



Top Row Standing left to right: 2/Lt William M Capece-B, 1/Lt , Alfred H Walker-N, G G Spitler-P, Arthur E Roth-C/P . Kneeling from left Roland B Giroux-E, Sgt Philip S Davison-NG, Cpl Paul J Doss-G, S/Sgt Otis E Rule-G, Sgt Julius S Jackson-G. This crew assignment is different from the crew that was shot down on June 13, 1944. See *Torretta Flyer* No 27, page 19.

Another Day, Another Mission

The morning was like any other morning... yet, it was different. A splash of cold water in the face to moisten the parched lips still recovering from the salty mackerel from the night before. A quick walk in the cool, yet invigorating, moist air to the chow hall. Shoulders back now, breath as deep as you can. We'll be on oxygen again, today. There was the darkened server's isle dishing up the usual dry scrambled eggs and sausage and, in the shadows, pieces of toast so dry that their edges were curled up. Eat quickly now, flush it down with some hot, black coffee before the taste buds can offer their plea of rejection! Time is relentlessly pushing the hands of the clock 'round.

Must get to Op's for today's 'form. Again, a quick hike through the graying dawn as the moist air gives way to the stirring of a slight breeze. The first rays of the sun start to push the heavens aside as they try to break through. It's going to be a short hop today, otherwise we would still be groping our way in the dark. A crewman is lounging near the door hoping for an early revelation of where we are going so that the men can load the proper amount of ammo for the flight.

At Op's they tell us it's 320 miles in and 270 out at 18000 ft. Weather over target should be opening up by the time we get there. The crew have already pulled the props through their mandatory three sums. Quickly now- supercharger regulator controls off, mixture controls- off, Propellers- fully up, Intercooler- cold, Gills open and locked, Air Cleaner closed. The click of switches signals action is about to begin!

No. 1 starter begins fuming into a growing whine as it becomes energized. A reverse flip of the switch to "mesh" alters the whine of the starter armature as gears engage the flywheel. The crankshaft slowly starts to rotate the propeller, the tips of which swing through their graceful arc silently, at first There is a cough as the fuel charge in the first cylinder of 9 fires, as the ignition is fumed on, followed by irregular explosions as fuel charges, being injected by the primer pump, continue to find their way past the intake valves, into the cylinders. The groveling staccato of exhausted gases and unburned fuel in the form of black smoke exit the exhaust manifold only to be caught up by the turbulent backwash of the propeller blades as they spin effortlessly faster and faster keeping cadence with the faltering firing of the enriched mixture. Finally, with a surge of triumph, all mighty cylinders fire in their designed rhythm as the throttle meters fuel through the carburetor to the appropriate opened valves. The propeller responds to the conversion of power, the blades becoming a blur in the vortex they create, clawing at the air as they rotate faster and faster. The dance of the propeller is repeated with the other engines as they, in turn, come alive, roaring, and eventually singing in unison with each other. Flight Leader stirs slightly, moving forward slowly at first, then faster and faster, wheels fuming until their discs become a blur, reflecting the morning light. Suddenly, they no longer share the rotating black tire with the concrete strip but now part the air around them as the giant slowly retracts them, braking them to sudden stillness as they are withdrawn into their wheelwells. It is now our turn to share the dangerous foreign skies with our leader.

M J Jake Pierce (a friend)