

**CAPTAIN MACK MCKAY  
A PILOT OF THE 306TH BOMB  
GROUP AND HIS CREW POINT  
TO A “KILL” MARKING  
PAINTED ON HIS B-17  
FLYING FORTRESS.**

**Summer Residency 2015**



*Object number FRE 4418*

Researched, Written, and Designed by Jason McDonald



*Captain Mack McKay, a pilot of the 306th Bomb Group and his crew point to a “kill” marking painted on his B-17 Flying Fortress. Passed as censored 21 Dec 1942. Printed caption on reverse: ‘Nazi Airfield Near Paris Blasted ... 300 Fighters Out. Nearly 300 RAF fighters provided an “umbrella” for a large force of U.S. Flying Fortresses and Liberator bombers which made the first attack yesterday (Sunday) in daylight on Romilly-Sur-Seine, site of a big Nazi airfield 20 miles south-east of Paris. ... 21/12/42. O.P.S. American boys back from the daylight raid. Captain Mack McKay (seen pointing to two of his 8 Nazi victims which are recorded on various parts of his Flying Fortress. With him are members of the crew that took part.’ On reverse: Ministry of Information, Daily Sketch, U.S. Army Press Censor ETO and US Army General Section Press & Censorship Bureau [Stamps].’*



## UNIDENTIFIED MAN IN FME4418

Two men who went on the December 12, 1942 mission to Rouen who are not in the photo are Donald J. Bevan, and Sergeant Jacob Kirn, McKay’s radioman on the Rouen mission. Whomever he is, identification would help explain the circumstances of the photo. However, it could be Sergeant Henry A. Bean, another frequent McKay crew, or it could be ground crew or some other crewmember. For now, he is lost to history.

*Unidentified man in FME4418.*  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



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## MISSION #26 ROMILLY-SUR-SEINE, DECEMBER 20, 1942

The 26th USAAF 8th Air Force mission to Romilly-Sur-Seine was flown on December 20, 1942. Out of 101 aircraft sent to attack the Luftwaffe Air Depot, Fliegerhorstkommandantur (“Airbase Command”) E 50/XIII,<sup>2</sup> seventy-two aircraft attacked the target with 165.5 tons of bombs.<sup>3</sup> Fifty-three German aircraft were claimed, with thirteen probably destroyed and eight damaged.<sup>4</sup> The 8th Air Force lost six aircraft, one damaged beyond repair, and thirty damaged. The 306th Bombardment Group flew eighteen B-17F Flying Fortresses. One aborted and three were destroyed (half of the 8th Air Force’s losses that day).<sup>5</sup>

Besides the flak and fighters, Romilly was an unremarkable target. McKay’s crew flew in a B-17F-40-BO Fortress, 42-5171 “Unmentionable” borrowed from the 368th Bombardment Group. Captain Mack McKay was Command Pilot, with Lieutenant Lewis P. Johnson as Co-Pilot. First Lieutenant Charles R. Patten, the 423rd’s adjutant and trained as an infantry officer,<sup>6</sup> rode in the Navigator’s seat but didn’t perform navigation. Staff Sergeant Henry R. Bean was the Radio Operator. Technical Sergeant Harry Alleman operated the Top Turret. Staff Sergeant James Hobbs was the Ball Turret Gunner. Sergeant Donald J. Bevan Was Right Waist Gunner and Raymond J. Henn was Left. Roy Gibson was the Tail Gunner. This was McKay’s only mission in “Unmentionable.” The 306th after-action reports that German fighters made frontal attacks that couldn’t be stopped by the machine guns in the Bombardier’s nose compartment.<sup>7,8</sup> McKay’s crew also saw a dummy airfield near Paris to distract American bombers. Roy Gibson claimed a German fighter and saw it spiral out of control leaking smoke. However, he didn’t see it crash so it was listed as a probable. McKay saw eight parachutes leave B-17F 41-24489 “Terry and the Pirates,” flown by First Lieutenant Lewis R. McKesson. The plane went down due to German fighters and crashed near Paris.<sup>9</sup> McKesson was a Prisoner of War with six other crew and three were killed. McKay’s sighting meant the crew could be listed as “Missing in Action” instead of “Killed in Action.”<sup>10</sup>



*The map plot from the Romilly Mission. COURTESY 306TH BGHA.*





*"Little Audrey" taking off.*  
COURTESY 306TH BGHA.



