

**COMBAT RECORD OF
LINDLEY G. MILLER
ON
B-24 LIBERATOR**

451st Bomb Group (H)
725th Bomb Squadron (H)
A.P.O. 520,
C/O Postmaster, New York, NY

Combat crew 45

Pilot:	George E. Tudor, Captain - 0-806371	Silver Star, D.F.C. and cluster, Air Medal and Two clusters, Purple heart. Returned home with wounds.
Co-Pilot:	Gustave H. Meissner, 1 st Lt. - 0-819845	Air Medal and Two clusters - P.W. Germany.
Navigator:	Nathan N. Firestone, 2 nd Lt. - 0-1695518	Air Medal and Two clusters. P.W. Germany
Bombardier:	Robert C. Donovan 2 nd Lt. - 0-671304	Air Medal & cluster. P.W. Germany
Engineer:	Lindley G. Miller T/Sgt. - 12078843 1 st Lt. - Korea	D.F.C., Air Medal & Three clusters, 1 Presidential Citation.
Radio Operator:	Raymond L. Fisher T/Sgt. 33528380	Air Medal and Three clusters.
Armorer:	Harold D. Graham S/Sgt. - 35603124	Air Medal & Four clusters.
Asst. Engineer:	Teddy Gosinski S/Sgt. - 31342581	Air Medal, Four clusters, and Purple heart.
Asst. Radio Operator:	Orville W. Richey S/Sgt. - 35629957	Air Medal and Four clusters - P.W. Germany
Asst. Armorer:	Dick W. Moreau S/Sgt. - 16066100	Air Medal and five clusters.
	David Gould Major - 0406676	C.O. of Squadron for a short period. Our co-pilot on Vienna mission, October 7. Returned home because of injuries.
	William L. Lee Colonel - 0-17465	C.O. of 49 th Wing. Co-pilot on mission to France Invasion. 8/15/44 (Brig. General)
	James C. Dooley Major - 0-431130	My present pilot since Capt. Tudor returned home. Returned home because of injuries. Lt. Col.
	Kendall K. Fish 1 st Lt. - 0-822126	My pilot on my last few missions. Killed in a buzz job. Capri.
	Oscar W. Fyre 2 nd Ltd., Co-pilot	5181 LaGorce Drive, Miami Beach, FL.

L. G. Miller
R. L. Fisher
H. D. Graham
Teddy S. Gosinski
Orville W. Richey

1 enemy fighter destroyed (FW 190)
1 fighter probably destroyed (FW 190)
2 enemy fighters destroyed (ME-109)
1 enemy fighter destroyed (FW-190)
2 enemy fighters destroyed (ME-109); 1 enemy fighter
probably destroyed.
(FW-190, ME-109) (2 P-51's destroyed)

Meissner:
Firestone
Fisher

Graham
Gosinski
Richey
Tudor
Moreau

Irvington, New Jersey
Chicago, Illinois
Austinville, VA (Rt. #1, Box 54, Max Meadows) -
Deceased
Mt. Vernon, Ohio
Terryville, CT
Union City, Indiana
Bristol, Maine
Detroit, Michigan, 4242 Trumbull Avenue - Deceased

RECORD OF MISSIONS:

