

Lt. Leif R. Ostnes Crews and Missions **to and from Grafton Underwood**

By his daughter, Jeanne Ostnes
jeannebeni@gmail.com



Standing Left to Right: Unknown 15, Bob Chapin, Group Navigator, Col. Theodore R. Milton Commanding Officer of 384th, Lt. Leif Ostnes, L/C Herbert H. Schaaf, USAF Retired. Schaaf was the pilot standing in the mid section looking backwards on the mission. Sitting Left to Right: Unknown16 could be Unknown 14, Pop Dolan, Dick Crown Group Bombardier, Unknown17 maybe Whipple.

Photo Courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files.

Lt. Leif R. Ostnes Crews and Missions to and from Grafton Underwood

By his daughter, Jeanne Ostnes
jeannebeni@gmail.com

September 27, 1944 Combat Crew Headquarters Biggs Field, Texas (El Paso)

November 22, 1944 Eight-day leave

November 30, 1944 Assigned to Crew #8238

Military Occupational Specialties has the acronym of MOS. The four digit MOS numbers are for Officers, and three digit MOS numbers are for Enlisted.¹

MOS of Crew 8238 also known as Crew 38

MOS 1091 = Pilot, B-17

MOS 1051 = Pilot - Two-Engine

MOS 1034 Navigator

MOS 1035 = Bombardier

MOS 748 = Airplane Mechanic-Gunner, Flight Engineer

MOS 757 = Radio Operator- Mechanic-Gunner, AAF Airplane

MOS 612 = Armorer-Gunner

MOS 611 = Aerial Gunner

When they left Biggs Field, El Paso, Texas November 30, 1944 they were Crew #8238

Rank	1st Lt	Date of Rank	6 Feb 43	Name	Ostnes, Leif R.	ASN	0737629	Duty	P	Aer	Rat	P-3-4	MOS	1091
	2d Lt		27 Jun 44		Leighton, Gerald E		0780637		CP			P-5-2		1051
	2d Lt		28 Aug 44		Purchase, George A		02069115		N		N			1034
	2d Lt		22 Jul 44		Robinson, John V		0783457		B		B			1035
	Cpl				Riordan, Victor J		16133392		E					748
	Cpl				Nepo, Alexander H		6003846		RO					757
	Cpl				Beck, Harrison G		17130624		AG					612
	Cpl				Carroll, John R		37580947		ARO					611
	Cpl				Burns, Harry W		38546978		TG					611



Left to Right: Unknown1; Cpl. Burns; Unknown maybe Lt. Robinson; Lt. Leighton; Lt. Ostnes; Unknown2; Unknown3; Unknown maybe Lt. Purchase. There were nine assigned to the crew. One of the crew is taking the picture, Unknown4. The aircraft number indicates it is a stateside photo so this photo was probably taken at Biggs Field near El Paso, Texas before leaving for Europe.

Picture courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files



There were nine assigned to the crew. One of the crew is taking the picture probably Lt. Leighton. Photo most likely taken at Biggs Field near El Paso, Texas before the men went to Europe. Sitting on Bomb is the fellow who took the first picture, Unknown4. Left to Right Standing: Unknown maybe Lt. Robinson; Unknown1; Cpl. Burns; Unknown3; Unknown2; Unknown maybe Lt. Purchase; Lt. Ostnes.

Picture courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files

December 02, 1944

Transfer to Lincoln Army Air Field, (LAAF) Lincoln, Nebraska, 2nd Air Force, 21st Command 273rd Bomb, Army Air Forces Base Unit (AAF BU) (SB) No Flying time accomplished at this station.

January 02, 1945

Assigned to FZ-555-EJ 1-56 Overseas Heavy Bombardment Crew #38. They were then transferred to the Port of Embarkation.

January 02, 1945

The same men of Crew #8238 were identified as Shipment No. FZ-555-EJ 38. They were part of fifty-six crews moving from Lincoln Army Air Field, Lincoln Nebraska traveling to Camp Myles Standish, Taunton, Massachusetts. Boston was the Port of Embarkation they were to arrive on January 4, 1945, then to the oversea destination, England. They were given the APO of 16856-EJ 38 C/O (care of) Postmaster, New York, New York. Upon arrival to final destination they used the mailing address of that place.

When they leave the Boston for England, Cpl. Carroll, John R is dropped from list. Cpl. Hamblin, Robert G. 35557913 is added and has duty initial G and an MOS of 611. Cpls. Beck, Burns and Hamblin are duty initial G. Cpl. Nepo has duty initial AR. Cpl. Riordan has duty initial AE.

January 21, 1945 they were assigned to 546th Bomb Sq. 384th Bomb Group (Heavy) for Casual Pool, Headquarters 70th Replacement Depot (AAF) Army Post Office (APO) 652.

