

Ernest Malcolm Wendt

Lieutenant Colonel, Air Force Reserve, Retired

Born – June 21, 1917

Graduated Rhinelander High School – June 1936

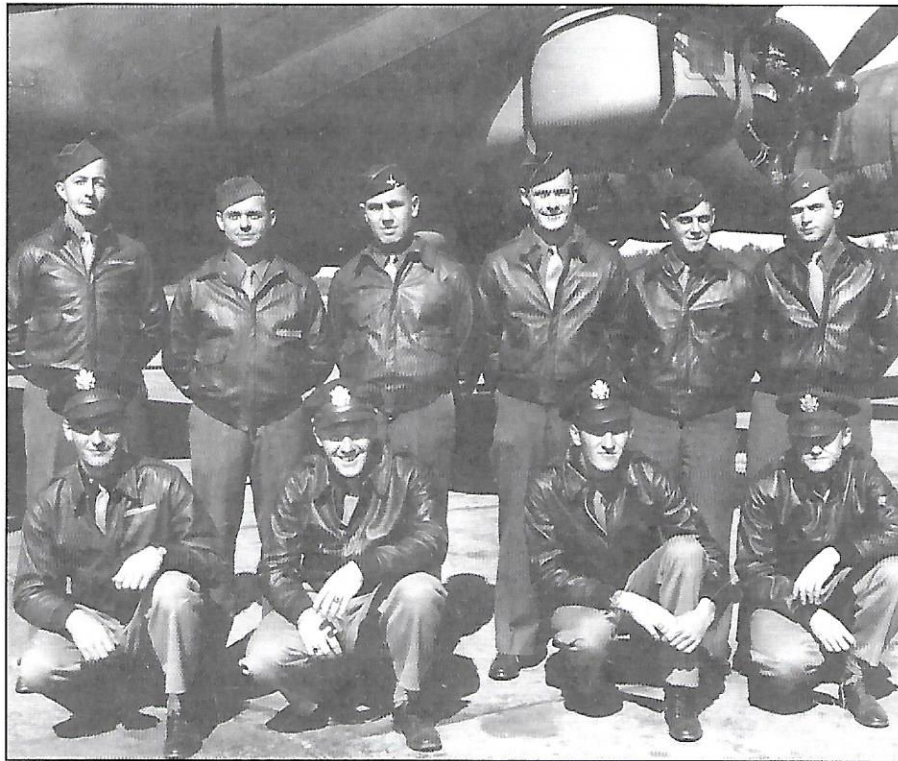
Enlisted in the AAF – October 15, 1941

Commissioned – May 28, 1943

Honorable Discharge – June 27, 1946

Died – February 6, 2003

Fortress Pilot



Lieut. Ernest M. Wendt (extreme left, front row), Flying Fortress pilot, will soon complete an intensive course in combat flying at the Alexandria Army Air Base, Alexandria, La., and in the near future will go overseas to a combat area.

Lieut. Wendt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest A. Wendt, McNaughton, was graduated from Rhinelander High School in 1936. Pictured with him are (front row, left to right): Lieut. Wendt; Flight Officer Elmer Suess, Silverton, Ohio; Lieut. Robert R. Fulton, Sabetha, Kans.; Lieut. Carlos Powers, Nevada, Mo.; Second row, left to right: Sgt. John Lockhart, Hartford, Conn.; Sgt. Harold L. Cornette, Portsmouth, Ohio; Sgt. Norman Tuohey, Bethesda, Md.; Sgt. Robert Snyder, East Palestine, Ohio; and Sgt. Howard Storm, Middle Village, N.Y.

