

# 303rd BG (H) Combat Mission No. 85

1 December 1943

Target: City area of Solingen, Germany (PFF Bombing)

Crews Dispatched: 20 plus one spare

Crews Lost: 2Lt. G.W. Luke, Jr., 1 KIA, 7 POW, 2 EVD;  
1 crewman with very bad frostbite

Length of Mission: 6 hours, 25 minutes

Bombing Load: 8x500 lb G.P. & 20 M47A1 65 lb Incendiaries

Bombing Altitude: 26,700 ft

Ammo Fired: 1,445 rounds

**T**wenty aircraft plus one spare were dispatched. Each B-17 was loaded with eight 500-lb. bombs plus 20 M47A1 65-lb. incendiary bombs. Four aircraft aborted the mission:

#42-5854 *Alley Oop* 360BS (**Bergeron**) - The Fortress had low oil pressure.

#42-5788 *A.O.G. Not in Stock* 360BS (**McClellan**) - The pilot's mike button was out and oxygen leaked 30 miles from base.

#42-39785 *Thru Hel'en Hiwater* 358BS (**Clark**) - The B-17G developed low oil pressure and the navigator's oxygen leaked out.

#42-5264 *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (spare aircraft) 358BS (**Troppman**) - The airplane developed low oil pressure and had an oxygen leak.

The intense cold gave combat crews more trouble than enemy flak and fighters when temperatures at the 26,700 feet bombing altitude dropped below -40E. P-47s, P-38s and Spitfires supplied flawless fighter protection all the way in to the target and out to the enemy coast. Not one enemy fighter slipped through the fighter cover and attacked the formation. P-47s destroyed twenty German fighters with four probables and seven damaged. Spotty anti-aircraft fire reached its greatest intensity over the Ruhr Valley on the way home. It caused little damage to the 303rd BG(H) B-17s. Bombs were dropped through solid cloud cover on the PFF aircraft.

A new B-17G on its fourth mission was missing. This was the first 303rd BG(H) loss of a B-17G. #42-39781 (*No Name*) 360BS, piloted by 2Lt. George W. **Luke**, Jr., was last seen northwest of Aachen, Germany. It dropped out of the Group formation in a gradual turn to the right as if flying itself back into Germany. It crashed at Radingham, 10 km west of Lille, France.

2Lt. Gordon A. **Ballagh** recalled that flak hit his B-17 next to one of the inboard engines. They left the Group formation and were losing altitude when they were again hit by flak. This burst severed their control cables and the pilot ordered the crew to bail out near Lille, France. He landed in soft ground while being observed by a French lady and her children. She shouted "Good Luck" in broken English. He was captured and made a POW. 2Lt. **Ballagh** also recalled that the aircraft's name was *Career Girl*, although there is no record of this name being used on a 303rd BG(H) B-17.

The pilot, 2Lt. **Luke**, became the first 8th Air Force POW to enter Stalag Luft I. The co-pilot, 2Lt. Frank **Mitchell**, evaded capture and served with the underground until France's liberation. Sgt. Ira J. **Walter** evaded capture for a week, was captured and made a POW at Stalag 17B. Sgt. Robert H. **Washburn** was killed by the Germans during an escape attempt. He was initially buried in the Lille, France cemetery under the name "Washburn RAF" and later interred at the Ardennes American Cemetery near Liege, Belgium.

Another new B-17G Fortress with no name, #42-31243 427BS, piloted by Lt. Alan **Eckhart**, ditched in the English Channel at Pegwell Bay when the aircraft ran out of gas. The crew was picked up by Air-Sea Rescue and taken to Manston.

Maj. **Snyder** summed up the mission by stating, "I've been on a lot tougher ones, although there was a lot of flak in a few places, especially over the Ruhr. We had very good fighter protection and I didn't see even one enemy plane." 2Lt. Linton **Munroe**, navigator on the B-17G *Aloha* 360BS, said he wasn't bothered at all. "Everywhere I looked there seemed to be hundreds of fighters—all P47s, P-38s or Spitfires. I didn't see even one German plane today." "It was cold as hell today. We had good fighter cover and not too much flak, but the cold made the trip pretty rough," said S/Sgt. William H. **Simpkins**, engineer of *Connecticut Yankee*, 358BS. "I don't know where the Luftwaffe was today," said Sgt. Harry **Ross**, tail gunner of *Baltimore Bounce*, 359BS. "But I'm glad they didn't show up. I was plenty busy trying to keep warm."

Two of the returning aircraft landed at Manston and one at Ridgewell. S/Sgt. W.L. **Tharp**, of Lt. **Osborn's** crew in #42-37757 360BS, had severe frostbite on his legs and was hospitalized.



