

## Replacement Crew #25

*“Long Branch and neighbouring communities helped swell Uncle Sam’s Army today when the local draft Board No.4 sent 100 draftees to Newark on the 8:23 train for induction, amidst a cheering by parents, relatives and friends.....*

*The crowd numbered more than 1,000 and was thickly lined across the entire station platform..... The station yard was lined with cars parked double and triple with well-wishers..... Traffic was parked on both sides of Third Avenue from Morris to Lowden Avenues. .... It was a long train having 13 cars, the first 10 of which were reserved for the special guests..... the draftees climbed into the coaches and found their seats. Immediately they opened all the windows and waved to their loved ones, however it was the V finger wave, which was returned in the same manner. At 8:30 the train pulled out of the station”*

(The Daily Record, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1942).

John C Bruno was actually one of those draftees mentioned above. No doubt he was excited, nervous, optimistic and apprehensive about what was to follow. After training, he and nine other men were crewed up to form Replacement Crew #25. They arrived at Station 146, Seething on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1944 and achieved the 30 mission target.

The crew included:-

*2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William Carey Beall – Pilot*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harry Eugene Betts – Co-Pilot*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harvey Charles Baker – Bombardier*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Charles Edward Langton Jr – Navigator*  
*S/Sgt Otto K Smith – Radio Operator*  
*Sgt George William Dickinson – Gunner*  
*Sgt John C Bruno – Gunner*  
*Sgt John Mack Jenkins Jr – Gunner*  
*Cpl Carl Eugene Himes – Top Turret Gunner*  
*Cpl Peter Joseph Murray – Gunner*

What follows are the stories of the men who made up Replacement Crew #25.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William Carey Beall – Pilot – 0761852 – (18149763)**, was born on 12th November 1916 in Louisiana to William (b1891) and Gertrude Beall (b1890). He had a brother Charles (b1920) who sadly was killed on a mission in 1943. William also had two sisters Catherine (b1922) and Lois (b1925).

**[1<sup>st</sup> Lt Charles Edward Beall – Fighter Pilot – 0-65944 – (14052322)**, enlisted on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1941 at Louisiana. His occupation was noted down as Actor. He graduated from the Air Corps Training Station at Lubbock, Texas where he was promoted to Lieutenant. He was assigned to the 338<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron of the 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group which was based at Nuthampstead. Charles “Chas” was the pilot of P-38 Lightning 42-67049. On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1943, he was escorting B17 Bombers on their mission to target Bremen, Germany, when they were attacked by German fighters. Charles was recorded as destroying a FW-190 before he was unfortunately shot down and crashed near Frustenuau, Germany. He is buried at Margraten Military Cemetery, Netherlands and was awarded the Air Medal with 1 oak leaf cluster and Purple Heart.]

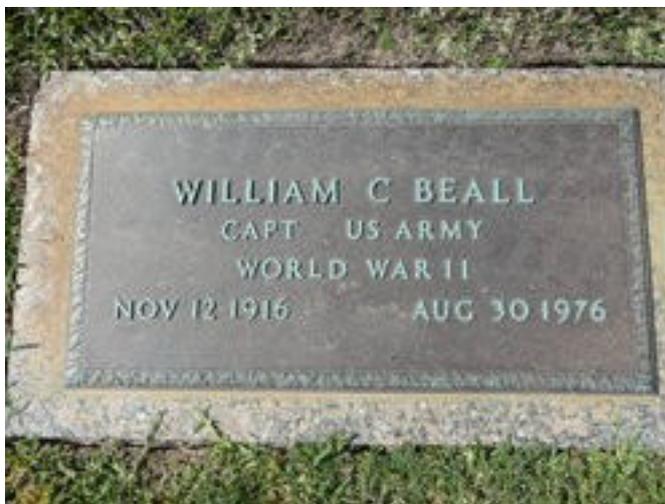


On the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1942 William enlisted at New Orleans, Louisiana and given service number **18149763**. His occupation was noted as skilled mechanic and repairman, motor vehicles working for A H Guion & Co. He received pre-flight training at Santa Ana and completed his basic training by October 7<sup>th</sup> 1943 at Lemoore Army Air Field. He then went on and trained at Douglas, Arizona and was commissioned a second Lieutenant on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 1943. He then went on to report for duty at Kirkland field, Albuquerque N.M. and received combat training for B24s.

During the war, William was promoted to Captain and received the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, two bronze stars and the Distinguished Flying Cross. He completed his 30 missions by January 1945 and was released 6<sup>th</sup> July 1945.

He married Vera Hazelwood (b1923) on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1945 and had two daughters Leah and Melanie and a son Charles (Chuck).

William died 30<sup>th</sup> August 1976 and Vera died 8<sup>th</sup> December 2003. Both are buried at Greenoaks Memorial Park, Louisiana.



