

The following are missions and experiences shared by a particular bomb crew during WW II. The crew consisted of:

Richard Paul	Pilot
Harry Duckworth, Spencer and Aronson	CoPilots
John Brooks	Bombardier
Alfred Smith	Navigator
Leroy Kannada	Engineer
John Foley	Radio Op
William Albro	Nose Gunner
Albert Popovics	Top Turret Gunner
Sabu Dastagir	Ball Turret Gunner
Matthew Straub	Tail Turret Gunner

This crew was first assembled at Fresno, California on May 18, 1944 and traveled by troop train to March Air Force Base near Riverside, California for phase training attached to Squadron T3.

They remained there and flew missions including navigation, bombing, formation, air-to-air gunnery (tow target), air-to-ground gunnery (Cadiz Dry Lake) and air speed calibration. The move to Hamilton Field was made by troop train in August of 1944. A B-24 was assigned to this crew to be transported to Townsville, Australia via Honolulu, Canton Island, Tarawa, Guadalcanal (Henderson Field) and then to Townsville. Left Fairfield Susin Air Base (now Travis) on September 1, 1944 and arrived Australia on September 8, 1944.

Remained in Townsville until September 13th at which time assigned to deliver another B-24 to Nadzab, New Guinea.

Forced to land at Port Moresby due to weather in Markham Valley but proceeded to Nadzab on 15th September.

During 2 1/2 week stay at Nadzab flew three practice missions to Wewak, New Guinea. Then assigned to 13th Air Force 307th Bomb Group (Hv.) 370th Squadron temporarily stationed at Noemfoor Island.

The following is a description of the missions flown by this crew during their tour of combat duty from Noemfoor and later Morotai.

The skip in mission dates from Jan. 9 to Feb. 7, 1945 is due to the crew (after 26 missions) being sent via ATC C47s to Sidney, Australia for R & R.

October 16, 1944 - 307th strike to Old Namlea Airdrome on Boroe Island in Ceram Area. Easy mission used as indoctrination for replacement crews received after first Balikpapan mission. Total flight time was 7:20. No enemy resistance or aircraft sighted.

October 18, 1944 - 307th strike to Balikpapan, Borneo (5th Balikpapan mission) Took off from Noemfoor (Spotter Tower) at 1 a.m. and rendezvoused near Donngala northwest edge of Celebes Islands at 11 a.m. Climbed in formation to 17,500 feet for bomb run at 17,000 feet but had snow five minutes from target so forced to scrub mission, jettison bombs and return toward Noemfoor. Most aircraft landed at Middleburg Island off Sansapor, New Guinea and spent the night returning to base at Noemfoor the next day. Steel mat runway was wet and slick so skidded a bit and ripped tread from right main gear tire. Left plane there and came back next day with replacement tire and crew to change it. Total time 15:45.

October 26, 1944 - 307th mission was shipping search in Philippines area. Expecting cripples of Japanese Navy retiring from Leyte Landing Area but instead found, in the Sulu Sea, a new Japanese task force consisting of the Yamato, two Kongo class battleships and several destroyers. Extremely heavy flak. 370th Squadron leading bomb run squadrons in trail 6 plane formations. 424th was last squadron over and lost second element of 3 planes to enemy fire.

1 Baker of 370th lost fast feathering pump on #2, broke engine mount and ruptured fuel cell. Streamed gas through bomb bay and into slip stream continuously back to Morotai. Ship was left there and flight crew caught ride next day on C47 back to Noemfoor. Japanese bombing Morotai destroyed plane two nights later. Total time for mission from Noemfoor to strike area and return to Morotai was 16:45.

November 2, 1944 - 307th Bomb Group mission was to take off at 1 a.m. with rendezvous at north shore of Mindinao for shipping search in Mindinao Sea. No targets sighted, too late to reach secondary, bombs jettisoned, landed at Morotai and returned to Noemfoor next day. Total time 13:50.

