



**Kneeling:** Bob Kuncl, Gene Whelan, George McPeake, Jim Cawley

**Back row:** J. W. Bartee, John C. McVey, Jerome J. Hartings, Robert Vaughan, Virgil French and Alphas Maddox.

**Missing in Action Berlin 6/3/44; with:**

**Pilot: 2Lt. Gene Whelan,**

**Co-pilot: 2Lt. Jim Cawley,**

**Navigator: 2Lt. George McPeake,**

**Bombardier: 2Lt. Bob Kuncl,**

**Flight engineer/top turret gunner: T/Sgt. Bob Vaughn,**

**Radio Operator: T/Sgt. Gerome Hartings,**

**Ball turret gunner: S/Sgt. Virgil French,**

**Waist gunner: S/Sgt. J.W. Bartee,**

**Waist gunner: S/Sgt. John McVey,**

**Tail gunner: S/Sgt. Alphas Maddox (10 Killed in Action);**

**Mid-air collision with ME 410... after wreckage fell from above off 42-31627;  
crashed NE of Brachwitz, four miles N of Treuenbrietzen, SW of Berlin, Ger;**

**Missing Air Crew Report 3197. B-17 "FLYING JENNY"**

# Mission Narrative

Mission No. 8

Date - March 06, 1944

Target - Berlin

On this mission to Berlin the 457th put up eighteen planes led by Capt. Fred Spencer. The target was the V.K.F. ball bearing works. As they approached the city of Magdeberg they met vigorous fighter opposition, mainly Me-109's and Me-210's. Two crews were lost during this encounter. Lt Eugene Whelan's plane, flying in the high box, was rammed by an Me-109 fighter and his aircraft exploded and fell into the low box where it crashed into the plane of Lt Roy E. Graves. Only one of the Graves crew survived. Five additional planes had major damage from flak over Berlin. The Eighth Air Force lost sixty nine planes on this day.

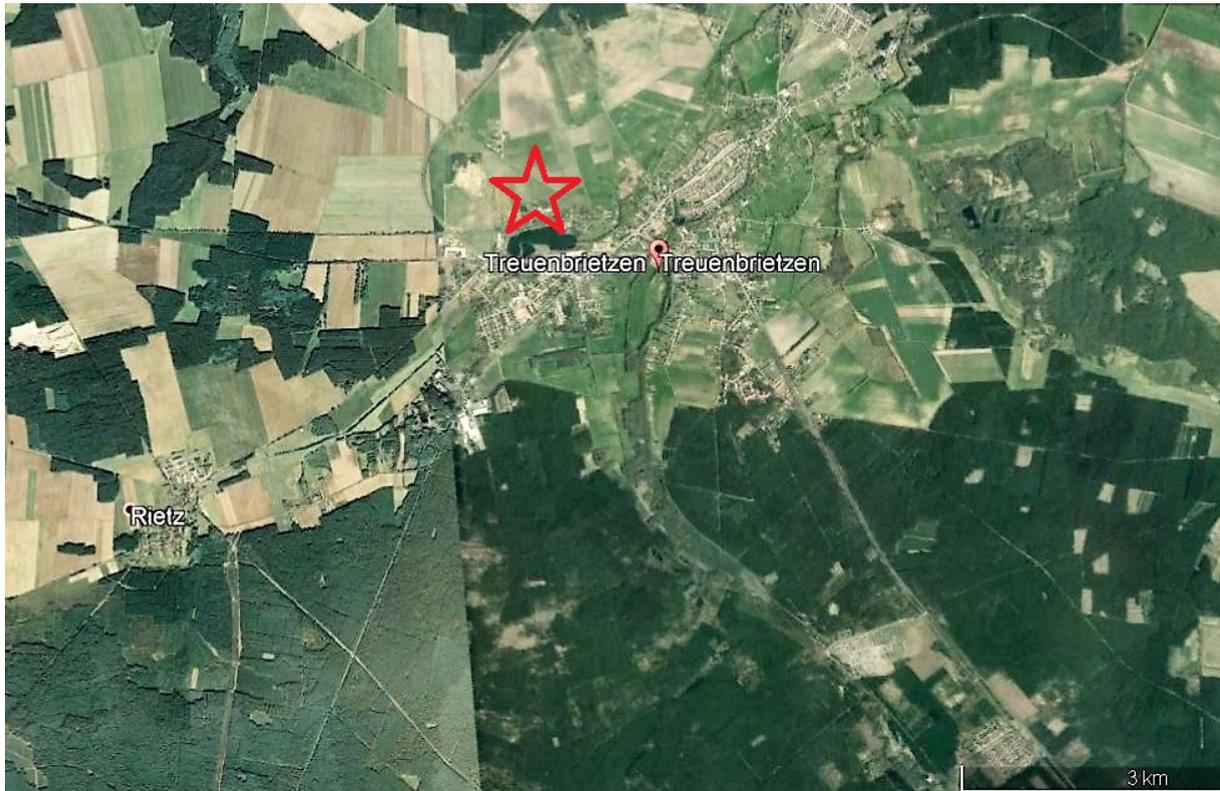
The crew was as follows:

★ Plane s/n 42-31595 ★

Pilot	★ Lt Eugene H Whelan	KIA ★
Copilot	★ James R. Cauley	KIA ★
Navigator	★ Lt George S. McPeake, Jr.	KIA ★
Bombardier	★ Lt Robert J. Kuncl	KIA ★
Aircraft Engineer	★ Sgt Robert H. Vaughn	KIA ★
Radio Operator	★ Sgt Jerome J. Hartings	KIA ★
Left Waist Gunner	★ Sgt J. D. Bartoe	KIA ★
Right Waist Gunner	★ Sgt John C McVey	KIA ★
Ball Turret Gunner	★ Virgil L French	KIA ★
Tail Gunner	★ Alphus Maddox	KIA ★



## Crash site 4 miles N of Treuenbrietzen (Ger.)



MISSION NO. 8

BERLIN, GERMANY

6 MARCH 1944

Eighteen aircraft returned to Erkner and the V.K.F. ball bearing works for the third time. Fourteen Combat Wings were dispatched to attack Berlin targets. The Group comprised the 94th Combat Wing's high box. Captain Fred A. Spencer was Air Commander and Lt. J. L. Smith was pilot. Near Magdeburg the Group encountered heavy and vigorous enemy fighter opposition, principally by Me-210s, Me- 109s and Ju-88s. Two crews, those of **Lt. Roy E. Graves** and **Lt. Eugene H. Whalen**, were **lost during the encounter. Lt. Whalen, flying in the high box, was a victim of a German Me-109 fighter; his aircraft exploded and fell into the low box, crashing into Lt. Graves. Only the tail gunner of the Graves crew survived.**

On reaching the IP, the groups formed in trail. When the Wing Leader dropped bombs the 457th lead plane did not observe the lead group's release. On withdrawal from the target a bomb run was made on the oil refinery at Verden, near Bremen. Results were poor.

Anti-aircraft opposition was heavy in the Berlin area. In addition to the two planes lost, five aircraft sustained damage from flak and one other sustained fighter damage. Crews reported observing a total of thirteen bombers in the Division formation being shot down.

Sixty-nine bombers were lost in the day's operation.