

35 Missions

by 1st LT Wayne "Tex" Frye, 323rd BG Navigator

We arrived at Bassingbourn, home of the 91st Heavy Bomb Group on July 23, 1944. On July 30th (today) we finished our 3rd practice mission. I guess we're ready to go "Meet the Hun" as the fellows say. I don't know whether I'm scared now or not, but I know I damn sure will be when "Jerry" starts throwing flak. O'Neil (Pilot) is slated to go tomorrow. p.s. Jack didn't go.

#1 August 3, 1944

We started out for Mulhouse, France today. We were in lead squadron #3. While still in Belgium, we had two engines (#2&3) knocked out. Followed the formation for about 50 minutes, found a village in Germany with some warehouses. Jim didn't have a bombsight, so didn't hit warehouse, but knocked hell out of part of the village. We hope we knocked off some Nazi bastards. We flew back over Germany at 12 - 14,000 feet with two engines out and no fighter escort. What a hell of a first mission!!! I hope the next 34 aren't similar to this one - Am still shaky. A flight Surgeon was flying with us and said I should be commended for my navigation bringing us back safe. Ha. Ha. 6 1/2 hours, 3 1/2 hours on oxygen.

#2 August 5, 1944

Target, underground oil tanks at Nienburg, Germany. 7:11 flying time, 1031 miles. Went by way of North Sea. Target NW of Hanover. Very slight flak. A German flown B-17 was seen used as a flak ship. Flew deputy lead today. All in all was easy 3 1/2 hours on oxygen. Flew over Germany P.W. camp near target. Duffy was in my ship. Hope they are all the easy. Saw 4 B-24's hit and go out of formation. They sure put bombs on target. Carried 8-1000 lbs. armor piercing bombs. August 6, was up to go but wasn't called - was not sorry - the boys went to Big B.

#3 August 7, 1944

Target Sens, France, 980 miles, 6 hours 15 minutes, 3 1/2 hours on oxygen. Oil storage tanks, lead bombardier said we did not hit target. We were number 3 on lead ship & went as a crew today. Went in by LeHavre, saw a wall of flak to left of us & there were 5 burst close to us but we didn't think we got any, but had a hole in right wing. No more flak on in-We've been damned lucky since the first mission. Saw lots of bombed out towns and railways on the way. These short missions are tiring. Flak suits are heavy. 32 more - - - -, 25,000 feet. ps. Found out we did hit target.

#4 August 8, 1944.

Target in front of British front lines in Brittany. 3 hours on oxygen, 5 hours flight. We thought this would be easy, famous last words. It was really tough. Flak was really heavy and accurate. Our group lost two ships. I saw it hit, it broke right in two, the tail making an arc in the sky away from the rest of the plane. I watched it all the way to the ground and none of the poor devils got out. Just after that about 200 yards off our left wing a B-17 exploded and all that was left was one big sheet of flame. Poor devils. They all have loved ones at home same as I. I thought sure we would have flak holes, but we weren't touched. The plane next to us had a large hole in the tail that a man could crawl through. We hit our target with 270 frag-bombs. Hope we killed a million of the S.B.'s. Keep your fingers crossed!!!

#5 August 9, 1944

Target was to have been Munich but didn't get there. Weather was too bad. We got as far as Strasbourg and turned back and bombed S.O.P. target. Don't know whether we hit anything or not. Flak was terrific and very accurate. We had about 25 flak holes in our ship. Jerry had my number, as three pieces of flak

hit chin turret, exploded about 8 rounds and raised Jim and I about a foot. Another piece came up under where I had been a few minutes before. We could hear the flak explode and see the red flame. Boy! we've had some tough ones. The Hun really is getting good with flak. The S.O.B.'s. I have had 5 missions in 7 days and am up for tomorrow. Hope I don't go. Flew with 322nd squadron today and they're not worth a damn. 6 hours, 3 1/2 hours on oxygen, 25,000 feet. 10 - 500 lb. GP.