1. **June 22, 1944** - On our first mission, we set out to bomb Trieste, Italy. Our target was covered by an undercast; although we did get a lot of flak and saw five enemy fighters. We then set out to bomb our alternate target, Rimini; and hit our objective well. Our Squadron suffered no losses, but I took a hit in my top turret from a spent cartridge case. (1)
2. **June 23, 1944** - Ploesti, Romania: Today, we set out to bomb the oil fields which contribute a major supply of oil to the Reich. We had excellent fighter coverage from P38's and saw only one enemy fighter. The flak over the target (250 guns) was terrific, and I really began to crouch down in my turret. I know they haven't made the bullet that can kill me; however, it's the flak that worries me as it is addressed "To whom it may concern." I saw one B-24 blow up over the target and no chutes were seen. We hit the target well, and could see dense, black smoke billowing up to our altitude. We had an uneventful trip home during which I took a nap! (2)
3. **June 25, 1944** - Avignon, France: Today, we set out to bomb the marshalling yards and telephone exchange center at Avignon. We were told to expect moderate flak and a few enemy fighters. However, we never completed the mission as we were forced to turn back over Corsica because of bad weather.
4. **June 28, 1944** - Bucharest, Romania: Our target today was the oil installations and railway yards at Bucharest. However, while over Yugoslavia, we had to feather our number four engine because of a severe oil leak and were forced to abort as we were unable to hold formation even after dropping our Bombs. We expected to meet many fighters and flak was heavy.
5. **July 2, 1944** - Budapest, Hungary: Today we went after the marshalling yards and oil refineries in Budapest. The trip was uneventful until we arrived over the target. Many ships had previously aborted because of various troubles, but ours worked fine. The target was already well bombed; and, when we had made our run, I could see flames and black smoke up to an altitude of 20,000 feet. We witnessed some beautiful vapor trails from our ships and numerous dog fights. Our escort were P-51's from the Eight Air Force and some of our own P-38's. We saw many planes go down, and one ME-109 made a pass at us but no harm was incurred on either side. The ME-109 is a superb ship and fast as hell. We encountered a lot of flak; but intelligence briefed us well, and we were able to avoid most of it. The return trip saw moderate flak and a few enemy fighters. Beats the hell out of me as to where the vaunted "Luftwaffe" is hiding. Mission successful.
6. **July 7, 1944** - Blechhammer, Germany: Today we set out on a good nine+ hour mission to bomb the Reich's largest synthetic oil plant in Silesia. All the way up and back, we were hit by the Luftwaffe which was out in great strength. At one time, we were attacked by some eighty odd twin engine fighters. Some of our bombers were hit; but, between our own gunmen and fighters (P-38's and P-51's), we accounted for many of them. Our tail gunner got two; and a shot at several, but could not see any results. Our fighters hit many as they were taking off and it was wonderful to see. We hit the target well and smoke was seen to rise high in the air. However, they had the target covered by a smoke screen. The flak was amazingly accurate and intense and many bombers were lost. One blew up close to us just after the crew had abandoned her. We lost our next door neighbors.

7. **July 11, 1944** - Toulon, France: This morning, we headed out to bomb the submarine pens at the great French Naval base of Toulon. The flight was a long one, and we sighted no enemy fighters. Our P-47 coverage was good, and the flak was mediocre, but quite accurate. We passed over Corsica and could see the Swiss Alps quite clearly. We also saw Rome and Naples, guarded by Mt. Vesuvius. We had our wing commander, Colonel Lee, along; and he proved to be a swell guy. Won the air medal today.
8. **July 14, 1944** - Petfurdo Oil cracking plant near Budapest, Hungary. Today we went on a mission which would have normally counted as a double; but, under the new Fifteenth Air Force regulations, it was only a single. It seems we have to go to Munich or Vienna to get a double. The mission was uneventful. No fighters and very mediocre flak. However, our wing tanks weren't serviced because of negligence, and we sort of sweated out our fuel supply. I saw a B-24 land with its wheels up. It was a terrific crack up which killed one.
9. **July 16, 1944** - Vienna, Austria: Today we went after the Daimler-Benz aircraft engine factory in Vienna. This factory, it seems, makes 50% of all engines for the Luftwaffe. We were lead crew for our Squadron, and we ran into a number of enemy fighters. I saw four B-24's spin in and one blow up. I only saw one chute from the bunch. These fighters don't fool around; they hit and get the hell out before our fighter could catch them. A straggler is just screwed, and he might as well lower his gear and bail out. The flak was very intense, and they tracked us using rockets for the first time. The target was covered by an overcast, and we were forced to bomb by radar. We believe we hit the target well and had an uneventful trip home during which we ate K-rations.
10. **July 18, 1944** - Freidrichshafen, Germany - Today, we set out to bomb the Monzell-Dormier Aircraft works along Lake Constance in Freidrichshafen, the home of the German zeppelins. We went to high altitude immediately because of the overcast and then headed towards our target thirty minutes later. This would mean we would have missed our fighter escort and there were some 500 enemy fighters in the area. B-17's hit our target first and sustained a loss of 18 planes. I saw several go down. The flak was very heavy over the target, and the guns were tracking us rather than laying up a barrage. We hit our target well and had a beautiful trip home with spectacular scenery of the Alps and the Po River Valley in Italy. On this mission, we used composition P- bombs which are 50% more potent than T.N.T. One can imagine how we sweated out the take-off with 2,700 gallons of 100 octane gas and 6,000 lbs. of bombs.
11. **July 21, 1944** - Brux, Germany: Today we traveled to the Sudetenland to bomb a synthetic oil refinery which produced 50% of Germany's oil. We led the Group and very few enemy fighters were encountered. However, the flak over the target was very intense and accurate; and we got badly shot up. We had numerous holes in our plane and had the controls to our number two engine shot out. Four other ships were badly shot up; but, with luck, we only had one shot down. On the return leg, we ran into bad weather and had to go to 14,000 feet. Over Austria, we again ran into very accurate flak; and we could hear it clapping against the bottom of the plane. We were only about 2,000 feet above the mountains and would have been out of luck if we had lost another engine. We got back safely, however; but several ships had to perform crash landings because of shot out hydraulic lines or deflated tires. A very exciting trip, all in all, and we heard the results of our bombing were good. We were forced to bomb by radar because the Germans had the target well covered by a smoke screen. Yesterday we lost a plane on take-off. It crashed and blew up with 6,000 lbs. of bombs and 2,700 gallons of gas. I saw the crash and several bodies afterwards and it was a horrible

