

Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann





Remembrance

This is a remembrance of Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann of New Milford, New Jersey. This report is based upon information obtained from various Internet and private sources, both in the U.S. and U.K.

It is hoped that the information, graphics and photos contained herein will properly illustrate, however briefly, Staff Sergeant Luhmann's service in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II and provide a glimpse about his home in New Milford, New Jersey.

Permissions, have been obtained to use the graphic images and photos included herein and all resources are listed in the "Acknowledgements" section. This report is intended for private use and is not for publication.



Introduction

In October of 1999 my wife and I moved to New Milford. Our house, the first house on Luhmann Drive, stands on a small hill on a corner lot with two large Red Oak trees. On the street corner is a green street sign with gold lettering bearing the name "Luhmann Drive" next to a gold star.

Looking up at the street sign one day, I became curious about the name, "Luhmann" staring out at me and I decided to find out more about this person, Luhmann, one day.

My quest began about two years ago with a visit to the Soldiers War Memorial in front of Borough Hall in New Milford. I stopped by to take look and remember those who had served and given their lives. Among the names inscribed, I found the name "Alfred H. Luhmann".

In the course of my research, I've discovered a number of interesting websites on the Internet and corresponded with a number of very kind people to whom, I would like to offer my special thanks for their time and valuable assistance.

Mr. William L. Beigel of Personalized WW2 Historical Research of Torrance, CA for his initial research and gracious advice rendered throughout the duration of this project.

Ms. Jenny Christian of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norwich, UK, for details regarding the plane crash, locating Alfred's half brother, Mr. Conrad Luhmann and facilitating our contact.

Mr. David Addy, of Long Stratton, UK, Webmaster of the Long Stratton Website, who has provided the account of the crash of April 1, 1944 near Long Stratton and from the anonymous eyewitness who, had kindly conveyed his recollections of the incident to Mr. Addy.

Mr. Paul Wilkinson, (RAF, Retired), of Forncett, St. Peter, UK, for his time spent researching and the information he has kindly provided regarding identities of the crew and aircraft.

Mr. Ray Pytel, of Elkhorn, Wisconsin for his research and information concerning the Distinguished Unit Citation and French Croix de Guerre w/Palm, Unit Citation.

Kay of the Long Stratton & Wacton, UK "The Sexton's Wheel" Website and Magazine for kindly posting my letter on "The Sexton's Wheel" website and help locating sources of information.

Information was also obtained from many Army Air Corps, Genealogy and U.S. Air Force Websites.

This project has been most worthwhile and it is hoped that Alfred H. Luhmann will continue to be remembered as long as there is a "Luhmann Drive" and a Soldiers War Memorial at Borough Hall in this quiet, little town of New Milford, New Jersey.

*Joe Becker
November 11, 2005*

★ Photo: Luhmann Drive - By Author



Home, New Milford, New Jersey

Alfred Henry Luhmann, the son of Carole, (or perhaps, Caroline)¹ Louise and Henry Conrad Luhmann, was born on April 8, 1920. At the time of the 1930 census, Alfred's mother, Alfred and a younger brother, Godfrey resided at 222 Grand Street, in New Milford, New Jersey, the home of Carole's mother, Mrs. Eva Rausenberger¹ and her two sons Harold and Charles, who worked for the Railroad. The house however, no longer stands and the home site for house number 222, which probably should have stood at the corner of Grand and Prospect Street, is now an open grass covered lot at the rear of St. Matthew's, Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In correspondence between Alfred's mother and the Army, after his death on April 1, 1944, his mother stated that her husband, Henry left the family in sixteen years earlier in 1928, when Alfred would have been eight years old. The correspondence also bears a different return address so it is most likely that the family later moved from the Rausenberger home in New Milford to 595 Main Street in Hackensack, New Jersey.

Alfred's father and mother having divorced, his father later remarried and had another son, Conrad, who resides in North Carolina and who recalled that his half-brother, Alfred was also known by the nickname, "Bob".

Alfred attended Hackensack High School, Hackensack, New Jersey from 1934 to 1938 and graduated in 1938, at the age of 18. In his High School Yearbook he is described as a collector of pictures of dogs, horses, and professional and college baseball and basketball games. He also enjoyed listening to the radio, going to the movies and reading. In school, he was also known for his determination and having a happy disposition. After graduation, he looked forward to getting a job and starting a career, perhaps in New York City. Unfortunately, little else is known about his early life.

High School Yearbook Photo



Footnotes:

¹ There was no mention of a Mr. Rausenberger residing at this address in the 1930 Census from which this information was obtained. The 1930 Census listed Alfred's mother's name as "Caroline" however, in correspondence with the Army the name used is "Carole".

★ Photo: Corner of Grand and Prospect Streets - By Author

★ Photo: Alfred Luhmann, High School Photo - Courtesy, Hackensack High School, Hackensack, NJ - Website: www.halley.hackensackhigh.org



World War II

Enlistment and Assignment, U.S. Army Air Corps

On September 1, 1942, at the age of twenty-two, Alfred enlisted as a private in the U. S. Army, Serial Number 32466039, at Newark, New Jersey. His enlistment records showed his marital status to be, "Single with Dependents", which is confirmed by correspondence between his mother and the Army after his death. Alfred's mother stated that he had been the sole support of both she and a younger son, residing in Hackensack, New Jersey, his father having left the family sixteen years earlier.

Alfred was assigned to the U.S. Army Air Corps and stationed at the Army Air Corps Base in Amarillo, Texas where he attended school and received training as an Aerial Engineer, (Military Occupational Specialty, MOS # 748), graduating with special honors.²

In November of 1943 Alfred went overseas and was assigned to the 702nd Bomb Squadron, Squadron Code WV, Radio Call Sign "Markum") of the 445th Bombardment Group, 2nd Combat Bombardment Wing, 2nd Air Division, 8th Air Force located at Tibenham, Norfolk, (East Anglia) England, Station # 124. Though trained as an Aerial Engineer, Alfred appeared to have served as the Left Waist Gunner, aboard a B-24, Liberator Bomber.

Footnotes:

²*"New Milford in World War II" by Theresa Martin, New Milford Public Library. Theresa Martin was a teacher in New Milford, who had corresponded with all New Milford servicemen during the war.*

★ *Graphic Image: Staff Sergeant Rank Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Courtesy, " Grunt-www.gruntsmilitary.com*



World War II

Awards and Citations

While a member of the 445th Bombardment Group, 702nd Squadron, from November of 1943 until his death on April 1, 1944, Alfred participated in numerous missions over Europe, primarily Germany, rising in rank from Private to Staff Sergeant, the rank he held at the time of his death. He was entitled to wear the silver Flight Wings by nature of his training and function aboard his aircraft. He along with his crewmates, no doubt, would also have been entitled to the following awards and citations, some of which are appropriately documented in official individual personnel records, unit histories and private recollections:^{3, 4}

The Distinguished (Presidential) Unit Citation⁶ – Awarded to the 445th Bombardment Group for unit action on the Gothaer Waggonfabrik, A.G., Gotha, Germany on February 24, 1944. Executive Order No. 9396, (sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), citation in General Order 129, Headquarters, 2nd Air Division, 11 April 1945. General Orders 42 War Department - Presidential Citation, 24 May 1945, G. C. Marshall, Chief Of Staff.

The Purple Heart – Death from wounds against an enemy of the United States. War Department General Orders No. 3, 1938 as amended.
Information releasable under Freedom of Information Act, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

The Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster⁴ - Any member of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard of the United States subsequent to September 8, 1939, distinguishes or has distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. Executive Order 9158, 11 May 1942.

Oak Leaf Cluster – Denotes subsequent awards of the medal.

"New Milford in WWII" by Theresa Martin, New Milford Public Library, New Milford, NJ.

The Good Conduct Medal⁵ – Completion of three years of service after December 7, 1941 or one year service while the United States is at war. As amended by Executive Order 9323, 31 March 1943.

Footnotes

³ A review of U.S. Army regulations for the entitlements for the following awards and citations are verifiable when compared to documentation of SSGT. Alfred Luhmann's military service for time periods and actions specified.

⁴ "for meritorious achievement while participating in ten bomber combat missions over Europe."
"New Milford in World War II" by Theresa Martin, New Milford Public Library. Theresa Martin was a teacher in New Milford, who had corresponded with all New Milford servicemen during the war.

⁵ Entitlement for this award should have been included in information releasable under Freedom of Information Act, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

⁶ Excerpt, page 10, "Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars News, April 1994 provided by Mr. Ray Pytel, Elkhorn, Wisconsin - Editor, "The Journal" 2nd Air Division Association.

★ Graphic Images: Ribbons, Badges, Flight Wings - Courtesy, Military Wives - www.militarywives.com

★ Graphic Images: Ribbons, Badges, Flight Wings - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA - www.nchsinc.com

★ Graphic Image: French Croix De Guerre w/Palm Citation - Courtesy, United States Army Insignia, - www2.powercom.net



World War II

Awards and Citations, (Continued)

The American Campaign Medal⁵ – Service outside continental United States in the American Theater for at least 30 days between December, 7, 1941 and March 2, 1946 or who served during that period for an aggregate period of one year in the continental United States. Executive Order 9265, 6 November 1942, as amended.

The European, African and Middle Eastern Campaign Medal⁵ – Participation in European, African or Middle Eastern theater of operations. Executive Order 9265, 6 November 1942, as amended.

The World War II Victory Medal – All members of the Armed Forces of the United States or the Government of the Philippine Islands who served on active duty any time between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946. Public Law No. 79-135(1945), 59 Stat 461.
Information releasable under Freedom of Information Act, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

The Croix De Guerre w/Palm⁶ – Awarded by the French Government to the 445th Bombardment Group, Decision Number 332, dated 17 September 1946, for operations from December 1943 to February 1945. Auth. 1939, Army Regulation 600-8-22. **Palm** - Denotes an award by the French Army, citation in Army dispatches.

On July 30, 1990 at the annual 2nd Air Division Association convention held in Norwich, UK, the citation and medal were formally presented to 445th Bombardment Group representatives by Lieutenant Colonel, Bernard Foron, of the French Air Force, the French Air Attaché to Britain.

The World War II Honorable Service Lapel Button

Awarded to all veterans of World War II, honorably discharged from military service. Identified as “Lapel Button”, in information releasable under Freedom of Information Act, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo. Also known as “The Ruptured Duck”.

Footnotes

⁵ Entitlement for this award should have been included in information releasable under Freedom of Information Act, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

⁶ Excerpt, page 10, “Wisconsin Veterans of Foreign Wars News, April 1994 provided by Mr. Ray Pytel, Elkhorn, Wisconsin - Editor, “The Journal” 2nd Air Division Association.
The French Croix de Guerre with Palm was awarded by to the 445th Bombardment Group by Decision Number 332, 17 September 1946 by the President of the Provincial Government of the French Republic, with the following citation. “A splendid unit animated by the finest spirit of courage and tenacity. It distinguished itself brilliantly in air operations over occupies territories and Germany from 1 December 1943 to 1 February 1945. It made 225 combat missions and dropped over 13,000 tons of bombs on vital German centers, in spite of sharp enemy resistance, which cost it 97 planes as against 142 enemy planes shot down or damaged. By its sacrifices, its tireless devotion, and it excellent crew work, it made a great contribution to the liberation of French territories.”

★ Graphic Images: Ribbons, Badges, Flight Wings - Courtesy, Military Wives - www.militarywives.com

★ Graphic Images: Ribbons, Badges, Flight Wings - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA - www.nchsinc.com

★ Graphic Image: French Croix De Guerre w/Palm Citation - Courtesy, United States Army Insignia, - www2.powercom.net



World War II

Last Mission and Crash - April 1, 1944

The Differing Accounts

Details of the crash, as well as the identities of the plane and crew have been most elusive. Some accounts are sketchy and appear to be subject to speculation. Several brief versions are stated below.

