

## **S/Sgt Howard R. Barkley**

**39553433**

**AAF 1943-1944**



**By Howard R. Barkley, Jr.**

This is the journey of a 19 year old young man serving his country from enlistment to Honorable Discharge. The young man was my father. He was an airman with the 720th Bomb Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group (H), 47th Bomb Wing, 15th Air Force based at Manduria, Italy.

### **1943**

**12 Jan:** Dad was inducted at Los Angeles, California. He traveled by train to Jefferson Barracks, Lemay, Missouri. The base is located south of St. Louis along the Mississippi. It was a major reception center and basic training facility for the Army Air Force.

\*Basic training lasted five weeks and included 73 hours of drills and marches; 15 hours of physical training; 54 hours of marksmanship; 13 hours of military procedure; 8 hours of first aid; 12 hours of sanitation; 3 hours of personal adjustment; 5 hours of care of clothing and equipment; 5 hours of defense against chemical attack; 5 hours of individual security; 4 hours of map and photo interpretation; and 4 hours of defense air attack.

**21 Feb:** Upon completion of Basic Training Dad was promoted to Pfc and transferred to Aircraft Armament School in East Lansing Michigan to arrive February 27th with training to commence March 1st at Michigan State College.

**March:** The Oldsmobile's Armament Training Course was a three week course to achieve the title of Armament Specialist. He trained on the .50 caliber Browning machine gun since it was the bomber's

defensive weapon. In order to be certified, the candidate had to assemble and disassemble the gun blindfolded. 20 March Dad received his diploma.

**April-May:** Dad's military specialty was Aerial Photographer. Training was four to eight weeks depending on the airman's intended military assignment. Training was at the technical school at Lowry Field near Denver, Colorado. It was the only training school in US at the time.

\*In 1943, 200 students arrived every week. Training included photographic laboratory work, camera repair, cinematography and production of training films.

**17 July:** While attending the six week course to be a gunner at Las Vegas Army Airfield Flex Gunnery School Dad was promoted to Sergeant. He was in Class 43-29 according to his cadet book.. Students learned about ballistics, gun turret operations, maintenance, and gun repair.

\*The school was activated May 1941 with the mission to "make Air Force bombers the most deadly in the air - four motor - fighters." Students received six weeks of intensive training. The training started on the ground using mounted shotguns with fixed arcs of fire, and then shotguns mounted on the backs of trucks which were driven through a course. Then the students went up in bombers, shooting at targets pulled by other aircraft.

**The 450th Bombardment Group** was constituted as a new heavy bomber group 6 April 1943 by Headquarters, Second Air Force, Fort George Wright, Washington and activated 1 May 1943. Initial organization and operational training took place in Florida in June 1943. The Group moved to Alamogordo mid-July 1943 coming to full strength with 70 crews 14 August. Bomber crews were composed entirely of volunteers because of the dangerous nature of their service.

**Late July:** Reporting to Alamogordo, New Mexico, Dad was assigned to the 720th Squadron of the 450th Bomb Group (H). The 450th was designated as an OTU - Operational Training Unit destined to go overseas upon completion of training.

\*As an OTU ground and flying personnel trained together, and the unit was capable of administering, feeding, clothing and housing itself. Training was divided into three overlapping phases: First, the trainees increased their proficiency in individual skills and learn to work as a team becoming familiar with equipment and techniques. Second, formation flying is stressed. Finally, trainees moved to a training area which approximated a battle zone, flying long formation bombing missions, learn to live, work and fight under combat conditions.

**3 Oct:** While at Alamogordo Dad qualified as a Marksman with 45 caliber pistol, Score 70. This was pretty common for both enlisted and officers.

**November:** After five months training, the POM inspector - Preparation for Overseas Movement - gave the 450th approval and the group began leaving Alamogordo, New Mexico and then continental United States in early December.

\*Some of the 450th ferried the B-24's overseas while the majority of the personnel went by ship, the USS Henry Baldwin. The ship left for the open sea from Newport News, Virginia, 4 December 1943 arriving at Bari, Italy 29 December 1943 after a one night stop in Augusta, Sicily. The 450th Historian reported that the trip was uneventful and the food bad.

**18 Nov:** Dad was on the move.

**NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

(A sufficient number of these cards will be distributed to each soldier when his mail address is changed to permit him to send one to each of his regular correspondents.)

Date 18 NOVEMBER, 1943.

This is to advise you that my correct address now is—

SGT HOWARD R. BARKLEY 39553433  
(Grade) (Name) (Army Serial No.)

720TH. BOMB SQ. 450TH. BOMB GP.  
(Company or comparable unit) (Regiment or comparable unit)

APO No. 9101 % Postmaster NEW YORK N.Y.  
(Strike out if not applicable) (Name of post office)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE.—Newspapers and magazines may need your old address for correct processing.

My old address was 720TH. BOMB SQ., 450TH. BOMB GP.,  
AAB, ALAMOGORDO, N.M.

W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204  
 April 8, 1943 16-33887-1 GPO

**25 Nov:** The crew led by 2nd Lt. Paul Cantrell picked up a new B-24H in Topeka, Kansas. #42-52124, Battle #3, naming it *Pistol Packin' Mama* and flew it to Morrison Field, West Palm Beach .



**Operations Order #236, 4 Dec 1943:** The crew of #42-52124 was ordered to ferry the aircraft overseas. The crew consisted of: 2nd Lt. Paul B. Cantrell (P), 2nd Lt Elmer Adrian (CP), 2nd Lt. Donald De Kraker (N), 2nd Lt. Lawrence H. Miles (B), Sgt. Scott M. Aylesworth, Jr. (E), Sgt. Jack R. Noe (R), Sgt Harley O. Tedford, Jr. (AG), Sgt. Howard R. Barkley (CG), Sgt. Victor J. Monkus, Jr. (CG), Sgt. Charles J. Boynton (CG). The aircraft also took along four passengers. Departure date was 6 Dec 1943 arriving with the original cadre 14 Dec 1943 according to Dad's enlistment record.



\*From Morrison Field, Florida they flew to Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico then the next morning to British Guianan's Atkinson Field. Early morning takeoff took them to Belem, Brazil on the Amazon River. Natal, Brazil was the next stop and jumping off place for the combat theater. From there it was across the Atlantic Ocean to Dakar, West Africa then on to Tunis. From Tunis, the 450th flew across the Mediterranean Sea to its new home at Manduria, Italy arriving 14 December 1943.

\*Located in the heel of the boot of Italy, Manduria became the home to the 720th, 721st, 722nd, and 723rd Squadrons of the 450th Bomb Group. Upon arrival, the Group was faced with severe shortages of just about everything (except mud) and had to live under Spartan conditions because of a German raid on the port of Bari on December 2nd. The raid destroyed 16 ships filled with cargo destined for the 15th Air Force.



\*Side Note: Among the ships in the harbor was the merchant vessel John Harvey. Unbeknownst to her captain she carried 100 tons of mustard gas. The fire and subsequent normal ammunition explosion set off the mustard gas bombs. The Army chemical warfare specialist and his crew died fighting the fire aboard the John Harvey. Wind spread the mustard gas over the town of Bari causing severe injuries and an unknown number of deaths. The Army authorities, Winston Churchill, and Secretary of War Stimson played the three monkeys - see, hear, and say nothing.

## **1944**

\*A normal squadron of heavy bombers was composed of 12 aircraft. There were four squadrons (48 combat crews) per Group. A heavy bombardment group had 293 officers, 1497 enlisted, and one warrant officer. There were extra aircraft and crews to offset the attrition. Medium bomb groups and fighter groups had different aircraft and personnel allocations. See Appendix.

**January:** *Pistol Packin' Mama* flew eight out of 19 Squadron missions in the first month of combat.. The Squadron flew 125 sorties losing one aircraft and crew. Officer and enlisted strength at month end was 466.

**8 Jan 1944:** First mission flown by the 450th Bombardment Group. Twenty aircraft from the 721st and 723rd dropped 48 tons of bombs on Mostar, Yugoslavia airdrome from an altitude of 19,000-19,500 feet. Group was escorted by P-38s from 82nd Fighter Group. No enemy aircraft and flak considered light. No casualties. Target damage unknown due to cloud cover.

**13 Jan:** First combat mission for Dad and *Pistol Packin' Mama* crew was to bomb the long range reconnaissance airdrome at Perugia, Italy. Due to weather conditions only two planes of the 720th

dropped their fragmentation bombs on the primary target. One plane jettison in an early return. Six jettisoned in the Adriatic Sea...Dad called jettisoning bombing fish.

