



Sgt. Louis J. Torretta was the tail gunner on the Robert Morley crew, and part of the original deployment from Harvard AAB to Rattlesden in November 1943.

His Diary exists today as a typewritten copy, having every indication of being a transcription by Torretta himself, of a handwritten journal made during his combat tour with certain notes and additions included after the fact. The diary is reproduced here in its entirety, with those later notations shown in *Italics*.

**The Diary was provided to our collection by Mrs. Wayne Dallas.**

### **MISSION #1 DEC 24 1943**

TARGET - ST. OMAR (FRANCE)

BOMB LOAD 12 Demolition each 500 pounds

BOMBING ALTITUDE 18500 ft

TEMPERATURE 20 BELOW ZERO

We were awakened at 0530 and we all thought it was just going to be another dry run. But we found out different when we reached the briefing room. There we were told what our target was to be and how important it was to the enemy. We worked from 0700 to 1100 getting all of our equipment in working order. Then came the time to start the engines and get ready for take off. We all climbed into our ship and got ready. Then we taxied up to the runway and we were on our way. We circled the field a few times until every ship had obtained its proper position and the formation was made. Then we flew across the Channel into France. We didn't encounter any enemy fighters which was quite a surprise to me. Also we were able to go around the Flak and no one was hurt. Later we heard that S-2 expected about 50% casualties. Also we were told that our bombs hit and destroyed the target. I wish some of you people that read this could have been there when we returned to our field. It seemed like everyone that could possibly come out to greet and question us was there.

### **MISSION #2 DEC 31st 1943**

TARGET – COGNAC (FRANCE) AIRFIELD

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds

BOMBING ALTITUDE 16,000ft

TEMPERATURE 18 Below Zero

My Second raid. We were awakened at 0230. Then we were briefed & the regular routine stuff. We took off at 0715. We arrived at our Target at 1230. Our Target was an Airfield where the German pilots train to fly the FW 190 and the FW 200. Just before we reached our target a formation of B-24s cut-thru our formation and broke it up. We were flying tail end Charley. That is the last ship in the high Element. When the Libs broke us up or cut us out of our formation we were attacked by two ME 109s. They came in at 9 o'clock high then flew out about 1500, yards and picked up another one out there and the three of them made a direct attack on our tail. They came in at 430 Level and I was the only one who could shoot at them. They were too low for the Top Turret and too high for the Lower Turret. Two of them kept weaving and the one in the center kept coming straight

in. I kept firing at the center one. Then all of a sudden he burst out in flame and I could see the smoke pouring out of his engine. He went down in a tight spin and that was the end of him. By this time we were over our Target. The Flak was very accurate and there was plenty of it. I saw two of our ships go down. One was from our group and the other was from another group that was flying with us. The one from our group was hit in #2 engine and the ship seemed to sit up on its tail. At first I couldn't figure what was wrong with it as I had never seen a ship hit as yet. Then I watched it go down in a spin. I saw two fellows bail out of our ship before it hit. We picked up a few holes in our ship from Flak. One piece hit #1 engine and another cut our trim tabs cable. Still another hit the top turret. As for the enclosed article, it tells pretty much what happened to one of our crews. They were flying another ship not Hangover and the ship they were flying was put in the junk pile. We put two ships in the junk pile on this raid. Major Newman's ship had 150 holes in it from Flak. He had to make a one wheel landing and ground looped no one was hurt. There was another group flying behind us and they called our old man and told him our bombs made a direct hit. We destroyed 11 out of 16 hangars which was our target. We landed at 1715 o'clock and boy was I ever tired. So far I got credit for a damaged ship from that last raid. No one saw it hit the ground and it was not confirmed.

### **MISSION #3 JAN 11 1944**

TARGET BRUNSWICK (GERMANY) ASSEM. PLANT

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds

BOMBING ALTITUDE 21,000 Ft

TEMPERATURE 35 BELOW ZERO

Once again we were awakened at 0230 breakfast and briefing and work. Then we left the field at 0700 o'clock. We were to assemble at 16,000 ft but there was a very bad overcast at that altitude and quite a few ships never did find their right outfits. The clouds were so thick I could hardly see our wing tips. There were ships all over the sky we almost got rammed by other ships a couple of times. I was kept pretty busy in the tail flashing code so the other ships could see us and know what group we belong to. We were very lucky to find our ships. We left the English coast at 1020 o'clock and reached the German border at 1110. We reached the target at 1217. We saw quite a few fighters, some JU 88s and some ME 110s and 210s. For our escort we had a few P38s. On this raid we used some new kind of stuff to deflect Flak and it proved to be pretty good. We saw plenty of Flak but it didn't come near enough to do any damage. We saw one B-17 blow up at 3o'clock. It was hit by a rocket and it really went down in a hurry. A little later I saw another B17 and two enemy fighters blow up. In this raid we lost Lt Jarrell and his crew. Jarrell was the Pilot. I. flew with from Irie to England. We also lost Lt Col. Bowman, he is the one who came down to Palestine, Tex when we made that forced landing there. Another crew went down into the Channel but they were all rescued. We landed at 1500 o'clock. Sure am glad to be back. It was pretty rough today.

