

# In Sacrifice, I Found Solace

- By T/Sgt Jewel Kenneth Haynes  
493<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group  
8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force



This is the factual account of a young man's journey into war and the unimaginable experience that would ultimately result in the death of eight of my bomber's crew while saving an entire English village from devastation. Only the pilot and I lived to tell this story of "Ditching in the Deben". So it begins...

At just twenty-one years of age, I enlisted in the Army in November, 1942, for better pay. Completing a series of classes at military camps across the country, I was trained in auto-mechanics, flying, gunnery and B-17s. I was then sent to Ardmore Army Air Field in Oklahoma, and assigned to a crew led by our pilot, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Fred Stindt. Now a T/Sgt Flight Engineer and Top Turret Gunner on a B-17 "Flying Fortress", it seemed I had successfully moved a few rungs up the military ladder. Then as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force, we received our orders on Oct 7<sup>th</sup> to fly to Europe in support of the major air offensive against Nazi Germany. We reached our permanent base at RAF Debach Field near Ipswich, England, on October 25<sup>th</sup>. In less than three weeks, we would be fully engaged in the largest aerial assault known to mankind.

From November 11, 1944, until February 14, 1945, our crew flew seventeen missions across Germany targeting everything from rail yards, oil refineries, bridges and airplane factories. In most cases we got out and back with minimal damage and minor injuries while wreaking havoc on the enemy's resources. However, there were three missions where we were severely disabled by intense "flak" and forced to crash land our plane in Belgium. Each time we were extremely fortunate to walk away with no deaths and the crew fully intact. We continued flying our missions through the winter fighting hard for the victory which grew nearer each month. For each mission accomplished, I recorded details of our experience in my personal journal and collected the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper clippings highlighting our division's achievements.

Then came February 20th, 1945...a day I'll never forget. That morning we were all set to take off for Nuremberg, targeting the railway yards and locomotive repair shops. Our replacement plane, B-17G serial number 43-38568 nicknamed "Little Davey II" (aka "568"), had just been refitted with four new engines which had minimal break-in time. We were fully loaded with 2,700 gallons of gas and 6,000 lbs of bombs. All things checked out well on the ground – but then came the takeoff. Just as we got into the air, our number three engine caught fire. We had just reached 250 to 300 feet of altitude so we didn't dare bail out. We also couldn't drop the bombs because we were flying over the small English town of Alderton. We were afraid to crash on the ground because the flames were increasing rapidly and we knew it would only be seconds before we blew, likely killing ourselves and destroying the entire village. The only other option we had was to put her down in the Deben River – so with little hesitation, we took it.

When we landed "568" in the 18-foot deep river, it angrily pitched forward crushing the nose cone and causing water to come gushing in. I was immediately knocked on my back then got up groggily realizing the radio room hatch had jammed shut. The next thing I knew, I was under water with only one way out and that was blocked by our pilot, 1st Lt. Fred Stindt, as he struggled to remove his chair chute. After what seemed like minutes, he was able to clear the chute and get out through his cockpit window. I followed but I'll never know how. The co-pilot got out as well but drowned as he was washed down river in the strong currents. The other seven died at the river bottom unable to escape from the submerged plane.

Lt. Stindt and I were also pulled quickly downstream but Fred was able to swim ashore. I was rescued by an English fisherman, Arthur Hunt, who snatched my semi-conscious body as I floated half-submerged down the river. We were then taken to a local pub where Lt. Stindt and the fisherman gave me first aid. As I sat stunned and confused near an open fire for heat, I unknowingly leaned over too close badly singeing the hair on my head. We stayed in the pub that day while waiting for someone to come collect us and take us back to Debach Field.