*"Little Audrey" with the crew  
of Lieutenant Edward Hennesy  
receiving a blessing  
from Father Adrian Poletti,  
the Catholic Chaplain for the 306th.*  
COURTESY 306TH BGHA.

## THE PHOTO

Due to the presence of this specific plane and the specific members of this crew, it's unlikely this photo was made to commemorate the Romilly-Sur-Seine mission of December 20, 1942, despite the photo caption. The aircraft in the photo is 41-24660 "Little Audrey" a Boeing B-17F-10-BO<sup>11</sup> Fortress. "Little Audrey" would become a legendary aircraft to the men of the 306th Bombardment Group, and possibly the entire 8th Air Force.<sup>12</sup> While not publicly famous, she would become the oldest B-17 in the 8th Air Force inventory.

"Little Audrey" was part of the second block of fifty B-17F fortresses built at Boeing's Plant 2 in Seattle. She was waiting on the apron for Mack McKay and his crew at Westover Field, Massachusetts, when the 306th moved from Utah to England. She was heavily damaged on October 21, 1942 when the life raft broke loose and wrapped around the horizontal stabilizer. "Little Audrey" took her crews on many missions.

McKay and crew took "Little Audrey" on the first mission the 306th Bombardment Group flew to Lille, France (October 9, 1942). McKay took her back to Lille on November 8, 1942. The group struck submarine pens in St. Nazaire on November 9 and 17, 1942; McKay's crew took "Little Audrey" on at least one of those missions. They took her to Rouen's train marshalling yards on December 12, 1942 and then back to St. Nazaire on January 3, 1943. On January 13 they took "Little Audrey" back to Lille. On January 20, 1943 McKay left to take command of the 368th Squadron.<sup>13</sup> This was a special aircraft for McKay and many of his regular crew.

It's likely, but impossible to prove, that the photo was actually taken to commemorate the December 12, 1942 mission to Rouen. Far more of the crew in the photo served with McKay in the Rouen mission. It was during that mission that new techniques for aerial gunnery were tried out and the crew found them successful. During that mission, Mack McKay's crew were credited with two German Focke



Wulf FW-190s. Bevan and Pollock were both awarded kills.

## MISSION #25 ROUEN, DECEMBER 12, 1942

90 bombers took off to attack Rouen's marshalling yards. 78 successfully attacked the target with forty tons of bombs. McKay and the rest of the 306th Bombardment Group arrived over the target at 1340.

The clouds were heavy, and five B-17s aborted because of the weather. The life raft came loose in "Little Audrey" and broke off the command antenna. Captain Mack McKay was Command Pilot, with Lieutenant Lewis P. Johnson as Co-Pilot. First Lieutenant Eugene J. Pollock was the Navigator. Technical Sergeant Jacob Kirn was the Radio Operator. Technical Sergeant Harry Alleman operated the Top Turret. Staff Sergeant James Hobbs was the Ball Turret Gunner. Sergeant Donald J. Bevan Was Right Waist Gunner and Raymond J. Henn was Left. Roy Gibson was the Tail Gunner.

As "Little Audrey" and the rest of the flight left Rouen, forty aircraft – a mix of Messerschmitt Bf-110s, Focke Wulf FW-190s, and Messerschmitt Bf-109Es and Fs attacked the formation at 21,000 feet (6400 meters) over Aumale, France. Eugene J. Pollock shot down one of the German planes that made fifty passes at "Little Audrey's" nose. Donald J. Bevan, on his first mission, shot down another from the Right Waist. The battle ran for two hours after the bomb run.<sup>14</sup>

