

P R E F A C E

On the following pages, will be found the more or less “crew history” of crew number 49. This will be found to contain the true facts and incidents of the crew from the time of its formation until such time as it becomes dissolved.

It all began in September 1943 when the individual members were ordered to the Army Air Base at Mountain Home, Idaho. At this base, the individual members were assigned to the 470th Bomb Group and to the 802nd Bomb Squadron.

Over a period of a couple of weeks, the men were gradually molded into what was to become known as Crew 49.

The original crew consisted of ten men who were as follows:

Pilot	Paul S. Mowery, F/O
Co-Pilot	Peter Mourtsen, 2 nd Lt.
Navigator	George E. Reed, 2 nd Lt.
Bombardier	Robert M. Sanders, 2 nd Lt.
Engineer	Joseph S. Zippilli, Sgt.
Radio Operator	Clayton Childs, Sgt.
Tail Gunner	Harry Dean, Sgt.
Waist Gunner	Lenard Johnson, Sgt.
Ball Turret Gunner	Charles Pugh, Sgt.
Nose Gunner	Theodore Pippit, Sgt.

The Crew as a whole were stationed at Mountain Home, Idaho, until the middle of October, 1943.

While at Mountain Home, the crew entered and finished the first phase of their combat training. This training consisted of local flights around the Mountain Home area which was used to “check the pilots out” in different kinds of flying, and to give them general practice in flying the B-24s. There was a total of 50 bombs dropped also by the bombardier by the use of the Sperry Bombsight. Also each man on the crew began to get new and hard training in each of his respective jobs.

Around the first of October 1943, however, all of the gunners were sent to a special gunnery school at Wendover Field, Utah, thereby leaving the crew shorthanded. The remaining crew members made the best of it, however, and finished their first phase of training.

Upon completion of their “first phase”, the crew was ordered to report to Wendover Field, Utah, where they were assigned to a new group which was being activated. This was the 461st Bomb Group commanded by Col. Frederic Glantzberg.

Upon reaching Wendover Field, we were told that the group was, as yet, not ready for us and that we might receive a 10-day leave. Thanks to Captain William Darden, our squadron commander, and to several other facts involved, this prophecy came true. On October 20, 1943, we left Wendover Field on a 10-day leave, knowing that when the leave was terminated, the crew would report to some other field due to the fact that the group was being ordered a change of station.

During our leave, we each received orders as to where to report back to the group and on November 1, 1943, we reported back to duty - this time at Hammer Field, Fresno, California. It was here at Hammer Field that our real training was to begin.

Upon beginning our training at Hammer Field, we had one change in the crew personnel. F/O Douglas L. Robertson was assigned as Co-Pilot instead of Peter Mourtsen. This change was due to a Second Air Force regulation which stated, in brief, that a Second Lieutenant could not be assigned to duty as a co-pilot with a crew which had a first pilot with the rank of Flight Officer. Hence, the change in our crew personnel at this time.

For the first week or two after our arrival at Hammer Field, we did not do much training, as far as flying was concerned. This was due to the lack of airplanes and also to the “infancy” of this new group. However, as time went by, we got into the swing of things and did a lot of flying. We flew mornings, afternoons, and nights, - in fact, at times we were flying so much that we missed a lot of sleep and a good many meals. But on the other hand, a lot was accomplished by our “continuous” flying.

The pilots and co-pilots received lots of training in “straight and level” flying, in making instrument let-downs and take-offs, making formation take-offs and landings, formation flying both at low and high altitudes, flying radio ranges, and in general, just getting practice and “feeling out” in the B-24.

The Navigator received training and practice in navigation by flying short cross-country flights. These flights were accomplished more or less up and down the San Joaquin Valley. However, there were a few flights made to Tonopah, Nevada, and Tucson, Arizona. Also, one long cross-country flight to Guadalupe Island

which is situated in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of lower California. On these flights, the navigator received practice in celestial navigation, dead reckoning and pilotage.

