

Mission Diary

by
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767th Squadron

Introduction

The missions that follow below were typed in July 1984 from my diary kept from July 1944 until January 1945. Many of these missions are still vivid in my memory, but as I typed this diary many things were refreshed in my memory that had long been forgotten.

As you read these missions you will notice that there is a total of 34 recorded, that would have been enough to complete my tour. I checked my log book and found that on 7 August 1944 we went to Germany and I had recorded a 6 hour flight time. I checked the book "15th Air Force History" for 7 August 1944. They recorded B-24s going to Blechhammer, Silesia on that date. I do remember going to Blechhammer one time when we lost an engine. We could not feather it due to it seizing up. I remember how difficult it was to fly home. We lost our electrical system, and a second engine was registering low fuel pressure which we expected to lose. With much difficulty we got back to the base okay. This was an aborted mission, but we must have been awarded a mission credit which could have made mission #7.

We took phase training as a crew at Boise, Idaho before being assigned to the 767th Squadron, 461st BG, 49th BW, Fifteenth AF based at Torretta, Italy, 10 miles southwest of Cerignola, Italy.

The following are the crew members

Pilot: Bob Roswurm
Co-pilot: Chuck Lomax
Bombardier: Ross Young
Navigator: Howard Sossamon
Engineer: Cottengain
Radio Operator: Chapman
Nose Gunner: Wyatt L Busbee
Ball Gunner: J Johnson
Tail Gunner: D Moore

Waist Gunner: Eisenberg

Eventually Bob Roswurn, Ross Young, and Howard Sossamon went into operations. They now flew group lead with different crews. I checked out and took our original crew.

Mission List

Linz, Austria. Ship #74. 25 July 1944

Bomb Load: Five 1,000 lbs., Fuel: full tanks 2700 gallons.

Four groups took part in the raid on the Tiger & Panther Tank Works which was 2,000 yards square. Fighter escort met us over the Adriatic Sea. Fighters were P-47s, P-38s, and P-51s. The group was hit extremely hard by ME-109s, FW-190s, and JU-288s, for a total of 150 attacking enemy fighters. Our gunners set all kinds of records, one ball gunner shot down 8 fighters; another crew reported 13 enemy shot down; a third crew reported 12 more enemy destroyed. Our crew and one other had to abort before hitting the IP. Our #4 engine had dropping oil pressure.

Mission No. 1

Pec, Yugoslavia. Ship #74. 27 July 1944

Bomb Load: Six 1,000 lb. Demolition bombs. Fuel: 2300 gallons

The 461st BG was the only one taking part in the raid. Mission was on the marshalling yards in the City of Pec. We hit the wrong town. No fighter escort, no flak, or enemy fighters seen. Time: 4 hours 5 minutes

Mission No. 2

Thorina, Greece. Ship #74. 28 July 1944

Bomb load: Six 1,000 lbs. Fuel: 2300 Gallons

The 461st BG was the only group to take part. Raid on rail bridgehead at Thorina. We completely destroyed the bridgehead and part of the town. No fighter escort, No enemy fighters, and only one flak burst. Bomb Accuracy 88.2%. Time: 5 hours 30 minutes.

Mission No. 3

Budapest, Hungary. Ship No. unknown. 30 July 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. high explosive. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

Target: Duna Aircraft Factory. The 49th BW composed of the 451st, 461st, and the 484th Bomb Groups hit the target along with other units. One B-17 and one B-24 were shot down. One FW-190 was shot down. The flak was extremely heavy, our ship was hit in the tail. Fighter attacks were not intense. The target was destroyed as far as the observers could see. A good bomb pattern was seen in the photos, but the target was missed. Time: 6 hours, 30 minutes.

Mission No. 4

Bucharest, Rumania. Ship #74. 31 July 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. high explosives. Fuel: 2700 gallons.

Target: Prahova Oil Refinery. 49th BW comprised of the 451st, 461st, and 484th Bomb Groups took part. P-38s and P-51s flew escort. Flak was extremely heavy, no enemy fighters were seen. 484th and 451st were hit hard with flak. As far as the observers could see, the bombs fell short, some hit the target. Time 7 hours, 30 minutes. Bombing height: 23,000 feet.

Mission No. 5

Oberraderch Chemical Works. Ship #60. 3 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 High explosive. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

49th BW 451st, 461st, 484th BG, and 5th BW (B-17s) took part. Fighter escort P-38s and P-51s. Opposition was about 74 flak guns, and 100 to 125 single engine fighters, and 15 to 25 twin engine fighters. We could not locate the target due to cloud cover. We bombed the first alternate target, which was Friedrichshaven Zahnabrik Works. Bombing accuracy was not known. Flak was moderate, but our ship did receive three holes in the left wing. Time: 7 hours. Bombing altitude: 22,000 feet.

