

4251251-AndersonCrash-26Apr44.txt

From: "Serge BLANDIN" <Serge.BLANDIN@Wanadoo.FR>
To: "Tom Ensminger" <governmentdrone@worldnet.att.net>
Subject: Tidbits again
Date: Saturday, November 04, 2000 6:15 PM

Dear Tom,

I have got in touch with Ann Renegar and Betty Jo Holbrook. Pictures and documents will be mailed to them on Tuesday. I hope we will have photos in return.

B-24J-1-DT 42-51251 N-L which crashed in bad weather on April 26, 1945 (Anderson crew) went down at Whitnash (a village SE of Royal Leamington Spa in 1944 and now part of the city, in Warwickshire). Not Whitton near Limington Spa ! The exact location was confirmed by Tom Brittan with his usual promptness. The plane was salvaged on 28 April, 1945 by the 2nd Mobile Repair and Reclamation Squadron. Tom said he has more details somewhere in an old magazine. Until now I failed to find correct info about this crash.

My photos have not been sent yet, sorry. Will put them in the mail on Monday.

Just had a long message from Hugh Turner about his uncle and B-24 42-95131, old Mag Drop. Seems this guy has found within a few days more than I found in one year. I really enjoyed his web site and the info he is giving freely. Will get in touch with him and hope to find some additional data which he may find of interest. Hugh mentions the fact he got the early information about his uncle from the Heavy Bombers e-mail lists. I was somewhat mortified to discover that I have not this e-mail address. I thought I had it somewhere but failed to find anything (I think I sent only snailmail letters to the compilers) . Can you help ? Don't tell anybody I am so stupid, this site is the basic place to find info about the 8th AF heavies !

Another detail is puzzling me. Do you know what is the meaning of the two letters SA often following a serial number in reports. Is it Serial Army, or Serial Aircraft as I was told several times ? Nobody seems to be sure about it... Maybe it is something else.

Thank you for the comments about the weekly working schedule. Same with the official holiday time in the USA. I know the minimum official period is two weeks, but many have three, four or even five weeks from their employer among the friends I know. Can you comment ?

The official paid holiday period in France was 3 weeks for years. The socialists voted for 5 weeks which was a blow to many small businesses and is sometime a problem for the employees themselves. Maybe we will return to the old scheme with the next government ?

I agree with Brad who said he didn't see what pics will add to your site if it's just for the sake of photos, but they are necessary, in my opinion, to identify the staff. What is important is that pictures should be associated with the credentials of the people who are running the site or helping in some way. It is also important to underline the site is fully approved by the association. Your web site is a star site and those who have visited it in France all said " Bravo ! ". As for one I will always recommend it. The Carpetbaggers were a great outfit and they deserve a great web site. Of course, I won't forget it means hours and hours at the keyboard for you and a colossal effort in overhauling and updating...

I also wish the complete history in paper form will be available to all one day. As you know, I am now thinking of articles on missions in France and a future book (possibly two volumes) about the American supply ops in France. It is a long-term

Spa tribute

406 B5

JOHN PRATLEY of Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, has sent us a piece from the *Leamington Spa Courier* which records that a road has recently been named to honour an American airman killed at Whitnash. Precisely 39 years before the naming ceremony, on April 26, 1945, Lt Jean Anderson, aged 23, was killed in his B-24 Liberator while trying to steer it clear of the town. Among those at the Anderson Drive unveiling ceremony was Mr Gail Anderson, brother of the airman who died.

AN ARTICLE in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* recalled a Halifax crash at Gomersal, near Cleckheaton, and the contact which has now been established between the aircraft's Australian pilot and witnesses of the crash. The crash took place on December 27, 1943, when Halifax JB788 from 1652 Heavy Conversion Unit at Marston Moor was abandoned by six of its crew, leaving the pilot, Tom Scotland, to make a successful crash-landing in a

B-24 on an Irish beach

A READER has sent us a page from a 1976 edition of *Briefing* which recalls how a B-24 Liberator bound for the UK ended up on a beach in County Clare, in the Irish Republic, in 1943. The Liberator, flown by Max Van Benthuysen and co-pilot Albert H Leighton, set out in July 1943 from Bangor, Maine, on a ferry flight via Gander in Newfoundland to Hethel, near

Norwich, where the aircraft was intended to join the 567th Bomb Squadron of the 389th Bomb Group.

Travelling Trollop, as the B-24 was named, was flying on the leg from Gander to Prestwick - described in this report as being "near Manchester, Northern England" so perhaps it's little wonder that they became totally lost! The flight had been delayed

because of leaking fuel cells and halfway over the ocean this problem once again began to manifest itself, and to make matters even worse, the radio equipment broke down. The weather was very stormy and although it was dark it was impossible for the aircraft to climb above the cloud to get a star fix as a passenger on board had not been supplied with oxygen equipment.

When the estimated time of arrival overhead Prestwick was up it was decided to turn through 180 degrees and back-track in the hope that the Liberator would drop down through the clouds over water rather than amid high ground. When the aircraft came out of cloud it was raining heavily and visibility was very poor. The crew considered that they could be off the coast anywhere between Scotland and occupied France. Fortunately, with the situation now looking extremely grim, the two pilots spotted a wide beach through the murk and carried out a perfect landing. Soon soldiers appeared on the scene and announced that the Americans were at Lahinch, County Clare, and very soon they were whisked off for breakfast at a local pub.

