



Flightline



Newsletter of the 780th Bomb Squadron of WWII

September 2014

465TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
INDIVIDUAL RECORD COMBAT CREW MEM. S
OPERATIONAL TIME, MISSIONS AND CLAIMS

NAME LARSON, HARRY C. ASN

RANK Sgt POSITION 612 ORGANIZATION 780th Bomb Sq

RESIDENCE

As of March 1 1944

MISSIONS

HOURS

DATE	TARGET	M/T	TIME
Sept 2	Lubovae, Yugo.	1	4:50
4	Bologna, Italy	1	6:30
6	Regensburg, Germany	1	7:15
12	Munich, Germany	2	7:55
13	Wrocław, Poland	2	7:55
17	Budapest, Hungary	1	6:20
20	Hatvan, Hungary	1	7:00
22	Munich, Germany	2	7:30
24	Leicestershire, Engl.	1	6:20
Oct 4	Munich, Germany	2	7:25
16	Wien, Austria	2	6:55
17	Wien, Austria	2	7:20
23	Incomplete	0	4:10
29	Incomplete	0	4:41
Nov 16	Munich, Germany	2	7:30
18	Vidine, Italy	1	6:05
Dec 2	Blechnowice, Pol.	2	8:00
11	Wien, Austria	2	6:50
15	Amstetten, Aust.	2	6:45
17	Blechnowice, Pol.	2	8:10
19	Maribor, Hun.	2	7:15
(19 SORTIES)			
		31	142:20

OFFICIAL CORRECT

Lawrence G. Gordon
LAURENCE G. GORDON,
Captain, Air Corps,
Operations Officer.

Jan 21 Regensburg, Germany 1/2 2 Jan 31 21 Dives down in Hungary after hitting Vienna

Feb 14 Vienna, Austria 0/R 2

Mar 13 Regensburg M/Y 2

15 May, Aust. M/Y 2

19 Muhlberg, Hun. M/Y 2 1900 M162

20 Amstetten, Aust. M/Y 2 1790 M163

21 Maribor, Hun. A/B 2 2000 M165

26 Bratislava, Czechoslovakia M/Y 2

April 5 OKA M/Y N. Italy 2

7 Vipetino R.R. Bridge N. Italy 1 2100 M176

8 R.R. Bridge N. Italy 1 2100 M177

9 Lago Stal, Front lines 1 2140 M178

10 Lago Stal, Front lines 1 2030 M179

11 Vipetino R.R. Bridge N. Italy 2 2200 M180

12 R.R. Bridge N. Italy 1 1980 M181

462 hours in B-24
242 combat hours

FINIS
The End

all brother

Harry C. Larson's son-in-law, Bill Sturm, emailed a copy of Harry's mission record. Pictured are his missions from September - December 1944, and an unofficial page - with comments - for missions from January - April 1945. Harry flew 41 missions (credit for 50 with double-point missions) and more than 247 combat hours. It looks like he had time to pick up some Italian, too, judging by his remarks near the bottom of the inset page. See Harry's obit in TAPS.

Your News & Letters

Dear Kathy,

My mother, Roberta Halter, passed away peacefully at my home on February 1, 2014. I am attaching the obituary, which mentions the 780th.

It was wonderful to see the photo of the 2007 reunion in Indianapolis in the last *Flightline*. Our whole family had such a good time hosting that one. We were really pleased to meet and get to know the people my parents had been talking about for years.

The 780th was an important part of the lives of James and Roberta. The whole family attended the first reunion in Chicago, and when my parents retired they very much enjoyed the annual

reunions. Because the gracious hosts were from all over the country and my parents would make an adventurous trip to the destination, the 780th reunions enabled them to see almost every state in the union, a pleasant consequence of WWII. They made close friends with people my dad had not even known in the war, such as with Mr. and Mrs. Ashby Nelson, who sometimes travelled with them to the reunions.

Because my mother was a Chief Yeoman in the WAVES during the war, she has her own white headstone and gravesite next to my father's at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, the city where they were born and met and where they went into the

service. Although my mother was in hospice for nearly a year (she outlived the medical projections), she was in the Veteran's Day Parade in Indianapolis last November and was still able to wear her full WAVES uniform.

Many thanks to the men and families of the 780th group for all their dear friendship over the years,

Christine Plews

Editor's note: Roberta's obituary appears on page 5, along with a picture of her in her WAVES uniform. From the moment I walked into my first 780th reunion (Dayton, 1998) I felt like part of the family. And certainly visiting your beautiful home during the Indianapolis reunion made us all feel special, like family. It is wonderful to have so many memories of reunions across the country and through the years. Like you said, it definitely is a positive result of the war.



Dear Kathy,

I have had Nile and Marian (Horne) on my email list for years and we stay in touch. Then this year, I could no longer contact them by email. Today I Googled him and this is what I found (see Marian's obituary, page 5). Perhaps Marian was the one emailing me. He must be devastated. The last reunion they went to together was Wisconsin (1994).

780th BS/465th BG

THANK YOU!

