

pulled my right foot out of my boot to get free and jumped from the upper hatch in front of the upper turret to the ground.

We all ran about 200 yards to get behind a little mound thinking the plane would explode at anytime. It was behind this mound that I looked down and saw a four inch cut across the top of the boot on my left foot. Took off the boot and saw the bones on top of my foot were cut and this was the first time I knew I was hurt although I jumped down about ten feet from the plane and ran 200 yards. The rest of the crew had minor injuries and I was the only one to go to the hospital with a broken foot.

The plane was left guarded and untouched for three days allowing the 72 hours as the maximum time for the booby trap bombs to explode. They did not explode and after the three days they set a charge under the plane and blew the whole thing along with the eight bombs and the 2,700 gallons of gas.

Our crew flew the entire thirty-five missions and the 35th and last involved going over three targets with flack on all three, Bruck marshalling yard, Graz marshalling yard, and dropped our bombs on the third target, the Villoch marshalling yard. The flack damage resulted in losing the hydraulic lines and the pilot, Bob Shelton, told us we would not have any brakes for landing. On landing he instructed all of us to come to the flight deck and on touchdown to slowly walk to the rear through the bomb bay and try bringing the tail of the ship down and skid the tail to help stop the roll on the runway.

To the surprise of all of us, we only used half the runway as both tires were flat from flak damage. The plane ended up in the ditch on the right center of the field and as this was our last mission, the truck met us at the plane and a ride back to the tent. This last mission was on March 21, 1945.

Bud, this was the first time we ever flew the plane "Whats Up Doc" shown in the photo. Hope this gives you the information requested in the Flyer. The first mission for our crew was on August 14, 1944, the invasion of Southern France. Our second mission was Polesti on August 17, 1944, which I think was the last raid on Ploesti.

Best regards,

RYAN M. O'BRIEN
825th Squadron.

Dear Bud:

Enclosed you will find two pictures I have had since the war. They came out in the paper while we were in Torretta.

They have survived almost 40 years but I don't know what you can do with them.

The plane on its nose I believe was in an adjacent group. Not the 484th or the 461st. (Photo A)

The one showing the wounded man is from the 766th Area. This ship came in and crashed just adjacent to our tent area.

We had to cut through the side of the ship to get this fellow out. He was pinned upside down just above the auxiliary poser unit-put-put.

I believe the caption is wrong and that he was an officer. No one was hurt bad in this one although one of crew had been trapped under the top turret.

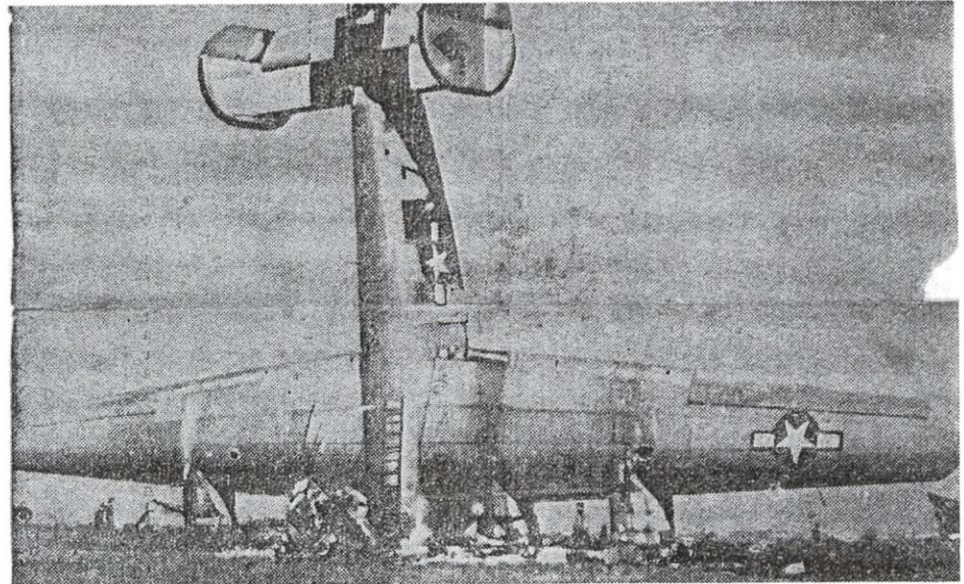
All the men in this picture are from 766th. I am on the left hand side holding his feet. Sgt. Kelly is on the upper right sitting. This was in the summer of '44. (Photo B) Thanks for all the

work and good luck to the 461st and 484th.

HARRY SIMCOX
766th Squadron

EDITOR'S NOTE: Photo A shows a B-24M, 44-50468 from the 455th Bomb Group, 740th Squadron. This group was based at San Giovanni in Fonte, just north of Pozzo Terraneo (see map page). The accident occurred in the spring of '45. Myself and my top turret gunner, Ralph (Red) Johnson were hitching a ride to Foggia and spotted the accident from the Road. We ran over to help, but were advised to keep moving because the ship was loaded with time set fuses. We didn't have to be asked twice.

BUD MARKEL 827th Sq



SIX MEN WERE KILLED INSTANTLY WHEN THIS 15TH AAF B-24 CRASHED SQUARELY ON ITS NOSE DURING A TAKEOFF. AN ACCIDENTAL APPLICATION OF BRAKES IS BELIEVED TO HAVE CAUSED THE ACCIDENT. (MAAF PHOTO)

THE MISSION COMPLETED



A WOUNDED GUNNER IS CARRIED FROM HIS WRECKED B-24, LIBERATOR BOMBER OF THE 15TH AAF WHICH WAS HIT BY FLAK OVER SOUTHERN FRANCE AND MADE CRASH LANDING AT BASE IN ITALY. (MAAF PHOTO)

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B