Eighth Air Force Bomb Group Tail Markings

3rd Bomb Division Markings – 331st Bomb Squadron



94TH BOMB GROUP	SQUADRON CODES
4 CBW	331 BS – QE
Bury St. Edmunds, UK	332 BS – XM
13 May 1943	333 BS – TS
B-17	410 BS – GL

*“If you
were in
the Eighth,
you were
in the
Big
Leagues.”*

– E. Malcolm Wendt

331st Squadron Twenty-five Missions in 1944



E. M. (Malcolm) Wendt
Pilot, 331st Squadron

DATE	CITY
February 8	Frankfurt
February 13	Pas-de-Calais
February 24	Rostock
February 25	Regensburg
February 28	Pas-de-Calais
February 29	Brunswick
March 6	Berlin
March 8	Berlin
March 9	Berlin
March 15	Brunswick
March 16	Augsburg
March 20	Frankfurt
March 22	Berlin

DATE	CITY
March 27	Cazaux
April 9	Warnemünde
April 11	Arnimswalde/Politz
April 19	Werl
April 22	Hamm
April 24	Friedrichshafen
April 26	Brunswick
April 27	Behen
May 7	Berlin
May 12	Brux-Zwickau
May 25	Brussels
May 29	Leipzig

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THE RHINELANDER (WIS.) DAILY NEWS

JULY 5, 1944

Malcolm Wendt Awarded DFC

AN EIGHTH AAF BOMBER STATION, England (Special, Delayed) — One of the pioneer airmen who blasted open the path to the invasion of Europe, First Lieutenant E. Malcolm Wendt, 26-year-old pilot of the Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress "My Girl," has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for "extraordinary achievement."

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest A. Wendt of McNaughton Wis., the flyer also holds the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters.

A graduate in 1936 of Rhinelander

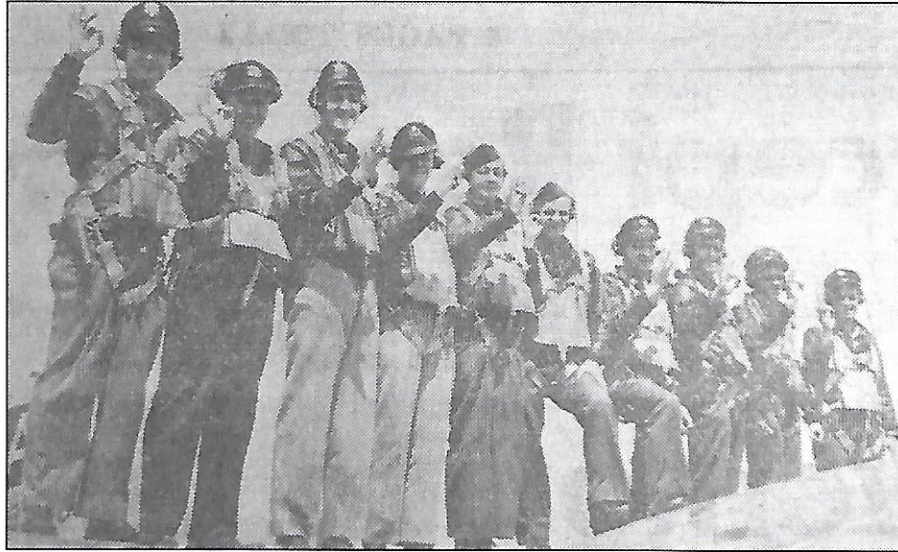
High School, Lieut. Wendt was formerly a summer resort operator. He enlisted in the AAF on Oct. 15, 1941 and received his pilot's training at Blytheville, Arkansas. He was commissioned on May 28, 1943.

Lt. Wendt experienced his hardest-fought combat mission during the Eighth Air Force's pre-invasion offensive against industrial targets in Brux, Czechoslovakia.

"We were attacked by German fighters long before we reached our target," he said. "The Germans sent up one force to engage our fighter escort

and another to attack the bombers. I could see Forts exploding and German fighters going down every time they made a pass at us. Some of their passes were made with as high as a hundred ships and the exploding 20 mm shells looked like Christmas tinsel that was being shaken in a bright light. In spite of all their opposition we did a good job on the target — a synthetic oil plant. On our way out we were attacked again by a large force. It was the longest running battle I've ever been in and the worst for concentration of attack and number against us."