#### **MISSION #4 JAN 21st 1944**

TARGET- ROBOT BOMB SKIS, (FRANCE)

BOMB-LOAD. 12 Demolition each 500 pounds

BOMBING ALTITUDE 12,000 Ft,

TEMPERATURE 10 ABOVE ZERO

This one is really a dandy. We were awakened at 0730 o'clock and we went about our regular duties when at roll call I was called to fly as tail gunner with Lt Putnam's crew # 16. We took off at 1240 and reached our I.P. at 1427. The bombardier said Bomb Bay doors coming open. Then the radioman said Bombs away. Yep we really screwed up on that one. We were flying the lead ship so we radioed the Deputy lead and told them to take over. So we made another run on the target this time there was a formation of B24s under us and we couldn't drop our Bombs again so we had to make another run and finally they dropped their Bombs and we started for home. There was no fighter or Flak to speak of. I guess we were pretty darn lucky because according to the newspapers some of the boys really took a beating. When we reached the English coast the Deputy lead ship which was leading now forgot to turn on the IFF and identify ourselves and the English began shooting at us. We saw more Flak on our own side than on the enemy's side.

#### **MISSION #5 JAN 29th 1944**

TARGET-FRANKFURT (GERMANY)

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.

ALTITUDE 23000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 45 BELOW ZERO.

Today I really have something to write about. We were awakened at 0200 o'clock everything went along smooth until just after we crossed the French coast #3 engine started to act funny. I noticed smoke coming back by the tail and I was just going to call Dal and ask about it when Simon noticed it too and called. By this time we were almost to the German border and we started to abort. I heard the Copilot call the Pilot and say #3 won't feather. So the Pilot said shut it off. A little later he called back and said, I cut #3 off and the instruments show 3400 R.P.Ms . We couldn't figure what was wrong. Then the whole ship began to vibrate and it shook so bad I thought it was going to fall apart. Then the Pilot gave the order prepare to abandon ship. At first I was really scared but as I waited for the order to jump I calmed down quite a bit. For a while it looked as though we wouldn't have to jump. Then the Pilot told the Bombardier and Navigator to get out of the nose. Later the engine started to act up again. Again the order came over the interphone, prepare to jump. This time it really looked bad. The Pilot got ready to jump and he gave the signal and was just ready to give the order to jump when the propeller came off and the ship smoothed out again. But Owens and Bourrett had seen the signal and jumped. Then the order came prepare to ditch. We threw everything we could out and made ready for a crash landing on water. But our prayers were answered and we made it back to the field safe. Upon inspecting the ship we found 19 holes in the front portion of the ship. All these were from flying debris of the engine. The oxygen line was cut in the nose and a few pieces just missed the Co-Pilot. During our flight back, Dave

our radioman did a swell job in bringing us back to the field. Also he got a good fix on the two who bailed out. As yet we haven't heard whether or not they have been picked up. From the time they bailed out the Pilot and another Navigator figured they must have landed near the German coast. There is a very good chance that they are safe. Morley and Dallas are really down in the dumps although they are not to blame. They both did a swell job and we all owe our lives to their good judgment and skill in bringing us back.

*Later we learned Owens & Bourrett were taken as Prisoners.*

## St. Louisan Gets Thrilling Ride Back To Base In Battered 'Fort'

Reprinted from late editions yesterday.

S. Sgt. Louis J. Torretta, 24, of 6125 Adeline st., was tail gunner on a Flying Fortress which was hit by rockets and flak over Frankfort, Germany, and almost broke up in the air before it was brought home safely, the A. A. F. revealed yesterday in England. Two of its crew members and one of its engines were gone.

Torretta's wife, Mrs. Elvera Torretta, lives at the Adeline st. address, and his mother, Mrs. Marie Torretta, at 2213 Sublette av.

The "Dotty Jane," piloted by Lt. Robert F. Morley of Salt Lake City, Utah, was caught in a terrific barrage of fire from ground defenses. The propeller on one engine came loose and the Fortress began to vibrate like a pneumatic drill. The oxygen system was knocked out by fragments from the damaged engine. That motor caught fire and tongues of flame curled around the cockpit.

To put out the fire, Morley dived from a five-mile altitude to a few hundred feet above the ground. He then gave orders to abandon the plane and the crew prepared for an emergency water landing by tossing out guns, ammunition and all movable equipment.

The radio operator, T. Sgt. David H. Musbach of Ness City, Kan., established ground contact to fix a course home and the pilot brought the battle-scarred bomber smoothly down.

Sgt. Torretta was a sheet metal worker employed at the Southern Equipment Co.'s plant at 5017 S. 38th st. before entering the air forces.



Torretta.