\*Group sent 45 aircraft. Heavy clouds over target. Bombing results undetermined. 19,500-21,500 feet. Seven enemy encounters with 2-5 ME-109s attacking together, damage minor. Heavy, but inaccurate flak over target. No casualties. P-38s of 82nd FG escorted.



**14 Jan:** Ten of the 720th's aircraft took part in a successful raid on the marshalling yard at Mostar, Yugoslavia. Bomb load was 12 x 500 G.P. Seven dropped on the target, and one B-24 on an alternate target. Two jettison because of malfunctions and one returned early. (An early return did not count as a mission flown)

\*The Group lost one aircraft to flak over target, four chutes seen. Two crewmen were wounded by flak. Flak was heavy and accurate with twenty B-24s hit. ME-109 shot down by P-38.

**15 Jan:** Prato, Italy marshalling yard was the target. Six Squadron aircraft dropped 12 x 500 G.P. on the target, two jettisoned on an early return. One jettison on way back to base when bomb bay wouldn't open over target.

**18 Jan:** The Squadron was subjected to heavy, intense, accurate anti-aircraft fire bombing marshalling yard at Pisa, Italy. One 720th aircraft was damaged and forced to land in Corsica.

\*Thirty-one B-24's dropped 79 tons of 500 lb demolition bombs from 20,000 - 21,500 feet. There were three early aircraft returns that jettisoned bombs over sea. One aircraft and crew was lost to flak. Heavy concentration of hits seen on target and immediate area. P-38s of 82nd FG escorted.

**27 Jan:** Mission to Istres Le Tube, France airdrome. Six planes of the 720th dropped 72 x 500 G.P.'s on airdrome. Airdrome was important because it was used by enemy aircraft to attack the Anzio Beachhead. Two aircraft jettisoned and returned early.

\*34 Group aircraft took off, 5 returned early. 27 dropped 80 tones of 500 lb G.P. on target from 21,000-22,000 feet. One aircraft lost. No enemy aircraft. Flak heavy and accurate over target. Three enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground, barracks, works shops, hangers heavily hit. High Command called the mission "courageous and well executed."

**29 Jan:** Dad was promoted to Staff Sergeant.

**29 Jan:** Squadron mission to Siena, Italy marshalling yards. Eight planes dropped 500 pounders on the yards and vicinity... A "milk run"

\*Thirty-six Group aircraft on the mission, five returned early. 93 tons of bombs dropped at 20,000 feet. No casualties. No enemy planes. No flak.

**30 Jan:** Capt. Clark J. Wicks, the 720th Squadron Commander, was fatally wounded by flak and his plane badly damaged over the airdrome at Udine, Italy. The co-pilot 2nd Lt Bechtel landed the damaged aircraft at Foggia, Italy. Parked aircraft were attacked with six clusters of twenty fragmentation bombs in each of eight planes. One aircraft jettisoned and returned early.

\*Thirty-two B-24's dropped from 22,000 - 24,000 feet on the target. Flak heavy and accurate. Five B-24s hit. Four crew members wounded. About 12 ME-109s, FW-190s, MC-202s attacked the lead element. Escort of P-38's went after the attackers. No B-24s were hit.

**31 Jan:** Aviano, Italy airdrome attacked by eight Squadron aircraft. Seven dropped 12 x 500 G.P. bombs on the target and one brought bombs back on an early return.

\*Thirty-three Group B-24's with five returning early. Twenty-seven dropped 78 tons of 500 G.P. on target from 24,500 feet. Photos showed good target coverage. Four attacks by enemy aircraft, but they were not aggressive. Two ME-109s claimed shot down. Flak was heavy and accurate over the target. Eight Group aircraft were holed.

**February 1944:** Dad flew five out of nine Squadron missions. The Squadron flew 75 sorties during the month losing two B-24's with 20 crewmen. Squadron strength at month end was 442.

**2 Feb:** Squadron kitchen was moved from a tent to a former indoor Italian kitchen. Food started to improve.

**3 Feb:** 12 x 500 G.P.'s were the load taken to the marshalling yards at Pontassieve, Italy. Four Squadron aircraft dropped on the target, three unloaded on the town and one on a target of opportunity. Results mediocre due to weather.

\*Thirty-five Group aircraft with three returning early. Thirty-two aircraft dropped on secondary target, the Stimigliano marshalling yard. Reported bombs dropped on target. Heavy weather from takeoff the limiting factor.

**10 Feb:** The Squadron flew to Valmontone, Italy to destroy enemy stores in support of the Anzio Beachhead. Eleven planes brought their 12 x 500 lb bomb loads home because of the solid cloud cover and close proximity of friendly troops prevented bombing.

**11,12,13 Feb:** No missions flown due to bad weather.

**16 Feb:** Pontassieve, Italy marshalling yards with nine 720th planes dropping 108 x 500 G.P.'s on target from 22,000 feet with one aircraft dropping on alternate target. Two enlisted crewmen hospitalized for frostbite upon returning to Manduria.

\*Forty-two Group aircraft took off at 0911 hours. Thirty-two dropped 96 tons of 500 G.P. on the primary target at 1152 hours. Four dropped railroad tracks at Dicomano while two dropped on Rufino. Photos showed good concentration on the target.

**17 Feb:** Enemy storage dump north of the Anzio Beachhead was the target. Seven Squadron aircraft each dropped 12 x 500 G.P. bombs on the target.



\*Thirty-nine Group aircraft with six early returns. Thirty-two flew three hours to drop 94 tons of 500 G.P. from 21,000 feet. No enemy fighters, but flak was heavy, intense and accurate. One aircraft lost over target. Eleven aircraft damaged by flak. Two crew wounded. Five brought bomb loads home. Bombing results considered good.

**18 -21 Feb:** Bad weather kept the 450th grounded.

**22 Feb:** Obertraubling Messerschmitt Aircraft Assembly Plant at Regensburg, Germany. Nine 720th B-24's carried 12 x 500 G.P.'s. Single engine enemy aircraft attacked on the approach to Regensburg. Attacks were aggressive coming in high to level from six to nine o'clock. Gunners destroyed two and probably a third enemy aircraft. One B-24 came back badly shot up and three crew were hospitalized - two wounded and one frostbite. Another aircraft was abandoned due to gas shortage. All bailed out safely. The attack was considered successful with good coverage on the target. This mission counted as a double for the flyers.

\*This was the longest mission that the Group had flown and it was the first time that they had flown over Germany. This factory produced nearly 50% of the ME-109's, one-third of Germany's single engine fighters. Forty-two Group aircraft took off at 0815 hours joining the 376th and 451st BG over Fesana. There were 13 early returns. Twenty-nine aircraft were over the target at 1258 hours. Of these, 20 dropped 58 tons of 500 lb G.P. bombs from 21,000 - 23,500 feet. Around Graz 25 ME-109's and FW-190's attacked the Group. The Group lost four aircraft and 40 men. Group claims were 7 ME-109s and one FW-190.



\*\*On 25 February the 450th Group returned to Regensburg to bomb the ME-109 Prufening Aircraft Factory. Deputy Group Commander Col Gideon led the 47th Wing and twenty-nine Group aircraft. Twenty-two dropped 64 tons of 1000 lb G.P. on target. The formation was attacked about 300 miles from the target by 15-20 ME-109s and Ju-88s. Two b-24s lost to fighters, 10 chutes seen. Two more aircraft did not return. The 450th was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for this mission. The crew of the *PPM* did not fly this mission.

**27 Feb:** In a German propaganda broadcast, the 450th became the "white-tailed boys". Group Commander Col John S. Mills addressed a group formation on 28 February. After reading

commendation notes from Generals Eaker, Spaatz, and Atkinson the Colonel said to put white on the aircraft tails to "make the Hun squeal louder." Thus, the birth of the 'Cottontails'.



**29 Feb:** Crew photo with new Nose Art on the aircraft.



Back of the photo.



S/Sgt Samuel B. Kern Athens, Ala.  
 Lt Paul B. Cantrell 312 Austin Pl Macon, Ga.  
 Lt Don De Kraker 231 W 17th Holland Mich  
 Lt. Lawrence H. Miles 360 East 122 St. Cleveland, O.  
 Lt. *Chenick*

S/Sgt. Scott W. Ryneworth L. Laurelale Miss  
 S/Sgt. Barclay D. Bedford - Lawrenceville Illinois  
 Sgt Howard R. Barkley E. North California  
 Sgt Jack R. De Lee Missouri  
 S/Sgt. Char Boynton 3304 Atlantic St. L.A. Calif  
 S/Sgt. Victor F. Monks Baltimore, Md.

