

25 Times He Belted the Germans

STARS & STRIPES - 4-16-43

ETO's Champion Air Gunner Winds up 25 Missions 'Cool as a Tomale'

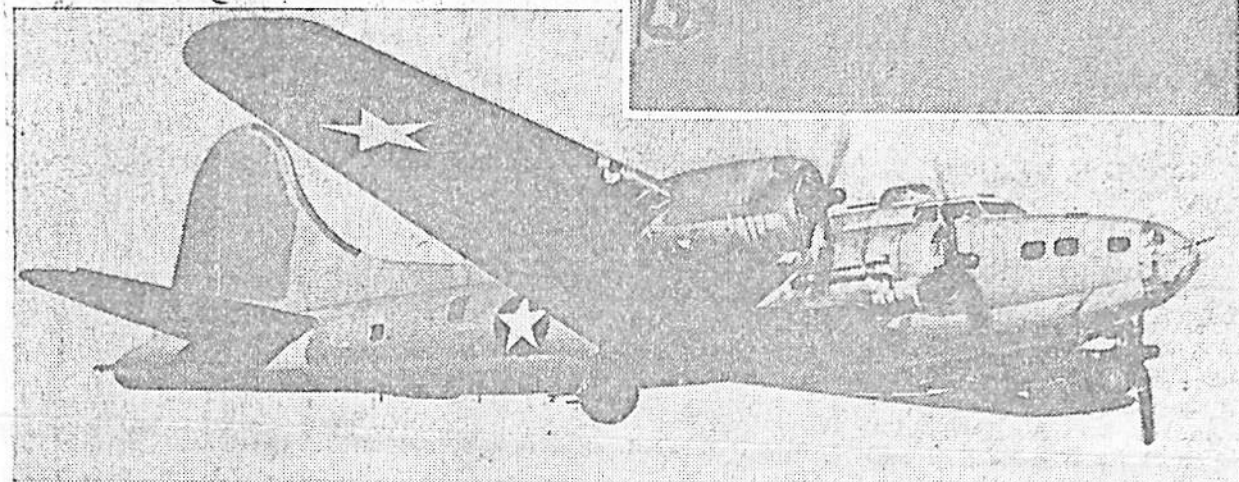
368 BOMB SQDN 306 BOMB GP.
By Andrew A. Rooney

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

Roscovich is not an average guy. An average guy does not cut bald eagled colonels' ties off just below the knot. Average guys don't even drop bricks over German-occupied France with "Vive la France" scribbled on them. Roscovich does.

Roscovich is the first man in the USAAF to complete 25 missions over Europe—T/Sgt. Michael Roscovich, 20, of Fayette City, Pa., radio man and gunner extraordinary.

Everyone sweated out his 25th. When the group returned from Antwerp, a crowd turned out to wel-



T/Sgt. Michael Roscovich, of Fayette City, Pa. (above), is the first man in the Eighth Air Force to complete 25 missions over Europe. Roscovich is a radio man-gunner in a Flying Fortress.

come "Rosky" home. "The Mad Russian" planned to bail out over the field but a high wind "and other military considerations" stopped him.

When the ship he was in stopped rolling the navigator and bombardier went for "Rosky" and while the rest of the crew held him they tore his clothes off. When he was stripped to his shorts someone got a can of paint and in large block letters they printed "25 MISSIONS" on his back.

Roscovich isn't the man to let a show die on its feet. Instead of getting the crew chief to take the paint off with gas and a rag, "Rosky" grabbed the nearest bike and rode around the camp in his underwear with the handwriting still wet on his back wall.

Natural Showman

A natural showman, Roscovich attracted newsmen; but he got tired of the publicity. After one raid, the public relations officer pointed out "Rosky" to a correspondent. The newspaper man cornered him.

"I hear you are Roscovich," he said as an introduction to what he hoped would be a paragraph of good quotes.

"Roscovich? I'm Harris. This was my first raid—we didn't get over the channel."

That was enough for the correspondent. He left "Harris" to drink his coffee.

Roscovich wouldn't mind going some-

where else now. "I've done this," he says. "I'd like to go to the Pacific or somewhere and go on some more raids."

