

# **S/SGT Raymond Sell's Story (Shot Down on Rebels Revenge)**

**Written by Eugene Sell**

## **TO THE CREW ON B-17 "REBELS REVENGE" LAST SEEN AT 1100 HOURS ON 9/27/43 NEAR EMDEN GERMANY**

**ASSIGNED TO THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE -91<sup>ST</sup> BOMB GP (H) - 323<sup>RD</sup> SQUADRON  
BASSINGBOURN ENGLAND AAF STATION 121**

**S/SGT RAYMOND H SELL**  
**BETHLEHEM PA**  
**GUNNER**

**2<sup>ND</sup> LT RICHARD F HULL**  
**DENVER CO**  
**BOMBARDIER**

**S/SGT CHARLES H OLIVER**  
**SAVANNAH MO**  
**GUNNER**

**S/SGT WILLIAM J GOLDEN**  
**NEWARK NJ**  
**ENGINEER**

**2<sup>ND</sup> LT JOHN M PERRITT**  
**ARCADIA LA**  
**PILOT**

**T/SGT HARRY L STOKES**  
**REW PA**  
**ASST ENGINEER**

**2<sup>ND</sup> LT EUGENE V HILL**  
**WABAN MA**  
**CO-PILOT**

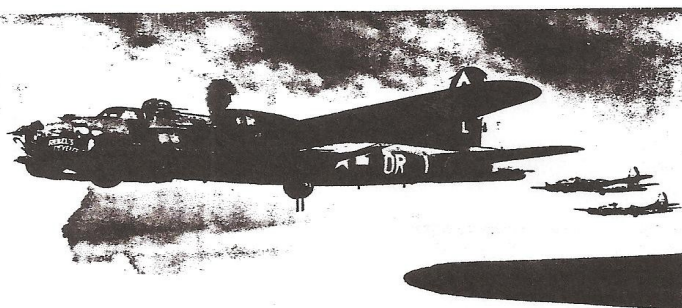
**T/SGT EDGAR G FETTY JR**  
**DIAMOND OH**  
**RADIO OPERATOR**

**2<sup>ND</sup> LT FRANK O ROLFE**  
**HUNTSVILLE AL**  
**NAVIGATOR**

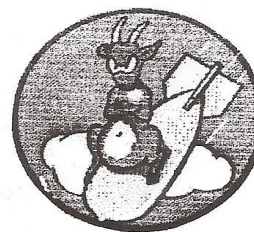
**S/SGT JAMES W SAMPLE**  
**LONGSTREET LA**  
**ASST RADIO OPERATOR**



.... TODAY, IN THEIR MEMORY, AND FOR ALL WHO  
FOUGHT HERE AND DIED HERE, WE CELEBRATE  
THE TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY....  
.... WE WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER  
WE WILL ALWAYS BE PROUD WE WILL ALWAYS BE PREPARED,  
SO WE MAY ALWAYS BE FREE....



229750 OR-L a 323rd BS B-17, "Rebels Revenge," replaced the lost "Delta Rebel #2," only to be lost on its fourth mission with 2/Lt. John W. Perritt as pilot. (Havelaar)





### UNCLE RAYMOND'S STORY

I DO NOT REMEMBER RAYMOND SELL AS I WAS VERY YOUNG BEFORE HE SHIPPED OVERSEAS WITH THE ARMY AIR FORCE DURING WORLD WAR II. BORN ON APRIL 13, 1917, HE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF FOUR BROTHERS - ALLEN AND RICHARD SUPPORTED THE WAR EFFORT BY WORKING AT THE LOCAL STEEL COMPANY AND BROTHER WILMER SERVED WITH THE QUARTERMASTER CORPS IN ITALY.

RAYMOND WAS A YOUNG LAD WHEN HE ENLISTED IN 1941. HE ATTENDED BETHLEHEM HIGH SCHOOL AND WAS EMPLOYED BY THE BETHLEHEM STEEL COMPANY PRIOR TO ENTERING THE ARMED FORCES. ATTACHED TO THE U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES, HE GRADUATED FROM THE AIR FORCES TRAINING SCHOOL IN BUCKLEY COLORADO AND FROM THE GUNNERS SCHOOL IN KINGMAN ARIZONA.

RAYMOND WAS A BALL TURRET GUNNER ABOARD "REBELS REVENGE", A HEAVY BOMBER FLYING OUT OF BASSINGBOURN ENGLAND. THE AIRCRAFT WAS A B-17F ASSIGNED TO THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE, 91<sup>ST</sup> BOMB GROUP, 323<sup>RD</sup> SQUADRON. THE PLANE WAS LAST SEEN ON MONDAY 9/27/43 AFTER COMPLETING A BOMBING MISSION TO EMDEN GERMANY. RAYMOND WAS LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION AT THE TIME AND LATER DECLARED OFFICIALLY DEAD BY THE WAR DEPARTMENT. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CREW WERE ALSO LISTED AS MISSING IN ACTION.

