

**FLIGHT LOG FOR RICHARD N. KUDUKIS T/SGT WITH 8TH
AIRFORCE EUROPEAN THEATRE BASED IN ENGLAND 2ND AIR
DIVISION, 448TH BOMB GROUP, 712TH SQUADRON, AIRCRAFT B-
24, POSITION RADIO OPERATOR.**

Mission 1: Dec. 4th, 1944

Target: Kloblenz, Germany (marshalling yards)

B-24 Aircraft #517

Flak-moderate but accurate

Fighters encountered-none

Bomb load-500 pounders (4), incendiaries (4)

Flying time: 7 hrs. 35 mins

Temperature: -35 degrees

Remarks: My oxygen mask froze up, I passed out and as I was falling towards the open bomb-bay, Willie Polk from Louisiana who was our flight engineer, grabbed my parachute harness and pulled me back. Wow! I almost bought it on our first mission.

Mission 2: Dec. 11th, 1944

Target: Hanaah, Germany (marshalling yards)

B-24 Aircraft #224

Flak-light

Fighters encountered-none

Bomb load-1000 pounders (5)

Flying time: 7 hrs. 40 mins.

Temperature: -35 degrees

Remarks: Made two runs over target. Had to feather engine # 1.

Mission 3: Dec. 24th, 1944

Target: Euskirchen, Germany

Flak-heavy and accurate

Fighters encountered-ME 262'S (Messerschmidts) about 50 of them sighted but they did not attack us.

Bomb load-250 pounders (24)

Bomb hits: excellent

Flying time: 5 hrs. 45 mins.

Temperature: -35 degrees

Remarks: Hit by flak in waist section, nose turret, # 1 engine and top of wings. A plane to our rear went down in flames.

Mission 4: Jan. 2, 1945

Target: Koblenz-(railroad bridge 8 miles north of Koblenz.)

Flak-light

Fighters-none

Load-1000 pounders (6)

Bomb hits: unobserved (cloud cover)

Flying time: 6 hrs. 10 mins.

Temperature: -40 degrees

Remarks: Briefed for heavy fighter opposition, traveled into Germany for 2 hrs 10 mins trying to attract fighter opposition for our fighter escort but nothing.

Mission 5: Jan. 6, 1945

Target: Koblenz, Germany

Flak-light

Fighters-none

Load-250 pounders (18), incendiaries (2)

Bomb hits-unobserved (cloud cover)

Flying time: 6 hrs.

Temperature: - 38 degrees

Remarks: In enemy territory for 1 hr. 30 mins. With good fighter support but no opposition.

Mission 6: Jan. 14, 1945

Target: Hallendorf, Germany (Hermann Goering steel works, 10 miles west of Brunswick.)

Flak-Heavy as hell

Fighters-none

Load-500 pounders (12)

Bomb hits-good

Flying time: 6 hrs. (on oxygen for 3 hrs.)

Temperature: -32 degrees

Remarks: In enemy territory for 3 hrs. passed around all the large cities including Berlin and also flew over Denmark.

Mission 7: Feb. 11, 1945

Target: Dulmen (Oil Depot southwest of Munster)

Flak-moderate but inaccurate

Fighters-none

Load-1000 pounders (6)

Bomb hits-unobserved

Flying Time: 5 hrs 20 mins, oxygen 3 ½ hrs.

Temperature: -42 degrees

Remarks: Pretty quiet trip.

Mission 8: Feb 14, 1945

Target: Magdaburg, Germany (marshalling yards)

Flak-heavy

Fighters-none

Load-1000 pounders

Bomb hits-excellent

Flying time: 7 hrs. 40 mins. (oxygen 3/12/ hrs.)

Temperature: -45 degrees

Remarks: This was a combined visual and radar run because of cloud cover. However it was clearing over target.

Mission 9: Feb. 21, 1945

Target: Nurnberg (heart of city)

Flak-moderate

Fighters-none

Load-500 pounders and incineraries

Bomb hits-unobserved

Flying time: 8 hrs. 15 mins. (oxygen 5 hrs.)

Temperature: -40 degrees

Remarks: We have been promoted to lead ship. Tail turret caught a nice piece of flak. Red ~~Norman~~ ^{Norman}, tail gunner, wasn't too happy but glad it didn't hit him. ^{Norman}

Mission 10: Feb. 22, 1945

Target: Kreinsen, Germany (marshalling yards)

Flak-light

Fighters-none

Load-500 pounders

Bomb hits-excellent

Flying time: 6 hrs, 50 mins. (oxygen 2 ½ hrs)

Temperature: -20 degrees

Remarks: This was a visual run, we bombed at 8500 feet which was some sort of record. We blasted the hell out of the target. Also for fun at this altitude we dropped a blue practice bomb with "to Hitler with love" painted on the sides.

Mission 11: Feb. 23, 1945

Target: Osnabruck, Germany (marshalling yards)

Flak-moderate

Fighters-none

Load-500 pounders

Bomb hits-Unobserved

Flying time: 7 hrs. 50 mins (oxygen 5 hrs)

Temperature: -37

Remarks: This was a cooks tour of Germany because we were trying to attract enemy fighters for our fighter coverage but to no avail. As a result we were running low on fuel and sweat out reaching friendly territory.

Mission 12: Feb. 27, 1945

Target: Halle, Germany (marshalling yards)

Flak-heavy

Fighters-none

Load-250 pounders

Bomb hits: Unobserved

Flying time: 8 hrs. 35 mins. (oxygen 4 ½ hrs)

Temperature: -27 degrees

Remarks: our radar and bomb site was not working so we had to bomb on another group's drop. Flak was heavy and it was a good thing the enemy gunners were not accurate.

