

STICHTING WINGS TO VICTORY

AIRWAR MUSEUM / AIRMEN MEMORIAL ZEELAND



Crash No 616

B-17 42-37906

02-08-1944

Noordzee



02 augustus 1944

Een rustige dag die eerst in de loop van de avond met een intensieve Flakbarrage op een reeds beschadigde Amerikaanse bommenwerper werd besloten. Tevens vlogen laat in de avond formaties V-1 dragende He 111's van de Luftwaffe uit over Walcheren.

Bomber Command operations.

V-1 sites werden bij dalicht door een aanvalsmacht van 394 vliegtuigen – 234 Lancasters, 99 Halifaxes, 40 Mosquito's, 20 Stirlings en één enkele Lightning(!) – met goed gevolg gebombardeerd.

Vaartuigen van de Kriegsmarine in de haven van Le Havre werden door 54 Lancasters aangevallen.

Meerdere missies van Eighth Air Force.

mission **510** werd in de loop van de ochtend uitgevoerd en behelsde een raid op tal van tactische doelen in Frankrijk. Kruisingen van doorgaande wegen, spoorbruggen, verlaadstations en V-1 sites nabij steden en plaatsen als Parijs, Bernay, Nogent-sur-Seine, Sens en St. Quentin (om er enkele te noemen) werden door 319 B-17's en B-24's met bijna 800 ton explosieven aan boord bestookt.

De tweede missie van deze dag – mission **511** – legde het accent nadrukkelijk op spoorbruggen en V-1 sites nabij Peronne en Pas-de-Calais; doelen waarop door 195 B-17's en 322 B-24's ruim 1000 ton brisant werden afgeworpen. De verliezen – hoewel in absolute zin betrekkelijk – waren toch niet verwaarloosbaar! Vijf B-17's werden neergeschoten (waarvan één in Zeeland) maar ook zes B-24's gingen door een veelheid aan oorzaken verloren! Zo werden twee zwaar beschadigde B-24's - van 448 BG en 392 BG - boven Engeland door hun bemanningen verlaten terwijl na het uitvoeren van crash-landingen B-24's van (onder meer) 446 BG en 392 BG moesten worden afgevoerd.

Eighth Fighter Command voerden – naast 283 jabo en strafe sorties – 407 escorte missies uit om beide bomber stromen te escorteren. Twaalf jachtvliegtuigen – 10 P-51's en 1 P-47 alsmede een P-38 – gingen hierbij verloren. Acht toestellen, waarvan 6 Thunderbolts, keerden met gevechtsschade op hun basis terug.

7 PG tenslotte opreerde met 10 F-5's en 4 Spitfires boven delen van Frankrijk en Duitsland.

Ninth Air Force – tactical operations.

In France, the Ninth Bomber Command halts bombing of bridges, fuel dumps and similar targets in Brittannie except on the request of 12. Army Group as the US Third Army wants the use of bridges access to all fuel they may find in their advance across France.

Around 300 A-20's and B-26's attack bridges at Mezieres-sur-Seine, Mainvillers, Nantes and Lisle and ammunition dumps at other places. Fighters fly armed reconnaissance in wide areas surrounding Paris and the south west as far as Laval, escort Ninth Bomber Command aircraft and provide cover for armoured columns and close support for ground forces.

Operatie Nordwind – V-1 lancering vanuit de lucht!

Naast het front in Frankrijk hield de Luftwaffe zich ook bezig met het lanceren van V-1's uit speciaal daarvoor aangepaste He 111-H22 bommenwerpers. Deze machines behoorden tot III./KG 3 danwel I./KG 53.

Men vloog laag boven de Noordzee om vervolgens bij het vooraf bepaalde lanceerpunt te stijgen tot de juiste hoogte en de motor van de V-1 te starten. Zodra de vliegende bom zich van het draagvliegtuig had losgemaakt en zelfstandig koers zette richting Londen, keerde de Heinkel zo laag mogelijk vliegend naar de basis Venlo terug.