January 21, 1945 they arrive 106 APO 557 8th Air Force, 1st division, 41st Wing, 384th Bomb Group (H) 546th Squadron. Station 106 was the designation number for the train stop at Grafton Underwood.

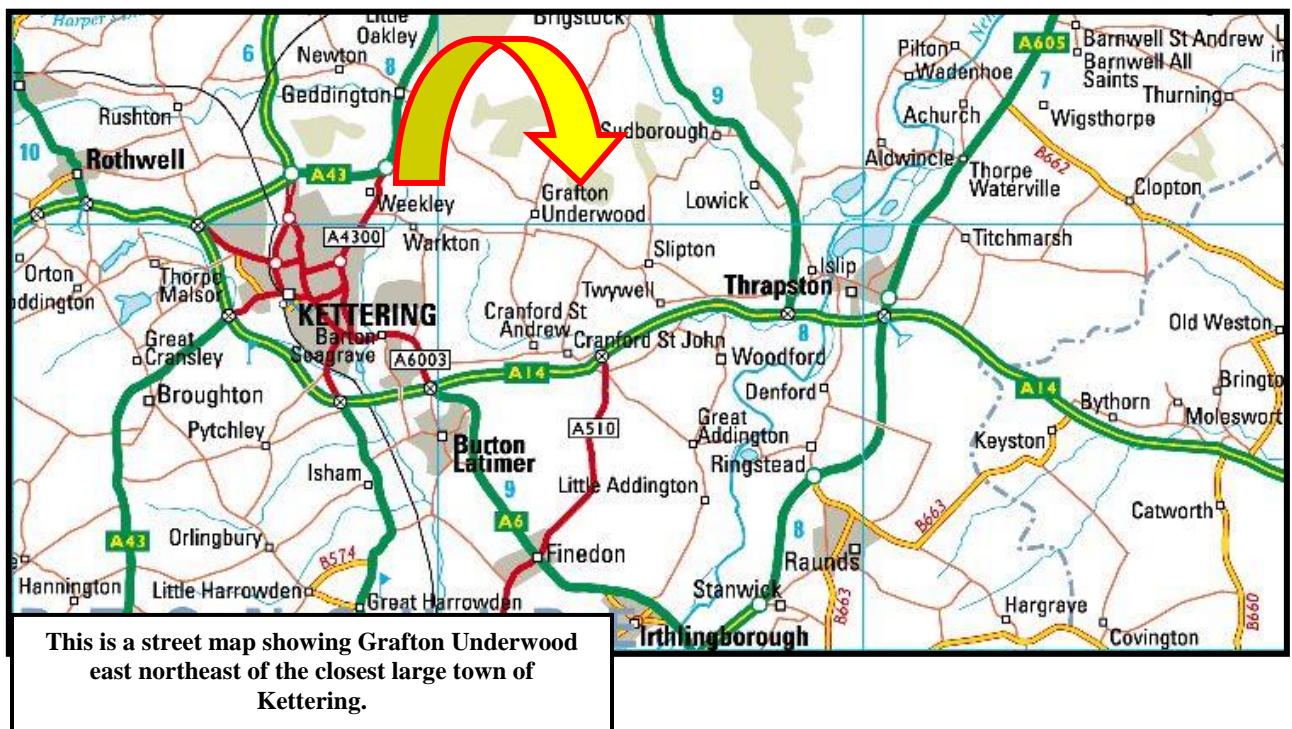
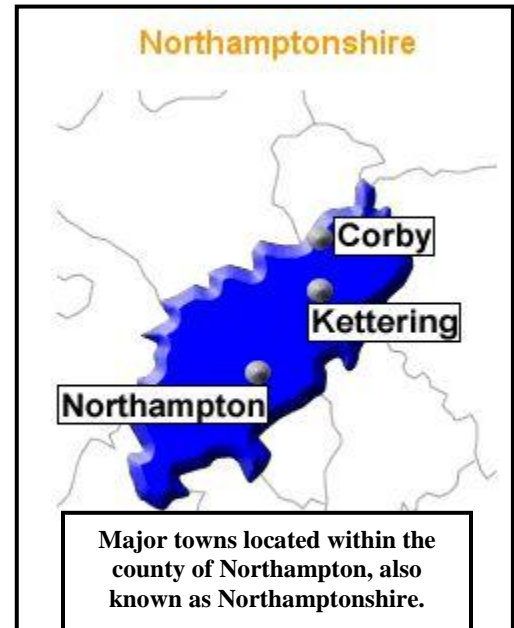
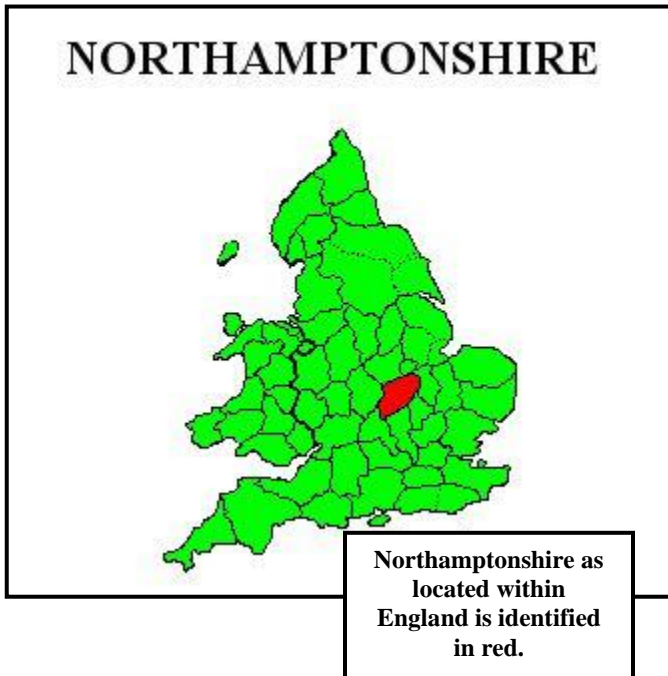
Grafton Underwood is a parish in the hundred of Huxloe, county of Northampton, 4¾ miles east northeast from Kettering.² Northamptonshire is situated in the East Midlands of England. From 1942 to 1945 the United States 8th Air Force operated from seven airfields in Northamptonshire. A granite memorial now stands at the west end of the former main east-west runway.³ The 384th memorial is by the road, along the south side of the farm that was the airbase. The little village itself is just to the east. There are no pubs there anymore, due to increased police emphasis on Drinking Under the Influence and Driving While Intoxicated in the United Kingdom.⁴ The village church also contains a stained-glass window dedicated to the 384th Bomb Group as a memorial window.⁵