**MISSION #6 FEB 3rd 1944**  
**TARGET WILHELMSHAVEN (GERMANY )**  
**BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds**  
**BOMBING ALTITUDE 30,000 Ft**  
**TEMPERATURE 45 BELOW ZERO**

Our target today was the Shipyards & Submarine docks at Wilhelmshaven. It was pretty cold up there today and I was afraid someone would get frostbite. But we were lucky and we made it all right. Today we had crew # 17's Bombardier & Navigator. We saw quite a bit of Flak but it was not too accurate. Also we had a wonderful fighter support they came in very close and even played tag with us. But don't get the idea that there weren't any enemy fighters around. One of our boys had a little engine trouble and he had to turn back. On his way back to the field he was jumped by at least 19 enemy fighters and the heavy clouds were the only thing that saved him. No one was hurt on his crew but his

ship really took a beating. He had 5 Twenty mm shells hit his right wing and three in his left wing. How he ever managed to bring his ship back to the field was and still is a mystery to me.

**MISSION # 7 FEB 4th 1944**

TARGET FRANKFURT (GERMANY)

BOMB LOAD 42 each 100 pounds (INCENDIARY)

BOMBING ALTITUDE 24000 Ft

TEMPERATURE 38 BELOW ZERO.

Today we flew ship 097 as our baby is still grounded for repairs. Our target was the city of Frankfurt. The idea was to start a fire in the city itself in order to break down the morale of the German people and we really did just that. We were about a 100 miles away from the target and we could still see the smoke coming up. This is our third time we started out for Frankfurt and twice we had to turn back because of engine trouble. Both times we came back on three engines, but at last we broke the jinx and went all the way. We went thru quite a bit of Flak on this raid but lady luck was with us and we only got three holes in our ship. One was in the nose by Dallas the Co-Pilot. One was in the wing by the radio room. The other was in the waist just missing Joe our waist gunner. It hit his ammunition box. We had one casualty Boyer our ball gunner his heating suit burned out and his legs were frozen. They took him to the Hospital as soon as we landed. Later we went to see him and his right leg was frozen from the knee down to the toes. They had to graft new skin on it. On this raid we lost Major Sheppard. His ship was hit by Flak and went down. Someone reported seeing ten chutes come out so I guess they all were able to bail out all right. The heater went bad in the cockpit and Moe & Dal had a heck of a time keeping warm. I was afraid they too would get frostbitten.

**MISSION #8 FEB 5th 1944**

TARGET ROMILLY FIELD (FRANCE)

BOMB LOAD 12 Demolition each 500 pounds

BOMBING ALTITUDE 24000 Ft

TEMPERATURE 30 BELOW ZERO

Our target today was an air field in France. But we never did get there. Things were kind of mixed up from the start. We flew another new ship and there was quite a few things wrong with it. The whole crew was on edge from the start. Then to make matters worse Joe called me and asked how many ships were behind us. I called back and said three how many in front of us? So we called the nose and they told us there were only three there also. So there we were only seven ships in the sky. Boy what a mess if the Germans would have known that. The Pilots called each other and took a vote as to whether or not we were to go on. While they were taking this vote Division called and ordered us back to our base. Boy was I ever glad to hear we were going back. Then on the way back the G Box in the nose caught fire and we had a battle with that for a while. But it was put out and we made it back to the field all right. We were over enemy territory long enough and we saw some Flak, so we got credit for a mission. Just as we were landing # 3 engine conked out so we really were lucky we didn't go all the way to the target.

**MISSION #9 FEB 8th 1944**

TARGET FRANKFURT (GERMANY)

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 26000 Ft

TEMPERATURE 40 BELOW ZERO

This is the fourth time we had Frankfurt for our target. It was pretty cloudy today. 8/10 to 10/10s. There isn't much to write about on this raid. We ran into some very accurate Flak in France. Thank God there wasn't much of it. Over the target was the heaviest barrage of Flak I ever saw. The ships from our group all came back they were all full of holes were the Flak went thru but no one was hurt as far as I know. One piece came thru the nose of our ship and just missed Lt Hues who was flying as our Bombardier.

*The clipping describes it pretty well, so I will enclose it.*

**MISSION # 10 FEB 13, 1944**

TARGET ROBOT BOMB SKIS (FRANCE)

BOMB LOAD 12. Demolition each 500 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 12000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE ABOUT ZERO.

Our target today was the rocket coast of France or to explain it more clearly, it is where the Germans were making the Robot Bomb. We took off at 1100 o'clock and it was to be a milk run (an easy one). But we got the surprise of our lives. We made our first run on the target and the Bombardier didn't line up his sight right and we had to turn around and make another run. We were flying ship #104 and we got 104 holes in it. We got three of our Gas tanks hit and Gas was pouring out all the way home. I was kind of worried for a while but we made it all right. We were certainly glad to hit the ground. We left our formation and took a short cut and we just made it back to our field as we were making our approach for a landing #2 engine ran out of gas and as we were taxiing to our parking place #3 ran out so we just did make it. Ship #104 was put in the Sub-Depot for repairs. We lost two ships on this raid. 12 of the 20 men were seen to bail out.

## Frankfurt Blasted by Fortresses

### Second Blow at City in 5 Days; Libs, Marauders Hit Northern France

American Fortresses, raising the European air offensive to a new pitch by the tenth U.S. heavy-bomber raid on the Continent in 12 days, attacked the railway and industrial center of Frankfurt in southwest Germany yesterday for the second time in five days.