Het bleken in de praktijk uitermate gevaarlijke opdrachten te zijn omdat de Mosquito's van AEAf een verbeterde offensief tegen deze vorm van oorlogvoeren hadden geopend.

Flakkommandeur Vlissingen.

1830 Flakalarm! Laut Breda in Richtung 10 ca. 30 Ziele mit SO-Kurs Entfernung 30 km.

1831 Die Ziele stehen in Richtung 11 mit Kurs Richtung 3 Entfernung 30 km.

1832 Neue Ziele in Richtung 9 Entfernung 60 km.

1840 In Richtung 2 ein Jagdverband mit Ostkurs, Entfernung 25 km und Höhe 8500 m.

1841 Ein weiterer Verband in Richtung 10 mit Kurs Ost Entfernung 60 km.

1845 In Richtung 9 und Richtung 11 viele Ziele mit SO-Kurs.

1850 (bis 1854) Kampfmittel melden mehrere Thunderbolt von Richtung 12 nach 3, Zielhöhe 7500 m.

1856 In Richtung 10 fünf Maschinen - Typ unbekannt – mit Ostkurs Entfernung 20 km.

1858 West./- meldet Thunderbolt mit roten Motorhauben und rotem Leitwerk.

1900 Kriegswache Ruhe! Mit weiteren Alarmen muß gerchnet werden, da noch Einflüge im Seesektor.

1940 Flakalarm! Ein Verband Fortress aus Richtung 5 mit Kurs Richtung 11, Entfernung 30 km.

1944 Fliegeralarm! West./- hat in Richtung 4 mehrere Fortress aufgefaßt.

1945 Die Maschinen haben jetzt Nordkurs.

1947 Süd./- meldet weitere Verbände Fortress in Richtung 4-5.

1949 Die Maschinen fliegen mit Jagdschutz (Mustang)

--/-- Ausguck meldet 5 Verbände in Richtung 1, ausfliegend nach Richtung 12.

1951 In Richtung 5 ein Verband im Anflug Entfernung 15 km.

1955 Dishoek meldet 10 Thunderbolt über Stellung kreisend.

1958 Eine Fortress über Westkapelle mit Kurs West.

2000 **Veere meldet eine Fortress mittelhoch (3300 m) mit 3 Jäger als Jagdschutz, ein Motor steht.**

--/-- Zur Zeit noch ein Verband im Anflug aus Richtung 5 Entfernung 40 km.

2005 West./- meldet Motorengeräusche aus Richtung 5 näherkommend.

2006 Dishoek meldet ein Verband Fortress in Richtung 2 mit Kurs 12.

2008 3./202 meldet Tiefflieger aus Richtung 6! Scheinwerfer 10 meldet eine Maschine tief!

--/-- **Süd./- und Souburg schießen! West./- meldet eine Fortress tief.**

2008 (bis 2010) **Die Maschinen wurde von der 5./-, 7./- und 8./810, 2./- und 3./203 und Artillerie Regiment 1712 mit 12 Schuß 10,5 cm, 72 Schuß 3,7 cm, 436 Schuß 2 cm und 135 Schuß MG beschossen! Die Maschine erhielt zahlreiche Treffer und stürzte ab.**

Die Besatzung ging in zwei Schlauchboote und entfernte sich nach SW.

Meldung an Seekommandant wegen Bergung der Besatzung ist erfolgt.

--/-- **Die 3./203 wurde durch Bordwaffen beschossen (keine Schäden und Verluste)**

2009 **Scheinwerfer 9 und 10 haben mit MG geschossen!**

--/-- Süd./- meldet Maschine hat Kurs Richtung 4 nach 8.

2014 **West./- meldet die Maschine abgestürzt!**

2018 Entwarnung und Kriegswache Ruhe!

2037 Dishoek meldet das Schlauchboot fährt nach West ab.

2039 In Richtung 9 über See viele Ziele im Anflug mit SO-Kurs.

- 2100 Dishoek meldet Schlauchboote sind nicht mehr auszumachen.
 2145 Schelde./- meldet in 300° ein Schlauchboot.
- 2222 Ab 2220 – 2305 und 2320 – 0020 Uhr erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit auf eigene Flugzeuge!
 --/-- **Von Venlo 15 He 111 zum Nordwind!**
 --/-- Ausflug 2220-2305 Uhr und Einflug bei Walcheren 2320-0020 Uhr Höhe tief.

