

Wilson, R. C.
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On August 27, 1942 I was inducted
in U. S. Air Force.

Attended R. M. Mechanic school at
Gulf Park Missouri later gunnery
school at La Rado Texas.

Joined my flight crew at Redmond
Oregon, first, second and third
base train with crew.

Sept. before leaving for ^{Crowse} ~~Cross~~ County
flight Frankie failed to follow
thru with propeller pull thru,
propeller kicked back struck me
in top of head and I went to infirmary
doctor put 6 stitches in scalp.

Next morning I walked to our plane
and the crew was preparing for
cross country flight.

Lt. Stroud suggested I lay down in
radio room and they would take
care of everything.

I did not wait long. I was up and
ready for flight.

Before we got to Chicago. Lt. Byrne
asked me to check smoke in
navigator's area. I discovered a
large fitting that was smoking.

Later the pilot asked me to connect
~~fixing~~ ~~fixing~~ again because we needed
windshield washers to land at Chicago.
Later to fly on to Sandusky, New York.

We were snowed in for a week at
New York before flying over the
Atlantic to Keweenaw, Scotland.

I transferred fuel over one or two
engines. When we landed we had

enough fuel for one hour of flying.
 Next day Lt. William F. Byrne
 matched a coin and we lost our
 crew. Our crew was broken up
 in order to fly with men who
 had flown all of their missions.
 I was assigned to Lt. Ray Clough's
 crew. I flew one mission to
 Gander Newfoundland - 10 1/2 hour
 flight; 2nd mission to Munster
 Germany and 3rd mission to
 Nance France. On Oct. 14-43
 we were briefed for Schwerfart
 ball bearing factory.

We had fighter escort to German
 border. P. 40 had to return to
 England due to fuel.

German fighters were desperate and
 twin J. 88 - two engine fighters
 would sit out of range of our
 guns and lob rockets into
 our squadrons.

Our B-17 had 3 engines knocked
 out and we had fire on plane.
 Lt. Clough gave order to abandon
 ship.

Well I did not lose any time
 to bail out of hatch beneath
 my turret in fact the Co Pilot
 was in near the escape hatch
 so I went out over his shoulder
 because we were still at high
 altitude and I could pass out due
 to ^{luck} oxygen.

all ten men cleared the B-17.

Germans picked all crew members up for interrogation. I gave only my name and rank.

Ray Cloughth stated he had a thought of trying to fly to Switzerland but it was a good thing he bailed out because the B-17 blew up before being shot down. I flew with Lt. Byrnes again to test a B-17. We had a run a way prop but we feathered it with no other problems. Also our first radio man made the flight, Sgt. Brubaker who I had great respect for.

Lt. Byrnes and Brubaker were killed on sweep raid.

The Germans living quarters were crude, lice, cold and with just enough food to survive. The night Prokas, sergeant tried to escape with another S.I., Prokas was killed in middle of compound and his companion was shot many times but survived. The Germans came thru our barracks and ruffed up some of 17. B. fellows.

I got the butt of German gun in my face, forehead and mouth. I did get purple heart for my wounds ^{Sp.}

Two weeks before end of world war II. Our complete camp was forced marched to Breslau, Germany Hitler's birth place.

I had ~~severe~~ diarrhea and lost
about 25 pounds.

We were liberated by Patton's tank
core on May 3rd 1945

We camped in forest, with snow
on ground and no shelter.

My short stay in England was
pleasant.

We had a Rice family Pat and
Shela who made us feel at
home with her parents.

I went to Eli Cathedral for
couple days.

I enjoyed my service life.

M./Sgt. Bandy A. Herman