

The missing plane was piloted by 1st Lt. Lucian Lentz, of Anniston, Ala., and was seen to go down 12 miles from the enemy coast. The aircraft jettisoned its bombs and fired one double red flare before it passed out of view.

Besides Lentz, the crew consisted of 2nd Lt. F.D. Lowell, of Indianapolis, Ind., co-pilot; 2nd Lt. Wrex D. Riley, of Tulsa, Okla., navigator-bombardier; S/Sgt. Edwin D. Cooper, of Brooklyn, N.Y., engineer-gunner; S/Sgt. B.F. Carlson, radio-gunner; S/Sgt. Willard F. Tinsley, of Olyphant, Pa., tail-gunner.

Lt. Lowell, the co-pilot, parachuted down into enemy territory and later effected his escape. He was interrogated on November 2, 1943, and it was revealed that the plane was forced out of formation because of mechanical failure and after it had been severely damaged by flak all members of the crew were believed to have bailed out. Lt. Lowell did not see any of the crew afterwards but believed they all got out of the plane safely. He gave a lecture on his escape to combat men of the Group before he was sent back to the States, in accordance with Air Force regulations governing the return of escapees from enemy territory.

His interrogation by Major Sauer, senior intelligence officer, is included in this Group History as a supporting paper.

Another Marauder came back from this mission so severely damaged that crew members were almost forced to abandon it. Only the skill and courage of the pilot and co-pilot and the sturdiness of the ship itself brought the plane and crew to safety.

FW 190s which attacked the Marauder "Idiot's Delight II," some 15 miles off the enemy coast, shot away its tail turret, aileron control cable and half of its rudder surface, punctured a gasoline tank, blew a three-foot hole in its right wing, knocked out the fuel transfer pump, and threw 20 mm. shell fragments into one of the propellers. The fragments that hit the propeller splattered the cockpit, injuring the co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Horace C. Rodgers, of Marshall, Tex., under the right arm and in the back, and setting flares and an Aldis lamp afire. Smoke quickly filled the cockpit, preventing the pilot, F/O Frank M. Remmele, of Roswell, N.M., from seeing his instruments.

"With my rudder and ailerons gone I started to reach for the alarm bell, but then waited to see if I could control the ship," F/O Remmele said. He succeeded in straightening out the plane and--with the smoke preventing him from seeing the instruments--looked through a side window of the cockpit to guide the ship in line with a large cumulus cloud.

In the meantime, the injured co-pilot grabbed the fire extinguisher and began to put out the fire. After opening the windows to let the smoke out, he was relieved by the engineer-gunner, S/Sgt. Ralph Morriner, of Philadelphia, Pa.,

who came forward while looking for damage to control cables.

"My co-pilot had a hell of a lot of guts," Remmels said. "I didn't know that he was wounded until after the engineer had relieved him."

Sgt. Morrins placed the burning flares in his helmet, then chopped a hole in the rear bomb-bay and threw them out. He groped his way through the smoke, carrying water in the cupped palm of one hand and wetting a handkerchief to put out a fire in a prop booster motor underneath a fuel tank. Later he administered first aid to the injured co-pilot.

The bombardier, 2nd Lt. Ross H. Buk, of Herndon, Kan., came up and took the co-pilot's position after the bombs were dropped and the ship straightened out. The ship fell out of formation after the attack, but it was protected against further attack by four RAF Spitfires which escorted it back to safety. With his rudder and aileron cables shot away, F/O Remmels landed the ship solely by manipulating the throttles and after it was safely parked on an RAF airbase a 20 mm. shell was found lodged in the cowl over the right engine nacelle.

For their bravery and skill in this incident, F/O Remmels, 2nd Lt. Rodgers and S/Sgt. Morrins were each rewarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross. The presentation was made November 17, 1943, by Major General Lewis H. Brereton, commanding general of Ninth Air Force. At the same time, Colonel Glenn C. Nye, Group commander, was presented with the Silver Star in recognition of his outstanding achievements in B-26 operational missions.

For his ingenuity in developing the sand-table principle as used by the Group in briefing combat crews, Major von Kolnitz, Group ground executive, was awarded the Legion of Merit on August 27, 1943. His promotion to Lt. Colonel came about the same time.

To use Colonel Nye's own words, the sand tables for medium altitude bombing "proved invaluable." They not only aided navigators in locating the target but assisted bombardiers greatly in bomb placement.

Great attention was paid to detail in construction of the sand-table models and crews were able to gain a graphic mental picture of the target. A silhouette of the target was projected by epidiascope on a table and the outline penciled in. Then, oiled sand was used for a foundation and a realistic appearance was gained through the use of sawdust, dyed in different colors. Miniature B-26s on tripods indicated the formation over the target and the direction of the sun and wind was also indicated. The sand-table models were shellacked to protect the surface and filed away for possible future use.

Briefing of combat crews over a sand-table model was suggestive of the thorough method of some football coaches in "briefing" their players about intricacies of the game.