Version 1 - *They were returning from a mission over Germany on April 1, 1944. Two of the plane's engines had been shot out and they crashed into a tree, trying to return to base. Alfred was killed in the crash. Courtesy of "New Milford in World War II" by Teresa Martin, 1947.*

Version 2 - *They departed Tibenham, April 1, 1944 in bad weather, on a mission to Ludwigshafen, Germany. The plane crashed shortly after takeoff at Long Stratton, killing, all on board. Courtesy of Mr. William Biegel, World War II Personalized Research. An excerpt from page 212 of "The Mighty 8th War Diary" by Roger Freeman, mentions a B-24 from the 445th BG, crashing in or near Long Stratton after take-off ("t/o"), with 9 killed and 1 injured.*

Version 3 - *The plane, serial number 42-110046, crashed shortly after takeoff at Long Stratton, near St. Michael's Church. No further details were available. Courtesy of Ms. Jenny Christian of the 2nd Air Division, Memorial Library, Norwich, UK.*

Version 4 - *In the afternoon of April 1, 1944,⁵ a B-24 Liberator, Bomber approached Long Stratton, with two engines out. The third engine died, crossing the over the village. The plane then headed toward an open field in the St. Michael's area for an emergency, belly landing. The plane collided with a cluster of Yew trees. It became hooked in the trees and was driven downward, breaking up as it descended to ground. All crewmembers were killed with the exception of one who was thought to have survived but later died. Courtesy of an anonymous eyewitness, a boy at the time and resident of Long Stratton, UK. Reported by Mr. David Addy of Long Stratton, UK.*

Version 5 - *A B-24, H, Liberator, Bomber, serial number 42-9463, crashed on April 1, 1944, near Tibenham airfield in the vicinity of Long Stratton, returning from a mission over Mannheim, Germany. Number Two Engine was lost over the target, Number Three Engine was lost leaving the coast of France and eventually Number Four Engine was lost over Tibenham airfield. Six crewmembers were killed: Pilot, Co-Pilot, Navigator, Top Turret Gunner, Radio Operator, and Left Waist Gunner. Four crew members survived: Bombardier, Right Waist Gunner, Ball Turret Gunner and Tail Gunner. Courtesy of Norwich Archive Records Center Office, Norwich, UK, reported by Mr. Paul Wilkinson, (RAF, Retired) of Forncett, St. Peter, UK.*

Footnotes

⁵*In the eyewitness account, the incident is reported to have occurred in the afternoon of Saturday, April 1, 1944, otherwise thought to have been April 6, 1944, which would have been a Thursday because the eyewitness recalled his father dying shortly after the incident.*

★ *Graphic Image: U.S. Army Air Corps Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA - www.nchsinc.com*



World War II

Last Mission and Crash - April 1, 1944

The Differing Accounts, (Continued)

Version 6 - A B-24, H, Liberator, Bomber, serial number 41-29483, crashed on April 1, 1944 returning to Tibenham airfield at 14:14 hours. The plane lost altitude on approach to base, possibly due to lack of fuel, and clipped the tops of trees nearby. It “belly” crash-landed in a field 250 yards, north of Long Stratton church. Nine crewmembers were killed and one survived with injuries. The plane, originally flew in the 487th Bombardment Group, 839th Squadron at Lavenham, UK and was named “G. I. Wife”. Courtesy of Mr. Alan M. Hague, Curator, Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum, UK.

As noted in the preceding versions, the story line is varied with few corroborating details documented. For the most part, the main body of information seems to suggest a series of events as might be described in the subsequent “Final Summary” version I have prepared, which will hopefully permit the reader to come to satisfactory conclusions of their own. It should be understood however, that the conclusions provided herein might not be indicative of exactly what had happened. As yet, there still may be undiscovered information, which may present a significantly different picture of what really happened. This being said, I hope the following story presents some degree of accuracy, as I have understood the facts.



World War II

Last Mission and Crash - April 1, 1944

Final Summary

The details common to most versions of the story can reasonably be accepted as confirming. Some details however, were discounted after having obtained information with respect to the identities and disposition of the crewmembers, after the crash, (i.e. those who were killed and those who had survived). As such, a final account may read as follows:

Alfred's last mission began on the morning of Saturday, April 1, 1944, Mission #287, to the I.G. Farben Chemicals Company at Ludwigshafen, Germany. The crew took off that morning in a B-24, Type H, "Liberator", in bad weather conditions and poor visibility. The plane is confirmed to have crashed in Long Stratton, UK, approximately, two hundred and fifty yards north of St. Michael's Church.

At approximately 14:14 hours on the afternoon of Saturday, April 1, 1944, their aircraft, a B-24 Liberator, Bomber, belonging to the 702nd Squadron of the 445th Bombardment Group, was observed approaching the village of Long Stratton, UK, overhead. They would have been returning to home base at Tibenham airfield, from their bombing mission Ludwigshafen, Germany, however the plane was travelling from a South to Northeast direction, clearly the wrong direction. It might be speculated that since the plane was badly shot up and possibly low on fuel, the pilot might have received instructions from Tibenham control tower to divert back to Hardwick Airfield, located in the Long Stratton area. Otherwise, there could have been no reasonable explanation for the plane to be travelling in the wrong direction. It is also possible the aircraft could have gone off course if the Pilot and/or Co-pilot were injured. Bad weather conditions were also reported that day, by the U.S. Army Air Corps and might have played a part.

Their plane appeared to be badly damaged, most likely from enemy fire, with two engines out. The Number Two Engine had been lost over the target and the Number Three Engine had been lost leaving the coast of France on the trip home. The plane's third engine, the Number Four Engine, died just as it had crossed over Long Stratton village, a very short distance from Tibenham Airfield. Most likely, the incident might have been observed and reported separately as happening at both Tibenham and Long Stratton, given the proximity of their locations.

Having lost the third engine, the plane then headed toward the St. Michael's area where there was a twenty-three acre open meadow strip and where it might possibly perform an emergency, "belly flop" landing. Flying low, with only one engine, The Number One Engine running and short of fuel, the plane did not have enough power to clear a cluster of Yew trees and collided with the treetops. The plane became hooked in the treetops and was driven downward, breaking up as it descended and hitting the ground, killing six of the crew, approximately two hundred and fifty yards north of St. Michael's Church, in Long Stratton.

★ Graphic Image: 702nd Squadron Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Courtesy, B-24 Best Web - www.b24bestweb.com



World War II

Last Mission and Crash - April 1, 1944

Final Summary, (Continued)

The six crewmembers killed in the crash that afternoon, April 1, 1944, at Long Stratton, UK are named as follows:

1st Lieutenant, Phil C. Dana, Pilot

2nd Lieutenant, Edward Eberhardt Jr., Co-Pilot

2nd Lieutenant, Robert W. Steen, Navigator

Staff Sergeant, Alfred H. Luhmann, Armorer/Left Waist Gunner

Technical Sergeant, Vincent Brimley, Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner

Technical Sergeant, Jasper T. Smith, Radio Operator

The four surviving crewmembers are named below, however it is not known if any were injured.

2nd Lieutenant, Walter S. Russell Jr., Bombardier

Staff Sergeant, Ralph E. Bradshaw, Right Waist Gunner

Staff Sergeant Edward R. Ringle, Ball Turret Gunner

Staff Sergeant Robert F. Diffenbacher, Tail Gunner

It is interesting to note that one version of the story told of a young neighbor boy running out to the crash site but who did not remain there long after viewing the wreckage and the dead. It also told that it had been locally thought there was one survivor, who perhaps injured and suffering a mental condition, ran from crash site, seeking transport on a bus and that he may have later died, at a different location. This detail might be discounted though, since information obtained appears to indicate that four of the crew, named above had survived, however with no mention of injuries sustained.

In another version of the story, they are returning from a mission over Mannheim, Germany. This is quite possible since the raid on Ludwigshafen, the official target of the day, appears to have been aborted in mid-flight, due to bad weather. The "Dana Crew", along with other 445th planes may have opted to attack Mannheim as a secondary target.

★ *Graphic Image: 445th Bombardment Group Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Unofficial Rendering By Author*



World War II

Last Mission and Crash - April 1, 1944

Final Summary, (Continued)

Correspondence received from The US Air Force Historical Office, (AFHRA OL-A), at Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C. and The U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency, (AFHRA), at Maxwell AFB, Alabama both confirmed that the unit archives for the U.S. Army Air Corps, 445th Bombardment Group and/or 702nd Squadron contained no details regarding the crash, the identities of the crewmembers, their aircraft or any mention of Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann, by name.

According to the U.S. Air Force Historical Office, no investigation was performed nor “Missing Air Crew Report” (MACR) / Accident Report, prepared. Instead, it was noted that the practice of not investigating or reporting a crash, though rare, was not totally unusual in wartime. Generally a crash site would have been investigated even if only to provide for compensation for damages to private property. No reason however, for not investigating the crash site was provided.

Likewise the local British authorities did not conduct any investigation or officially record any details of the incident. This is confirmed in correspondence with the Town Clerk of Long Stratton, UK, who stated that no records of the crash of April 1, 1944 exist in the Long Stratton archive records. She did say that as a young girl at the time, she did remember the plane descending and almost hitting her grandparent’s cottage, where she had been visiting.

Only sparse details were provided in Staff Sergeant Luhmann’s Individual Death Personnel File (IDPF), routinely prepared for deceased crewmembers.



Crew Members

The complete crew roster for that day along with a few brief biographical notes for each member is listed below. Six crewmembers, noted below (*), were killed in the crash of April 1, 1944 at Long Stratton, UK. A standard compliment aboard a B-24 Liberator Bomber would have comprised ten to twelve personnel. In this case the complete roster included ten crewmembers.



Pilot*

1st Lieutenant, Phil C. Dana

Identified as a 2nd Lieutenant in several documents but listed as 1st Lieutenant, in the National Archives & Records Administration, WWII Memorial Registry

Serial Number: O687556

Born: Phil Clarence Dana, January 19, 1918, Mesa, (Maricopa County), Arizona

Hometown: Suffolk County, Massachusetts in the National Archives & Records Administration, WWII Memorial Registry

Killed In Action: April 1, 1944, B-24 Liberator Crash at Long Stratton, UK



Co-Pilot*

2nd Lieutenant, Edward Eberhardt Jr.

Serial Number: O806822

Hometown: Denver, Colorado

Medals Officially Documented: Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster

Killed In Action: April 1, 1944, B-24 Liberator Crash at Long Stratton, UK

Buried: Cambridge American Cemetery, Cambridge, UK – Plot: C, Row: 3, Grave 65



Navigator*

2nd Lieutenant, Robert W. Steen

Serial Number: O805357

Hometown: Pine Apple, (Wilcox County), Alabama

Killed In Action: April 1, 1944, B-24 Liberator Crash at Long Stratton, UK

★ Graphic Image: B-24 Liberator, Bomber - Courtesy, B-24 Best Web - www.b24bestweb.com

★ Graphic Image: Flight Wings and Lieutenant Insignia - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA, www.nchsinc.com

★ Graphic Image: Officer Lapel Brass Insignia - Courtesy, Soldier City, www.soldiercity.com

Crew Members, (Continued)



Bombardier

2nd Lieutenant, Walter S. Russell Jr.

Serial Number: O739118

Born: Unconfirmed, May 8, 1920

Died: Unconfirmed, March 20, 2004

*Buried: Unconfirmed, Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, CA, Section BA, Row C, Site 167
as Lieutenant Colonel, Walter Stanley Russell, U.S. Air Force, with Service in World War II,
Korea and Viet-Nam.*



Armorer / Nose Gunner

The Nose Gunner position aboard the B-24 Liberator Bomber, was typically, but not always manned by the Flight Engineer who would also have manned the Top Turret Gunner position, alternately. It appears that no one person was specifically assigned to the Nose Gunner position on "Dana" aircraft.