sight. Furthermore, it accentuated the risks we are taking though few realize it. They think we only have to contend with flak and fighters; but, that's only the half of it.

12. **July 25, 1944** - Linz, Austria: Today, we went to Austria to bomb the recently constructed Herman Goering tank and iron works at Linz, on the Austrian Danube near the Bavarian border. We were first attacked by some 150 fighters, mostly FW-190's and ME-109's of Goering's famed yellow nosed squadron. The FW-190's came at us from 9 o'clock, but overshot and attacked the group in front of us. We saw 14 B-24's shot down, one bursting with flames right in front of us. Our nose and tail gunner each got a fighter, but I didn't get many shots in as all the fighters were below us. Our P-38's appeared to avoid contact with the FW's. They sat above us and then turned to attack the ME-109's in the rear. The flak over the target was very heavy and accurate, and we were hit in our number two and three turbos losing a lot of power from the engines. We really demolished the target, mainly because of the fine work of our bombardier who was recommended for the D.F.C. and subsequently lost in action the next day. The fighters continued their attack during the flak, and our group was recommended for a Presidential citation because of this raid.
13. **July 28, 1944:** Ploesti, Rumania: Again today, we set out to bomb the great oil fields at Ploesti, Germany's chief source of oil. The flak over the target (now some 300 heavy guns) was intense and accurate, but in barrage form. We took numerous hits; and, on the return trip, we ran low on fuel and had all but decided to bail out over Yugoslavia. We threw everything overboard, guns, ammo, flak suits, etc. and managed to get over the drink. We were the only plane to return in our squadron today. It seems our lead ship (a Mickey) only carried two bombs, and we were forced to maintain a high R.P.M. and manifold pressure to stay in position. The target was very well hit, and I could see thick black smoke rising to an altitude of some 20,000 ft. Some of our planes were lost over the target; but others didn't get back because of the lack of fuel. I flew right waist today and liked it a lot.
14. **August 2, 1944:** Le Pontet, France: Today, we visited Southern France again. Avignon and received a warm reception. We were out to hit oil installations; but they screwed us - no oil. The flak was relatively intense and quite accurate; and three planes in the high flight were hit - one bursting into flames. It was a beautiful trip, but very long and tiring. We got several hits, and I again flew right waist.
15. **August 6, 1944:** Miramar, France: Today, we went up to France again, the whole fifteenth and twelfth Air Forces combined, to pull a complete sweep before the impending invasion. We were assigned the task of rendering useless the great marshalling yards at Miramar above Toulon. We hit our target well, and the flak was relatively severe, but inaccurate. On the way back, we sighted hundreds of ships of all types, especially concentrated at Naples prepared for the invasion. We were forced to land in Bari, Italy because of a shortage of fuel - some 40 gals. per tank by our sight gauges (inaccurate) - and the weather had closed in our field. We were relieved on landing as we were afraid our engines might cut out at any time.
16. **August 15, 1944:** Well, today was D-Day on the invasion of Southern France, and we once more set out to bomb gun placements, bridges, munition yards, marshalling yards, roads, etc. Our target was a road junction and marshalling yard just below the town of Frejus. We had to have split second timing on our target as our troops were to move in ten minutes later. We hit our target well and right on time without any opposition from flak or enemy fighters. We toured Southern France and came out over San Ramo, Italy. There were tremendous glider and paratroops concentrated on below us and off shore were vast quantities of ships of