Mission No. 6

Miramas, France. Ship #60. 6 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. high explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Marshalling yards. Escort was provided by P-38s and P51s. The flak was

very heavy and accurate. A close burst hit our nose gunner Busbee, cutting his oxygen hose in two. The target was hit and completely destroyed as seen from the air. Time: 7 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing height: 22,000 feet.

Mission No. 7

See second paragraph of introduction for explanation.

Mission No. 8

Ploesti, Rumania. Ship #65. 10 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

Target: Xenia Oil Refinery. P-51s flew escort. We flew #3 in Able flight of second attack unit. 50 single engine enemy fighters encountered by other bomb groups. The flak was like one big cloud, and was very accurate. There was a heavy smoke screen over the target so target damage could not be observed. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes. Bombing altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 9

Genoa, Italy. Ship #63. 13 August 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 Gallons

Target: Coastal guns. No fighter escort provided. We flew #4 position in C flight in the second attack unit. Encountered no enemy fighters, but ran into very accurate flak. Missed the target. Time: 6 hours, 45 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 10

Southern France. Ship #68. 14 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Coastal defenses. No fighter escort was provided. We flew #2 position in A flight in the first attack unit. Encountered no fighters or flak opposition. Target hit with very good pattern. Good mission. Time 6 hours, 5 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 18,000 feet.

Mission No. 11

San Raphael, France. Ship #63. 15 August 1944

Bomb Load: Thirty-six 100 lb. general purpose demolition bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Coastal defenses and beach (264A) in preparation for the Invasion of Southern France. We had the most pinpoint target to hit, supposedly our group has the best bombing score. Our mission was to soften up the beach for the invasion forces. No flak or enemy fighters were observed. We hit the target with a good pattern. We observed many naval ships and aircraft carriers in the waters off of the target. Time: 6 hours, 15 minutes. Bombing height: 14,000 feet.

Mission No. 12

Ploesti, Rumania. Ship unknown. 17 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. high explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Rumania American Axis Refineries. We were the second group to go over the target. 31 planes started over Ploesti, 20 made it over the target. The rest aborted. Fighter escort: P-38s, and P-51s. Flak was very accurate and very thick. One ship in what was left of our squadron was damaged heavily. T. C. Moore feathered one engine and was losing another. Rosencrans flew his wing toward home. T. C. got as far as the Yugoslavia Coast and bailed his crew out. They were picked up by a German E boat. Time 7 hours, 45 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 23,000 feet.

Mission No. 13

Budapest, Hungary. Ship #67. 20 August 1944

Bomb Load: 4,000 lbs. fragmentation bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Szolnok Airfield. With no fighter escort and very little flak. One ship in our wing was shot down. We hit the target and destroyed many airplanes on the ground. Time: 7 hours, 5 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 18,000 feet.

Mission No. 14

Vienna, Austria. Ship #69. 22 August 1944

Bomb Load: Four 1,000 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Lobavoil Refinery. We were supposed to have P-38 escort, but they never showed up. We were the second group to go over the target. Col. Applegate led the group. Approximately 10 minutes before the IP about thirty-

five FW-190s and three ME-109s hit us knocking down seven B-24s in the group in front of us. We went over the target and received a hit in our #4 engine, which we had to feather. Busbee our nose gunner shot down a FW-190 which exploded almost immediately. The German pilot ejected safely. The tail gunner, D Moore, was wounded in the foot with flak over the target. Time: 6 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 15

Vienna, Austria. Ship #65. 23 August 1944

Bomb Load: 4,000 lbs. fragmentation bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Military Airfield. We had P-51s & P-38s to escort us. We were the third group to go over the target. Approximately 15 minutes before the IP the German fighters hit us again. They shot down ten B-24s in the group in front of us and one out of our squadron. We did not have any flak until we left the target. We lost our hydraulic system due to one of the accumulators being hit with flak. Cottengain, our engineer, repaired it sufficiently so we would have pressure to land safely. Time: 6 hours, 50 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 21,000 feet.

Mission No. 16

Bucharest, Rumania. Ship #68. 26 August 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Military Airfield. We had P-51 escort, they did a good job. We were the second group over the target. No enemy fighters or flak encountered. Bomb pattern was very good destroying the field. Time: 7 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing Altitude: 23,000 feet.