Of course, right now Roscovich is on a private little eight-day raid of his own. He has hit Bedford, Chester and London with little resistance from the opposition.

One of "Rosky's" best weeks was the one following the raid on Vegesack, near Bremen. He took along a 100-pound practice bomb on that raid, smuggled it into his radio compartment, and heaved it out the bomb bay after the goods had been dropped and while the doors were still open.

All during the following week "Rosky" sat smiling like an anarchist with a time bomb in the mails, thinking about the squads of German "suicide" demolition experts handling the sand-filled dud with ersatz kid gloves.

Screams While Firing

The boys in his crew report that he is cool as a Mexican tomale on a raid.

"Roscovich? Oh, he is very cool. He jumps on top of his radio table, twists his gun in circles and screams to himself while he fires. Very cool."

The story they tell at the photographic section at "Rosky's" station is that they had to take the camera they used to give him on raids away from him because he would balance the camera in one hand and the caliber .50 in the other and try to catch the FWs that came in with both of them.

Roscovich has flown as radio gunner, waist, tail and top turret. He prefers the top turret spot.

"You get more shots from up there," he explains.

Twenty of his 25 missions have been in one ship with Capt. Purvis E. Youree, an

Oklahoma pilot, who, according to "Rosky," is the "best damn pilot on the field."

"I flew 20 missions in that ship," he says, "and five other missions in five other ships."

He hasn't been over here any longer than any of the old-timers, but he took every chance he could to go on a raid.

"A couple of times when it was our turn to go on pass I was broke and stayed in camp, while the rest of the crew went to town. Twice that way I got a ride on other planes that needed a man."

'The Mad Russian'

Sometimes the boys at the field call him "The Mad Russian," but usually it is just "Rosky." Referring to the tab "Mad Russian," he says that both his father and mother were born in Austria. His grandfather lived in Russia, though.

His father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. John Roscovich, have eight other kids to think about, so "Rosky" doesn't worry them with such details as the news that he has completed 25 raids over Europe. "I'll tell them about it when I get home," he says.

His youngest sister is ten, and he just got a postcard from one of his three older sisters. She joined the WAACs and is training down in Florida now.

His oldest brother is a police warden in Arnold City, about 30 miles outside Pittsburgh, and another 27-year-old brother is a private in the Quartermaster Corps up in Alaska.

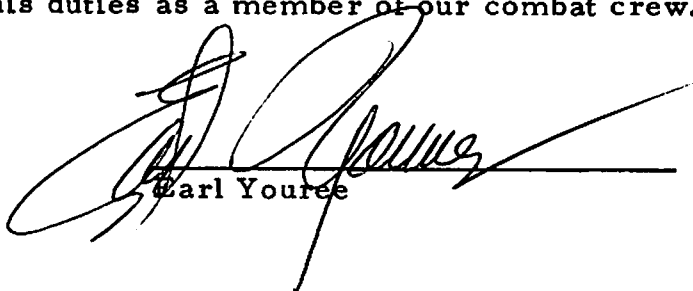
Although Capt. Youree usually has been "Rosky's" pilot, there are often changes in the crews of the ships, and one of the things he insists on is cutting the ties off all the officers who fly in his plane. He has caught everyone from colonels to second lieutenants, and if Gen. Eaker ever decides to ride in a plane "Rosky" is in he will probably come out a foot short of tie.

ROSKOVITCH

Roskovitch, affectionately known among the combat crew and others as the "Mad Russian", was a member of our original combat crew and when he made his 25th mission, he was with us.

He finished his "25th" earlier than the rest of our crew because while our plane was undergoing replacement of a wing, he asked for and received permission to fly as a replacement with other available crews in the 423rd. This display of confidence on his part in any pilot and crew in our outfit amounted to a tribute to our pilots and crews as well as a reflection of Rosky's "guts", his desire to participate, to be a part of the action and of his love and loyalty for his country.

Roskovitch was a very happy and cheerful person and had the ability to lift the spirits of the people he came in contact with -- specifically his fellow crew members -- yet he was intelligent, aggressive, serious, determined and capable in his duties as a member of our combat crew.



Earl Youree

Written in 1982 by Earl Youree, pilot on Roskovitch's first and last missions. Rosky went to combat with Youree's crew and flew most of his missions with them.