**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Harry Eugene Betts – Co-Pilot – 0767977 – (19177753)**, was born 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1924 in Fort Scott, Kansas to Roy (b1889) and Pearl Betts (b1895) and had a brother Robert (b1921)

*[Robert Roy Betts – 39586566 was born on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1921. He enlisted on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1944 in Ft Macarthur, San Pedro, California and his occupation was noted down as Clerk, general office. He was given the service number 39586566. He was released 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1946. Robert married Hulda Wilhelmina and they had 2 daughters and a son. Robert passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1992]*



On the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1942 Harry enlisted in San Diego, California. His occupation was noted as Foreman and he was given the service number **19177753**. Harry started training at Santa Ana and then transferred to Wickenburg in July 1943 for primary flight training. He was in class 44 B.

After the war, Harry reenlisted again for the Navy on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1946 and served during the Korean War. He was discharged on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1957. He retired as a Commander of the US Navy.

He graduated from San Diego University and attended the University of California, Los Angeles.

Harry died 14<sup>th</sup> November 2001 but wasn't buried until 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2002 at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Harvey Charles Baker – Bombardier – 0709463 – (39164637)**, was born on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1919 in Oakland, California to Charles (b1882) and Ella (b1886) Baker. Harvey had 4 sisters Thelma (b1910), Mildred (b1911), Louise (b1913), and Fern (b1915).

In the 1930 census, it looks like Ella and Charles had divorced. Ella was now working in a laundry and Thelma was working in the public library.

Louise married Elmer H. Vanderhoofven (b1909) in 10<sup>th</sup> November 1930; Mildred married Ray H Wallace on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1930 and Fern married Nevin W Hipolito on 26 November 1936.

Harvey enlisted on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1941 in Los Angeles and his occupation was noted down as working for the Southern Californian Gas Company. He was given the service number **39164637**. In February 1944 he was commissioned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

After the war, Harvey's mother, Ella got remarried on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1946 to Henry W Maxwell (aged 63) and Harvey and Thelma were their witnesses.

Harvey reenlisted for the Air Force on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1950 and went on to fight in the Korean War with the 27<sup>th</sup> air force. In December 1951 Harvey, his wife Llewellyn (daughter of Mrs. Zella Raddatz of Yucca Valley), son Marc and his mother Ella were posted to Hawaii. Harvey and Llewellyn's son Brian Komoa was born on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1952 at Tripler Army Hospital.

Sometime in 1953 Harvey was commissioned to Captain and on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1953 Capt. Harvey Baker and his wife Llewellyn, their two sons Marc and Brian and Harvey's mother Ella left Hawaii on the MSTs Shanks for Harvey's next assignment at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

By November 1968 Harvey was a Lieutenant Col. and arrived for duty at Ent Air Force Base, Colorado as a security police officer. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 1970, Harvey was released from service.

Harvey passed away on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2006 in California.



(Llewellyn Baker)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Charles Edward Langton Jr– Navigator – 0766294** - Charles has been extremely difficult to trace with 100% certainty. I found a letter he wrote to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division Newsletter back in 1987 and tried tracing him from his place of residence. During 1987-1994 he and his family were living in Cardiff by the sea, California. From this I found out he was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1924 in Omaha, Nebraska.

In March 1945 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Langton was assigned to duty at the Big Spring Texas, bombardier school. He was released 17<sup>th</sup> September 1945.

On September 18<sup>th</sup> 1948 I believe Charles married Joyce Smith and they have a son Thomas Edward and a grandson (b1990).

It also looks like in May 1954 Charles worked for the Federal Government and gained a Bachelors Degree in Meteorology while on active duty for the Navy.

**S/Sgt Otto K Smith – Radio Operator - 18202005** – was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1925 to Otto K. Smith Sr. and Ruth Stakes Smith in Orange, Texas, He had a brother Charles (b1927) and a sister, Jean (b1929).

Otto enlisted on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1942 in San Antonio Texas. He was the radio operator for the crew. He completed thirty missions and received the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with three bronze oak leaf clusters.

During his missions Otto would hang a rag doll - given to him by a pub owner's 9-year-old daughter – on his post for good luck. I think it certainly gave him more than luck. On one of his missions he was cut off from his oxygen and fell unconscious at his post. Carl Himes found him and saved his life. He even took the rag doll with him on the C-54 plane on his way home after completing his missions. However, the plane crashed in the Azores and he had to claw his way out of the burning wreckage. The doll was unfortunately destroyed in the crash.

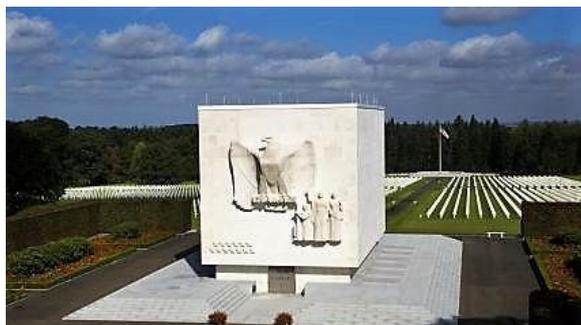


After the war he worked in real estate, and married his wife, Carolyn (b1945) on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1989.

Between them they had 3 daughters Shelley, Melissa, Suzanne and two sons Dane and Tom. Otto also had 10 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren.

Otto passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 aged 90. He is buried at Seaside Memorial Park.