Group Completes 30 Missions



AN EIGHTH AAF BOMBER STATION, England — Standing on the wing of their bomber, the Eighth AAF B-17 Flying Fortress, "My Girl," after returning from an aerial assault on Nazi invasion defenses in France, are the 10 fliers of the first combat crew at this

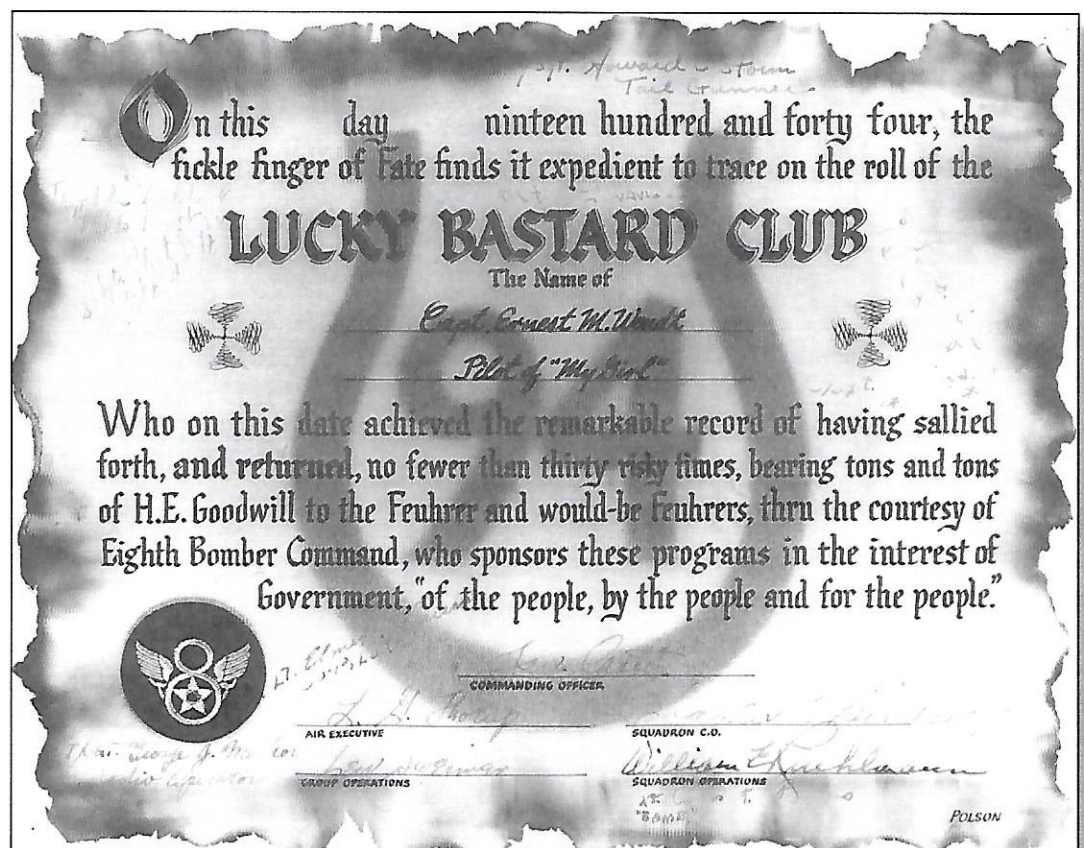
base to finish 30 missions simultaneously. For "extraordinary achievement" in aerial combat, every member of this heavy bomber team has received the Distinguished Flying Cross in addition to the Air Medal and four Oak Leaf Clusters to that medal.

From left to right: **First Lieut. Malcolm Wendt, 26, pilot, McNaughton, Wis.;** Second Lieut. Elmer A. Suess, 24, co-pilot, Silverton, Ohio; First Lieut. Robert Fulton, 22, navigator, Sabetha, Kans.; First Lieut. Charles T. Powers, 24, bombardier, Kansas City, Mo.; T/Sgt. John H. Lockhart, 33, aerial engineer and top turret gunner, Hartford, Conn.; T/Sgt. George J. Merter, 26, radio operator-gunner, Brooklyn, N. Y.; S/Sgt. Howard C. Storm, 28, tail gunner, Middle Village, Long Island, N. Y.; S/Sgt. Robert Snyder, 30, right waist gunner, Newark, Ohio; S/Sgt. Ervin L. Ivie, 30, left waist gunner, Duchesne, Utah; and S/Sgt. Charles E. Rice, 21, ball turret gunner, Cape May Court House, N. J.