MY INTEREST IN RAYMOND BEGAN IN THE SUMMER OF 98 WHEN MY MOTHER GAVE ME TWO LETTERS WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN 1944. THE LETTERS WERE FROM FAMILY MEMBERS OF HIS CREW OF THE PLANE HE WAS ASSIGNED TO. ONE LETTER FROM MRS DORTHEA HULL OF DENVER, MOTHER OF 2<sup>ND</sup> LT RICHARD HULL AND THE OTHER FROM MRS JEAN STOKES OF REW PENNSYLVANIA, WIFE OF T/SGT HARRY L STOKES. BOTH LETTERS WERE WRITTEN WITH THE SAME CONCERN AND ANXIETY FOR THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS- BOTH WERE MAKING INQUIRIES - BOTH WERE ASKING THE SAME QUESTION, "HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THE BOYS?"

THE LETTERS AROUSED MY CURIOSITY, ESPECIALLY THE SINCERITY AND THE PASSION IN WHICH THEY WERE WRITTEN. I COULD ONLY IMAGINE THE HEAVY HEARTS OF THE SENDERS -ONE A MOTHER, THE OTHER A WIFE, TRYING TO KEEP ALL HOPES ALIVE, WISHING FOR SOME GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE MEN IN THEIR LIVES. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A DREADFUL TIME TO BE ALIVE.

ALTHOUGH HE WAS IN THE ARMY AIR FORCE FOR APPROX 2 YEARS, RAYMOND'S COMBAT TIME LASTED A SHORT 13 DAYS- FOUR MISSIONS.

BEGINNING ON WEDNESDAY SEPT 15, 1943 TO BOMB AN AIRDROME AT ROMILLY FRANCE. THE BOMBERS RECEIVED EXCELLENT ESCORT FROM THE THUNDERBOLT'S BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THE BOMBS FELL SHORT OF THE TARGET. FLAK WAS MEAGER AND INACCURATE AND NO ENEMY AIRCRAFT CHALLENGED THE FORMATION. TOTAL TIME OF THE MISSION IN AIR WAS 6 HOURS. 1504 HOURS TO 2104 HOURS.



THE FOLLOWING DAY WAS HIS SECOND MISSION. ON THURSDAY SEPT 16 - FIFTEEN B-17 FORTRESSES BOMBED THE AIRDROME AT NANTES FRANCE WITH GOOD RESULTS.

ONE AIRCRAFT WAS THE VICTIM OF FLAK AND WAS SEEN GOING DOWN IN FLAMES. ONE WAIST GUNNER DID NOT SURVIVE AND THE OTHER CREW MEMBERS BECAME PRISONERS OF WAR. TOTAL AIR TIME OF MISSION 6 HOURS 9 MINUTES- THERE WAS A REPORT OF 25 ENEMY FIGHTERS IN OPPOSITION.

RAYMOND'S THIRD MISSION AND THE LAST HE WAS TO RETURN WAS ON SUNDAY SEPT 26<sup>TH</sup> 1943. NINETEEN B-17'S WERE AIRBORNE TO STRIKE AN AIRCRAFT ASSEMBLY PLANT IN MEULAN FRANCE BUT THE WEATHER PROVED TO BE SO BAD THAT ALL WERE RECALLED- TOTAL AIR TIME 4 HOURS 35 MINUTES. THIS MISSION WAS ON AIRCRAFT 639 "THE CAREFUL VIRGIN" FOR RAYMOND. HIS ONLY MISSION NOT ASSIGNED TO "REBELS REVENGE".

HIS FOURTH AND FINAL MISSION WAS ON MONDAY SEPT 27<sup>TH</sup> 1943. THIS WAS A BOMBING MISSION TO EMDEN GERMANY- AT 1010 HOURS HIS SHIP WAS SEEN LEAVING FORMATION AT 23,000 FEET SHORTLY AFTER BOMBS AWAY. WITH AN ENGINE ON FIRE,. THE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN IN A DIVE WITH PARACHUTES EMERGING. TWO OF THE CREW SURVIVED AS PRISONERS OF WAR. LAST REPORT ON RAYMOND WAS A RADIO CHECK IN AT 1100 HOURS- THE WAIST GUNNERS APPEARED UNINJURED ACCORDING TO ONE OF THE SURVIVORS. ANOTHER REPORT WAS THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS OVER THE NORTH SEA BUT DID NOT KNOW WHERE THE SHIP FINALLY CRASHED. THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED ENEMY FIRE ACCORDING TO ANOTHER REPORT.

THIS NARRATIVE IS WRITTEN TO HONOR THE CREW OF "REBELS REVENGE", FOR THEIR COURAGE AND BRAVERY AND TO THANK GOD FOR THEIR VALOR AND SACRIFICE. IT IS BECAUSE OF THEM THAT I ENJOY THE FREEDOMS THAT I HAVE TODAY. THESE MEN ARE TRUE HERO'S AND I THANK GOD EVERYDAY FOR THEM.

ONE CAN ONLY IMAGINE THE HORROR OF THAT FATEFUL DAY

**MONDAY SEPTEMBER 27 1943**

**RAYMOND WAS AWARDED THE AIR MEDAL AND THE PURPLE HEART**

EUGENE H SELL  
NEPHEW OF RAYMOND  
0327/00

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