**Sgt George William Dickinson – Gunner - 20225687**, was born in Gladstone, New Jersey on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1916 to John (b1890) and Elizabeth (b1893) Dickinson. His father, John was born in England and his mother, Elizabeth was born in Ireland. George had two brothers Charles Gordon (b1928) and John Jr (b1917) who was declared missing in action in France 1944.



*[T/Sgt John L Dickinson – Gunner - 32453614 was assigned to the 68<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the 44<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1944, John was top turret gunner on the B24 Valiant Lady #42-7514 heading to a V-1 site, southeast of Neufchatel, France on what was normally considered a relatively “safe” mission, being so close to the English Channel. It was their 18<sup>th</sup> crew mission. The weather was poor with heavy cloud over most of the target area; however, they were determined to continue. At 1526 about 30 enemy fighters attacked and Valiant Lady was mortally hit. “The plane nosed up and over the formation with the waist position burning profusely.” Only three crew members survived and became POWs. John unfortunately was not one of them and is buried at Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial].*

*[Charles Gordon Dickinson served as a corporal in the United States Army from 1946-1947. He married Lois Estler and had two daughters Diana and Sally. He was a carpenter and built his own family home. He was a member of the Peapack Gladstone First Aid Squad and the Peapeack Gladstone Fire Department. He passed away on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 aged 90]*

In 1941 George was attached to the 114<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Fort Dix and learnt motor mechanics. On the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1942 George enlisted at Trenton, New Jersey. Looking at his enlistment paper, his occupation was noted as semiskilled mechanic/repairman n.e.c. working for Dunwalke Farms. He was crewed up and assigned to the 713<sup>th</sup> Squadron at Station 146 on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1944. He was the crew's tail gunner for most of his missions.

George completed 30 missions by 31<sup>st</sup> December 1944 and had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and five oak clusters. He was released on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1945. After the war he reenlisted for the Army and served for 30 years, retiring as a master sergeant in 1976.



George married Hazel Burkhardt (b1924) on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1945 and had two daughters Joanne (b1946), and Jill (b1950). He enjoyed model building and had his work displayed at the Aeronautical Museum in Reston Va.

George died on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1987 and is buried at Basking Ridge New Jersey. Hazel died on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2007 and is buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery, New Jersey next to their daughter Jill.

**Sgt John C Bruno – Gunner - 32605097** – was born in 1923 in Bergen, New Jersey to Thomas (b1892) and Mary (b1893) Bruno. John had two brothers Thomas (b1927) and William (b1929) and two sisters Marie (b1919), and Anna (b1925).

By 1940 John's mother, Mary was a widow and William was not on the 1940's census.

John enlisted on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1943 in Newark, New Jersey. His occupation was noted down as General industry clerks and he was a steamfitter for Mahoney-Troast Construction Co. On 18<sup>th</sup> November 1943 John had graduated as an armourer at the Army Air Forces School at Lowry Field, Colorado. He received basic training at Miami Beach and completed a radio course in Scott Field, Illinois before going to Colorado.

During his time with Crew #25, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Purple Heart. He was also promoted to Staff Sergeant.

After the war John was a volunteer fire-fighter, with Independent Hose Co. and for many years he was an usher at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. He also worked for many years at J.P. Flannigan, Inc., Hackensack as a sheet metal mechanic.



John married Rosalie Mantineo and had two sons John, Joseph and a daughter Nancy. He also ended up with 9 grandchildren. Rosalie died in 2006 and John died 16<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

**Sgt John Mack Jenkins Jr – Gunner - 34602346** – was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1923 in Forest City, North Carolina to John Mack Sr. & Minnie Lee Hardin. John had a brother Jack and a sister Nell.

He enlisted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1943 at Cp Croft South Carolina and his occupation was noted down as semiskilled occupations in manufacture of textiles, n.e.c. at Florence Mill.



After the war, John graduated from N.C Sate College where he received his B.S and Master's (May 1955) degrees in industrial arts. He then went on and taught at Piedmont junior High School in Charlotte for two years and at Mooresville High School for four years. He also coached the baseball and basketball teams. In 1955 he worked for Gaston Tech School and taught mechanical drawing and won the Mooresville golf championship for the second year. In time, he became a Director of North Carolina Vocational Schools.

John married Bobbie Jean Tisdale and they had 2 daughters Patricia and Johnelle.

John passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1985 and is buried in Bethel Baptist Church, Ellenboro, North Carolina. Bobbie Jean died 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2011 and is buried with John.

**Cpl Carl Eugene Himes – Top Turret Gunner - 33757446** – was born on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1924 in Coolspring, Pennsylvania to Harry (b1898) & Reba Harriger (b1902) Himes. Carl had 2 brothers James (b1923), and Robert Irwin (b1933), and 2 sisters Gertrude Ann (b1938), Bertha Mae (b1930). He also had an older sister Mabel Harriett (1920-1925).

Carl enlisted on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1943 at Altoona, Pennsylvania. His occupation was noted as unskilled occupation in extraction of minerals, working for Sprankle Mills Coal Company at Worthville.

