

Missing in Action 9/4/44 with;

**Pilot: 2Lt. Dave Parks,
Co-pilot: 2Lt. Floyd Grove,
Flight engineer/top turret gunner: T/Sgt. Don Kesselmeier,
Radio Operator: T/Sgt. Ruben Halverson,
Ball turret gunner: Sgt. Tony Nunes,
Waist gunner: S/Sgt. Cosmo Fazzio,
Tail gunner: S/Sgt. George Grebe (7 Killed in Action);**

**Navigator: 2Lt. Bill Ellerbusch,
Bombardier: 2Lt. Ed Quinn,
Waist gunner: S/Sgt. Chas Kerr (3 Prisoner of War);**

**Shot down by Fw190, crashed Hohnert-Steinfeld, five miles NE of Schleswig, Ger;
B-17 "RAVEN'S NEST" Missing Air Crew Report 3664.**



2Lt. David PARKS's crew

Mission Narrative

Mission No. 23

Date - April 09, 1944

Target - Gdynia

Over three hundred bombers were sent to bomb a FW-190 aircraft plane in Gdynia, Poland. This was the longest mission that the 457th had flown to date. Because of the distance friendly fighter protection would not be available near the target. The group lost three planes to a furious fighter attack both before they hit the target and on the way home. The route was over the North Sea, across Denmark and then East across the Baltic Sea. Many planes dropped out due to extremely bad weather conditions but the weather cleared as they approached the target. The bomb run and results were good in spite of enemy fighter attacks. Flak was moderate. The 457th lost three planes to enemy action. The 8th Air Force lost 32 bombers on this mission.

Lt Parks aircraft, 42-31629, was shot down in the target area. They were hit in the cockpit area and the plane left the formation and shortly after exploded. Some crewmen were able to bail out and some were thrown out by the force of the explosion. Seven of his crew were killed and three became POW's.

MISSION NO. 23

GYDNIA, POLAND

9 APRIL, 1944

A large-scale attack was launched against the FW-190 eastern complex of aircraft factories in north central Germany and Poland. Twelve Combat Wings were airborne for the deepest penetration to date.

The 457th's target was an aircraft factory, situated at Rahmel, seven miles from the center of Gydnia, that produced FW-190s. The 457th comprised the 94th A Combat Wing, and led the Wing. U. Col. Henry B. Wilson was Air Commander with pilot Lt. J. L. Smith. In addition, the 457th supplied two squadrons for the high box. Major Fred A. Spencer as the high box leader, with Lt. Jerome E. (Jerry) Godfrey as pilot. The flight route took the Group in a northeasterly direction over the North Sea, across Denmark and the Baltic Sea, and to the target area. Bad weather, which had hampered the Group in England and over the North Sea, caused seven planes to become lost and abort the mission. In addition, four more were lost from the high box and two, having failed to assemble with the Group, aborted when the Group they joined abandoned the mission.

The weather had cleared by the time the formations reached the IP.

A good formation produced a good bomb run, and bombing results were good, in spite of enemy fighter attacks along the run. Flak was moderate over the target.

Immediately after leaving the target, the formation was attacked by waves of FW-190s and Me-109s, coming in from the nose and from the tail. Aircraft piloted by Lt. Amos W. Shepard and Lt. Robert K. Walker took direct hits, with both being shot down. One member of Lt. Shepard's crew and three of Lt. Walker's crew, including Lt. Walker, failed to survive. The aircraft piloted by Lt. Stuart James took a direct hit, claiming the life of one crew member.

The attacks continued over the Baltic Sea, where Lt. David P. Parks was shot down and seven crew members lost their lives. The attacks continued over Denmark. Lt. Donald G. Karr crashed his badly damaged aircraft at Woodbridge, an English base near the coast.

Gunners from the 457th received credit for three enemy aircraft destroyed, one probably destroyed and one damaged. The mission required eleven hours. The bombing results drew a commendation from the Division Headquarters.