Liberators, also escorted by USAAF fighters, meanwhile struck at military objectives in northern France. Marauders, making two raids in one day, with RAF, Dominion and Allied Spitfire escort, fanned out over targets in the French Pas de Calais at the same time, and RAF Typhoons and Hurricanes bombed targets in the same area, a few hours after British Mosquitoes raided western Germany by night and other RAF bombers raked French airfields.

Frankfurt, heavily battered city of a half million near the junction of the Main and Rhine Rivers, was attacked by USAAF heavy bombers for the fourth time since last October.

#### Report Seeing New Fighter

One of the first groups to return from the 400-mile penetration reported seeing a new type of Focke Wulf fighter with a long nose—"fast as hell."

"About three minutes into France, 15 FWs rolled right through our formation without warning and kept right on going," said Lt. M. G. Hemphill, of Jackson, Miss. "The attack was some surprise and we had hardly fired our guns before they were gone. Then P47s showed up and we didn't see any more German fighters the rest of the way."

**MISSION # 11 FEB, 20th 1944**

TARGET TUTOW AIRFIELD. (GERMANY)  
BOMB LOAD 42 Incendiaries each 100 pounds  
BOMBING ALTITUDE 12000 Ft.  
TEMPERATURE 10 BELOW ZERO.

Our target today was an airfield. We had a bad day for bombing today as it was very cloudy. It was 10/10s clouds all the way over and back. We didn't have any fighter support either but it was not needed as we didn't encounter any enemy fighters. The only hard part of this raid was that it was so long. We took off at 0730 o'clock and landed at 1800 o'clock. I don't know as yet how we made out on the target but as my own opinion I don't think we hit anything. The Flak was light and we saw a few fighters but they didn't attack us so it was pretty easy. It was the first one for our new boys and it was pretty as easy.

**MISSION # 2 FEB 21st 1944**

TARGET AN AIRFIELD NEAR ASTER (GERMANY)  
BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.  
BOMBING ALTITUDE 23000 Ft.  
TEMPERATURE 30 BELOW ZERO.

On this raid there isn't much to write about. We were awakened at 0330 o'clock and took off at 0845 o'clock. We formed at 7000 ft. Then we met the 385th at 9000 ft. The target was hit and destroyed. The only trouble we had was that the mechanics on our ships didn't put enough gas in our ship and we just did make it back to our field. Number 3 engine ran out of gas, before we could see our field and number 2 had just enough to make the landing with. Numbers 1 & 4 had just a few minutes gas left in it when the Pilot shut the engines off.

Also on this mission Joe our waist gunner was climbing into the escape door in the nose and his hand slipped and he fell and hit on his head. They took him to the Hospital and later I found out that he would be all right. They had taken an x-ray and found no fractures so they are just going to keep him there long enough to rest up.

**MISSION #13 FEB 24th 1944**

TARGET TUTOW #1, ROSTOCK #2 (GERMANY)  
BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.  
BOMBING ALTITUDE 12000 Ft.  
TEMPERATURE 10 BELOW ZERO

Once we went to Tutow and the weather was bad so we had to take the secondary target the town of Rostock. We dropped our bombs right in the heart of town. Later it was reported as a direct hit.

On this raid we were attacked by JU 88s and ME 210s and also a few FW 190s. One of the FWs barrel rolled right through our formation. I guess he wanted to see if he could do

it because he didn't even shoot as he came through. We didn't have any fighter escort on this raid and the enemy fighters kept attacking us from the time we first reached the French coast all the way to the target and all the way back to the coast again. But for some reason they didn't press their attacks and I enjoyed this raid very much. They stayed about fifteen hundred yards out and once in a while they would come in to about 800 yards and we would open fire and they would go back. I shot about 800 rounds at them. Two of the enemy fighters were knocked down and one group lost a Fort. I saw three chutes come out of the Fortress before it dove into the clouds for cover. We encountered light but accurate flak and we got five holes in our ship. There were two holes from 20 mm and three holes from Flak. The 20mm hit our wings one in each wing. Two gunners from our group was wounded. One was a tail gunner and enemy bullets cut both his hands completely off just a little above his wrist. The other was a waist gunner and he was hit in the leg. Both made it back all right and the Doctor said they would be all right.

#### **MISSION #14 FEB 28th 1944**

TARGET ROBOT BOMB SKIS (FRANCE).  
BOMB. LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds  
BOMBING ALTITUDE.-12000 Ft..  
TEMPERATURE 10 BELOW ZERO.

Today we started out to test hop a ship and then we were alerted for a mission. The mission turned out to be another raid on production of the Robot Bomb. This was always thought of as an easy raid but that attitude has changed now as we really took a beating the last time we went there. Again we lost two ships from Flak over the target. I saw both of them go down and it wasn't a pretty sight to see. One went down in a spin and then pulled out and two chutes were seen come out of it. Then it burst into flame and blew up. The other went down in a tight spin nose first and the last I saw of it no one was able to get out of it. They were two crews from other squadrons. We got about 15 holes in our ship but no-one was hurt.

#### **MISSION # 15 MARCH 8 1944**

TARGET BERLIN (CAPITOL OF GERMANY).  
BOMB LOAD 30 Incend each 100lbs. and 10 Demolition each 100lbs.  
BOMBING, ALTITUDE 20000 Ft  
TEMPERATURE 35 BELOW ZERO.