Flight Engineer / Top Turret Gunner*

Technical Sergeant, Vincent Brimley, (may have been spelled "Brindy")

Serial Number: 35564238

Born: 1915, Indiana

Hometown: West Terre Haute, (Vigo County), Indiana

Enlisted: 10/21/42, Indianapolis, Indiana

Civilian Occupation: Wire Chief, Telephone and Telegraph

Marital Status: Single with Dependents

Killed In Action: April 1, 1944, B-24 Liberator Crash at Long Stratton, UK

★ Graphic Image: B-24 Liberator, Bomber - Courtesy, B-24 Best Web - www.b24bestweb.com

★ Graphic Image: Flight Wings, Lieutenant Insignia and Technical Sergeant Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA, www.nchsinc.com

★ Graphic Image: B-24 Liberator, Bomber, Tail Marking, 445th Bombardment Group - Courtesy armyairforces.com



Crew Members, (Continued)



Air Crew / Radio Operator*

Technical Sergeant, T Jasper T. Smith

Serial Number: 38037255

Born: 1917, Texas

Hometown: Greenville, (Hunt County), Texas

Enlisted: 01/29/41, Dallas, Texas

Civilian Occupation: Bandsman – Oboe or Automobile Parts Clerk

Marital Status: Single without Dependents

Killed In Action: April 1, 1944, B-24 Liberator Crash at Long Stratton, UK.



Armorer / Left Waist Gunner*

Staff Sergeant, Alfred H. Luhmann

Serial Number: 32466039

Born: April 8, 1920, New Jersey

Hometown: New Milford, (Bergen County), New Jersey

*Medals Officially Documented: Purple Heart, WWII Victory Medal and
WWII Honorable Service Lapel Button, (“Ruptured Duck”)*

Medals Unofficially Documented: Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster

Training: Trained as an Aerial Engineer, (MOS #748) but served as Left Waist Gunner

Enlisted: 09/01/42, Newark, New Jersey

Civilian Occupation: Engineering Aide

Marital Status: Single with Dependents

Killed In Action: April 1, 1944, B-24 Liberator Crash at Long Stratton, UK

Buried: Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, NY, Section H, Site 9711



Armorer / Right Waist Gunner

Staff Sergeant, Ralph E. Bradshaw

Serial Number: 36058821

Born: 1913, Illinois

Enlisted: 06/08/42, East St. Louis, Illinois

Marital Status: Married

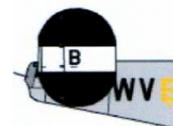
Civilian Occupation: Locomotive Fireman

★ Graphic Image: B-24 Liberator, Bomber - Courtesy, B-24 Best Web - www.b24bestweb.com

★ Graphic Image: Flight Wings, Technical Sergeant Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA, www.nchsinc.com

★ Graphic Image: Staff Sergeant Insignia, Shoulder Patch -- Courtesy, “ Grunt ” www.gruntsmilitary.com

★ Graphic Image: Enlisted Lapel Brass Insignia - Courtesy, Soldier City, www.soldiercity.com



445th BG

Crew Members, (Continued)



Armorer / Ball Turret Gunner

Staff Sergeant, Edward R. Ringle

Serial Number 18056657

Born: May 17, 1924, California.

Hometown: Reagan County, Texas

Enlisted or Re-Enlisted: 12/11/45, San Antonio, Texas, as Staff Sergeant

Marital Status: Single without Dependents

Civilian Occupation: Automobile Serviceman

Died: September 18, 1976

Buried: Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, Section AI, Section 635. Served in U.S. Army Air Force in World War II and U.S. Air Force in Korea



Armorer / Tail Gunner

Staff Sergeant, Robert F. Diffenbacher

Serial Number: 33409768

Born: October 23, 1923, Kane, Mckean, Pennsylvania

Enlisted: 01/15/43, Erie, Pennsylvania

Marital Status: Single without Dependents.

Died: April 19, 1991

★ Graphic Image: B-24 Liberator, Bomber - Courtesy, B-24 Best Web - www.b24bestweb.com

★ Graphic Image: Flight Wings - Courtesy, Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA, www.nchsinc.com

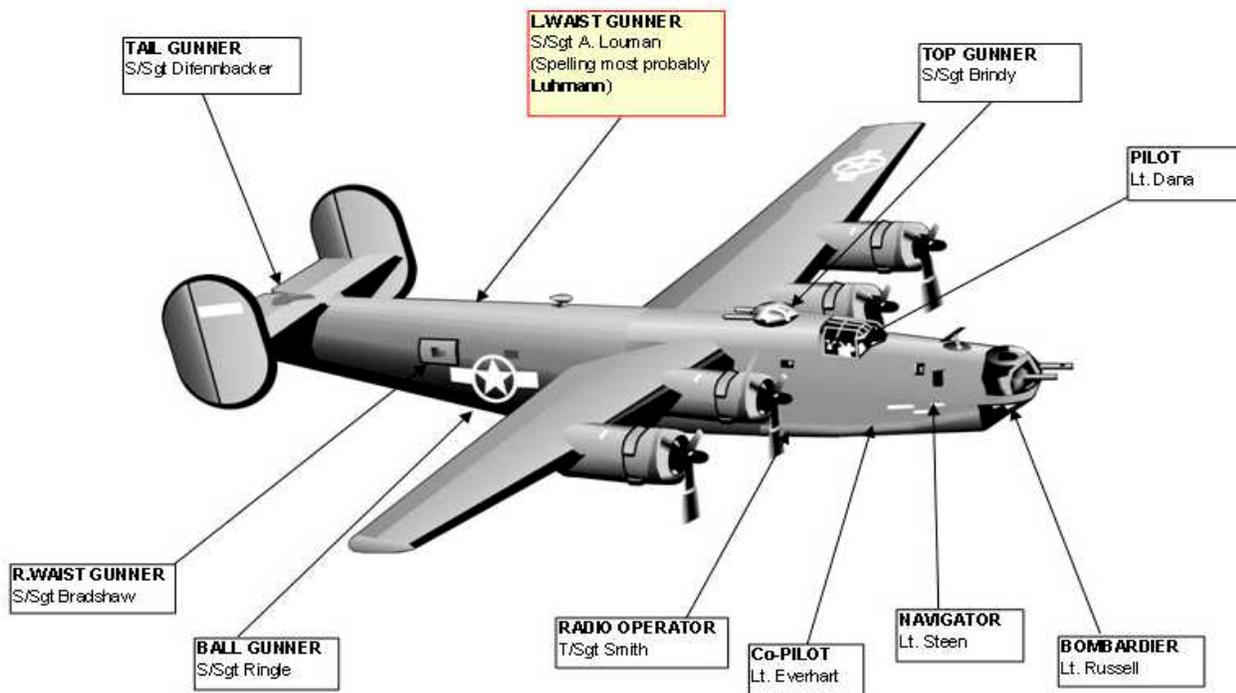
★ Graphic Image: Staff Sergeant Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Courtesy, "Grunt" www.gruntsmilitary.com

★ Graphic Image: Tail and Wing Insignia 445th Bombardment Group - Unofficial Rendering By Author



Aircraft Diagram, "The Dana Crew"

Lt. DANA's CREW



CRASH-LANDED IN ENGLAND KILLING SIX OF THE BOYS:-

PILOT; Co-PILOT; NAVIGATOR; TOP GUNNER; RADIO OPERATOR; LEFT WAIST GUNNER.
THEY WERE ON A RAID TO MANHEIM, GERMANY, LOST THE No.2 ENGINE OVER THE TARGET
LOST THE No.3 LEAVING THE COAST OF FRANCE. LOST THE No.4 OVER THE AIRFIELD.
CRASHED NEAR THE AIRFIELD.

Additional Notes – 10/03/05

1. The Top Turret Gunner's surname is "Brimley", (Technical Sergeant, Vincent Brimley) who would have served as the Flight Engineer and Top Turret Gunner or Nose Gunner.
2. The Co-Pilot's surname is "Eberhardt", (2nd Lieutenant, Edward Eberhardt Jr.).
3. The Tail Gunner's surname is "Diffenbacher", (Staff Sergeant, Robert F. Diffenbacher).
4. The Left Waist Gunner's surname is "Luhmann", (Staff Sergeant, Alfred H. Luhmann).
5. Official Army Air Corps documentation confirms that the aircraft and crew were on a mission to Ludwigshafen, Germany, (445th Bombardment Group, Mission #287), on the morning of Saturday, April 1, 1944 and that the crash occurred that day. If they had crashed returning from the mission, it would have occurred later that day, most likely in the afternoon as reported in an eye witness account of a Long Stratton resident.

★ Graphic Image: B-24 Liberator, Bomber - Courtesy, B-24 Best Web - www.b24bestweb.com

★ Graphic Image: "The Dana Crew" - Courtesy, Mr. Paul Wilkinson, (RAF, Retired), Forncett, St. Peter, UK



The B-24, Liberator Bomber

The Dana Crew's aircraft was a Consolidated B-24, Type H, Liberator, Bomber. It is likely that the plane's serial number was #42-9463, as noted in the photo on the following page. This serial number however cannot be confirmed in any other documentation other than what has been noted in that actual photograph of the crashed aircraft. Its nose art nickname, if any, remains unknown.

Various sources have reported a variety of serial numbers for the Dana Crew's aircraft but additional research has proved the serial numbers incorrect for the reasons stated below.

2nd Air Division Memorial Library at Norwich archive records reports a B-24 aircraft with a serial number # 42-110046. This serial number however, belonged to an aircraft of the 703rd Squadron of the 445th Bombardment Group.

445th Bombardment Group Museum at Tibenham archive records report a B-24-H aircraft with a serial number #42-9463. This serial number however does not appear within any series listing for any of the all B-24 Type H aircraft that was manufactured. This number was assigned to a P-39, Airacobra, Fighter. The photo on the following page however, would seem to disprove this fact.

446th Bombardment Group, Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum at Flixton archive records report a B-24-H aircraft, serial number 41-29483 and no nose art nickname. The aircraft was said to have originally flown in the 487th Bombardment Group, 839th Squadron under the name "GI Wife". This serial number later belonged to a 445th Bombardment Group aircraft of the 701st Squadron, which crashed on June 21, 1944 and not the 702nd Squadron aircraft, which crashed on April 1, 1944.

Crash Site



Photo: Courtesy, Mr. Paul Thrower, Curator, 93rd Bomb Group Museum

The aircraft identified above, serial # 42-9463, a B-24 H Liberator, bears the Circle "F" tail Marking of the 445th Bombardment Group from Tibenham Air Base. In the photo however, there are no other visible distinguishing features, which could identify it as the "Dana Crew" aircraft of the 702nd Squadron of which Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann was a member and which crashed in Long Stratton, on April 1, 1944.

It may be likely however that this may be the "Dana Crew's" aircraft even though the serial number captioned above cannot be positively confirmed. In the mid-left-hand side of the photo there appears to be a remnant of a tree which would confirm the story about a collision with a tree or trees, causing the crash. The date in the photo "2-4-44" would also be appropriate, since they crashed on April 1st. It would also seem likely that someone from the base at Tibenham would have been there the next day to inspect the site and document the wreckage. A person can be seen inspecting the wreckage in the middle of the photo, under the right tail section.