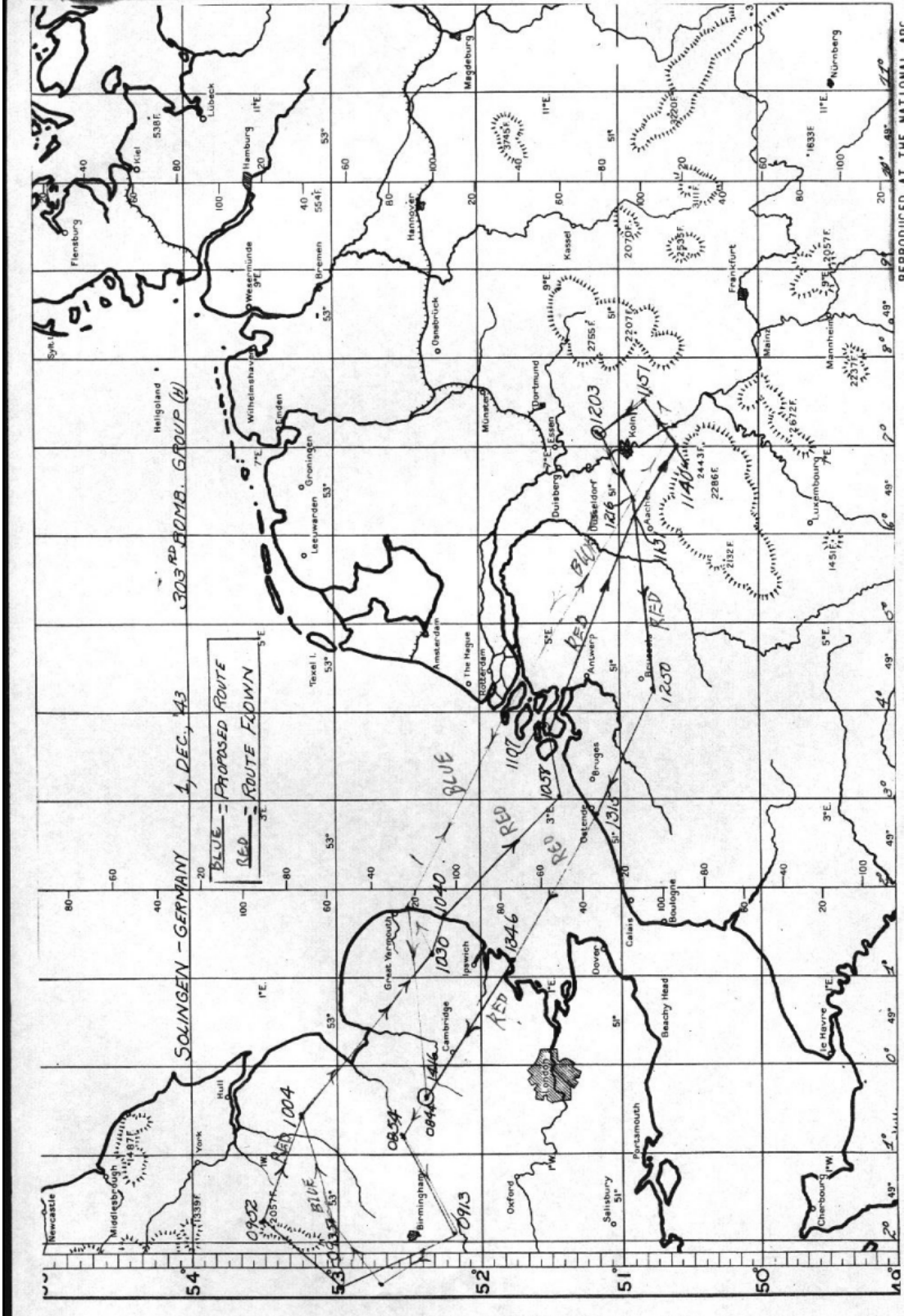
**Vicious Virgin #42-5341 (427BS) GN-Q**  
303rd BG Lead - Pilot 1Lt R.J. Hullar / CoPilot Maj E.E. Snyder

1Lt R.J. Hullar (P), Maj E.E. Snyder (CP),  
1Lt P.W. Scroggins (N), Capt B.K. Butt (B), Lt W. Klint (TG-O)  
T/Sgt G.E. Hoyt (R), T/Sgt D.W. Rice (E), S/Sgt N.A. Sampson (BT),  
T/Sgt C. Fullem (WG), S/Sgt M.D. Miller (WG)  
(crewmen are not in order)