February 29, 1944

**March 1944:** There were 21 non-operational days for the 450th due to rain, mud, and more mud. The Squadron flew ten missions for 77 sorties losing two aircraft and 20 men during the month. Dad flew seven of the missions. Squadron personnel strength at month end was 481.

**11 Mar:** *Pistol Packin' Mama* flew the raid to bomb the U-boat repair facilities at Toulon, France. Ten 720th aircraft took off carrying a load of 10 x 500 G.P.'s. Six planes bombed the target, four brought their bombs home. Bombing results were good. A commendation was received from Colonel Rush, Commanding Officer of the 47th Wing for the coordination and timing of the raid.

\*20 to 25 ME-109s and FW-190's were encountered over the target area. They did not attack until the end of the bomb run. And then attacked without any apparent coordination or operational plan. One attacking aircraft was positively identified as a Spitfire with British markings on top of the wings and fuselage and German markings on the wing undersides. The Spit shot down one of the Group B-24s.

**14 March 1944** S/Sgt Howard R. Barkley was Awarded Air Medal for flying five missions then later the same month received his first Oak Leaf Cluster for the Air Medal.

**17 Mar:** Ten 720th aircraft participated in the scheduled attack on the aircraft assembly plant at Schwechat Airdrome at Vienna, Austria. Weather effectively canceled the mission with seven planes

dropping bombs on the alternate target, Vienna's industrial area. One plane crashed on landing without injuries and one ditched in the Adriatic.



**18 Mar:** Dispersed aircraft at Lovariano Airdrome, Italy was the Squadron's target with eight planes covering the target with fragmentation bombs. One aircraft returned early due to supercharger problems bombing fish in the Adriatic on the return.

\*The Group put up thirty-nine aircraft rendezvousing with the 451st BG at 3000 feet over Manduria. 42 tons of fragmentation bombs were dropped by thirty-six aircraft at 22,000 feet. Target area well covered. No fighters and moderate inaccurate flak over the target

**19 Mar:** Dad's 20th mission was to the Walzergenswerk Ball Bearing Plant in Steyr, Austria. The 720th contributed seven planes to the Group's thirty-seven B-24's. The target was obscured by solid cloud cover and the Group bombed the alternate, Graz, Austria from 21,000 feet. Cloud cover prevented accurate observations. Two Squadron crewman each shot down an ME-109. Because of the distance and enemy opposition the mission counted as a double.

\*Over the target flak was intense, accurate and heavy holing 16 aircraft. The majority of enemy fighters did not press home their attacks. However, a flight of 6 ME-109's flown by experienced pilots who attacked in elements of 2 abreast braking off on the after firing and then reforming high above and to the rear of the formation. One of the Group's aircraft was shot down.

**20, 21, 22 Mar:** The Squadron was non-operational due to weather. On 22 March, all enlisted personnel were addressed by the Squadron Medical Officer, Capt. Wagner, and the Squadron Commander, Capt. Colley on sex. A load of lumber arrived for use on the enlisted men's mess hall.

**23 Mar:** Squadron was briefed again on ball bearing plant at Steyr, Austria, took off and returned within a hour due to bad weather.

**24 Mar:** Target of the Day...again...was the Walzergenswerk Ball Bearing Plant in Steyr, Austria. Weather and poor visibility forced the second attack unit to turn back. The first attack unit led by Major Snaith,

the 720th turned to the alternate target with eight planes bombing the marshalling yards at Rimini, Italy. Four crewmen each claimed an ME-109. One plane was lost to enemy fighters over the sea.

\*The Group put up forty-two B-24's at 0732-0800 hours. Two B-24's collided over the Adriatic Sea, no chutes seen. Due to bad weather only twenty aircraft continued to alternate target via Trieste and were heavily engaged by fighters. Attacks from around the clock from ME-109's, FW-190's and Ju-88's were well coordinated and aggressive. Three B-24's were shot down, 20 chutes seen and one aircraft disappeared. Sixteen continued to Rimini where thirteen dropped 32 tons of 1000 lb G.P. bombs from 20,000 feet. Twelve of the returning fifteen aircraft had varying degrees of battle damage. Ten enemy fighters claimed destroyed.

**25 & 26 Mar:** Missions were scrubbed due to bad weather over the target, but Dad (on the right) and buddy and crewman Charles Boynton were able to entertain themselves.



**28 Mar:** Eight planes of the Squadron took off in snow flurries in almost solid undercast sky, but found the target and dropped 80 x 500 G.P. bombs on the Mestre, Italy marshalling yards. A large fire was seen



in the center of the aiming point indicating destruction of oil and gasoline rail cars. No flak or enemy fighters.



**29 Mar:** 720th Squadron Commander, Capt Gordon T. Colley led the Group on a mission to bomb the marshalling yards at Bolzano, Italy. Bomb load was 10 x 500 G.P. bombs. Six of seven aircraft unloaded on the target with the seventh unable to drop. Photo coverage showed direct hits on the choke point of the marshalling yard and two bridges. Lt Ernest John's aircraft was forced to turn back 15 minutes before the bomb run and was in a running battle starting at 21,000 feet for about 25 minutes with eight ME-109's and two FW-190's before the B-24 found protection in cloud cover at 2000 feet. The aircraft returned to base badly shot up with the crew claiming three fighters destroyed and two probable. This mission counted as a double for all the crews completing the mission. The theater was filled that evening for the movie "A Guy Named Joe."

\*Thirty-six 450th aircraft took off at 0740 hours. Twenty-six dropped 65 tons of 500 G.P. from 21,000 feet at 1214 hours. Groups of 10-12 enemy aircraft were seen on the route but did not attack due to effective escort provided by P-38's. Three aircraft were lost on this mission due to flak.

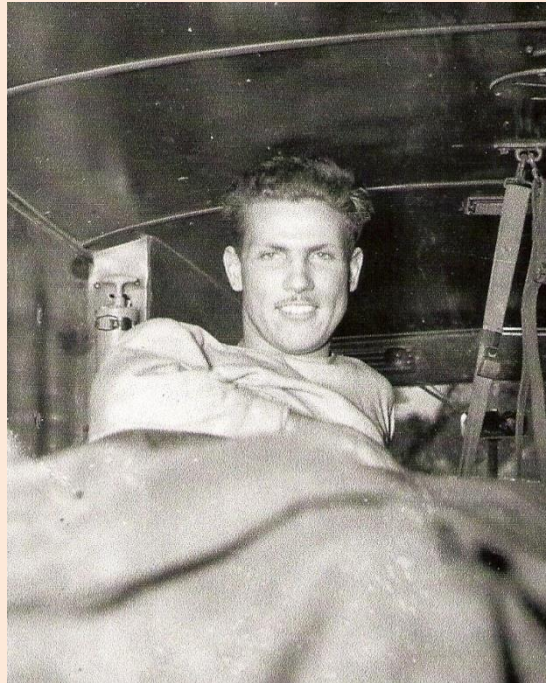


**April 1944:** A busy month the Squadron flying 17 missions for 133 sorties. Dad flew nine of the missions. The Squadron lost ten aircraft with 100 men in April. Cadre strength at month end was 514.

**2 April:** Mission for the day was the Daimler-Puch Engineering Factory at Steyr, Austria. The Squadron took off at 0730 hours sending eight of the Group's forty-one aircraft. Bomb load was 12 x 500 G.P. Six enemy fighters stood off lobbing rockets into the formation then closed to 100 yards for a gun attack.. Two of the Squadron's bombers were shot down over the target. In all 30 to 40 fighters - ME-109's, FW-190's, ME-110's and Ju-88's engaged the 720th formation with the battle lasting about an hour. Lt. Paul Cantrell brought back the severely damaged *Pistol Packin' Mama* with two wounded on board, Dad and the navigator, 2nd Lt De Kraker. Mission length was about 7 1/2 hours. Dad was awarded the Silver Star for this mission and earned the Purple Heart.



HOWARD R. BARKLEY, 39553433, Staff Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. For gallantry in action as gunner of a B-24 type aircraft. On 2 April 1944, while participating in a vitally important mission against an enemy aircraft factory in Austria, Sergeant Barkley, despite a serious wound in the thigh caused by enemy cannon fire, repaired and kept his guns operative during persistent and intensive attacks by large formations of enemy fighters. Probably destroying one (1) enemy fighter, and, although weak from shock, pain, and great loss of blood, he gallantly remained at his position in the successful defense of his plane and fellow crewmembers. Only after all attacks had been repulsed and his aircraft was safely out of enemy territory did Sergeant Barkley permit himself to be treated. By his conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Barkley has, throughout his personal combat record of over twenty-six (26) successful missions against the enemy, reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America. Residence at enlistment: Monterey Park, California.