Today our target was the ball bearing plant Erkner in Berlin or the Big B as it is called. The weather was very good and we could see the ground all the way. We could see the target very clear Bombs away and a perfect hit. We were about 100 or more miles away and we could still see the smoke. The Flak was very heavy and pretty darn accurate. We were very lucky and we hardly got a hole in our ship although most of the ships flying right along with us got pretty well beat up. Also we saw quite a few fighters but we had a good escort and only a few got thru them to attack us. Those that did were taken care of

in quick order. The 8th Air Force lost quite a few ships that day but due to the swell formation our Pilots flew our group didn't lose a ship. Some groups lost as many as 15 ships. (150 MEN) We saw Flak all the way in and all the way out but we managed to steer clear of it.

**MISSION #16 MARCH 11th 1944**

TARGET MUNSTER (GERMANY)

BOMB LOAD 40 Incendiaries each 100 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 20000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 35-BELOW ZERO.

We were awakened at 0130 o'clock and we all thought we were going on a heck of a long raid instead of a nice short one like we had. We took off at 0630 o'clock. And we landed at 1130 o'clock. But after seeing how the weather turned out that afternoon we knew why we had to get out early. We bombed P.F.F. and from reports we did pretty good. We had a swell escort and we were not bothered by any enemy fighters. We encountered a lot of Flak but again we were lucky and we didn't lose a ship.

P.F.F. is bombing thru clouds.

**MISSION #17 MARCH 13 1944**

TARGET ROBOT BOMB SKIS (FRANCE).

BOMB LOAD 12 Demolition each 500 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 12000 Ft

TEMPERATURE 10 BELOW ZERO.

We were told the night before that we wouldn't have to fly so we stayed up pretty late. We went to bed about 0100 o'clock and they woke us up at 0400 o'clock. We took off at 0815 o'clock and landed at 1250.

We went to the Rocket Coast and we were to bomb the skis that are used to launch the Robot bomb but when we got over France there was 10/10s clouds and we could not drop our bombs as there is a rule that we are not to drop any bombs anywhere in France unless we could see the target so we flew around looking for a break in the clouds so we could bomb some other target. But we could not find any so we had to bring our bombs back and save them for another day.

We saw some Flak but we were not hit and we didn't see a single enemy fighter.

## **Augsburg, Ulm Struck, Reich Says**

Fortresses and Liberators, escorted by American fighters which equalled up one of their best day's scores of the war, bombed multiple targets in southern Germany yesterday to carry out the USSTAF's half of the heaviest 12-hour air assault in history.

Thrusting some 550 miles into the Reich to what the Nazis said was the war industry town of Augsburg, the U.S. bombers forced the Luftwaffe up to fight for the second time in two days.

Until Wednesday's daylight raid on Brunswick, which cost the Nazis 36 fighters, the Luftwaffe had refused combat for a week and U.S. bombers had droned over their targets unopposed.

Yesterday, 22 bombers and 13 fighters were reported missing from what USSTAF headquarters described as a force "in very great strength," but for their losses the long-range Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings, as well as Allied Spitfires, claimed 76 enemy planes destroyed in aerial combat. The number destroyed by bomber gunners was still being checked. The pilot of one missing fighter later was reported safe.

First official announcement of the attack did not specify target cities, but German radio went on the air while the American formations were still over the continent and after describing vast air battles all across the Reich named Augsburg and Ulm, on the left bank of the Danube, as the day's objectives.

### **MISSION # 18 MARCH 16th 1944**

TARGET AUGSBURG. (GERMANY)

BOMB LOAD. 5..Demoliton each 1000 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE.16000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 15 BELOW ZERO.

We were awakened at 0230 o'clock and took off at 0715 and landed at 1630. It was a very long ride and we had fighters all the way. They were attacking us from all angles and everything on our crew had a chance to shoot. We saw ME 109s and 110s and 210s. I guess we saw at least 80 of them at one time. They attacked on the nose most of the time which was unusual as they had been making all of their attacks on the tail. They rolled thru our formation a couple of times and then one ME 210 got brave and made an attack on the tail alone. Between myself and about three other tail gunners we made quick work of him. We saw a lot of Flak and quite a few Rockets but once again we were lucky and we only got a few holes in our ship and no one on our crew was hurt. One ship right above us got hit bad in number 2&3

engines and it made so much noise that at first I thought it was us. He pulled out of the formation and I saw four chutes come out of it. Then we were attacked again and I lost sight of it. Our group lost three ships on this raid. It was a pretty darn rough one. It was Joe's #13.

### **MISSION #19 MARCH 23th 1944**

TARGET BRUNSWICK (GERMANY).

BOMB\_LOAD 5 Demolition each 1000 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 20,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 30 BELOW ZERO.

