

2nd Lt. Walter Hauptman
U.S. Army Air Corps



By his nephews
Dick Kahler
Jack Crump
and anyone else
that knew anything
about Walt

Walter Hauptman was our family hero. Although all the Hauptman "boys" did their duty for their country during WW II, Walter experienced the drama of war first hand. He entered the US Army Air Corps and became a Second Lieutenant with pilot wings to boot. He was very proud of being an officer and a gentleman. Upon his graduation he was assigned to the 447th Bomb Group at Ephrata, Washington. This new group was established in April of 1943. His Commanding Officer, Lt. Colonel Hunter Harris Jr. was pure military. The Colonel had attended the Virginia Military Academy and had gone on to graduate from West Point in 1932. From there they went to Signal Hill, Orlando, Florida where they went through bomber simulation carrying out simulated missions and "bombing" American cities. Their next assignment was Rapid City, South Dakota. For a guy who had never been more than 100 miles from home Walt was seeing the nation. While in training there two B-17's collided with each other and 14 lives were lost. The next month another B-17 went down due to weather problems and another 14 lives were lost. On November 8, 1943 the orders came down to 42 air crews to take the North Atlantic crossing where only 16 years before Lindbergh had mapped his flight. After signing and taking delivery of their new aircraft they were on their way to Rattlesden, England to join the 8th Air Force. The date was November 9, 1943.

IN ACCEPTING THIS AIRCRAFT, IT IS OUR SOLEMN INTENTION TO BRING CREDIT TO HER AND TO OURSELVES, AND TO CARRY OUT OUR MISSION WITH THE SKILL AND TENACITY, FOR WHICH WE PRIDE OURSELVES AS MEMBERS OF THE 447TH. HEAVY BOMB GROUP AND THE ARMY AIR FORCES.

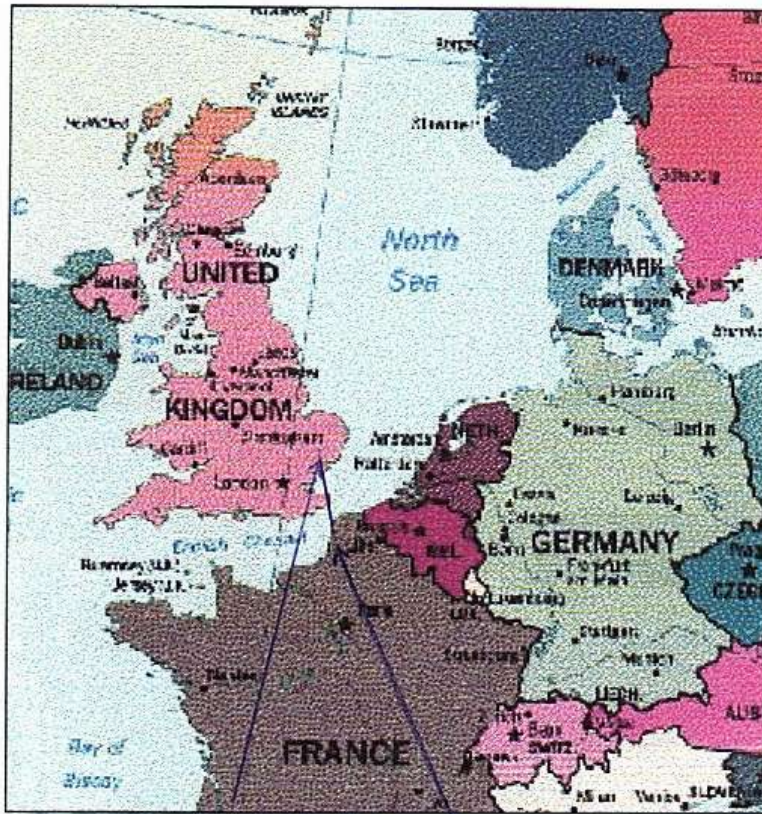
PILOT <u>Merton C. Putnam</u>	CO-PILOT <u>Walter I. Hauptman 2nd Lt. A.C.</u>
NAVIGATOR <u>Merton Gold 2nd Lt. A.C.</u>	BOMBARDIER <u>William H. Marshall 2nd Lt. A.C.</u>
ENGINEER <u>Clarence H. Stewart</u>	WAIST GUNNER <u>Oren M. Smith</u>
RADIO OPERATOR <u>Milton H. Clantz</u>	WAIST GUNNER <u>James F. Fordyce</u>
BALL TURRET GUNNER <u>John H. Suggs</u>	TAIL GUNNER <u>Kenneth Corey</u>