The *Flightline*
is grateful for a donation by

**The Halter and Plews Families
in Memory of
Jim and Roberta Halter**

to keep *Flightline* flyin'

If you would like to contribute
please send your donation to:

Kathy Le Comte, *Flightline*
1004 Williams Blvd.
Springfield, IL 62704
johnkath5@comcast.net
(217) 787-6512

Then he came alone to the last one Jim went to in Florida, hosted by T.P. Walton (2001). Anyway, thought you might want to put it in the Flightline. Will continue to see if I can check on him.

*Thanks,
Vera Bagley*

Editor's note: Thanks for the research, Vera. I hope you can get in contact with Nile again. Nile, if you're reading this, please get in touch with Vera or the *Flightline* to let us know how you're doing, OK?



Hello Kathy,

My cousin, 2nd Lt. Robert Carlson, was a member of the 780th Heavy Bomber Squadron, 465th Bomb Group, stationed at Pantanella in 1944. He was a bombardier aboard the B-24 Red "Q" that crashed into the Adriatic Sea on August 24, 1944. All but the co-pilot died that day and their bodies were never recovered. My late husband and I became friends with Bob Bleier and joined the group in remembrance of my cousin. This note is let you know that I have moved to 590 Browning Terrace, Sebastian, FL 32958-5914. Also, you can send the Flightline to my email address: Ruth4781@att.net. That will save the group the cost of postage.

*Thank you,
Penny Showers*

Editor's note: Hi Penny. Thank you for updating your address, providing your email

address, and telling us about your cousin. According to 780 *Memoirs*, two crews were lost that day on a mission to Pardubice, Czechoslovakia - the Harry Lengvenis crew and the LeRoy Buck crew, to which Carlson belonged. His name is spelled wrong in the crew list (Carlen). According to Buck's brief biography at wwiiflighttraining.org/Cadets/Class1943/1943i.php, the Buck plane lost three engines coming back from the target. As the plane lost altitude Buck decided to ditch and landed in the Adriatic. The plane disintegrated upon impact. Like you stated, only one man survived - Flight Officer Harry Nolen. Nineteen squadron men were lost that day - a tough day for the 780th.



Dear Kathy,

Just received the June edition of the Flightline newsletter and I wanted to bring you up to date on my address. This will be my permanent address from now until the "guy in the sky" comes to collect me.

I'm living in a house my daughter and I have acquired here in Bass Lake - about 40 miles north of Fresno in the forested foothills of the Sierra National Park. At 92 I'm still walking - slowly, carefully and with a cane. Otherwise I feel reasonably well.

Really appreciate getting the Flightline.

*Fond regards,
Frank Diederichs
39737 Road 274, #57*

Bass Lake, CA 93604

P.S. Yep, that's definitely old V-Grand. I flew a couple of missions in it.

Editor's note: Thanks for keeping your address current, Frank. Frank had sent me a note, just prior to the one above, asking for Jim Alter's address. I was able to track it down and forward to Frank in July. I hope Frank was able to get a note to Jim before Jim passed in August (see *TAPS*). Jim and Frank both were bombardiers with the 780th, and Frank thought of him as a "dear friend." In a subsequent letter, thanking me for Jim's address, Frank mentioned he's busy writing an autobiography his family has requested. He's also trying to stay out of the way of some fast moving great-grandchildren. I think you all will agree that it's a blessing - at any age - to have projects to work on and family to be with.

Funds for 5 more issues of *Flightline*

Just a heads up - there are enough funds for five more newsletters - through 2015. I will continue to print and send to about 120 members as long as possible, but if you'd like to help, see the box on page 2. It costs about \$120 per issue. I have published the newsletter since December 2009 with squadron funds and donations. It's an honor, truly.

TAPS



James M. Alter, 92, passed away August 14, 2014, in Chicago. Jim was a prominent Chicago businessman, civic leader, and mover and shaker in Illinois politics. In his sophomore year of college he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces. He was commissioned a lieutenant in 1942 and flew 31 combat missions as a navigator and bombardier in a B-24 over Nazi-occupied Europe. Shot down over Soviet-held territory, Alter and his surviving crew mates bartered the wreckage of their plane for cigarettes and safe passage back to their base in southern Italy. He referred to his war years as “an impermanent but defining chapter of my life,” in his 2006 memoir, *From Campus to Combat: A College Boy Becomes a WWII Army Flier*. After the war he finished college and ran his father’s refrigeration and air conditioning business. In 1952 Jim married Joanne Hammerman, who preceded him. Together they were involved in state and local politics, supported parks and forest preserves, and served many civic organizations. Jim is survived by four children: Jennifer Alter Warden, Jonathan Alter, Jamie Alter Lynton and Harrison Alter; 11 grandchildren; and a sister.