November 8, 1944 - 307th Bomb Group mission was to bomb Alicante Airdrome on Negros Island in Philippines, land at Morotai for overnight and return to Noemfoor on November 9th.

No fighter cover was available and approximately 20 Tonys and Zeros jumped formation near target. 370th Squadron was flying #3 position in group box for bombing. Lead of group box made sharp left turn on bomb run, stalling out inside plane of 370th. After dropping gear and flaps, stalled out aircraft recovered and regained position in formation. Bomb run was repeated with constant attack by Jap fighters. Three B-24s were lost on this mission. Crew members bailed out of some but were shot in their parachutes by Jap pilots. A few survived and floated on their rafts in the sea several days and finally made it to shore. They made it through the Jap lines to the guerrillas in the hills. They remained there for approximately one month and on about December 12th, while on mission to Bacolod Airdrome on Negros Island mirror flashes were sighted. The cat picked up some of the members of crews lost on the November 8th, 1944 raid. Total time for mission including November 9th return from Morotai to Noemfoor 16:10.

November 15, 1944 - Two planes were sent to recon Borneo, Tarakan and across to Brunei Bay, Jesselton, Sarawak and around northern tip of Borneo. Japanese naval task force sighted in Brunei Bay including Yamato and carrier. No other coastal vessels sighted. Bombed secondary target in Tawi Tawi group. Good bombs and returned to Morotai. Total time for mission 12:00.

November 18, 1944 - Group mission to Tarakan, Borneo Oil Separation Plane. Good oil fires. Target reported wiped out. Total time for mission 9:15.

November 23, 1944 - Group mission to Bacolod Airdrome on Negros Island. Lead bombardier screwed up and our bombs went into the water. Poor job. Total time 9:55.

November 26, 1944 - Group mission to LaCarlata on Negros Island. Bombs well placed on air strip. Had fighter cover for first time. No enemy opposition. Total time 9:30.

November 30, 1944 - Two planes sent on recon to Borneo. Same route as November 15th mission - Brunei Bay empty. No Japanese naval vessels this time. 370th plane flew lone mission, never sighted the other plane of a different squadron and no radio contact.

Sighted coastal vessel camouflaged near Jesselton. Skip bombed on the deck. Bombs missed but tracers on 50s etc. started fires. Made two runs and left area with smoke plume up to approximately 2000 feet. Proceeded northeast to northern tip of Borneo. Found two camouflaged ships in bay at northern tip of Borneo. First strafing run was made. One crew member of ship attempted to return fire with machine gun on deck but as four streams of 50 cal converged he turned around and dove overboard. Bomb (500 lb.) went down the hatch. Another ship was also sunk there by near miss and 50 cal fire. Sunk 1 Fox Tare Dog and two Sugar Charlies which were confirmed by another recon mission next day. Total time for mission 13:10.

December 3, 1944 - Threat of Japanese invasion of Morotai led to mission to Mapoeng Airdrome in Celebes Islands and on return from mission flew directly to Noemfoor for two days. Mission required bomb bay tank for extra fuel. Engineer (Leroy Kannada) reported unable to transfer fuel to main tanks due to malfunction of fuel transfer pump. He was advised that if the fuel was not transferred we would not have enough to return to destination. Approximately 1 hour later he reported that the pump had been disassembled, repaired and the fuel had been transferred. Total time 11:45.

December 5, 1944 - Returning to Morotai from Noemfoor the decision was made to load on bombs and unload on Hatatabaco Airdrome in Halmahera approximately fifteen miles from our base on Morotai. Results were unobserved due to weather. Total flight time 4:15.

December 9, 1944 - Mission to Tarakan Oil Tank Farm on Borneo, east coast. Individual runs were made. Six tanks destroyed and fires still burning the next day. Total flight time 9:15.

December 12, 1944 - Mission to Bacolod Airdrome on Negros Island. Overall, good bombs on target. One or more bombs of our load exploded directly under the plane resulting in 37 holes in the plane. The only person aboard who was wounded was the top turret gunner who caught a piece of shrapnel in his right leg. Total flight time 9:10.