#6 August 13, 1944

Target a large bridge over Seine river south of Roven, France. 5 hour mission. Moderate but very accurate flak. Saw one of our ships start to spiral down but later it pulled out of it on the deck and came home on two engines, but 5 men had chuted out. To hell with these milk runs, had one piece of flak in supercharger. 3 hours on oxygen. 24,000 feet. p.s. That plane did not; come back. We wiped out the Bridge at Roven. 10 - 500 lb. GP. Heard Engeman got it. Poor guy.

August 14th and 15th

In London

#7 August 16, 1944

Target JV88 wing factory at Halle, Germany near Leipzig. 8 hours mission, 1,300 miles. I've really been checked out! About 150 fighters hit us today, some Jet propelled among them. The latest report is 7 knocked down in our group. Flak was heavy. We had 5 big holes in tail and wings. 20mm shells bursting near us. We really socked the target today. Hope we don't have to go back there. Those fighters are really rough. 25,000 feet. About 5 hours on oxygen, which was getting low, have a hell of a headache from the oxygen (Jim gets to damned excited up there). This was the Air Medal Mission. Hope to wear it in the U.S.A. If you know what I mean! Hope I don't go tomorrow. Later, we lost 6 planes. Simcock was one of them, Winston had to crash-land on English coast. Later, Winston went to Flak house, p.s. he took plane right over Bremen on way out.

#8 August 24, 1944

Target, Kolleda airfield near Leipzig. Secondary Caslar airfield in same area. Total flying time 8:20, on oxygen 5 hours. When I heard of the target this morning! Ouch! We were routed right by Hamburg, Bremen and Berlin, my first sight of "Big B". Trip was uneventful, we saw both flak and fighters but neither bothered us. Thank Heaven! We had a visual run on primary target but my group did not drop bombs, still don't know why. Went on to secondary and dropped bombs, but they missed target. Other two groups hit each target good. Had 10 - 500 lb. of RDX. Saw P-51 shoot down German fighter on way home about 1400 mile trip out over North Sea. 25,000 feet.

#9 August 25, 1944

Target FW-190 Plant at Newbrandenburg. 9 hours, 3 1/2 hours on oxygen. We really smashed the hell out of this plant. It was one long trip, I'm awfully tired tonight. No fighters or flak. Target was 60 miles north of Berlin. We could see Sweden and did it look good! Had one alert for "Bandits", but did not see any. About 1,400 miles, 18,000 feet. 10 - 500 lb. GP.

#10 August 30, 1944

Target Center of city of Kiel! Time 7:05 on oxygen 3 1/2 hours. This was PFF mission. Thanks for that. Had 10/10 undercast, Jerry was still good with flak. Damned near knocked right wing off of a 323rd ship, but it got back. Lots and lots of flak, but we didn't get touched, thank the Lord. Am very tired landed at 1950. Up for tomorrow. About 1150 miles at 27,000 feet, 10 - 500 M.I.

#11 September 5, 1944

Target, Ludwigshaven, synthetic oil factory. Flight 7 hours. Time on oxygen 5 hours. We went over France today and saw the battle lines and thousands of trucks and tanks moving up to the front. They are still fighting in Metz and Nancy. We don't know whether we hit target yet or not, started a visual run but undercast moved in and we bombed PFF. Had 42 incendiary bombs. There was lots of flak. We just had two holes. I flew with a green crew because their navigator was AWOL. Their co-pilot thought he was "Hot" about crashed us into lead ship.

#12 September 11, 1944

Target in Leipzig area again. Flight 8 hours, on oxygen 6 hours. That country gives me the jitters, plenty of flak. Had about 4 pieces hit us, all around us. On oxygen too long. Saw the Seigfried Line. Hope they get this thing finished before too long. Its looks as though it will be quite awhile! 28,000 feet, 52 c below zero. We flew 909 (Nine-O-Nine) on its 70th mission without a abort. 10 - 500 lb. G.P., Lutzendorf, fighters hit another group today, but we didn't see any. Merseberg' - Flak.