Lt. Col. Ned C. Hayes, USAF Ret., 95, passed away April 10, 2014, at the Masonic Home, Burlington Township, New Jersey. He was born in Erie, Pennsylvania, on February 27, 1919. Ned was a bomber pilot with the 780th Bombardment Squadron. He flew 51 missions, and was a member of the Caterpillar Club for ejecting not once but twice from his plane during missions. After the war Ned was a first lieutenant in the Salvation Army, retiring in 1951 to enter the USAF. He retired from the military as a lieutenant colonel in 1968. He then started a second career as a high school business/distributive education teacher, teaching until 1982 when he retired a second time. Ned was preceded in death by his wife of 50 years, Elizabeth ‘Dede’ Saco. He is survived by two daughters, Lori B. Hayes and Carol (Bill) Rosner; and two grandchildren, Phillip and Alexis.



Harry C. Larson, 90, died in Lexington, Kentucky, on May 5, 2014. He was born in Malcom, Iowa, on August 7, 1923. He attended Iowa State University the summer of 1941 to take an all-day defense training course provided by the government to cover the first year’s mechanical engineering curriculum. After finishing that course he got a job at Lockheed Aircraft in California. He was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Corps in January 1943, and sent to various places in the U.S. for training. His crew was given a new plane to fly to Pantanella, Italy in August 1944. There he was the ball turret gunner on a B-24 bomber and flew 41 missions before being returned to the U.S. His return was by sea and he was at Gibraltar when the Germans surrendered. After the war he completed his mechanical engineering degree and went to work for Eagle Iron Works in Des Moines where he eventually became chief engineer and retired in 1987. He was a trap shooter and pheasant hunter in his spare time and enjoyed golf. He was preceded by his wife, Martha; and son-in-law, Fred Samani. He is survived by two daughters, Ann (Bill Sturm) Samani and Janet (Michael) Braun; grandchildren David (Lisa) Samani and Jennifer Samani; and a sister.

TAPS



Roberta M. Halter, 90, died February 1, 2014, in Indianapolis, Indiana. She was born August 24, 1923, in St. Louis, Missouri. Roberta volunteered for the WAVES in World War II, attaining the rank of Chief Yeoman, and was stationed in Washington, D.C., and Pearl Harbor. In 1947 she married James Halter, a customer at her father's bakery where she worked. Roberta and James liked to travel, particularly to reunions of his 780th Bombardment Squadron of the 15th Air Force. They visited almost every state and hosted the national reunion in Indianapolis in 2007. Roberta is survived by three children: Christine (George) Plews, Fred Halter, and Nancy Halter; grandsons Arthur, Matthew, Noah, and Lincoln Plews; and many nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, and great-great nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband. She was buried with military honors at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis.

Aileen L. Long, 86, passed away June 4, 2014, after a brief illness. She was a long-time member of the American Legion Auxiliary. She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Jim Long, of the 780th Bombardment Squadron; and three sons, Tommy (Kathy), Steve, and Billy; and three grandchildren, Kelsey, Nicholas and Keely Long. She was preceded in death by a son, Jimmy.



Marian Culp Cline Horne, 88, died March 8, 2014, in Roanoke, Virginia. She was born in South Bend, Indiana, and graduated from Purdue University and the University of Virginia. In 1985 she married Nile T. Horne of the 780th Bombardment Squadron. She is survived her her husband, Nile; daughters Dana (John) Hall and Sharon (Kenneth) Wasilewski; son Steven (Kay) Cline; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; two sisters and one brother.

Willie and Joe by Bill Mauldin



"Wish to hell I wuzn't housebroke."



"Joe, yestiddy ya saved my life an' I swore I'd pay ya back. Here's my last pair o' dry socks."

Kathy Le Comte
Editor, *Flightline*
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Springfield, IL 62704-2832

Flightline



THE BIG
V MISSION
August 22, 1944
DOUBLE
KORNEUBERG OIL
REFINERY - VIENNA
SHIP - V GRAND ON
ITS V MISSION
LOST ONE AND TWO
AT THE TARGET
STRIPPED THE PLANE OF
AMMO - GUNS - 24" CAMERA -
FLAK SUITS - RADIO EQUIP -
PUT PUT - ETC.
MANAGED TO HOLD
ALTITUDE AND LAND
AT VIS YUGO
(OVER)

HYDRAULIC SYSTEM
OUT SO HAD TWO CHUTES
TIED TO WAIST GUN MOUNT
THREW ONE OF THEM OUT
CAPT ZEWADSKI MADE
A SPECTACULAR LANDING
REALLY HAD THE
FEAR OF FLAK
NOW
DICK AND I GOT THE
D. F. C. FOR THIS
MISSION
CAPT. ZY WAS MAJOR
UPON RETURN

Reflecting on 'The Big V'

A couple people have commented about the photo of *V-Grand* that appeared in the June issue. Frank Diederichs mentioned it (see his letter, inside), and Roger Love sent the above photo and pages from his father Frank Love's war diary about *V-Grand*'s last mission, resulting in the landing at Vis, during which Love was the nose gunner. In the photo, the name written underneath the man on the left is Bill McNary. Frank's account of the Vis landing is harrowing.

I think Frank had a sense of humor. Notice the title to the diary entry: *The Big V Mission*. I'm sure there are multiple meanings that could be drawn from that. Hopefully no surgeries occurred on *V-Grand*.