A graduate of Rhinelander High School, Lieut. Wendt is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest A. Wendt, McNaughton.

The 30th mission occurred on D-Day: June 6, 1944

Target:
Pointe du Hoc,
France —
the highest
point between
Utah Beach to
the west and
Omaha Beach
to the east.



Promoted

Winner of the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Malcolm Wendt has been promoted from First Lieutenant to Captain. He is now home on leave visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest A. Wendt, McNaughton. Capt. Wendt piloted the Eighth Air Force Flying Fortress "My Girl" in bombing raids which prepared the way for the invasion of Europe. A 1936 graduate of Rhinelander High School, Capt. Wendt is 26 years old.



Tarawa Veteran Roy Fredrich Calls Saipan 'Toughest'

By Sgt. Herb Schultz, Albany, N. Y., a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent.

SAIPAN — (Special, Delayed) — Now serving in his third major Pacific campaign, Marine Staff Sergeant Roy C. Fredrich, of McNaughton, Wis., figures the battle of Saipan "toughest yet."

He has landed with an outfit of assault engineers on D-plus day and has had some of the narrowest escapes of his two years overseas duty during the past three weeks. He is a veteran of Guadalcanal and Tarawa.

Staff Sergeant Fredrich, known as "Freddy" to his buddies, had his

closest call on the first night on Saipan's beach when the Japs laid down a heavy artillery barrage in his area. One large chunk of shell fragment entered his foxhole and dug deep into the sand between his legs.

Two nights later, while standing security watch in a sector infested with Jap snipers, Fredrich shot a pig. "I saw a figure moving toward a foxhole occupied by a Marine," he said. "I challenged it twice. When it failed to halt, I fired my carbine.

"I thought I had gotten a Jap. It was a pig!"

On another occasion, Fredrich

participated in a patrol which scouted 200 yards beyond the Marine lines into Jap territory.

Recalling his close shaves in previous campaigns, Fredrich told of a Jap bombing attack on Guadalcanal. "It was one of our early nights on the island," he said, "and one plane dropped a string of eggs in our area. Bombs hit on either side of my foxhole."

"Tarawa was a rough campaign," said Fredrich. "As tough as Saipan, but it was only three days."

Sergeant Fredrich owns a McNaughton tavern and with his brother, owns a dairy farm at McNaughton."

With 30 Combat Missions Wendt Volunteers for More

EDITOR'S NOTE — The following story has been reviewed by the Army Air Forces Material Command, Chicago, and passed without objection to publication.

It was Malcolm Wendt's first mission. Flying weather was bad. A storm raged over the North Sea as Lieut. (now Captain) Wendt piloted the Fortress towards Germany. Visibility was poor when another Fortress suddenly loomed out of the gloom. There was a dull crash as the Fort's wing sheered into the tail section of Wendt's plane.

Telephone contact with the tail gunner was gone. The plane wobbled, righted itself and droned on its way. The crew peered over the side, saw a parachute blossom in the wake of the Fort.

"The tail gunner, he's saved," someone shouted. They looked again. A half of a body dangled from the shrouds of the 'chute.

Capt. Wendt, a tall, sandy-haired, 26-year-old, doesn't talk much about his experiences. In his 30 missions over enemy-occupied Europe (six of them over Berlin), he saw plenty but tells of his experiences reluctantly.

His worst trip was over Brux, Czechoslovakia, he admits upon questioning.

What happened?

"Well, about 140 or 150 fighters attacked us. There were Messerschmitt 110's and 210's and JU88's. Forts were exploding all around us. They got about 38 of our ships. The Forts simply exploded like firecrackers. But we got through and did a good job on a synthetic oil plant.

"The way out was even rougher. Over 200 twin-engined fighters hit us. Our fighter escort had had to drop back because of the length of trip.

"We kept on our course and the tail gunner advised us when they were coming in. When he signaled, we slid the whole formation over to evade the fighters. One ball turret gunner got eight ships. Our ship didn't get hit at all. We were lucky."

Plane Catches Fire.