#13 September 13, 1944

13 on the 13th! Target same as #12. 7 hours flight, 5 hours on; oxygen, 1185 miles. This was the usual Leipzig raid - lots of flak and very accurate today, had about 30 flak holes today. Saw my first Red Flak today. Flak was all around us. They hit chin turret again. One flak shell went right through the right wing. Glad it didn't explode!! Bombardiers messed up today in our group. McCarter about froze today. altitude 28,000 feet, minus 40 c. Target name was Lutzendorf. There were hundreds of B-17's in the air at assembly. This morning more then I'd ever seen. Sept. 20 was alerted but was scrubbed, Have had Red alerts last two nights. Merseberg Flak!

#14 September 21, 1944

Target, marshalling yards at Maintz, Germany. Flight time 6 1/2 hours, on oxygen 4 hours, 40 minuets. weather was very bad. Flak was very plentiful, but not too accurate. Was big stuff. Flew with Lt. Snow today. Was put up for 1st today. Had to make instrument let down.

#15 September 26, 1944

Target, Osnabruck, Germany. Marshalling yards. Flight time, 6 hours, on oxygen 4 hours. This was an easy one, except for our wonderful lead navigator taking us over flak at the Holland coast, 10 miles south of course. Beaman picked a couple of pieces of flak out of the radio room. We really hit the target.

#16 September 28, 1944

Target, Magdeburg, Germany. Flight time 7:50, on oxygen 4:30. Had to bomb center of city PFF. 10 - 500 lb. GP bombs. This was a long one, fighters hit group behind us. Glad we didn't get them. Saw 9 parachutes today. Poor guys. Was really worried about this one but made it O.K. 1285 miles. 40 below zero at 26,000 feet. ps. Saw a B-17 explode.

#17 October 2, 1944

Target, Kassel, Germany. Flight time, 7:10, on oxygen 5 hours. We bombed PFF again today, but don't know why, I saw primary target clearly. It was burning like mad form other groups before us. Weather was pretty bad. Carried 10 - 500 lb. Incendiary bombs. Flak was light but very accurate. Didn't see the Luftwaffe thank the e Good Lord. 38 below zero, at 25,000 feet.

#18 October 6, 1944

Target, Newbrandenburg, Germany. FW-190 Assembly plant. Same target as August 25th. We smacked

this damaged plant again, right on the nose. Flight time 9 1/2 hours, on oxygen 4 hours. This was a long tiresome trip, but uneventful. Not much flak, a little right under our nose! Bombed at 20,000 feet, 16 degrees below zero.

#19 October 9, 1944

Target, center of City of Schweinfurt, Germany. PFF flight time, 7:25, on oxygen 5 hours. Bombing Altitude, 23,000 feet, 25 below zero. This wasn't too bad, quite a bit of flak, but no fighters. This fighter business is really a worry. I took some pictures of formation and flak with Duffy's camera. 10/10 undercast the entire trip.

#20 October 14, 1944

Target, Cologne, Germany, marshalling yards, in the center of the city. Flight time 6:30, on oxygen 4:40, altitude 25,000 feet, 35 below zero. Bomb load 14 - 250 lb. GP, 4 - 500 lb. incendiaries. This was a short rough one. Flak was plentiful and accurate. We had a Tokyo Gas Tank hit. We were sure worried it would burst in flames. had major battle damage for the forth time. We have been having lots of those damned buzz bomb lately. They scare hell out of me. I have been scrubbed 13 times to date. ps. On this trip, the lead called up to tell us to bail out. Missed the Gulag Luft this time.

#21 October 17, 1944

Target Cologne, Germany, center of city. Flight time 6:25, on oxygen 4:30. Altitude 27,000 feet, bomb load 34 - 100 lb., 2 - 500 lb. Lead squadron, this one was not so bad. Plenty of flak, but none close to us. No holes at all. There were B-17's all over the sky, over 1300 counting the B-24's. Saw B-17 explode with wing fire.

#22 October 22, 1944

Target Brunswick, Germany PFF, center of city deal. Flight time, 8:20, on oxygen 4:00 hours. Bomb load 12 - 500 lb., 6 of them incendiaries. I flew as deputy lead today, but would rather be in my own crew, looks as though I'll be deputy from now on. 10/10 undercast today. Lots of flak, but it missed us. Am really tired tonight. 24,000 feet.