In June 1943 he was promoted to Private First Class at Keesler Field, Mississippi. During his time in England, he was promoted to T/Sgt and was awarded the Flying Cross, Air Medal with 3 Oak leaf Clusters and 3 Bronze Battle Stars.

In May 1945 he completed more training and graduated from Army Force Training Command School at Chanute Field Ill. In November he was honourably discharged.

After the war Carl spent 35 years working for Sohio, the oil company and later worked for 10 years with the Electrolert Company. He married Olive Ruth Haywood in 1946 and they were together for 64 years until Olive died in 2010. They had 3 daughters Mary Ann, Linda, Janet and a son Ken (who served as a jet engine mechanic with the 313<sup>th</sup> Air Division). They also had 9 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren

Carl passed away on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at the age of 87 years and is buried along Olive at Polk Grove cemetery Ohio

**Cpl Peter Joseph Murray – 32456666** was born on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1921 in New York City, New Jersey. Peter had 3 brothers Owen (1922), John (1923) and Arthur (1929) and a sister Vera (1919).

In the 1930 census, Peter and his brothers and sister were living with their Uncle and Aunt – John (1891) and Mary (1893) Trainor and their daughter Rosalie in Bogota, Bergen, New Jersey.

In the 1940 census, Peter and his brother John were still living with their Uncle and Aunt. The other 3 sibling were not on the census.

Peter enlisted on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1942 at Newark, New Jersey. He is noted down as working as a Tinsmith/Coppersmith or sheet metal worker and worked for Larkin Soap Co.

During his time with Crew #25, he was promoted to Staff Sergeant.

Peter died on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1992 and is buried in George Washington Memorial Park.

## George Dickinson Mission List



(1944 Before coming to England - Norfolk Record Office)

We were lucky to find a copy of George Dickinson's Mission List and notes and decided that we would research each mission he completed to give you a brief overview of them. Where we were able to find out which aircraft George was one, which crew he was with etc, we have included. George started his missions in July and his last mission was on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1944. It took him 5 months to complete 30 missions.

### **Mission #1 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #109]**

According to George's mission list, his first mission was on 6th July 1944 to Vallier, France. Brett states that the 448th target was the railway bridge at Saumur. George and 36 other aircraft from the 448<sup>th</sup> took off from Seething around 16:30hrs.

However as they approached the target, clouds had formed, completely hiding the ground below. The formation left the area in search of a target of opportunity. Some dropped bombs on bridges at Gien and one dropped its bombs at Sully-sur-Loire with the 446<sup>th</sup> bomb group. The bombs overshoot and the target was undamaged. The others dropped their bombs on an airfield at Chartres. I am unsure if George's crew dropped bombs on Vallier and I am not sure what was there, as a target. They returned back to Seething at 22:00.



(Group Mission #109 - Norfolk Records Office)

### **Mission #2 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #112]**

George's second mission was 12<sup>th</sup> July 1944 to Munich Germany. George's crew took off at 05:00



(Fat Stuff II in Switzerland - Norfolk Records Office)

but the poor weather and flak hampered the mission. Many of the aircraft were damaged and lost. George's aircraft was lucky with only one flak hole in the wing. FAT STUFF II piloted by Lt. George Wilson made it to Switzerland. BIM BAM BOLA also made it Switzerland but some of the crew bailed out over Austria and were captured. SLEEPLESS KNIGHTS was destroyed but most of the crew survived the bail out and were captured. George's crew arrived back at Seething 14:40.

### **Mission #3 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #113]**

George's third mission was on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1944 to Saarbrücken, Germany. The target was the marshalling yards. Despite the weather making navigation difficult it didn't shield the target. Heavy flak caused problems again and Lt. Dale Grubb who was piloting aircraft 42-94989 headed towards Switzerland. Once over Switzerland he ordered his crew out. All nine men managed to bail out as the plane exploded over the town of Batterkinden. Aircraft 42-95158 crash landed at Coldharbour Sussex.



(Aircraft 42-95158 - Norfolk Records Office)

#### **Mission #4 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #116]**

George's fourth mission was on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1944 to Caen, France. They bombed the town of Grentheville to give support to General Montgomery's troops as they tried to breakout of the Normandy beachhead. George's crew took off at 05:00 and despite the difficulties of flax, smoke from exploding bombs obscuring the target area, they dropped their bombs and returned to Seething at 10:15. No aircraft from the 448<sup>th</sup> were lost.

#### **Mission #5 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #117]**



(Koblenz - Fold3.com)

George's fifth mission was on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1944 to Koblenz, Germany. Before this mission started a Lancaster piloted by Flying Officer Hollis Andrew Taylor Clark crashed in Brooke at 0330hrs. The pilot saved the lives of his crewmen who bailed and landed near Seething. Unfortunately he died (he can read his story on our website) Their original target was the engine factory at Eisenach. Unfortunately, they were unable to hit the target so only some aircraft managed to drop bombs on Koblenz as an opportunity target. All the aircraft returned back to Seething safely. George's aircraft was hit by flak but they managed to arrive back to Seething at 11:00hrs.