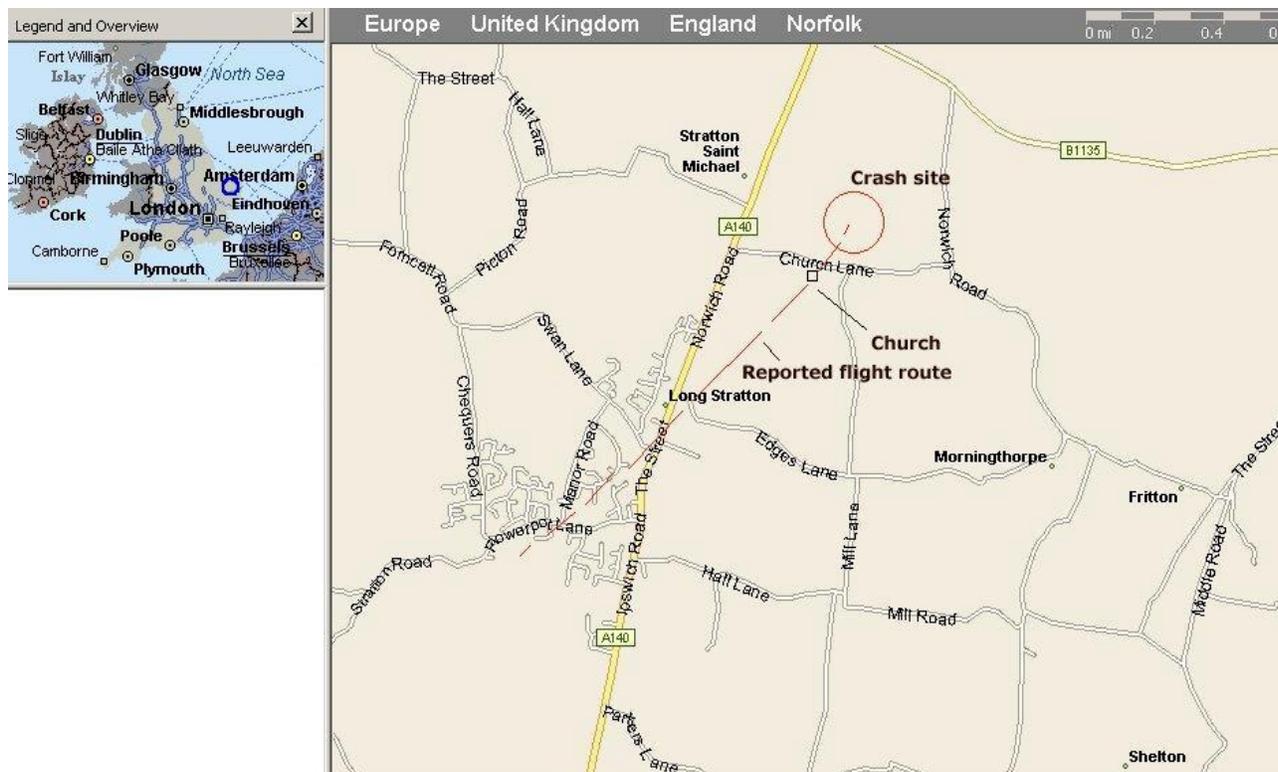
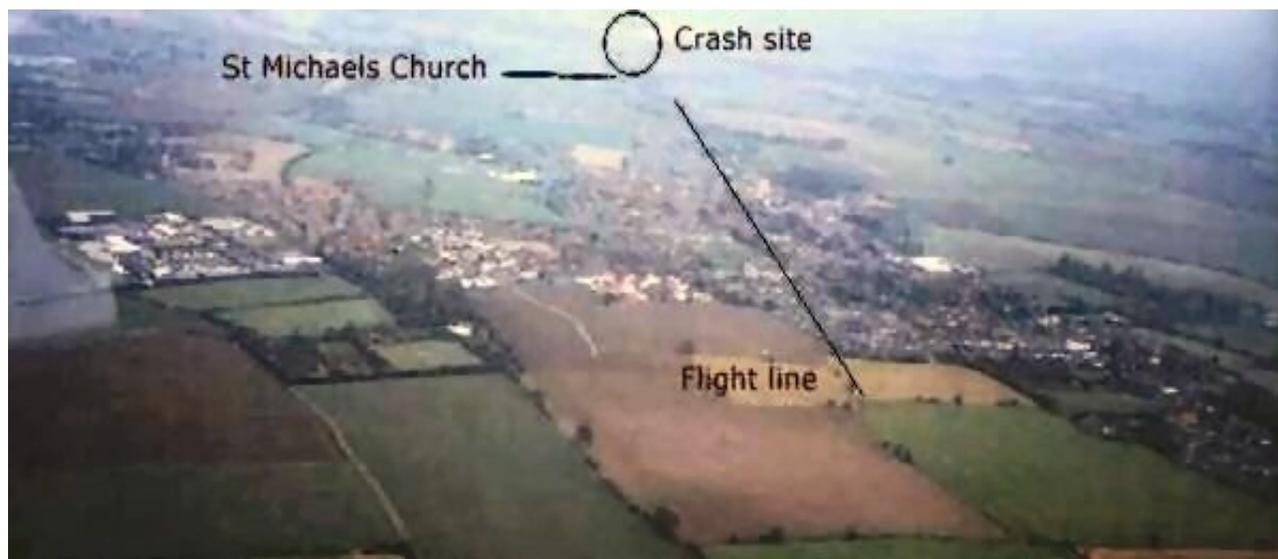
According to U.S. Air Force sources, no Accident Report was filed which might have been done if they had crashed after take-off. No Missing Aircrew Report was filed since they crashed nearby and their whereabouts were probably known. The Army Air Corps and local authority conducted no investigation since there may not have been any damage to property. Perhaps is likely that they may simply have been reported as a combat loss in their unit logs without any additional details which would seem to confirm that very little information can be found through official channels.

★ Graphic Image: Officers Lapel U.S. Insignia - Courtesy, Soldier City, www.soldiercity.com



Flight Path and Crash Site

Saturday, April 1, 1944 Long Stratton & St. Michael's



- ★ Aerial Photo and Graphic Map Crash Site Location - Courtesy, Mr. David Addy, Long Stratton, UK
- ★ Graphic Image: 2nd Air Division Insignia, Shoulder Patch - Unofficial Rendering By Author



Flight Path and Crash Site – (Continued)

Saturday, April 1, 1944 Long Stratton & St. Michael's





World War II

Burial and Return Home

The bodies of all the crewmembers killed in the crash were recovered and buried at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, in England on April 4, 1944. Alfred was buried in Plot D, Row 3, Grave 9, between another crewmember, Technical Sergeant, Jasper T. Smith of the 445th Bombardment Group and Technical Sergeant, Donald N. Jugenberg of the 447th Bombardment Group. The crew members, buried at Cambridge American Military Cemetery were eventually returned to the United States for re-interment. The only exception appears to be that of 2nd Lt. Edward Eberhardt Jr., awarded the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, who still rests at Cambridge American Military Cemetery, in Plot C, Row 3, Grave 65.

After being notified of his death, Alfred's mother, Carole Louise Luhmann, who was named as next of kin had corresponded with the Army regarding the disposition and return of Alfred's personal effects. In one letter she remarked that Alfred had been her and her younger son Godfrey's sole support and that her husband, Henry had left the family sixteen years earlier, his whereabouts being unknown at that time. A number of items and money were returned, but Alfred's Flight Wings and ribbons were not among his effects. In another letter, one month later, his mother inquired about their return, only to be told that these items could not be located among his personal effects. It is doubtful if these items were returned to his mother and the last correspondence in this regard, was dated October 31, 1944.

The Army later had located his father, Henry Conrad Luhmann at 300 Success Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut and contacted him in January 1946 regarding the disposition and arrangements for the return of Alfred's remains the United States for re-interment. During subsequent communication between the Army and Alfred's father, right up until Alfred's re-interment, there had been no mention of Alfred's mother or her participation in any manner. It seems strange that no mention had been made of her since she had originally been named as Beneficiary and Executrix in Alfred's will, made while he was stationed at Gowen Field, Idaho. She was also the person contacted by the Army immediately after his death and regarding the disposition of his effects. Alfred appointed his father as Beneficiary and Executor only if his mother predeceased him but no information had been found to indicate that this was the case or to explain this seemingly unusual situation.

Alfred was returned to the United States on June 18, 1948 and re-interred on July 23, 1948 in The National Cemetery at Farmingdale, Long Island, New York, Section H, Grave 9711, with a Protestant Religious Service and a Latin, Cross Marker.



Thoughts

Although the Army was able to locate and return Alfred's money and personal articles to his mother, after his death, they were unable to locate his Flight Wings and ribbons and return them, as she had requested.

It seems unusual that Alfred's Flight Wings and ribbons, could not be located among his personal effects in his quarters at the garrison. According to Army regulations, these items are part of the uniform and are to be kept, maintained and worn appropriately with the uniforms, issued to each service man. In the event these items are lost or damaged, they must be replaced. If the Army could not locate them and presumed them lost, these items probably could have been replaced at the request of his unit commander and sent to his mother for a remembrance. It would have been a fitting act of kindness, and would have at least provided some small comfort to his mother for her loss. Perhaps then as it is now, it simply did not occur to those in charge to send a replacement set. There is no further information to show that anything was done with regard to these items, whether they were located and returned later, any replacements sent or nothing done at all. The question still remains.

Also unusual is the existence of several accounts of the crash, and a variety of aircraft identification numbers. It is hoped that this report has provided credible and accurate account of what happened that day, in 1944.

As I have understood the information I have been able to piece together, I personally think this was their story, a brave crew desperately trying to keep their badly damaged aircraft aloft long enough to reach home base. It was most unfortunate that luck wasn't with them that day and this story had to end so tragically.



Closing

To this end, I have spent my time and fulfilled my promise to Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann. I learned something about his brief life of only twenty-four years, which ended so sadly for him and his family. It is most fortunate that Alfred's half brother, Conrad Luhmann has been located through the services of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norwich, UK and that I have had the pleasure of contacting him, and sharing this information with him.

I hope that Alfred or "Bob" as he was also known, will be remembered as long as his name appears among all the other veterans on the Soldiers War Memorial in front of Borough Hall, on the street named after him, "Luhmann Drive" in New Milford, New Jersey and for as long as we all shall live.

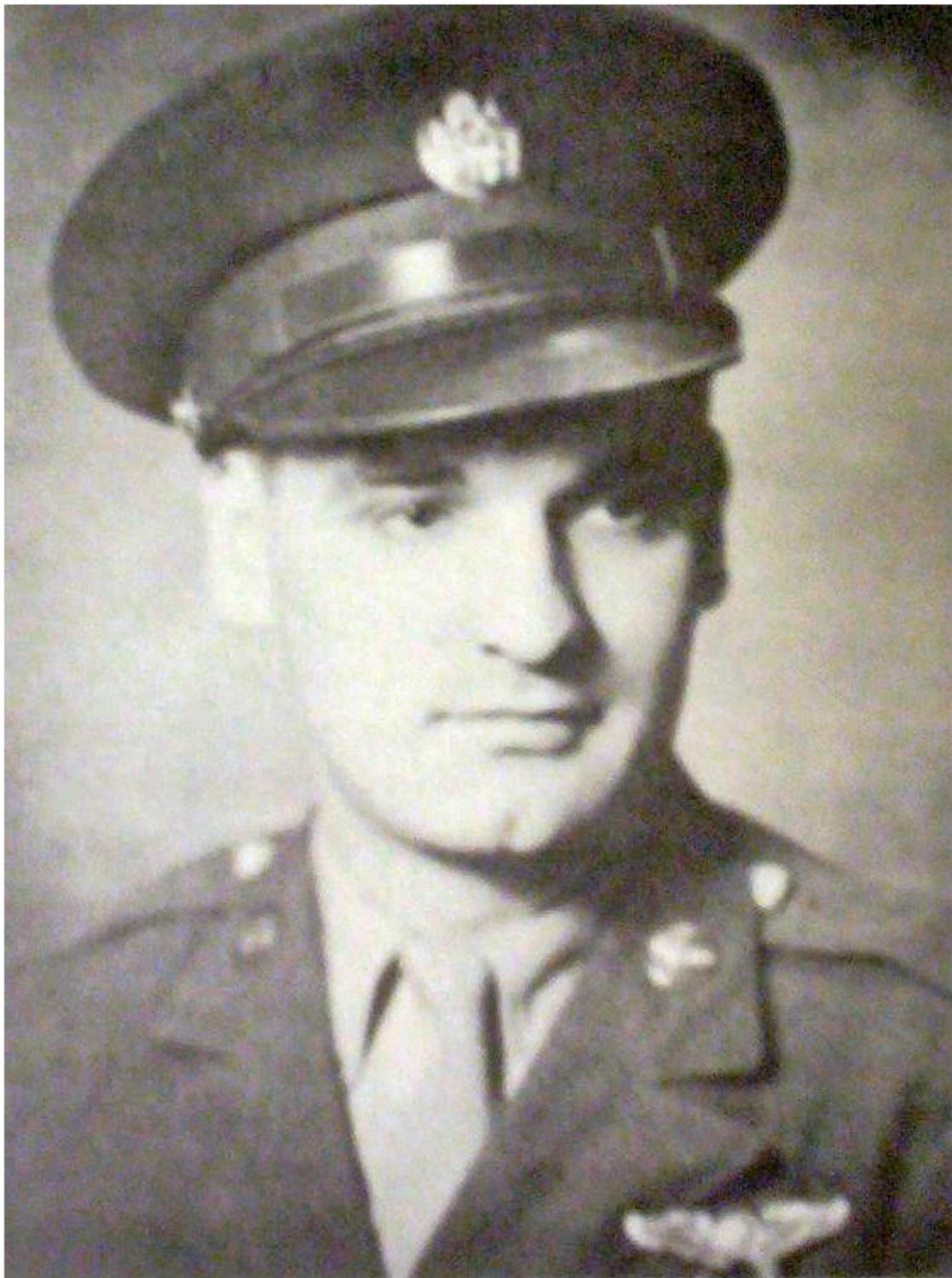
Alfred also wanted to live and enjoy life like the rest of us but he was not to realize this simple dream. He gave all he had and we must remember him and those like him who gave up everything.

