, Jr. of South Boston, Farn-

ham's Engineer, went into action as a one-man fire department and rescue squad combined.

"Tom performed his duties well," reported Farnham. "He put out the fire and told me to hang on long enough to fix the wounded men up. Not knowing that it is supposed to be impossible to fly a plane without elevator or rudder control and instruments, I flew it."

"Tom went to the waist and applied first aid to one man, and brought an unconscious man forward, where the navigator applied an oxygen mask and brought him to. Tom returned to the waist and applied first aid to another man and helped him forward. He then brought a third fellow forward where he could get oxygen."

Meanwhile Farnham was having his troubles, experimenting with improvised methods of flight to be found in no instruction book.

"Every time I pulled off just a little power the plane would dive," he explained. "So I would have to give her the gas again to keep her from overspeeding in a dive. I tried to get down to where we didn't need oxygen, but with a ship in that condition I could only lose about 500 feet in each semi-controlled dive, so Tom did most of his

work at altitude.

"Finally, about 30 minutes after No. 3 tank went dry, No. 3 engine couldn't get enough from the other tanks, so it decided to quit. Without rudder, I could only hold it straight by cutting No. 2 engine.

"With all this power off, the old blunderbuss started to dive, so as all the boys were revived by this time, I told them to step out for a breath of fresh air.

All crew members, wounded included, bailed out, with Lt. Farnham going out last.

"I landed about 20 miles from the rest and hit the side of a ravine, collapsing my chute and knocking me out.

"I was taken prisoner, but got away. Taken prisoner again by others, but was rescued from them by a band of guerrilla fighters that knew of my presence, because of the word they had received from the other crew members.

"After 40 days, we finally got back.

Art was a 33rd degree Mason. He is survived by his wife, Marjorie Farnham, two sons, two daughters and four grandchildren. He was 63 years old.



STANLEY C. VORPE. 461st B. G. Hdqtrs. Lead Navigator. Passed away 28 January 1984. Mrs. Vorpe wrote us: "He was very proud of his service to his country." His military service record: Graduated Army Air Forces Navigator School, Selma Field, Monroe, Louisiana, Sept. 25, 1943, Class 43-13 Flight 28, Stationed at Wendover Field, Utah, Hammer Field, Fresno, California; after overseas duty, Bow-



man Field, Louisville, Lockbourn Air Force base, Columbus, Oh., Separated from service Bowman Field, October 13, 1945. He flew 50 missions as a lead navigator and earned the DFC and the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters. He is survived by his wife, Oma Wick Corpe, two sons, two daughters, and four grandchildren. Mrs. Vorpe is a member of our Association.