Memorial located at Grafton Underwood
Picture courtesy of <http://www.northamptonshire.co.uk>



Memorial stained glass window in village church
Picture courtesy of <http://www.northamptonshire.co.uk>



THE NINETEEN MISSIONS OF LT. LEIF R. OSTNES

Mission 1

February 09, 1945 Merseberg, Germany Co-Pilot B-17G⁶ Aircraft 42-97510
Co-Pilot to Lt. William Grieg⁷ in B-17 aircraft numbered 42-97510. It was model 17G-15-VE with the markings of BK*A. The plane had a nickname of "Satan's Playmate". "Satan's Playmate" completed the war and transferred out on May 27, 1945. Note the old style painted finish⁸. The first mission of any pilot was as a co-pilot.



A picture of Satan's Playmate a B-17 belonging to the 546th Squadron of the 384th
Bomb Group in Grafton Underwood, Northamptonshire, England.
Picture courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files



A full picture of Satan's Playmate a B-17 aircraft numbered 42-97510. It was model 17G-15-VE with the markings of BK*A.

Picture courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files

Mission 2

February 14, 1945 Dresden, Germany Command Pilot B-17G Aircraft 44-6476

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 44-6476. It was a model B-17G-50-DL with the marking of BK*G. It was built under license by Douglas. It had overall natural metal finish, plus the usual star-n-bar national marking and the big triangle on the tail with the serial number, squadron number (3) and group designator 'P' in it. No info on any nose art. The aircraft survived the war and went to the depot at Istres, France⁹.

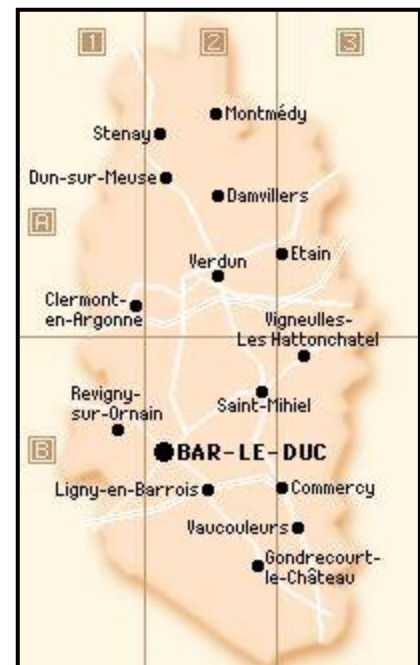
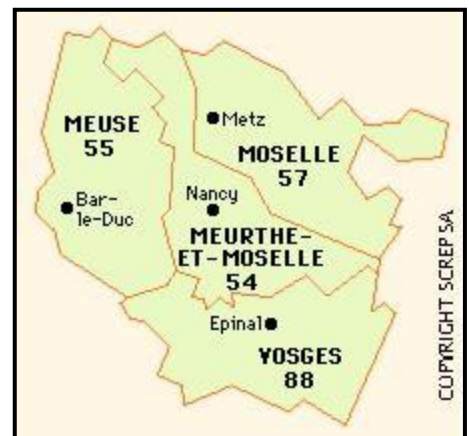
A post mission report for the February 14th, 1945 mission to Dresden was written up and signed by the Group Intelligence officer, Major W.E. Dolan. In this report, he records a dictated narrative by 1st Lt. G.W. Holmes who flew on the mission. The report lists 14 aircraft that did not return to Grafton Underwood after the February 14, 1945 mission. They were short of gas and so they all landed at airports in Belgium or France. All were accounted for so none were reported missing from this mission.¹⁰