Mission No. 17

Budapest, Hungary. Ship #68. 28 August 1944

Bomb Load: Four 1,000 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Bridge on the outskirts of Budapest. We were squadron lead and were supposed to have P-51s escorting us. We saw no enemy fighters, but there was quite a bit of flak. Szolnok RR bridge was destroyed. Time: 6 hour 55 minutes. Bombing altitude: 20,000 feet.

Mission No. 18

Ferrara, Italy. Ship #68. 1 September 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

Target: Railroad bridge. We were deputy lead of the group. Some flak was experienced, but no fighters were encountered. We hit the target, but it was found to be the wrong bridge. Time: 5 hours, 55 minutes. Bombing altitude: 24,000 feet.

Mission No. 19

Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Ship # 68. 3 September 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

Target: Slips for barges. We had no fighter escort, and did not encounter any enemy fighters or flak. We hit the target as briefed. Time: 5 hours, 35 minutes. Bombing altitude: 18,000 feet.

Rest Camp. 4 September 1944

We went to the Isle of Capri for a week's rest.

Mission No. 20

Lyon, France. Ship #72. 13 September 1944

Fuel: 3600 gallons

Mission: Transporting supplies. Two 55 gallons of oil. Ammunition and empty drums for motor fuel. The railroad and highway bridges over the Rhone river were destroyed by the Germans and the Allied Armies and Air Forces. It was difficult getting supplies to our armies who had moved up the Rhone River valley in the vicinity of Lyon.

Mission No. 21

Lyon, France. Ship #60. 17 September 1944

Fuel Load: 3600 gallons

Two 55 gallons of oil. Ammunition and empty fuel drums. We lost an

engine on our way up to Lyon, the weather was bad, and getting worse as we flew north. We decided that we should land at the first available landing strip, and so informed the crew. We had to be careful as some strips were still being used by the Germans. One of the crew spotted a strip as we hit a break in the clouds. We started to circle and let down to get a better look. When we found it, it turned out to be a P-47 strip on a farm field. We decided to land in a driving rain storm on this short field. This would be extremely tricky even under ideal conditions. When we landed our main wheels locked and we slid the whole length of the runway across a concrete highway into the mud on the other side where we became stuck. We spent the rest of the day digging the plane out. In the afternoon a C-47 with a load of sailors on board slid down the runway just as we did and headed right for us. At the last possible moment he did a controlled ground loop avoiding a nasty wreck. We were in Valance, France for a week.

Mission No. 22

Athens, Greece. Ship #68. 25 September 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Dock installations. We had no fighter escort as it was not needed. Flak was weak. Newton's crew went down and crash landed on an island that the British had just recaptured. They were returned to the squadron later. Time: 6 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission No. 23

Vienna, Austria. Ship #63. 7 October 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lbs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

The whole air force was to hit various targets in the Vienna area. There was no fighters to be seen, but the flak was very intense as always in this area. We dropped our bombs on a secondary target in Hungary, and received one mission credit. We destroyed the marshalling yards there. Time: 7 hours, 35 minutes.

Mission No. 24

Venice, Italy. Ship #69. 10 October 1944

Bomb Load: Ten 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

Target: Marshalling Yard. We were escorted by P-38s which provided good cover. One ME-210 came out of the clouds and was as surprised as we to see him. He quickly returned to the clouds upon seeing our P-38 cover. We encountered some flak. We did not drop our bombs because the target could not be seen. Time: 5 hours 50 minutes.

Mission No. 25

Bologna, Italy. Ship #63. 12 October 1944

Bomb Load: Thirty-six 100 lb.

Target: German Store House. This was an all out raid in conjunction with the Fifth Army to take the city of Bologna. Our escort was provided by P-38s. We did not see any enemy fighters. There was some flak, but it was very inaccurate. Our bombing was good. Time: 6 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission No. 26

Vienna, Austria. Ship #65. 13 October 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Oil refinery. We had P-38 escort which seemed to be spread out all over the sky. We saw two enemy aircraft that stayed out of range near the clouds, and never did attack. This was a real bad luck Friday the 13th. A plane blew up on take off, and we had a serious mid-air over Mt. Melfi during assembly. One crew was killed. The other ship made it back to the base. Our target was an oil refinery right in the heart of Vienna. The group took a lot of damage from very accurate flak. We could hardly get to the strip when we got home due to damaged ships cluttering the runway. Many had wounded aboard that had to be tended to immediately. I flew with Herbert's crew today. He is a good pilot and commander. A large plume of smoke came up from the target. Time: 8 hours, 40 minutes.