## ANALYSIS

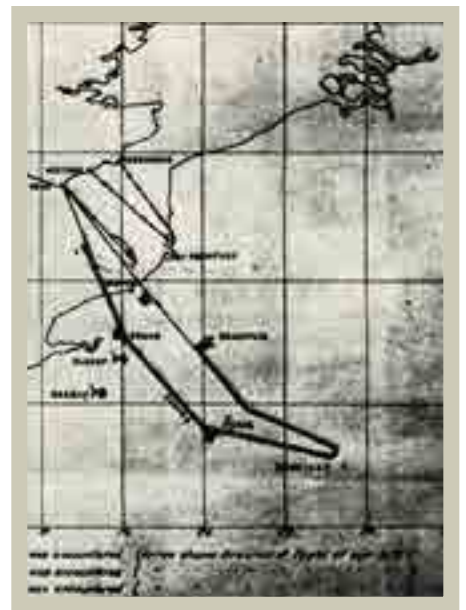
The Casablanca Conference between United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and United Kingdom Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill started on January 14, 1943, just three weeks after this photo was taken. The "Casablanca Directive" ordered the combined Allied Air Forces to attack Germany's interior.

Richard Overy noted, "The air forces' case at Casablanca had to be made to a disillusioned audience and it had to be made as far as possible in concert. Yet from the autumn of 1942 there were evident strains in the relationship between the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), despite the public commit-



*"Little Audrey" mission record  
on her nose.*

COURTESY 306TH BGHA.



*The map plot from the Rouen  
Mission. COURTESY 306TH BGHA.*





*Air and Naval Commanders  
with Roosevelt and Churchill  
at Casablanca.*

COURTESY IBIBLIO.ORG.



*Brigadier General Robert B. Williams'  
plane, 41-24460, is parked along  
the taxi strip during his visit  
to the 91st Bomb Group base  
at Basingbourn, England. Note the  
lack of defensive armament.*

COURTESY UNITED STATES  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES.

ment to combined operations. Both air forces realized that bombing had to be presented as a more coherent strategic option than it had offered for much of 1942.”<sup>15</sup> The caption for this photo reflects that public commitment to cooperation. None of the 306th’s after action reports for December 12 or December 19, 1942 feature remarks about their RAF Spitfire escorts. At that time, and in some ways throughout the war, USAAF personnel considered their operations separate and distinct from the RAF. It’s unlikely that the approved caption for the press was discussed or even seen by Mack McKay or his crew. Often even the photographer would not see the photo until months later when publications circulated the photo back to the combat outfits.

## CONCLUSION

The identity of nine of ten men in the photo is not in doubt. Their identities are corroborated by other photos with complete identifications. The circumstances of the of the photo, however, are not clear. Most of the crew depicted in the photo did not fly in the mission described in the caption, and if they flew that mission at all, they flew with other plane crews. It’s likely that the 8th Air Force Signal Corps wrote a caption that fulfilled propaganda directives rather than reflected the circumstances of the photo itself.

B-17F 41-24460, “Little Audrey,” survived the terrible slaughter of accidents and combat that claimed so many of her cohort from Boeing Plant #2. She was transferred to the 482nd Bombardment Group at Alconbury on August 22, 1943. Then, she transferred to the 379th Bombardment Group at Kimbolton on March 27, 1944. By then, she had been stripped of her turrets and guns and served as a personnel transport for Major General Robert B. Williams.<sup>16</sup> She returned to the United States on October 10, 1944 and was sold to Reconstruction Finance Corporation of Kingman, Arizona for scrapping on July 10, 1946, one of many special aircraft with a bloody and terrible past that were cast aside by a war-weary public more concerned with the present than remembering recent history.<sup>17</sup>

I have completed the biographies of the men in the photo to the best



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of my ability. Errors are mine alone.