December 15, 1944 - 307th mission to Puerta Princesa on Palawan Island. Had weather en route but was o.k. at target. No enemy action. Good bombs on runway. Reported saw U.S. P.O.W. camp. Total flight time 10:20.

December 20, 1944 - Mission to Santa Barbara on Panay Island. Fair bombs. Saw air strip after bombing. Interesting looking town there. Total flight time on mission 9:40.

December 23, 1944 - 307th mission to Fabrica Airdrome on Negros Island. No enemy sighted - had fighter cover over target. Made two runs. Formation not so good as a whole. Cloudy but hit target from group box. Total flight time 9:50.

December 25, 1944 - 307th mission to Sandakan Airdrome on Borneo. Had no enemy contact. Bad weather en route back to Morotai. Total time 9:15.

December 27, 1944 - 307th mission to Talisay Airdrome on Negros Island. No fighter cover but none needed - Japanese resistance in the air has dwindled. Bombs missed target but photos showed target already destroyed. Total flight time 9:05.

January 1, 1945 - 307th mission to Mite Ammo Dump on Airdrome in Halmahera. Fires started. Pilot saw bombs hit ground for first time. Short mission - two hours and returned to turkey dinner.

January 4, 1945 - 307th Bomb Group mission to Puerta Princesa Airdrome on Palawan. Easy mission, milk run. Hit already ruined runway. Total time 10:15.

January 5, 1945 - Mission to Sandakan, Borneo to bomb ship building yards. Two plane mission - bombing 100% verified by photos.

January 9, 1945 - 307th mission to Nielson Airdrome near Manila - Japanese reported to have 109 Heavy Guns near Manila. Flack fairly heavy. Low on fuel so proceeded to Tacloban strip on Leyte to refuel. Flight time to Leyte 10 hours - after refueling return to Morotai was 4 hrs. Bad thunderstorm over ocean after dark while returning to Morotai.

February 7, 1945 - 307th mission to Tawan Airdrome, Borneo was a search for Japanese carrier but was not located so ineffective bombs were dropped on secondary target. Total flight time 10:20.

February 10, 1945 - Mission to 16" gun emplacements on Corregidor. Good strike - effective bombs. Total flight time 12:25. ☐

February 12, 1945 - Another mission to bomb gun emplacements on Corregidor. Target well bracketed. No enemy resistance. Total time 12:40.

February 15, 1945 - 307th Group Box bombing of howitzer Battery on Corregidor. Target destroyed. Bombs hit ammo dump. Sighted U.S. BBs, CAs, CLs, and DDs shelling Batavia prior to landings. Total flight time for mission 13:15.

February 19, 1945 - 307th mission to Miri Airdrome on Borneo. Target hit as briefed. Sighted one enemy but he did not close. Total flight time for mission 12:40.

February 24th, 1945 - 307th mission to Manguar Airdrome at Balikpapan, Borneo. Mission proceeded as briefed for 307th Group. Total time 10:00. Fifth group hit same target and were attacked by ☐ Japanese fighters.

March 1, 1945 - 307th mission to Seppingan Airdrome, Borneo. Some flack - 5 Jap fighters sighted. Again they jumped 5th group but not 307th. Total time 10:20.

March 6, 1945 - Mission to Zamboanga personnel area on Mindinao - bombed area from briefed altitude and I.P. 5th group also bombing from lower altitude but were late to target. One bomb from 307th hit 5th group plane just behind top turret. The ship disintegrated but bombardier had his chute on and regained consciousness in air, pulled rip cord and was picked up. Total time for mission 7:30.

March 15, 1945 - 307th mission bombed secondary Talaud Islands. Total time 10:00. Negros Island closed in by weather so forced to bomb secondary.

March 20, 1945 - 307th mission to Cebu City in Phillipines - Japanese personnel and ammo dispersion area north of city. No enemy resistance and dropped 100 lb. frags from altitude of 2800 feet. Total flight time 9:10. Photos indicated 95% of area to be bombed was covered.