

Edwin PIPP

(1919 - 2001)

Les Batailles de l'Histoire de Bretagne

Titre exact (en capitales) RAID AÉRIEN SUR SAINT NAZAIRE

Date 1^{er} mai 1943Lieu précis Espace aérien atlantique entre S^t Nazaire et BrestNature et type :
(cocher ou compléter)X aérien
maritime
terrestre
.....escarmouche
bataille rangée
X guerre
siège
débarquementcampagne
guerre civile
résistance
insurrection
.....

Adversaires :

(Pays, partis, personnages)

1 U.S.A. et ALLIÉS
2 ALLEMAGNE
3
4

Forces en présence :

(armées, unités, généraux, effectifs...)

① 8^e AIR FORCE : 306^e B.G., 91^e B.G., 305^e B.G., 303^e B.G.
78 bombardiers B.17. 780 hommes
sous le commandement du Colonel PUTMAN

② LUFTFLOTTE 3 : K Gr 806. Nantes. 4 appareils Me 110
II J.G. 53. Nantes. 20 chasseurs
FW 190
BF 109

III J.G. 2. Brest. 25 chasseurs
FW. 190
BF. 109
sous l'autorité du Generalfeldmarschall
Hugo SPERLE

Récit: Le 1^{er} mai 1943, une formation de 78 fortresses volantes B.17 quitte l'Angleterre pour effectuer un raid sur la base sous-marine allemande de S^t Nazaire. Le bombardement est peu efficace. Sur la chemin du retour, une tragique erreur de navigation conduit les B.17 sur Brest à 800 pieds d'altitude. Pris à parti par la chasse allemande et la Flak, 4 appareils américains sont aussitôt abattus malgré leur résistance. L'U.S. Air Force doit revoir le système de formation de ses navigateurs et l'ensemble des aides radio-électriques à la navigation.

Résultat final : La base sous marine de S^t Nazaire a peu souffert.
L'U.S. Air Force a perdu 8 B.17.
La Luftwaffe a perdu 18 chasseurs.

Plan de la bataille : oui-~~non~~ à dessiner au dos (échelle 1/25000 si possible)
indiquer les mouvements par des flèches

Bibliographie sommaire :

- R.A. Strong: "First over Germany" Hunter Printed Company - Winston Salem - Nth Carolina. U.S.A
- M. Mazéas: "Les Houles de la Mer d'Iroise" Ed. Edilarge. Rennes
- National Archives of U.S.A. Dpt. AIR FORCE - Headquarters U.S.A.F. Washington D.C.
- "The Bomber Command War Diaries" Aviation Bookshop 656 Holloway Road London N19 3PD.
- "306th Echoes" Newspaper January 1995

Nom du(des) rédacteur(s):

Michel Mazéas
7 avril 2000

RAID AERIEN SUR SAINT-NAZAIRE

1er MAI 1943

Le 1er mai 1943, une formation de B17 de la 8ème US Air Force quitte l'Angleterre, avec pour objectif le bombardement de la base sous-marine de SAINT-NAZAIRE, que dans l'argot des aviateurs on appelait "Flack City" (la ville D.C.A.).

Quatre groupes de bombardement (Bomb Group) participent à l'opération : le 306è BG basé à THURLEIGH, le 91è BG basé à BASSINGBOURNE, le 305è BG basé à CHEVELSTON, le 303è BG basé à MOLESWORTH.