all types. This was the largest invasion in history, and it was exciting to be a part of it. At four o'clock that morning, B-17's headed for the invasion coast flying in formation. They appeared to be covered with phosphorous (probably moonlight reflecting) and they provided an eerie sight, especially since they kept shooting flames. Two of them locked wings and crashed in flames close to us, and we also lost a B-24 from our outfit on take-off. She crash landed and blew up killing many of her crew. All in all, it was a day of activity and spectacular sights. It reminded me of a fourth of July celebration.

17. **August 18, 1944:** Alibunor, Airdome: Today, we set out to bomb said Airdrome in Yugoslavia near the Romanian border. This trip was a definite "milk run" No flak, no enemy fighters. We carried anti-personal fragmentation bombs and covered the target well hitting many grounded aircraft. No losses for a change. It was a swell raid, but pretty boring on the activity side.
18. **August 23, 1944 - Vienna, Austria:** Today, we went out after the Markesdorf Airdrome at St. Polten, twenty miles West of Vienna, Austria. We started with a six ship flight, but two of our planes aborted over the Adriatic. The flight went along smoothly until we hit the I.P. Then we were jumped by some 150 enemy fighters - mostly FW-190's. Our number two man, Extra Joker, was hit by rockets and twenty mm shells and burst into flames, later blowing up. She was our plane, and it was a really horrible and terrifying sight to see her get it and the men crumble up. I was flying right waist at the time, and could see the whole incident. She flew our wing for awhile like a Roman candle and then dropped down and blew up. Then, our number four man was badly hit and banked off towards five o'clock. They cut him in half at the ball turret, and then his wings flew off. She broke into pieces, and no chutes were seen from either plane. A short while later, our number three man was hit and went down with five chutes seen. Our group lost eleven planes that day, and the Air Force forty-six heavies. The Group Commander, Colonel Eaton, wouldn't allow us to split up our low flight; and so, if more or less left us holding the bag. Our crew got seven hits that day, and I was credited with an FW-190 destroyed. A short while later, we were hit by intense and very accurate flak and took hits on the flight deck, bomb bay, and ball and waist sections. With two 20 mm hits and over 150 flak holes, we limped home for a crash landing with a gas tank punctured by one 20 mm. and our rudder hit by the other. Our whole waist was shattered and our whole section was blown out next to the ball turret. It was a miracle none of us were hit. The target was well covered; but I guess it was one of the most disastrous raids of the war, and we were really lucky to get back. We also couldn't get our ball turret down which was bad as we were open for attacks from the bottom. It is ironical to note that it was only a few days ago that we were told that the Luftwaffe was through because of no gas. We were the only ship to return in our Squadron - 31 men lost out of 42 which is a 75% loss. Our group lost 11 out of 22 planes. We were also attacked by a German manned B-17; but everyone fired at her for awhile, and she left escorted by 3 ME-109's and had two engines shot out. Our group received a Presidential citation on this raid, and Capt. Tudor won the D.F.C. in recognition of a good job.
19. **August 28, 1944 - Giurgie, Italy:** Today, we set out to bomb a train bridge over the Danube which provided the only direct rail communication between Bucharest and Sofia. This bridge was close to Giurgie, Italy; and we completely demolished it through no fault of our Squadron bombardier. He screwed up royally; but then again most of them do. There was no flak or fighters seen which was a good deal.