## **HARRY G. ALLEMAN**

*October 1, 1923 – September 30, 2011*

Harry Gerald Alleman lived at 328 Walnut Street in Shippensburg, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.<sup>18</sup> He had completed three years of high school when he joined the Air Corps. Alleman was issued Service Number 13090987.<sup>19</sup> In McKay's crew, he was the plane's Engineer and Top Turret Gunner. Alleman enlisted in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on October 6, 1941<sup>20</sup> and joined the 306th Bombardment Group in July 1942. Orders issued on July 28, 1942 detailed Alleman to fly with Mack McKay's crew from Wendover Field, Utah in B-17E 41-9067 to Westover Field, Massachusetts, and then to the United Kingdom in B-17F 41-24660 "Little Audrey" on July 31, 1942.<sup>21</sup> This was part of the movement of the 306th Bombardment Group into the European Theatre of Operations. He arrived in Europe on September 1, 1942. By March 1, 1943 he completed 13 missions.<sup>22</sup> Departed the European Theatre of Operations in June 1943. He became an instructor at Wash Gunnery School in England for 15 months.<sup>23</sup> As a gunnery instructor, Alleman trained actor Clark Gable as a gunner,<sup>24</sup> probably using the deflection method developed by Eugene J. Pollock. He returned to the United States on October 18, 1944. He was discharged on October 21, 1945 in Newark, New Jersey<sup>25</sup> as a Technical Sergeant.<sup>26</sup> He married Mildred Ruth Alleman in 1946; they had one son and two daughters. They remained married until her death in 1999. He was a Master Printer at Regency Thermographers until he retired. He is buried in Spring Hill Cemetery in Shippensburg.<sup>27</sup>

## **DONALD J. BEVAN**

*January 16, 1920 – May 29, 2013*

Bevan was on the December 12, 1942 Rouen mission but doesn't appear in the photo. That's probably due to his being a replacement gunner and not part of the crew. The only one from McKay's Rouen crew to become a Prisoner of War, Bevan turned that experience into the famous play *Stalag 17* in 1951, later made into a successful film in 1953.<sup>28</sup> He was born Joseph Donald Bevan in



*Harry Alleman in FME4418.*

COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*Harry Alleman, December 23, 1942.*

COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.



*Harry Alleman (far left)  
with Clark Gable.*

COURTESY AIR POWER HISTORY.



*Harry Alleman later in life.*

COURTESY THE ALLEMAN FAMILY.





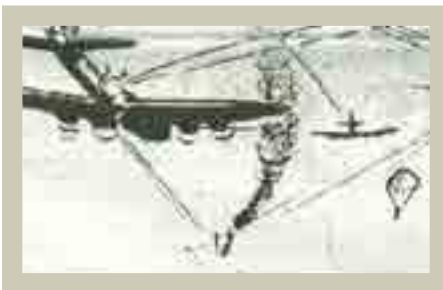
*Donald J. Bevan, Waist Gunner.*  
COURTESY FINDAGRAVE.COM.

Holyoke, Massachusetts to Walter Lawrence Bevan and Edna Pearl Stebbins. Bevan was one of four sons.<sup>29</sup> He attended the Grand Central School of Art in Manhattan and worked at the *Daily News* as a cartoonist before the war.<sup>30</sup> Bevan enlisted on January 2, 1942 in Springfield, Massachusetts, when he was drafted.<sup>31</sup> His Service Number was 11017949.<sup>32</sup>

Bevan was selected as a replacement gunner after one practice mission and shot down a German fighter on his first mission.<sup>33</sup> Flying with Mack McKay on December 12, 1942, Bevan shot down a Focke Wulf FW-190. Bevan wasn't sure if the enemy aircraft had survived his assault – Tail Gunner Roy H. Gibson told him it blew up.<sup>34</sup> The kill was officially verified by Waist Gunner Raymond J. Henn.<sup>35</sup> Bevan spent his spare time drawing cartoons for the 306th Bombardment Group's publications. His illustrations of the December 12, 1942 kill appeared in *Stars and Stripes* on December 14, 1942.<sup>36</sup> His work was noticed by Walter Cronkite, who submitted the cartoons to the Associated Press.<sup>37</sup>



As a replacement gunner, he moved from crew to crew, completing fifteen missions. He was flying with Command Pilot First Lieutenant Warren J. George in B-17F 42-29631 “Unmentionable” on April 17, 1943 when the plane was shot down. George and Engineer Technical Sergeant Warren A. McGregor were killed; Bevan and the rest of the crew bailed out.<sup>38</sup>



*Bevan's drawings of his first kill on December 12, 1942.*  
COURTESY STARS AND STRIPES.