Mission No. 27

Blechhammer, Silesia. Ship #71. 14 October 1944

Bomb Load: Seven 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Oil Refinery. Escort provided by P-38s and P-51s. We could not make Silesia due to poor weather encountered. We picked a target of

opportunity in Czechoslovakia. Bombing results were good. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes.

Mission No. 28

Milan, Italy. Ship #71. 20 October 1944

Bomb Load: Eight 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Automotive works. We had no escort. We saw four German airfields, two of which had no parked aircraft. Two of the airfields were observed to have single and twin engine fighters on them. Bombing results not known. Time: 8 hours.

Mission No. 29

Augsburg, Germany. Ship #75. 4 November 1944

Bomb Load: Six 500 lb. clusters of incendiary bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Escort was provided by P-51s. We made it as far as the Alps, when 3 and 4 superchargers gave out. It was impossible to go on and we could not stay with the formation. We were flying number 4 position. I lowered the landing gear to signal those flying my wing. We dropped our bombs on a marshalling yard in Northern Italy. We must have hit oil storage, when the Fifteenth returned from Augsburg they reported a black plume of smoke reaching 23,000 feet. This was my first mission as first officer. Time: 5 hours, 35 minutes.

Mission No. 30

Sarajevo, Yugoslavia. Ship #60. 5 November 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. Fuel: 2300 gallons

We had good escort provided by P-38s. We couldn't drop because of cloud cover. We returned to base with the bombs. Time: 4 hours, 5 minutes.

Mission No. 31

Bolzano, Italy. Ship #60. 6 November 1944

Bomb Load: Nine 500 lb. RDX explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: Middle transformer. We took the Germans by surprise. They were just beginning to smoke the pass as we arrived. The flak was very intense. We were told that the flak guns were mounted up to 10,000 feet in the mountains which almost put us in a cross fire situation. One co-pilot was killed instantly by a burst that hit close to him. We had two main fuel cells punctured in the right wing that had to be replaced. Time: 6 hours, 50 minutes.

Mission No. 32

Munich, Germany. Ship #63. 16 November 1944

Bomb Load: Five 500 lb. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: West marshalling yard. We had 52 P-51s fly very good escort for us. The flak was very intense, but we didn't go through it due to an accident. The P-51s seemed to be dog fighting above us. Through all of the confusion we dropped our bombs just past the IP. As far as I know, we did not hit anything. Time: 7 hours, 25 minutes.

Mission No. 33

Villa Franca, Italy. Ship #60. 18 November 1944

Bomb Load: thirty-six 100 lb. frag bombs. Fuel: 2700 gallons

We were supposed to be escorted by 55 P-51s and RAF Spitfires. The fighters were also supposed to strafe air fields in the area. We hit the target and did quite a bit of damage. Time: 7 hours, 5 minutes.

Mission No. 34

Munich, Germany. Ship #60. 22 November 1944

Bomb Load: Six 500 lb. RDX explosive. Fuel: 2700 gallons

Target: West marshalling yard. We were to be escorted by P-51s and P-38s which we did not see due to the poor weather we were flying in. We did not see the flak, but knew it was there because we could feel it. After bombs away the group split up due to a poor rally off the target. Ships were all over the sky in the clouds. Two ships collided, but both made it back to the base okay. I tried to enter our group three times, but the formation was so messed up I could not get back in. I joined another flight of three B-24s headed in the right

direction. One crew from our squadron was missing. Time: 7 hours, 50 minutes.

Mission No. 35

Blechhammer, Silesia. Ship # 60. 2 December 1944

Bomb Load: Six 500 lb. RDX explosive.

Target: Oil refineries. We were escorted by 50 P-51s and 50 P-38s. The P-51s flew very good cover into the target, and the P-38s were supposed to fly cover on the withdrawal. We did not see them. There was no fighter opposition although the flak was very intense. I flew #6 position. Podwolski was in position #3. Just as bombs were released a shell went through Podwolski's number 4 engine nacelle. He lost the engine and almost the wing. He flew it back to base okay. We missed the target. Time: 8 hours, 15 minutes.

Author's Notes:

The following is a list of those crews that I recorded as going down and what happened to them. Some of those listed as unknown may have been captured. The information was probably known after I had returned stateside.

Original crews lost: Fisher – Captured; Kane – Unknown; Boyer – Captured; Swinehart - Unknown

Replacement crews lost: Moore – Captured; Rosencrans – Captured; Ohlsson – Captured; Newton - Escaped twice; Krinkly - Escaped from Yugoslavia; Krahn - Ditched in the Adriatic Sea; Lange – Unknown; Capalbo - Blew up; Galvin – Unknown; Bailey – Unknown; George - Unknown