Het verlies van een B-17 van 390 BG voor de kust bij Cadzand.

- o B-17G (42-37906) van 390 BG/568 BS – afkomstig van Framlingham Suffolk – werd direct na het bombarderen door Flak getroffen waardoor twee motoren werden uitgeschakeld en de formatie uiteindelijk moest worden verlaten. De Flak van het Verteidigungsbeheer Zeeland gaf uiteindelijk de genadeklap waarna op 10 kilometer ten westen van Cadzand een ditching op zee moest worden uitgevoerd. De volgende ochtend kwamen de twee dinghies met de negen inzittenden – waaronder twee gewonden – nabij 7./203 (Cadzand) aan land alwaar zij door soldaten van deze kustbatterij gevangen werden genomen. Na ondervraging door Leutnant Petersen werden zij afgevoerd. De gewonden werden overgebracht naar het Luftwaffe Lazarett te St. Gilles nabij Brussel.

1Lt. Clay L. Perry Jr.	pow
2Lt. Harold R. Sproul	pow
2Lt. Charles E. Ryan Jr.	Pow/ wia
Flg.Off. Beverly W. Stubbs	pow/ wia
T/Sgt. Laughlin O. Campbell	pow/ wia
S/Sgt. Raymond B. Sinclair	pow
S/Sgt. Leon J. Peragallo	pow/ wia
S/Sgt. Warren R. Shea	pow
S/Sgt. Russell E. Hicks	pow/ wia

Off we go into the wild blue yonder

Mission: Just a Milk Run to France

August 2, 1944 – Our crew was awakened about 2.30 A.M. to go on a mission. We were briefed as usual, then went to our ship to get prepared for take-off. Shortly Clay Perry – our pilot – got a call that the mission was scrubbed (cancelled). We went back to the barracks about mid-morning. I started to write a letter to my mother (I have the unfinished letter today as it was sent back to the USA with all my belongings, after I was missing in action).

A few hours later we were ordered to report to the flight line, without briefing. Lt. Perry briefed us in the ship. We were to go on a tactical mission to bomb a railroad bridge near St. Quintan, (Jussy) France. Normally this type mission was done by two-engined bombers (B-26).

Everyone said... Just a milk-run, meaning easy target just across the Channel. Only the 13 th. Wing (390th, 100th, 95th. Bomb Group and 25 ships participated) and this would be our 16th. mission.

As we approached the target, altitude about 12.000 feet on the Bomb Run, we lost an engine. The pilot feathered the prop and we continued on the Bomb Run but we fell behind our formation and losing altitude. At this time, Perry asked each crew member individually over the intercom as to what we wanted to do? Either try to make it to US occupied airfield in France or proceed to the target by ourselves, drop the bombs and then take a chance in getting back to England.

All crew voted to proceed to the target!

The anti-aircraft fire (88s) was heavy at this time and we took a direct hit of Flak and lost another engine. Then, as we approached the target we knew we were in much trouble.

In dropping our bombs, our bombardier Stubbs reported he had a direct hit on the bridge and we were all elated. However, we were losing altitude and Lt. Perry ordered the crew to lighten the ship – throw everything out. He said, we would have to ditch.

He ordered me to jettison the ball turret and I immediately went up into the ship. The first thing I did was to take off my flying boots (sheep-skin) and put on my G1 shoes as we were instructed to do this in training in this situation). So I proceeded to get rid of the ball turret.

There was some difficulty because I could not break the cast-iron hangers that were supposed to break, then the turret would drop out. I used a barrel of a caliber .50 machine gun and hit those clips with strength I never realized I had... and down went my ball turret!