His crew was as follows:

2nd Lt. Marten C. Putnam	Pilot
2nd Lt. Walter I. Hauptman	Co-pilot
2nd Lt. Merton Gold	Navigator
2nd Lt. William H. Marshall	Bombardier
T/Sgt. Clarence H. Stewart	Engineer
T/Sgt. Milton H. Clantz	Radio operator
S/St Oren M. Smith	Ball turret
S/Sgt. John H. Suggs	Waist gunner
S/Sgt. James F. Fordyce	Waist gunner
S/Sgt. Kenneth Corey	Tail gunner



Noball 50 Mission Drionville France

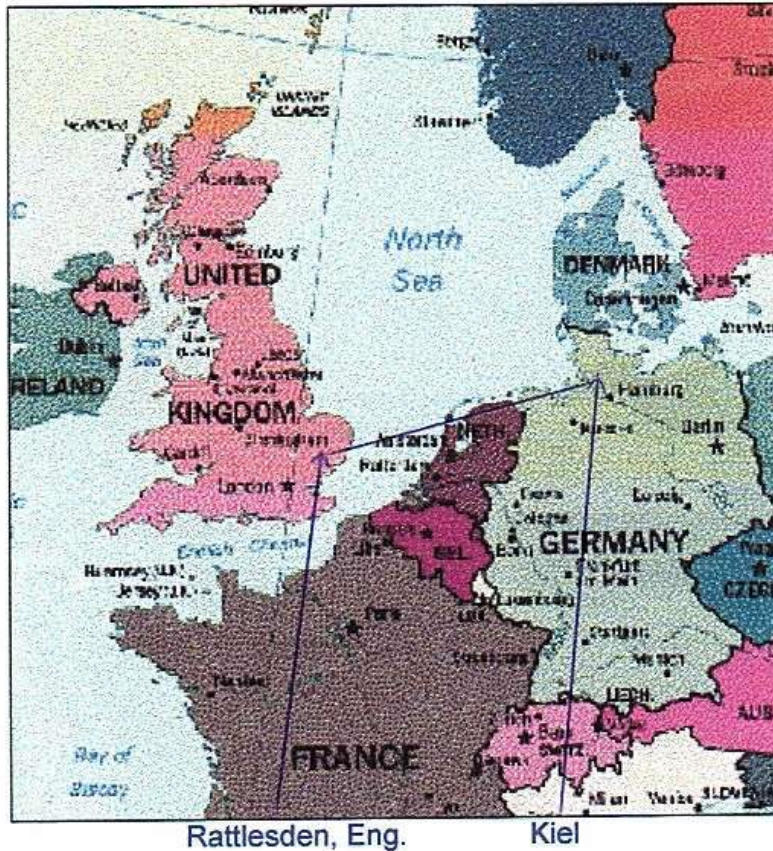


Rattlesden, Eng.
Noball 50

On their first mission their assigned aircraft was a B-17G #42-31167. Christmas Eve 1943 was the Putnam crew's baptism of fire as well as the 447th. The mission was Noball No.50 near Drionville, France. This was the launch area for the new V-2 rocket. These rockets were aimed at London and Southampton. At 11:30 AM a flare went up and the planes took off at 30-second intervals. As they approached the green French countryside they were surprised to find that there was no anti-aircraft flak. After the successful bombing run they were on their way back when the flak started. One plane the "Ice Cold Katy" took a hit but was able to make it home. The 447th had completed their first mission and had not lost a plane. While it is unknown what happened to the plane that Walt was in it was not ready for the next 2 missions. Strike

photos the following day indicated the mission as "good". After debriefing they each got a shot of whiskey to celebrate their first mission and collapsed into their bunks. The next day was Christmas day and the 447th held a party for the local children.

