

## **THE ERWIN NINE**

**Written by Marion Hoffman**

Did you know or ever hear about the book, "The Erwin Nine"? Nine airmen become POW's at Stalag Luft IV all from a small town Erwin in Eastern Tennessee population of 3,500 (I Have the Book). All nine were shot down and came from various 8th AF Bomb Groups, one from the 15th AF. One Homer Stanley Norris is of the 91st Bomb Group, 322 Squadron. Stan's crew was shot down on July 20, 1944 over Leipzig, Germany. By the book he flew as Waist Gunner and Asst. Radio Operator. Stan was flying with 2nd Lt. Albert G. Deshaw's crew in Superstitious Aloysius documented in the 91st website plane and photos. I notice Stan has never been listed in our 91st BG roster.

What aroused my interest in book was part of the story I will tell Richard Edward's hometown unknown to me at that time. Richard Edwards was one of the Erwin Nine was on the same plane and crew as my hometown buddies Max Kimmel of Vincennes, Indiana. Richard, Max and I went to the Burlesque House, the Rathskellor Bar at Sioux City while in training. We trained together on different crews at Sioux City, Iowa but went to different Bomb Groups. Richard Edwards and Max my buddy on same crew were assigned to Thurleigh Air Base, 306th BG, 369th BS. They were shot down on September 13, 1944 on their thirteenth mission over Merseburg, Germany. The book explains how each of the nine crewmen met at times in various phases of their training here in the states but then were shot down and how they arrived at Stalag Luft IV.

In October 1944 I went one day to Thurleigh to see Max my buddy. It was surprising to me how the Red Cross lady and the Chaplain put me off from not seeing Max. At supper that night my suspicion was confirmed they broke the news Max and crew were shot down on a 13th September day. They put me up for the night fed me breakfast and seen me off at train station for my train ride back to Basingbourn.

### THOSE ERWIN NINE;

Name	Mission	Date	Group	Squadron	Plane
Clyde D. Tinker	1	2/8/44	452	730	B-17
James H. Hensley Jr.	13	2/22/44	303	360	B-17
Allen S. Alford	13	02/24/44	445	703	B-17
George D. Swingle	24	4/27/44	447	700	B-17
George L. Hatcher Jr.	2	5/27/44	451	749	B-17
J. Fred Miller	35	7/2/44	456	15AF 744	B-24
Dick L. Franklin	14	7/12/44	351	510	B-17
Homer Stanley Norris	2	7/22/44	91	322	B-17
Richard G. Edwards, Jr.	13	9/13/44	306	369	B-17

On January 6, 1945 my crew and I were shot down. Of the 114 days as a POW and after our forced march 345 miles across Germany in 85 of those 114 days we arrived at Stalag VII-A Moosburg, Germany. One day when looking across the compound fence to see if I knew anybody over there, there was my buddy Max Kimmel. I told him I was up at Thurleigh to see him and he was not there. He yelled back at me and said Hoffman what the hell you doing over here? I spoke and said Max what the hell you doing over here. Then on April 29, 1945, we were liberated by George Patton's 3rd Army.

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