

4 June 1944

Northern Italy. R.R. bridge. Missed the target (the bridge was too small). The Germans must have known we were going to miss because they didn't send up any opposition.

6 June, 1944

Ploesti, Romania. Oil fields. The usual heavy flak and many fighters. Jug got hit in the foot, and had to turn the plane over to Lt. Utley. Allen (the bombardier) helped out in the other seat, and they got us back without any trouble. I should add, we sweated a lot. We got to land right away because of wounded aboard. Looks like the foot isn't too serious, but we'll need another pilot, and it will no doubt be a green one which none of us are looking forward to.

9 June, 1944

Munich, Germany. They say Munich has as many flak guns as Berlin, and it sure looked like it, but we were only hit once. Our crew flew another plane today and had a replacement pilot who had washed out of fighters. Under the circumstances, I should have snapped on my chute when I got out of the turret, but as it turned out I'm glad I didn't.

Our new pilot flew us into some kind of thunderhead on the way home. We were all pinned to the floor from the "G" force and when the bell rang to bail out couldn't get my chute, which I had left back by the tail turret. It wasn't long before the plane straightened out and the pilot called back to see if anyone was still with him. He seemed happy to hear that we were all still there. So much for washed out fighter pilots.

10 June, 1944

Trieste, Italy. Oil refinery. Moderate flak. No fighters. No losses.

25 June, 1944

The B-24's hit targets in southern France: Sete, Avignon, and Toulon. They are all in the same general area, and I don't know which one we hit. It must have been Sete however, because there was no flak. Nine hours. No losses. Some enemy fighters.

26 June, 1944

Target Vienna, Austria. Had engine trouble on the way out. The group got ahead of us somewhere northeast of Zagreb and we aborted. Kept losing altitude. Threw out much of Uncle Sam's equipment to lighten the load. Salvoed the bombs in the Adriatic. Came on in without further incident.

28 June, 1944

Target Bucharest, Romania. Got all the way to Hungary in lousy weather, where the Group was recalled.

3 July, 1944

Bucharest, Romania. Heavy flak. No enemy fighters. Routine. Received a few small holes. Eight hours.

5 July, 1944

Toulon, France. Docks and subs pens. Feathered number one on the way to the target but managed to keep up with the formation. Part of the oxygen system went out and Palmer had to go to the flight deck for some walk-around bottles. He almost passed out before he got there. Heavy flak over the target but we weren't hit.

Our bombs failed to release by the usual method, and had to be salvoed, consequently missing the target by a mile. Allen (the bombardier) called me (aircraft armorer) and said there was a bomb hung up and for me to see what I could do. About the same time another engine started acting up and we were told to throw out some more of Uncle Sam's equipment.

While the guys were doing this I went into the bomb bay to check the hung-up bomb. It was hanging by the rear shackle with the arming wire out and the rear shackle jammed. It was a 500 pounder and there was no way I could release it. I finally got up enough nerve to defuse it, and we left it hanging.

When I got back to the waist they were still tossing things out, and in the meantime one of the servos went out. We were still in formation though, no doubt because the Group was descending. I have a photo of our plane returning from this mission.

6 July, 1944

A milk run to northern Italy. R. R. bridge I think.

7 July, 1944

Bleckhammer, Germany. Developed a rough engine on the way, but we were deep into enemy territory by this time and didn't want to turn back by ourselves. Were jumped by the Luftwaffe over Hungary, and they stayed with us all the way to the target. We were doing a lot of shooting and there were tracers all over the sky. Most of the time the Germans came in two or more abreast from the front, but one loner came in and knocked out the plane on our left. Joe was letting off a long burst as the fighter went by, and he put six holes in our left rudder. He and Smitty were throwing out the "window" (to confuse the Flak guns) between fighter attacks. This probably saved Joe's life. He was bent over getting an armful of the foil when a shell (or Flak) entered the bomb bay, through the bulkhead to the waist and out the top, making a large hole where Joe's head would have been if he were standing up. Had to shut down the bad engine over the target, right after releasing the bombs.

We were able to stay in formation (again due to the fact that the formation was letting down). The fighters hit us again but didn't stay with us long. About an hour later Jug called us on the interphone to tell us we probably wouldn't make it to base because we were too low on gas, and for us to start tossing out the excess weight again.

I wonder what the people down below think when all that equipment is seen raining down? Pretty soon Jug called again and said we had better maintain ditching procedures.

B-24's don't ditch well. Every one I saw broke apart. I only saw two try it though.

We made it to the Italian coast, however, and put down at Amendola, about 10 miles inland. The 2nd and 97th Bomb Groups are located there--both B-17 outfits.

Took a terrible ribbing about our "Banana Boats" and "Flying Coffins". Some of their people fixed our engine and put some gas in, and we took off for home. Today was quite a tour: Italy,