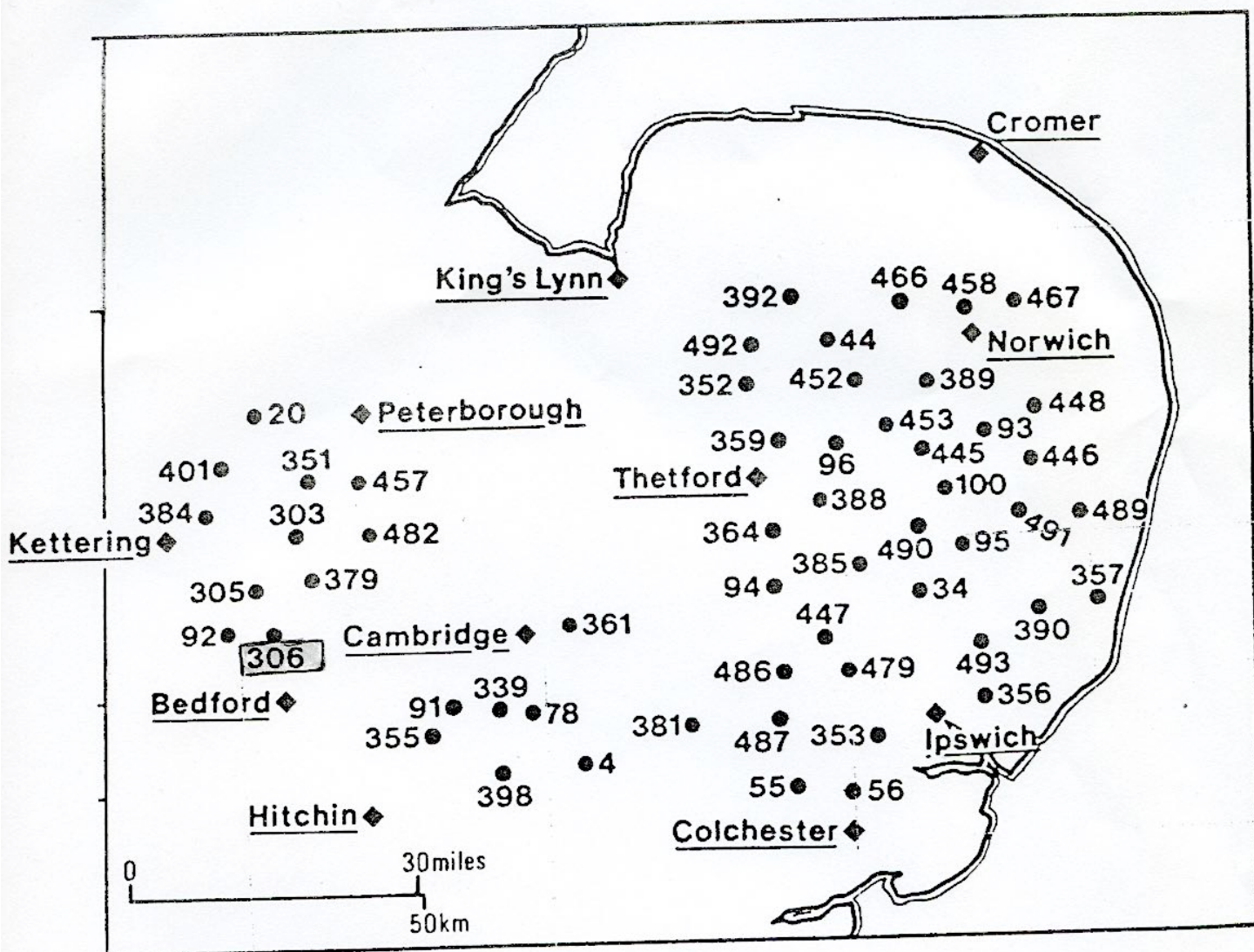
A 10 h 30 G.M.T., la formation est rassemblée à la verticale de PORTLAND BILL et met le cap au Sud. Les 78 appareils forment une impressionnante armada et utilisent un itinéraire indirect pour prendre SAINT-NAZAIRE en venant de l'Est, à 25 000 pieds, pour plonger ensuite vers la mer, à 1 000 pieds afin de passer sous la couverture des radars allemands. Jusqu'à SAINT-ETIENNE-DE-MONTLUC, aucun incident notable n'est venu entraver la marche du 101 Combat Wing (91è BG et 306è BG) ni du 102 Combat Wing (305è BG et 303è BG). Puis 20 à 25 chasseurs allemands apparaissent dans le ciel et se mettent à harceler les gros quadrimoteurs. Ils réussissent à abattre le B17 du lieutenant Sterling, du 303è BG. Il explose en vol et seulement 4 hommes survivront sur les 10 membres d'équipage. Il est environ 11 h 30 G.M.T.

Les conditions météo rendent inopérant le bombardement prévu. Seuls 27 appareils lâchent leurs bombes, un peu au hasard, sur les cibles, mais sans grande efficacité. Les 38 autres ne peuvent apercevoir l'objectif et par prudence se délestent, pour la plupart, au-dessus de la mer. Quelques uns ramènent leurs charges intactes à leur base.

La suite du raid (marquée par la perte de deux B17, l'un du 303è BG, l'autre du 305è BG, dans les parages de Belle Ile) allait tourner au cauchemar. Dérouté une première fois pour porter secours au 91è BG attardé et attaqué par la chasse allemande, le 306è BG devait commettre une grave erreur de navigation en reprenant son cap vers le point de regroupement dans le GOLFE DE GASCOGNE par 47° 00N et 04° 00W. Oubliant de décompter le temps passé à secourir le 91è GB, le leader ordonne de changer de cap avant d'arriver au point dont les coordonnées avaient été soigneusement calculées. Se fiant uniquement à sa montre, négligeant involontairement la distance parcourue, il donne le top à 12 h 26 mn comme l'indiquait la feuille de route.

