

Steyr, Austria

2 April 1944

by

Doyle G. Black

I am in reference to page 68 paragraph b) of the 455th BG History - 1st 100 Missions, Mission 18, 4/2/1944. I am referring to information that was included in Missing Aircraft Report #3464.

KNOWN INFORMATION: Source's plane was operating from Cerignola, Italy on the mission on 2 April 1944 to bomb Steyr, Austria. Approximately fifteen or twenty before reaching the target plane was attacked by a heavy force of fighters. On the first pass the plane was hit in the left wing gas tank by a 20 mm shell and had to feather No. 2 engine. On the second pass fighters shot out the No. 3 engine. The pilot had to drop out of formation. Controls of the plane had been damaged, the electrical system and the hydraulic system had been shot out. The pilot finally gave orders to the crew to bail out. Eight of the crew members immediately bailed out and landed in the vicinity of Laitija, Yugoslavia. At the end of four days the following members of the crew who originally bailed out were brought together.

Lt W.J. Pardoe - Evaded Capture

Lt. W.V. Costello Jr. - Evaded Capture

T/Sgt. W.B. Roberts - Evaded Capture

T/Sgt. J.E. Warren - Evaded Capture

S/Sgt. E.C. Kimberly - Evaded Capture

None of the other crew members joined this group during the time they were escaping.

HEARSAY INFORMATION: The pilot Lt. W.J. Pardoe and the co-pilot Lt. W.V. Costello told the source that they stayed with the plane for an estimated twenty miles after the order was given to bail out and at that time they were the only crew members left on the plane. The radio operator, T/Sgt. W.B. Roberts, told source that he was hiding near a spot where waist gunner S/Sgt. R.V. Black landed and saw him taken prisoner at that time. No other information was gained regarding other crew members.

This is what I know about the other crew members according to MACR #3464:

S/Sgt.R.F. Matthews - captured, interred at Dulag Luft

2nd Lt. L.N. Gottlieb - captured, interred at Dulag Luft

2nd Lt. T.R. Patterson - captured, interred at Dulag Luft

S/Sgt. R.P. Lenhard - captured, interred at Dulag Luft

S/Sgt. R.V. Black - captured, interred at Dulag Luft (my Uncle)

My Uncle Vannoy (as he was known) was a German POW from 4/2/1944 and was liberated 05/3/1945. He wrote a fascinating "diary" of when the German's were forced to move the POWs from the prison camp with liberation imminent titled "Camp-out in the woods and Liberation." I can make a PDF of the document if you are so interested.

My quest is to recreate 41-29407 "Shoo Shoo Baby", in a 1/48th scale Monogram model with the correct color scheme, serial number, and squadron markings. I am very close based on the research I have done, but am missing any nose art or the "position in squadron" number for the plane. Interestingly enough the squadron picture shown on page 239 has the crew under "Double Trouble" possibly 41-29282. Vannoy's son Gary has told me of a story where crews were instructed to get under any plane to have their picture taken. My reference for the serial number and plane name are listed in "B-24 Nose Art Name Directory" written by Wallace R. Forman.