

EYEWITNESS

On a mission to Merseberg (No 146) on Nov 8th, 1944, two planes of the 457th mysteriously collided while in formation. One of the planes was s/n 42-38064 named "Arf & Arf" piloted by Lt Arnet L Furr. The other plane involved in the collision was s/n 44-8418 named "Bad Time Inc II". The pilot of Bad Times Inc II was James Elduff. The copilot of "Bad Times Inc II" was Lt James Jenkins, Jr.

The official account says that "Arf & Arf" was cut in two by "Bad Time Inc II". The two portions of "Arf & Arf" spiraled into the sea with no survivors. "Bad Time Inc", while badly damaged, was able to return to base and flew again only to crash land in Belgium while on a mission to Euskirchen several months later

In the June 1991 issue of the Association Newsletter is a letter written to the Association by George Crockett regarding this incident. It is published here in it's entirety.

"Reading Lt. Jenkins (Copilot on "Bad Time Inc.") article in a previous issue of the Newsletter brought back many vivid, but sad memories. I remember sitting across from Warren Rankin and Leroy Wetzel at breakfast on the morning of Nov 8th, 1944. It was to be the last time we would eat together or see one another. Our mission was to be the Luena synthetic oil plant at Merseberg. Fourteen of our planes were assigned to it. We had already crossed the channel when we were recalled due to bad weather.

As we were returning over the coast, we were met with a "flak" barrage and flew through it without any apparent damage. We were flying above and to the left of Lt. Elduff. I was the right waist gunner on Joe Coleman's crew "Rattle Snake Daddy". Lt. Furr's, "Arf & Arf" was to the right and below Lt. Elduff's "Bad Time Inc.". As I looked down on Furr's plane, I waved to their left waist gunner, and he waved back. As I watched, they started edging closer and were climbing closer to our level. At the time I thought they were just tightening the formation but they suddenly climbed up and under Lt. Elduff and hit him. The next thing I saw was "Arf & Arf" in two parts plummeting towards the water.

Contrary to the account in Col. Byers "Flak Dodger", one chute did open. We were instructed to 'hold position'. Joe (our pilot) said "To hell with you, I'm going down" and we went. We were going to try and drop a raft. We made two passes about 30 feet off the water and managed to drop a raft near him, thanks to Tom Crowley (our bombardier) who was calling the shots. The man in the water was Glen Wisdom. He made it to the raft and waved. We thought he had been saved but could not get any information on him. As we left the area, there was a swarm of fighters circling over him and the "flak" started up again trying to reach them.

It was hard to return to our hut and find their bunks empty and their personal effects gone. A lot of us cried to ourselves that night. We were given a 48 hour leave and found ourselves drowning our sorrows in London. When we got back, there was a new crew in their bunks and business went on as usual. There were two other survivors from that crew. Ed Rambler had left the crew a month before and Sgt. Ramoe went to the hospital with severe abdominal pains the night before. He was replaced by Sgt. Brunsvold, flight engineer. Joe must have caught "hell" for doing what he did but I thought he deserved a medal."