On Lt. Leif Ostnes' hand written note for landing on the continent February 14, 1945 he had the same crew except a crew member identified with duty MOS of R had the ASN of 33610339 so Cpl. Nepo the radio operator of the original crew was not on this February 14, 1945 flight.

Hand written note by pilot indicated name and identification number of those on board aircraft.

Rank	1st Lt	Date of Rank	6 Feb 43	Name	Ostnes, Leif R.	ASN	0737629	Duty	P Aer Rat	P-3-4	MOS	1091
	2d Lt	27 Jun 44		Leighton, Gerald E	0780637	CP			P-5-2		1051	
	2d Lt	28 Aug 44		Purchase, George A	0269115	N		N			1034	
	2d Lt	22 Jul 44		Robinson, John V	0783457	B		B			1035	
	Cpl			Riordan, Victor J	16133392	E					748	
	Cpl			Unknown	33610339	R					757	
	Cpl			Beck, Harrison G	17130624	B					612	
	Cpl			Hamblin, Robert G.	35557913	WG					611	
	Cpl			Burns, Harry W	38546978	TG					611	

A handwritten note by Lt. Ostnes on back of a German radio log paper indicates his movements. He landed a B-17 at Rouves (Etain) on February 14, 1945. The air field was for fighter aircraft. The P-47, the “Jug” used it in daylight missions and the P-61 the “Black Widows” used it for the night missions.



Rouves was 4.4 kilometers from Etain. Etain is in the region of Lorraine in north east France. It is in, what we would call a county, Meuse with the French identification number of 55. Verdun is 24.4 miles southwest of Etain. Bar-Le-Duc is the largest town in Meuse. The maps above and to the right show the location of Etain. Rouves is just to the east of Etain.

Below are Lt. Ostnes' hand written notes and a Paris Pass he received February 14, 1945.

Front of Hand Written Note:

SE 0740
TAY 16755 S. NO. 46476
TG 0814
0910 A-82
COAST 10:07 #1
CONT COAST 37 #2
BOMBS AWAY 1236
#2 1237
#3 1235
RHINE 15:22
LANDED 1630 P. CP 503
ROCKETS (ETA IN) (4K) N } 602
B }
E } 603
R }
CP 0-280637
N 0-2069115
B 0-283457
E 1613339
R 33610339
B 17130624
TG 38546978
WG 35557913
609 BELK & BUR
T -701

Senderabstimmung

Type:	Nr.:	Tag:
Frequenz kHz	Steuertreis od. Zwischentreis	Antennentreis
	Grob Stufe	Fein Grad oder Teilstr.
		Ant.-Kopplung
		Grob Stufe
		Fein Grad oder Teilstr.
		Verkürzung
		Strom Amp. oder m Amp.
		Sonstiges (z. B. Entkopplung, Gitterkopplung usw.)

O, D. 962/40 — Din A 5 — C/1402

Front of Pass:

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE (MAIN)
APO 633

15 FEB 1945
(Date)

SUBJECT: Pass for Paris Area
TO : Whom It May Concern

OSTNER L.R. 1ST LT 0-737629 8TH AF
(Name) (Rank) (ASN) (Organization)