After two days of interrogation, Bevan was shipped from camp to camp, finally placed in Stalag XVIIIB at Braunau Gneikendorf, near Krems, Austria. The camp was renowned for its rough conditions, with sawdust bread, little water, and harsh discipline. Bevan met Edmund Trzcinski, another prisoner, and they put on shows for the captive Americans. He was forced marched to Branau, Austria, an eighteen day march, beginning on April 8, 1945. The Germans wanted the Americans away from the advancing Red Army. Bevan's column was liberated by Patton's Third Army.

After liberation, Bevan and Trzcinski met Joshua Logan, who wrote *South Pacific*, in Paris. Logan was a Colonel in the United States Army and liked their stories about Stalag XVIIIB. He in turn introduced them to Dorothy Parker, who brought Bevan and Trzcinski to the



famous Algonquin Round Table in New York City after their discharge in October 1945 as Staff Sergeants. Parker introduced them to playwright Jack Kirkland (*Tobacco Road*).<sup>39</sup> Bevan married Kirkland's daughter actress Patricia Kirkland.<sup>40</sup> He was introduced to Vincent Sardi, Jr., by his father-in-law, who hired Bevan as the restaurant's caricature artist. *New York Times* artist Al Hirschfeld recommended Bevan for the job.<sup>41</sup> *Playbill* later wrote, "His initial efforts as a Sardi's caricaturist were not successful. Maureen Stapleton disliked hers so much that she stole it. He eventually got the hang of it, though, penning hundreds of portraits, including images of Karl Malden, Lauren Bacall, Jackie Gleason, Carol Burnett and Laurence Olivier. His drawings were true caricatures, with exaggerated features and not necessarily flattering."<sup>42</sup> His wife and two of his three sons predeceased him.<sup>43</sup> He is buried in Riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, California.<sup>44</sup>



*Donald J. Bevan in the 1960s.*  
COURTESY NEW YORK TIMES.

## **LESLIE D. GEDNEY**

*October 7, 1920 – July 2, 1990*

A native of Westchester, New York, Leslie David Gedney Junior was born to Leslie Gedney and Elsie Kreitler in Port Chester before the family moved to Rye.<sup>45</sup> Leslie D. Gedney Senior was a veteran of World War I, serving in the infantry.<sup>46</sup> Gedney Junior attended Rye High School.<sup>47</sup> On January 8, 1942, he enlisted in New York City. He was employed as a driver at the time.<sup>48</sup> Gedney was issued Service Number 12041186.<sup>49</sup> He joined the 423rd Squadron with John J. O'Brien's crew.<sup>50</sup> By November 29, 1942, Sergeant Gedney had completed five missions and earned the Air Medal. As the Left Waist Gunner on McKay's crew, Gedney gained valuable experience that he would use as squadron armorer. At some point, Gedney was demoted to Corporal. He was serving with the 423rd Bombardment Squadron Armament Department as of April 18, 1945.<sup>51</sup> He returned to the United States on Queen Elizabeth on August 11, 1945.<sup>52</sup> Gedney was discharged on September 24, 1945.<sup>53</sup> Gedney married Dorothy Lilly Abraham (August 12, 1923 – October 15, 2001) from Luton, Bedfordshire, England.<sup>54</sup> It's likely they met while he was attached to the 306th Bombardment Group.



*Leslie D. Gedney in FME4418.*  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*Leslie D. Gedney, December 23, 1942.*  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.





*Roy H. Gibson in FME4418.*  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*Roy H. Gibson, December 23, 1942.*  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.

## ROY H. GIBSON

*April 6, 1919 – August 13, 1982*

Roy Harvey “Hoot”<sup>55</sup> Gibson was born in Minnesota. Gibson completed four years of high school and was an auto mechanic in San Diego, California before World War II.