During the training at Hammer Field, the bombardiers had the practice of dropping more bombs. All of the bombs dropped were 100-pound sand practice bombs with the exception of five demolition bombs which were dropped at Tonopah, Nevada bomb range. Most of the bombing was done by each ship singularly, although some of the missions were completed by formation bombing.

The rest of the crew received their training and practice in air-gunnery, and in learning as much as possible about their jobs, and, in general, getting the “feel” of the airplane.

Not long after we arrived at Hammer Field, California, we lost our squadron commander, Capt. William Darden. Capt. Darden was killed in an airplane crash near Huntington Lake in the mountains east of Fresno, California. His command was taken over by Capt. James C. Dooley, who is still our squadron CO at this writing.

While at Hammer Field, we had three more changes in our crew. The first change occurred when Sgt. Charles Pugh was declared physically disabled to continue his duties. He was replaced as ball turret gunner by Sgt. Daniel Hoch. Our second change occurred when Sgt. Theodore Pippit took the examination for aviation cadet. He was proving more and more troublesome to the crew as a whole as time went on and so was replaced as nose turret gunner by Sgt. John Moreno. Our third change was in co-pilots, when Flight Officer Robertson was made first pilot of another crew, thereby leaving our crew without a co-pilot. We soon had a new co-pilot assigned to us, however, in the person of Lt. George L. Owens. Lt. Owens came to us under somewhat of a handicap. He only got in on the tail end of the crew training and yet proved to be a very competent flyer. In fact, we think he is one of the best co-pilots in the squadron.

While the crew was stationed at Hammer Field, it made a fairly good record for itself. We were the first crew to gain enough of Capt. Darden’s confidence to be sent out on a night mission when it was known the field would be closed by weather at the time of our return. On that mission we were sent on a cross-country flight to Sacramento, Calif. However, upon our return to Hammer Field, the field was closed due to weather and we had to proceed to the air field at Muroc, Calif. to land. That was a night that I am sure none of us will ever forget.

The crew also has the distinction of being the first (and so far as the writer knows) and only crew to successfully lead a group bombing mission.

Somewhere around the middle of December 1943, the crew received another distinction. We were the second combat crew of the squadron to be awarded our own airplane to take into combat. This ship was a brand-new B-24 H officially known by number 2336. However, at that time we had a name for our ship already picked out which later came into reality.

Due to previous contacts made, the crew decided to name the new airplane "Spirit of Hollywood" and wanted as an unofficial sponsor, Miss Gloria Jean Schoonover-known on stage and screen as simply, Gloria Jean. So, arrangements were begun by Lt. Sanders. S/Sgt. Clayton Childs, our radio operator, set about printing and painting the new name of the ship on the side of the nose section. He painted the words: - "The Spirit of Hollywood"- on the side and beneath this he copied the autograph of Gloria Jean. So far, our venture was progressing O.K.

Lt. Sanders then contacted Gloria Jean to find out her reactions to the idea and, if her reactions were favorable, whether she would be willing to have some pictures made of the airplane, the crew and herself. Gloria Jean and Universal Pictures Co. approved of the idea wholeheartedly. Our next step was to get the permission from the proper military authorities to transform the idea into a reality. F/O Paul Mowery and Lt. Sanders took their idea to Capt. MacFarlane, the squadron intelligence officer, and to Capt. James Dooley, the squadron CO. They both approved of the idea and promised to help us obtain the permission of the group to fulfill it. Capt. MacFarlane obtained the permission from Major Lett, the group intelligence officer, provided that all pictures would be taken by an air force photographer. Capt. Dooley obtained permission from the group officials enabling us to fly our airplane to the Los Angeles area to have the pictures taken. On Monday, January 3, 1944, the crew of "The Spirit of Hollywood" took the airplane and four passengers and flew to Los Angeles- landing at Van Nuys airport. The passengers were as follows:

Capt. A. E. Sproul	Squadron Medical Officer
Lt. Wn. Franklin	Asst. Operations Officer
Lt. Phillip Caroselli	Asst. Intelligence Officer
Sgt. Michlmann	Air Force Photographer

Due to being in the hospital, S/Sgt. Childs, the radio operator, was unable to make the trip.