#### **Mission #6 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #121]**

George's sixth mission was on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1944 to St. Lo, France. This mission was in support for General Bradley operation; "Operation Cobra". The mission was to "carpet bomb" the German forces around St. Lo to allow the U.S First Army to break the German line and end the stalemate in Normandy. George's crew took off at 09:00 as poor weather delayed the take off. Again poor weather over the target postponed the mission from dropping any bombs as the Allied troops were in close proximity. No aircraft from the 448<sup>th</sup> were lost.



(Mission Map - americanairmuseum.com)



#### **Mission #7 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #122]**

George's seventh mission was on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1944 and they were heading off to St. Lo France again to complete the mission they were unable to do the day before. George's crew took off at 06:00 and they were met with heavy flak as the Germans had moved the flak batteries in, during the night. Despite the American artillery units firing red smoke to mark the front line, the formation above was having trouble seeking their target. Some units dropped their bombs short of the target and into the American troops. The lead 448<sup>th</sup> aircraft was forced to salvo its bombs in order to avoid a collision. However, General Bradley's troops managed to break the German line and set in motion the great chase across France. George's crew arrived back at Seething at 12:10. No aircraft from the 448<sup>th</sup> were lost. However other Bomb Groups were not so lucky.

### **Mission #8 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #123]**

George's eighth mission was on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1944 to Bremen, Germany. The target was an oil refinery. George's crew took off at 06:00. Once they approached their target they were met with flak. The aircrafts released their bombs with the aid of PFF and recorded excellent results. The crew returned at 12:30. No aircrafts from the 448<sup>th</sup> were lost but LITTLE JOE, SONIA, OUR BABY and Aircraft 42-100435 suffered damage.

### **Mission #9 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #128]**

George's ninth mission was on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Rostock, Germany. The target was an aircraft factory that produced the Heinkel He-111. George and his crew were in Aircraft 41-28958 (LITTLE



(Little Joe - Norfolk Records Office)

JOE) and were in position back right wing of the Lead Squadron. Despite clear skies no enemy fighters showed but the group had to deal with the flak. Aircraft 42-50648, piloted by Lt. Briola suffered damaged so they headed to neutral Sweden and landed safely at Sovde. The aircraft factory was hit. The next problem the group had was that they may not have enough fuel to get back to Seething. This mission was a long trip for the B24s and now they faced head-on strong winds. However the rest of the group made it back safely.

### **Mission #10 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #129]**

George's tenth mission was on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Fallersleben (Fallershausen as George wrote) Germany. The target was a JU-88 parts plant. George's crew took off at 0930. Just after takeoff Aircraft 42-94809, piloted by Flight Officer Hosea Matthews experienced mechanical problems and had to turn back to Seething. Unfortunately as they tried to land, they overshot the runway and crashed. It was a miracle that the bombs onboard their plane did not go off. No-one was seriously injured but the plane was beyond repair. The rest of group suffered delays getting to the target and faced heavy flax again. Aircraft 42-50443, piloted by Lt. William Snavely was damaged by flak but made it back to Seething. LONESOME LOU, piloted by Lt. Donald Ginevan (crew 36) was also damaged; however they didn't make it back to Seething. They ended up in the English Channel and only two crewmembers survived.



(Lonesome Lou 41-29465 - Norfolk Records Office)

### **Mission #11 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #133]**



(Norfolk Records Office)

George's eleventh mission was on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Parcy-sur-Armancon, France. Their target was a fuel storage facility. George's crew were in Aircraft 42-95620 (MISS B-HAVIN) and were in position front right wing of the Low Squadron (Deputy lead). They took off at 0645. The journey over was quiet with little flak but Aircraft 41-28648, piloted by Lt. Parmely Ferrie, was damaged by flak just as it reached the target. They headed for Allied lines and once over Caen, where friendly troops were, the crew abandoned the aircraft. They returned to England a few days later.

### **Mission #12 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #135]**

George's twelfth mission was on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Laon, France. Their target was the airfields around Laon. George's crew took off at 0500 and they flew as deputy lead again. As the group neared the target area they split. Two formations bombed the airfield at Couvron and the other formation bombed the airfield at Athies. Despite the heavy flak experienced at the airfields all the aircraft returned back to Seething at about midday.

### **Mission #13 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #136]**

George's thirteenth mission was on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Rouen, France. Their target was the choke points around Rouen, immediately in front of the British and Canadian ground troops who were slowly pushing the German back. George's crew took off at 1030. The 448<sup>th</sup> Group had 7 specific sites and 3 of these were road junctions which were packed with retreating German units. Unfortunately Bruno was hit by flak but lived to tell the tale.

### **Mission #14 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #137]**

George's fourteenth mission was on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Dijon-Longvic (DiJoin as George writes). Their target was the airfield and fuel dump. George's crew were in Aircraft 42-95620 (MISS B-HAVIN) and were in the position front right wing of the Low Squadron. The mission was quiet as no Luftwaffe fighters materialised and there were only mirror flak bursts in the sky – a Milk Run. The 448<sup>th</sup> decimated their target.