After a brief hospital stay on base, Lt. Stindt and I were sent to Southport, England, to a rest home for recovery. We stayed there seven days and were treated well, but being so mixed up I couldn't really enjoy it that much. Meanwhile, an engineering team raised the plane from the Deben River which enabled them to recover the bodies of all our crew who had died serving their country. After leaving the home, Lt. Stindt and I went to the men's funeral on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945. We solemnly buried them side-by-side at the American Military Cemetery in Cambridge, England. I couldn't help thinking how close I came to going with them. I'll never forget them.

It is almost incomprehensible to imagine having to make a decision between trying to save your own life or the lives of people you don't even know. But that was the dilemma we truly faced with so little time to react. I believe if we had the chance to take a vote, the crew's decision would have still been the same as the one made by Lt. Stindt on that fateful day. The outcome was considered heroic by many yet left us deeply saddened for our fallen soldiers.

The town of Alderton, England, was extremely grateful and fully understood the extent of the sacrifice that had been given to save their town and all who lived there. There were newspaper articles published and notes of appreciation given to help provide comfort for Lt. Stindt and I during this time of grief. Nearly fifty years later on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1994, the village of Alderton would erect a plaque at the Ramsholt Arms Pub along the Deben River to honor all of us who had guided our Flying Fortress away from their town avoiding greater devastation and loss of life.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Lt. Stindt and I flew again for the first time since the crash. Our old flight surgeon just had to see how our reactions were as if it would help anything to ground us. The second time up following the accident I was certain it hadn't affected my ability to perform and I planned to continue flying as long as they'd let me. But that was not God's plan for my life. As a last minute addition to another B-17 crew, I flew my 18<sup>th</sup> and final mission before the 8<sup>th</sup> AAF bombing operations were halted on April 26<sup>th</sup>. VE-Day would occur on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> I received my orders to return to the States. Left Ipswich, England at eight o'clock am – arrived in Stone just long enough to be processed then headed to a sea port in southern Scotland. Arrived there at 7 am, May 14<sup>th</sup>, where we went aboard the French ship Ile De France. There were eight thousand of us - Americans, Canadians, Jamaicans and crew. We set sail at one o'clock am on May 15<sup>th</sup> and arrived in New York May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4 o'clock am. They met us in the harbor with a band, ship and beautiful women. What a welcome home! We left the boat at one o'clock pm and arrived at Camp Kilmer in New Jersey at 4pm. Had a big steak dinner and got a pass to go to New York City. The next day we left Camp Kilmer for Jefferson Barracks, MO and arrived 6 o'clock pm, May 24<sup>th</sup>. On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945, I received a 30-day furlough from Jefferson Barracks and had to report to Santa Ana, CA on June 30<sup>th</sup> where I would soon meet the beautiful and irresistible, Dottie Hauhe. Dottie would become the love of my life and my wife of nearly seventy years until she passed in 2016. This would be the greatest loss of all.

Because of Lt. Stindt's poor health, neither he nor I attended the commemorative plaque ceremony in Alderton in 1994. And it would be just a few months later that Fred, having carried the burden of lives lost for so many years, would die quietly surrounded by his family. I was fortunate, by the Grace of God, to have survived this tragic event and eventually found solace in all that had occurred during those harrowing times. It is with humility I now share this story.

## Grantwood Flier Landed Fortress In River to Save English Village

An Eighth Air Force bomber, Sgt. Jewel K. Haynes, who snatched the engine of his B-17 Flying Fortress and plunged it into the river, was involved in saving over 100 English villagers in Alberton, River.

Lieutenant Frederick S. Stindt, 27, of Grantwood, N. J., was the pilot of the bomber. The group of the Third Air Division, which never will be forgotten by the villagers of Alberton, who rescued the bomber and the pilot, Lieut. Stindt, 27, of Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore.

After swimming ashore, the rapidly subsiding Fortress, which landed about 100 feet from the river, was rescued by a fisherman, Arthur Hunt, of Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore. The pilot, Lieut. Stindt, 27, of Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore.

Sergeant Haynes was rescued by an English fisherman, who snatched the engine of his B-17 Flying Fortress and plunged it into the river.

