

Hummelstown, PA

Dear Bud

Here is a photo of our crew taken in front of our brand new B-24L



Standing left to right: Ferris L Jones-C/P, John S Wise-P, and Elias W Smith-N. Kneeling: Claude M Bassler-R/O, Everett A Evans-E, Russell J Hayhurst-N/G, Robert J Havlik-W/G, Ira Whiteley-T/G, and Frank Haverdick-B/G. Cambell L Gilbert-B was not present when the photo was taken.

Sincerely

Claude M Bassler 827 sq.

Dear Sir:

This letter is directed to former Commanders of the 15th Air Force, 484th BG, 825 Sq. In a recent "Torretta Flyer", Winter-Spring '94, it was stated that some 59 years ago pilot Major J.C. Landon and Bombardier Lt. George Adams were awarded the DFC. They were most deserving, but the other eight brave crew members who completed the same 36 combat missions with this pilot and bombardier were also deserving of this medal. All crew members (10) were interdependent on one another for their survival and for the success of each mission. All crewmembers endured the same horror of flak and fighters. No one was exempt.

Our C/P "Lucky", N/G-Person, E Kinsky, B/G- Konertz, T/G- Martin, N- Roth, U/G Cromer and R/O Freeman performed outstandingly as a fighting unit. The DFC was usually automatically awarded to all crew members of Heavy Bombardment Flying Units on completion of their tour of duty. It is unconscionable that the other 8 members of this crew did not receive the DFC.

Sincerely,

Bill Freeman R/O

Southbridge, MA

Dear Bud:

After seeing the 484th Citation in an issue of the 15th Air Force "Sortie" I was reminded of what happened to our crew on June 13, 1944.

Lt. Willie Fairchild's bunch flew on that mission, we used some other crew's airplane as ours was down for maintenance work, a 50 hour inspection perhaps.

On our way to the target upon test firing of the guns, we discovered that the only guns that worked were in the top turret, my position. As we approached the target area, which was covered by a smoke screen, we were hit by fighters who came right into the flak after us.

Now, before leaving our base, we all had been issued flak helmets, a new idea for us, and we were supposed to put them

Letters To The Editor

on while over the target where the flak was thickest. To store my helmet in the top turret prior to reaching the target, I just put mine over the gunsight between the guns.

As we approached the target I endeavored to put my helmet on. I discovered to my dismay that the helmet strap had become entangled on the rotor for my vertical elevation, and try as I might I couldn't get the darned thing free.

Just about that time, with the sky alive with ME 109's, two of them flew through our formation from the rear, and pulled in front and above the group, and they hung there like two sitting ducks for what seemed a long time, two prime targets for me with the two only working guns on the ship, and my flak helmet trapped over my gun sight. There were other planes of our group slightly in front and above, and I was afraid to fire for fear of hitting some of our own planes without the gunsight. So I didn't and missed a chance of nailing at least one of them because of my dumb luck with the damned flak helmet. "C'est la vie!"

In any event with no particular thanks to me, we survived Munich to go on to Innsbruck, and apparently did a good job.

According to the Sortie article, the 484th was cited for its successful bombing run at Innsbruck, and I wonder if that meant a Unit Citation with a blue ribbon in a brass frame. Was it official*, or was it just a slap on the back for a job well done? I am not looking for any medals, but if it was official I wouldn't mind having one for my "leave behind" souvenirs, when I go to that great bomb group in the sky. When I read the article I felt a twinge of nostalgia and had to ask.

Thanks for listening

James J Cox 826 Sq.

* Editors Note: Yes this was the first Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the 484th Bomb Group, and is official.