(Norfolk Records Office)

### **Mission #15 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #141]**

George's fifteenth mission was on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Brunswick, Germany. In a maximum effort, the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Division flew Brunswick and targeted different aircraft industries. The 448<sup>th</sup> target was the airfield at Waggum. It was good weather so seeing the target would be easy.

George's crew took off at 0710. However, FLEXIBLE FLYER had a malfunctioning propeller so Lt. Leroy Conner had to abort. There was a lot of flak and Aircraft 42-95182, piloted by Lt.

Douglas, was hit and sadly 6 men died but the other 4 escaped and returned to Seething. A badly damaged B24 from another group flew above OUR JOY piloted by Lt. William Gilbert and it's



bombs dropped. William managed to avoid 7 of the bombs but the 8<sup>th</sup> one ripped through his left wing, punctured the fuel tank and damaged the landing gear. They managed to head back to Seething and according to Rowe 12 P-38s and 6 P-47s arrived to shepherd him home. William had to make a wheel up landing on the grass strip next to runway 25. Amazingly only 2 of his crew were injured.

*(Our Joy - b24bestwb.com - Brendan Wood)*

### **Mission #16 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #143]**

George's sixteenth mission was on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1944 to Ludwigschafen, Germany. The target was the I.G Farben Chemical Works where Zyclon-B gas was manufactured for the extermination camps. This target was very well protected with 300 anti-aircraft and apparently 100 German fighters. One of 34 aircrafts, George's crew took off at 0600 and was the lead craft of the High Right Squadron in MISS B-HAVIN (42-95620). According to records, George was the tail gunner and the crew had an extra member to their crew - Ligouri F.L who was also a Navigator.

The 448<sup>th</sup> flew as tail end Charlie for the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force on this mission and that cost them dearly.

The flak was so heavy. LADY MARGARET, piloted by Lt. Francis Botkin, exploded in mid air; 6 crew died and the other 4 became POWs.

Aircraft 42-50788, piloted by Lt. Frank Bastian was severely damaged by flak, 2 men bailed out and were captured by the Germans. Frank managed to gain control before the others bailed and headed towards France where 4 more men bailed out over Chartres. The last 4 bailed out over Montruil.

These last 8 men made it back to Seething.

Aircraft 41-28924, piloted by Lt. Edmond Postemsky was hit by flak and crashed near Mannheim, Germany. Only the co-pilot Lt. Clifford Unwin survived and become a POW.

Aircraft 42-50443, piloted by Lt. William Stonebraker, was destroyed by flak. Amazing all 10 crew survived but 3 of them were attacked and injured by angry villagers. All 10 were captured.



*(crew of 41-28924 Supplied)*

In all, 28 aircraft from the 448<sup>th</sup> managed to drop their bombs on the target. George's notes states that his aircraft missed the target. When they returned to Seething LITTLE JOE, BARFLY, OL' BUDDY were severely damaged, 4 crews were missing and many men were injured.

### **Mission #17 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #145]**

George's seventeenth mission was on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1944 to Gustaveburg, Germany. Their target was the marshalling yards. George's crew took off at 0715 and was the lead plane for the low left squadron, in MISS B-HAVIN (42-95620). The 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group provided the lead, piloted by Major William Blum and deputy lead aircrafts for this mission. Bad weather over the target meant PFF was needed.

They were met with intense flak. At 1046 the lead aircraft took a direct hit in its bomb bay, causing the tail section to fall off. This explosion also caused damage to the deputy lead aircraft. Major Blum managed to bail and was captured. As a result of this event, only 5 aircraft from the low left squadron (which George's crew lead) dropped their bombs but according to George's notes his aircraft wasn't one that dropped their bombs.

### **Mission #18 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #151]**

George's eighteenth mission was on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1944 to Kassel, Germany. The target was the Henschel and vehicles works and the whole of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force (about 1000 B-24s and B-17s) was heading for it. George's crew took off at 1015 and was the deputy lead aircraft for the lead squadron. Captain Andresen was the command pilot for their aircraft MISS B-HAVIN (42-95620).

As the group crossed the Rhine, they were met with heavy flak. FRISCO'S FRISKY was damaged and turned for home. The flak encounter also caused the low left squadron to become separated from the rest of the 448<sup>th</sup> and ended up joining the 446<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. Despite not being able to see the target, the use of PFF meant they were able to drop their bombs. All aircraft returned to Seething. George's crew arrived back at 1715 and were welcomed by some of the evacuee children that had come to Seething for a party.



(Supplied)

### **Mission #19 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #158]**

George's nineteenth mission was on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1944 to Gaggenau, Germany. The target was the Daimler-Benz aircraft works plant. George's crew took off at 0730 and was the lead aircraft for the high right squadron in Aircraft 42-50661. It was bitterly cold for the group and some experienced ice forming in their oxygen mask.

As the group passed over Amsterdam, flak hit the aircraft Lt. Harold Solden was pilot of (I believe he was the deputy lead aircraft for the group with Captain Andreson). The flak damaged their number 1 engine but they struggled to remain with the formation.