**13 Apr:** After two weeks convalescing Dad was flying again. This time he was headed to the Vesces Airdrome in Budapest, Hungary as part of the counter aircraft production offensive. The eight 720th aircraft carried fragmentation bombs.

\*Escort was considered excellent by P-38s and no enemy fighters were encountered. The thirty-two Group aircraft dropped 38 tons of fragmentation bombs from 20,000-22,000 feet. Bombing results were considered good with 35 enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground. This was a six hour mission.

**15 Apr:** On this mission to the marshalling yards at Bucharest, Rumania, the 720th Squadron led the 450th Group, which in turn led the 47th Wing. Cloud cover over the target was between 8/10 and 10/10. Ten Squadron planes over the alternate target, industrial center of Bucharest, with nine dropping 10 x 500 G.P. bombs in solid cloud cover with the Group toggling behind them. Later reconnaissance showed that the mission was a success.



\* On this mission , the 450th Group introduced pathfinders to the 15th Air Force. Pathfinders were radar-equipped lead bombers that put the group formation on target when visibility was reduced. It was a British invention that Americans ran with. Basically it was a cathode ray tube like an old television screen that presented a crude terrain map on the scope. Designated H2X, dubbed Mickey for Mickey Mouse, it was not small. It weighed 300 pounds and contained eighty vacuum tubes. It replaced the belly ball turret and was operated by a highly trained technician who replaced the gunner and usual bombardier.



**16 Apr:** Ten 720th planes took off and ten dropped 10 x 500 G.P. bombs on the marshalling yards at Brasov, Rumania. The Squadron was jumped almost immediately by enemy fighters when the P-38 escort departed. The weather was clear and the target well hit. In the evening, a B-24 on the flight line caught fire and exploded. Gasoline and bomb explosions were reported as "terrific." All Squadron personnel were safe.

\*Thirty-nine Group aircraft took off at 0753 hours. Five returned early. Thirty-two dropped 79 tons of G.P. bombs. The P-38 escort left in the vicinity of the target and the Group was jumped about five minutes after leaving the target by 20 to 30 ME-109's and FW-190's. The attack was very aggressive and lasted about 25 minutes. Two of the B-24's were shot down by enemy fighters, 18-19 chutes seen. Flak holed seven aircraft.

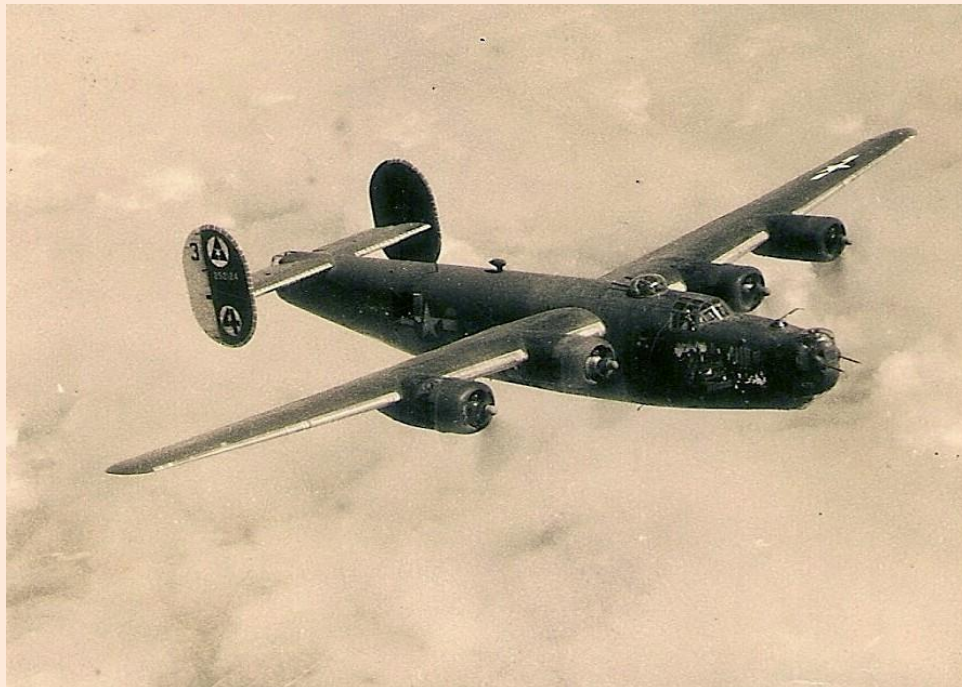
**17 Apr:** Seven 720th aircraft dropped on the center of Sofia, Bulgaria. Bombing was by Pathfinder method - toggling when the Pathfinder dropped. The P-51 escort discouraged enemy fighters. A different bomb load was carried by the Squadron, type 300 lb of 100#A and M30 G.P. bombs.

\*Attacks by 12 ME-109s and FW-190s which stood off and fired 20mm cannon from 1000-1200 yards. Flak was moderate to intense and accurate. Eight B-24s received flak damage. Photos of Pathfinder bombing showed 200 bursts in the city.

According to Dad this crew photo was taken in mid-April 1944. After 27 missions the plane is pretty beat up. Compare this photo to the photos of the delivery on 25 November 1943 and "new" nose art on 29 February 1944.



Aerial photo of *Pistol Packin' Mama*, date unknown



**24 April:** *Pistol Packin' Mama* was one of eight 720th B-24's that took off for Ploesti, Rumania to bomb the east marshalling yard. The target was obscured by smoke and the 10 x 500 G.P. bomb load went into the east side of the Vega Oil Refinery starting a huge fire. Bombing was from 22,000-23,000 feet. One Squadron aircraft was lost, four chutes were seen. Two aircraft returned early. One aircraft "washed out" on landing because of a tire holed by flak. No injuries, but plenty of excitement.

\*Thirty-eight 450th aircraft took off on this mission joining up with the 449th, 98th, and 376th Bomb Groups. Approximately 24 enemy aircraft seen in area, but did not attack. P-38's provided escort and P-51's target cover. Flak over the target was intense, accurate, and heavy. Twenty of the 450th aircraft were holed. Two aircraft were lost.



**25 April:** Nine aircraft took off to bomb the Macchi Aircraft Factory at Varese, Italy. When the primary and alternate targets were obscured by weather the marshalling yards at Ferrera, Italy was successfully bombed. The mission became a mess when the planes broke formation in the clouds. Enemy fighters jumped the loose formation hitting stragglers and downing two 720th aircraft, 10 chutes were seen.

\*Enemy fighters, 109's, 190's and a single ME-210 attacked at 1130 hours. The battle lasted about 30 minutes. The Second attack by six enemy airplanes occurred at 1345 hours. The Group lost a total of six aircraft out of twenty-nine that took off. Do the math. Losses were 20%!

**28 April:** *Pistol Packin' Mama*, #42-52124, was lost on its 31st mission to bomb the harbor at Orbetello, Italy due to flak according to M.A.C report #4619. A relatively new crew was flying *PPM*. All were lost. A second aircraft also with a relatively new crew was lost.





Dad said this was his crew's new aircraft after losing *Pistol Packin' Mama*. I remember him telling me that another B-24 in the Group had the same name.

**29 April:** Seven Squadron aircraft were part of the Group's 36 planes that took off to bomb the submarine pens and U-boat repair facilities at Toulon, France. Bomb load was 5 x 1000 G.P. It was hoped the larger bombs would penetrate the concrete pens. Two aircraft returned early and one plane was lost to flak over the target. The Group lost three aircraft to flak, 23 chutes were seen. Ten B-24's returned with flak damage. Flak was reported as the most accurate seen by the Group.

**30 April:** Six 720th planes dropped 48 x 500 G.P. on the marshalling yards at Alessandria, Italy. A seventh aircraft returned early. No flak, no fighters, all planes returned without damage...A Milk Run.

**April:** Dad received his fourth and fifth Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster for his Air Medal

**May 1944:** Dad flew 10 out of the Squadron's 16 missions. A total of 159 sorties were flown. Two aircraft were lost to enemy fighters on the 24 May mission to Wollensdorf Airdrome at Weiner Neustadt, Austria. Cadre totaled 510 at month end.

