

CHAPITRE III**RAID SUR SAINT-NAZAIRE**

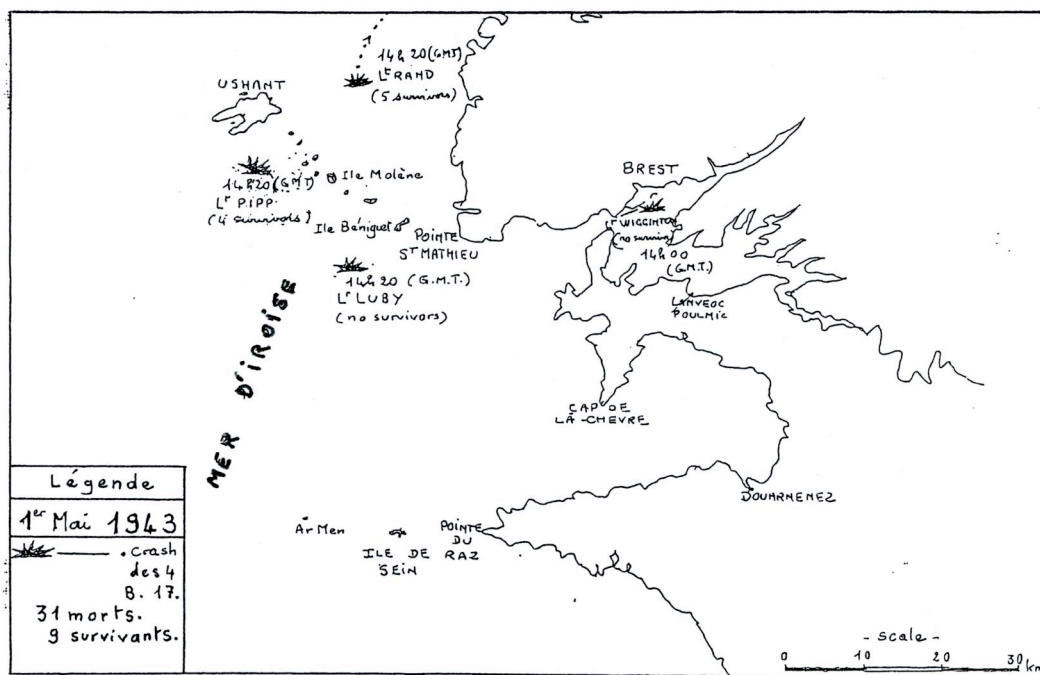
- . BRIEFING A THURLEIGH.
- . BANK AR VERVENT.
- . READY TO TAKE OFF !
- . VERS L'OBJECTIF.
- . TARGET !

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	E	Dam	Casualties KIA	WIA	MIA
1BW			ST. NAZAIRE U/B (P)								
B-17	91BG	20	1125-1131 hrs	57 x 2000GP	3-0-0	1	0	3	0	4	10
	303BG	19			5-6-6	2	0	8	2	0	20
	305BG	21			2-0-2	1	0	3	0	1	10
	306BG	18			8-0-0	3	2	6	1	12	33
TOTALS:		78		57.0	18-6-8	7	2	20	3	17	73
2BW			DIVERSION								
B-24	44BG	18	BRITTANY COAST								
	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 undercasts 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.

BREST 1^{er} Mai 1943

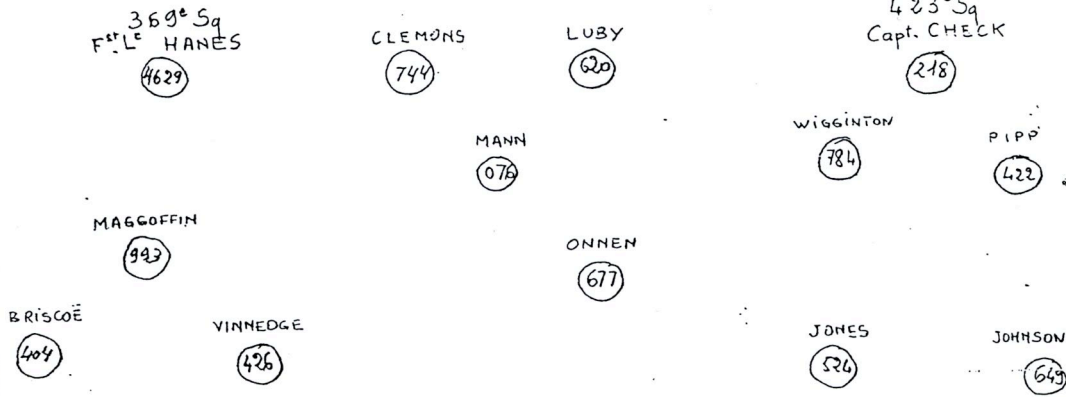
LA TRAGIQUE MÉPRISE
du 306^e B.G. de la 8^e U.S.A.F
au retour d'un raid
sur SAINT-NAZAIRE

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.