On another trip, Capt. Wendt's Fort caught fire over the English channel. The crew fought the blaze which resulted from ignited oxygen. It looked as though the fire was going to envelop the whole ship. The crew checked their 'chutes, got ready to jump when the oxygen burned out and the fire died. Capt. Wendt has a burnt parachute as a souvenir of that mission.

On one of his raids over Berlin, an anti-aircraft shell burst in front of his Fort, shattering flak on the windshield. The windshield cracked but didn't break open. That was lucky. A broken windshield may mean trouble. With the wind whipping in and the temperature at 62 below, a person can freeze pretty fast. Frost bite is so bad that the AAF awards Purple Hearts to personnel who experience bad cases of it.

Over Augsburg, Capt. Wendt's plane was attacked by rocket-shooting Messerschmitts. His ball turret gunner shot down one of the attackers and the Fort came home after hitting the target.

Rockets are not so bad when you have fighter escorts, Capt. Wendt says. Rocket-firing planes stand off and lob their shells from out of your firing range. Escorts can chase them away. Those 20 mm shells are more accurate but can't be fired as far.

What was it like in England on D-Day?

Sometime before midnight, the crews had "breakfast" then gathered in the briefing room. An intelligence officer addressed them.

"Well, fellows. This is it," he said briefly. A chorus of yells followed.

Capt. Wendt's squadron bombed the invasion coast. Clouds prevented him from seeing much but he thought it was a "pretty big show."

Unit Received Citations.

The youth from McNaughton had had more excitement than he cares to talk about. That raid over Brunswick, for which his unit received a Presidential citation, was no "milk run" nor was one over Regensburg, for which the group got another citation.

In addition to the group citations, Capt. Wendt has been personally awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf clusters.

Postwar plans? Capt. Wendt loves flying and he'd like to stay in the game. But he's a realist and thinks that there might be too many pilots after the war.

He likes flying so much that he's volunteered for more combat duty and, at the conclusion of his leave, he will report to Fort Sheridan and then go back to England "if the show isn't already over," he says.

Capt. Wendt's brothers, Walter and Edgar, have seen a lot of service, too. Walter, a Chief Petty Officer in the Navy, underwent the attack on Pearl Harbor, had a cruiser sunk under him, has been in South America, Panama and the Southwest Pacific.

Edgar, a First Class Petty Officer in the Coast Guard, has been in England, Sicily, India, and Australia. He also wears battle stars. Edgar is now in

With 30 Combat Missions Wendt Volunteers for More *(continued)*

Milwaukee and Walter is somewhere in the Pacific. The three are sons of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Wendt, McNaughton.

Capt. Wendt served as an enlisted man for a year before getting into pilot training. He had experience as an

airplane mechanic and was graduated from Blytheville Ark., in May 1943. Dec. 18, 1943, he went overseas.

Altogether, Capt. Wendt has chalked up better than a 1,000 hours flying time and 268 of those were

combat hours. His planes have been hit by flak on almost every mission, he's had plenty of narrow escapes but he's going back — as a volunteer!



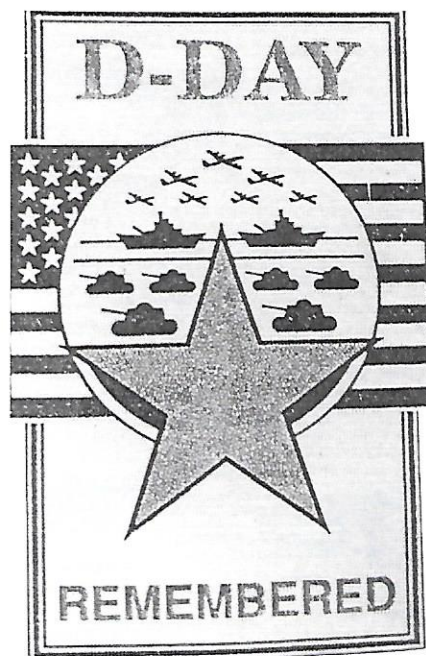
Wendt Gets Fifth Oak Leaf Cluster

AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STATION, England (Special, Delayed) — Capt. E. Malcolm Wendt, 27-year-old pilot of an Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress, has been awarded the fifth Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal for “exceptionally meritorious achievement” while on heavy bombing attacks on German military and industrial targets and in

support of Allied ground forces. The award was presented by Col. Charles B. Dougher of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., commanding officer of the 94th Bombing Group.