20. **Sept. 2, 1944.** Today, we set out to remove the Szeged and Szajol railroad bridges over the Tirea River in Hungary. I flew today with Major Bowen (Pilot) and Col. Eaton (co-pilot); and it was a short and uneventful trip. We hit our target well and destroyed the large bridges at several points. No flak or enemy fighters were perceived, and it was a good milk run. On the third, another plane crashed on take-off and burned for an hour and a half. Finally, she blew up with ten five hundred lb. Comp. "B" bombs going off at the same time. It was a tremendous explosion and flames shot to 2,000 feet in the air. Steel was flying everywhere, and two red hot pieces dropped close by me.
21. **Sept. 17, 1944** - Lyon, France: Well, after a brief rest at Capri, we are now flying again and are temporarily attached to the A.T.C. We were to transport supplies (gas, bombs, bullets, etc.) to the Seventh army and leave them at Lyon. By the way, we were the only group in the 15th Air Force that was chosen for this type of work; and, perhaps, it was because we had sustained so many losses of late. The weather was poor over S. France, and we were forced to land at Aix en Provence since Lyon was closed in. We visited Aix, and I met a cute little French blonde (Pierete) and had myself a date for the evening. However, Tudor got pissed off; and we took off on instruments and headed home. No one else came back except our good little crew!!!
22. **Oct. 9, 1944** - Farerra, Italy: Today, we set out to bomb a railroad viaduct in N. Italy. We were carrying 2000 pound bombs, Comp B. We never found the target because of poor weather; and jettisoned our bombs rather than land with them. A very easy milk run and it is the kind we all enjoy.
23. **Oct. 7, 1944** - Vienna, Austria: Today turned out to be another very disastrous day for all concerned, especially us. We were out to bomb a large group of oil refineries only four miles east of Vienna, Austria. We had to fly a mickey ship (Burma Bound) from the 724th Squadron. Shortly after takeoff, we lost two of our four generators and were, therefore, forced to turn off the radar set and not operate our turrets. The trip went along okay until we hit the I.P. when we were hit by mucho and very accurate flak (400+ and heavy guns). It was a very large caliber type, and it went high or low - just level. The whole flight was badly shot up, however, I guess we get it worst of all. We didn't have any men killed aboard our ship as did several of the other planes; but, today, no planes returned to our base, setting down to other fields along the return route. The flak tracked us for a good 10-14 minutes, and we took a direct hit on the number two fuel cell and the latter gushed gas at the rate of about eight gallons per minutes into the bomb bay. We also had our No. 1 and No. 4 engines shot out; and our No. 2 engine supercharger rendered useless because of hits in the induction system. We also lost all of our electrical system and parts of our oxygen system. Capt (now Major) Gould, our co-pilot, had his left wrist all but shot away as well as being hit in the throat. Capt. Tudor was hit in the left wrist (cutting the tendons) and several times in the leg; our mickey operator was hit in the hand and leg; our nose gunner (navigator) was hit in the face and eyes; and our top turret gunner was hit in the head. I transferred the balance of the fuel out of No. 2 tank and used our No. 4 tank to operate the No. 2 engine. We limped home on all but one engine. We set course for Yugoslavia and got prepared for a crash landing on Vis. I got the gear down manually and prepared the waist gunners to pull chutes after we hit. We made a beautiful landing among other crashed ships; and they pulled old Burma off the runaway - her flying days probably over. We returned to Italy three days later. The Partisans that day were o.k. and we lost two planes outright and had three dead men on other returned planes. We hit our target well and should be justly proud after taking such a hits. Capt. Tudor received the Silver Star and me the D.F.C. for our parts in this raid.