"Dragons"
Brighton Rd.
Woodmaneste
NR Henfield, Sussex
England BN5 9FP

Dear Russell Strong,

I don't quite know how to express my thanks to you for sending over the original drawing of Michael Roskovich to Connie Richards for my son David. I was not able to collect it until a few days ago and when my son came over we had a serious discussion over it. We have agreed that during my lifetime I can keep it and afterwards it will go to my son and then his sons and whatever happens it will be kept carefully within the family - I hope you are happy with this.

Connie, who has become a very dear friend, was going to send you all she knew of Michael and I last year but the time was not right and I asked her not to. Since last year when I contacted her the coincidences that have happened are almost unbelievable and certainly too many and too long to try to put in this letter.

Since Michael died I have sent flowers to his grave every year I was able and I don't know where to begin except the beginning -

The latter part of 1942 (I was 16 but looked older) I met Michael in the shop I worked in. I took him home to meet parents and we all loved him. I had at the time a nice boyfriend but I fell hopelessly in love with Michael. Sometimes he would stay the night at home and to me now - he was the someone special you only meet once in a lifetime. (I even wrote pages of poems over him!) I can swear I really feel sometimes his protective arm round my shoulder and we would walk home in the "blackout".

It was not just because I was ²young and impulsive because these feelings have lasted my whole life.

My saying is that Time does not heal as there is not a day goes by that I do not think of him. He was my first real love and first lover and of course the inevitable happened I became pregnant.

When my mother knew all hell broke out but in those days you obeyed your parents. I refused to get rid of it so my parents agreed to see me through on condition I married my poor unsuspecting English boyfriend and stopped seeing Micheal. I suppose they were afraid of losing me (I was an only child) to America which was as good as going to the moon to them in those days.

Micheal was very hurt (he did not know of the baby) confused and cross but he gave me a record "Her name is Mary" since sadly lost and some giant tins of food for the wedding. My heart just broke. I married 13-2-43 and our son David was born 14.9.43.

It was a silly mistake of a marriage and by Jan 1944 was over. I decided in spite of my parents Micheal was to be told but he died before I could. I have never forgiven myself and have lived with this guilt ever since.

About '66 or '67 I married again to a person called Englehart - this is the name my son has taken and about that time I took him up to Cambridge Cemetery to "tell" Micheal what I was doing. This marriage was unfortunately another mistake as he was very jealous of David and treated us both very badly, but maybe it was my fault also as I refused to have a child because I felt I would betray Micheal.

I left him after Bys and married my Cousin who died 5 years later! Since 1966 I have been happily married to a very nice kind and long suffering man!

David stammered badly as a child and lost all his hair tho' newes. However he overcame all this and became one of the youngest solicitors to qualify in this country. He has married twice. The first time when he was only 19 and has two sons Simon and Phillip from that union. Phillip really looks a Raskovich + Simon has just married, their mother remained and lives nearby. David remained about 10 years ago and has a little girl (also looks like a Raskovich!) 7 years old now everyone is in good terms tho' and my son lives nearby also.

I'm afraid I did not tell David about his father until late 1986 and at first everyone in the family was difficult with me over it. Since last March '87, as I told you, I contacted Connie and since then so much seemed to happen and move almost too quickly. Why I left "telling" so late I don't know except it would have been terrible if anything had happened to me and the truth & never known. The saddest thing I felt was that I had lots of anything belonging to Michael I could show or give to David. Since knowing Connie so many unbelievable things have happened by that my son and husband could not keep pace, feeling their peaceful life was about to be shattered! At this point I would like to say that my son

has his own very lucrative business and been highly successful. I have heard from Chuck Roskovich, Michael's nephew, that Michael also wanted to become a lawyer (it's in a newspaper cutting he sent me) - how about that!

David is a very quiet and reserved person so I am extra proud of him that he is going to lay the wreath this year at Cambridge on behalf of 306 B.G..

I am also a wealthy person in my own right so there was never any question of me wanting to contact the Roskovich family for what I might gain because I need nothing.

I would still love to have some small personal item (even a button !!) that has actually belonged to Michael. I must not complain tho' because through Connie we have some pictures and information and Chuck said he's sending more pictures and news of all items your precious gift.