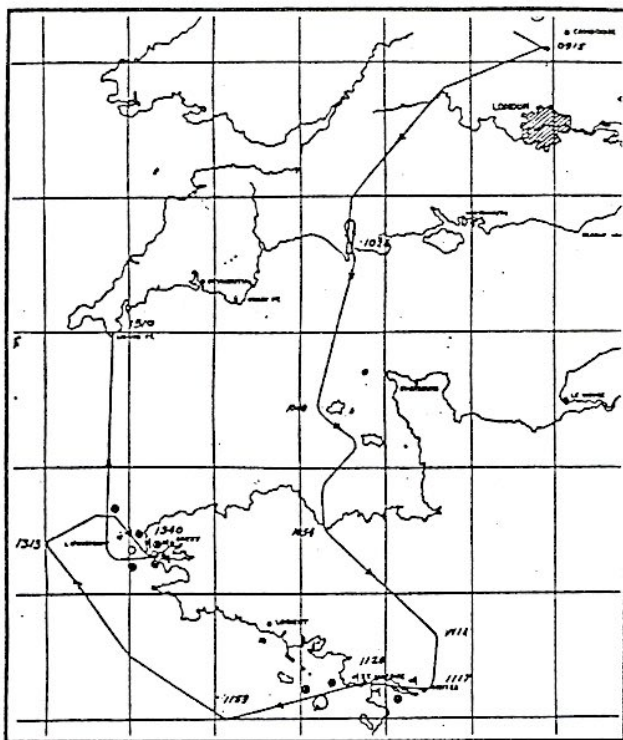
A 13 h 50 G.M.T. au lieu d'apercevoir au loin le CAP LIZARD, comme il l'escompte, le leader conduit droit sa formation sur la POINTE SAINT MATHIEU.

Sur Brest, la chasse et la Flak sont particulièrement actives. Entre 13 h 50 et 14 h 20, quatre forteresses volantes sont abattues. Le 306è BG perd trois avions, celui du Lieutenant Wiggington, dans le port de Brest à 14 h, celui du Lieutenant Pipp dans le suroît d'Ouessant à 14 h 20, celui du Lieutenant Luby par 48° 20N et 05° 00W, à 14 h 20 et enfin le 91è BG voit disparaître l'avion du Lieutenant Rand dans le chenal du Four, à 14 h 20, lui aussi.



A gauche, Edwin PIPP, pilote du
B 17 no 42 - 5422, du 306^e BG,
abattu le 1^{er} mai 1943





This track chart, from the mission of 1 May 43, was only recently located at National Archives, and is interesting as it shows where the great blunder occurred that took our planes into Brest harbor.

Recently Found Map Shows 306th Trip To St. Nazaire and Tragedy in the Brest Harbor

To: Commanding General, First Bomb Wing

1. 18 Aircraft of the 306th Bomb Group took off at 8:45 for St. Nazaire. Three returned early. Fifteen were over the target, but only twelve dropped bombs. Two jettisoned and one brought bombs back. Eleven ship; landed at Predonnock at 1530 hours, eight later proceeding to Portneath where another had previously landed.

The mission was uneventful until target was reached, when some slight enemy opposition was encountered. Flak at target was ineffective and behind formation.

2. Bombing was bad due to heavy overcast, making exact target pinpointing difficult on bomb run. Target visible only when directly overhead when such hits as could be seen were mainly in water or on point of land short and to the right of aiming point.

On return trip, while at 800 feet, formation flew over Brest in error and was engaged by light and heavy flak, as well as by 15 to 20 E/A, three of our planes being lost.

3. Three A/C turned back at English coast near Portland at 1030, one with number three engine out (Capt. Robert W. Smith 423rd), one with heavily vibrating engine, Capt. Parvis E. Younsie 423rd and one with number one engine out (Lt. Richard K. O'Hara 367th).

4. E/A opposition at target was slight, no claims reported for any encounter over target. Less than ten planes sighted. At Brest, heavy attacks by from 15 to 20 E/A, which came up to engage as formation appeared. A new attack reported was from rear from water level up against the bottom of our A/C flying at from 800 to 1500 feet. We claim eight destroyed.

(Credited were: Peter J. Nolasco 369th, two; Mike J. Komo 369th, FW 190; Smoot 423rd, FW 190; Milton B. Edwards 423rd, FW 190; John R. Ricker 369th, FW 190; Lamont J. Durlee 367th, ME 100; and William W. Fehrenholz 423rd, FW 190.)

