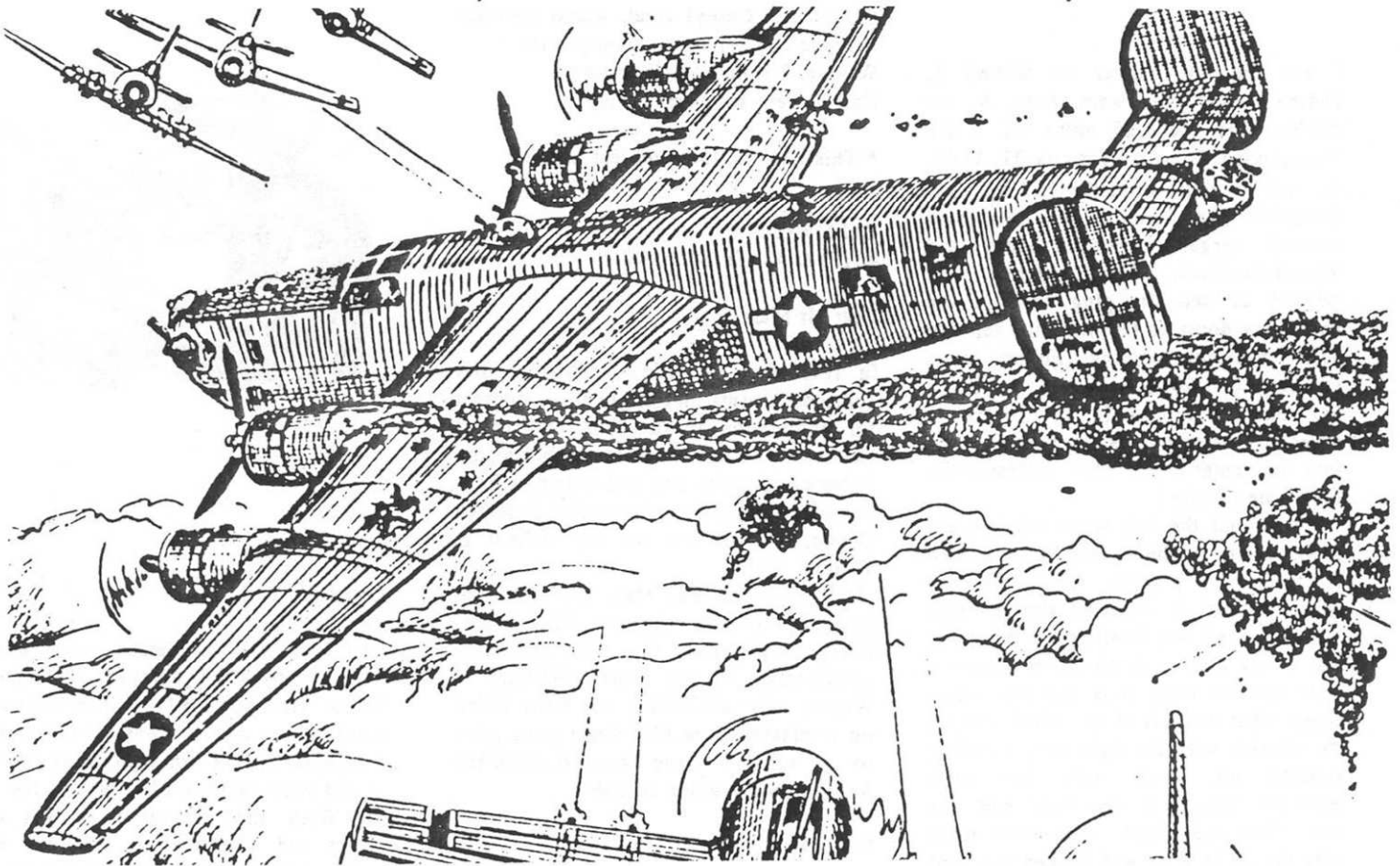


One Way Trip ... and Back

DECEMBER 17, 1944

DECEMBER 14, 1984



I would like to share with you the news of our crew reunion. This was the first time we had met as a crew since our disastrous first mission on December 17th, 1944. Our target was the synthetic oil plant in Oderstal. We were hit by flak somewhere over Czechoslovakia. Unable to stay in formation, we were hit by a gaggle of FW190's. In the fighter assault we lost our ball gunner, Roland Morin. During the continuing fighter attacks our radio operator Charlie Foss, who was manning the right waist gun was hit. The fuel cell in the right wing began to burn. Ken Smith, the pilot was finally forced to give the bail out command. We were all able to bail out safely. We were in the general vicinity of Trencin, Czechoslovakia. Bob Trumpy, top turret and Chet Rudel, co-pilot were injured hitting the ground. Chet suffered a broken back, and Bob received an injured ankle.

Chet, Bob and Charlie Foss were taken to a hospital in Trencin. Ken Smith,

Harry Edmiston, bombardier, Urban (Homer) Grainger, tail gunner and I were captured and taken to a military barracks, ("Kasaren") in Trencin.

Ed Burkhardt, the nose gunner was found by an underground guerilla group. It was formed by Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Czech, and other partisans. He stayed with the group to the end of the war.

Ken Smith, Harry Edmiston, and I were sent to interrogation centers and wound up in Stalag I near Barth. Homer Hymbaugh, the engineer, and Urban Grainger, were also confined in Stalag I but in a different compound. Charlie Foss, radio operator, and Chet Rudel, co-pilot remained in the hospital in Czechoslovakia. Bob Trumpy, top turret gunner eventually was sent to another POW camp.

When the war ended we were returned stateside to rehab centers nearest our homes. Unfortunately we lost touch with each other. Then some years later while

watching pro football on TV I kept seeing a running back for the Cincinnati Bengals named Bob Trumpy.

About a year ago, when he retired from pro ball and became a sportscaster I wrote to him and inquired if he might be related to my crew member of the same name. He was Bob Trumpy's son. Bob Sr. phoned long distance in February, 1984. We began writing to each other and tracked down the others of the crew. We planned a reunion on the fortieth anniversary of our fateful first and only mission.

We met in Springfield for an emotion filled weekend accompanied by our wives. Everyone made it except the bombardier, Harry Edmiston, and Chet, the co-pilot. Incidentally Chet was the co-pilot on another crew assigned to help us on our first mission. I did get a chance to meet Chet when I discovered he lived in Bakersfield, California. He was the one who told me about the Association.

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