Lieutenant Stindt now is flying once again as a pilot of a Flying Fortress with the 422d Bombardment Group of the Third Air Division. He never will be forgotten by the villagers of Alberton, who rescued the bomber and the pilot, Lieut. Stindt, 27, of Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore.

The pilot, Lieut. Stindt, 27, of Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore. The pilot, Lieut. Stindt, 27, of Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore.

## SAVE KANSAS CITY 1

Suffolk Fisherman Rescue  
Haynes After Crash.

ALBERTON, ENGLAND, Feb. 23. (AP)—

A Suffolk County fisherman busily repairing nets for his day's catch dropped everything the other day and rescued an unconscious American airman from the Deben river.

The flier, Sergt. Jewel K. Haynes, 23 years old, 2508 Myrtle avenue, Kansas City, Mo., was taken by the fisherman to a pub for first aid treatment.

Haynes was a gunner on a crippled Flying Fortress which fell into the river after having been steered away from this town to avoid civilian casualties. The bomber nosed over and submerged quickly in eighteen feet of water, trapping all crewmen except Haynes and the pilot, Lieut. Fred E. Stindt, 27, Grantwood, N. J., who swam ashore.

Sergeant Haynes is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Haynes, of the Myrtle avenue address. He enlisted more than two years ago in Richmond, Calif. Two brothers in service are Pvt. Max Haynes, medical corps, Camp Barkeley, Tex., and Pvt. Fred J. R. Haynes, infantry, who recently embarked on an overseas assignment. The parents have been living in Kansas City a year.

## First Aid in Pub Saved Hurt Flier

Special to the World-Telegram

GRANTWOOD, N. J., Feb. 23.—There is nothing like a good old-fashioned English pub for first aid treatment.

Lt. Fred E. Stindt, 27, this place, pilot of a Flying Fortress that crashed in the Deben River near Alberton, England, and Sgt. Jewel K. Haynes, 23, Kansas City, Mo., learned this recently, the Associated Press reported in a dispatch today. They were the only survivors.

Lt. Stindt swam ashore after the bomber crashed and Sgt. Haynes, knocked unconscious, was rescued by a fisherman and taken to the pub for first aid treatment. He recovered.



Haynes.

A miner prior to his induction in November, 1942, Sgt. Jewel K. Haynes well might describe his military occupational transition to engineer-gunner as "getting up in the world."

Sgt. Haynes, a native of Kansas City, Mo., served his overseas tour in England where he earned the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Purple Heart. He is 24 years old.

## He fishes flyer out of river

A SUFFOLK fisherman, Arthur Hunt, of Shottisham, preparing his nets for the day's catch on the banks of the Deben River, near Alberton, saw an Eighth Air Force airman floating helplessly downstream, held up by a life jacket.

He dropped his nets and rushed to his boat. He just managed to reach the airman, whose head was under water, in time to pull him out before he drowned.

Given first aid in a pub on the river bank the airman, Technical Sergeant Jewel K. Haynes, 23, of Kansas City, revived.

Haynes, an engineer-gunner of a bomber, had been flying in a Fortress which developed mechanical trouble, its wing section and one engine bursting into flame with a full load of bombs aboard.

The pilot, Lieutenant Frederick S. Stindt, 27,

of Grantwood, New Jersey, headed away from Alberton to avoid civilian casualties in case of a crash and flew at low altitude over the Deben River in an attempt to make a landing further down stream. But when the Fortress touched down it was in the river and it at once sank in 18 ft. of water, trapping all the crew except Sergeant Haynes and the pilot, who swam ashore.



