
* May be the two unidentified crewmen referred to in the hand written report.

The 484th Bomb Group was based at Torretta, Italy, about 50 K South and west of Foggia, Italy, and operated B-24 aircraft exclusively from April 1944 to April 1945. It is interesting to note that on this day June 13, 1944, because of bad weather the primary target was an aircraft factory at Neuaubing (Near Munich) (ME 410 production), the first alternate target was the city of Munich by pathfinder (bombing by radar sighting), and the second alternate target was the marshaling yards at Innsbruck, Austria. This target was selected and hit with an excellent bomb pattern at 10:33 AM. Because of the weather delay in the planned attack, a rendezvous with P-47 escort fighters was missed. The bomber formation was thus left unguarded. The formation was to turn west at Landshut on a dogleg path south of Ingolstadt to turn south at Augsburg and come to Munich from the southwest. This route would bring Lt Willen's plane in the vicinity of Ingolstadt, where it was shot down with a full bomb load. The city of Munich was spared because the radar equipped planes were damaged and were not available to sight the target.

The 484th Bomb Group narrative for that day reveals that the Luftwaffe was very determined to defend the aircraft factory and attacked with rocket firing ME 410s, and ME 210's attacking from line astern in air to air bombing, and ME 109's and FW 190's attacking individually with cannon and machine gun fire, five bombers were shot down before the primary target was reached. One aircraft was damaged so badly that it fell in the Adriatic Sea (Robert Bedwell's crew), where the surviving crew members were rescued by a German motor launch. When the crew was asked if they wished to be taken to a prison camp, or put back in the sea they voted to go back into the water. They were picked up by a friendly boat later on.

Robert Willen goes on to say that he did not know the other crew members very well as he was a replacement pilot and was flying in place of someone else.

Sincerely,

Bud Markel
President and Founder
484th Bomb Group Association

Dear Bud and Bea:

Too frequently when war stories are told they involve bestial atrocity or the animal nature of man. When I was with the 824th Squadron, I learned of an event which represented the extreme opposite of this and which may be of interest to the Association membership.

We had a T/Sgt. who was in charge of our parachute room. He was not flying at the time but was a former air crew member. As the story goes, during a mission, his crew was badly shot-up. While time has erased some of the details, I recall that there were some casualties and serious injuries involved. The aircraft was also seriously damaged and it was necessary for the crew to ditch in the Adriatic. The surviving crew members were picked up by a German hospital boat. Our airmen were made comfortable and wounds treated. The captain of the ship spoke perfect English or so it was related. As part of his interrogation, he offered our airmen the alternative of being taken back to Germany as prisoners or to be returned to the waters in their life rafts. The crew requested a return to the life rafts. As was related

to me, the men were given blankets and hot beverages.

A most amazing thing also supposedly happened. The German captain radioed our authorities and a short time later our men were picked up by a PBY flying boat. Again, much is lost in the translation when such tales are related. Also, I may be a bit off regarding the actual details. However, I am convinced that there is some validity to the events related above. I am fascinated about this display of humanness of enemies during wartime. However, I would very much like to meet or hear from someone who was directly involved.

I am also certain that this would also be very interesting to our other members. I do not recall any names or dates, except that it took place several months prior to my arrival in Italy in October 1944.

Sincerely,
Hank Ronson 824th Sq.

Editors Note: This was Robert Bedwell's crew

The following narrative was written by one of the gunners S/ Sgt. Anthony A Giammettie (on Edward Eibs crew) who was credited with shooting down one ME-109 on this mission.

Enroute to the target and already deep in enemy territory, the supercharger on number four engine went out. All efforts to remedy the trouble were in vain. We fell behind very slowly and were still at the tag end of the formation approaching Falenbach. As we turned and headed for the IP we saw the first formation of enemy fighters slide alongside the main body of the formation. We passed through a deep cloud bank. Suddenly the sky was full of enemy fighters. The attack started with an air to air bombing attack from one force overhead. At exactly the same time the force at the side, still out of range of our guns, fired their rockets. Most of the fighters were twin engine jobs and now they attacked from almost every angle and seemed to be all over the formation and single ships coming from every direction. Then they would form up again and come in in waves of three abreast. I was on the raid to Girugui three days before and I thought they were aggressive, but these planes came within less than 25 yards of the formation. We saw four of our bombers ahead twist out of control and away from the formation and we saw eight or nine enemy fighters in flames or plunging, smoking to the ground. All of this time we had been counting ourselves lucky. The entire attack was being concentrated on the main body and though we were definitely out of the formation and struggling we still hadn't been hit. But we knew we might be at any minute and we were alert at our guns when the first fighters bounced us. Either two abreast or singly we were hit by seven ME-109s and ME-210s at the same time. In the first pass we caught an ME-109 and saw it explode in mid air. They kept after us and were getting some hits. Then we caught an ME-210 and in the next few seconds got another one. They were both in flames and we watched one go down and hit the ground. The remaining four stayed for only a few minutes before they turned off, which was very lucky for us. We couldn't have taken much more. The hydraulic system and a second engine had been shot out. The strain on the two remaining engines was finally beginning to tell. We dropped eight thousand feet in a shallow dive and our pilot (Ed Eibs) warned us to be ready to hit the silk. The navigator suggested we set course for Switzerland. We jettisoned everything we could tear loose and we shut the waist windows to reduce air resistance. In this way the plane was kept flying until Swiss fighters arrived to escort us to a neutral field. The landing was successfully made by emergency procedure and before the Swiss guards arrived we were able to destroy our IFF and other secret equipment..