

Dear Bud

In reference to the picture of the plane, Malfunction, sired by Ford on page 27 of Flyer #12, I flew the ball turret, as assistant engineer.

We were assigned to this plane at Hammer Field, Fresno, California. Robert W Walters was my pilot. The only one I can identify is the fellow on the right, T/ Sgt. Lawrence J Brehman Mos 750, crew chief. He and Harry Oglesby flew overseas with us. We named the Plane Malfunction, Sired by Ford because every time we flew it to check the plane out while training in the states and practice missions overseas, we always had a malfunction and it was built by Ford, hence the name. It ended up being a good plane in combat completing 51 missions. I returned to the States in August of 44 and don't know the final disposition of the plane.

The story on page 25 of Torretta Flyer #12 by Dennis Cheek, my radio operator, ship #63. We were hit in the no 2 engine mount, oil separator, carburetor and cylinder and lost about 200 gallons of fuel by the time we transferred to another tank.

The story on page 17, crew 69,(62) I was on that mission and saw the collision. I have their crew list, but not of the other ship involved. One of the gunners who survived the crash , who I met later in the states told me that he fell inside the turret and landed in a mud hole and came out alive. I don't know if the turret was attached to the tail section. He may have been from crew #62.

See you all in San Antonio,
Francis Lucas, 767 Sq.

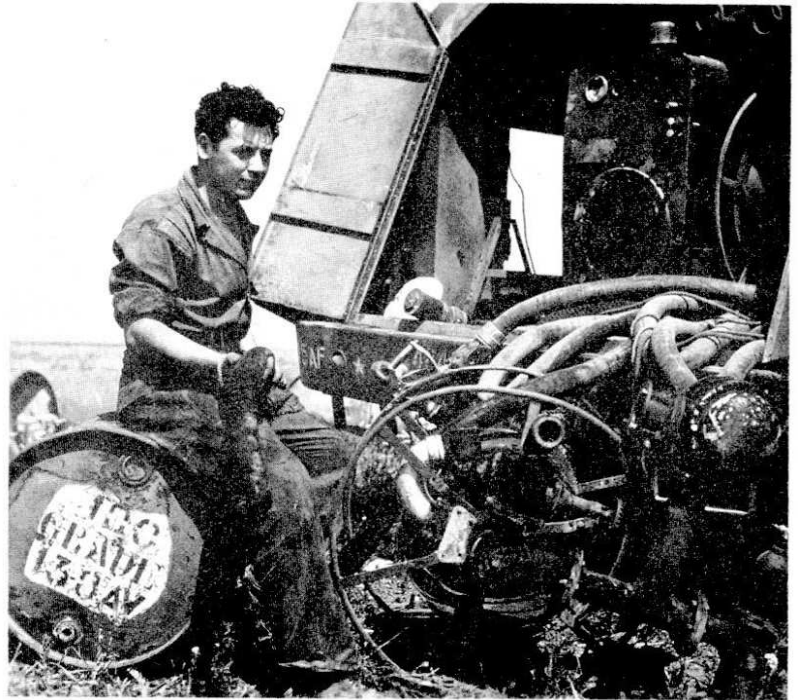
Dear Bud:

Marty Allen, 824 Squadron (then known as PFC Morton D Alpern, ASN 22426102) now a nationally known comedian and entertainer, was a fueler and slept in tent no 31 facing mine no 32. The refuelers worked mostly at night so we used his tent each night after pay day to play poker, until funds got low after a couple of weeks.

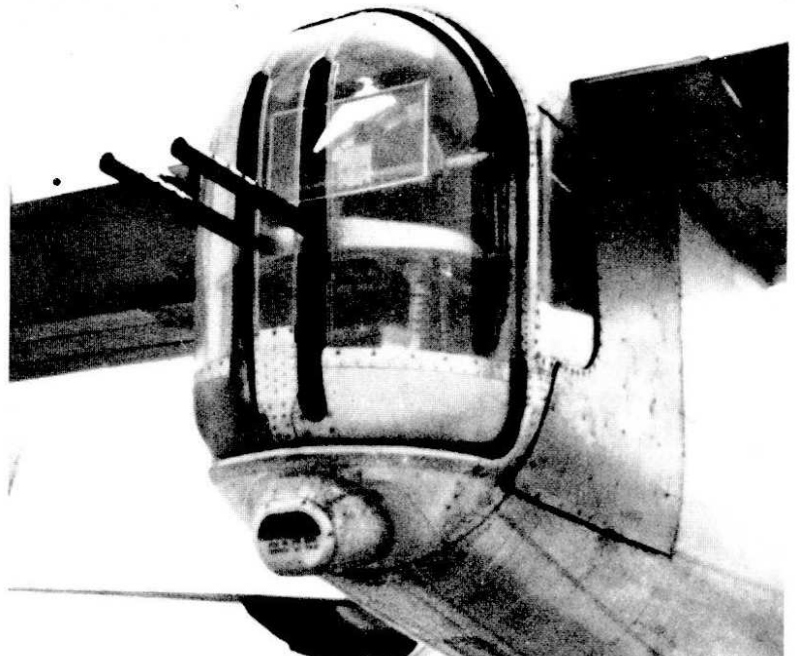
Marty was refueling a 824 Sq ship with another fueler when the hose on the gas truck came loose from the engine driven pump and a spark caught the fuel truck on fire . With heroic action Marty drove the truck away from the aircraft and put out the truck fire with the portable extinguisher. He then ran to the airplane and grabbed the fire extinguisher from inside the plane and put out the fire that was burning on the ground under the aircraft wing saving the airplane and a larger conflagration that would have resulted in the aircraft catching fire, possibly blowing up endangering other planes as well. He received the Bronze Star for this action. Please note the enclosed photos.

Sincerely,

Preston Wade



This shot shows Marty Allen 824 squadron sitting on a 50 gallon gas drum holding up the broken fuel hose.(Editors Note) Fuel service vehicles used by the 15th Air Force were of the tractor-trailer type.A small gasoline engine in the end of the tank trailer unit supplied the power to run the pumps to lift the fuel from the truck to the top of the wing. It was this engine that caught fire from gasoline hitting the hot exhaust manifold. Preston Wade photo 824 Sq



Light weight tail turret. These began to show up in early 1945. Note the revised metal work and window cut out to accommodate the new design. John Grim Photo 825 Sq.