**1-4 May:** Practice missions to improve bombing accuracy, photo target I.D. classes, formation flying.

**5 May:** After two days of Ploesti missions being scrubbed due to bad weather over the target, the 450th Bomb Group flew its 60th mission and Dad his 40th. Eight Squadron planes took off and bombed the oil refinery at Ploesti, Rumania with 10 x 500 G.P. bombs. Target was obscured by the smoke pots and preceding bombs. All planes returned safely and one gunner claimed an ME-109. Squadron reported fighter opposition not as intense as normal over oil refinery targets. Flak heavy and accurate as always.

\*Thirty-nine Group B-24's took off at 1015-1042 hours with thirty eight of them dropping 94 tons on the target at 1359 hours from 20,500-22,000 feet. Bombing was effective with a large column of smoke reaching about 12,000 feet indicating a large oil fire. Enemy fighter attacks were not aggressive attacking in pairs they broke off the attack at 500 yards. Flak was intense, accurate, and heavy. Three planes were shot down, 21 chutes seen. Twenty-one aircraft were damaged by flak. This was a 7 hour mission and counted as a double.

**6 May:** The mission was to bomb the marshalling yards at Brasov, Rumania. The Squadron put up nine aircraft with eight dropping 70 x 500 pounders. Ninth aircraft could not get bomb bay open over target jettisoning later. Fighter opposition and flak was light. Results of the bombing were reported as good. You could call this a "milk run" even though it was nearly a nine hour mission.

**12 May:** This was a "double-header" day. Eleven Squadron aircraft took off 0800-0828 hours to bomb harbor installations at Porto San Stefano, Italy. The target was hit about 0858 hours from 18,500 feet. Pattern of the 12 x 500 G.P. per aircraft was right on the aiming point. Ten planes took off in the afternoon for the second mission but turned back due to bad weather. Show for the evening was "Beautiful But Broke."

\*Forty-two B-24's took off with thirty-nine dropping 114 tons of 500 lb. bombs . One B-24 lost its left stabilizer to flak causing it to spin crashing into another aircraft. Both B-24s were lost. Nine chutes seen to open from the second bomber. None from the first.

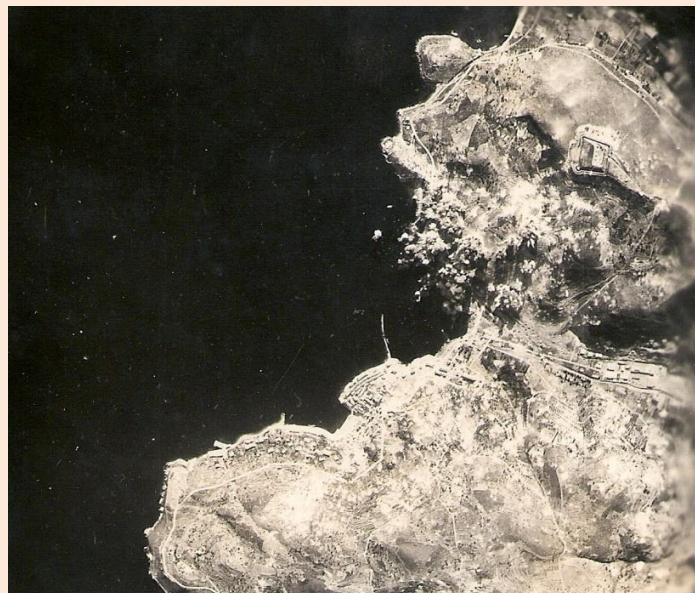
**13 May:** Ten 720th aircraft were sent to bomb the marshalling yards at Piacenza, Italy. Two aircraft returned early with the others dropping their load of 10 x 500 bombs on the target from 20,500 feet. Photo coverage showed that the Group had a good concentration of hits on trains, tracks, and structures. No fighters, no flak. Boxing show that night cancelled because of danger of air attack.

**14 May:** On Dad's 45th mission the Squadron was to bomb the Vicenza Italy marshalling yards. Eight planes each dropped 10 clusters of incendiaries "at" the target. Reported in Squadron history that navigation was poor, the mission poorly run, and it was doubtful that anyone hit the target! Escorted by P-38s, P-47s, and P-51s. No enemy fighters encountered.

**15-16 May:** No missions - maintenance, practice missions, swimming, boxing, and baseball.

**17 May:** Group Commander, Colonel John Mills led the mission in a 720th B-24 to Porto San Stefano, Italy to bomb railroad and dock facilities. Bomb load was 10 x 500lb. Ten Squadron aircraft took off and bombed the target. The 720th Squadron led the Group which Dad said it often did.

\*Forty Group dropped 100 tons of bombs. Bombing results for the Group were very good with the target area well covered with a heavy concentration of bombs. P-51's provided escort. No enemy aircraft encountered. Over the target, flak was moderate but accurate, holing 17 ships out of the forty on the mission.



**19 May:** The mission was flown through hazardous weather conditions. Ten 720th planes dropped 10 x 500 G.P. bombs on the marshalling yards at Spezia, Italy. Aim and pattern were good. Flak was light and no fighter opposition. *PPM's* bombardier, 2nd Lt. Lawrence Miles was the first officer in the 450th Group to complete 50 missions. He said, "He owed great thanks to 2nd Lt. 'Pappy' Cantrell with whom he had flown 45 of his missions without turning back."

**21 May:** No mission scheduled, Group formation. Quote from Squadron historian 1st Lt. Malcolm, "Notable awards for our squadron were the Silver Star to S/Sgt Howard R. Barkley, and Soldiers Medal to Pfc Marquis Cedeno of Armament. Sgt Barkley was given the fine award for gallantry in action during a raid on Steyr, Austria. He was wounded on the same mission. Pvt Cedeno had, with great courage, extinguished a fire on a B-24 aircraft after another had exploded nearby."

**25 May:** The oil storage installations at Porto Marghera, Italy was the target. Ten 720th planes took off, 0920 hours, two aborted and one had its bombs hang up. S-2 reported the Group's concentration of bombs into target area ignited oil storage tanks with smoke rising to 10,000 feet. Flak light and no fighter opposition. Three ships in the harbor fired rockets at the formation that exploded with a red flash.

That evening, Dad and the other men of the 450th who had over forty missions were invited to a BBQ and show sponsored by the Red Cross Director. The BBQ was a hit, however the show reportedly "laid an egg".

**26 May:** The entire Squadron of twelve aircraft took off for the marshalling yards at Nice, France to bomb railroad car repair and machine shops.. One turned back due to mechanical failure. Eleven dropped their load of 10 x 500 G.P. The target was well hit with many fires and heavy smoke visible as the planes withdrew.

\*Thirty-nine B-24's took off at 0600-0635 hours. Rendezvous with 449th BG over Manduria at 0647 hours then to San Vito D' Normanni to complete the 47th Wing assembly. The briefed route was San Vito to Capri, to Palmarola, to Revellata, to Tenda, to the I.P. (Lantosque, France). 95 tons of bombs were dropped on target from 19,000 - 20,500 feet at 1031 hours. P-38's provided escort to, over, and withdrawal from the target.

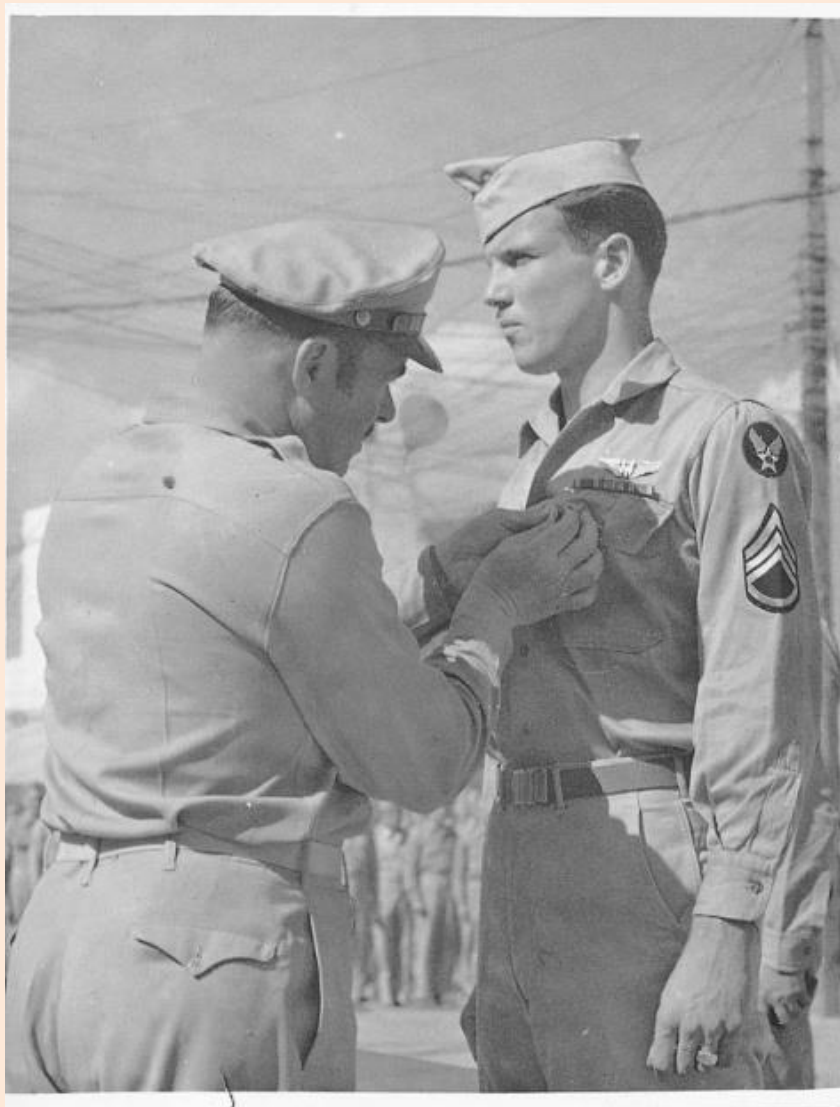
**27 May: Dad's 50th mission!** and the Group's 75th mission. The target was the St. Charles Marshalling Yard at Marseille, France. The bomb load was the usual 10 x 500 lb. G.P. Ten 720th planes took off leading the Group. Group leader Lt. Col Gideon was hit by flak in the engine short of the target. He jettisoned bombs and was forced to land at Corsica with no crew injuries.

