



Orville Hommert

Granite City, IL  
Dear Bud.

My name is Orville Hommert. I was on the mission of 17, December 1944. I was the tail gunner of Capt Marion Hammet's crew. On this day, the pilot was Major James Lyle, and Marion Hammet, now deceased, flew as co-pilot. We were flying in the formation Dog II. This was my 19th mission so was used to the routine on such missions. I did fly 35 missions, but this mission

stands out in my memory more than any other I flew.

I saw the whole attack take place when the German fighters attacked the 461st Bomb group I saw it all. I alerted the crew. I called out on the intercom as a 461st B-24 was going down. It was something like this: "a B-24 is going down" I hardly had it out of my mouth when I saw another B-24 going down and almost as soon as I said it, another B-24 would be going down. It was happening just that fast. I remember Marion Hammet, pilot of our crew, say on the intercom "My God there won't be any of them left." For awhile I felt the same way. We were then attacked by Me- 109's. I remember shooting at one coming straight in at six o'clock. I thought I hit him because he turned belly to us and dove straight down trailing smoke.

The 484th lost two planes on this mission. One was ship # 28 "Little Joe" flown by pilot Charles A. Himmler. He was flying in Baker 12 position. The second plane lost was # 38 flown by Rodger A. Martin. He was flying in Easy 22 position. Getting back to our box of planes in Dog there were 6 planes to begin with. One had to abort: #86 flown by pilot Lt Williams because of an oxygen leak.

As the German fighter attack continued a B-24 #38 slid out of his position and came up into our box on my right. I'm the tail gunner, but left as far as the box was concerned. He hardly got up next to us when fire started coming out of his bomb bay streaking along the bottom of the plane. The bomb bay doors were closed. In a matter of seconds he rolled over to his right and went down. I never saw him again.

Now this is the most bazaar thing which happened. I will always remember for the rest of my life. All of a sudden sitting right next to us is a ME- 109. He is just like part of our formation. He is just sitting there, not making any effort to attack us. I can hardly believe my eyes. At this moment our waist gunner who had him dead to rights, fired just 2 rounds when his gun jammed. At this point the German pilot looked over at me. I can see him plain as day. I saw him with his flying helmet and his oxygen mask on his face. At this point he waved at me and with a reflex action on my part I waved back. Then he was gone, winged over to our left and dove away. Again, I will always remember this. His ME109 was silver gray with black splotches all over it.

I have oftened wonder why did he do this daring yet foolish thing. Why didn't he try to shoot us down, was he out of ammunition or were his guns jammed I will always wonder and would like to know the answer to those questions. I have often wondered if he survived the war and is still alive today. If he is I'm

sure he will remember the story I have just told you. I have also wondered if the German groups have associations such as we have. If you have anything to add to this story I would like to hear from you.

Orville Hommert, 827 Sq.

Dear Bud

It was good to see Vernon Halliday's crew in the last Torretta Flyer. Vernon D "Doug" Halliday was a great friend, a fine craftsman, model builder and sailor. He returned to Flint, MI after the war and lived there for a while before he and his wife Lois, moved to Flushing, MI with son Richard, and daughter Gail. Called "Doug" by his friends, he was an engineer for Buick Motors Division for 41 years. He died of cancer January 18, 1984. For anyone who would like to write me, my address is 9373 Jamie Dr, Davidson, MI 48423-2828., Best regards, Joe Nedela , Davidson, WI  
Joe Nedela AM-001

Dear Joe:

My files show: 1) March 24, 1945, Halliday's crew (826Sq) flew in 42-52833, Nose No. 53, Radio call D 2) March 25, 1945, Halliday's crew flew in "Toggle Anne 42-52705 Nose No. 52, Radio Call C. Toggle Anne had a long and interesting history. 3) On May 14, 1945 the crew flew in 44-50816 Nose No. 51, Radio Call B. They may have flown missions also on March 6, 1945, March 9, 1945, and March 10, 1945. I have no mission reports to back this up. Al Davidson can bring you up to date on Toggle Anne, He lives at: 1225 E Main St. Lowell, MI 49331-9313. Ph. 616/897/0654.

Best regards,  
Bud Markel, Founder and President

Millville, NJ

Dear Bud:

Just received the latest issue of the "Flyer" #36, Winter- Spring 2000. I was a bit confused by the E-mails, top, bottom, and your reply on page 29 of this issue.

I refer you to past issues nos. 23, 24, and 30. In regard to losses of the 827th Squadron, they all read the same in respect to Major Donald C. Haldeman and crew, downed during a bombing mission to Weiner-Neustadt on May 29, 1944.

Issue 27 carries my story of this last mission on page 15. No one in the accompanying aircrafts could see us, "blow up" because, when we were bracketed up front by flak bursts, we fell straight down out of formation. Wonderfull pilot that he was, although wounded, the Major pulled the ship out of its fall, but then we were jumped by Me.410 fighter planes. In the losses list, it states, "FLK-CR near Graz". I did end up as a POW in a Graz hospital with both bones broken in my right leg, forehead burns and a piece of 20mm cannon in the same fractured leg.

Actually four (4) crew members managed to bale out of the B- 24H, afire at both ends and full of holes. The radioman died of blood loss on the way down. The bombardier and nose gunner also suffered burns and wounds.

Major Haldeman took over our crew early in our training. He "bumped" our first pilot, ("Pappy" Papiano); then one of the regular gunners, (Jake Jazwa?), to make room for his own first engi-