Kiel Mission



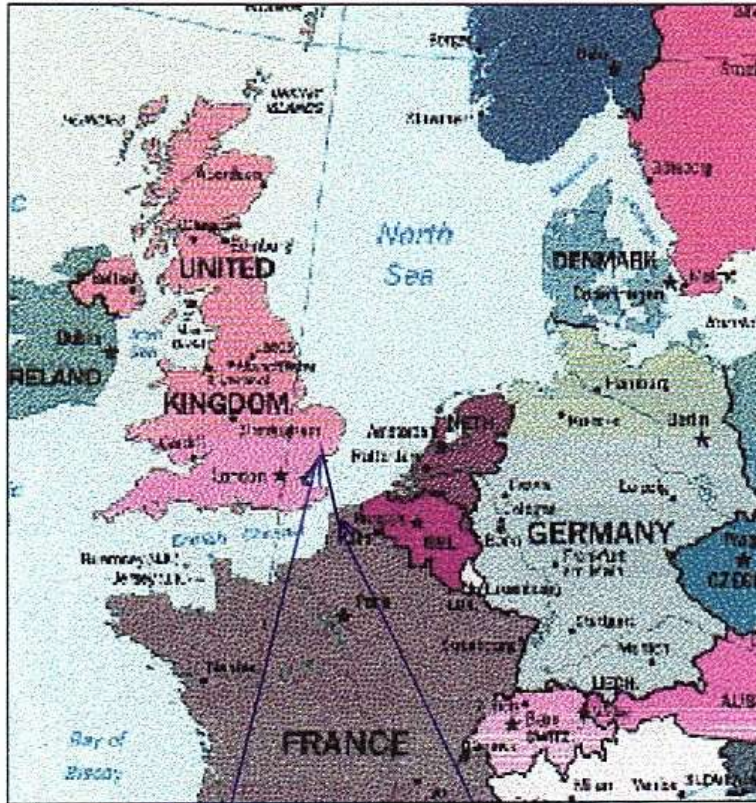
Walt's next mission took place on January 4, 1944 flying a new plane #42- 31154. This time the target was Kiel on the Baltic Sea. They were part of a 486 B-17 aircraft group. They were loaded with incendiary bombs and while they lost no aircraft to enemy fire 2 B-17's collided and were lost near the IP (initial point, which is about 15 miles from the target). They were escorted to and from Kiel by 430 P-47's, 70 P-38's and 42 P-51's. The bombers shot down 4 aircraft and the fighters got 7.

Brunswick Mission First Time



The 3rd mission was to a place where 19 days later Walt and his crew would be shot down. Right after takeoff the lead navigator's plane developed engine trouble and they quickly landed and got into a spare. The spare plane was the only silver plane in a group of 219 B-17's and 65 B-24's. As they took off one of the guys said he can see it now, one of the German pilots will say I have never shot down a silver one. Right after the drop zone sure enough they came in and took the silver one out. The lead navigator Lt. Jack Cole spent the remainder of the war as a guest of the Germans. Eighteen heavies (B-17's or B-24's) were lost as well as 19 Luftwaffe aircraft.

