

This time we flew north by the Tyrrhenian Sea and across Northern Italy to the target, whereas on the first Ferrara mission we flew both north and south over the Adriatic. While over the mountains of Northern Italy pilot Dionne had a nerve attack and put the plane into a steep left bank and out of formation causing me to believe I would have another bailout for the same target. Our copilot, and the successor as 1st pilot took over.

Lt. Robert Fritts, co-pilot at that time pulled the plane back into control and back into formation. After that time he did all the flying of the aircraft from the co-pilot position. After our 17th mission Bob Fritts became our first pilot and Lt. Dionne was sent to the ferry command and flew non-combat only.

#### **Mission #4.**

September 3, 1944 Railroad ferry slips on the Danube river at Smederevo, Yugoslavia.

We were flying planes delivered to us from the 8th air force. They were much heavier than our own planes and flew awkwardly due to tons of armor bucket seats and flat armor around the flight deck. Thus, when power was decreased the momentum carried them (drifted) forward and the only control for speed was to slow down by raising the nose, which sometimes was impossible, due to the position in the formation to which it was assigned (we could have rammed the plane above us, which could be fatal to both planes, and possibly others close by).

One of the planes in our group flying brownnose position in this type of plane was caught in a drift on the bomb run. Being under the lead plane he couldn't slow by lifting his nose (risk of collision of 2 planes). At this moment the time came for bombs away and an unarmed 500 pound fell on his nose just forward of flight deck, crushing the control cables and pulleys and disabling the plane, which fell off in a tight spin into a 90 degree bank (wing tip down) generating an overwhelming spinning force pinning against anyone inside and their effort of escaping and bailing out. Because of this the plane fell over into a tight spin and disappeared into the clouds below. We saw no parachutes, no flak. All assumed dead.

#### **Mission No #5.**

September 11, 1944. Flew a round trip supply mission to Lyon, France in support of the invasion of Southern, France.

#### **Mission No #6.**

September 13, 1944. Flew a round trip supply mission to Lyon, France in support of the invasion of Southern, France.

#### **Mission No #7, 8, and 9.**

September 14 to October 10, 1944. Moved to Aix En Provence. Before the war this was a French Air Force cadet training field. We were supplying fighter squadrons with bombs and fuel because the Germans had destroyed bridges and highways. We got credit for three missions at 1/3 mission per ferry trip. Spent my 20th birthday in France.

#### **Mission No#10.**

October 13, 1944. Returned to combat missions. Target motor works factory at Vienna, Austria.

#### **Mission #11.**

October 20, 1944. Romeo armament works, Milan, Italy

#### **Mission #12.**

November 8, 1944. Marshalling yards at Villa Fontana, Italy

#### **Mission #13**

November 20 1944. Marshalling yards at Prerov, Czechoslovakia.

#### **Mission #14**

December 17, 1944. Oil refineries, Odertal, Germany

#### **Mission #15**

December 19, 1944. Oil refineries, Blecheimer, Germany. Saw several planes including a P-38, which turned onto its wingtip, split into two parts lengthwise at center of fuselage one side on fire and go down during the attack by three 109s.

#### **Mission #16**

December 27, 1944 . railroad bridge Vicenza, Italy.

#### **Mission #17**

December 29, 1944. Marshalling yards, Passau, Germany. It was clouded in over most of Southern Germany.. After much circling looking for a hole in the clouds to attack our target, we gave up, as the winds had forced us over Switzerland, so we held our bombs and flew east to clear that country. The weather forcing us to climb up to 28,500' over the Brenner Pass. On way to Italy, where we stumbled into a hot nest of 88 mm A.A. guns at Udine, Italy (N.E. Corner, near Yugoslavia).The Germans could see us clearly and peppered us with their 150 or more 88mm. A.A. guns, which were falling into the position of the box we were leading. The pilot took our box and lead us over to the opposite side of the formation, as we were taking many hits, one of which punctured our left main landing gear tire.

The flight leader instructed all planes to take their bombs home if they had enough gas to carry them. When our pilot called me, as engineer, I replied that we never would have enough gas to carry our bombs home and land, a decision I made when I recalled what happened to the plane we ferried from San Francisco when a live bomb dropped out of the airplane blowing off the tail.

Some days you can do no wrong.. My policy turned out to be a wise decision, as it saved Uncle Sam several insurance policy payoffs that day. I still have a piece of that policy. To our surprise we found when we had slowed to about 85 M.P.H. the pull of a flat left hand main gear tire was forcing us left approximately into the path of plane mentioned in previous page toward control tower. In spite of steering right, braking right, the drag was pulling us left toward the tower and we were completely off the runway, and all the men in the tower were trying to abandon it as we bore down on it. Our pilot said to the copilot: "hit the main switch", who replied "I can't" I'm too busy. Then I jumped across the copilot to reach the bar switch, killing all power. Remember, as engineer it was my job to assist the pilots. We ended the crash landing without touching the control tower, and without further damage to the airplane, with 10 happy air-crew members and seven or eight men from the control tower who could have stepped out onto the wing tip where we stopped, about ten feet from a drainage ditch leading from the runway past the tower. Some of the men had not made it to the ladder and off the