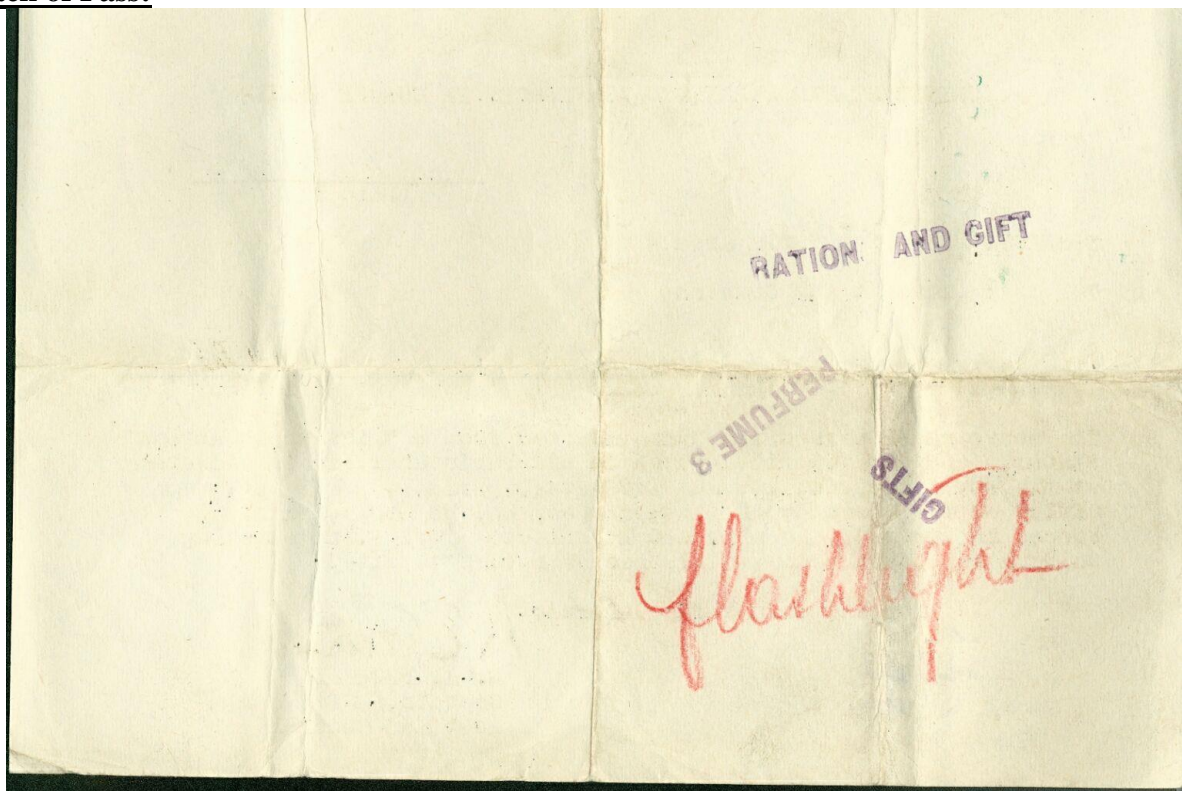
The above named person has just returned from a "Missing in Action" status, and is authorized to be in the Paris area. He is billeted at the Hotel Francia, 100 rue Lafayette, Paris, (PW & X Det, Office of the Director of Intelligence, Hq, US Strategic Air Forces in Europe). he will not be able to comply with existing uniform regulations due to his recent return to duty.

For the Commanding General:

Adrian E. Knock
Adrian E. KNOCK
MAJOR, AIR CORPS
Hq. 9 AF

R. E. Fecteau
R. E. FECTEAU
Captain, AGD
Asst Adj General

Back of Pass:



Mission 3

February 24, 1945 Hamberg, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 44-6476

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 44-6476. It was a model B-17G-50-DL with the marking of BK*G. It was built under license by Douglas. It was overall a natural metal finish, plus the usual star-n-bar national marking and the big triangle on the tail with the serial number, squadron number (3) and group designator 'P' in it. No info on any nose art. The aircraft survived the war and went to the depot at Istres, France¹¹. This is the same aircraft he flew on February 14 so it is assumed he flew it back to Grafton Underwood on or about February 16, 1945.

Mission 4

February 25, 1945 Friedreichshafen, Germany Command Pilot B-17G Aircraft 43-38766

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 43-38766. It was a model B-17G-95-BO with the marking of BK*R

Lt. Ostnes was unaccounted for after bombs away but over friendly lines. A post mission report for the February 25th, 1945 mission to Friedreichshafen was written up and signed by the Group Intelligence officer, Major W.E. Dolan. Lt. Ostnes' aircraft was listed as being missing after the mission. The 384th BG received a radio message from Lt. Ostnes reporting that he was over allied territory and that Number 2 engine was shut down. His plane had been hit by Flak and made an emergency landing.

Pictures showing the Rouves airfield and different crew members around the area may indicate Lt. Ostnes landed again near Etain. George Hoover served with the 425th Night Fighter Squadron as a Crew Chief. He and the Squadron were at operation post Etain, France from November 19, 1944 to April 12, 1945. He related, "I remember a B-17 landing on our air strip with only one engine running and it was shot up very bad. As far as I know the Medic's picked up the crew in ambulances and headed for the hospital with the crew. I think the B-17 was still there when our squadron the 425th Night Fighters moved on to Germany." When queried on how transportation routes were at the time George also stated, "The road system in France at that time was in fairly good shape, other than lots of trucks, and supply vehicles and a few tanks running around. [It was] slow moving, but you could get through."¹²

This aircraft was transferred with the group to Istres, France.