He enlisted on January 1, 1942 at Fort Rosecrans in San Diego as a Private in the Air Corps. His Service Number was 19068071.<sup>56</sup> He was promoted to Sergeant prior to July 1942. Orders issued on July 28, 1942 detailed Gibson to fly with Mack McKay’s crew from Wendover Field, Utah in B-17E 41-9067 to Westover Field, Massachusetts, and then to the United Kingdom in B-17F 41-24660 “Little Audrey” on July 31, 1942.<sup>57</sup> This was part of the movement of the 306th Bombardment Group into the European Theatre of Operations.

On December 12, 1942, Gibson saw the FW-190 shot down by Donald J. Bevan explode and told Bevan that he’d made a kill.<sup>58</sup> He completed five missions on December 31, 1942 and received the Air Medal.<sup>59</sup> On March 8, 1943, Gibson was credited with shooting down a Focke Wulf FW-190.<sup>60</sup> By March 1943, he completed seventeen missions and another three by April.<sup>61</sup> Gibson was flying in Lewis P. Johnson’s plane on March 22, 1943 when Raymond J. Henn was killed by a shell from a German fighter.<sup>62</sup> He was promoted to Staff Sergeant prior to May 1943.

On May 1, 1943, Gibson was wounded in the lungs while flying in Lewis P. Johnson’s aircraft, B-17F 42-29649.<sup>63</sup> The flight of sixteen B-17Fs were misdirected and arrived over Brest, France, a heavily fortified German submarine base. They thought they were over England. Dropping to 2,000 feet (600 meters) the flight came under attack from flak and fighters. Three aircraft were shot down. Johnson’s aircraft was shot up and the ball turret and radios lost power. A large fire began to compromise the plane’s integrity in the radio room. Stanley N. Kisseberth was wounded in the leg.<sup>64</sup> Maynard H. “Snuffy” Smith, the Ball Turret Gunner on his first mission, climbed out to find the waist gunners and the radioman bailing out; they were never seen again and listed as Killed in Action a year later. Gibson, losing blood that was filling his lungs, crawled from the tail just as the fire in the



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radio room grew worse and more fighters attacked.<sup>65</sup> Smith drove off the FW-190s, fought the fires, threw out burning equipment and ammunition, and stabilized Gibson so he wouldn't bleed to death.<sup>66</sup> Johnson, concentrating on flying the damaged plane, was unaware of Smith's actions and assumed the crew had bailed out.

Gibson was awarded the Purple Heart on May 9, 1943.<sup>67</sup> He recovered from his wounds and rejoined the 423rd Bombardment Squadron on April 9, 1944.<sup>68</sup> He was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal in December 1943.<sup>69</sup> His life after military service and information about his death is unclear; the 306th Bombardment Group Newsletter *Echoes* reports that he died in Warrenton, Oregon in 1983.<sup>70</sup> However, the California Death Index indicates he died in Los Angeles on August 13, 1982.<sup>71</sup>

## RAYMOND J. HENN

*August 24, 1920 – March 22, 1943*

Raymond J. Henn hailed from Queens, New York. He completed two years of high school and worked as a plumber before joining the Air Corps. He enlisted in New York City on January 6, 1942.<sup>72</sup> Orders issued on July 28, 1942 detailed Henn to fly with Mack McKay's crew from Wendover Field, Utah in B-17E 41-9067 to Westover Field, Massachusetts, and then to the United Kingdom in B-17F 41-24660 "Little Audrey" on July 31, 1942.<sup>73</sup> This was part of the movement of the 306th Bombardment Group into the European Theatre of Operations. Donald J. Bevan's shoot down of a Focke Wulf FW-190 was officially verified by Waist Gunner Raymond J. Henn.<sup>74</sup> Henn completed twenty missions by March 1943.<sup>75</sup>