Our crew of the 493<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group

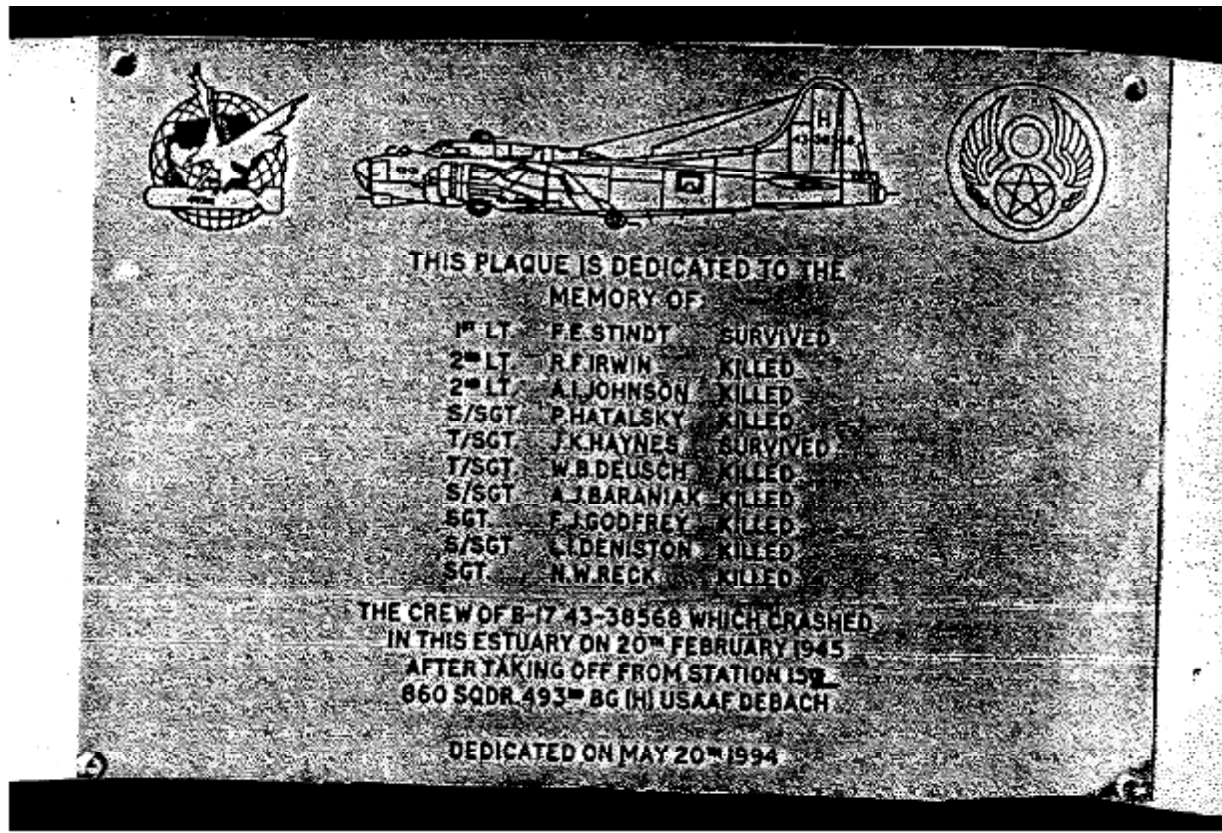


1943

1. Stindt - Pilot
2. Roth - Co-Pilot
3. Lacey - Navigator - Nose Gunner
4. Johnson - Bombardier - Chin Turret
5. Mansour - Engineer - Waist Gunner
6. Deusch - Radio Opr. - Radio Gunner
7. Hatalsky - Armor - Waist Gunner
8. Baraniak - Ass. Radio Opr. - Ball Turret
9. Ken - Ass. Engineer - Top Turret
10. Deniston - Ass. Armor - Tail Gunner