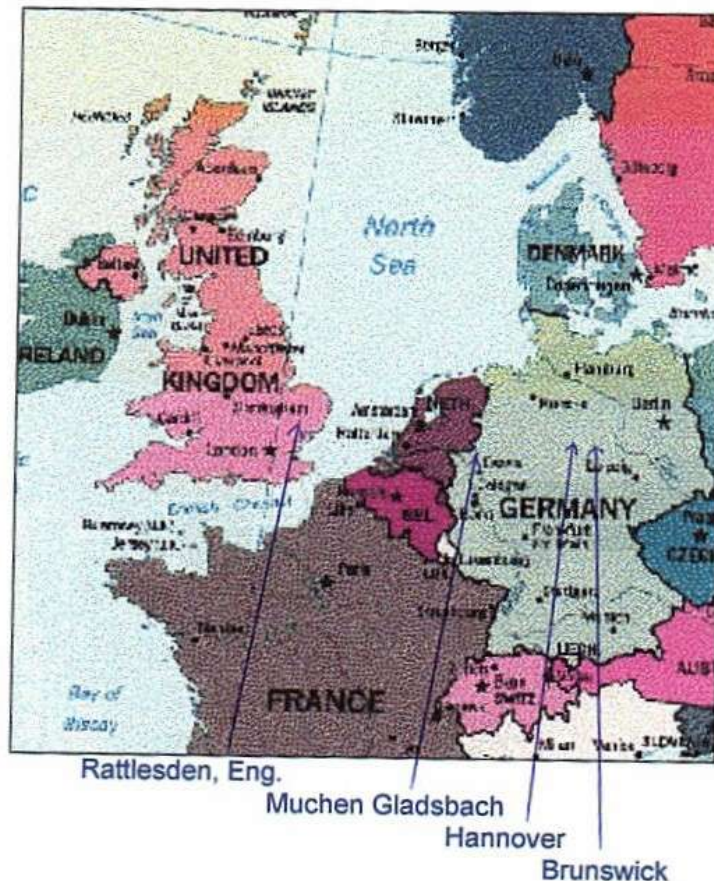
Noball 107 Mission Grand Parc, France



Rattlesden, Eng.
Noball 107

On January 21, 1944 they went to a target that had been bombed the prior week, Noball No. 107 near Grand Parc, France. They were part of a 795 aircraft group consisting of B-24's and B-17's. While the 447th lost no aircraft 5 B-24's went down. The group also shot down 6 aircraft.

Brunswick Mission (Braunschweig)



His 5th and final mission took place on January 30, 1944. Their target was the aircraft plant at Brunswick again. There were 333 B-17's on this mission and they had 635 escort planes. Fifteen B-17's were lost including Walt's plane. In addition 4 P-38's, 36 P-47's and 5 P-51's were shot down. 45 German aircraft were shot down as well. As there was fog over Brunswick they chose to bomb Hannover as a target of opportunity. Walt's plane went down near Munchen Gladsbach Germany. Not everyone got out of the plane.

He bailed out and landed in a farmer's field. He was pleased that he did not come down in the middle of a city that had just been bombed. While the farmers were friendly they would not offer assistance and turned him

over to the German SS at Dulag Luft. From there he was sent to Stalag Luft 1 where he remained until he was liberated on April 30, 1945. We all found out later just how elite the SS boys were and just how rough a game they played.

Nana (my grandmother) and I were at home when the telegram came. It was from the War Department, and we both knew that they were not known to send out good news. Nana had three boys in uniform, Carl in Seattle Washington; Edward in Port Moresby New Guinea and Walter was in England.

708th Bombardment Sq (H)
447th Bombardment Gp (H)
APO 559
New York, New York

201-Hauptman,
Walter I. (O)

FMN/hea

10 April 1944

Mrs. Edith Meyer
410 Kentucky Street
Bakersfield, California

Dear Mrs. Meyer:

In the first place I wish to thank you for the information reference Lt. Hauptman. The whole Squadron rejoiced upon hearing that Walter is a prisoner of war. You see, this is the first information we have received since his failure to return from operations; this may surprise you, but we are usually the last ones to hear about the boys that are missing.

Your brother disappointed me a great deal by his failure to return. We were just planning to qualify him as First Pilot and give him a crew of his own, but his sudden exit cancelled our good intentions.

The candy you sent him was given to British War Orphans with Walter's name listed as donor. I trust this meets with your approval.

Let me extend the best wishes for a speedy termination of the war and safe return of your brother. I know you are all as relieved as I to hear that he is a prisoner of war.

I should appreciate any information you may receive regarding others on his crew.

Sincerely yours,

Frank M. Newman

FRANK M. NEWMAN,
Major, Air Corps,
Commanding.

The telegram read something like "We regret to inform you that the your son, Walter I. Hauptman is reported missing in action." There was both fear and relief in the air. At least he was not reported dead. A few weeks later the second telegram came. Nana thanked the deliveryman as he handed her the war department telegram. She closed the front door and proceeded to her rocking chair located in the dining room. After sitting down she opened the telegram very methodically. It read " We regret to inform you that your son Walter I. Hauptman is a prisoner of war". Although it was several months before Nana received a letter from Walter, at least she knew that he was alive.



Walter with his father and mother
John .J. and Marie (Nana) Hauptman

After his release, Walter told us about prison life and what happened when he was captured. The truth was unbelievable to those of us living in Bakersfield California in the nineteen forties. How could the Germans know so much about us?

Walter parachuted out of his crippled B17 along with the rest of his crew. On the way down he could only think of the stories of airmen being captured by the German civilians, who in all fairness were getting their share of bombing, and then to be strung up to the nearest lamp post. Fortunately for Walter, he landed in farmland where the war was a little more remote. The local farmers treated him kindly, but they would not let him escape. They feared the German Gestapo. Walter was turned over to the local army commander and became a guest of the SS. His SS office interrogator told him that he had a beautiful name "Hauptman", which is the rank of Captain in the German Army. He was a German boy and he can take his place as a German pilot in the Luftwaffe. The officer brought out copies of Walter's school records at Bakersfield High School, which showed the subjects he took and the grades he got. The SS officer even knew the names of some of his school buddies. Walt refused the offer to fly for the Luftwaffe, and spent the rest of the war in Stalag Luft # 1, a prison camp located on the south shore of the Baltic Sea. While there he worked in the sports store. In July of 1944 he and a group of others tried to tunnel their way out. They were captured as they stepped out of the tunnel.