Mission 5

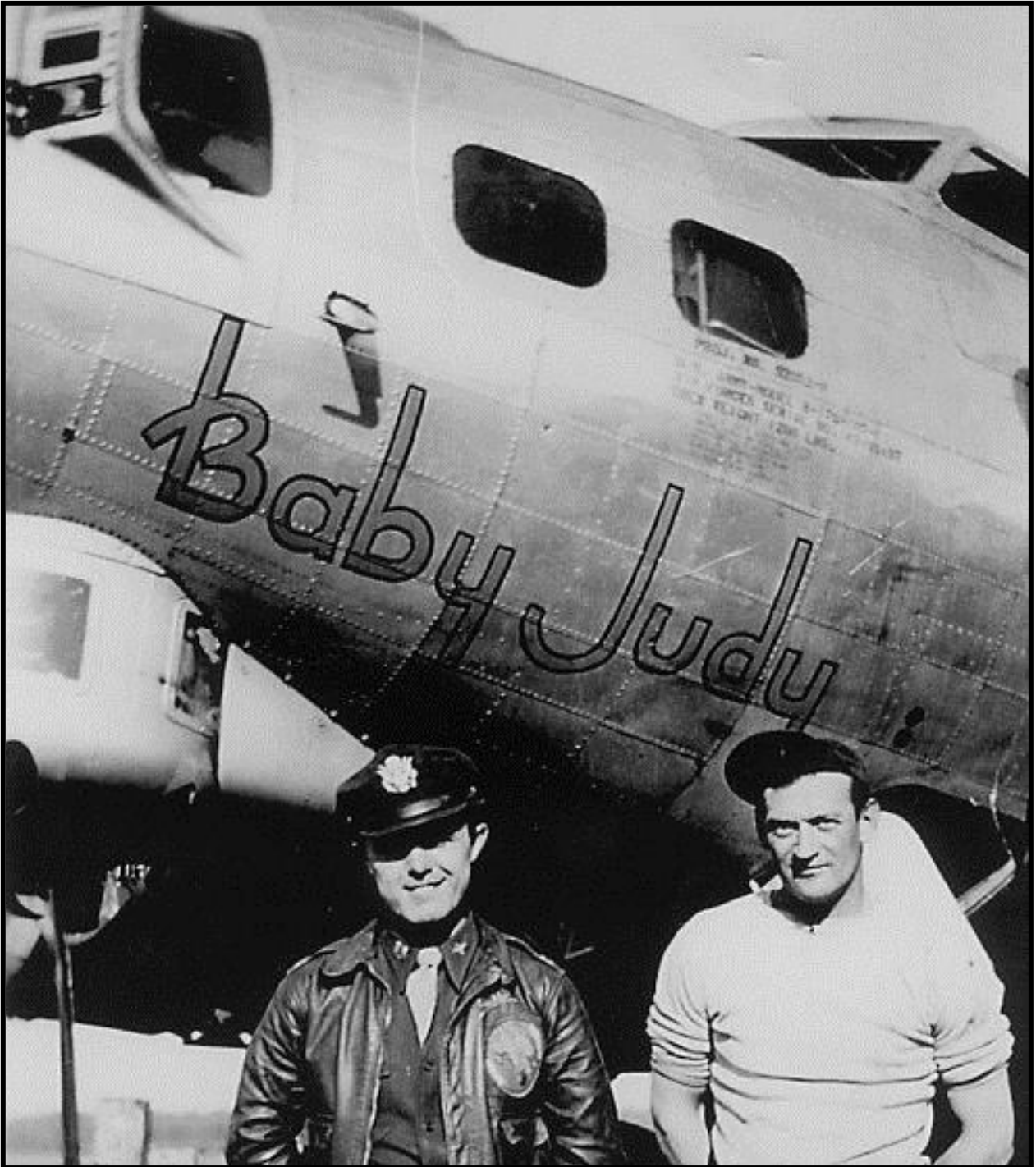
February 27, 1945 Leipzig, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as "School Marm" in the Group History but has been also identified as "Baby Judy". The Nose Art shows "Baby Judy".



Lt. Leif R. Ostnes shown with his crew in front of "Baby Judy". Note the Nose Art for name. From Left to Right in back: Unknown5, Unknown6, Lt. Ostnes, Unknown maybe Lt. Purchase, Unknown7 maybe Lt. Crown, Unknown8. On left bending down: Unknown9. Kneeling Left to Right: Unknown10, Unknown11.