One more strange coincidence Chuck has a son born May 1st the same birthday as my granddaughter - he has also called him David before he knew about us over here!

I heard from Chuck the 1st time last October and I wrote him in November. I have not heard from him since altho' I chase out every day when I hear the post looking for the pictures. I suppose when you reach my age ($61\frac{3}{4}$!) you get impatient as time goes too damn quickly.

I don't think I can say any more, I'm sure I've said more than you want to hear.

Once more from my son and all of us

my heart felt thanks to you

Mary Smith

How

Smith
Howe's
Brixton
W08 9NR
Sussex
England
BMS RFE



Nov. 8, 1988

Dear Russell,

I read the article in the October edition of the 306th Echoes about "Rosky" Micheal Roskovitch. I would like to give my explanation as to what actually was the reason for the trip to Scotland in which he lost his life. The report in Echoes stated that the trip to Scotland was a "Joy Ride" with a group of 306th officers. This is not correct, and my explanation follows.

My crew was given a two week R and R after we had finished approximately half of our required missions and had just returned from a very rough trip to Brunswick Germany (Note we had lost two engines, one feathered and one running away; both on the same side, we were unable to stay with the formation so flew back to England alone, Escorted by FW-190's until driven off by some P47's!) We were without an aircraft until repairs were made, so was offered the R and R, which was quickly accepted.

I was informed there was a nice place near Edinburgh, Scotland (The Bridges) so was checking out a way to get there, bus, train or air. I decided to check with 423rd ops as the the availability of an aircraft. I was informed that there was an available B-17 I could have for the trip if I could find a crew to fly it back. I was informed that Lt. Mosley, a friend of mine, wanted some additional flying time. I checked with him and he informed me he was available and would find a crew to bring the aircraft back. Which he did.

Upon leaving Thurleigh "Rocky" wanted to go along. I think he enjoyed flying and it would give him a chance to see Scotland. He knew he would have to return the next day but he still wanted to go.

I landed at Edinburgh RAFB after dark and my crew and I caught a bus to the city of Edinburgh then by bus to "The Bridges" Scotland.

Lt. Mosley, "Rosky", and Lt. Mosley's crew informed me they were going to RON and return to Thurleigh in the A.M.

Upon my return to Thurleigh I was informed of the accident in which Lt. Mosley, "Rosky" and crew, plus two English soldiers had lost their lives. I was told that they hit a gun implacement on T.O. My crew and I were devestated, if that is the correct word as to how bad we felt. We had lost the friends that had helped us get away from combat for a short time.

The crux of this letter is that this trip was not for a bunch of officers on a "Joy Ride", but for some friends trying to help a crew they knew had done their best and needed a rest.

Their rest was eternal.

Sincerely,

Chmer L. Heap
LTC USAF RET
423 Sgdn 306 HBG

11-4-88

Dear Russ,

I have met you a few times at Conventions.

Received 306th Echoes Oct. 1988 Vol. 13 #4 newspaper, and was most pleased to read (front page) article on Mike Roshavitch.

Mike + I were buddies from the very start at Scott Field Radio School Sept. of 1941. We completed School in Feb. of 1942 and were shipped to Wendover Field, Utah. We were both with the 423rd and after our training were sent to Thurligh, England where we completed our missions. We remained very good friends until I was returned to the U. S. A. in July or August 1943. I did not hear of Mike's tragic death until 1944.

Our Commander at the time was 1st Lt. Jim Wilson (at Wendover and England.)

Mike and I doubled dated in Bedford England and I am sure I knew Mary Smith. To find out that Mike has a son by Mary, certainly surprises me and I would love to be able to contact them especially David his son and let him know what a Wonderful guy his father was.

Would it be possible to get an address where I could at least write to them. It would be a great favor to me to be able to contact them.

I have many wonderful memories of the times and adventures Mike and I shared. We were both on the same raid over France & Germany during the rough days. Especially the raid with Snuffy Smith. Our crew protected Snuffy's plane, they slid under us and when we landed at an off field in England. Our crew, Lt. Jones Commander, flew them back to our base at Thurleigh.