Rest In Peace, Alfred.

Thanks and God Bless.



★ Graphic Image: Eagle Crying - Courtesy, Flagpole Banners and Images - www.theflagpole.com
★ Graphic Image: Rose - Public Domain



Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann

Photo: Courtesy, "New Milford in World War II" By Teresa M. Martin, May 30, 1947, New Milford Public Library, New Milford, NJ

OFFICIAL MEDALS, CITATIONS, BADGES AND RANK INSIGNIA

SSGT ALFRED H. LUHMANN



Purple Heart



*Air Medal
w/Bronze Oak
Leaf Cluster*



*Army
Good Conduct
Medal*



*American
Campaign
Medal*



*European/African/
Middle Eastern
Campaign Medal*



*WWII
Victory Medal*



*"Distinguished"
or "Presidential"
Unit Citation* *Croix de Guerre
w/Bronze Palm
France, WWII*



Ribbons



*Honorable Service
Lapel Button WWII*



*Staff Sergeant
SSGT*



Aerial Gunner

NON OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS



*Army
Commemorative*



*Combat Service
Commemorative*



*European/African/
Middle Eastern Victory
Commemorative*



*Overseas Service
Commemorative*



*WWII Victory
Commemorative*

Graphic Images: Courtesy, Military Wives, George A. Petersen NCHS, Inc., United States Army Insignia and Great Websites



Presidential Citation

GENERAL ORDERS)
NO. 42)

WAR DEPARTMENT
Washington 25, D.C., 24 May 1945

* * * * *

BATTLE HONORS—Citation of units Section IX

6. As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), citation of the following unit in General Orders 129, Headquarters 2d Air Division, 11 April 1945, as approved by the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations, is confirmed under the provisions of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2d Air Division, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy. On 24 February 1944 this group participated, with other heavy bombardment groups of the 2d Bombardment Division, in an attack on the Gothaer Waggonfabrik, A.G. located at Gotha, Germany. On this occasion the attacking bombers met and overcame the fiercest and most determined resistance the enemy was able to muster in defense of this target, so vital to his ability to wage war. Unprotected by friendly fighter cover the 445th Bombardment Group (H) was under almost continuous attack from enemy aircraft for a period of 2 hours and 20 minutes. Although antiaircraft fire was hurled at the formation along the route to and from the target as well as at the target itself, the most deadly opposition was given by enemy aircraft. For 1 hour and 20 minutes before "bombs away" savage attacks were made by single and twin-engined enemy fighters in a vain attempt to keep the bombers from reaching their target. On the actual bombing run, that critical period of each bombardment mission, fierce and relentless attacks were unable to keep the bombers from accomplishing their task. For another hour after bombing, the group continued to be the object of ferocious fighter attacks. Of this group's 25 aircraft which penetrated enemy territory, 13 were lost to these fierce fighter attacks, which number is approximately twice the loss suffered by any of the other groups participating in this mission. In addition, 9 of the surviving 12 aircraft returned from the mission with battle damage. With heroic determination the 445th Bombardment Group (H) flew its assigned course, destroying 21 enemy attackers, probably destroying 2 more, and damaging 7 during the long running battle. The target was located and bombed with extreme accuracy and devastating results. This target, the most important source of ME. 110's, was so well hit that the enemy air force suffered a most telling blow. The courage, zeal, and perseverance shown by the crew members of the 445th Bombardment Group (H), 2d Air Division, on this occasion were in accordance with the highest traditions of the military service of the United States and reflect great credit on themselves and the group, and the Army Air Forces.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

G. C. MARSHALL
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:
J. A. ULIO
Major General

Graphic Image: Presidential Unit Citation Document, Dated 24 May, 1945 - Courtesy of Website Listed Below:

<http://www.dj1953.com/1944/citation.jpg>

11/19/2004

Graphic Images: Presidential Unit Citation - Courtesy, Grant Website



Photo & Caption: Courtesy, Mr. Ray Fytel, Editor, "The Journal"



Ray Fytel's "several years of research and search" finally culminated in the 445th BG being formally presented the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme by Lt. Col. Foron, the French Air Attaché to Britain. We owe Ray Fytel a great big thank you for all the work he put into this task — atta boy Ray.

Did you know that only three bomber groups were awarded the Croix de Guerre? The 492nd Carpetbaggers, the 100th BG (B-17s) and the 445th — so you see it is quite a unique honor.

The French Croix de Guerre w/Palm was formally presented to the 445th Bombardment Group, on July 30th, 1990 at the 2nd Air Division Association annual convention, held at the Norwich Sports Palace in Norwich, UK. Left to right: Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Foron of the French Air Force, Assistant Air Attaché to Britain, presents the award to Mr. Ray Fytel, Editor of "The Journal" and Mr. Charles Walker, Vice President of the 445th Bomb Group on behalf of the 445th Bombardment Group. The 445th Bombardment Group had been deactivated before the citation could have been officially awarded, on September 17, 1946.

ASSOCIATION NATIONALE DES CROIX DE GUERRE, DES T.O.E.
ET DE LA VALEUR MILITAIRE
HOTEL DES INVALIDES, PARIS



FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE WITH PALM, awarded by Decision No. 222, 27 September 1946, by the President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, with the following citation:

A splendid unit, animated by the finest spirit of courage and tenacity, distinguished itself brilliantly in air operations over occupied territories and Germany from 1 December 1943 to 3 February 1945. It made 225 combat missions and dropped over 12,000 tons of bombs on vital German centers, in spite of sharp enemy resistance, which cost it 97 planes as against 142 enemy planes shot down or damaged. By its sacrifices, its tireless devotion, and its excellent crew work, it made a great contribution to the liberation of French territory.

Image: Croix de Guerre Diploma & Caption - Courtesy, Mr. Ray Fytel, Editor, "The Journal"

Image: Croix de Guerre w/Palm Medal and Unit Citation Ribbon - Courtesy, United States Army Insignia, website www.2.powercom.net

Rausenberger / Luhmann Family Home Site 222 Grand Street, New Milford, N.J., Circa 1930

Alfred H. Luhmann's residence at 222 Grand Street, which was owned by his grandmother, Eva Rausenberger, at the time of the 1930 Federal Census, no longer stands today. Alfred lived there with his mother, Carole Luhmann and a brother, Godfrey Luhmann along with two uncles, Harold and Charles Rausenberger, the sons of Eva.

Today, the most likely area where the home site may have been located is an open, grass covered lot at the rear lot of St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church which fronts 225 Center Street, in New Milford. It is not known when the home was demolished or the church was built.



Photo: By Author



Photo: By Author

*Hackensack High School,
Hackensack, NJ
Graduating Class of 1938*

High School Year Book Photo and Caption



ALFRED H. LUHMANN

Al is an enthusiastic collector of pictures of dogs and horses . . . baseball and basketball . . . especially college and professional games . . . enjoys the radio, movies or a good book . . . grim determination . . . dandy disposition . . . intends to find work in the big city . . . more power to him . . .

Photo & Caption: Courtesy, Hackensack High School, Hackensack, NJ - Graduating Class of 1938 Yearbook

EXCERPT "NEW MILFORD IN WORLD WAR II"
BY TERESA M. MARTIN, MAY 30, 1947
NEW MILFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY,
NEW MILFORD, N.J.

To the memory of the New Milford men who gave their lives during World War II, and to express appreciation to the many who served gallantly during the conflict, I wish to dedicate this booklet.

May 30, 1947

Dear Friends,

During World War II, this little town of New Milford contributed generously to our Country's Call.

Five hundred sixty-three men and women joined the armed forces for military service. Two hundred twenty-three citizens were volunteer members of the town's Defense Council, giving many hours of time to planning and practicing safety in case of any emergency. The American Red Cross groups supplied many articles of clothing for the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, and made thousands of surgical dressings for hospital work. The War Bond drives were always over-subscribed, the salvage materials were collected regularly; and every one in town accepted Rationing problems willingly to help win the war.

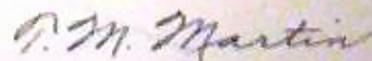
Through many years of teaching in New Milford's schools, I had the opportunity to know most of the town fellows who went into service, and so we kept a Junior High School Honor Roll, listing the names of all our graduates in the military forces.

Carrying out the idea of the Servicemen's League of New Milford we published a mimeographed newspaper once a month and sent news from our boys in all parts of the world to all on our mailing list - three hundred eighty-five at one time.

I have tried to compile the records of our Servicemen and women from information, furnished by them and their families, and although it has been a big task, I have enjoyed doing it. I realize that there are probably some errors and omissions but I offer my best effort and hope that you will be as interested in the experiences of our New Milford men and women as I have been.

I wish to express my appreciation to all who so willingly helped in any way to complete this project and I extend the heartfelt gratitude of our townspeople to all those who served during World War II.

Sincerely,



TERESA M. MARTIN

Graphic Images: Courtesy, "New Milford in World War II", By Teresa M. Martin, May 30, 1947

EXCERPT "NEW MILFORD IN WORLD WAR II"
BY TERESA M. MARTIN, MAY 30, 1947
NEW MILFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY,
NEW MILFORD, N.J.



ALFRED H. LUHMANN

Staff Sergeant, Alfred H. Luhmann, age twenty-three, was killed in action April 1, 1944, while returning to his base in England after a successful mission over Germany. Two engines were shot out and the plane crashed into a tree as the crew tried to get back to their home base.

Alfred entered the Army Air Force in September 1942, and graduated at Amarillo, Texas, with special honors as an aerial engineer. In November 1943, he was sent overseas and assigned to the 702nd Bomb Squadron, 445th Bomb Group, based in England.

He served as an aerial engineer and top gunner and was awarded the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf cluster for meritorious achievement while participating in ten bomber combat missions over Europe.

Photo & Graphic Images: Courtesy, "New Milford in World War II", By Teresa M. Martin, May 30, 1947

UNIT SHOULDER SLEEVE INSIGNIA



U. S. ARMY AIR FORCE



** Unofficial Rendering*

2ND COMBAT BOMBARDMENT WING



8TH U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE



** Unofficial Rendering*

445th
Bombardment Group
No Unit Patch WWII

Unit Patch Approved
Sept. 7, 1955
Motto "The Bison Wing"

445TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP



** Unofficial Rendering*

2ND AIR DIVISION



702ND SQUADRON

ORGANIZATION

U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE



8TH U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE



2ND AIR DIVISION – AIRCRAFT ID - CIRCLE



2ND COMBAT BOMBARDMENT WING



389TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP HEAVY



445TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)

AIRCRAFT ID – CIRCLE – F
TIBENHAM, ENGLAND
NOV. 1943 – MAY 1945

453RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HEAVY)



445th Bombardment Group
No Patch WWII
Unit Patch Approved Sept. 7, 1955



"Distinguished" or "Presidential" Unit Citation
Gotha, Germany
Feb. 24, 1944
French Croix de Guerre
w/Bronze Palm
Dec. 1943 / Feb. 1945

700TH SQUADRON



701ST SQUADRON



702ND SQUADRON

AIRCRAFT ID – WV
CALLSIGN - MARKUM



703RD SQUADRON



1st Lt. Phil C. Dana Pilot
2nd Lt. Edward Eberhardt Jr. Co-Pilot
2nd Lt. Robert W. Steen Navigator
2nd Lt. Walter S. Russell Jr. Bombardier
TSgt. Jasper T. Smith Radio Operator
No Nose Gunner On Board



SSgt. Alfred H. Luhmann
SSgt. Ralph E. Bradshaw
SSgt. Edward R. Ringle
SSgt. Robert F. Diefenbacher
TSgt. Vincent Brimley

Armorer/Left Waist Gunner
Armorer/Right Waist Gunner
Armorer/Ball Turret Gunner
Armorer/Tail Gunner
Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner



Graphic Images: Credits, Page 41

445TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP PHOTOS



***“Dingy”
A Mascot Of The
445TH Bombardment Group***

Photo: Courtesy, 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norwich, UK



Photo: Courtesy of 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norwich, UK

A 445TH Bombardment Group Crew - “The Neal Crew”

B-24, LIBERATORS IN ACTION



Photo: Courtesy, U.S. Air Force Archive



Photo: Courtesy, U.S. Air Force Archive

Going In At Zero Feet !!!