Captain Wendt is the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Wendt of McNaughton, Wis. He is a graduate of the Rhinelander High School.

D-Day "seems like yesterday"



By Malcolm Wendt, Lt. Col. Air Force Reserve, Ret., McNaughton

(Editor's note: This D-Day memory by Malcolm Wendt is one of 11 which will be published in the Daily News this week. The 50th anniversary of D-Day is Monday, June 6.)

We are rapidly approaching June 6th, the 50th anniversary of "D-Day" and the landing of the allies on the beaches of Europe. As I look back on that day, at times it seems like a far away dream, but most of the sights and sounds seem like yesterday. General Cassel led all of the American four-engine heavy bombers that day and as leader of the high squadron off of General Cassel I had a great ringside seat so to speak.

In June the nights are very short in England and we were awakened slightly before midnight to go to breakfast and one hour later, to briefing. In the darkness you kept hearing "D-Day," "D-Day," as everyone happily knew

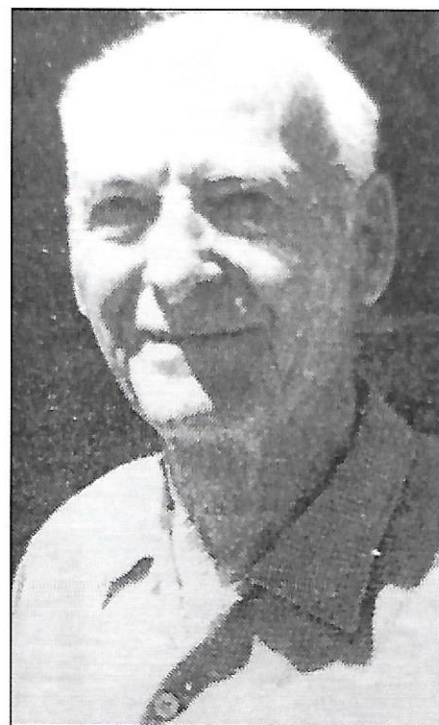
that this was the big one and the one we all had been waiting for.

At the briefing, General Cassel told us that the allies expected to fly about 10,000 sorties that day and if we saw a plane in the air, it was ours. At briefing time, it was still expected to be visual bombing and we would go straight in and bomb by squadrons. My squadron's target was a high rocky point that I believe our rangers later took. We were told the number and size of the German guns there and approximate number of men.

The English Channel is very wide in front of the invasion beaches because of the very, very slight chance of a pre-release of a few bombs when our bomb doors opened we did not open bomb doors at some point over the Channel where they could hit invasion boats. We opened bomb doors over southern England and flew across the wide channel with doors open.

The weather did not cooperate so there was solid cloud cover when we bombed so we bombed by radar and aimed a little in from the beaches to protect our landing craft. After bombing, we went straight ahead a short distance and then turned right 180 degrees to head for England. By then the cloud cover was blowing to the northeast and exposing parts of the channel. It was a sight to see. There were so many boats of all kinds that it looked like you could walk clear to England from boat to boat.

Some of our big naval battlewagons (battleships) were also pounding the beaches before and during our bombing. As leaders, we bombed from a height of 17,500 feet and following wings were each stepped down until the last ones were probably at about 8,000 feet.



Malcolm Wendt

On invasion day we had absolute air superiority. I believe only one German fighter flew across the invasion water front that day and he couldn't believe what he saw. I believe we used about 1,900 four-engine B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators.

There was little or no flak. The English I am sure hit in front of their beaches with their Lancasters, Halifax's and Sterlings. All of us used untold hundreds of light and medium and dive bombers during the day and we made the invasion stick a big success.

I eventually flew 50 combat missions, flying as the first pilot of a B-17. I figured it out as 404 hours in German flak. In non-combat missions, I flew B-25s, B-29s and P-63 King Cobras.

I was a member of Rhinelander High School Class of 1936. Our class suffered the most losses of any RHS class. There were eight from our class killed in action in World War II.