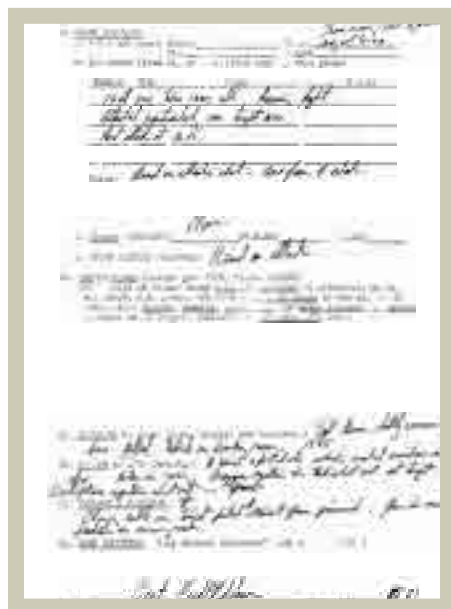
On March 22, 1943, the 306th Bombardment Group targeted the submarine pens at Wilhelmshaven. Henn was the Right Waist Gunner in Lewis P. Johnson's plane when a 20 millimeter (.78 caliber) shell from a German fighter struck him in the face during the bombing run. Henn died instantly.<sup>76</sup> He would have been the first enlisted man to complete twenty-five missions had he survived.<sup>77</sup> The Combat Diary of the 423rd Bombardment Squadron noted, "Though this was a successful mission, our spirits were considerably dampened when



*Raymond J. Henn in FME4418.*  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*Raymond J. Henn, December 23, 1942.*  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.

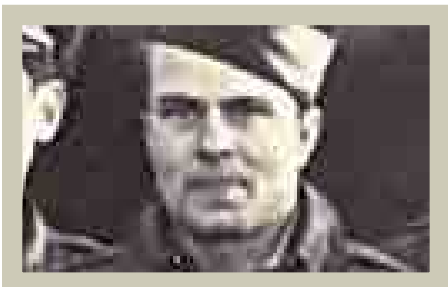


*From the after action report:*  
*"Sgt. Henn hit by 20mm fire. Killed.*  
*While on bombing run."*  
COURTESY 306TH BGHA.





*James M. Hobbs in FME4418.*  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*James M. Hobbs, December 23, 1942.*  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.

we learned that Sgt. Henn had been hit by a 20mm (.78 caliber) shell and killed, his twentieth mission.”<sup>78</sup> He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Henn is buried in Cambridge American Cemetery, Cambridge, England.<sup>79</sup>

## **JAMES M. HOBBS**

*August 23, 1921 – June 15, 1995*

The history of James Hobbs is confusing. James H. Hobbs is mentioned repeatedly in the 423rd Bombardment Squadron history, but James Monroe Hobbs is correctly listed with the Service Number 18067673 in the Army Enlistment Records<sup>80</sup> and the 306th Bombardment Group Roster on March 1, 1943.<sup>81</sup>

James M. Hobbs was born to Maggie Odom and Martin Hobbs in Porter, Oklahoma. The family moved around a lot, probably itinerant farmers; they lived in Booneville, Arkansas in 1929; in Tate, Arkansas, in 1930.<sup>82</sup> He dropped out of Grammar School to work as a farm laborer in Artesia, New Mexico.

He enlisted in the Air Corps in Santa Fe just ten days after Pearl Harbor. He completed five missions and was awarded the Air Medal on November 13, 1942. He received his first Oak Leaf Cluster for ten missions completed on February 1, 1943. After fifteen missions he was awarded a second Oak Leaf Cluster on February 22, 1943. He completed his twentieth mission and received his third Oak Leaf Cluster on March 20, 1943. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross on May 31, 1943, the second enlisted man to complete his required twenty-five missions. At some point, Hobbs transferred to Lewis P. Johnson’s crew. After he finished his tour, he was replaced by Maynard “Snuffy” Smith.