Upon landing at Van Nuys airport, we obtained an army staff car and F/O Mowery, Lt. Sanders, and Lt. Caroselli proceeded into North Hollywood to pick up Gloria Jean and take her to the airplane where the pictures were to be taken.

Accompanying Gloria Jean was Mr. Fred Selig, a Universal Studio publicity agent.

Upon completion of the taking of pictures, the crew of "The Spirit of Hollywood" and the four passengers were the guests of Gloria Jean and Universal Pictures for a tour around the lot of Universal. The tour proved to be more or less of a quiet tour due to the fact that the studio was in the process of making only one picture. This picture was "The Merry Monahans" starring Jack Oakie, Donald O'Connor, Peggy Ryan. However, we watched the shooting of a couple of scenes and then were shown other points of interest around the studio lot. We were fortunate enough to meet, personally, several other stars, which included Jack Oakie, the Andrew Sisters, Suzanne Foster, and others.

After the tour, we were taken to the "still" picture studio where more pictures were taken of the crew and Gloria Jean. All in all, the writer believes that the crew enjoyed themselves very much.

The crew spent the night of that eventful day in Los Angeles and Hollywood. Much could be said about all that happened that night, but that is another story and best not be written at this time.

As the story goes, it seems as if crew 49 set another example for the group. On the day the crew was supposed to leave Los Angeles and report back to Hammer Field, the group as a whole landed at Van Nuys airport to have their ships christened and pictures were made with movie stars. However, the group was unable to obtain any prominent movie stars, so once again crew 49 came thru' with flying colors.

Upon returning to Hammer Field, there was very little to be done in the line of duty until that eventful day of January 15, 1944, when our squadron began its long journey to an overseas destination.

January 15, 1944

We left Hammer Field, Fresno, Calif. on the first leg of our overseas movement. Our destination was Hamilton Field, San Francisco, Calif. Purpose of going there was to be processed for our overseas movement. Arrived there on same day of take-off, January 15, 1944.

January 16, 1944

Began our processing by taking abbreviated examinations, such as medical examinations, showdown inspection, drew equipment, etc. The airplane also had work done on it as to having certain technical orders complied with, etc.

January 17, 1944

Continued and finished work of processing of crew and airplane begun on January 16, 1944. Crew of airplane was as follows:

Pilot	Paul S. Mowery, Jr.
Co-Pilot	George L. Owens, Jr.
Navigator	George E. Reed
Bombardier	Robert M. Sanders
Engineer	Joseph S. Zippilli
Radio Operator	Clayton Childs
Nose Gunner	John Moreno
Tail Gunner	Harry Dean
Ball Turret Gunner	Daniel Hoch
Waist Gunner	Lenard Johnson
Crew Chief	Joseph Hammer
Passenger & Squad C. O.	James Dooley

January 18, 1944

Left Hamilton Field, San Francisco, California, on the second leg of our long journey. Our destination was Palm Springs, California. Nothing out of the ordinary occurred while in flight.

January 19, 1944

Left Palm Springs, California, on third leg of our journey. Our destination this day was Midland, Texas. Still nothing occurred while in flight.

January 20, 1944

Left Midland, Texas on fourth day of our journey. Our destination was Memphis, Tennessee. Lt. R. S. Fawcett had engine trouble and had to feather #3 engine and leave the formation. He landed at Dallas, Texas safely. Remainder of flight was uneventful.

January 21, 1944

Left Memphis, Tenn. on fifth leg of our journey. Our destination was Morrison Field, Palm Beach, Florida. Morrison Field was our Port of Embarkation. Also, while there, the crew and airplane had their final inspections and we also drew some final equipment. We were under the jurisdiction of the Air Transport Command from the time we left Hamilton Field until such time as we were to arrive at our final destination in North Africa. Also, at Morrison Field Sgt. Hoch and Sgt. Johnson were taken off our plane and transported to our final destination by other A. T. C. means. I might say they were pretty disgusted at the whole affair, too.