Please try to ^{get} a contact to Mary & David Smith for me. I am 70 years old now and I feel great now, however one never knows!

I believe I owe it to his son!

Ray Stymacks

2910 W. Marconi #113

Phoenix, Az. 85023

Phone is 602/993-2982

15-January 1989

Dear Mary:

I am enclosing a couple of letters I received earlier from 306th men who had known Mike. I thought that you and your son might like to have these.

As to whether you want to make any further- contacts with either of these writers is certainly your decision. Their addresses appear on their respective letters for your convenience.

I plan to use parts of these letters in the January issue of Echoes.

Sincerely yours,

Russell A. Strong

20 March 1989

Mrs. Mary Smith
Brighton Road
Woodmancote, nr Henfield
Sussex BN5 9FP, England

Dear Mary:

Writing for myself, and for Don Ross and Reg Robinson, let me express our sincere thanks to you for your significant gift to the 306th Bomb Group Project Fund.

We are most appreciative of your interest in and support of the Association, and shall keep you informed as to future progress and programs of the Fund.

Sincerely yours,

~~William~~ F. Houlihan
President

Amount received: \$250.00

24 April 1991

Dear Mary:

In going through a file today I found this document, which I thought you might like to have for your collection.

I don't believe you have seen it before.

When the 306th comes to England in 1992 I hope you will be with us at least a part of the time.

All the best,

March 5th 1991

Dragons
Brighton Road
Woodmancote N^r Henfield
Sussex England.

Dear Russell,

I have today received and read my 306th Echoes as usual with enjoyment.

I was very interested in the final article on Page 11 re Pilot gets back from Bremen because of course that # was the plane that Ticheat Roskovich flew with.

I thought you might like the enclosed picture & I have written the names on the back 5 of whom are in the article.

The original picture was sent over by Kenneth McClure and I had copies made and a negative taken, which I've got, and then the original picture was sent back to him.

You may keep the enclosed.

All the best

Mary (Smith)





RAE

306th FIELD

OCT 1990



306th FIELD OCT 90





CHURCH -

354th GRAFTON UNDERWOOD

OCT 90

First to Finish: Michael Roskovich

A Tragic Incident At RAF Drem

On the morning of Friday February 4th 1944 the roar of three Wright Cyclone engines reverberated about the grass airstrip at RAF Drem as a lone B-17G 'Flying Fortress' bomber of the 306th Bombardment Group was prepared by it's crew to return south to the unit's base at Thurleigh in Bedfordshire. The fourth engine of the Fortress was refusing to start and the crew made the difficult decision to attempt a take off on three engines in the hope that the fourth could be coaxed into starting by allowing it to 'windmill' in flight. It was cold, near freezing point, but weather conditions were good with light winds and visibility excellent as the olive green clad B-17 began to taxi out. The aircraft began it's takeoff run well but as it took to the air disaster struck and a wing dipped and caught a fighter abutment wall; this caused the B-17 to crash immediately and catch fire. Tragically all six people on board were killed in the crash.

The following morning Francis Waugh, of the 306th's photographic section, was awakened early and flown from Thurleigh to Drem with instructions to photograph the crash scene. When he had carried out this duty he went on to the mortuary to photograph the aircrew for identification purposes. By this time it had been established that two of the men killed were not from the 306th; one was a RAF airman based at nearby Dirleton radar station and another a Royal Naval radar mechanic from the Royal Navy's 784 Squadron which shared the base. Three of the four American air crew were experienced pilots: 1st Lt Woodrow S Ellerton, 1st Lt Arthur G Moseley and 2nd Lt Edward D O'Malley. Waugh was horrified to be told on his arrival at the mortuary that the fourth American was his close friend 2nd Lt Michael Roskovich, 423rd Squadron Gunnery Officer and the first man in 8th Bomber Command to have successfully completed a tour of 25 operations over occupied Europe. Waugh was then left with the unenviable task of photographing his friend and comrades before returning to Thurleigh to confirm the losses to his unit.