The Ploesti Raid



Photo: Courtesy, U.S. Air Force Museum

Luhmann Drive, New Milford, New Jersey



Photo: By Author

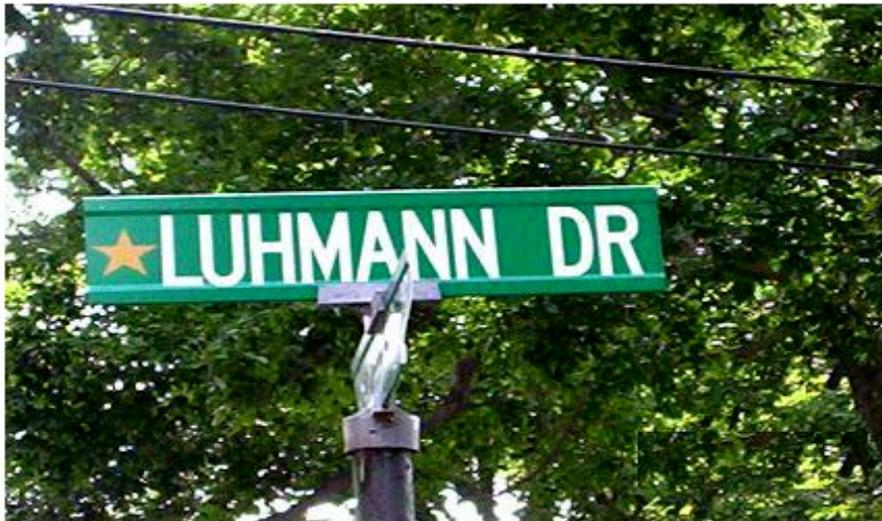


Photo: By Author



Photo: By Author

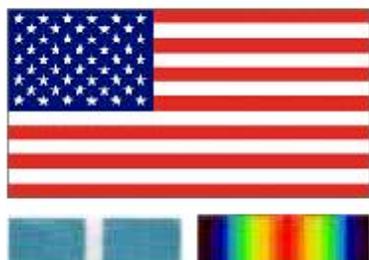


Photo: By Author

Soldiers War Memorial, Borough Hall, New Milford, NJ

Photo & Graphic Images: Credits, Pages 40, 41



KOREA
 RICHARD T. SHEA JR. M.O.H.
 GEORGE MORRIS
 JAMES H. POWELL
 FRANK ROSSE


WORLD WAR I
 CARL H. KASTLER

VIETNAM
 THOMAS GRIX
 LARRY MERSCHROD
 JAMES WOODS, JR.
 GEORGE LESTER MICHELS



WORLD WAR II

ARMAND ALLESSANDRINI	WILLIAM KORFITSSEN
JOHN J. BULGER	DENNIS J. LACEY
LOUIS J. FALLER	GARY LEONARD
GEORGE FERMERY	ALFRED H. LUHMANN
ROBERT GREVE	CHARLES R. MCCARTHY
LEE G. HOFFMAN	HENRI NEILL REICHELT
WARREN JOHNSON	ROBERT TRENCH
EDWARD J. JORDAN	ROBERT TROTTA
	HOWARD TRENCH



Photos: By Author

Photos & Graphic Images: Credits, Pages 40, 41



Acknowledgements

- ◆ **Mr. William Beigel, 4824 Newton St., Torrance, CA 90505**
Website: Personalized WW2 Historical Research, [www. Ww2research.com](http://www.Ww2research.com)
★ *Personal Historical Information, S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann and Crew*
- ◆ **Mr. Michael Simpson, Webmaster, 445th Bombardment Group**
Website: 445th Bomb Group, www.445thbomb-group.com
★ *Unit History, Mission 287, April 1, 1944, Ludwigshafen, Germany*
- ◆ **Ms. Jenny Christian, 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norwich, UK**
Website: 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norwich, England, www.2ndair.org.uk
★ *Details of crash on April 1, 1944 at Long Stratton and information regarding the whereabouts of Staff Sergeant Luhmann's half brother, Conrad Luhmann.*
- ◆ **Mr. David Addy, Long Stratton, UK**
Website: Long Stratton, Mr. David Addy, Webmaster, www.geocities.com/longstratton
★ *Reporting the account of the crash on April 1, 1944 at Long Stratton based on the recollections of a Long Stratton resident who was an eyewitness to the incident but who prefers to remain anonymous.*
- ◆ **Anonymous Eye Witness, Resident of Long Stratton, UK**
★ *Recollections of the plane crash on April 1, 1944 at Long Stratton.*
- ◆ **Mr. Paul Wilkinson, (RAF, Retired) of Forncett St. Peter, UK**
★ *Details of the crash of April 1, 1944 and names of the complete crew.*
- ◆ **Mr. Alan M. Hague, Curator, Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum, UK**
★ *Details of the crash of April 1, 1944.*
- ◆ **Mr. Ray Pytel, Elkhorn, Wisconsin - Editor, "The Journal" 2nd Air Division Association**
★ *Information and research with respect to documentation of the 445th Bombardment Group's unit citations, Distinguished Unit Citation and French Croix de Guerre w/Palm.*



Acknowledgements, (Continued)

- ◆ **National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo., Request # 1-176990730, Luhmann**
 - ★ *Personnel Records Available to Public - S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann*

- ◆ **National Archives & Records Administration, Washington, D.C.**
 - Website: *NARA Access To Archival Databases, www.archives.gov*
 - ★ *Enlistment Records - S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann*

- ◆ **National Gravesite Locator, American Battlements Monuments Commission, National WWII Memorial and Long Island National Cemetery**
 - Website: *Nationwide Gravesite Locator, www.gravelocator.cem.va.gov*
 - Website: *American Battlements Monuments Commission, www.abmc.gov*
 - Website: *National WWII Memorial, www.wwiimemorial.com*
 - Website: *Long Island National Cemetery, www.cem.va.gov/nchp/longisland/htm#top*
 - ★ *Burial & Memorial Information – S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann and Crew Members*

- ◆ **“New Milford In WWII” by Teresa M. Martin, May 30, 1947, New Milford, New Jersey,**
New Milford Public Library, New Milford, New Jersey
 - ★ *Photo and Story - S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann*

- ◆ **Hackensack High School, Hackensack, NJ - Alfred H. Luhmann Alumni, Class of 1938**
 - Website: *Hackensack High School, www.halley.hackensackhigh.org*
 - ★ *High School Year Book 1938 - Alfred H. Luhmann*

- ◆ **Ancestry.com**
 - Website: *www.ancestry.com*
 - ★ *Family Information - Alfred H. Luhmann*

- ◆ **Military Wives**
 - Website: *Military Wives, www.militarywives.com*
 - ★ *Medals, Ribbons – Descriptions and Details*

- ◆ **The Mighty 8th AF**
 - Website: *Mighty 8th AF – Bomb Groups Order Of Battle, www.mighty8thaf.preller.us*
 - ★ *8th Air Force Cross Reference Bomb Groups, Order of Battle – Organization*

- ◆ **B-24 Best Web**
 - Website: *B-24 Best Web, www.b24bestweb.com,*
 - ★ *Unit History – 445th Bombardment Group*

- ◆ **“The Sexton’s Wheel”**
 - Website: *www.sextonswheel.co.uk*
 - ★ *Posting inquiry letter on the website and help locating sources of information.*

★ *Graphic Image: Keys – Public Domain*



Acknowledgements, (Continued)

◆ **Heritage League, 8th Air Force, US Army Air Forces**

Website: Heritage League, www.heritageleague.org

Website: 445th Bombardment Unit History, www.8thafhs.org/bomber/445bg.htm

Website: usaaf.com/8thaf/bomber/445bg.hym

★ Unit Histories - 445th Bombardment Group and 702nd Squadron

◆ **U.S. Air Force**

Website: AFHSO – U.S. Air Force Historical Studies Office, Washington, D.C.,
www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil/index.htm

Website: AFHRA OL-A - U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency Operating Location A,
Bolling AFB, Washington D.C., www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil/

★ U.S. Air Force - 445th BG Unit History concerning S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann

Website: AFHRA - U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Alabama,
www.au.af.mil/au/afhra and www.afhra.maxwell.af.mil

www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil/publications/fulltext/af_combat_units_wwii.pdf

www.au.af.mil/au/afhra/wwwroot/numbered_studies

★ U.S. Air Force - 445th BG Unit History concerning S/Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann

★ Air Force Combat Units of World War II, Maurer & Maurer, Study #140, Iris #32311

★ U.S. Air Force Unit Histories and Insignia – 2nd Air Division, 2nd Combat Bomb Wing
and 445th Bombardment Group - 2nd Air Division pages 432 – 433
2nd Bombardment Wing, pages 374 – 375, 445th Bombardment Group, pages 319 – 320

◆ **Photos**

★ Alfred H. Luhmann Photo; Teresa Martin Letter and Caption – Courtesy of “New Milford
In World War II” by Teresa M. Martin, May 30, 1947, New Milford, NJ

★ Alfred Luhmann High School Year Book Photo and Caption Class of 1938, - Courtesy
of Hackensack High School, Hackensack, NJ - Website: www.halley.hackensackhigh.org

★ Rausenberger Home Site Vicinity and Luhmann Drive - Corner of Grand and Prospect
Streets, New Milford, NJ and Luhmann Drive, New Milford, NJ - Photos By Author

★ Soldiers War Memorial, Borough Hall, New Milford, NJ – Photos by Author

★ “Dingy” Mascot of 445th and “The Neal Crew” of the 445th Bombardment Group – Courtesy
of the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, Norfolk, UK, www.2ndair.org.uk

★ B-24 Liberators – Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force, www.af.mil

★ B-24 Liberators – B-24Ds, The Ploesti Raid and B-24Ds on Back Cover – Courtesy of
The National Museum of the United States Air Force, www.wpafb.af.mil/museum

★ Aerial photograph of flight path and crash site, April 1, 1944, near Long Stratton, UK -
Courtesy of Mr. David Addy, Webmaster, www.geocities.com/longstratton

★ Croix de Guerre Presentation Photo & Caption excerpt from “The Journal”, Courtesy of
Mr. Ray Pytel, Editor, “The Journal”

★ Photo of B-24, H Liberator Serial # 42-9463, Courtesy of Mr. Paul Thrower, Curator, 93rd
Bomb Group Museum”

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[Acknowledgements, \(Continued\)](#)

◆ Graphics

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- ★ *U.S. Army Air Corps and 8th Air Force Shoulder Sleeve Insignia Patches* – Courtesy of Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA, www.nchsinc.com
- ★ *Rank Insignia Staff Sergeant Patch and “Flight Engineer Wings” Badge* – Courtesy of “Grunt”, www.gruntsmilitary.com
- ★ *Medals, Ribbons, Badges, Patches* – Courtesy of Military Wives, www.militarywives.com and Mr. George A. Petersen, NCHS Inc., Springfield, VA, www.nchsinc.com
- ★ *French Croix De Guerre with Palm Citation* – Courtesy of United States Army Insignia, www2.powercom.net
- ★ *B & W Sketches of U. S. Air Force Shoulder Sleeve Insignia – 2nd Air Division pages 432/433, 2nd Combat Bomb Wing pages 374/375 and 445th Bombardment Group, pages 319/320* Courtesy of Air Force Combat Units of World War II, By Maurer & Maurer, Study #140, Iris #32311 - AFHRA - U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, www.au.af.mil/au/afhra/wwwroot/numbered_studies.
- ★ *Map of flight path and crash site, April 1, 1944, near Long Stratton, UK* – Courtesy of Mr. David Addy, Webmaster, www.geocities.com/longstratton
- ★ *B-24 Liberator Bomber Diagram, w/names of crewmembers on board and positions they manned.* Courtesy of Mr. Paul Wilkinson, (RAF, Retired), Forncett St. Peter, UK.
- ★ *B-24 Plane Image and 702nd Squadron Unit Patch* - Courtesy of B-24 Best Web, www.b24bestweb.com
- ★ *Eagle and Flag*, Courtesy of Nate – Free Images The Flagpole Banners and Images, www.theflagpole.com
- ★ *Eagle Crying, and Dog with Flag “These Colors Don’t Run”* – Free Images Courtesy of The Flagpole Banners and Images, www.theflagpole.com
- ★ *Statue of Liberty/Flag* – Free Images Courtesy of Patriotic Art, www.patrioticart.tripod.com
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- ★ *Graphic Images: Officer and Enlisted Lapel Brass Insignia* - Courtesy, Soldier City, www.soldiercity.com
- ★ *Croix de Guerre Diploma and Caption*, Courtesy of Mr. Ray Pytel, Editor, “The Journal”
- ★ *Presidential Unit Citation Letter, 24 May 1945* – Courtesy, www.dj1953.com/1944/citation.jpg

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March 4, 2006

Addendum

Information has surfaced regarding the “Phil Dana Crew” in which Staff Sergeant Alfred H. Luhmann was a member, which confirms many details described in my report with regard to the aircraft, crew and the events of April 1, 1944. Details of the “original crew” are also reported herein.