The two fully expected to be interned as were German and English servicemen who arrived in the republic but by the afternoon of the same day their belongings had been loaded into cars and the men were taken to the Northern Ireland border and handed over to the authorities.

Pilot's appeal

field at Drub Lane, Gomersal. Recently, Scotland contacted police in Leeds asking if they had any records of the crash and they passed his query to the YEP. As a result of an appeal in the paper two witnesses wrote to Mr Scotland. One was Mrs Elsie Firth who still lives in a house overlooking the crash site. She saw the Halifax approaching the field with all its lights on, then watched it slide along and collide with a wall which broke the

entire tail section away. The main part of the aircraft burst into flames, but happily Tom Scotland was able to walk away unharmed.

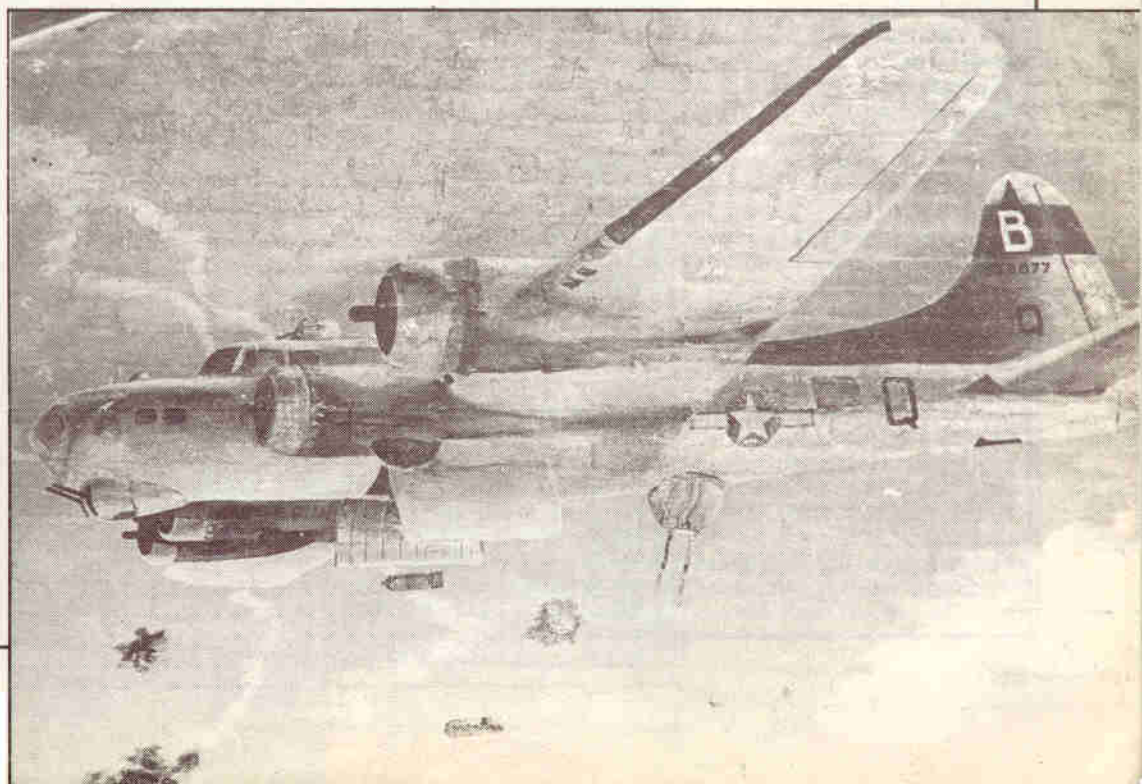
All the other six members of the crew of JB788 landed safely by parachute, although two had close calls and were lucky to escape serious injury. Derek Hopper the navigator, Ed Riley the bomb aimer, Wes Weekes the wireless operator and Bill Smith the mid-upper gunner all landed without incident in and around the village. Bill Butler the other gunner was unlucky enough to become impaled on power lines and when he finally untangled himself he dropped into a gorse bush, which resulted in several trips to hospital over the next few days to have the painful spines removed! Bob Lewis, the flight engineer, landed on a railway line and was knocked unconscious. Luckily he came round just before a train arrived.

Monster Mural!

KEN COTHCLIFF, of Maghull, Merseyside, was particularly interested to read about the discovery and preservation of the Stirling mural from North Creake airfield featured in the April edition of *FlyPast*. For several years now Ken has been trying to drum up interest in preserving a similar, although much larger, mural which still exists at a disused airfield in Bedfordshire. The mural, carrying the title *The Big Picture*, is approximately 12ft wide by 8ft high and depicts a B-17G Fortress flying through a flak-filled sky with all its guns blazing. Ken has contacted the Imperial War Museum and the USAF Wright Paterson Museum as well as several other organisations with a view to having this important Second World War relic preserved, but no interest was shown.

The mural was painted by Staff Sergeant Francis Waldschmidt sometime in the mid-summer of 1944. It depicts a 92nd Bomb Group aircraft, 43-38877, coded 'Q' on a daylight operational mission over Europe. S/Sgt Waldschmidt, incidentally, is believed to have served with the 100th Bomb

Group from around May 1944 until September 5 of the same year when the Fortress he was aboard came down in the English Channel. It is understood that Waldschmidt survived the war and that a few years ago he visited England and saw his mural.



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project but should be feasible...

More later.

I have been limping badly since last week, probably a mild case of sciatica ? Never suffered from this before...

All the best,

Serge