



*Ground crew Ship 42-52658 (35) Charlie 23. From left: Anthony Mikolaitis, Les Walker, Leonard Suiter, Charles Costello, and Dwight Morse.*

14,000 feet to avoid the flak suddenly popping up from the area around Udine in northern Italy, as reported by Leonard Brodsky, the engineer. The flak was moderate but very accurate. Udine also was known to have some Luftwaffe fighter aircraft based there.

Capt. Seaman took evasive action and we got away with one hole in the flight deck. Nobody was hurt. 2/Lt Charles A Beck Jr the navigator found the piece of flak. It was about two inches long and a half inch thick. Also I saw two ME 109s fly through our formation. They didn't do any shooting as the P-51s escort drove them away. We were relaxed and relieved because Munich was a tough target and we were almost home. The flak right outside our windows was a shock. Seaman dove to a lower altitude in a great piece of flying. During the dive we thought we had been hit and were going down.

The file indicates that 3 ships were MIA and one of them ditched in the Adriatic, 4 men bailed out. I don't know if this ship had been hit at Udine.

Lt John S. Howell 824th, MIA for a time, landed at Falconara, an English field in Italy. He lost two engines after being hit at Munich and got additional flak in Northern Italy at two spots where he thought guns were located to protect bridges. I spoke to Howell on the phone. He lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

He was shot down on 1 February 45, mission to Moosbierbaum. He and his crew bailed out over Hungary behind Russian lines. See escape statement Torretta Flyer No.10 p.23. John is currently recovering from a long battle with cancer.

An account of another crew whose ship went down as a result of the Munich mission is given in the Torretta Flyer No 19. p. 14. follows:

Herman J White was 18 years old when he enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in July of 1944. He was a tail gunner assigned to the 484th Bomb Group. He participated in bombing missions over southern Germany, Austria, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

As a Tech/Sgt White had flown nearly 25 missions before he and his crew lifted off the airfield in southern Italy on November 16, 1944, to bomb Munich, Germany. Ground anti-aircraft fire disabled number two engine and torched a fire in number three. With two engines feathered, the ship began to drop over 300 feet per

minute as the cylinder head temperatures on the two remaining engines began to climb. One engine was restarted in an effort to fly over the Swiss Alps, but the ship continued to drop, and the effort to climb was abandoned.

The crew began throwing everything out that could be pulled loose to lighten the ship when the order to bail out came. "When I opened the hatch to make my escape the other crew members just stared ahead. They weren't sure what to do, so I said 'follow me' and out I went", White declared.

As he came down, the plane appeared over his left shoulder to disappear into a mountain. "I thought we were over the Adriatic at 8000 ft, but we were at 3000 ft, 500 miles behind enemy lines. Each of us was scared and bewildered. There were 30 Germans with dogs waiting for us as we hit the ground," White said.

"The Germans began to fire at us but we were not armed. There was little to do but surrender." White said. "I was scared not knowing what would happen next. I knew the Germans were mad about the saturation bombing the Allies were doing." The Germans took them into northern Italy through the Brenner Pass to Munich and placed White in solitary confinement. "I was in a narrow cell for four days and nights," White said. "It was dark, had a narrow window and I slept on the floor."

"They tried many forms of intimidation but I gave just my name, rank, and serial number" When he was taken to a train station to be moved, a German woman noticed his unit patch on his jacket. "She was outraged," White continued. "Many of the civilians hated the heavy bombing we were doing. Before I knew it, nearly 30 to 40 civilians were gathered to hang me. The German



*From left: Capt. Joe Moe flight leader of the November 16, 1944 mission in Able II, Ship 528Z stands next to F/O George "Foxhole" Adams Bombardier on Maj. James C Langdon's crew, and 1/Lt Rollen Phillips.*