

FRANK N. SCHAEFFER, GRATEFUL EVADER

Frank Schaeffer avoided the Army draft by joining the Army Air Corps in 1942, but after his sixth mission from Shipdham, he found himself climbing into back rooms and hiding in pits to elude marauding Germans and wondering what was the difference. After enlisting, he had to wait six months before he was inducted. So he took the opportunity to take night school courses at the local vocational school along with flying lessons. When the call came to report, he rode the Northeastern Railroad through a snowstorm, to arrive on time at the 8th Street Theater in Chicago.



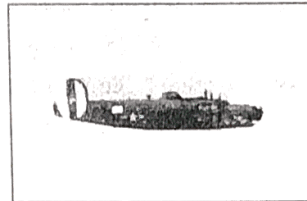
Frank Schaeffer 1945

Unfortunately, his dream to be a pilot faded, and he was sent to Sheppard Field to study Airplane Mechanics, where the biggest irritant was the CQ who wakened them in the morning, "Drop your ---- and grab your socks." When he finished AM School, he went to Tyn dall Field for Gunnery School; where he moved up to Buck Sergeant. To celebrate the completion of that program, and the rank that went with it, Schaeffer drank many beers and smoked a cigar. It didn't sit well. He barfed all over one of his roommate's foot locker!



FRONT LEFT TO RIGHT: BERNARD J. KOMASINSKI, pilot; W. SCOTT GIPPERT, co-pilot; EDGAR W. MICHAELS, navigator; CHARLES H. LAIN, bombardier. STANDING: STANLEY J. HULEWICZ, tail gunner; FRANK LAFAZIA, ball turret; JOHN H. MCKEE, radio operator; NELSON E. BROTT, left waist gun; WALTER E. JACOB, right waist gun; FRANK N. SCHAEFFER, flight engineer and top turret.

Soon attacks of pneumonia and rheumatic fever separated Schaeffer from his buddies. When he got back on his feet, he was assigned Engineer on Lt. B. J. Komasinski's crew. His memory of working with his new crew in Pueblo, Colorado was harrowing, exciting and coupled with bouts of air sickness--problems that passed when the serious business of war came to them. When their training was over, they set out for the trip on the Queen Elizabeth to the Firth of Clyde in Scotland.



BAR P, Ole Cock, 42-110024 FROM HARRY STEELE's collection.

From Shipdham Schaeffer

flew in a succession

of planes: *Ole Cock*, *Bar-P*, *Bar-L*, and *My Gal Sal*, each time getting back safely, notwithstanding holes in the planes. (*My Gal Sal* crashed on take-off several weeks later, but Schaeffer was not on board.)



HARRY STEELE, CREW chief of "Ole Cock," 42-110024

August 8, 1944 was a foggy morning, delaying take-off on the mission to the German airdrome near L'Perthe, France. Komasinski's plane, *My Peach*, had a substitute gunner, Coley Richardson, who was on his last mission. As it turned out, it was the last for all of them.

Trouble Beginning

Until the plane reached the IP, Schaeffer remembers little flak activity. When they reached the bomb run to the target, the #2 engine began to speed, and he could not bring it back to cruising speed with the synchronizing switch. The rpms increased, and he could not slow them.

"We had a runaway propeller!!" he recalled. "She really howled and went to 4,500 rpm. Our co-pilot, W. Scott Gipbert operated the feathering button, and the throttle was closed, but the propeller refused to feather.



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The 8-Ball Tails ©

Official Journal of
The 44th Bomb
Group Veterans
Association, Inc. ©

Compiled, written
and published tri-
yearly at 2041
Village Circle East,
York, PA, by Ruth
W. Davis-Morse,
Editor. Printed and
mailed Bulk Rate
at Salt Lake City,
UT under USPS
Permit #6923. All
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