January 22, 1944

Continued our processing and inspections at Morrison Field.

January 23, 1944

Continued our processing and inspections at Morrison Field.

January 24, 1944

Continued our processing and inspections at Morrison Field.

January 25, 1944

We took off from Morrison Field on our next leg of our journey. This leg was to carry us out of the continental limits of the United States and our destination was Waller Field, Trinidad. Took off at 0200 and arrived at Waller Field at about noon. Nothing of importance happened in route.

January 26, 1944

Left Waller Field, Trinidad on our next leg which was to carry us to Belem, Brazil. This was also a quiet flight until we landed at Belem. When we were ready to land, we encountered a rain storm. Visibility was none too good and we nearly "over-shot" the field, however, we came in anyway. The runway was very wet and slippery and the brakes of the airplane could not take hold, which resulted in our going off the side of the runway. We were lucky in the fact, however, that no damage was done either to the crew or the ship. We only got stuck badly in the mud. We were pulled back on the runway by Caterpillar tractors manned by the United States Engineers stationed at Belem. We did, however, get a lot of mud and water all over the bombsight and navigation instruments on the inside of the nose of the airplane.

January 27, 1944

Left Belem, Brazil, on our next leg which was to take us “next door” to Fortaleza, Brazil. While at Fortaleza, Brazil we “pulled” a 50-hour inspection on the airplane. This was done under the direction of Crew Chief, T/Sgt. Joseph Hammer. We also saw a “fair” USO show at Fortaleza.

January 28, 1944

Completed the 50-hour inspection and made ourselves ready for the longest and hardest leg of the whole journey. That was our flight over the South Atlantic Ocean. We left Fortaleza, Brazil, about 2100 on January 28, 1944, and our destination was Rufisque, French West Africa, which is located just southeast of Dakar.

January 29, 1944

We arrived at Rufisque about noon after a fairly uneventful flight due to the wonderful job of navigation done by our navigator, Lt. George E. Reed. Lt. Reed hit our destination on the head and missed his E. T. A. by only a few seconds. At Rufisque, we had our first experience with the steel matted runways.

January 30, 1944

We left Rufisque on our next leg of our journey, which was to take us to Marrakech, French Morocco. We were late in taking off because of another ship crashing at the end of the runway and burning up. Quite a saddening sight-but that is the chance every flyer takes. So on to Marrakech.

We arrived at Marrakech in the late afternoon, obtained our quarters, and went into town to look it over. It was the first time the boys had “officially” been to a town since leaving Hammer Field, California. There proved not to be much in town except a lot of filthy Arabs.

January 31, 1944

We left Marrakech on our next leg which was to take us to Teleghma, Algeria. We arrived there in mid-afternoon and found our home to be in tents. We had slept in tents before, but none like these. It was so cold that we had to sleep in our heavy flying clothes. We attended another USO show, which turned out to be another “fair” show. The labor at our camp was done by Italian prisoners of war. They

also cooked and served our food - not bad either. Those prisoners were taken by the English but turned over to the American Army.

February 1, 1944

Still at Teleghma and learning a little more about the Italians, because we felt that we would end up in Italy instead of Africa. This feeling became a reality as we saw later. There proved to be a lot of filthy Arabs around this sector also. We stayed at Teleghma long enough to allow us to visit a nearby city called Constantine. This proved to be a better city, inhabited by both Arabs and French. Many incidents happened there which are better to remain untold as Lt. Owens and myself will verify.

February 2, 1944

We awoke with the startling news that we were moving on to a place called Oudna, near Tunis, Tunisia. We took off in formation with the "Spirit of Hollywood" flying in #4 position. Lt. C. W. Bauman was leading our flight and he could not find the airport at Oudna- hence, under orders from Capt. James Dooley, our ship took the lead and due to Lt. Reed, we led the flight to the airport. This proved to be Oudna Field #2.