24. **Sept. 25, 1944** - Athens, Greece: Forgot to write this one up. Today, we set out in poor weather (vis. 1,000' and raining) to bomb enemy fleet concentrations in the harbor of Athens. We had a very interesting trip, but missed our target - four heavy cruisers. This was another pre-invasion bombing. We were forced down at Leace, Italy, because of bad weather. We returned here shortly afterwards; and, today, I had Capt. Gould, our new C.O. as pilot.
25. **Oct. 31, 1944** - Polgovica, Yugoslavia: Today, we set out to bomb German troop installations in Yugoslavia. The target was covered with an overcast; and, so after cruising around awhile, we returned to the base.
26. **Nov. 4, 1944** - Munich, Germany: Today was another double into Germany with my new crew. Lt. Fish is a good pilot, but the rest of the crew isn't too sharp. The co-pilot is a "Good Joe," but too darned nervous for my money. But the rest of the crew isn't too sharp. We were after the marshalling yards and Messerschmitt Messerschmitt factory at Augshuy, a little town North west of Munich. We went over the target but couldn't pick it up; but we did receive plenty of flak. We then headed South and bombed the messerschmitt yards at Kufstein, Germany. We hit our target well, but also smashed hell out of the town which was very picturesque with the alps as a background. Some of our bombs were delayed action (as much as two and three days) so you can imagine the slaughter to come. Anyway, I guess that's all part of war; and the Germans are really asked for a total one.
27. **Nov. 6, 1944** - Vienna, Austria: We again headed today for Vienna; and I was really scared as hell as our last two raids there were veritable nightmares: I was again flying as engineer for Lt. Fish, and we were out to hit the Vienna South Ordinance depot; but had several other alternatives in and around the city. The weather was perfect; but I was really praying it would be overcast over the target as the flak is less accurate in such a case. Our escort was poor, but no enemy fighters were encountered. We bombed by radar as the target was covered by weather; and the flak was heavy but quite inaccurate. However, both our main gears came down over the target for no earthly reason; and we couldn't raise them. We lagged behind, but received escort home and arrived safely, but a little late.
28. **Nov. 7, 1944** - Sarajevo, Yugoslavia: Today, we set out on what was to be a milk run, to bomb marshalling yards and troop installations at Sarajevo. German troops were supposedly concentrated here on their way North from our rout in Greece. We made two runs over the target before dropping our bombs, and on the 2nd run, the flak became very heavy and accurate; tracking us throughout the entire bomb run. We were hit, but not badly; but we did wipe out the target completely and a whole infantry division with it.
29. **Nov. 11, 1944** Linz, Austria: Today we set out to bomb the Benzol plant at Linz. It was really cold this morning; and, even before we reached ten thousand feet, we were leaving treacherous vapor trails. At 26,000 feet, the temperature was 49 degrees below zero F. I was flying waist (because of the fuel transfer system); but shortly before we reached the target, we lost No. 2 engine. Previously we lost our waist, and nose guns which had frozen tight without heaters. We turned off the target with about five lbs. of fuel pressure in No. 2 engine and a severe gas leak in the bombay. I used the transfer system getting gas from No. 4 tank; but shortly afterwards we lost our turbo on Number 1 and had a runaway prop on No. 3 which we couldn't control. We dropped our bombs on a little town (unidentified) in Austria and headed for Rimini, only ten miles behind the front. We were forced to land in between the two runways as one was blocked with a burning B-17 and the other with a crashed B-24.

We landed okay, but our nose dug in the mud when our brakes locked; and it collapsed. We piled up in the middle of the field; but the plane wasn't too badly damaged. We returned home two days later in a newly repaired plane which proceeded to crash the following day when its wing came off. This was a poor repair job on a main wing and it took eleven men's lives and we could well have been the ones.