5. Flak at St. Nazaire generally ineffective and behind. At Brest, very accurate, intense light and heavy flak. Flak boats, coastal batteries, machine guns, in addition to regular flak positions reported firing.

6. Three A/C lost, two down in Brest harbor (Edwin G. Pipp 423rd and Bart Wigginton 423rd), probably no survivors (four in Pipp plane) one ditching in the Channel (Owen Luby 367th) too near French Coast for Air Sea Rescue to be effective. Men seen launching raft. Positions reported by our A/C to tower on arrival at Predonnock. Report received at Portneath at 2040 from Air Sea Rescue stated entire Spitfire wing escorted rescue boats out in wide sweep but found nothing. Three men (Henry Beers, Joseph Zukacki and Robert Follard 423rd) baled at approximate mid-Channel (exact position impossible to secure) from our burning A/C 649 (L. P. Johnson, pilot 423rd), which later successfully landed at Predonnock with balance of crew.

7. Eleven A/C landed at Predonnock, of which three are seriously damaged. One landed at Portneath seriously damaged.

8. Three ME 110s flew level with formation, then climbed through overcast and dropped bombs on our A/C from 15,000 feet near Belle Isle. Four sticks of five bombs each reported dropped in train, bombs exploding on contact with water. One flak boat raked by fire from our A/C at Brest. One flak battery shot up by another A/C at Brest. One long, slim ship, possibly sub, reported hit by bomb at St. Nazaire. One crew reports numerous evidences of fresh building activity en route in, noting especially huge construction in several areas. Several instances reported of extreme heroism and great devotion to duty.

Foreign Affairs

Looking at Bipartisanship

ANDREW NESS was a 369th engineer late in the war who served from 1952 to 1961 as a Foreign Service Officer in a variety of capacities. His overseas assignments included Karachi, Pakistan; Bangkok, Thailand; Baghdad, Iraq and Nairobi, Kenya. His final assignment before retirement in 1981 was as an advisor for political and security affairs, U. S. Mission to the United Nations, and delegate to the U.N. Since 1980 he has served as president of the Dialectical Studies Institute. He will endeavor in a series of editorial pieces to help us in understanding how the foreign affairs of the U.S. are handled.

In a government often riven by tension and conflict between the two principal parties over domestic policies, one might think agreement on foreign policy would be easy. It isn't! Bipartisanship is missing.

This wasn't always the case. Shortly before World War II, throughout that war, and up into Vietnam era of President John F. Kennedy's administration in the early 1960's, the President set the country's general foreign policy line. While there was often public debate, once the policy was agreed upon, both parties accepted and supported it. It was this bipartisanship that imparted influence and muscle to our relations with other countries and earned us respect around the world. Political differences over whether or not to pursue the war in Vietnam shattered bipartisanship and continues to divide us even today.

While our various presidents since then have tried to set and implement foreign policy, de facto leadership has come to reside in our congress, in particular in the Senate and its Foreign Relations Committee, and, within that committee, with the various staff members who prepare the studies and guidance for their senator's presentation.

Many think policy guidance emanating from senate staffers through the senators for whom they work, instead of from the President through the Department of State, is badly misplaced—and so it is; but that is also the way it is.

To make matters worse, our foreign policy is further influenced and conditioned by a plethora of studies and opinions from various think tanks, scholars

in academia, and media foreign policy "experts." It is no wonder that our nation no longer has a central policy focus, and it is easy to understand why other nations are often bothered, amused, sometimes apprehensive and even frightened, by the manner in which the United States handles these affairs. Foreign leaders see policies enunciated on one day changed in some significant way a few days later. With so many experts it means there really is no one expert and no one voice, not even the President's. As a consequence, American foreign policy has little credibility abroad.

Without taking sides, and only to illustrate the problem, we can sympathize with President Clinton and his vacillation over what to do in Haiti and Bosnia—send troops, don't send troops, send troops. It is clear in these times that our presidents can no longer act decisively in handling international affairs. There are simply too many voices to be heard, and some of the loudest do not necessarily have the best interests of the nation at heart.

Thus, given our current foreign policy concerns—near chaos in Russia, the North Korean nuclear threat, Iran, Iraq, economic interests abroad, and excessive foreign demands on our limited resources by the United Nations for help and assistance, it is unlikely that the present or any future administration will be able to handle our international relations efficiently. Only when we again restore the bipartisan voice to foreign affairs will we be able to again act as one nation internationally.