Roskovich & The 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy)

Michael Roskovich was born on August 20th 1922 in Fayette City, Pennsylvania; he was one of eleven children to his Russian immigrant parents. After leaving school he had little time to pursue a career before enlistment but would later tell an American newspaper that his desire was to study

to become a lawyer. Enlisted before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and Germany's subsequent declaration of war on America, he was detailed to Scott Field Radio School in September 1941 to commence twenty weeks training as a radio operator mechanic gunner with the rank of Technical Sergeant. He completed his studies in February 1942 and was shipped to the 423rd Squadron, 306th Bombardment Group (Heavy) at Wendover Field in Utah. The 306th was one of the many 8th Air Force units which were rapidly being transformed from existence on paper into fully equipped combat units; activated on 1 March 1942 the Group began flying training on 6 April 1942 at Wendover before transferring to the UK. Michael left with the air crews and their Fortresses for Prestwick, Scotland on 1st September; the rest of the 306th's personnel arrived at Greenock, Scotland onboard the Queen Elizabeth on the 5th September 1942. The Group then located to Thurleigh where they would remain for the duration of hostilities.

On October 9th 1942 the Group flew it's first mission against industrial targets at Lille, France with the loss of one aircraft and one damaged beyond repair. Michael Roskovich would continue to fly with the Group during the coming months when losses were frequently heavy; it soon became apparent during this period that an airmen had less than a one-in-three chance of completing a tour of twenty five missions over *Festung Europa*.

Michael soon acquired the honorary title of 'the Mad Russian' amongst his comrades not least for his habit of producing a pair of scissors and cutting off the tie of anyone, regardless of rank, who entered his aircraft to fly on a mission; these ties were displayed as trophies in the coffee room of the photographic section where he frequently visited. On some occasions he took a K-20 hand held oblique camera onboard his 'plane during a mission to take snap shots of attacking Luftwaffe fighters to the upset of other crew members who preferred that he shoot with the supplied heavy machine gun. But beyond his affectionately bestowed title he was known as a brave and determined airman who was greatly liked and respected by those around him.

On 20th December 1942 B-17s of the 91st, 303rd, 305th and 306th Bombardment Groups together with B-24s of the 44th BG struck at an Air Depot at Romilly-sur-Seine. The Luftwaffe responded in force and half of the missions entire losses fell to the 306th who lost 3 aircraft and had a further twelve damaged from a force of 19 aircraft despatched. The Group claimed 12 Luftwaffe fighters downed and 6 probably destroyed; credit for the destruction of two heavily armed and robust Focke-Wulf 190 fighters was given to Michael Roskovich.

Early in January 1943 Colonel Frank Armstrong took command of the 306th. Armstrong had

considerable experience and had flown in the lead aircraft during the 8th Air Forces first raid on Rouen, France on 17th August 1942. On 27th January 1943 the first raid against Germany was launched and Armstrong and the 306th led the 8th Air Force formation earning themselves the title of 'first over Germany'; on this occasion the 306th despatched 16 B-17s and escaped any loss of aircraft or personnel despite having 11 Fortresses damaged. After the war Sy Bartlett, a Staff Officer in 8th Bomber Command would approach his friend Colonel Beirne Lay Jnr with the idea that they write a novel based in part on the impact of Armstrong's leadership on the 306th. The resultant novel 'Twelve O'clock High' was filmed by Twentieth Century Fox in 1949 and this film is still widely acclaimed for it's moving and powerful portrayal of men under the extreme pressures of war.

On April 5th 1943 field orders directed the 306th to attack the Erla Works at Antwerp together with five other Bombardment Groups. Major General Ira Eaker had recently announced that a tour of duty would consist of 25 missions over occupied Europe and there was a sense of anticipation amongst the crew of Captain Pervis Youree's Fortress because their Radio Operator, T/Sgt Michael Roskovich, would be flying his 25th mission; an achievement as yet unaccomplished. Francis Waugh, Michael's friend from the photographic section, joined him to record the mission and was sternly warned by Captain Youree that he "better not foul up on oxygen or anything else and cause an abort" even if the results were fatal! The mission was a disaster for the 306th and for the 8th Air Force. Most of the attacker's bombs fell inadvertently on the Belgian town of Mortsel killing 943 and injuring a further 1300. The 306th received the full attention of Jagdgeschwader (Fighter Group) 26's Focke Wulf fighters; continuous head on attacks resulted in the loss of 4 of the Groups B-17s and damage to a further 6. During the battle Hauptmann (Captain) Fritz Geisshardt, commander of III/JG26 and with 102 allied aircraft credited to him, was mortally wounded by defensive fire from 306th BG gunners. Captain Youree's aircraft was severely damaged by fighter attacks, knocked out of formation and forced to salvo it's bombs but was able to make it back to Thurleigh where Michael had to be dissuaded from bailing out over the airfield to celebrate completing his tour of duty.