In the words of Rowe the "lead ship screwed up and they made a couple of unnecessary runs on the target" This unfortunately caused the formation to scatter and only the high right squadron (lead by George's crew and Rowe was part of) dropped their bombs. They hit short. The deputy lead took command of the formation and led a second pass over the target but they were unable to bomb so they set course for Pforzheim as their backup target and dropped their bombs.



(Lt. Robert Mains)

Lt. Harold Soldan had another issue! One of the bombs was still hanging in the bomb bay. It was apparently kicked out in the end but then the bomb bay doors froze and would not close. Amazingly they held formation all the way back to Seething.

Flak damaged Aircraft 42-95006, piloted by Lt. Mains and they crash landed in (according to Brett) Calais, France or (according to Rowe) Aldeby, England. Rowe also states that 2 crew members were injured and 1 crew member died.

#### **Mission #20 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #159]**

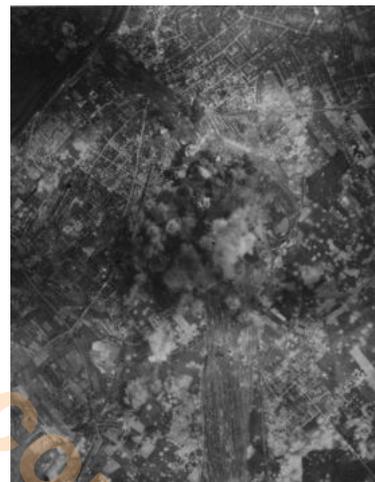
George's twentieth mission was on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1944 to Harburg, Germany. The target was an oil refinery. George's crew took off at 0815 and was deputy lead with Mills as master pilot in Aircraft 42-50661. The formation was met with intense flak but they got to their target and dropped their bombs. All aircraft returned back to Seething.

#### **Mission #21 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #160]**

George's twenty-first mission was on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1944 to Clausthal-Zellerfeld, Germany. The target was an explosives factory. This was the secondary target as they were originally supposed to attack an oil refinery in Magdeburg but weather conditions put a stop to that. During the mission, there was confusion as the 448<sup>th</sup>, led by Lt. William Snavely and crew, found themselves in the front of the formation and leading the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Division. Despite this mistake, William led the whole group across the target and they dropped their bombs. The target was destroyed. All the 448<sup>th</sup> aircraft returned back to Seething

#### **Mission #22 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #166]**

George's twenty-second mission was on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1944 to Hamm, Germany. The group that departed Seething consisted of the main formation of lead group, low group and high group. However an extra group was added to this formation, made up from the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group and led by George's crew on Aircraft 42-50661. George's crew took off at 1040 for this "Milk Run". Bad weather over Germany meant that PFF had to be bomb in order to bomb the target. Everyone arrived back at Seething safely.



(Hamm - Fold3.com)

#### **Mission #23 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #170]**

George's twenty-third mission was on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1944 to Bielefeld, Germany. The target was a railroad viaduct and bridge. George's crew took-off at 0830 as the lead plane on high right squadron in Aircraft 42-50661. Cloud covered the target and when they were able to see the target it was too late and all the bombs missed the target. George's aircraft hydraulic system was shot up.

#### **Mission #24 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #180]**

George's twenty-fourth mission was on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1944 to Bielefeld, Germany again in order to destroy the railroad viaduct and bridge. George's crew took-off at 0845 for this "Milk Run" but once again weather caused targeting a problem and the bridge remained intact.

### **Mission #25 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #185]**



George's twenty-fifth mission was on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to Minden, Germany. The mission for today was the secondary target of the Mittelland canal, this being due to bad weather over the primary target of the marshalling yards at Lohne, Germany. Everyone returned back to Seething.

(Mittelland canal - fold3.com)

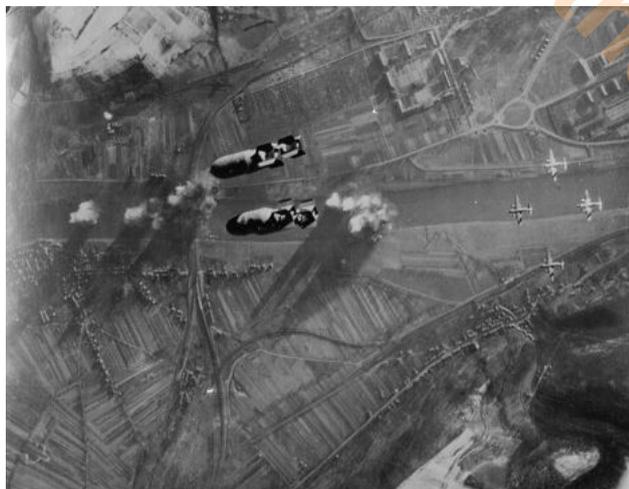
### **Mission #26 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #186]**

George's twenty-sixth mission was on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to the marshalling yards at Hanau, Germany. The bad weather meant that PFF aircraft were required for the bomb run. George's crew took-off at 0815 and they hit the target just after midday. Aircraft 42-50587 (PFF ship) was damaged by flak and landed on the continent. George's aircraft was also hit by flak at Dunkence.



