

MY LAST FLIGHT ON "MY DARLING ALSO"

Written by Dana Morse

On March 5, 1944, we were alerted at 6 PM of a mission.

On March 6, up at 3 A.M., with hardly no sleep, breakfast was at 4 AM and then briefing. The crew was taken to our plane "My Darling Also" (serial # 4231578) for boarding. The target again was for Berlin, a nine-hour flight. We had made attempts before in the early days of March, but had to abort. This time, everything went fairly smooth until we reached the I.P. with light flack and some fighters sighted. At this time, the action became intense; the fighters came in on our group and tailend Charlie was knocked out. 1st Lt. Bob Tibbets Jr. thought it best with our experience over the crew or wingman that we should fill in the tail end position, which we did. As I recall, enemy fighters were being called in from every position on our plane. To the best of my knowledge, we had made the turn at the I.P. when we were hit and knocked out of the formation. The intercom was out, so I moved my chute and put it back near the escape hatch. Later, a hole was blown in the spot where my chute had been laying. I went back to firing my gun, which I believe was a Messerschmidt 110 and could see my machine gun holes going down at least a third its fuselage; he could not have been more than fifty yards away and came in from 9:00 low. Others were firing their guns and it reminded me of the first mission when we had to ditch into the North Sea and had to fire the guns to get rid of our ammunition.

A German FW 190 flown by Feldwebel Wahfeldt rammed our plane. S/Sgt. Walter J. Davis (tail gunner) survived the collision of this fighter that had aimed at the area between the tail assembly and the tail gunner. Being unable to shoot us down, the fighter was trained to ram. The fighter pilot survived to tell his story of the ramming of our plane. The plane was jarred and I was knocked from my gun and at that time, my gun was shot out and I felt a burning sensation on my left thigh. Sgt. Sydney A. Barratt Jr., right waist gunner, was holding his stomach and had been hit bad. I looked out the right waist window and saw that we were on fire and sliding off to our right and going down. I could see no one at all up through the plane due to the smoke and knew we were in deep trouble. I tried to arouse S/Sgt. Harold J. Rhode, the ball turret gunner, with no results.

Then I tried to help Sgt. Barratt, but he was out cold, so I tried to open the escape door but the door was jammed. I was finally able to kick it out. I could see no movement from the ball turret coming up and the right waist gunner was still laying and I could not move him. I took one look out of the escape door before jumping and saw the right horizontal elevator torn off near the fuselage and I could not see Sgt. Davis in the tail section. I jumped and waited some, but probably not long enough and I was jerked hard. The chute opened and I floated toward the west and I later confirmed. I heard a loud explosion and when I tried to locate our plane, I could not find it. At the same time a fighter came in on me and it was a ME 109. I was not sure at the time if it fired at me, but later when I looked up at my chest type chute, it had at least 25 to 50 holes in it. I drifted over one big town and several small towns. It seem that the wind was strong and blowing me. I tried to steer the chute as I was heading into the woods and I don't know if I did any good, but I landed hard into some type of thorn bushes. People were coming in from all sides as I drifted down, so I just lay there. I had lost a lot of blood and had no more strength.

There were many civilians with guns pointed at me and they stripped me of my chute and any thing else that they wanted. The German Army came up and knocked the guns out of the hands of the civilians. I guess they were thinking of shooting me, because of all of the loud talking. I learned later that Hitler had given orders to shoot all Allied Airmen. The Army then placed me in an oxcart and it was not long before Sgt. Davis came up and tried to give me some morphine, but they would not let

him. By this time, I did not know if Sgt. Davis had gone. All I know was that it took a long time and long ride. When I came to, I was in a building and on a stretcher and taken to a room where they held me down on a table. I thought that this was it, so I fought like hell. I came to some time later in an old theater. It was in the town of Magdeburg Germany.

I was later transported to be interrogated and sent to POW camp 17-B.

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