At the time that Michael finished his twenty fifth mission the 306th had flown a total of 614 sorties over 34 missions including 6 against Germany. The Group lost during this period 25 B-17s to enemy action at a human cost in excess of 270 men killed, seriously wounded or missing in action.

At the end of his tour of duty Michael Roskovich was fully entitled to return to the US where he

could anticipate a hero's welcome and most likely a posting to a training unit where he could pass on his skills and experience to new crews. Instead he elected to remain with the 306th and together with two other gunners, Joe Bowles and Harold Lightfoot, accepted a commission as 2nd Lt and the position of Gunnery Officer. He flew a further 8 combat missions during a period when the 306th received the highest casualties of any unit within 8th Bomber Command. For his service to his country he was awarded the Purple Heart, Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross, the Good Conduct Medal (Army) and, posthumously, the WWII Victory Medal.

Prelude To A Tragedy

On 30th January 1944 the 306th joined a force of 623 B-17s and 154 B-24s despatched to attack industrial targets at Brunswick. During the raid, which resulted in the loss of 20 heavy bombers, the B-17 piloted by Elmer Heap was seriously damaged by fighter attacks and lost two engines; only the timely intervention of P-47 escort fighters saved the crew from the destruction of their aircraft by the Luftwaffe over the Channel. After its safe return to Thurleigh the B-17 required lengthy work to make it air worthy and Heap's exhausted crew were offered R and R (Rest and Recreation) which they gladly accepted. Elmer Heap enquired at 423rd Squadron operations about the availability of transport and was told that a B-17G was available if he could find a crew willing to fly him to his chosen destination of Edinburgh - a favourite venue for a seven day furlough amongst many American personnel. The B-17, serial number 42-31715 and manufactured by Boeing at their Seattle plant, was a new replacement aircraft that had arrived at Thurleigh on 29 January. Elmer approached his friend 1st Lt Arthur Moseley who was keen to accumulate more flying time and happy to help him out. Michael Roskovich also learned of the flight and asked to join the crew. The aircraft left Thurleigh and arrived at RAF Drem after dark on the 3rd February. From Drem Elmer Heap caught a bus into Edinburgh to find accommodation at a hotel on the Bridges. Michael and the rest of the crew spent the night at Drem and next morning prepared to leave for their base joined by two British servicemen who most probably were 'hitching a lift' south.

And so the next morning Michael Roskovich and his comrades died; not in the face of the enemy against whom they fought valiantly but in the act of providing a kindness to battle weary friends in need of a short break from the stresses of combat.

On 5th January 1941 Adolf Hitler, speaking at a midday meeting, had raised the issue of possible attacks in the future by units equipped with Flying Fortresses and was moved to declare that "I'll never believe that an American soldier can fight like a hero". Through the determination and sacrifice of men like Michael Roskovich and his brothers in arms Marshal of the RAF Sir Arthur Harris wrote in 1947 "as for the American bomber crews, they were the bravest of the brave, and I know that I am speaking for my own bomber crews when I pay this tribute". Their names shall live forever wherever freedom from tyranny and oppression is celebrated.

Gerard May

Dalkeith

16 November 1997

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Note & Acknowledgements:

Despite my best efforts and repeated enquiries I have sadly been unable to establish the names of the two British servicemen who were killed in the crash at Drem. No disrespect to their memory is intended by the omission of this information. My grateful thanks to the following for their generous assistance: Sr Cathy, Roger A Freeman, Derek Hancock, J L Hey, Elizabeth Kerr, Edo van der Laan, Dennis Parker, Gordon & Connie Richards, Mary Smith, Russell E Strong. Special thanks to my wife Karen for her support and my father Gerald for his advice and encouragement.

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