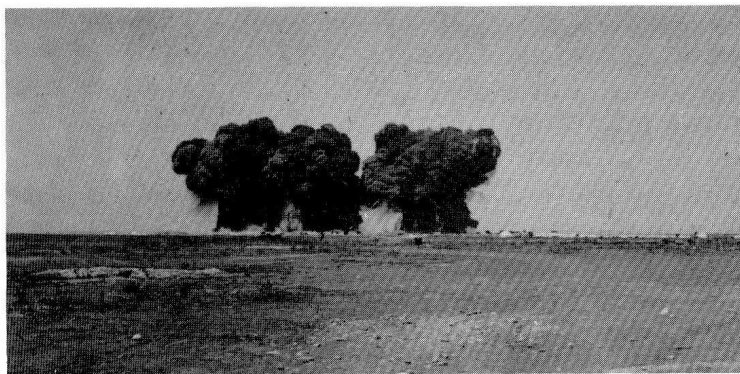


er No 4, both No 3 and 4 were feathered, which put us into a spin to the right. The spin threw me back in my seat as the bail out bell sounded. I can remember how



hard I pulled on the table to get in a position to try to bail out. A drift meter against my left leg would not let me get to the aisle and bail out through the bomb bay. Also fire was all under the bomb bay.

At 9000 feet the pilot pulled us out of this spin over the town of Palesti and immediately began calling for a heading. I gave him a heading to Turkey as it was the closest neutral country. As we got on course to Turkey, we found ourselves alone, and quite crippled. Just the type of meat marauding German fighters were looking for. The rest of our group was going north or west back to our base. We were fortunate that day that the Luftwaffe did not follow us. It was at this point in our journey that Mayfield plugged the fuel line with the 50 caliber shell.

South of Bucharest the pilot decided we could make it into Yugoslavia and asked for a heading back towards Torretta. After weighing the possibilities of bailing out over Yugoslavia, trying to make it to Turkey, or ditching at sea, calculations showed we had enough fuel to make it back to the base.

Approaching Torretta we found that the bomb dump was on fire with a 50 knot wind blowing cross wind from the west. All of the other planes of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups were diverted to other bases with more of an east west runway, but Torretta was closer and our fuel supply by now was very low. We landed going to the north on the west side of the runway and came to a stop finally on the east side off in the dirt. The jar of the landing jarred something loose and opened a fuel line filling the flight deck with deadly fumes. My thought was to make it this far and then get caught in a fire a second time was too much for all on the flight deck. That was one speedy evacuation.

The following day the crew chief brought the fuse from the 88MM shell that was found stuck in number 4 engine, and I in turn presented it to Col. Glanzberg

as a souvenir of the mission.

### Part 3

## Official Report of Mission No 67 22 July, 1944 Romana Oil Refinery, Ploesti, Rumania

Despite the efforts of the Air Force on the 15th of July to finish off Ploesti, the Romana Oil Refinery was assigned to the group as its target for 22 July. Col Glanzberg led the wing. In the lead plane with him were; Lt Specht, Capt. Leffler, Major Pruitt, Lt Simeroth and Lt Gizelba. After the group was on the bomb run, Colonel Glanzberg's plane had number 4 engine knocked out by flak and number 3 engine set on fire. Captain Leffler salvoed the bombs as the plane went into a circle to the left. After loosing 8000 feet, Col Glanzberg and Lt Specht were able to level off the plane. The fire in number 3 engine was put out by feathering it. After the fire was extinguished the prop was unfeathered and the crew came home on three engines.

All planes dropped their bombs as briefed by the Group leader. All of them fell short of the target. Of the 22 planes on the bomb run, seventeen were hard hit by flak, and four were lost. Two planes, one piloted by 2nd Lt Clarence W Bloxum and the other one by 2nd Lt Elias R Moses, both of whom were flying their second combat mission, left the formation after the target and disappeared. 1st Lt Taylor bailed his crew out near the base when he had but one engine left. 1st Lt Holmes also bailed his crew out near the base when leaks in his gas line caused him to run out of fuel. One man on Lt Taylor's crew, F/O Irving Smithkin was fatally injured in parachuting to earth.

While the planes were away from the base on the mission, a fire, which had started in a wheat field west of the base, swept up the fire barriers which had previously been burned around the edges of the field. No damage was done to installations or equipment on the field, but the bomb dump was set on fire. Smoke from the conflagration covered the field, with the result that only five planes including the one flown by Col Glanzberg, were able to land. Capt Donovan, who had flown the mission as deputy group leader, took about half of the planes to Pantanella. The remainder of the planes landed at various fields in the area of Torretta.

The 280 heavy anti-aircraft guns at Ploesti had turned the trick for the first time of keeping the 461st Groups from reaching its target.

The End