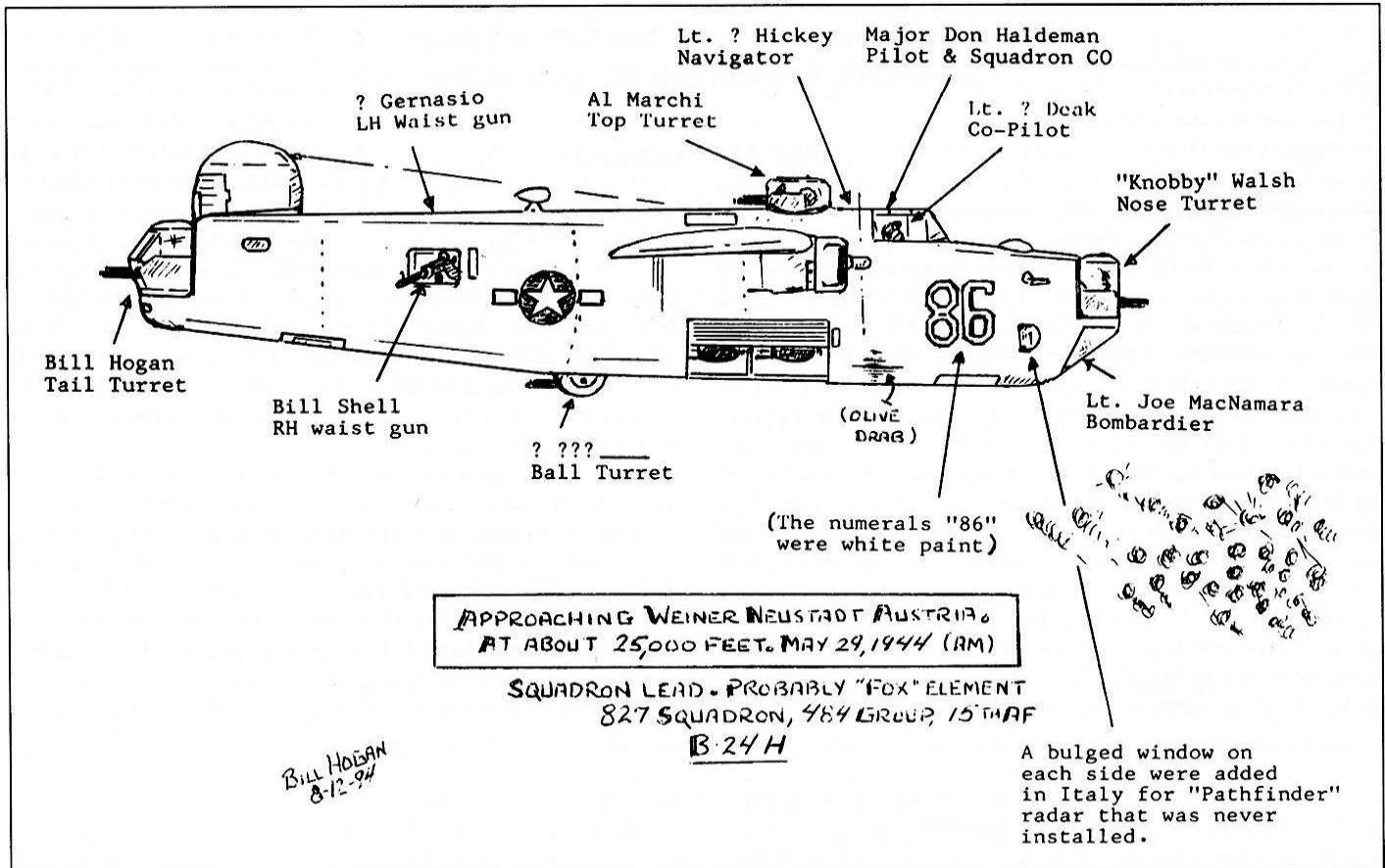


# How We Were Shot Down

William C. Hogan 827 Sq



I cannot confirm that the logo of the aircraft was “Hustling Hussy” or that the actual manufacturer’s number was as shown in the “Flyer”. However, the identification painted on both sides of the front section was, positively, the number 86.

When the crew was formed up at Colorado Springs, the Major kept an old crew man of his, from his A-20 flying days, as his first engineer. This made Al Marchi second engineer, but Al retained the top turret position and Gernasio handled one of the waist fifties. In the B-24, that did not have a top mounted gun for the radioman as in the B-17, the other waist gun was his station in combat.

My position in the tail turret was also a minor change, but I had taken over this spot when certain circumstances arose with a former crew while transitioning in B-17 training. I became a permanent “tail gunner” from that point on. The co-pilot, Lieutenant Andrew J Deak, had the misfortune to be chosen for this mission. Major Haldeman would pick different co-pilots for each mission, even though he retained everyone else of his regular crew. Included with my rendition is a sketch I made to illustrate the crew positions as we started the bomb run on the assigned target. (The B-24 heavy bomber certainly looked better than that!)

Joe MacNamara stated in his version that the navigator, Lt. Hickey, stayed up on the flight deck as he did not have to navigate on

this trip. Who can say whether he would have been better off at his regular station?

On the evening before the mission, we sat on empty bomb fin containers and enjoyed the movie, “Going My Way” featuring Bing Crosby and Barry Fitzgerald as it was projected on the side of a building. The next morning we find that our scheduled mission was to be Weiner Neustadt, Austria, (definitely a “double mission”). If this was a postwar movie they made, there would have been groans from the assemblage, but I never heard any in “real life”.

As we prepared to board the aircraft, Major Haldeman kidded the ground crew chief that he was out of uniform. It seems that the CO had promoted the guy, but this was the first time he had heard about it. After the usual line ahead waiting, we took off, then circled about to gather up the rest of the formation. Our element’s call sign was usually, “Fox” and it was probably the same that day. Our home base was call coded, “Snow White”. As we headed northerly toward the target, we were joined by a group of P-38 fighter planes.

At about 25,000 feet we approached Weiner Neustadt. The flak ahead was so dense that someone remarked over the inter-com that it, “looked like a swarm of bees”. The 500 pound bombs had been dropped, the bomb bay doors still open, when at least one flak shell exploded just forward of #3 engine. This definitely occurred and there