12-1-43  
SOLINGEN -  
GERMANY

T-732

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, SECTION 3.3, 745005  
BY USW NARA, DATE 5/18/88



Route Map

# Aircraft Formation at Assembly Point

<u>Snyder-Hullar</u> 341				
<u>Sheets</u> 786		<u>Emerson</u> 893		
<u>Woddrop</u> 875				
<u>Humphreys</u> 060		<u>Eckhart</u> 243		
<u>Bergeron</u> 854		<u>Reeder</u> 605		
<u>Clark</u> 785	<u>Osborn</u> 757		<u>Eich</u> 448	<u>Shoup</u> 894
<u>Heller</u> 973		<u>Quinn</u> 561		
<u>Lawlor</u> 055	<u>Luke</u> 781		<u>Daub</u> 257	<u>Hungerford</u> 629
<u>McClellan</u> 788		<u>Goolsby</u> 177		
<u>Troppman</u> 264				

Four (4) aircraft aborted this mission:

Lt. Bergeron in 854	Lt. Clark in 785
Lt. McClellan in 788	Lt. Troppman in 264

### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CREW POSITIONS</b> CMP - Command Pilot P - Pilot CP - Co-Pilot NAV - Navigator ANV - Ass't. Navigator MNV - Mickey Navigator ENG - Engineer BOM - Bombardier RO - Radio Operator	TOG - Toggler BT - Ball Turret Operator TT - Top Turret Operator TG - Tail Gunner NG - Nose Gunner RG - Radio Gunner WG - Waist Gunner LWG - Left Waist Gunner RWG - Right Waist Gunner GUN - Gunner	VI - Voice Interpreter OBS - Observer PAS - Passenger PHO - Photographer  <b>RESULTS OF MISSION</b> KIA - Killed in action WIA - Wounded in action MIA - Missing in action POW - Prisoner of war	DOW - Died of wounds EVD - Evaded the enemy INT - Interned in neu cntry REP - Repatriated RES - Rescued ESC - Escaped BO - Bailed out DCH - Ditched CR-L - Crashed on land CR-S - Crashed at sea
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## 358th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17F #42-29629 Connecticut Yankee**

P Hungerford, Merle R., Capt  
CP Henderson, John F., 2Lt  
NAV Wiggins, Warren S., 2Lt  
BOM Monkres, Woodrow W., 2Lt  
ENG Simpkins, William H., S/Sgt  
LWG Burkart, Ralph F., S/Sgt  
RO Vosler, Forrest L., S/Sgt  
BT Ruppel, Edward, Sgt  
RWG Moody, Stanley N., Sgt  
TG Buske, George W., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-37893 Bam Bam**

P Emerson, Aubrey L., 2Lt  
CP DaShiell, William C., 2Lt  
NAV Sutherland, Thomas A., 2Lt  
BOM DeLaura, Don J., 2Lt  
ENG Stevenson, Robert L., S/Sgt  
BT Robinson, Authur H., Sgt  
RO Radebaugh, Bernard J., S/Sgt  
RWG Owen, Robert J., Sgt  
TG Morrison, George J., Sgt  
LWG McKinney, Clifford M., Sgt

### **B-17F #42-5264 Yankee Doodle Dandy**

P Troppman, Walter W., 2Lt  
CP Elder, Damon C., 2Lt  
NAV Minkowitz, Samuel, 2Lt  
BOM Armstrong, Charles C., 2Lt  
ENG Wilson, David L., S/Sgt  
LWG Stender, Francis H., S/Sgt  
RO Gilmore, Daniel F., S/Sgt  
BT Mirenda, Frank J., Sgt  
TG Swank, Verden D., Sgt  
RWG Garcia, Mario D., Sgt  
(Abortive)

### **B-17G #42-39785 Thru Hel'en Hiwater**

P Clark, Martin L., 2Lt  
CP Watson, Jack W., 2Lt  
NAV Leverton, John G., 2Lt  
BOM Colvin, Vance R., 2Lt  
ENG Rowland, Samuel L., S/Sgt  
LWG Stewart, Eugene R., Sgt  
RO Romaniec, Harry, S/Sgt  
RWG Fussner, William H., Sgt  
TG Kosinski, Roman P., Sgt  
BT Booth, Fred H., Sgt  
(Abortive)