As I looked through the hole – we were real low – I could see gardens, rooftops, rows of cabbage etc. and meanwhile while I had been working on the ball turret, the crew was throwing out guns, equipment and everything to lighten the ship.

Immediately after, the crew proceeded to get in position for ditching. We had practised this procedure in training in Alexandria and all crew members except pilot and co-pilot were to lay down on the radio room floor, which was between the waist and the bomb bay.

As soon as we got into position on the floor we got a direct hit from an anti-aircraft gun on the right side of the radio room, just above where we were positioned on the floor! An incredible shot from the enemy but for the Grace of God we were still alive.

I was hit in three places in my right leg. Campbell, the radio operator, got a hit in his arm while it was around my head and Ryan, the navigator got hit in the arm while coming out of the bomb bay and Hicks and Shea also got some Flak.

In training we were told that if we ditched it would be a matter of seconds before the ship would sink and at this point my thoughts were this is it, the end for me.

Then we hit the water and it came in like the force of high pressure hose. We immediately were up to our armpits in water and to my surprise we were still alive. I then pulled the cord on my May West but it didn't inflate because it was full of flak holes from the hit we took in the radio room.

We had to get out of there fast. Two inflated life rafts were stored above the radio room. The escape hatch on top was opened but I could not get any leverage to reach the hatch. Two crew members shoved me up and Shea, who was now on top, pulled me up and I slid down on the starboard wing. The life rafts came down and inflated and we piled in – 5 in one, 4 in the other.

The ship was still afloat and one engine was still operating. As we floated away about 50 yards, the aircraft turned upright, nose down and slowly sank into the North Sea.

Nine crew members still alive, very unusual. There was a small first aid kit in the raft plus some survival type food. My leg was really hurting and losing blood. We ripped

off my right pant leg and tied up the wound with the cloth and made a tourniquet, which worked oke.

Rafting in the North Sea

We were in the North Sea, thanks to the skills of the pilot Clay Perry and Bill Sproul, to land the plane in the water so well that we all survived. It was late afternoon and we were about 5 miles from the coast. We headed out to sea to England, which was about 40 miles away.

At daylight - the next day – we were out of sight of land. We had a rough night, the sea was rough but we were all in a semi-state of shock but still positive.

About 24 hours later, since we had ditched, we saw a boat on the horizon coming toward us from the east. There were two Dutch fishing boats, which came up to our rafts. A couple of their crew members pulled us into their boats and they quickly helped us to go below deck to a small cabin to hide us. In a very short time another boat – the German Navy – came along side and there was a shouting match between the fishermen and the Germans, who were angry that the Dutch picked us up. Our entire crew back on deck, with the Jerry's pointing their guns at us, wanting us to get in their boat. We hesitated, then one Jerry shot a machine gun burst over our heads! We all moved fast to their boat which was lower than the fishing boat and so I landed on deck on my side and it hurt.

We were now POW's of Deutschland

The Germans then took us to Zeebrugge, where we were turned over to the Luftwaffe. At this time the officers were separated from the non-commissioned officers and we were all now POW's of Germany. Two guards transported us to a hospital to get us medical attention. At this time I was in bad shape and could not walk without help, nor stand up. One of the guards went into the hospital and – after a while – came out along with a doctor who was yelling and arguing with the guards for taking us there and he would not give us medical attention because a few days before, Hitler had given an edict to kill all captured American airmen.

However, one of the guards went back to see if he could get someone else to help and so we finally went into the hospital and finally got a medical soldier to help.

He proceeded to take the metal out of my ankle with his jackknife, also cleaned out some wires from my heated suit that were imbedded in my thighs from flak (two large pieces of metal had gone deeply in the calf and thigh, which I still have today).

The medic told a nurse nearby to get some bandages – which were like toilet paper – which he wrapped around my leg.

Off we got to Brussels

Next episode, we were taken to a train station and the guards told my crew members to load me into a baggage wagon and then pushed me to the Train Track to board the train.

In a few hours we arrived in Brussels

(vervolg gaat verder aan Zeeland voorbij).