Deniston is Leonard Deniston Haynes name sake

Commemorative Plaque at Ramsholt Arms Pub in Alberton, England

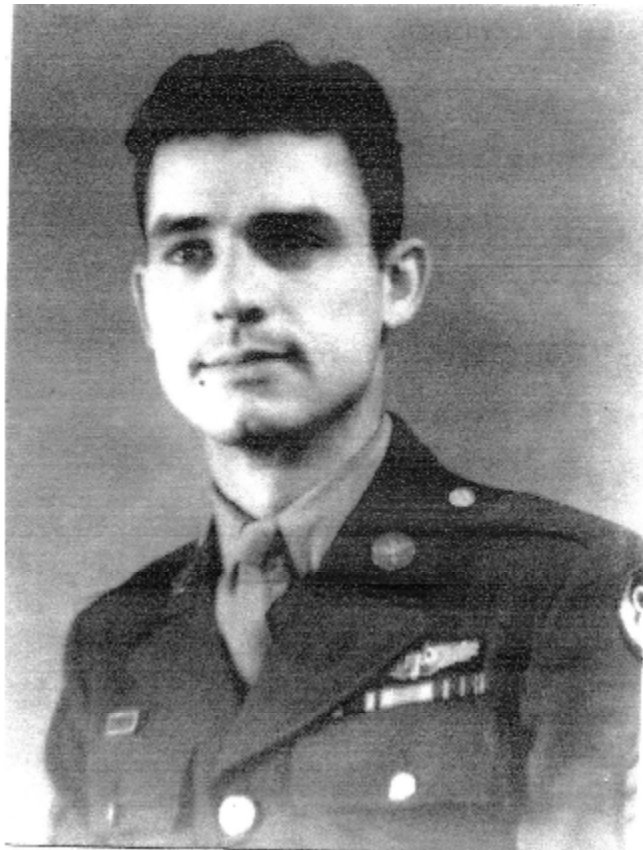


T/Sgt Jewel Kenneth Haynes

Medals Awarded:

Purple Heart  
Oak Leaf Cluster to P.H.

Air Medal  
Oak Leaf Cluster to A.M.



Entries from JK Haynes' Army Journal:

Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>, 1944

Left Lincoln, Nebraska ten o'clock A.M. - Landed in Manchester N.H same day - four o'clock p.m.

Oct. 16<sup>th</sup>, 1944

Left Manchester, N.H. eight o'clock A.M. - Landed at Labrador - Goose Bay - two o'clock p.m.

Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>, 1944

Left Labrador four o'clock A.M. - Landed in Meeks Field, Iceland - ten o'clock A.M.

Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1944

Left Iceland one o'clock A.M. - In Valley, Wales Seven o'clock A.M.

Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944

Took a slow train to Stone, England - Arrived eight o'clock p.m. Starved to death. Stood in line two hours for a roast beef san. Drank coffee from a milk can - which I had cut the top from.

Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1944

Left Stone for Ipswich, England - our permanent base - arrived ten o'clock p.m. How long now? The boys all say it's pretty rough - Guess we'll soon know - for sure.

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1944

FIRST MISSION

Target: Coblenz, Germany

Dropped 6000 lbs bombs on Railroad yard. The shells (flak) were bursting all around us - four holes in right wing. Saw three different ships fall out of formation with engines shot out. So this is war! I wasn't scared - but what was this strange different feeling?? Something I'll never forget - that I'm sure of. Been in the service two years today - first Mission.

Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944

2<sup>nd</sup> MISSION

Target: Luxendorff

Was to bomb oil refineries. Heavy flak all the way after crossing enemy lines. Half the formation was hit so badly - had to turn back. The weather closed in until it was most impossible to bomb the target. The ones left were recalled. We had flak holes in waist - nose & stabilizer but came back in good condition.

Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1944

3<sup>rd</sup> MISSION

Target: Bielefeld

Bombed a railroad viaduct. Flak was moderate and no fighter interruption. Lucky us - oxygen out in ball turret & mike out in the top and nose - We would have been duck soup if we had been attacked. Saw one plane go down in flames - not a pleasant sight.

Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1944

#### FOURTH MISSION

Target: Hamm

Heavy flak but very inaccurate. Only four bombers lost – not bad out of one thousand-what?