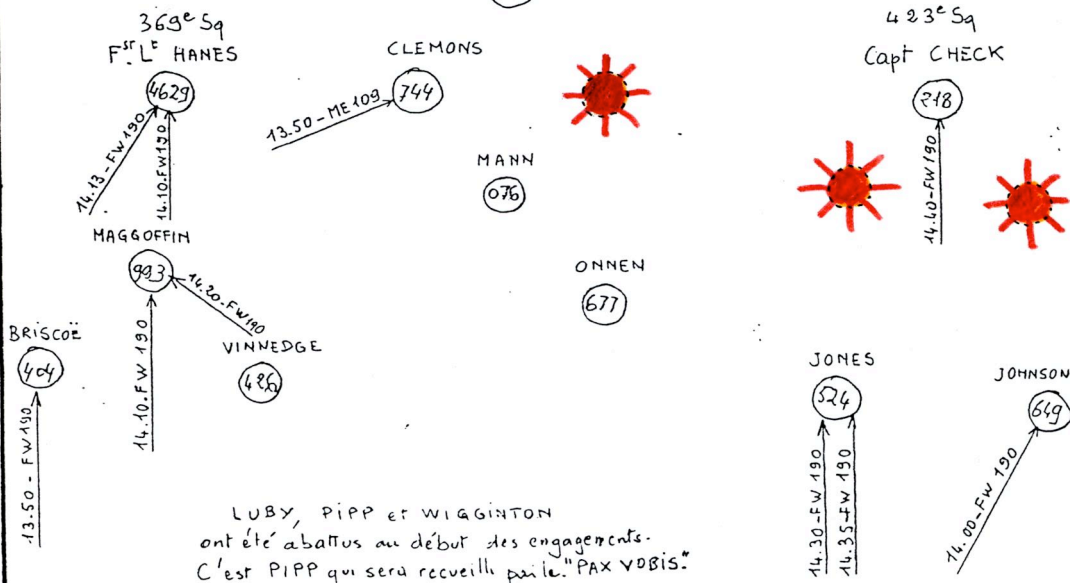
Les chasseurs allemands,
des F.W. 190 et des M.E. 109,
au nombre de 15 à 20, vont
poursuivre les B. 17 échappés à la Flak.

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





La "SAINTE THÉRÈSE" refait
sa peinture, à l'échouage.

Au centre, le patron, Hervé GLOAGUEN, surnommé
"An hini Bovar". En 1935 il fera installer le
premier "petit moteur" à relever les palanques
sur son bateau. C'était un moteur BRITT
à essence avec prise d'eau à la mer.

A sa droite, Gaby QUEMENER qui perdra
une jambe dans la "guerre de la bolinche".