\*Thirty-nine aircraft took off at 0600-0627 hours and as usual rendezvoused with the 449th Bomb Group over Manduria. Smoke from the first attacking group covered the target and bombs were dropped at 1050 hours from 20,000 - 21,500 feet into it by thirty-one B-24s. Bombing results were not verified. Flak was heavy from the I.P. to the target holing nine group aircraft. 25-30 P-51s stayed with the formation over the target and out over the Mediterranean Sea departing about 1100 hours. Nine B-24's received minor damage from flak.

**May:** Dad awarded Air Medal Oak Leaf Clusters 6 through 8. Number 6 awarded for ME-109 he shot down on 25 April 1944.



**9 June:** The entire crew of *Pistol Packin' Mama* was awarded Distinguished Flying Cross, for the 2 April 1944 mission "For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as a crew of a B-24 type aircraft."



R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE  
APO 520

C-UPD-bmr

9 June 1944.

GENERAL ORDERS )

NUMBER 954 )

Awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross . . . . . I

SECTION I -- AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-45, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular No. 26, Headquarters NATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded the following named personnel, residence as indicated, with the following citation:

For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as crew of a B-24 type aircraft. On 2 April 1944, this gallant crew participated in a bombing mission against a vitally important and heavily defended enemy industrial center in Austria. Despite intense and accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire enroute to the target, together with aggressive attacks from large numbers of hostile fighters, this crew courageously battled their way through the enemy defenses to the target area. With their aircraft severely damaged, oxygen supply severed, elevator and rudder controls rendered inoperative and the navigator and waist gunner seriously wounded, these men courageously remained at their positions bringing their crippled plane through for a highly successful bombing run, inflicting grave damage to the vital enemy installations and equipment. Turning from the target area under continued persistent enemy opposition, they brought their ship safely through hostile territory, driving off all subsequent attacks and accounting for three (3) enemy fighters destroyed and another probably destroyed. Through their outstanding teamwork and courage in overcoming such formidable odds in the determination to complete their assigned task and bring their aircraft safely back to base, together with their exceptional combat records of over fifty (50) successful missions against the enemy, these men have reflected great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

PAUL B. CANTRELL, O-795355, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at appointment; Macon, Georgia.

LAWRENCE H. MILES, O-749728, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 720th Bombard-



RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS  
FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE  
APO 520

C-UD-DMF

9 June 1944.

GENERAL ORDERS )  
NUMBER 954 )

Awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross . . . . . I

SECTION I -- AWARDS OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Under the provisions of AR 600-43, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Circular No. 26, Headquarters MATOUSA, 6 March 1944, the distinguished flying cross is awarded the following named personnel, residence as indicated, with the following citation:

For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as crew of a B-24 type aircraft. On 2 April 1944, this gallant crew participated in a bombing mission against a vitally important and heavily defended enemy industrial center in Austria. Despite intense and accurate enemy anti-aircraft fire en route to the target, together with aggressive attacks from large numbers of hostile fighters, this crew courageously settled their way through the enemy defenses to the target area. With their aircraft severely damaged, oxygen supply severed, elevator and rudder controls rendered inoperative and the navigator and waist gunner seriously wounded, these men courageously remained at their positions bringing their crippled plane through for a highly successful bombing run, inflicting grave damage to the vital enemy installations and equipment. Turning from the target area under continued persistent enemy opposition, they brought their ship safely through hostile territory, driving off all subsequent attacks and accounting for three (3) enemy fighters destroyed and another probably destroyed. Through their outstanding teamwork and courage in overcoming such formidable odds in the determination to complete their assigned task and bring their aircraft safely back to base, together with their exceptional combat records of over fifty (50) successful missions against the enemy, these men have reflected great credit upon themselves and the armed forces of the United States of America.

PAUL B. CANTRELL, O-795355, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at appointment; Mason, Georgia.

LAWRENCE H. MILES, O-749728, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at appointment; Cleveland, Ohio.

JAMES G. WRIGHT, O-142499, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at appointment; Los Angeles, California.

DONALD DE KRAKER, O-690381, Second Lieutenant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at appointment; Holland, Michigan.

SCOTT M. AYLESWORTH, JR., 11163459, Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at enlistment; Lucedale, Mississippi.

RESTRICTED

(OO # 954, Hq Fifteenth Air Force,  
9 June 1944, cont'd)

MORRIS L. HOPKINS, 39677387, Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at enlistment; Yonkers, New York.

VICTOR J. MONKUS, JR., 13136982, Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at enlistment; Baltimore, Maryland.

HARLEY O. TEDFORD, JR., 16129926, Technical Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at enlistment; Lawrenceville, Illinois.

HOWARD R. BARKLEY, 35553439, Staff Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at enlistment; El Monte, California.

LAWRENCE R. MILLER, 39904578, Staff Sergeant, Air Corps, 720th Bombardment Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group, United States Army. Residence at enlistment; Portland, Oregon.

By command of Major General TWINKLE:

R. K. TAYLOR,  
Colonel, GSC,  
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

*J. H. IVINS*  
J. H. IVINS,  
Lieutenant Colonel, AGD,  
Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION: "D"  
Plus: 1 - EA individual concerned  
1 - Stars and stripes, Naples  
1 - Stars and stripes, Algiers

- 2 -

RESTRICTED

- First Lt. Paul B. Cantrell
- First Lt. Lawrence H. Miles
- First Lt. James G. Wright
- Second Lt. Donald De Kraker
- Technical Sgt. Scott M. Aylesworth
- Technical Sgt. Morris L. Hopkins
- Technical Sgt. Victor J. Monkus, Jr.
- Technical Sgt. Harley O. Tedford, Jr.
- Staff Sgt. Howard R. Barkley
- Staff Sgt. Lawrence R. Miller



**14 June:** With 50 missions completed, Dad boarded a ship in Bari, Italy for the United States.

**10 July:** He arrived in the United States on this date. Telegram from him dated 10 July 1944 that he was somewhere on the east coast. He probably traveled to Hamilton Field near San Rafael, California. Undated telegram saying he arrived at Hamilton Field, California. The base functioned as a major separation center for returning troops in addition to being a fighter training base and the home of Air Transport Command.

**14 November 1944:** Honorable Discharge at Fort Wright, Washington, headquarters for the Second Air Force. It was the principal center for developing heavy (B-17 & B-24) and very heavy (B-29) bombardment groups and replacement personnel.

Dad's awards: Left to right, Air Medal with Eight Clusters, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Bronze Star for Italian Campaign not shown





720TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H) AAF  
450TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) AAF  
APO 520 U S ARMY

6 JUNE 44  
(Date)

SUBJECT: Awards and Decorations.