#23 October 26, 1944

Target, Munster, Germany, P.F.F. marshalling yards. Flight time 6:00, on oxygen 4:00. Bomb load 6 - 500 lb. GP, 6 - 500 lb. Incendiaries. Not much flak around us, lots after we left. 36 B-17's went in first with chaff bombs. 25,500 feet, 35 below zero. Flew with O'Neil, is much better. p.s. Didn't hit the target.

#24 October 30, 1944

Target, Hamm, Germany P.F.F. marshalling yards. Flight time 5:05 hours, on oxygen 4:30. Bomb load, "Nickels". Another navigator malfunction. Lead navigator took us over Munster and we really caught hell, had about 50 holes in our, "Wicked Witch", about 20 holes in the waist. My DR was within 2 miles of actual position. weather was terrible. Bombed from 29,000, 50 below zero. Was cold as the devil. Not much flak at target. A piece of flak went through the nose and one back of me. Another souvenir. p.s. Had an even 100 holes in the ship. Major Battle damage the fifth time.

#25 November 2, 1944

Target, Merseburg, Germany, Flight time 7:07 hours, on oxygen 4:30. Bomb load 18 - 250 lb. Altitude 26,200 feet, 38 below zero. Several hundred ME-109's and FW-190's hit us today, we were last group in. 323rd lost 6 planes (Passenger in one of them). The group lost 13 planes. No words can describe how terrible this was Hollenbaugh and Robinson each got a FW-190, McCarter and I each got one. Paul damaged an ME-109. They really came in on us. No visible fighter support. Hoffman was in

another ship and got back OK. He got an FW-190. Mullins got back with two engines shot out. Lots of empty bunks tonight. Flak got tow ships, was intense and accurate. 155 mm. 20 mm was all around us. We were hit several time. We were lucky. O'Neil really did some wonderful evasive action. If I had had a cheek gun on the left side, I could have had an FW-190. He stalled out about 40 yards in front of me. An ME-109 did a slow half roll right over our plane, about 15 yards over us. The FW-190 Hollenbaugh got about clipped our right wing off when he was shot. The plane I shot was low going from 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock. There were 4 jet propelled planes around. Bombers shot down 53 enemy aircraft and the fighter escort got 155, the largest air battle ever since the war started. We were under fighter attack for 8 minutes and in flak 45 minutes. The fighters came in at 6:00 o'clock, lowered flaps, throttled down and started shooting. They were Hermann Goering's famed Yellow-Nosed boys. Had 7.6 mm machine gun holes all over tail and direct 20 mm burst in horizontal stabilizer.

#26 November 5, 1944

Target Frankfurt, Germany. PFF marshalling yards. Flight time 6:37 hours, on oxygen 4:00. Bomb load: 6 - 1,000 S.A.P. Was very jittery on this one. Flew spare and naturally we had to go down in the low squadron which was a good thing. The high got hell shot out of them. Mickey operator was killed in High Squadron. Flak was moderate to intense and accurate in spots. They were shooting visual. We hit target. 26,000 feet. 35 below zero. Had several holes in plane "Naturally!" I had to drop bombs today, toggler went nuts.

#27 November 6, 1944

Target, oil refinery at Harburg, 6 miles south of Hamburg. Flight time 7:33 hours, on oxygen 5:00 hours. Bomb load: 6 - 1,000 GP. Altitude: 25,000 feet, temp 39 below zero. A very rough one, Major Taylor's crew had a direct burst right above ball turret. The Mickey operator killed. Lots of flak-intense and accurate. Correction, Mickey operator will come through, but waist gunner and radio were killed. I hope we hit the target. I'm getting scared to death. They are rough now. We had several holes, the old "Witch" is getting quite "Patchy".

#28 November 9, 1944

Target, German fort near Metz, France. Flight time 7:15 hours, on oxygen 5:00 hours. Bomb load 8 - 1,000 S.A.P. Altitude: 25,000 feet, temp 39 below zero. My gosh an easy mission! I hope we helped General Patton and his boys today. No flak! No fighters! But awfully cold. Heater not working in "Witch". Didn't hit target, but did some good, I think. Others did hit it. Fort had 9 foot thick concrete top.