Wish they were all so easy. Maybe I shouldn't think it so easy at that. My oxygen hose was shot into – only that I fell against my push to talk button – I'm here to write this. They tell me I'll never come closer to death. I wonder?

Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, 1944

#### FIFTH MISSION

Target: Mersburg

Oil refineries - Heavy flak and accurate! 56 bombers and 30 fighters failed to return. Our number three engine was shot out. Couldn't stay in formation so had to drop down & come back alone – I'll be happy when Mersburg is gone.

Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, 1944

#### 6th MISSION

Target: Giessen

Rail yards again – saw several rockets & moderate flak. Our number three & four engines were hit – electrical system shot out. Three quit completely and four running away. Then it really happened – number one blew a cylinder head – we lost altitude fast. Came over the lines at five hundred feet – made a crash landing 30 miles east of Brussels Belgium – all went well stayed four days and what a time! Came home in a C-47 transport.

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1944

#### 7th MISSION

Target: Frankfurt

Airdromes. Was the longest most tiresome mission yet – ten hours fifteen minutes. Saw fighters but didn't get a shot – too far away. Maybe it's Christmas but who the hell knows it over here?

Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>, 1944

#### 8th MISSION

Target: Kassel

Marshalling yards. Fighters were out again – flak was moderate. Lost eight bombers & three fighters. Pretty easy mission I'd say. Guess maybe they are all easy so long as you can come back and talk about it though.

Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944

#### 9th MISSION

Target: Misburg

Oil refineries. Roughest yet. Heavy flak & accurate - Our lead ship was hit & blew up right in our face – tore the nose from our ship wounded the bombardier & navigator – minor wounds thank heaven. Don't know how our ship held together the way it was shot up. Maybe the old man upstairs was riding with us. No celebrating tonight first New Year's Eve since I can remember to stay home & go to bed. 38 bombers and 26 fighters were lost today.



Jan 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945

10th MISSION

Target: Cologne

Rail bridges. Flak was mild but accurate. Our ship was hit in nose and left wing – navigator's flak suit saved him. All in all - it wasn't a bad mission except for the cold 56° degree below. Tail gunner froze right ear. Lt. Buttler's ship caught fire and cracked upon takeoff. Pilot, co-pilot, engineer, navigator and tail gunner were killed.

Jan 13<sup>th</sup>, 1945

FIRST ACCIDENT

Full bomb load – full gas load & icy runway. Just as I called seventy miles per hour, our right tire blew. We skidded off the runway – ran full length of the field – hit the taxi strip at the far end which knocked the landing gear from under us. We skidded on our belly and came to a halt. All were plenty scared.

Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945

11th MISSION

Target: Derben

Oil storage depot. They had us in their gun sights today. Our number 2 engine was shot away. Our number 4 engine, number 3 prop, nose and bomb bay doors were hit. Enemy fighters were there but out of range. Darn it, I would have liked to get in a few shots. Guess maybe it'll come soon enough though.

Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945

12th MISSION

Target: Bitterfeld

Airplane factory. Really target on the nose. Could still see the smoke fifty miles away. All went well until coming back over the lines. Our number three & four engines were knocked out. Made a crash landing near Florennes, Belgium. All went well – no one hurt. We slept in a tent that night and darn near froze to death. Spent the next two nights in Florennes waiting for a plane to go back to home base.

Jan 19<sup>th</sup>, 1945

A BIT OF HELL

Left Florennes, Belgium for home base. Got out over the channel and ran into a snow storm – was lost for three hours – the roughest ride I ever had. Ship was icing up and gas supply was too low. We all said a little prayer that day – maybe that's why we came through. Lt. Shaw's crew turned back - ran out of gas and had to bail out. Tail gunner broke right leg – Navigator landed in the water and was lost.

Jan 21<sup>st</sup>, 1945

13<sup>th</sup> MISSION

Target: Mannheim

Rail bridges. Flak was moderate – saw one ship go down in flames. Capt. Bethane's crew had to crash land in Belgium. We came through okay and untouched. Waist gunner froze his face - 56° below again today.