1ST BOMBARDMENT DIVISION

CHAMPIONSHIP

BASKETBALL

WON BY AAF STATION 111

1944

Capt. I.R. Elliott	Sgt. S.M. Feely	Cpl. F.C. Biggle
Lt. W.N. Brunn	Sgt. A.A. Romer	Cpl. W.E. Scullen
Lt. W.D. Daniels	Sgt. A.S. Savage	Cpl. E.B. Thompson
Lt. D.F. Mattoon	Sgt. C.E. Sifer	Cpl. C.O. Weisgerber
M/Sgt. N.W. Sanford	Sgt. F. Baumgardner	Cpl. P.A. Wagner
S/Sgt. R.J. Might	Cpl. J.C. Gorman	Cpl. C.A. Zinder
S/Sgt. J.J. Rose	Cpl. R.R. Mount	Pfc. C.E. Tressler

Widow Visits Andorra Haven

'Rose of York' Almost - -

BREST 1^{er} Mai 1943

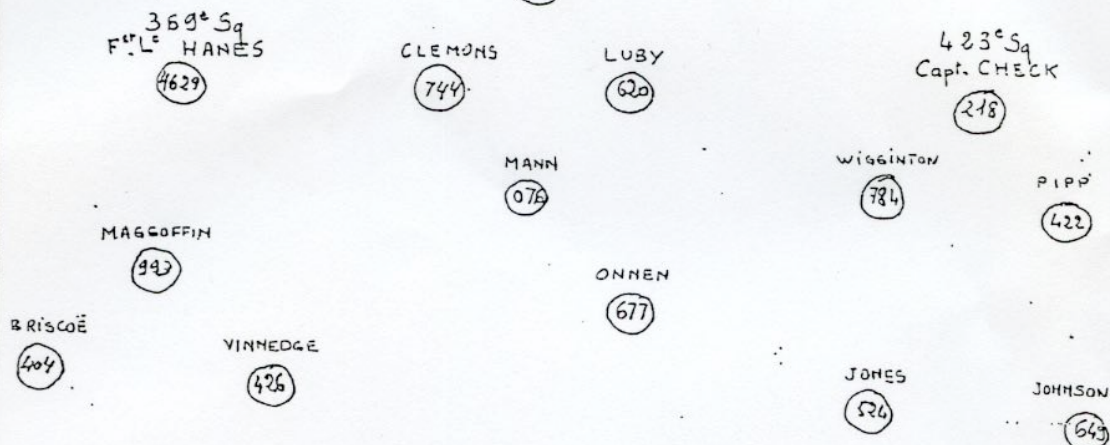
LA TRAGIQUE MÉPRISE du 306^e B.G. de la 8^e U.S.A.F au retour d'un raid sur SAINT-NAZAIRE

306^e BOMB. GROUP
8^e U. S. A. F.

BREST
1^{er} Mai 1943

367^e Sq
Col. PUTNAM

Situation de la
Formation à 13.40 GMT.



C'est dans cette formation que le 306^e B.G se présente
à la POINTE SAINT MATHIEU à la suite d'une erreur de navigation.

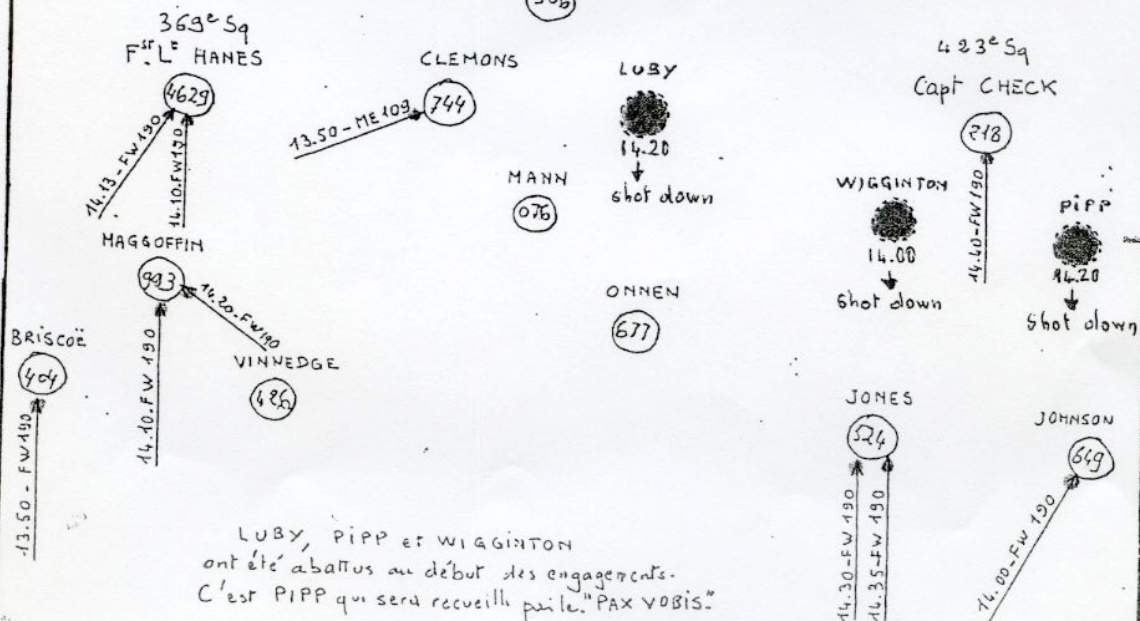
Les chasseurs allemands
des F.W. 190 et des M.E. 109
au nombre de 15 à 20, vont
poursuivre les B.17 échappés à la Flak.