We were awakened at 0130 o'clock. Briefing and regular procedure and we took off at 0630 we landed at 1245. We left the English coast about 21 minutes too early and we missed our fighter escort. We went all the way to our I.P without seeing a thing. Then all of a sudden we got it. Nazi fighter planes attacked us just as we were opening our bomb bay doors to drop our bombs. Almost at the same time the flak started to come up. I saw one B-17 burst into flame at #2 engine. He pulled out of the formation and it was really blazing but they all bailed out safely. Then another went into a very steep dive and three bailed out before it fell apart. The Nazi fighters got both of these. Then another was hit by Flak and it started to burn also. He too pulled out of the formation. They all managed to bail out safely. The Pilot must have set the automatic pilot because after they had all bailed out the ship continued on its course for a while and then headed right back for our formation. I thought sure it was going to ram into one of our ships. But it went into a dive

and then blew up. We got one direct attack on our ship. I shot at him and he went down. I couldn't watch him all the way down as he went under our ship. But Kouma our ball gunner said he watched him and he bailed out before the ship hit the ground. We got one pretty big hole in the nose of the ship but no one was hurt. I didn't put in a claim for the ship I knocked down and now I am sorry I didn't because some other fellows that didn't have as good a shot as I did claimed it.

**MISSION # 20 MARCH 26th 1944**

TARGET ROBOT BOMB SKIS (FRANCE)

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition. each 500 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 18,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 15 BELOW ZERO.

We were awakened at 0230 o'clock and were briefed for a very rough target Leipzig. There was a lot of Flak reported to be at this target and I wasn't very eager to go there. Just as we were ready to start engines the tower fired two flares. That was the signal for the Pilots to report back to the briefing room. When they got back they were told that the mission to Leipzig was scrubbed and we were to stand by for a different target. So we went back to our huts to wait for further orders. At 1100 we were called back to our ships and we took off at 1230. Our target had been changed to the Rocket coast of France. Boy did we ever see some Flak. It was all around us. But, as soon as we dropped our bombs we dove down and used a lot of evasive action. That was something we very seldom do when we are flying as a formation and it really mixed the Nazi gunners up. We only caught two pieces of Flak in our ship - one in the nose and one in the tail just missing my head. Of all the raids we pulled on the Rocket coast of France this was the first one we didn't lose a ship on.

**MISSION # 21 APRIL 10th 1944**

TARGET DIETZSHAVEN (BELGIUM)

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 18,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 15 BELOW ZERO.

Today we were awakened at 0230 briefed and boy was I surprised when I saw the E.T.R. or the time of return. We took off at 0630 o'clock, went into France and over to Belgium. We were briefed to bomb a plant but the weather was bad over that target and we looked for a target of opportunity. So we found an airfield and bombed it. We made a direct hit. The name of the field was Dietzshaven. We landed at 1230 it was a nice short mission. I wish I could get more like it.

**MISSION # 22 APRIL 11th 1944**

TARGET POZNAN (POLAND)

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 100 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 18,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 18 BELOW ZERO.

"Wow" what a ride today. Our target was an oil plant near Poznan Poland but again the weather was against us and we had to bomb the secondary target which was an air field (Arnimwalde). It is located at Stettin in (Germany). It set out in the woods and we had a heck of a time finding it. When the Germans discovered what we were looking for they tried to hide it with a smoke screen and that just gave it away. We took off at 0530 o'clock and landed at 1700 – 11-1/2 hours. We were able to see the target very clear and we had a good score. We ran into some enemy fighters and we sort of took a beating. They were ME 110s, about 12 of them. We lost Lt Pauling's crew #15. They were very good friends of mine.

*Later we heard they were headed for Sweden. I hope they made it.*

*About three weeks later we heard they had landed on a small island which was occupied by the Germans. It was the small island of Bornholm just off Sweden. About one month later they came back to the field all dressed in civilian clothes. Five out of ten escaped to Sweden and they were returned to us. The other five were never heard from again. They were either killed or taken prisoners.*

*There is a rule that if American soldiers escape into Sweden or any neutral country they are to be returned to their respective country. But if they just make a forced landing or something to that affect they will be interned for the Duration.*

**MISSION # 23 APRIL 18th 1944**

TARGET BERLIN (GERMANY).

BOMBING ALTITUDE 20,000 Ft.

BOMB LOAD 6 Incend and 16 Demo

TEMPERATURE 35 BELOW ZERO

We were awakened at 0500 o'clock and our target today was an assembly and test field in Berlin. We took off at 0945 and just before we reached the target we ran into a very bad overcast and we had to drop our altitude to 16,000 ft. It was a very rough ride as we ran into a hell of a lot of Flak. Also we were attacked by a mess of ME 109s and FW 190s. Simon our engineer got one of them. We had a Lt Col. riding along with us as an observer today and he sure picked a rough ride. It was his first mission and he really got broke in right. The reason he flew with us is that he is the C.O. of a new outfit on its way over for combat. He flew with us to see what it was like so he could tell his men what to expect. Our Navigator was hit twice by Flak but it was not serious and he made it back all right. We got about 20 holes in our ship. One of the bullets went right over my head. We lost Capt. Dalzell on this raid he was a swell fellow and he was our Asst. Operations Officer. Boy I sure was scared up there today it seems like they get harder instead of easier. After the danger was all over we began to cut up and make wise cracks at one another to ease the strain we started to talk about the swell hamburgers & steaks back in the States and a number of other things. The Col. that was riding with us got a big kick

out of the way we were so serious during the battle and then turned right around and began joking. After we landed he called us all together and thanked us for showing him how to act in the air also he told our Pilot that he wished his crews turn out just like us. That made our boy feel pretty proud. I hope I never go to the Big B again.