Picture courtesy of Lt. Ostnes files.



“School Marm” also known as “Baby Judy” was a B-17G-105-BO with the markings BK*K. This shows an unknown pilot with an unknown crew member or ground crew member.

Photo courtesy of Anthony Plowright.

Mission 6

February 28, 1945 Hagen, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as “School Marm” in the Group History but has been also identified as “Baby Judy”. The Nose Art shows “Baby Judy”.

Mission 7

March 02, 1945 Rositz, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39060

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 43-39060. It was a model B-17G-100- with the marking of BK*F. It was listed as “Terrible Ute”



This shows an unknown crew in front of “The Terrible Ute”. It is a B-17G-100-BO with the markings of BK*F.

From the Collection of Charlie Burke

March 02, 1945 Lt. Leif R. Ostnes awarded the Air Medal.

Mission 8

March 19, 1945 Plauen, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as "School Marm" in the Group History but has been also identified as "Baby Judy". The Nose Art shows "Baby Judy".

Mission 9

March 20, 1945 Hamberg, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as "School Marm" in the Group History but has been also identified as "Baby Judy". The Nose Art shows "Baby Judy".

Mission 10

March 22, 1945 Westerholt, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as "School Marm" in the Group History but has been also identified as "Baby Judy". The Nose Art shows "Baby Judy".

Mission 11

March 26, 1945 Meinden, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as "School Marm" in the Group History but has been also identified as "Baby Judy". The Nose Art shows "Baby Judy".

Mission 12

March 28, 1945 Berlin, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 43-39197

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft 43-39197 number. It was a model B-17G-105-BO with the marking of BK*K. It was listed as "School Marm" in the Group History but has been also identified as "Baby Judy". The Nose Art shows "Baby Judy".

Mission 13

March 30, 1945 Bremen, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 44-8541

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number. 44-8541. It was a model B-17G-70-VE with the marking of BK*Y. It was listed as “Buckeye Belle”. The “Buckeye Belle” was damaged once by flak, seriously wounding the pilot. It was repaired and finished the war.

The mission that day was to bomb the U-Boat Pens. The following U Boats were destroyed.

U-430	VIIC	Mar 30 1945	Near Bremen	US bombs
U-870	IXC/40	Mar 30 1945	Bremen	US bombs



Formal photo in front of the “Buckeye Belle”.

Standing Left to Right: Lt. Leighton, Lt. Ostnes, Unknown12, Unknown maybe Lt. Purchase.

Kneeling Left to Right: Burns, Unknown13, Unknown5, Unknown6, Unknown14.

Photo courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files.



Aircraft number 44-8541 known as "Buckeye Belle" shown here with unknown crew man. It was a B-17G-70-VE with markings of BK*Y.

Picture courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files

Mission 15

March 10, 1945 Oranienberg, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 44-8211

The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 44-8211. It was a model B-17G-55-VE with the marking of BK*Z. Aircraft number 44-8211 had no nickname and completed the war as a radar equipped aircraft. See the Radar dome in place of the ball turret.¹³



Aircraft flown on Lt. Leif R. Ostnes and crew's Mission 15. It was a B-17G-55-VE with the markings of BK*Z.

Picture courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files

Mission 16

April 12, 1945 Mission missed by Dad's original list 44-8789

The Pilot's Briefing Form shows the crew used aircraft number 44-8789. It was a B-17G-80-VE with the markings of JD*X It had not nickname and it transferred out post war

The Pilot's Briefing Form shows: 41st A Group Lead Squadron

Col. Milton and Lt. Ostnes Lead Squadron, call sign Cowboy Able

Depart Control Point "A" 0826

Leave English Coast 0902

Arrive Enemy line 1043

Arrive Target 1209

Fighter Support Peter 51 11:03

Plan "B" Cont Assembly

Pilot's Briefing Form April 12, 1945

Rank	Date of Rank	Name	ASN	Duty	Aer Rat	MOS
Lt. Col.		Milton				
1st Lt	6 Feb 43	Ostnes, Leif R.	0737629	P	P-3-4	1091
		Chapin,		1N		
2d Lt	28 Aug 44	Purchase, George A	0269115	2N	N	1034
		Crown		B		
		Schwob		MN		

Mission 17

April 14, 1945 Bordeaux, France Command Pilot B-17G 44-8541

The Pilot's Briefing Form shows the crew used aircraft number 44-8541 a B-17G-70-VE with the nickname "Buckeye Belle" and the markings of BK*Y. Anthony Plowright indicates that the Group History shows that the aircraft was number 44-8789 a B-17G-80-VE with the markings of JD*X. It had no nickname and was transferred out post war.