## 359th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17F #41-24561 *The Duchess***

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P	Quinn, Thomas J., 2Lt
CP	Hybert, Arthur J., 2Lt
NAV	Howlett, Oscar D., 2Lt
BOM	Van Zandt, Roland, 2Lt
ENG	Holper, Ralph M., T/Sgt
RWG	Kalafut, Joe J., S/Sgt
RO	Vieira, Joseph, T/Sgt
BT	McCauley, Patrick N., S/Sgt
LWG	Reynolds, James B., S/Sgt
TG	Pelkey, Elwood R., S/Sgt
PHO	Mahaffey, William D., Sgt

### **B-17F #42-5257 *Miss Bea Haven***

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P	Daub, Leroy E., 2Lt
CP	Donalson, Douglas C., 2Lt
NAV	Palmer, Gerald M., 2Lt
BOM	Marlatt, Ray G., 2Lt
ENG	Barrett, John J., S/Sgt
RO	Kelly, Victor S., S/Sgt
RWG	Haman, Ray T., Sgt
LWG	Carter, Edward K., Sgt
BT	Gilmore, Charles E., Sgt
TG	Considine, Louis W., S/Sgt
PHO	Hunter, Richard G., Sgt

### **B-17F #41-24605 *Knockout Dropper***

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P	Reeder, D.M., 1Lt
CP	Cole, Richard H., Maj
NAV	Salk, Harvey M., 2Lt
BOM	Vermillion, Earl E., 2Lt
ENG	Herod, Henry W., T/Sgt
LWG	Hayes, John J., S/Sgt
RO	Mowery, Ellis D., T/Sgt
RWG	Hull, Kenneth W., S/Sgt
BT	Wright, Samuel S., S/Sgt
TG	Swan, Henry, S/Sgt

### **B-17F #42-29894 *Baltimore Bounce***

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P	Shoup, Noel E., 2Lt
CP	Callahan, Edward F., 2Lt
NAV	Clark, Byron F., 2Lt
BOM	Kelly, James H., Jr., 2Lt
ENG	Bragg, Ben W., S/Sgt
RWG	Gribble, Robert F., Sgt
RO	Harrison, Donald B., Sgt
LWG	Mayhugh, W.D., Sgt
BT	Hostetter, William L., Jr., Sgt
TG	Ross, Harry C., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-31177 *Lonesome Polecat***

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P	Goolsby, Billy M., 2Lt
CP	Savage, John N., 2Lt
NAV	Towberman, P.E., 2Lt
BOM	Bowen, Richard R., 2Lt
ENG	Rothrock, Harry J., Sgt
TT	Newman, John F., S/Sgt
RO	Greenhalgh, Chester W., S/Sgt
BT	Montgomery, R.E., S/Sgt
TG	Strobel, William A., Sgt
RWG	Manchester, Robert E., S/Sgt

### **B-17F #42-3448 *(No Name)***

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P	Eich, Henry J., Jr. 2Lt
CP	Woodside, William E., 2Lt
NAV	Carroll, James E., 2Lt
BOM	Stein, William G., 2Lt
ENG	Lenson, H., Sgt
BT	Celoni, J.P., Sgt
RO	Harvey, D.S., S/Sgt
RWG	Erdmann, D.C., Sgt
LWG	Maggia, Edmond A., S/Sgt
TG	Gilstrap, R.M., Sgt

## 360th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17F #42-2973 Iza Vailable**

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P	Heller, William C., Lt
CP	Coppom, John F., Lt
NAV	Zwayer, James P., Lt
BOM	DeSousa, John, Jr., Lt
ENG	Huston, William J., T/Sgt
RWG	Payne, George S., S/Sgt
RO	Spoerri, Felix, T/Sgt
LWG	Lanier, Leo, Jr., S/Sgt
BT	Ayres, Arthur B., S/Sgt
TG	Laurinitis, Anthony, S/Sgt

### **B-17F #42-5854 Alley Oop**

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P	Bergeron, Willard H., Lt
CP	DeWall, Hershel R., Lt
NAV	Noland, James B., Lt
BOM	DeFeis, Robert N., Lt
ENG	Carnathan, Hugh S., T/Sgt
RWG	Frost, Carlyle A., S/Sgt
RO	Cline, Leroy, T/Sgt
BT	Hemmings, Norman A., S/Sgt
LWG	Wilson, George W., S/Sgt
TG	Appleton, Vernon R., S/Sgt

(Abortive)

### **B-17G #42-37757 (No Name)**

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P	Osborn, William C., Lt
CP	Jernigan, Jack, Jr., Lt
NAV	Ross, Lawrence D., Lt
BOM	Campbell, Nelson, Lt
ENG	Wolff, William E., S/Sgt
LWG	Wolfe, Earl D., Sgt
RO	Daniel, George L., S/Sgt
RWG	Tharp, Willard L., S/Sgt
BT	Fitzgerald, Lyle W., Sgt
TG	Evans, Lawrence B., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-39781 (No Name) CR-L**