TO : WHOM IT MAY CONCERN  
(Addressee)

1. I certify that S/SGT HOWARD R. BARKLEY, 39553433, this organization,  
(Name, Rank, Serial No.)  
has earned the following awards:

<u>AWARD</u>	<u>DATE, NUMBER AND HEADQUARTERS OF G. O.</u>
SILVER STAR	PER G.O. 353, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 4 MAY 44.
PURPLE HEART	PER G.O. 11, HQ. 450TH BOMB GROUP, 5 MAY 44.
AIR MEDAL	PER G.O. 138, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 14 MAR 44.
1ST OAK LEAF CLUSTER	PER G.O. 138, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 14 MAR 44.
2ND OAK LEAF CLUSTER	PER G.O. 313, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 29 APR 44.
3RD OAK LEAF CLUSTER	PER G.O. 313, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 29 APR 44.
4TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER	PER G.O. 339, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 2 MAY 44.
5TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER	PER G.O. 339, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 2 MAY 44.
6TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER	PER G.O. 582, HQ. 15TH AIR FORCE, 22 MAY 44.
7TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER	RECOMMENDED FOR DATES SHOWN: 24 APRIL TO 5 MAY 44.
8TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER	RECOMMENDED FOR DATES SHOWN: 6TH MAY TO 17 MAY 44.
EAME MEDAL	PER WD CIR #1, DTD 1-1-43
BRONZE STAR FOR ITALIAN CAMPAIGN	PER NATOUSA LTR, 23 DEC 43, FI AS AMENDED.

2. All of the awards mentioned above have been presented, together with all pertinent theatre ribbons, battle participation awards, and citation devices, if applicable, except for the following:

- 1 - SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER (FOR 5 BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTERS)
- 3 - BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTERS (FOR 6TH, 7TH & 8TH OAK LEAF CLUSTERS)
- 1 - BRONZE STAR FOR ITALIAN CAMPAIGN.

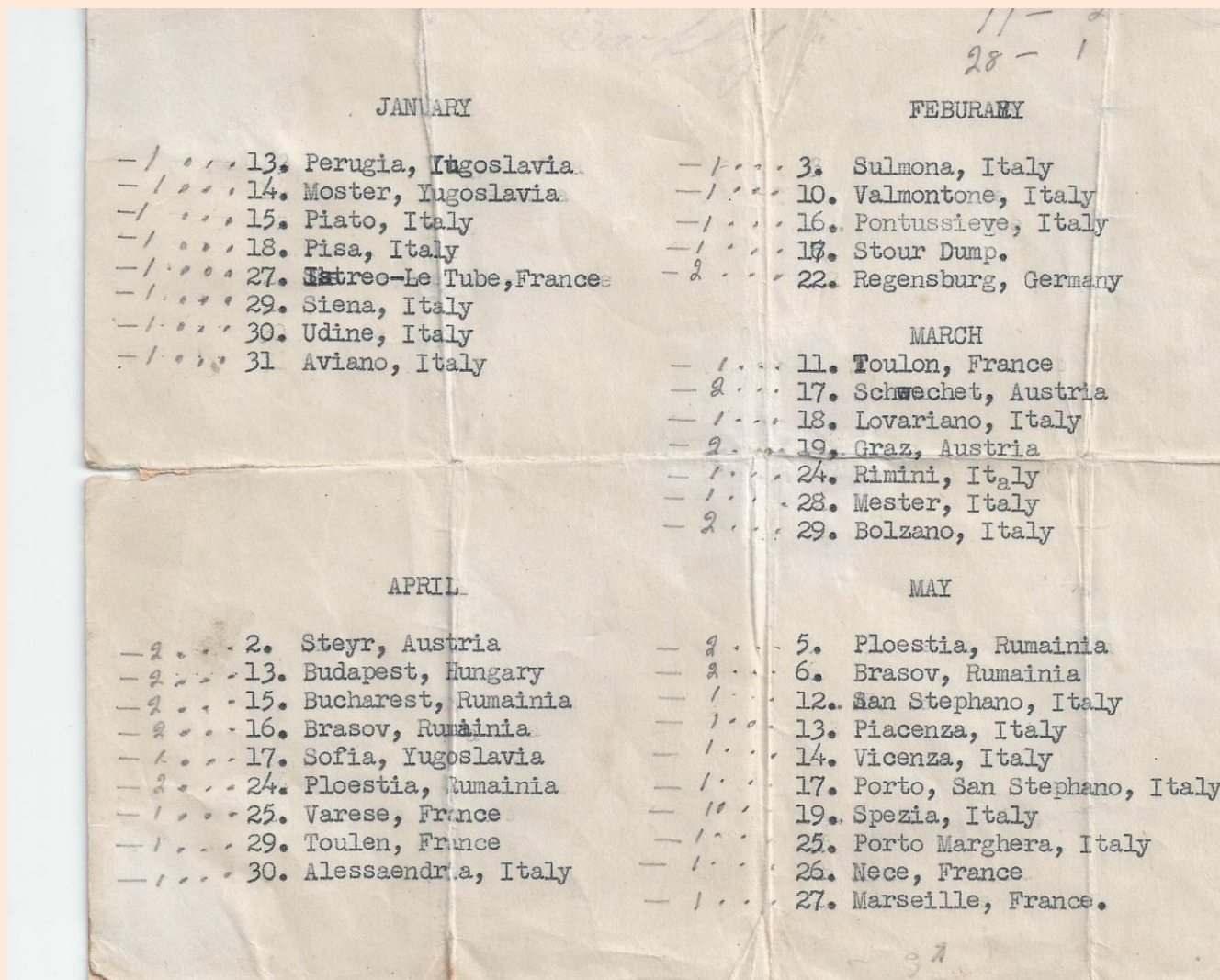
3. The above-mentioned awards have not been presented for the following reasons:

NOT ON HAND. NOT AVAILABLE

4. Upon completion of all unfinished data on pending awards, information will be sent your organization as part of, or supplement to, the allied papers of the individual concerned. A suspense date of



Dad's personal score card for missions flown. I have framed the original.



### Postscript

In less than a year and a half of combat operations, January 1944 to April 1945, the 450th Bombardment Group (H) flew 274 missions losing 1505 airmen killed or MIA. This was the equivalent of losing their effective flying strength, 480 aircrew, three times over!

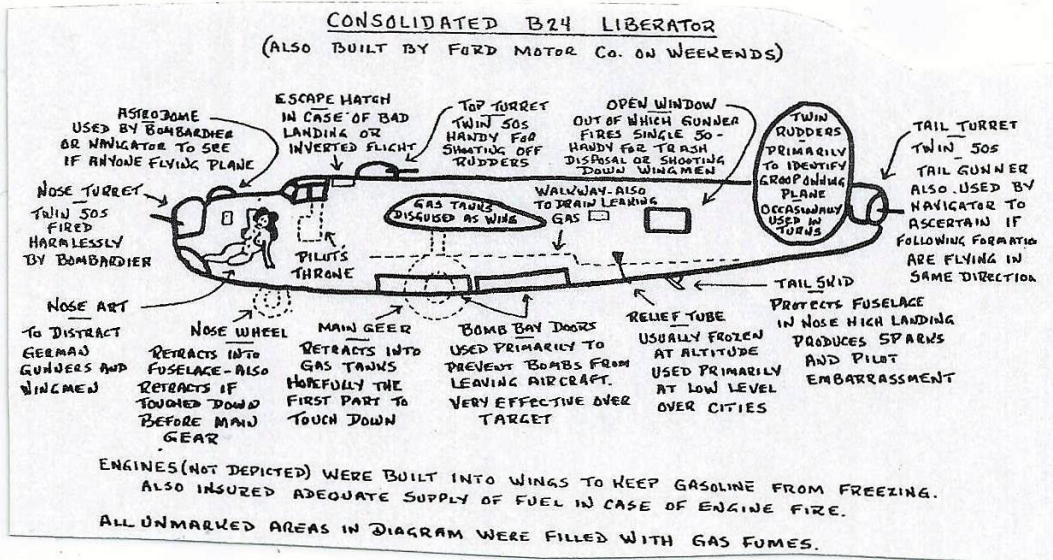
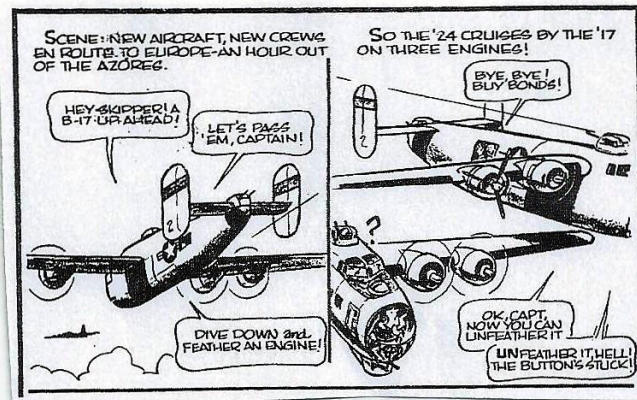
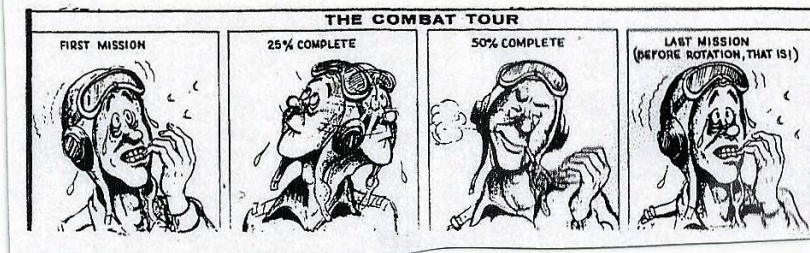
From January 1944 through May 1944, the period Dad was flying, the 15th Air Force lost 323 B-24's to enemy fighters and 212 to flak. That is approximately 5350 airmen.

