

## Edward H Eibs Jr

Edward H Eibs Jr, 827 Squadron, pilot, passed away on June 13, 1989, exactly 45 years to the day of June 13, 1944, when he landed old # 71 at Dubendorf, Switzerland. The determination he showed on that fateful day of June 13, 1944, earned him a DFC. At the squadron dinner of the San Francisco reunion all of the members in the 827 squadron dining room got up in turn and told of their wartime experiences, the one told by Ed Eibs was one of the most memorable:

### Narrative Mission 31 Innsbruck

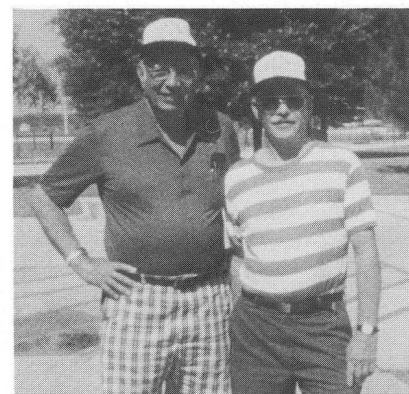
The 484th Bomb Group was hit hard by enemy fighters on that day June 13, 1944, but persisted in bombing the target despite mounting losses. The 484th Bomb Group was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for this mission (#31) One of these bombers was the B-24 H, #71 (43-52661) Piloted by Ed Eibs. It too was attacked repeatedly by a very aggressive fighter force. The following narrative was written by one of the gunners S/Sgt. Anthony A Giammettie who was credited with shooting down one ME-109 on this mission.

Enroute to the target and already deep in enemy territory, the supercharger on number four engine went out. All efforts to remedy the trouble were in vain. We fell behind very slowly and were still at the tag end of the formation approaching Falenbach. As we turned and headed for the IP we saw the first formation of enemy fighters slide alongside the main body of the formation. We passed through a deep cloud bank. Suddenly the sky was full of enemy fighters. The attack started with an air to air bombing attack from one force overhead. At exactly the same time the force at the side, still out of range of our guns, fired their rockets. Most of the fighters were twin engine jobs and now they attacked from almost every angle. They seemed to be all over the formation and single ships were diving from every direction. then they would form up again and come in in waves of three abreast. I was on the raid to Girugui three days before and I thought they were aggressive, but these planes came within less than 25 yards of the formation. We saw four of our bombers ahead twist out of control and away from the formation and we saw eight or nine enemy fighters in flames or plunging, smoking to the ground. All of this time we had been counting ourselves lucky. The entire attack was being concentrated on the main body and though we

were definitely out of the formation and struggling we still hadn't been hit. But we knew we might be at any minute and we were alert at our guns when the first fighters bounced us. Either two abreast or singly we were hit by seven ME-109s and ME-210s at the same time. In the first pass we caught an ME-109 and saw it explode in mid air. They kept after us and were getting some hits. Then we caught an ME-210 and in the next few seconds got another one. They were both in flames and we watched one go down and hit the ground. The remaining four stayed for only a few minutes before they turned off, which was very lucky for us. We couldn't have taken much more. The hydraulic system and a second engine had been shot out. The strain on the two remaining engines was finally beginning to tell. We dropped eight thousand feet in a shallow dive and our pilot (Ed Eibs) warned us to be ready to hit the silk. The navigator suggested we set course for Switzerland. We jettisoned everything we could tear loose and shut the waist windows to reduce air resistance. In this way the plane was kept flying until Swiss fighters arrived to escort us to a neutral field. The landing was successfully made by emergency procedure and before the Swiss guards arrived we were able to destroy our IFF and other secret equipment.

Ed Eibs is survived by his wife, Dorothy.

(photo right) Ed-ward "Eddie Eibs" (LH) Gene Stover (RH) Photo taken at the Orlando Reunion.



(Drawing left): ME-210's drop bombs on the 484th Bomb Group formation in an attempt to break up the attack on the marshalling yards at Innsbruck, Austria June 13, 1944. Nevertheless, the target was bombed successfully, resulting in the awarding of a Presidential Unit Citation.

See also Torretta Flyer No. 11 Winter 1984 back page for the picture of Old 71 landing at Dubendorf, Switzerland.