(Hanau marshalling yards - fold3.com)

### **Mission #27 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #188]**



According to George's mission list, his twenty-seventh mission was on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to Ehrang, Trier, Germany. Rowe has this mission happening on the 16<sup>th</sup> December and Brett has it as happening on the 19<sup>th</sup> December. This mission was of the utmost importance because for the previous 5/7 days the weather had hampered aircrews from helping the American ground forces, as they were being pounded by the Germans who were on the offensive. The target was the marshalling yards that were being used to move the German 53 and 80 Corps. The weather was marginal at best, but with how important this mission was, George's crew took off at 1100. Unfortunately two aircraft following

were not so lucky, crashing at the end of the runway. In all, 20 aircraft got airborne before the weather worsened, preventing further takeoffs. Despite cloud covering the target and flak damaging several planes, the group dropped their bombs using H2X. Aircraft 42-50357 was heavily damaged but they managed to land near Brussels, Belgium. No crew members were hurt but the aircraft was a total loss.

On their return to base, the group was met with thick fog. Landing at Seething would be too dangerous so the group was diverted to Western England where it was clearer. George's crew landed at Barnstaple and they stayed there for 3 days.

### **Mission #28 [448<sup>th</sup> Group mission #190]**

George's twenty-eighth mission was on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to Waxweiler, Germany to support the ground forces. The target was the marshalling yards in an attempt to stem the flow of the German army. George's crew took off at 0900. On this mission George was not with Lt. William Beall's crew. Records are unclear at this time which crew George flew with but because his target was Waxweiler it is possible to deduce that he was in the Low Left Squadron. This squadron unfortunately missed their target or in the words of Joseph Zonyk from Rowe "*The Lead ship screwed up and took us over the wrong target and we did not drop*". Rowe's crew were the only ones who dropped their bombs over rolling stock at a crossroads. The High Right Squadron hit a communications centre at Budenheim and the Lead Squadron hit the marshalling yards at Prum, Germany. George's crew returned back to Seething at 1430. His aircraft was shot up and the tail gunner had been hit. During this mission the base played host to over 300 children - including the late Jim Turner who volunteered at the tower in later years as membership secretary – and held a Christmas party for them. By the time George returned the Christmas dinner was all gone.

### **Mission #29 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #191]**

George's twenty-ninth mission was on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1944 to Kaiserslauten, Germany. The target was the marshalling yards. George was the ball gunner for the crew of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Sherman F. Furey, Jr, who arrived at Seething on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1944 and was originally assigned to the 713<sup>th</sup> Squadron and by December he had been transferred over to 712<sup>th</sup> Squadron. Other members of his crew included:-

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. William J. Dickenson (Co-pilot)

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Clifford Linder (Bombardier)

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Rex B. Olson (Navigator)

Sgt. Charles Granato

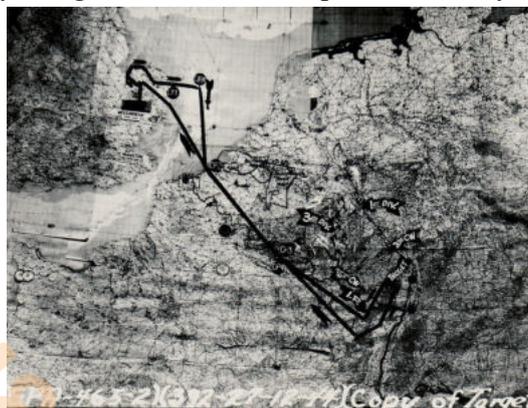
Sgt. Philip J. Donovan – who George replaced

Sgt. Florence T. McCarthy

Cpl. Colston H. Browne

Cpl. Walter C. Hoke

Cpl. Stephen L. Kott



On this mission there were 3 extra names added to the crew list – R. Smith (Navigator), J. Nettles and G. W. Leary.

Major Smith was a Command Pilot and together they were the lead aircraft (44-48806 SH 32) for the Low Left Squadron. Their aircraft was also a H2X (as indicated by the SH on the tail number) aircraft, which is a ground mapping radar so they could bomb through cloud/fog.

George's crew took off at 0900 for this "milk run". Just before the initial point the lead aircraft's H2X system failed but the deputy lead aircraft immediately assumed control. The quick reaction allowed the Group to drop their bombs on the target and return to Seething by 1530.

### **Mission #30 [448<sup>th</sup> Group Mission #193]**

George's final mission was on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1944 to Kudendorf, Germany. The target was a railroad bridge (Ludendorf Bridge). George's crew took off 0800. Due to cloud they failed to hit the bridge but this turned out to be a good thing as 3 months later this bridge ended up providing the Allies with a route over the river Rhine when the troops from the 9<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division captured it intact. George's crew returned back to Seething at 1430. George's 30 missions were now complete.



(Ludendorf Bridge 7<sup>th</sup> March 1945 – warfare.historynetwork.com)

On completion of this 30<sup>th</sup> mission George Dickinson was deemed to have completed his tour of duty and was assigned to other duties. He was extremely lucky to go through 30 missions relatively unscathed and the same for the rest of his original crew.



(George Dickinson – Norfolk Records Office)