Pilot's Briefing Form April 12, 1945 41st A Group Lead Squadron

Rank	Date of Rank	Name	ASN	Duty	Aer Rat	MOS
Col.		Milton				
1st Lt	6 Feb 43	Ostnes, Leif R.	0737629	P	P-3-4	1091
		Chapin,		1N		
2d Lt	28 Aug 44	Whipple		2N	N	1034
		Crown		B		
		Schwob		MN		

They flew Lead Group with Col. Theodore Milton (41st A Group). Pop Dolan was on board as the Staff Officer, Intelligence. Lt. Ostnes related that Pop Dolan missed the bombing initial point and Lt. Ostnes had to take the whole group around and return to bomb site again. Dick Crown was the Group Bombadier so he probably took the heat for the missing of the bombing point. Other Bomb Groups had flown through and when A Group got back on track the smoke trailing through the air looked like Elise Ostnes's lace curtains. Elise was Lt. Ostnes' mother.



Standing Left to Right: Unknown 15, Bob Chapin, Group Navigator, Col. Theodore R. Milton Commanding Officer of 384th, Lt. Leif Ostnes, L/CHerbert H. Schaaf, USAF Retired. Schaaf was the pilot standing in the mid section looking backwards on the mission. Sitting Left to Right: Unknown16 could be Unknown 14, Pop Dolan, Dick Crown Group Bombadier, Unknown17 maybe Whipple.

Photo Courtesy of Lt. Leif R. Ostnes files.

Mission 18

April 15, 1945 Ruyan, France Command Pilot B-17G 42-98027

Lt. Leif R. Ostnes was the High Squadron Lead Pilot.¹⁴ The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 42-98027. It was a model B-17G-40-VE with the marking of SU*Z. Aircraft number 42-98027 had a nickname of "Swamp Angel".

Mission 19

April 20, 1945 Seddin, Germany Command Pilot B-17G 44-8211

Lt. Leif R. Ostnes was the Low Squadron Command Pilot.¹⁵ The aircraft he flew that day was aircraft number 44-8211. It was a model B-17G-55-VE with the marking of BK*Z. Aircraft number 44-8211 had no nickname.

April 24, 1945 Lt. Ostnes awarded 2 Oak Leaf Clusters

May 08, 1945 Unconditional Surrender from Axis Powers

Lt. Ostnes awarded:

American Theater Services Medal

World War II Victory Medal European,

African Middle Eastern Services Medal with 3 Bronze Stars





**Standing Left to Right second from left is Lt. Leif R. Ostnes. The others are unknown.
Possibly the first standing on left is Lt. Col. Robert W. Fish**

Lt. Leif Robert Ostnes Medals and Patch:

The Captain Bars are made of material instead of metal so may have been given in the field and not ever recognized in the records.



Lt. Leif Robert Ostnes Dog Tags:



July 01, 1945 Assigned to Station Y-17 APO 557 8th Air force, 1st Division, 40th Wing, 384th Group, 546 Squadron.

August 01, 1945 Assigned to Station Istres #2. Flew Free French back from Morocco.

September 01, 1945 Assigned to Station AAF 195.

September 24, 1945 Assigned to AAF Station 369 8th air Force, VIII Ftr Command, 67th Wing, 356 Ftr Group.

October 24, 1945 Leave for USA Total 2,171 Hours and 35 minutes and 50 Seconds flying time while in military.

November 10, 1945 Arrive in USA.

END NOTES

¹ <http://www.armyairforces.com/dbmos.asp>

² A Topographical Dictionary of England: Volume 2 page 248.

³ <http://www.northamptonshire.co.uk> and actual runway directions from personal correspondence with Lloyd Whitlow.

⁴ Personal correspondence from Bob L. 6/23/2002

⁵ <http://www.northamptonshire.co.uk>

⁶ Co-Pilot information came from Anthony Plowright.

⁷ Information came from Anthony Plowright.

⁸ Ken Decker noticed old style paint. Bob L. indicated it was OD green & gray.

⁹ Bill L. personal correspondence 6/20/2002 relating information from Cliff Bishop's book, "Fortresses of the Big Triangle First".

¹⁰ Win Jackson, III personal correspondence 6/28/2002 relating information from microfilm B0373 - 384th Bomb Group (Dec. 42 - Apr. 44).

¹¹ Bill L. personal correspondence 6/20/2002 relating information from Cliff Bishop's book, "Fortresses of the Big Triangle First".

¹² George Hoover personal correspondence June 30, 2002 to Jeanne Ostnes.

¹³ Ken Decker personal correspondence July 17, 2002.

¹⁴ Anthony Plowright personal correspondence throughout summer of 2002.

¹⁵ Anthony Plowright personal correspondence throughout summer of 2002.