I want to thank Mr. Michael S. Simpson, Mr. Henry M. “Hank” Lively, Mr. William “Bill” Trudell and Mr. Paul Wilkinson, who are also recognized in the “Acknowledgements” section for their contributions.

The information Mr. Simpson has reported is documented in the original crew load list for the 46th mission of the 445th Bombardment Group, for the April 1, 1944, mission to Ludwigshafen, Germany. Additional details, also worth mentioning, have been provided and are listed below. Some however, differ slightly from what has been included in my report and are addressed subsequently.

The serial number of their aircraft on April 1, 1944 was 41-29463. It had no nose-art name and was a B-24H-15CF, (H = Model H, 15 = Block Modification 15, CF = Mfgr. - Consolidated, Ft. Worth, Texas). Staff Sergeant Merle J. Mentel, Serial Number 16159476, was on board that day, (April 1, 1944) and was listed as the Assistant Engineer, replacing Staff Sergeant Virgil C. Lewis, Serial Number 18200300, the regular crew member. There was however, no reason for the change in personnel and Staff Sergeant Mentel’s, officially assigned position was not known. Unfortunately, Staff Sergeant Mentel was also among those killed in the crash. The ball turret might have been removed to reduce weight and Staff Sergeant Ringle was the Tail Gunner with Staff Sergeant Diffenbacher, as one of the Waist Gunners, whether on the left or right side, it is not known.

In my report, Staff Sergeant Ringle was the Ball Turret Gunner, there being no information to suggest that the ball turret might have been removed. Staff Sergeant Diffenbacher was the Tail Gunner with Staff Sergeant H. Luhmann, the Left Waist Gunner and Staff Sergeant Ralph E. Bradshaw, another of the original crew who survived, the Right Waist Gunner. The names and positions reported for the “Phil Dana Crew” also correspond closely with a sketch prepared by Mr. William “Bill” Trudell, now deceased, a member of the “John Steinbacher Crew”, of the 702nd Squadron, who sketched the squadron’s aircraft and crews, which were lost. A copy of this sketch has reached me via Mr. Henry M “Hank” Lively, a member of the “Henry Bussing Crew”, also of the 702nd Squadron and from Mr. Paul Wilkinson, RAF Retired, a researcher who located the sketch at the Norwich Records Office, UK. After having seen both sketches, I would think that Bill Trudell’s sketch or a copy of it had also been archived in Norwich, since the two sketches appear to be very similar, if not identical. If the ball turret had been removed, no doubt Staff Sergeant Ringle would have had to man a different gun position, quite possibly the tail gun. Bill Trudell’s sketch however, has him listed as the Ball Turret Gunner, because this may have possibly been his officially assigned position.

Regarding the aircraft number “41-29463”, my report identified a B-24H, # 42-9463 as captioned in a photo thought to be the “Phil Dana Crew” aircraft of April 1, 1944. The number “1” could have been omitted and the number “2” transposed in its place, followed by the trailing numbers “9463”, which would have produced the “42-9463” number, which was the one recorded in the caption of the photo.

Addendum

- 1. -

March 4, 2006

Addendum

Excerpted from 445th Bomb Group - Unit Movement List, dated October 6, 1943, Sioux City, Iowa and declassified 01/24/80, is a listing of the original crew members who made up the "Phil Dana Crew" on April 1, 1944, the day of the crash. The "Phil Dana Crew" was made up of original crew members from other crews as noted below. Some were in the same crew and others were in different crews, when they left Sioux City, Iowa. It is not known however, when the "Phil Dana Crew" was formed and crew members assigned to it but it would have been after their arrival at Tibenham, at the earliest. Staff Sergeant Mentel's name was not recorded on the list and it appears that he was the only crew member on the April 1, 1944 flight who was not a member of any one of the original crews from Sioux City, Iowa in October of 1943.

Group #5 - Plane #3 - Serial Number 41-29122, (No Nose-Art Name)

Crew #45, the "Max Davis Crew"

2nd Lt. Edward (NMI) Eberhardt, Serial Number O806822, AC - Co-Pilot on April 1, 1944*

2nd Lt. Robert W. Steen, Serial Number, O805357, AC - Navigator on April 1, 1944*

T/Sgt. Vincent (NMI) Brimley, Serial Number, 35564238 - Flight Engineer on April 1, 1944*

T/Sgt. Jasper T. Smith, Serial Number, 38037255 - Radio Operator on April 1, 1944*

S/Sgt. Ralph E. Bradshaw, Serial Number, 36058821 - Right Waist Gunner on April 1, 1944

Sgt. Alfred H. Luhmann, Serial Number, 32466039 - S/Sgt. and Left Waist Gunner on April 1, 1944*

Sgt. Robert F. Diffenbacher - Serial Number 33409768 - S/Sgt. and Tail Gunner on April 1, 1944

Group #5 - Plane #4 - Serial Number 42-7513, ("Pistol Packin Momma")

Crew #55, the "Jean Sefton Crew"

2nd Lt. Philip C. Dana, Serial Number, O687556, AC - 1st Lt. and Pilot on April 1, 1944*

Group #5 - Plane #10 - Serial Number 42-7566, ("Little Bill")

Crew #54, the "William Shurtz Crew"

2nd Lt. Walter S. Russell Jr., Serial Number, O739118, AC - Bombardier on April 1, 1944

S/Sgt. Edward R. Ringle, Serial Number, 18056657 - Ball Turret Gunner on April 1, 1944

Group #6 - Plane #3 - Serial Number 42-7597, ("Bubbling Lady")

Crew #58, the "Thomas Gray Crew"

Sgt. Virgil C. Lewis, Serial Number 18200300 - S/Sgt. and not onboard on April 1, 1944

Replaced by

Staff Sergeant Merle J. Mentel, Serial Number 16159476 - Assistant Engineer on April 1, 1944* **

Notes:

Bold = Original crew member.

* = Killed in crash, April 1, 1944, Long Stratton, UK. (7 of 11 crew members).

** = Staff Sergeant Mentel was not an original member of the crew but was also killed in the crash, April 1, 1944.

Addendum

March 4, 2006

Addendum

Having left almost no stone unturned in my search, I am satisfied with what I have discovered and the reports I have prepared, bringing this project to its final completion. I am pleased that many of my questions have now been answered as I hope yours may be, after reading the report and addendum.

As an added item of interest, Captain, James M. Stewart, Serial Number O433210, AC, better known as the actor, "Jimmy Stewart" was an original crew member of the 445th Bombardment Group, 703rd Squadron. His name is listed where noted, in the 445th Bomb Group - Unit Movement List, dated October 6, 1943, Sioux City, Iowa excerpts of which, I have included at the end of this report to identify the original "Phil Dana Crew" members as well as Henry M. "Hank" Lively and William "Bill" Trudell, without whom much of the original crew information could not have been confirmed and reported herein.

*Very Truly Yours,
Joe Becker*

Addendum

March 4, 2006

Addendum

Enclosure #1, SO #279, par 23, Hq, AAB, Sioux City, Iowa dd 6 Oct 1943

PLANE -16

CREW

2ND LT GEORGE H. LYMBURN, 0797568 AC	2ND LT JOHN E. ROBERTS, 0809073 AC
2ND LT JOHN C. SLOAN, 0731538 AC	2ND LT FRANK R. SERPICO, 0801152 AC
T/Sgt Harold G. Henry, 37184118	T/Sgt James M. Young, 34129154
S/Sgt Francesco P. Cittadino, 12146868	Sgt Robert (nmi) Schailley, 3325314
Sgt Walter J. Downey, Jr, 32731748	Pvt Edgar W. Carr, 15378989

PASSENGERS

MAJOR PAUL (NMI) SCHARTZ, 0371869 AC	CAPT NEIL F. BLACK, 0479819 AC
CAPT LLOYD J. MARTIN, 043383 AC	M/Sgt Everett M. Kerr, 16018962

GROUP # 5

PLANE NO. 1

702ND BOMB SQ

(Serial # 42-29146)

CREW:

(41)

1ST LT JOHN H. ALLEN, 0-465407 AC	2ND LT SAMUEL M. ELLICOTT, 0797495 AC
2ND LT ANTHONY L. DESTRO, 0732613 AC	2ND LT WILFELD Y. BROOKS, 0803143 AC
T/Sgt John R. Elder, 38188018	S/Sgt Remund M. Firewicz, 33254229
S/Sgt Joseph J. Pavelko, 13125175	S/Sgt Everett M. Odom, 13165120
S/Sgt Clifford W. Spencer, 32466928	Efc Arthur (nmi) Bada, 18232034

PASSENGERS

CAPT JAMES C. EVANS, 0385447 AC	2ND LT HAROLD J. BLUMENCRANZ 0795188AC
M/Sgt Paul J. Hopson, 6948550	Cpl Donald H. Cupps, 38455691

PLANE NO. 2

(Serial # 42-7526)

CREW

(51)

2ND LT NILS (NMI) KLUKSDAL, 0804695 AC	2ND LT JAMES H. DOBSON, 0806814 AC
2ND LT VERNON D. MUSTON, 0686196 AC	2ND LT RALPH G. KELLER, 0805291 AC
T/Sgt Averett B. Jenkins, 13064104	S/Sgt James J. Turner, 13131160
S/Sgt Arnold E. Mikkelsen, 17110732	Sgt Joe A. Gursky, 35395828
Sgt Eugene (nmi) Rice, 39544890	Sgt Malcolm T. Bowlsby, 19188071

PASSENGERS

1ST LT MAX J. HALPERIN, 01789646 AC	1ST LT ANDREW (NMI) GROVE, 0568829 AC
M/Sgt Joseph P. E. Fellerin, 11035695	T/Sgt Walter E. Harrison, 12091848

"Dana Crew" Members

On-Board 4/1/44

PLANE NO. 3

(Serial # 41-29122)

CREW

(45)

"Dana Crew" Members

On-Board 4/1/44

2ND LT MAX D. DAVIS, 0803575, AC	2ND LT EDWARD (NMI) EBERHARDT, 0806822 AC
2ND LT MARK S. DEAN, 0741402 AC	2ND LT ROBERT W. STEEN, 0805357 AC
T/Sgt Vincent (nmk) Brimley, 35564238	T/Sgt Jasper T. Smith, 38037235
S/Sgt Ralph E. Bradshaw, 56058821	Sgt Alfred M. Luhmann, 32468979
Sgt Clement E. Robert, 33549829	Sgt Robert F. Diefenbacher, 33409768