Jan 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945

14<sup>th</sup> MISSION

Target: Hohenbudberg

Rail yards. Briefed for 600 guns and believe me, they were there and in action. Flak everywhere – one burst came through my top turret. One piece came through the top of my helmet and clipped a lock from my hair. One piece hit my gun sight and shattered in my face – minor cuts in and around my eyes. Spent four days in hospital for treatment. We also had holes in right wing and windshield. Shaw's crew finished today – really good buddies.

Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945

15<sup>th</sup> MISSION

Target: Berlin

Wasn't so bad as we feared though flak was heavy. 19 bombers and five fighters failed to return. We were untouched by flak – bombed from 26,000 feet – six 1,000 pounders. Flew over the Russian lines after leaving the target. Bombs went away at 11:59 o'clock – kind messed up their lunch hour.

Feb 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945

16<sup>th</sup> MISSION

Target: Chemnitz

Marshalling yards. Moderate, accurate flak. Right wing and number 3 engine hit – holes in three and four gas tanks. Just made it back to the lines when we ran out of gas. Made a crash landing near Charleroi, Belgium. Don't know what we'd do if we didn't have Belgium for emergency landings. Spent four days in Charleroi and had one swell time. Nothing so bad but what there's a little good in it...so they say.

Feb 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945

17<sup>th</sup> MISSION

Target: Chemnitz.

Marshalling yards again. Moderate flak. We got two holes in stabilizer. Saw no fighters – had good escorts - P51s and P47s all over the sky. Our little friends – we call them and does it ever feel good to have them along.

Feb 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945

18<sup>th</sup> MISSION

Target: Nuremberg

A day I'll never forget. We had 2,700 gallons of gas and 6,000 lbs of bombs. All checked well on the ground – then came the takeoff. Just as we got into the air – our number three engine caught fire. We didn't have more than 250 to 300 ft altitude so didn't dare bail out. Couldn't drop the bombs because we were flying over the small English town of Alberton. Was afraid to crash on the ground because the flames were increasing rapidly and we knew it would only be seconds before we blew. Only chance we had was the Deben River – so we took it. Next I knew – I was under water with only one way out and that was blocked by the pilot – him hung up by his chute. After what seemed like minutes – he was able to clear the chute and get through his window. I followed but I'll never know how. The other eight died at the river bottom. The swellest bunch of buddies that ever flew the blue – I'll never forget them.

Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1945

Lt. Stindt (pilot) and I were sent to Southport, England to a rest home. We stayed seven days and was treated like kings. Had I not been so mixed up I could really have enjoyed it.

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Went to the funeral. Buried the boys side by side in the American military cemetery in Cambridge, England. I couldn't help thinking how close I came to going with them.

March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Flew again for the first time since the accident – the old flight surgeon just had to see our reactions as if it would help anything to ground us!

March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Second time up since the accident. I'm sure it hasn't affected me any and I'll continue to fly so long as they'll let me.

May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Orders to return to the States. Left Ipswich eight o'clock am – arrived in Stone 5 o'clock pm. Here just long enough to process then the boat.

May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Left Stone, England for a sea port in southern Scotland. Arrived seven am May fourteenth where we went aboard the French ship XXX De France. Eight thousand of us - Americans, Canadians, Jamaicans and crew.

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Set sail one o'clock am – arrived in NY May 22<sup>nd</sup> 4 o'clock am. They met us in the harbor with a band, ship and beautiful women. What a welcome home! Left the boat one o'clock pm arrived at Camp Kilmer NJ at four. Had a big steak dinner – got a pass and went to NY City.

May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1945

Left Camp Kilmer for Jefferson Barracks, MO - arrived 6 o'clock pm May 24<sup>th</sup>.

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945

Received 30 day furlough from Jefferson Barracks. To report to Santa Ana, CA June 30<sup>th</sup>.

End of Journal Entries