February 3, 1944

We again had to move; this time to Oudna Field #1. However, we were unable to go with the rest of the squadron due to T/Sgt. Hammer finding water in the gasoline. It took about four hours to remedy this, allowing us to arrive at Oudna Field #1 in mid-afternoon.

February 4 to 21, 1944

The days we spent at Oudna Field #1 were, for the most part, uneventful. A few incidents occurred; however, they can be written up later. We spent most of our time improving our living quarters, and participating in recreation. Although there were training missions planned, there was not much flying due to the weather. It was at Oudna #1 that the bombsight in the ship was inspected, cleaned, rebalanced, and recalibrated for the first time since the minor accident at Belem. This time spent at Oudna #1 was also used to allow the rest of the group to catch up with our squadron. What flights were made at Oudna were all local flights made by skeleton crews.

February 22, 1944

On this date, the group was ordered to leave Africa and move into Italy to our permanent base of operation. We flew from Oudna over the Mediterranean Sea to Sicily and up into Italy on the east side to our field which was called Torretta, which was located about eight miles from Cerignola. There, we met again our ground personnel who had come overseas by boat. We arrived in mid-afternoon and set about setting quarters temporarily for the night.

February 23-1944 to March 5-1944

During the period stated above, the crew spent most of their time making their living quarters as decent as possible. The four officers were assigned to one tent known as "Tent #18", while the enlisted men were assigned to another tent in the enlisted personnel area. Our first improvement was the installation of a stove. Our stove was a half of a fifty-gallon oil drum with a can welded in the bottom for use as a grate. Our stove pipe was five 75 mm shell cases welded together. We obtained an oxygen bottle from a wrecked plane to hold our gasoline and a piece of oxygen tubing through which the gasoline flowed from the bottle to the stove. We found that this sort of stove was extremely satisfactory. Next, we obtained flat 10" x 5" bricks which we laid on the ground for a tent floor. Besides keeping the tent cleaner, these bricks held the heat better.

Then, to create a homelike atmosphere, we strung wiring into the tents for electric lights. Heretofore the lighting system had consisted of either candles or homemade gasoline lamps. Therefore, the electric lights were a great improvement.

With the installation of electricity, the four officers made another improvement. F/O Mowery had bought a radio while at Boise, Idaho, and we had been carrying it around with us in the plane. We brought this into the tent and wired it up to the electricity. Lo and behold, the darn thing played. The most enjoyable program which we could receive, and I think everyone will agree on this, was an English-German propaganda program. The main two characters were a couple called "Sally and George". They broadcasted propaganda which no one, of course, believed but their main feature, as far as we were concerned, was the playing of musical records by American dance bands.

During the period mentioned above, the tent improvements were about all that was really accomplished. Due to rain, cloudiness, and general bad weather, there was little or practically no flying.

March 5, 1944

On this day, one of our members, F/O Paul Mowery, became a very happy boy. Effective on this date, he received his commission as a 2nd Lt. in the Air Corps with a rating as Pilot. Lt. Mowery is an exceptionally good pilot; in fact, his crew thinks he is one of the best. However, due to the “red tape” involved and a little hard luck, his commission was a long time coming through. At any rate, there was great rejoicing and “fumar mucho del cigar”.

March 6, 1944 to March 31, 1944

Not very much happened to the crew between the dates mentioned above. We spent a lot of our time making more improvements to our tent. Of course, even with all of our improvements, we were not living in any “suite at the Ambassador”, but we did have a better than average tent.

We were scheduled to fly several training missions during this period, but due to the weather most of these missions were cancelled. However, we did fly a few missions around the local area to our field and around the “heel of the boot” of Italy.