PASSENGERS

2ND LT RUSSELL B. BROWN, 0576998 AC	M/Sgt Vincent M. Schneider, 35300274
M/Sgt Bruno R. Dziobak, 32166626	Sgt Earl L. Forstall, 34290356

PLANE NO 4

(Serial # 42-7513)

CREW

(55)

"Dana Crew" Member

On-Board 4/1/44

2ND LT JEAN H. SEFTON, 0668648 AC	2ND LT PHILIP C. DANA, 0687556 AC
2ND LT GEORGE C. SPARNAS, 0686202 AC	2ND LT MELSON R. BORN, 0687927 AC
S/Sgt Linsey A. Patrick, 34136996	S/Sgt James C. Parker, 13046684
S/Sgt Donald E. Moyer, 12153304	Sgt John C. Miner, 16159815
Sgt Donald C. Woodruff, 39552507	Sgt Raymond W. Hass, 36516359

PASSENGERS

T/Sgt Harold R. Johnson, 35258499	T/Sgt Robert J. Drummond, 33328056
S/Sgt Joseph (nmi) Jerzyk, 36724547	Sgt Harold E. Lenox, R-236581

Addendum

March 4, 2006

Addendum

Enclosure #1, SO #279, Hq, AAB, Sioux City, Iowa, dd 6 Oct 1943

*"Data Crew" Members
On-Board 4/1/44*

PLANE NO 10
(Serial # 42-7506)
CREW (54)

2ND LT WILLIAM E. SHURTZ, 0742790 AC	2ND LT KENNETH D. CUNNINGHAM 0806968 AC
2ND LT WALTER S. RUSSELL JR, 0739118 AC	
2ND LT ERK R. BRADSON, 080914 AC	
S/Sgt Edward (nom) Anest, 32408613	S/Sgt Wayne A. Teale, 16028606
S/Sgt Edward R. Rinolo, 13056657	S/Sgt Norval W. Ashworth, 39903519
S/Sgt Ernest E. Steinselfer Jr, 19169595	Sgt Hugh S. Denny, 17196476

PASSENGERS

T/Sgt Sergio J. Rossi, 32408601	S/Sgt Robert C. Clark, 32078505
S/Sgt Thomas (nom) Abodo, 12132235	Pvt Charles F. Gogolen, 35307333

GROUP # 6

PLANE NO 1
(Serial # 42-7601)
CREW (43)

702ND BOMB SQ

1ST LT RALPH H. SCHNECK, 0728732 AC	2ND LT JOHN R. DECKER, 0794501 AC
2ND LT CHARLES E. PAINTER, 0679646 AC	2ND LT JOSEPH F. GILL, 0674179 AC
S/Sgt Archie R. Sloman, 30253187	S/Sgt Sebastiano A Capobianco 12041181
S/Sgt Albert J. Urbanik, 13155704	Sgt Harold F. Houlihan, 37439948
S/Sgt Wilburn G. Pursel, 37397255	
Sgt Joseph J. Flynn, 32437680	

PASSENGERS

1ST LT JAMES N. GRAHAM, 0389234 AC	2ND LT ANTHONY R. CASSANI, 0732609 AC
T/Sgt Edward R. Baxley, 16040682	S/Sgt John C. Bolisle, 12130794

PLANE NO 2
(Serial # 42-29117)
CREW (44)

Contributor - Unit Movement List

1ST LT HENRY G. BUSSING, 0726742 AC	2ND LT LEBRON T. TRIGHT, 0743150 AC
2ND LT JACOB (NMI) FEINGOLD, 0679616 AC	S/Sgt Leroy H. Tucker, 39256635
S/Sgt George J. Drobo, 0389343	Sgt Henry H. Lively, 15335223
Sgt George L. Harlow, 16147695	Sgt John E. Bloom, 32572916
Sgt Benjamin R. Madambo, 39258550	2ND LT ALBERT J. MASSEY, 0605137 AC

PASSENGERS

2ND LT BENJAMIN M. PINLEY, 0697116 AC	2ND LT CHARLES W. HONAKER, 0665689 AC
T/Sgt Marion S. Christal, 6969208	S/Sgt Carnor E. McMillon, 34421305

PLANE NO 3
(Serial # 42-7597)
CREW (58)

*"Data Crew" Member
Not On-Board 4/1/44*

2ND LT THOMAS (NMI) GRAY, 0742576 AC	2ND LT EARLING W. DATES, 0667681 AC
2ND LT MORTON J. SIFTER, 0635656 AC	2ND LT PAUL R. BROWN, 0741126 AC
S/Sgt Arnold J. Swanson, 11084914	Sgt Sidney L. Reppe, 14180218
S/Sgt William M. Titus, 16159471	S/Sgt Herbert E. Simmons, 14075632
Sgt T. J. (io) Boys, 18217205	Sgt Virgil C. Lewis, 16200300

PASSENGERS

2ND LT SYMNER (NMI) LOYZIM, 0915971 AC	M/Sgt Edward C. O. Hill, 36180209 AC
T/Sgt Alan G. Scott, 19004629	T/Sgt Edwin L. Trent, 37201544

PLANE NO 4
(Serial #

*Contributor "Data Crew"
Aircraft and Crew Sketch*

2ND LT JOHN R. STEINBACHER, 0804420 AC	2ND LT HENRY E. HESTER, 0800994 AC
2ND LT EUGENE D. DENNIS, 0686415 AC	2ND LT ROBERT W. BENSON, 0687925 AC
T/Sgt Eugene W. Clever, 33292439	S/Sgt Edward E. Oliver, 18042922
S/Sgt Jerry P. Richardson, 35591848	Sgt William J. Trudell, 37228510
Cpl Herbert M. Buckner, 32663264	Pfc Pauntley M. Jones, 13167923

PASSENGERS

M/Sgt Robert D. Rossi, 37292985	M/Sgt Napoleon C. Eakin, 38277535
S/Sgt Ralph Western, 19011513	Sgt Clifford F. Copeland, 38422592

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Addendum

March 4, 2006

Addendum

AIR BASE HEADQUARTERS

SSG/K

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 279)

*Downgraded 11/24/88
W m w*

EXTRACT

CONFIDENTIAL

Sioux City, Iowa
6 Oct, 1943.

Auth: CG, 2AF
Initials: *ESC*
Date: 10-6-43

24. PAC in Classified Ltr, Hq, 2AF dd 20 Sept, 1943, Subject: "Movemen of Unit: Flight Echelon, 445th Bomb Gp(H)", file 370.56, Personnel of 445th Bomb Gp, Flight Echelon, as Listed on Inclosure NA.1, which hereby is made a part of this order WP by mil ap to arrive at AAB, Lincoln, Neb, as follows: 10 Crews including passengers will arrive 8 Oct, 1943; 10 crews, including passengers will arrive 9 Oct; 11 crews, including passengers will arrive 10 Oct; 9 crews including passengers will arrive 13 Oct; 10 crews including passengers will arrive 14 Oct; 12 crews including passengers will arrive 15 Oct; and upon arrival at AAB, Lincoln Neb, the CG, 2BC will relinquish control over crews to the CG 21st Bomb Wg. This is a temp change of sta. Individual equipment and overseas aircraft only will accompany organization. It is impracticable to continue the journey by air, continuation by rail is authorized and TC will furn necessary rail T. TDN 1-5250 P432-02, A0425-24.

Any remaining personnel of the Flight Echelon, including combat crews, not covered by this order at this sta, will be dispatched direct to POE with Ground Echelon.

GROUP #1, 703rd BOMB SQ

Plane 1 42-7580 Crew No 62

1ST LT LLOYD C. SHARRARD, 0436905, AC,	2ND LT CHARLES S. WOLFE, 0675147, AC
2ND LT JAMES N. KIDDER, 0683253, AC	2ND LT DONALD W. DANIEL, 0734317, AC
S/Sgt John L. Heck, 31127906	S/Sgt Robert M. Buxton, 15336057
S/Sgt LeRoy E. Dunster, 39613533	S/Sgt George F. Johnson Jr, 11111337
S/Sgt Samuel (nmi) Parris, 13053980	Sgt Anthony (nmi) Yacoboni, 32669302

Passengers

The Actor, Jimmy Stewart

1ST LT CARL JAMES M. STEWART, 0433210, AC	2ND LT ALBERT V. KIRSCHENBAUER, 0741788
2ND LT HOWLAND L. SWEARINGIN, 0960342, AC	M/Sgt Donald AC Allison, 6277040

Plane 2 42-7565 Crew No 64

1ST LT NEIL R. JOHNSON, 0434115, AC	2ND LT WILLIAM H. VANDAGRIFF, 0749360
2ND LT HARRY A. R. SELLCKE, 0800779, AC	2ND LT WILLIAM B. ROBINSON, 0462614, AC
S/Sgt George (nmi) O'Day, 32391230	S/Sgt Charles H. Wright, 17069040
S/Sgt Harold B. Wright, 35036723	Sgt Harry (nmi) Buehman, 32399944
Sgt John R. Howell, 12096751	Sgt Richard G. Manning, 16110411

Passengers

1ST LT JOSEPH F. WALSH, 0502931, MC	1st Sgt EARL O. Salter, 6971096
M/Sgt Benjamin N. Isenhour, 13023007	Sgt Ernest F. Ragan, 13332050

Plane 3 41-29118 Crew No 77

2ND LT EARL G. METCALF, 0800383, AC	2ND LT JOHN E. LERCARI, 0752005, AC
2ND LT PAUL G. W. FISCHER, 0687936, AC	2ND LT ERNEST H. HUTTON, 0748847, AC
S/Sgt Phillip (nmi) Bronstein, 13152993	S/Sgt James R. Crawford, 35404712
S/Sgt Donald C. Dewey, 37442329	S/Sgt Earl T. Dogett, 3406332
S/Sgt William K. Timmons, 37230256	Cpl Stanley W. Trousah, 12141105

Passengers

1ST LT GILBERT W. FISHER, 0729858, AC	1ST LT EMIL A. WIENSCKE, JR, 0132473, AC
M/Sgt Leslie W. Holland, 6777895	Sgt Eugene L. Peterson, 3627662

Plane 4 42-7062 Crew 61

2ND LT FRANCIS W. CONLEY, 0796313, AC	2ND LT GORDON B. PARKER, 0677555, AC
2ND LT JEROME M. STEINHAUER, 0676159, AC	2ND LT JOHN J. RANKIN, 0414397, AC
T/Sgt Harold C. Eckleberry, 15315930	S/Sgt George M. Allen, 31258358
S/Sgt Edward C. Naungarten, 36526317	S/Sgt Kermit E. Moon, 35339520
S/Sgt Francis R. Wilson, 31127698	Sgt Piersol G. Borden, 19145497

D

Addendum

Addendum - Acknowledgements

- ◆ **Mr. Michael S. Simpson, Webmaster of the 445th Bomb Group Website**
 - ★ *Information provided from the original crew load list for the 46th mission of the 445th Bombardment Group for the April 1, 1944, mission to Ludwigshafen, Germany.*

- ◆ **Mr. Henry M. "Hank" Lively of Wichita, Kansas. An original member of the "Henry Bussing Crew", #44 of the 702nd Squadron, 445th Bombardment Group**
 - ★ *A copy of the declassified original unit movement list for the 445th Bombardment Group from Sioux City, Iowa, dated October 6, 1943. A copy of Bill Trudell's sketch of the "Dana Crew" aircraft.*

- ◆ **Mr. William "Bill" Trudell, deceased. An original member of the "Steinbacher Crew" and one of the few men of the original crews to complete the entire number of missions to complete a "Combat Tour"**
 - ★ *The "Dana Crew" aircraft sketch, listing crew members' names, positions and details of the events on April 1, 1944.*

- ◆ **Mr. Paul Wilkinson, (RAF, Retired) of Forncett St. Peter, UK**
 - ★ *A copy of what also appears to be Bill Trudell's sketch of the Dana Crew aircraft, listing crew members names, positions and details of the events on April 1, 1944, which had been obtained from the Norwich Records Office, Norwich, UK.*



KEEP 'EM FLYING !!



Consolidated B-24D "Liberator"
USAF Museum Photo Archives

Photo: Courtesy, U.S. Air Force Museum