Upon his return to the states he married Ella Mae (Tommie) Mooney on September 1, 1945. They had three children, loosing one of them at childbirth. With a gift of gab and a constant smile on his face he went to work for S & W Fine Foods. From there he worked for Massengill Pharmaceuticals. He joined the Elks Club in Bakersfield as there were many WWII Vets in the group and Walt always enjoyed singing around the piano. His wife passed away in January of 1969. He passed away on May 13, 1978 and was put to rest in the Military section of Union Cemetery in Bakersfield, California. His two daughters, Nancy and Lynne; four grandchildren, Debra, Katherine, John and Brian; and two great-grandchildren Savannah and Donovan survive him.

RESTRICTED

(attach additional sheets if necessary)

STATEMENT OR REPORT OF INTERVIEW OF RECOVERED PERSONNEL

LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL: MORGAN, WILLIAM T. ARMY SERIAL NUMBER: 04790

30 Jan 44 we were shot down by fighters near Munchen (Munich), Ger. Bailed out, captured immediately taken to Dulag Luft for interrogation then to Barth, Ger. Liberated 30 Apr 45. Attempted to escape July 44, dug a tunnel to outside of camp but got captured as we stepped out of tunnel.

DATE OF DATE OF LOSS TO UNITED STATES MILITARY CONTROL: 30 Jan 44

UNIT OF ORGANIZATION: 708 B. Sq. 44790 B. Sq. 8th AF

NAME AND GRADE OF IMMEDIATE COMMANDING OFFICER AND ANY OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS ORGANIZATION KNOWN WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES: Frank M. Newman, (Maj.) - Sq. C.O. Maj. Victor H. Legasse Operations Officer

SECTION OCCUPIED OR DUTY BEING PERFORMED: Co-pilot B-17

FOR PERIOD OF ABSENCE FROM UNITED STATES MILITARY CONTROL: 30 Jan 44 to 30 Apr 45

NAME OF PRISONER OF WAR CAMP OR CAMPS IN WHICH IMPRISONED, AND LENGTH OF TIME SERVED IN EACH: Stalag Luft 1 - Barth, Ger. - 6 Feb 44 to 30 Apr 45

NAME OF SENIOR UNITED STATES ARMY OFFICERS IN EACH SUCH PRISONER OF WAR CAMP: Hubert Kenke (Col.) N. H. Spicer (Col.)

WALTER I. HANDELMAN
INDORSEMENTS: Ed Lt. A.C.

DUTIES PERFORMED WHILE IN PRISONER OF WAR CAMP OR CAMPS: Operated sports store and equipment

IF EVADING CAPTURE IN ENEMY-HELD TERRITORY OR IF ESCAPING FROM IMPRISONMENT: (None)

IF IN INTERVIEW: (None)

NAME OF INTERVIEW CAMP OR CAMPS IN WHICH INTERVIEWED, AND LENGTH OF TIME SERVED IN EACH: (None)

NAME OF SENIOR UNITED STATES ARMY OFFICERS IN EACH SUCH INTERVIEW CAMP: (None)

DUTIES PERFORMED WHILE IN INTERVIEW CAMP OR CAMPS: (None)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWING OR CHECKING OFFICERS: Individual covered by ... a copy of AF 100 Form 64-1, 2 or 3 will be attached to report of interview. In addition, a copy of AF 100 Form 10, an exact copy of service record showing dates of promotions, reductions, awards-medals, if any, and character and efficiency ratings. Service record, Form 64-1, 2 or 3, or Form 27 is available, then a signed statement of individual concerning pertinent data will be attached. Individual covered as a flight or chief warrant officer or enlisted man of the first class a signed statement that he does not desire to make application for appointment as a warrant officer junior grade (in case of enlisted man of first class) or 2nd lieutenant (in case of chief warrant and flight officers).

Table with columns: NAME - INITIALS, GRADE, STATION, DATE. Row: MORGAN, WILLIAM T., Capt, ALBU QB, 03

RESTRICTED