Mission 13: Mar. 3, 1945

Target: Magdaburg, Germany (Oil Refinery)

Flak-heavy

Fighters-ME 262's

Load-500 pounders

Bomb hits: Excellent

Flying time: 7 hrs. 5 mins. (3 ½ hrs oxygen)

Temperature: -45 degrees

Remarks: Lost Smarinsky's plane in a collision of two planes after the attack by the ME 262's. We knew these crew members well and shed tears for them.

Mission 14: Mar. 9, 1945

Target: Rheine, Germany (marshalling yards)

Flak-medium

Fighters-none

Load-1000 pounders

Bomb hits-good

Flying time: 5 hrs. (oxygen 2 ½ hrs)

Temperature: -40 degrees

Remarks: Flak was very accurate and we had an explosion right under the plane but with no apparent damage.

Mission 15: Mar. 12, 1945

Target: Swinemunde, Germany (submarine docks and repair sheds)

Flak-light

Fighters-none
Load-1000 pounders
Bomb hits-unobserved
Flying time: 8 hrs (oxygen 3 ½ hrs)
Temperature: -22 degrees

Remarks: The target was in Northern Germany so we flew for 6 hours over water. This was a long tiring mission. Too much damned water. Made me nervous.

Mission 16: Mar. 17, 1945

Target: Hanover, Germany (tank factory)
Flak-medium
Fighters-none
Load-500 pounders
Bomb hits-unobserved
Flying time: 6 hrs. 30 mins. (oxygen 4 hrs)
Temperature: -39 degrees

Remarks: Lost our #3 engine at IP (start of bomb run) and we had to sweat out engine #4 as well all the way home.

Mission 17: Mar. 19, 1945

Target: Baumenheim, Germany (ME 262 parts factory)
Flak-none
Fighters-none
Load-500 pounders
Bomb hits-good
Flying time: 8 hrs. 5 mins. (3 ½ hrs oxygen)
Temperature: -30 degrees

Remarks: We were air wing lead with a base Colonel.

Mission 18: Mar. 24, 1945

Target: Wesel, Germany (supplying Montgomery's troupes)
Flak-none but received small arms fire.
Fighters-none
Load-all sorts of supplies
Bomb hits- hit our drop point
Flying time: 6 hrs
Temperature: warm

Remarks: We were flying low, 500 feet and less, in support of the crossing of the Rhine River. We were the third echelon. The first consisted of paratroopers, the 2nd were the gliders carrying troops and us as the third echelon with their supplies. As we approached our drop point, we saw all of the tanks moving up to position, then the

gliders. Some had landed before the Rhine, some in the Rhine, others on the other side. A good number of them had cracked up. Then as we moved closer to our drop point we saw where the paratroopers had landed. Many of them were hanging from the trees where the enemy had shot them as they came down. We reached our drop point which were railroad tracks. We were hit with all sorts of ground fire because we were flying in so low in formation, mind you. They shot out our nose wheel, hydraulic system, which controlled many of our systems, including brakes. The pilot's and co-pilot's control cables were severed so that the plane, which was now in a steep turn to the right (away from enemy territory) with no one really at the controls because there were none-they had been severed. Because of our pilot, Captain William Voight's excellent knowledge and use of the automatic pilot, he was able to regain control of the plane, bring it back up to altitude and head back home. On the way, I discovered gas leaks in the bomb-bay which we attributed to a hole in our right wing. Since we had no hydraulics we headed towards Manston, England which was a Canadian Air Force Base which had an 8000 ft. runway for emergency landings such as ours. Upon approach the tower told us that we could not land because of our gas leak (we would be a ball of fire as soon as the wheels touched down) and were instructed to head the plane towards the English Channel and bail out. We did and everyone landed safely however some were banged up mainly yours truly. Incidentally they sent up a fighter to shoot down our plane over the channel.

Mission 19: Apr. 7, 1945

Target: Duneberg, Germany (ammunitions factory)

Flak-light

Fighters-lots of them

Load-1000 pounders

Bomb hits-good

Flying Time: 6 hrs.

Temperature: -20 degrees

Remarks: This was the first time we encountered the German Jet Fighter planes. Such chaos. Our fighter cover, which consisted of P-51's, didn't have a chance because of the speed of the jets. Our formation didn't receive any hits but the formation ahead of us, on a straight in run by the German Jet lost three aircraft on one pass by the German Jet. This was a rough mission.

Mission 20: Apr. 18, 1945

Target: Passau, Austria (harbor installations and railroad yards)

Flak-none

Fighters-none

Load-500 pounders

Bomb hits-good

Flying time: 8 hrs. 20 mins (oxygen 3 hrs)

Temperature: -18 degrees

Remarks: We sweat out fighter attack, which did not occur but otherwise this was a milk run.

Mission 21: Apr. 21, 1945

Target: Salzburg, Germany (marshalling yards)

Flak-none

Fighters-none

Load-250 pounders

Bomb hits-see remarks

Flying time: 7 hrs. 40 mins. (oxygen 4 hrs)

Temperature: -22 degrees

Remarks: 10 miles from our IP, I got a recall message due to bad weather over enemy lines. We tried another target on the way back but to no avail. We had to fight to get credit for this mission remembering that with 25 missions we would head home to the good ole USA. Thankfully this was our last mission because the war was over. Some weeks later our group flew our planes home to the US. We landed at Bradley Field, Connecticut, were relieved of our equipment and sent on home leave. I was later assigned to a B-29 Base in Great Bend, Kansas for the purpose of being trained on the B-29 for later reassignment to the Pacific Theatre of War. However President Truman approved the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Japan and then Nagasaki and the war with Japan was over. Next stop for T/SGT Kudukis was the Airbase at Souix Falls, SD and reassignment as civilian R. N. Kudukis.