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P	Luke, George W., Jr., Lt	POW
CP	Mitchell, Frank, Lt	EVD
NAV	Ballagh, Gordon A., Lt	POW
BOM	Dahnke, Leonard L., Lt	POW
ENG	Boren, Millard A., S/Sgt	POW
RWG	Yeakel, Elwood D., Sgt	POW
RO	Day, Ben T., S/Sgt	POW
LWG	Wright, Sherman G., Sgt	POW
BT	Washburn, Robert H., Sgt	POW/KIA
TG	Walter, Ira J., Sgt	EVD/POW

### **B-17G #42-31055 Aloha**

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P	Lawlor, John C., Jr., Lt
CP	Hicks, David F., Lt
NAV	Munroe, Linton S., Jr., Lt
BOM	Stamper, William B., M/Sgt
ENG	Tower, Jack W., S/Sgt
RWG	Baker, Nelson, Sgt
RO	Esposito, Frank B., S/Sgt
LWG	Krenek, Joe W., Sgt
BT	Kuntashian, Warren V., Sgt
TG	Butler, Raymond K., Sgt

## 427th Bombardment Squadron Crew Lists

### **B-17G #42-31060 *Poque Ma Hone***

P	Humphreys, Fred C., Lt
CP	Clemons, James H., Lt
NAV	Culpin, John J., Jr., Lt
BOM	Orvis, George T., Jr., Lt
ENG	Janisch, Ferdinand J., T/Sgt
LWG	Beach, Russell F., S/Sgt
RO	Woods, Arthur H., T/Sgt
BT	Ross, Madison H., S/Sgt
RWG	Dare, Melvin M., S/Sgt
TG	Sparks, William C., Sgt

### **B-17G #42-37875 *Empress of D Street***

P	Woddrop, Edward M., Lt
CP	Culbertson, A.T., LtCol
NAV	Brown, Elmer L., Lt
BOM	Matthews, E.P., Lt
ENG	Watts, William A., S/Sgt
BT	Plante, Royal F., S/Sgt
RO	Mulholland, John J., T/Sgt
TG	Baggs, Charles C., S/Sgt
RWG	Valis, William, S/Sgt
LWG	Hadley, Owen W., Sgt

### **B-17F #42-5341 *Vicious Virgin***

P	Hullar, Robert J., Lt
CP	Snyder, Edgar E., Jr., Maj
NAV	Scroggins, Paul W., Lt
BOM	Butt, Byron K., Capt
ENG	Rice, Dale W., S/Sgt
TG	Klint, Wilbur, Lt
RO	Hoyt, George F., S/Sgt
BT	Sampson, Norman A., S/Sgt
LWG	Miller, Merlin D., S/Sgt
RWG	Fullem, Charles, S/Sgt

### **B-17G #42-31243 (No Name) DCH**

P	Eckhart, Alan, Lt	RES
CP	Jenkins, Elton L., Lt	RES
NAV	Arvanites, George L., Lt	RES
BOM	Meagher, Robert W., Lt	RES
TT	Neuner, Francis X., Sgt	RES
BT	Tambe, Angelo J., S/Sgt	RES
RO	Kuehl, Fred T., S/Sgt	RES
TG	Smith, Nyle F., S/Sgt	RES
LWG	Madak, Edward P., S/Sgt	RES
RWG	Musashe, Michael, Sgt	RES

### **B-17G #42-39786 *G.I. Sheets***

P	Sheets, Robert W., Lt
CP	Jackman, Lon E., Jr., Lt
NAV	Linnehan, Arthur, Lt
BOM	Wallen, George A., Lt
ENG	Souder, Lee F., Jr., S/Sgt
BT	King, Earl J., Sgt
RO	DuBray, Ernest D., S/Sgt
TG	Sullens, Tom C., Sgt
LWG	Donnelly, James F., Sgt
RWG	Smith, Leonard C., Sgt

### **B-17F #42-5788 *A.O.G. Not in Stock***

P	McClellan, George S., Jr., Lt
CP	Greenwood, Ernest G., Lt
NAV	Kaliher, John C., Lt
BOM	Cornish, Merlin L., Lt
ENG	Tempesta, David, T/Sgt
RWG	Chiles, Alfred B., Jr., S/Sgt
RO	Callihan, George A., T/Sgt
BT	Yarian, Robert G., S/Sgt
TG	Dugan, Charles E., S/Sgt
LWG	Heaton, Barnell S., Sgt
RO	O'Connor, William S., Sgt

(Abortive)