29 November 26, 1944

Target: RR Viaduct east of Patderborn, Germany. Flight time 6:13 hours, on oxygen 4:30 hours, Altitude 21,500 feet, temp 40 below zero. Bomb Load 6 - 1,000 GP. "This will be a Milk Run", famous last words! This did look like a easy, no flak at all! but 150 to 200 FW-190's and ME109's hit us just east of the Dortmund canal. The 91st lost 4 ships. One from the 323rd. It was Stevens, they think that some of them may have got out. That tail gunner of mine, Robinson, blew up two FW-190's and damaged three. Boone, our new engineer, blew up two of them. I didn't get a shot. I thought we had it when four FW's came in on a pursuit, curve at 10:00 o'clock. We didn't have a scratch on the "Witch". Plenty were hit with 20 mm. We had on oxygen when we got to low altitude. Correction, did get 20 mm holes.

#30 November 27, 1944

Target: Marshalling yards at Offenbug, Germany. Flight time 7:15 hours, on oxygen 4:30 hours. Altitude 25,000 feet, temp 44 below zero. Bomb load 10 - 500 GP, 2 - M-17's. Not a bad one - very

little flak, one group was hit by bandits. This one was visual and we really did a good job. This helped the ground troops.

#31 November 30, 1944

Target: Synthetic oil plant at Zeitz, Germany near Merseburg! Flight time 7:32 hours, on oxygen 4:00 hours. Altitude 24,000 feet, temp. 35 below zero, bomb load 20 - 250 GP. We had delayed actions. Flak was moderate and accurate -ROUGH! Long and tiresome. Visual bombing . Hope we don't got back. Came back on 3 engines. Lost 1 ship out of group. ps. Flak accounted for 56 bombers today.

#32 December 4, 1944

Target: Bombed Kassel - PFF, marshalling yards. flight time: 5:00 hours, on oxygen 5:00 hours, Altitude: 26,500, temp 40 below zero. Bomb load: 10 - 500 lb. RDX, GP. 2 M17's. 500 lb. Came home alone on 3 engines again. Did some good navigation. Got a little flak. 12 E/A chased them off. wind, 102 knots, Rough! Indicated 240 mph on 3 engines diving away from E/A.

#33 December 5, 1944

Target: AA gun factory at Berlin!! Big "B". Flight time 7:26 hours, on oxygen 5:00 hours, Altitude 24,500 feet, temp 47 below zero, bomb load: 10 - 500 lb. RDX, 2 M17's - 500 lb. Ouch! Finally had to go to Big "B". It's as rough as they say. Our group lost 3 ships. A navigator of the 322nd bailed out over Berlin when he got scared. Had a piece of flak go through the nose behind me. We led element #4 today. Jack really flies those big birds. Really a swell pilot. Two to go - hope they're not like today, too nerve-wracking. Piece of flak knocked out my "G" Box.

#34 December 11, 1944

Target: PFF Marshalling yards at Frankfurt, Germany. Flight time 8:10 hours, on oxygen 6:15 hours, Altitude 25,000 feet, temp 35 below zero. Bomb load 10 - 500 lb. GP's. Not a bad one, long and tiresome. Flew with Eblen and Cunningham on their last mission today.

AMEN!

#35 December 12, 1944

Target: Merseburg - Naturally! Flight time 8:28 hours, on oxygen 6:00 hours, Altitude: 25,400 feet, temp 40 below zero, Bomb Load 10 - 500 lb. GP. Was easy for Merseburg, due to O'Neil's flying, we're allergic to flak. Flew part of way back. THAT'S ALL BROTHER. 35 to Festung Europa. Robinson - 2 FW190's.

January 21, 1945

Landed in New York, Discharged from army June 19, 1945. Combat time: 262.20 hours.

- - - - -

THE ABOVE STORY IS THE PROPERTY OF THE AUTHOR AND MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE AUTHOR'S CONSENT

www.91stbombgroup.com