### Photos

All black & white photos appearing in this narrative are from the collection of S/Sgt Howard R. Barkley. There are about 240 photos in his collection in addition to official orders and records from his 1943-1944 AAF service. I have negatives for 14 of the photos.



**B-24 Humor**



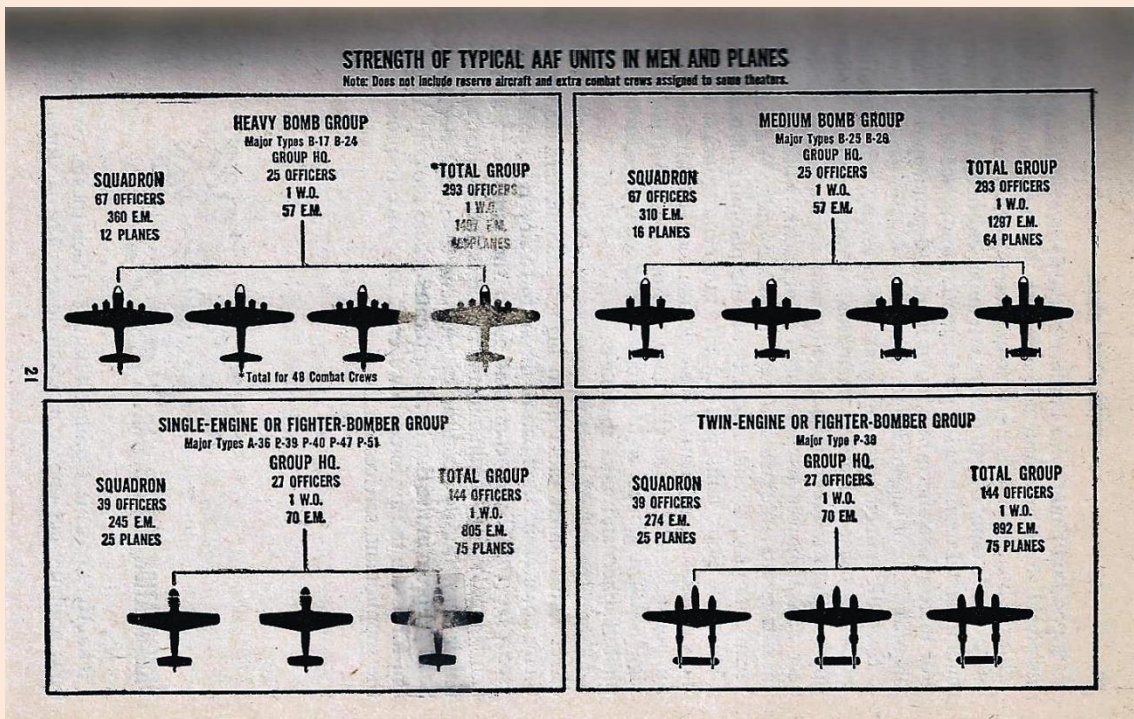
## Appendix

450th Bombardment Group squadron tail (battle) numbers:

720th Squadron	1-25
721st Squadron	26-50
723rd Squadron	51-75
724th Squadron	76-99

A Heavy Bomb Group was authorized per Army Air Force WWII Statistical Digest, 72 aircraft and 96 crew with a cadre of 465 officers and 1796 enlisted personnel.

The cost of a B-24 in 1944 was \$297,627 - \$4.79 million in 1993 dollars!

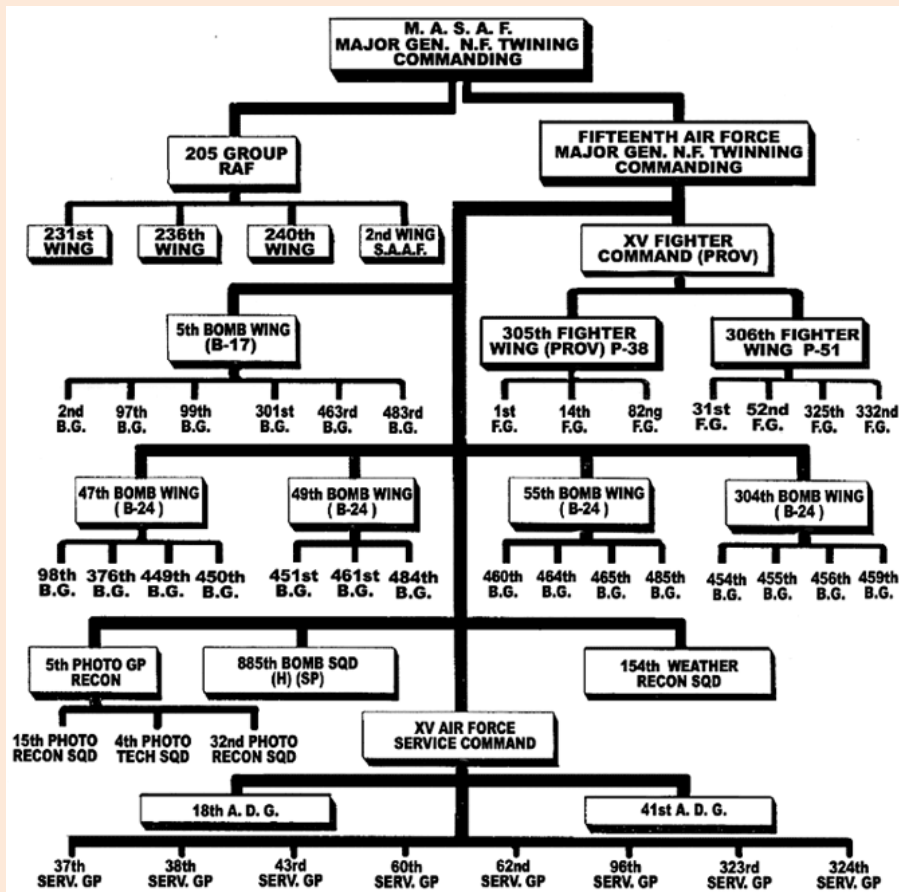




## LIBERATOR SPECIFICATIONS

	B-24D	B-24J	B-24M	C-87	PB4Y-1
LENGTH	66'4"	67'2"	67'2"	66'4"	67'3"
WINGSPAN	110'	110'	110'	110'	110'
HEIGHT	17'11"	18'	18'	18'	17'11"
WING AREA	1048 sq ft	1048 sq ft	1048 sq ft	1048 sq ft	1048 sq ft
EMPTY WEIGHT	32,605 lbs	36,500 lbs	36,000 lbs	31,935 lbs	36,950 lbs
GROSS WEIGHT	60,000 lbs	65,000 lbs	64,500 lbs	56,000 lbs	60,000 lbs
POWER PLANT	R-1830-43	R-1830-65	R1830-65	R-1830-43	R-1830-43/65
ARMAMENT	10 x .50-cal	10 x .50-cal	10 x .50-cal		10 x .50-cal
BOMB/CARGO					
LOAD	8800 lbs	8800 lbs	8800 lbs	8800 lbs	8800 lbs
MAXIMUM SPEED	303 mph	290 mph	300 mph	306 mph	279 mph
CRUISING SPEED	200 mph	215 mph	215 mph	200 mph	200 mph
SERVICE CEILING	32,000 ft	28,000 ft	28,000 ft	31,000 ft	31,800 ft
RANGE	2,850 miles	2,100 miles	2,100 miles	2,900 miles	2,960 miles

The above table of Liberator specifications has been compiled from standard references on the subject, but can only be applied generally.





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