**MISSION # 24 APRIL 19th 1944**

TARGET LIPPSTADT (GERMANY).

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 18,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 15 BELOW ZERO.

We were awakened at 0130 o'clock and I really expected a long one again. But I was surprised to find it was not so bad. We took off at 0630 and landed at 1300. Only 6-1/2 hours. It seems short now but those used to be long ones at one time. It was a swell mission and the weather could not have been any better. We could see the ground all the way over and back. We saw the town of Dunkirk and Brussels very clear we had flown over these towns many times before but this was the first time we could see it so clearly. We were able to see the target clear and we made a direct hit. We encountered no opposition to speak of and no one was hurt. But I sure was scared when the lead ship said we had to make another run, because I can remember what happened to us one time before when we had to make a second run in the target. We really got shot up.

**MISSION # 25 APRIL 20th 1944**

TARGET ROBOT BOMB SKIS.

BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.

BOMBING. ALTITUDE 12,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 10 BELOW ZERO.

Today raid was really a lulu. We were awakened at 0700 o'clock and told to go and eat breakfast because we were on the alert. So we ate and reported to the briefing room at 1230. We were briefed and the take off time was at 1630. We had a very nice trip. We saw some Flak but it was not bad. It was really a mixed up affair today. They had us all scattered around. I flew with crew # 17, Morley flew with Capt. Smith and the Col's crew. Joe flew with him. Rech flew with Lt. Gilleran and Kouma flew with Lt. Donahue. Musbach and Simon didn't fly. (WHAT A MESS.)

We landed at 2100 and it was getting pretty dark. We had to be on the alert until we hit the ground as the Germans had a habit of attacking as we were getting ready to land so being as it was getting dark we had some of our fighters pick us up as we came into our field. We saw a few of them get into a fight with our boys but our group was not hit. A B-24 outfit not far from us was hit pretty bad. The Nazi planes hit and wrecked seven of them as they were making their approach for a landing. I wish they hadn't raised the quota of missions. I would have finished today.

**MISSION #26 APRIL 21st 1944**  
TARGET HAMM (GERMANY)  
BOMB LOAD 10 Demolition each 500 pounds.  
BOMBING ALTITUDE 23,000 Ft  
TEMPERATURE 34 BELOW ZERO

Our target today was the Marshaling yards at Hamm. We briefed noon and we took off at 1530. It was a very nice trip and we had a very good fighter escort. We encountered some very mean Flak. We lost Lt. Gilleran and some very good friends of mine. Flak got their ship and they were reported as all having jumped. Then their ship blew up.

The bombing was very good and on this raid I have decided that each one of my five extra missions I will dedicate each one to some one. This one I give to my Father as I am sure he rides with and watches over me on every mission. We had a pretty fair trip as far as our crew was concerned. We landed at 2140.

**MISSION # 27 APRIL 29th 1944**  
TARGET BERLIN (GERMANY).  
BOMB LOAD 3 Dem. ea 1,000 lbs. 4 Inc. ea 500 lbs.  
BOMBING ALTITUDE 20,000 Ft.  
TEMPERATURE 30 BELOW ZERO.

We were awakened at 0230 o'clock and the weather looked very bad. But we flew anyway. Later the weather cleared a little. We thought we were just going to have Flak to watch out for, which was very heavy but the Navigator that was leading us screwed up and we were 25 miles off course and separated from the rest of the formations. We had an escort at the coast but being as we were off course the group that was supposed to relieve them could not find us and the ones that were with us had to leave as they were getting low on gas. About five minutes later the Copilot (Lt Chase was flying with us as our regular was sick) He called over the interphone and said it looks like a formation of Forts up ahead and Lt. Irwin who was flying as our Bombardier said, "Hell, those aren't Forts, they are 109s and 190s" and then they came in. We were leading the high squadron (7ships). The first attack about 80 of them came from 1 o'clock high. Their first pass at us they got Lt Donahue. He was flying #5 in our squadron. Number 2 engine caught on fire and he went down in a steep dive, no chutes were seen. (Every man on that crew-would have been finished if they hadn't raised the quota.) Then they made another pass and this one came from 10 and 11 o'clock, high and low. This time

## Flak Suit Saves Life of St. Louis Flyer

How his flak suit took the impact of exploding shell fragments and saved his life, permitting him in retaliation to shoot down the attacking enemy in his next to last raid over Berlin, was related yesterday by Sergt. Louis J. Torretta, 25-year-old Flying Fortress tail gunner, reporting for furlough at Jefferson Barracks Reception Station after a year with the Eighth Air Force in England.