During the time of this period when we were not flying, we made frequent trips to nearby towns. Those were such towns as Foggia, Cerignola, Barletta, Canosa, Bari, and others. Cerignola was the nearest town to our camp and consequently we visited there more often. The town did not offer much there for us. There was a fairly nice Red Cross service club for the enlisted men. The town had lots of wine shops, but they were nothing out of the ordinary. All in all, the town was not too good from a soldier’s point of view.

Foggia was a much larger town and offered one feature to American Officers which was worth the trip there. In the town was an American Red Cross Officers Club, which had as a main feature a snack bar. The trip was well worthwhile if for no other reason than to eat the sandwiches, coffee, pastry, etc. in the snack bar.

April 1, 1944

It was on this day that we were really supposed to start our operations. Our target was a railroad bridge and highway bridge at a town in northern Italy called Senigallia. We were called at 0315 and immediately arose and ate breakfast in order to be at Group Headquarters by 0445 for a mission briefing. At this briefing, we were told the known facts of the mission. The mission plan was to take-off at 0730 and climb to 5,000 feet over the field and assemble in formation. We were then to climb to an altitude of 15,000 feet, which was to be our bombing altitude for the target. We were to climb on course over the Adriatic Sea, drop our bombs

on our target, which was on the coast and head back to sea and back to the field. However, due to the weather the mission was cancelled.

Due to cancellation of the mission, Col. Glantzberg called for volunteers for a six-ship formation to carry out the mission at a low-level bombing attack of 75 feet. Naturally, the "Spirit of Hollywood" was one of the six ships. Our bomb load was three 500-pound bombs per ship. However, due to the fact that ordnance could not obtain the proper bomb fuses, the mission was not run.

April 2, 1944

This was the day that we actually flew and completed our first combat mission. Our target was the marshaling yards at Bihac, Yugoslavia. Our bomb load was thirty clusters of fragmentation bombs.

We were called and arose at 0315, ate breakfast, got our equipment together and went to Group Headquarters for a briefing at 0530.

Our primary target was Bihac, Yugoslavia. Our secondary target was Knin, and the third alternate was Drnis, both in Yugoslavia.

Our take-off time was 0730 and we climbed to 15,000 feet over Melfi; then proceeded on course, continually climbing until the altitude of 20,000 feet was reached. We crossed the Adriatic Sea and entered Yugoslavia with no opposition of any kind. Everything seemed so peaceful there that it was a shame to drop bombs there but nevertheless we dropped them. At Bihac, were the marshaling yards, but also there were troop concentrations and other military installations.

We reached our IP which was near a little town, Martin Brod, and turned on our bombing run. Our bomb run was about seven minutes at the end of which we dropped our load of bombs and knocked out our target. We saw no fighters over the target and were not bothered by flak. However, some of the ships which were behind us said there was considerable flak coming up.

We turned from the target and proceeded west to the coast once more. Shortly after leaving the target, there was an accident in the formation which resulted in the loss of two airplanes and their crews. Lt. Wilson and crew of our squadron was one crew and the other was Lt. Zumsted from another squadron.

We saw three fighters shortly after leaving the target. They were Focke-Wulf 190s, but only looked us over and left, much to the disgust of our gunners, who seem to be getting a little "bloodthirsty".

Upon reaching the coastline of Yugoslavia, we turned and returned to our base, losing altitude as we returned. We arrived at Cerignola about 1300.

Summary of the mission goes something like this:

No fighters encountered.

No or little flak.

Target completely covered with bombs.

Two airplanes lost.

Total flight time: 5 hours and 50 minutes

So ended the first successful combat mission for the “Spirit of Hollywood” and her crew.

The crew completed six missions before being reported “Missing” over Budapest, Hungary.

The reports of the last five missions are unobtainable due to the fact the writer lost contact with the crew. The reason for loss of contact was due to the writer being physically grounded for two months during which time the crew was reported “Missing”.

After being returned to flying status, the writer, Lt. Robert M. Sanders, continued flying combat missions until he, himself, was shot down.

By luck he was returned to Allied territory and in due time returned to the United States, thus temporarily completing the history of Crew 49.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Sanders