306^e BOMB GROUP
8^e U. S. A. F.

BREST
1^{er} Mai 1943

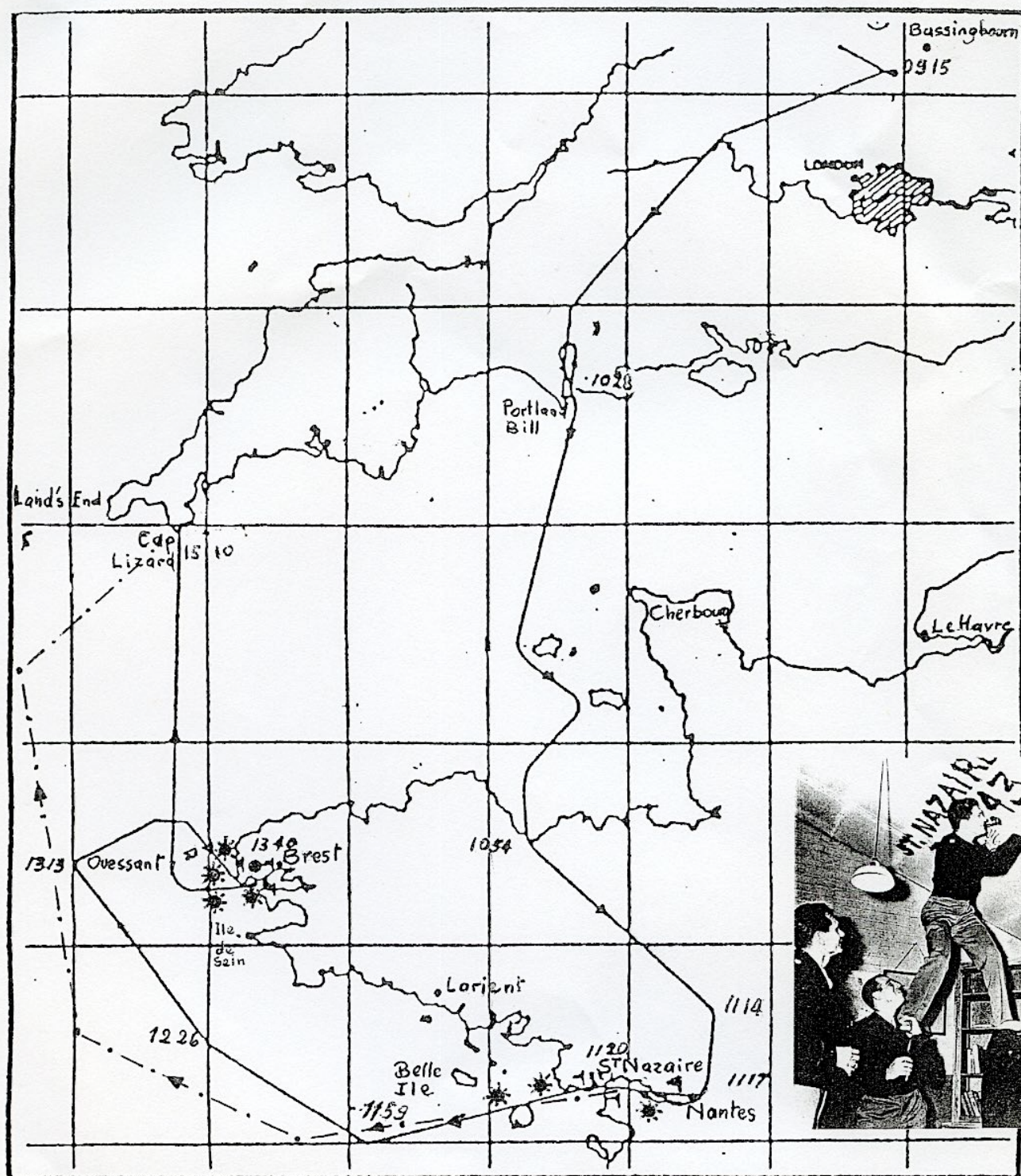
367^e Sq
Col. PUTNAM

Engagements de la
Formation à partir de 13.50 GMT



RAID AERIEN SUR SAINT-NAZAIRE

1er MAI 1943 - 8th U.S. AIR FORCE



—— . ——— Itinéraire prévu après le passage sur St-Nazaire

—— ——— Itinéraire suivi réellement

On voit, en bas de la carte, l'origine de l'erreur de navigation, entre St-NAZAIRE et BELLE-ILE, quand la formation fait demi-tour pour soutenir le 91st B.G. attaqué par deux Me BF 110.

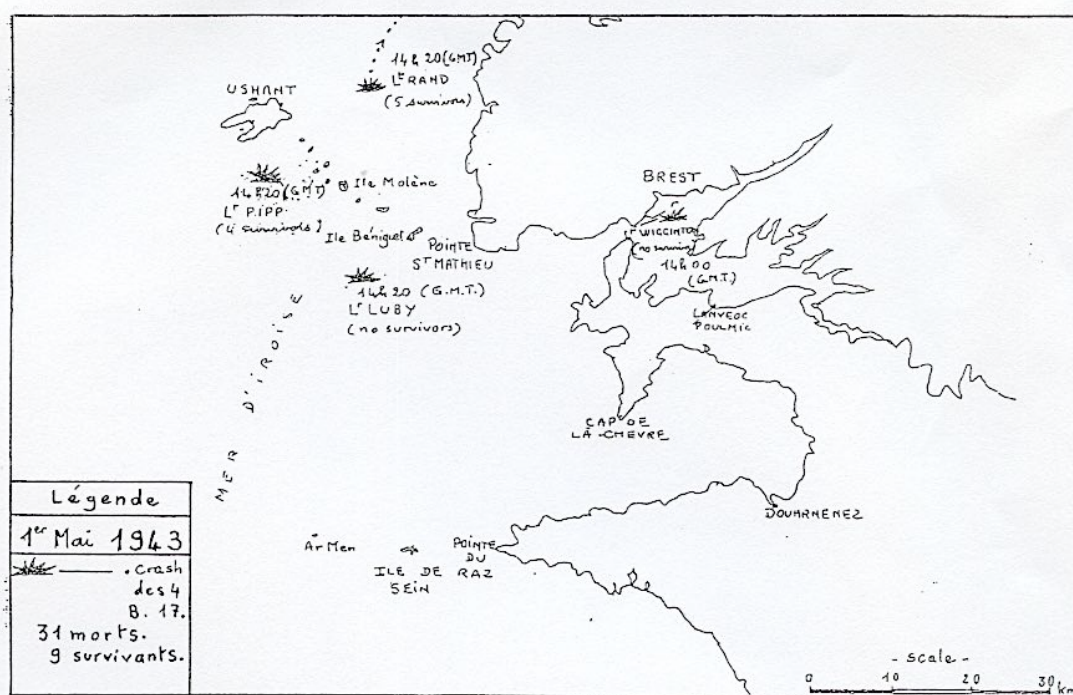
* B.17 abattus par la chasse allemande et la Flak au cours du raid du 1er mai 1943.

Sur les 40 hommes d'équipage, 9 seulement seront sauvés.

Dans cette opération, les Allemands ont perdu 18 chasseurs et les Américains 7 bombardiers et 54 hommes, soit 4 avions et 31 hommes à la suite d'une incompréhensible erreur de navigation qui a conduit la formation sur Brest à 800 pieds d'altitude.

Une note sévère, adressée à la 8ème Air Force stigmatise cette erreur, qualifiée d' "avoir un effet particulièrement désastreux sur le moral des équipages de bombardiers".

L'U.S. Air Force entreprend alors une réforme en profondeur de la formation de ses navigateurs et accentue ses recherches dans la construction de l'appareillage des aides radio-électriques à la navigation.



1 MAY 1943

VIII BC 53

	Despatched		Effective	Target	Bombs Tonnage	E/A	Losses MIA		Casualties				
									E	Dam	KIA	WIA	MIA
1BW				ST.NAZAIRE U/B (P) 1125-1131 hrs	57 x 2000GP								
B-17	91BG	20	2										
	303BG	19	10										
	305BG	21	5										
	306BG	18	12										
TOTALS:		78	29		57.0	18-6-8	7		2	20	3	17	73
2BW				DIVERSION BRITTANY COAST									
B-24	44BG	18											
	93BG	6											
TOTALS:		24	-		0	0-0-0	0		0	0	0	0	0

REMARKS: Poor weather prevented most bombing. 306BG crew member Sgt Maynard Smith received MOH for action this day. The B-17 in which he was flying landed at Predannack with severe battle damage and was salvaged.