"It was the toughest of my 30 missions and the most successful," Torretta said. "We were without fighter escort and were attacked by more than 200 Nazi fighters. My flak suit stopped exploding cannon shell fragments, although four of them pierced my skin. I got a line on the attacking Focke-Wulf and let him have it. The navigator told me his plane exploded just beneath us. Our boys shot down 20 of the Germans and we got back to base without serious damage, although our plane had taken five cannon shells and had 23 holes from flak."

Back at base, Torretta said he picked out the shell fragments that had wounded him and reported for his last raid the next day, after which he was listed for furlough. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters and given a citation for the Purple Heart.

A former sheet metal worker, Torretta is the son of Mrs. Marie Torretta, 2213 Sublette avenue, and the husband of Mrs. Elvera Torretta, 6125 Adeline avenue.

they knocked Lt Hughes out of the formation and he fell behind and about 10 of them jumped him and 3 were seen to bail out. Then he dove for the clouds. He was under control and that is the last we saw or heard of them. The third attack came from 12 and 6 low, and 9 and 3 level. This time they got Lt. Dowler and a 20mm cannon shell hit and blew up in the tail about 16 inches behind me. I was wearing my Flak suit and that is the only reason I am here today. The force of the explosion and where it hit me pushed me up against the armor plate in front of me with such force that it almost knocked me out. I heard the waist gunner call the Pilot and say they knocked Torretta out of the tail then I could hear the Pilot cussing. By that time I was getting my senses back and I tried to call the Pilot and tell him I was still with them and that I was all right but my inter phone had been hit and I could hear them but I couldn't answer. Finally the smoke cleared out of the tail and I motioned to the waist gunner that I was all right and that my interphone and oxygen was shot out. I switched over to my emergency oxygen but the bottle was ruptured and it was useless. The waist gunner kept check on me and asked if I was hit. By this time I could feel the warm blood running down my back so I motioned to him that I was hit but I did not think it was serious. A few small fragments of the exploding shell had stuck in my back a little below where the Flak suit ended. In all this we got one big hole in the tail (about a yard in diameter). Also a portion of our left wing blown off and a number of small ones. I claimed one fighter destroyed as he blew up almost on top of me. (I am pretty sure he was the one that hit me.) Our crew claimed four destroyed. (1) Lt Irwin our Bomb. (2) Kouma our Ball G. (3) Simon our Top Turret and (4) myself. Parachutes were seen all over the sky from our ships and from the Germans also. I had given up all hope of getting back because we were the only ship in our formation left so I reached back and grabbed my parachute only to find it too was riddled. Then one lone fighter made another attack on us and I started to shoot and I discovered one of my guns was hit by one of the enemy bullets and it wouldn't work. This fighter fired a couple of times and quit. I guess he ran out of ammunition. Thank God. That is the only thing that saved us -- if they would have had enough ammunition to make another attack we surely would have gone down. We had quite a bit of trouble with that left wing but good old Moe our Pilot pulled us thru again. Boy what a Pilot that guy is. I would fly thru anything with him at the controls. Our group put 21 ships up in the air today and 11 of them came back. I guess that is about all. Sure am glad to be back alive from this one. This one I dedicate to Owens & Bourrett whom we were told are Prisoners.

**MISSION # 28th APRIL 30th 1944**

TARGET CLERMONT FERRAND. (FRANCE)

BOMB LOAD 5 Demolition each 1,000 pounds.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 18,000 Ft.

TEMPERATURE 10 BELOW ZERO.

We flew with Lt Bye today as our boy was O.D. today. We took off at 0615 o'clock it was a very long ride but it was not so bad as it was warm for some reason. We saw some Flak but we were able to avoid it. We saw one enemy fighter but he did not attack us not that I blame him, I would do just as he did. He followed us for a while and then he pointed his guns away from us and emptied them and went home. There was no Flak at

the target but they had a fake that looked just like the real one and we almost bombed it but at the last minute the Navigator said it wasn't time to reach the target and we went a little farther and we found the real one and we made a good hit as it was a very clear day and we could see the target good. We landed at 1420 and as we were taxiing to our parking place we got a flat tire. We sure were lucky. This raid I dedicate to our families who have been so swell about everything. Sorry Butch but I gave Hitler a present for your birthday.

Today we finally got credit for that mission of January 29th so that gave Rech our waist gunner credit for two missions and he was finished.

**MISSION # 29 & 30 MAY 1st 1944**  
**TARGET ROBOT BOMB SKIS.**

We were awakened at 2420. We weren't even briefed just told to report to our ships. Later we found out what our target was. It was Robot Bomb Skis # 78 that was the target we got 104 holes in our ship the last time we went there. Boy was I ever sweating this one out as it was to be my last one. We were to fly in separate squadrons and make a feint at the French to mess up their Radar. We took off at 0220 and it was pitch dark. Also just before we took off the signal came that enemy planes were over England. So we were to keep firing flares to identify ourselves. I was so nervous it was pitiful every time the flare gun would go off I would just about jump out of my skin. But God was good to me and as we reached the French coast the contrails were so bad, we had to turn back. But we had encountered enemy Flak and we were over enemy territory long enough to get credit for a Mission. We got a small hole in our deicer boot. Boy that was a swell way to finish up. I am really thankful that I came out of it as well as I did. This last one I dedicate to my Darling Wife (BUTCH)