

MATHER FIELD NAVIGATORS

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MEMORANDUM

MATHER FIELD NAVIGATORS/ 91ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP

On July 25, 1942, approximately 85 cadets graduated from the Mather Field Advanced Flying School. They were commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the United States Army with the status of "Navigator/Observer."

They were assigned to active duty on that date, at Headquarters, Army/Air Force, Mather Field, California, as "Navigation Instructors." This assignment was purely an administrative convenience.

On July 26, 1942, all of the graduating class of 85 cadets, except for one or two, who remained at Mather Field as instructors, was assigned to duty with the Second Air Force, at Salt Lake City, Utah. In addition, two Lieutenants who had served as instructors at Mather Field were also assigned to Second Air Force. These are Harry Ackerman and Bryon M. Bennett.

On or about July 30, 1942, approximately one third of the graduating class, which is to say about 27 or 28 Lieutenants, were assigned to duty Gowen Field, at Boise, Idaho. Sixteen members of this group were assigned to duty with the "91st Bombardment Group (BG)." Approximately one month later, on August 28, 1942, the 91st BG was ordered to proceed to Dow Field, Bangor, Maine. After further training at Bangor, the 91st BG established itself at Bassingbourn. Several months after their arrival, in approximately November 1942, the Group began combat operations over Europe.

During the first months of operation, the 91st BG sustained substantial casualties, and fatalities. Some reports estimated the percentage of casualties at 82% of the entire group.

Set forth below is a list of the Mather Field Navigators assigned to the 91st BG, their town of origin, upon entering the United States Army, their Bombardment squadron in the Group, and, such information as is available on their combat status.

Combat history of Mather Field Navigators:

1. Harry Ackerman: 323rd Squadron.
2. Robert Nye Allen: Latham, New York; 401st Squadron
3. Thor Val Arnkil: Sausalito, California; 401st Squadron. Killed in action, 28 Feb 1943. Listed on The Wall of the Missing at The Netherlands-American Cemetery.
4. John Ainsley Ball: Alto, Louisiana; 324th Squadron. Killed in action, 28 Nov 1942. Interred at Madingly Cemetery, Cambridge, England.
5. Robert Aaron Bercu; San Gabriel, California, 324th Squadron. Wounded in action.
6. Bryon M. Bennett: 323rd Squadron.
7. Ralston Elwell Bixler, Haddonfield, New Jersey, 401st Squadron. Killed in Action, 28 Feb 1943. Listed on The Wall of the Missing at Madingly Cemetery, Cambridge, England.
8. Melvin Ellsworth Brown: Odell, Illinois; 401st Squadron.
9. Robert Raymond Brunn: San Francisco, California; graduated from the University of California, Berkeley. 401st Squadron. His airplane was disabled or otherwise forced to land, or to evacuate the crew by parachute, over continental Europe. He was taken a prisoner of war, and confined to Stalag Luft 7, until 1945.
10. James Roeder Bullock: Greensboro, North Carolina; 322nd Squadron. At least as of May 1943, Capt. Bullock was still active in combat. Reference Brechler's History of the 91st Bombardment Squadron, on page 88.
11. Paul Clifton Burnett: Marshall, Texas; 322nd Squadron.
12. Joseph Patrick Carr: Gary, Indiana; graduate of the University of Notre Dame; 324th Squadron. His airplane was disabled in combat, and forced to land, (that is "ditch"), in either the North Sea or the English Channel. He was wounded in action.
13. Everett Lauher Clinard: Oakland, Illinois; 323rd Squadron. Killed in action, 4 Feb 1943. Listed on The Wall if the Missing, at the Netherlands-American Cemetery.
14. Ralph Leon Clinton: Newsome, Texas; 322nd Squadron. Killed in action.
15. Linden Wayne Cochran: Turlock, California; 322nd Squadron.
16. Robert Urquhart Duggan: Long Island, New York; 323rd Squadron. Killed in action.
17. Howard Monroe Dunham: Kalamazoo, Michigan; 323rd Squadron. His airplane was disabled, and was forced to land in continental Europe, or evacuate the crew by parachute. He was taken as a prisoner of war.

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