US 8TH AIR FORCE ORDER OF BATTLE: JUNE 1944

1ST BOMB DIVISION

1st Bomb Wing B-17

91ST BG 322, 323, 324, 401 BS
 381ST BG 532, 533, 534, 535 BS
 398TH BG 600, 601, 602, 603 BS

40th Bomb Wing B-17

92ND BG 325, 326, 327, 407 BS
 305TH BG 364, 365, 366, 422 BS
 306TH BG 367, 368, 369, 423 BS

41st Bomb Wing B-17

303RD BG 358, 359, 360, 427 BS
 379TH BG 524, 525, 526, 527 BS
 384TH BG 544, 545, 546, 547 BS

94th Bomb Wing B-17

351ST BG 508, 509, 510, 511 BS
 401ST BG 612, 613, 614, 615 BS
 457TH BG 748, 749, 750, 751 BS

2ND BOMB DIVISION

2nd Bomb Wing B-24

389TH BG 564, 565, 566, 567 BS
 445TH BG 700, 701, 702, 703 BS
 453RD BG 732, 733, 734, 735 BS

14th Bomb Wing B-24

44TH BG 66, 67, 68, 506 BS
 392ND BG 576, 577, 578, 579 BS
 492ND BG 856, 857, 858, 859 BS

20th Bomb Wing B-24

93RD BG 328, 329, 340, 409 BS
 446TH BG 704, 705, 706, 707 BS
 448TH BG 712, 713, 714, 715 BS

95th Bomb Wing B-24

489TH BG 844, 845, 846, 847 BS
 491ST BG 852, 853, 854, 855 BS

96th Bomb Wing B-24

458TH BG 752, 753, 754, 755 BS
 466TH BG 784, 785, 786, 787 BS
 467TH BG 789, 790, 791 BS

3RD BOMB DIVISION

4th Bomb Wing B-17

94TH BG 331, 332, 333, 410 BS
 385TH BG 548, 549, 550, 551 BS
 447TH BG 708, 709, 710, 711 BS

13th Bomb Wing B-17

95TH BG 334, 335, 336, 412 BS
 100TH BG 349, 350, 351, 418 BS
 390TH BG 568, 569, 570, 571 BS

45th Bomb Wing B-17

96TH BG 337, 338, 339, 413 BS
 388TH BG 560, 561, 562, 563 BS
 452ND BG 728, 729, 730, 731 BS

92nd Bomb Wing B-24

486TH BG 832, 833, 834, 835 BS
 487TH BG 836, 837, 838, 839 BS

93rd Bomb Wing B-24

34TH BG 4, 7, 18, 391 BS
 490TH BG 848, 849, 851 BS
 493RD BG 860, 861, 862, 863 BS

Bassingbourn
 Ridgewell
 Nuthampstead

Podington
 Chelveston
 Thurleigh

Molesworth
 Kimbolton
 Grafton Underwood

Polebrook
 Deenethorpe
 Glatton

Hethel
 Tibenham
 Old Buckenham

Shipdham
 Wendling
 North Pickenham

Hardwick
 Bungay
 Seething

Halesworth
 Metfield

Horsham St. Faith
 Attlebridge
 Rackheath

Bury St. Edmunds
 Great Ashfield
 Rattlesden

Horham
 Thorpe Abbots
 Framlingham

Snetterton Heath --
 Knettishall
 Deopham Green

Sudbury
 Lavenham

Mendlesham
 Eye
 Debach

VIII FIGHTER COMMAND

65th Fighter Wing

4TH FG 334, 335, 336 FS P-51
 56TH FG 61, 62, 63 FS P-47
 355TH FG 354, 357, 358 FS P-51
 356TH FG 359, 360, 361 FS P-47
 479TH FG 434, 435, 436 FS P-38
 5 ERS P-47

66th Fighter Wing

55TH FG 38, 338, 343 FS P-38
 78TH FG 82, 83, 84 FS P-47
 339TH FG 503, 504, 505 FS P-51
 353RD FG 350, 351, 352 FS P-47
 357TH FG 362, 363, 364 FS P-51

67th Fighter Wing

20TH FG 55, 77, 79 FS P-38
 352ND FG 328, 486, 487 FS P-51
 359TH FG 368, 369, 370 FS P-51
 361ST FG 374, 375, 376 FS P-51
 364TH FG 383, 384, 385 FS P-38

Debden
 Boxted
 Steeple Morden
 Martlesham
 Wattisham
 Boxted

Wormingford
 Duxford
 Fowlmere
 Raydon
 Leiston

King's Cliffe
 Bodney
 East Wretham
 Bottisham
 Honington

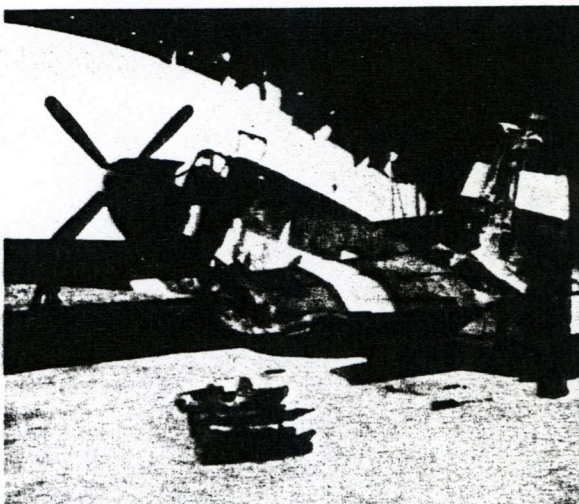
VIII COMPOSITE COMMAND

801ST BG(P) 36, 406, 788,
 850 BS

495TH FTG 551, 552 FS P-24
 496TH FTG 554, 555 FS P-47
 803 BS(P) P-38 & P-51
 B-17 Goxhill
 Oulton

Under BAF HQ

7PG 13, 14, 22, 27 PS Spitfire &
 F-5 Mount Farm
 802 RG(P) 652, 653, 654, B-24 &
 BS(P) Mosquito Watton



44. In an air fight over south-west France, Captain Duane Beeson shot down an enemy fighter but took a shell in the tail of his P-51B 43-6819, QP-B. Beeson was to become one of

the leading Mustang aces in the 4th FG, the first 8th Air Force unit to convert from P-47s to P-51s, a programme which began in February 1944. (F. Bodner)



Le "Mauser" en bandoulière,
malgré son air bonasse, le
préposé de la GAST arpente
les quais du ROSMEUR

(photo X... Collection André LAGADEC)