

What the communique did not say was that the large scale attack in the overcast weather over Austria and Germany would have been impossible without the aid of "Mickey," the code name for the navigational and target sighting radar device that has been one of the most hush hush of the allied secret weapons of this war.

"Mickey" employs radio (radar) waves to literally stitch a path through the clouds and along the sea and ground to the target and then to cut a hole in the overcast or smoke screen over the objective so that the radar operator sees through the medium of radar, (High frequency radio waves bounced off the ground objective and returned to the aircraft. The time delay is plotted and shown on a ground return pattern that is painted on an oscilloscope tube by a rotating scan line.)

No longer need the Flying Forts and Liberators sweat out a clear day or moonlit night to go winging over the Reich and unload their high explosives.

As a matter of fact the development of "Mickey" and its employment in so called "pathfinder" missions had the heavy bombers personnel of the 15th Air Force more or less broken into competitive teams, with the pathfinder group hopefully looking for bad weather and the others sweating out the good days. This friendly competition, however bodes ill for Adolph Hitler and his Nazi satellites for it means that the Reich is subject to heavy bombing attack by day and night in fair or stormy weather. All that is required is that there is enough visibility at the home base to take off and land.

"Mickey" was put through its paces in a simulated bombing mission over southern Italy recently by Capt. Stan Beerli of Portland, Oregon, a pioneer in the use and development of this equipment in the 15th Air Force. He is also a 54 mission flyer, 44 of which have been in "Mickey" ships.

With Capt. Charles McCrary of Brownstown, Indiana, at the controls, the plane was flown back and forth below cloud level and the terrain observed through the oscilloscope. Then Capt McCrary lifted the Fort above the cloud level and traversed the same course, and the observers again peered through the Mickey screen. The images, projected onto a fluorescent dial, resembled a topographic relief map and even to an untrained observer appeared identical with those previously seen.

Capt Beerli explained that the frequency of the radar waves sent by the transmitter, unaffected by the cloud layers, bounce back from the ground and produce varying intensities of light on the screen that can be read by a trained operator.

The Fort then made a simulated bombing run on an a friendly oil refinery as the target with Capt Beerli directing the bombardier, Major Everett C Davis of Eastland, Texas, by use of the interphone as to the operation of the bomb sight, and automatic bomb release. If the bombs actually had been dropped in accordance with this synchronized technique developed by the AAF, the oil refinery would have been a dead duck in the opinion of the observers looking through the camera well.

"Mickey" was first used by the 15th Air Force for navigation on March 20, 1944, and for bombing purposes in the April 15 raid on Ploesti. Regular use of the pathfinder technique got underway in June, 1944 and "Mickey" is given credit by the 15th AAF officers for much of the success in the battle of Ploesti. Late in

October, the scope of "Mickey operations was broadened when pathfinder ships participated in a night raid on an Austrian target.

"Mickey" is still being improved and new applications of its principals are being studied.

Hank Cushard 826 Sq.



Portsmouth, Virginia

Dear Bud:

I am enclosing some memorabilia from my files. The enclosed newspaper clipping might add some light on the crash into Huntington Lake in the winter of 1943. Capt Darden was my squadron commander and pilot at this time. I missed this flight because I had gone on a flight as engineer with a Capt Dickinson to Sacramento to pick up some aircraft tires.

It was rather ironic that I was on his crew at Wendover Field, Utah. When he came down the road in a command car, he stopped and asked my name and if I was from Portsmouth, Virginia. I will never know why, because I had never seen him nor known him before. Strangely, I knew his father very well and later worked with his sister in the police department.

Following is the text of the clipping from a Portsmouth, Virginia, newspaper:

Air Captain's Body Found After 1943 Crash

The body of Capt. William H Darden USAF, son of Mr & Mrs William B Darden of Grove Park, Virginia, who lost his life in the crash of a B-24 into Huntington Lake, south central California December 6, 1943, has been recovered.

Parents of the long-lost airman were notified by telegram received late yesterday from the post commander, Army Air Force, Presidio, San Francisco, California.

The father immediately wired the Department of Defense to send the remains to the Snelling Funeral Home where rites will be held at a time to be announced.

Five members of the bomber's crew lost their lives beside Captain Darden. The scene of the crash was at an altitude of 12,500 feet atop a long mountain. Huntington Lake, 10 miles long and averaging about a mile wide, occupies a rough valley in the mountain range. The lake is almost perpetually frozen over, which has made recovery of the six bodies a 12 year task for the Army.

According to information received by Captain Darden's parents at the time of the crash, his plane had gone out on a routine flight from Hammer Field Monday December 5, 1943 with other ships of his squadron.

Upon return to base, one plane was missing and Captain Darden ordered the other planes to land and returned with his own search for the missing plane.

The search required a flight into the Huntington Lake depression, which is surrounded by high peaks, with the plane near the surface. Then motor trouble developed and it was impossible for