30. **Dec. 3, 1944** - Innsbruck, Germany: Today, we set out on a new kind of raid - a nuisance raid and we carried 500 lb. delayed action bombs (some to go off as late as a week) with screamers attached. Our target was the marshalling yards at Innsbruck which was sending supplies to the Italian front. This was a single ship mickey run and could be very dangerous if it was clear over the target or if enemy fighters spotted us. I was flying as engineer to Major Dooley, our new C.O, and the trip proved to be another wonderful "milk run" over the Alps. It was clear as a bell, but just South of Berchtergaden (Hitler's home) the weather closed in and we went to 26,000 feet. We encountered no flak over the target and had a pleasant trip home. I like those single trips a lot as one doesn't have to rendezvous over the field for an hour or so, but an go right on up after the target, climbing on course.
31. **Dec. 15, 1944** - Linz, Austria: Today, we set out to bomb the marshalling yards at Linz in the heart of the city. We were again flying a radar plane and was forced to take off with one generator inoperative. I was again flying with Major Dooley, and our Squadron was leading both the Group and the Wing. The target was covered by an overcast; but we were able to bomb okay; and, from all accounts, did a good job. The flak over the target was relatively heavy, but very inaccurate, and no enemy fighters were seen although jet propelled aircraft were in the vicinity. There seemed to be hundreds of planes over the target, and the formations were really screwed up. We had a good trip home, and I have given Mom a good birthday present by striking a blow at the enemy and shortening the war. Anyway, each mission now brings me that much closer to home - I hope!
32. **Dec. 23, 1944** - Today was a really close call when we were returning from a ferry trip to Naples. There was an overcast over Foggia reaching to 14,000 feet, and we tried to let down through it. Because we began to collect ice, we increased our descent to 2,000 feet per minute, letting down by mistake over a 4,000' hill. "Big Fence" an emergency station called us when we were at 5,000 feet so that was one close shave. Then our flight indicator went haywire, and I thought we were going to spin in when I got vertigo. Foggia Main shot up red flames for us, and we came in the field stalled it out with only 2,800 feet of runway left, and we crashed into a large trench - demolishing the plane. I was the only one injured out of 22 people and it was very lucky that we got down safely.
33. **Jan. 4, 1945** - Trento, Italy: Today we set out to bomb one of the most heavily defended lines of communication in the world: The Brenner Pass, sole link between Germany and her armies fighting on Italian soil. Our group led the wing at 21,000 feet, and our target was the Trento rail yards. It was a really beautiful trip up since we were in sight of the Alps for a long while; and they had a brand new coat of snow. We made a long bomb run; and the flak was mucho, very accurate, but of light caliber (88 mm). We hit our target well, but five planes had to feather their engines; and one plane went down. We got off with a few holes and had a long trip home touring all over Italy.

34. **Jan. 15, 1944** - Vienna, Austria: Well, today I again headed back for my chief nemesis, namely Vienna. We were scheduled to hit the marshalling yards in the center of town, and it would have most certainly been very rough had not the weather come to our aid. We went over our briefed target, but were unable to pick it up directly since the latter had 10/10's overcast; and our Mickey was inoperative. The rest of the formation headed for N. Italy to bomb; but we struck out for home since we were very low on gas. We had a late take-off since on our initial start, we had one runaway turbo and two completely out. We were forced to taxi around, recharging our batteries (which had gone dead due to the radio being played by men on guard duty) at the same time; and, after a second try, we had to pull excessive manifold pressure and R.P.M. to catch our formation. Consequently, we ran short of gas quickly; and so we bombed a marshalling yards which happened to be on the most direct course home. The rest of the trip was quite uneventful except that I had to balance myself on the cat-walk and close the bomb-bay doors, and then our navigator took us over three different flak zones giving the Germans some good target practice. One piece of flak barely missed Lt. Fish, the pilot; and I happened to be standing directly behind him at the time. My luck is still holding out and I pray to God that it will for awhile longer at least.
35. **Jan. 19, 1944** - Brod, Yugoslavia: Today we were briefed to go after the Vienna marshalling yards; but the weather again came to our aid. Instead, we set out to bomb the Brod railroad bridge, a fifteen hundred foot masonry and steel structure spanning the Sava River in Yugoslavia. This bridge was a vital communications link for German forces fighting delaying actions in the Balkans. The flak over the target was fair but inaccurate; and it seems we did a thorough job on the bridge. It was a pleasant trip all the way around, and I certainly wish I could pull four more like this one and finish up quite safely.
36. **Jan. 31, 1945** - Vienna, Austria: Today we set out to bomb the Moosbierbaum oil refinery, 22 miles Northwest of Vienna. It appeared that this would be a fairly good mission since we had been briefed on poor weather. However, we were hit by quite accurate flak over Yugoslavia; but only sustained one hit which was directly above the pilot's face. I was standing behind him at the time; but was only sprinkled with flying glass. Vienna had a very heavy undercast; and we were forced to bomb by instruments -- results not verified. The flak over the target was fairly accurate, but about two hundred yards directly behind us. We had a pleasant trip home except for the hydraulic system screwing up for a short while, and arrived home safely but late for supper.
37. **Feb. 1, 1945** - Vienna, Austria: We set out again today to bomb the Moosbierbaum oil refinery; but this time it was the South oil refinery. We were briefed on only 3/10's cloud coverage, and some 100 heavy guns at the target; and I really began to sweat it out. However, all of Austria was well covered with a thick overcast; and we were again forced to bomb by instruments. The flak was again quite heavy; but not as accurate as we are really accustomed to up there. Some enemy fighters were in the area; but we didn't see any of them. We had a fine trip home; and I am slowly but surely approaching that big-ass thirty-five.