13PS despatched 2 F-5 to photograph French ports.

INCIDENT

Throughout 8th Air Force operations there were numerous instances of navigational error precipitating disaster. Constant vigilance was demanded to fly a briefed course across under-casts and through weather fronts that so often hindered the heavy bombers. In such conditions it was very easy for navigation to go astray. On May Day, 1943, heavy cloud frustrated a mission to St. Nazaire. Turning for home the bombers were supposed to take a north-westerly course to ensure they skirted the Brest penin-

sula by 60 miles. The leading 306th Group somehow miscalculated and made a turn to the north and England too early. Losing altitude the Group was suddenly made aware of its wandering by flak from the Brest area, an error which cost three B-17s. The trailing 91st Group saw what was happening and made a sharp turn left. This manoeuvre dispersed the formation and enemy fighters then arrived to take advantage of the situation. Such happenings, coupled with the inability to successfully bomb a target, had a particularly damping effect on aircrew morale.



Edwin G. PIPP
pilote de B.17,
8th U.S.A.F.,
en 1942
Abattu le
1^{er} mai 1943,
sur « Bank ar
Vervent ».

- ANNEXE -

Le cercle vert de l'Iroise...

50 ans ont passé...



Retrouvailles sur le
port de Douarnenez :
E.G. Pipp et M. Mazéas
en 1996.

Les 4 rescapés du B. 17 n°42-5 422 du 306th B.G. sont recueillis en mer par le « PAX VOBIS », palengrier de l'ILE de SEIN, patron Jos GUILCHER. Deux d'entre eux sont blessés, James MELLILO et Eli ROGERS. Les deux autres sont indemnes, dont le pilote Edwin PIPP et James BABBS, mitrailleur arrière. Ils finiront la guerre dans un camp de prisonniers malgré les efforts des Allemands pour ne pas les livrer aux Allemands. Quant aux 6 autres membres de l'équipage ils gisent encore au fond de l'océan, à jamais, dans la carcasse de leur quadrimoteur.

Les 5 rescapés du B. 17 « VERTIGO » n°24-547 du 91st B.G. dérivent pendant 24 heures dans la Manche avant d'être recueillis par un navire allemand qui les ramène à SAINT MALO. Eux aussi finiront la guerre dans un camp de prisonniers en Allemagne. Il s'agissait du Maj. ROSENAUER, du Sgt WAWRZYNEK, du Sgt HATCH, du Sgt FARRAR et du Sgt PLATT.

Les 5 autres membres de l'équipage n'ont jamais été retrouvés.

Deux appareils disparaissent corps et biens, ce 1^{er} mai 1943.

Celui du 1st Lieutenant Owen LUBY n°42-29620 du 306th B.G.

Celui du 1st Lieutenant Bart WIGGINTON n°42-5784 du 306th B.G.

On n'a jamais retrouvé les corps de ces 20 aviateurs.



Bombardier
quadrimoteur
B.17. de
l'U.S. Air Force
(1943)



Personalkarte I: Personelle Angaben

Kriegsgefangenen-Stammlager: *Per 188* Stalag Luft 3

Beschriftung der Erkennungsmarke

Nr. *1292*

Lager

Name:

RIPP

Staatsangehörigkeit:

U.S.A.

Vorname:

Edwin Gaylord

Dienstgrad:

Sgt.

Geburtstag und -ort:

9.5.19 Belmond, Mich

Truppenteil: *U.S.A.F.* Kom. usw.:

Religion:

CH

Zivilberuf: *Berichtungs-Gr.*

Vorname des Vaters:

Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatstaates):

2-751 496

Familienname der Mutter:

Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum): *15.43 Brink*

Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert:

Lichtbild

Nähere Personalbeschreibung



Grösse:

1.83

Haarfarbe:

dkl. braun

Besondere Kennzeichen:

Fingerabdruck des rechten I. Zeigefingers



Name und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person in der Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen

*Mrs. Wanda Ripp
1939 No. 17 TH. St.
Brose, Idaho*

Wenden!

Deutsche Sprachkenntnisse:

Besondere Merkmale:

Gebir:

geb.

Gesichtsfarbe:

normal

Schadellorm:

normal

Gewicht:

77 kg

Augen:

blau

Bart:

Haare:

dkl. braun

Gesicht:

normal

Alter:

35-40

Grösse:

1.83 m

Figur:

adlanke

Personalbeschreibung

Des Kriegsgefangenen