P.S. We have just received the report that Moosbierbaum has been completely demolished which is a lot of credit to instrument bombing and only because the Germans one remaining oil refinery - Brux.

38. **Feb. 7, 1945** - Vienna, Austria: Today I went out in my next to last mission to bomb the Kornenburg oil refinery only eight miles from the heart of Vienna. It was another humdinger of a mission with us being briefed on the weather as C.A.V.U. over the target. We were scheduled to fly in number two position of the low flight with our Group heading the wing at 24,000 feet. Shortly after take-off, our ailerons screwed up as they were too loose, and we almost collided with the number one and number four men. We then decided to fly in number 5 position which for my money was a far better deal. It then meant that we could use our own evasive action after bombs away. As we came off the I.P., I could look ahead and see the target area and Vienna itself big as life. We made our bomb run and released our bombs without encountering any flak whatsoever; and it appeared to me as if we were to have a delightful "milk run". However, instead of turning off our run, we continued on course for another forty seconds which brought us almost directly over the heart of the city (mounting over 400 heavy flak guns not counting numerous mobile pieces). It was shortly after bombs away that all hell broke loose and this flak was again today very heavy and amazingly accurate. We were not hit too badly; however our Group and more especially our Squadron took a terrific beating. We had three ships spin in over the city - one bursting into flames on a direct hit behind number three engine. Our lead plane was hit behind number two engine and began to burn; but to everyone's great amazement, it blew itself out. Our number two man lost three engines and plenty of gas; and he was one of the few crews to bail out. We had a very pleasant trip home with our co-pilot plenty happy since a large hunk of flak missed him by inches. That day our Squadron lost six out of ten planes. And the group lost nine in all. After final tabulations, I heard the Air Force had lost thirty-two ships including two P-38's which had also been hit by flak while giving us close escort. I pray to God that my last missions will be nice and quiet and that He has mercy on the crew that went down today as I had some very close friends aboard the plane that began to burn and dropped from our formation. The latter killing all but three of the crew.

P.S. The plane that took a direct hit in its number three fuel cell spun over on its back losing its right wing. A second later it blew up taking two other planes down with it. One of our photographers got the pictures which resembled the shot of Extra Joker a great deal. I am now hoping to get this shot.

39. **Feb. 13, 1945** - Maribor, Yugoslavia: Well, today was the day for which I'd been waiting one hell of a long time - the day of my last mission. The Squadron hadn't planned to have a mission today; however, about nine o'clock orders came through to bomb the Maribor marshalling yards (40 guns). I flew in the deputy head ship as engineer for Capts. Miller and Westburg. I had hoped to fly with Major Dooley; but Westburg wanted me to fly with him. We had a late take-off and hit our target about three o'clock. The target was well hit, and we rallied sharp off the target since the flak was heavy and extremely accurate. Major Dooley was badly hit losing part of his nose and perhaps one eye. We got back quite safely although we lost two planes over the target and saw one burning close to our base. Upon landing, I should have had a big party in addition; however, I felt badly over Major Dooley and went into town to see him - not much to report as yet. Well, that's that on this tour of combat, and I must admit it's been a long, rough haul.

Finito

35 Sorties
53 Missions