Hobbs transferred to the 11th Combat Crew Replacement Center on June 5, 1943.<sup>83</sup> He transferred to the 720th Squadron, 450th Bombardment Group for a second tour.<sup>84</sup> He was discharged on June 11, 1945.<sup>85</sup>

Hobbs married Bertha Irene Martschinske on May 9, 1945, in Fresno, California and they had a son, James M. Hobbs Junior, who



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did not survive the year in 1948 and a living daughter, Betty Jo, in 1949.<sup>86</sup> He and divorced Martschinske and married Lyda Mae Jordan on March 12, 1960, in Carson City, Nevada.<sup>87</sup> James Monroe Hobbs died in Coalinga, California, when he was 73 years old.<sup>88</sup>

## LEWIS P. JOHNSON

*June 10, 1921 – December 5, 2007*

Lewis Page Johnson Junior was born in Crummies, Harlan County, Kentucky. His father ran the town coal mine and was prosecuted in 1938 for threatening union organizers.<sup>89</sup> Johnson Junior attended the University of Kentucky.<sup>90</sup> He was bullied and ignored because he skipped grades in grammar and high school and attended college early. He became an Aviation Cadet in the Air Corps when he saw the reaction the uniform made among the female students.<sup>92</sup>

Upon graduating college, Johnson formally enlisted in the Air Corps in Fort Thomas, Newport, Kentucky on November 10, 1941. He listed his profession as an actor.<sup>93</sup> His Service Number was 0661846.<sup>94</sup> He preferred to be called “L. P.” during his time with the 423rd Bombardment Squadron.<sup>95</sup> Orders issued on July 28, 1942 detailed Johnson to fly as Co-Pilot with Mack McKay’s crew from Wendover Field, Utah in B-17E 41-9067 to Westover Field, Massachusetts, and then to the United Kingdom in B-17F 41-24660 “Little Audrey” on July 31, 1942.<sup>96</sup> This was part of the movement of the 306th Bombardment Group into the European Theatre of Operations.

Johnson flew missions initially as McKay’s Co-Pilot, completing five missions on November 29, 1942 and was awarded his first Air Medal on February 1, 1943.<sup>97</sup> He was also promoted to First Lieutenant on February 1, 1943.<sup>98</sup> He completed ten missions on December 31, 1942<sup>99</sup> and received his first Oak Leaf Cluster for the Air Medal on March 13, 1943. His second Oak Leaf Cluster was received on March 20, 1943.

Johnson was promoted to Command Pilot, and took Kisseberth, Gibson, Hobbs and Henn with him. On Johnson’s twenty-second mission, Henn was killed and Sergeant Kenneth F. Powell, a waist gunner on Johnson’s plane, was wounded on March 22, 1943.<sup>100</sup> On May 1, 1943, during Johnson’s twenty-fifth mission, a flight of



*Lewis P. Johnson  
in the 1937 Yearbook  
at Franklin Central High School.  
COURTESY ANCESTRY.COM.*





*Lewis P. Johnson in FME4418.*  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.

sixteen B-17Fs were misdirected and arrived over Brest, France, a heavily fortified German submarine base. Johnson was piloting B-17F 42-29649 when the group tightened formation and came out of the clouds. “It seems odd to be going northeast,” Johnson said to Second Lieutenant Robert McCallum, his copilot.<sup>101</sup> The flight’s navigator, thinking they were over England, dropped to 2,000 feet (600 meters), formed a tighter formation, fired flares in the lead plane, and received a response. Johnson later reported that gunners on the flight saw flak guns mounted on boats around the harbor. When the flight started to land at 500 feet, the flak guns opened fire, and FW-190 fighters appeared. Three B-17 Flying Fortresses were shot down, and every plane took damage. 42-29649 caught fire in the Radio Room. Johnson’s plane veered perpendicular from the formation, struggling for altitude. Sergeant William W. Fahrenhold, Johnson’s Engineer, was ordered to put out the fire, but he couldn’t get past the bomb bay.

The plane’s control wires melted, and Johnson and McCallum fought to keep the plane level and headed towards England by pushing the yoke forward at extreme physical strain for almost an hour.<sup>102</sup> Contact with the rear of the plane was lost, and Johnson, McCullum and Fahrenhold assumed the rest of the crew bailed out. Bombardier Stanley N. Kisseberth was wounded in the leg.<sup>103</sup> Maynard H. “Snuffy” Smith, the Ball Turret Gunner on his first mission, climbed out to find the waist gunners and the radioman bailing out; they were never seen again and listed as Killed in Action a year later. Gibson, losing blood that was filling his lungs, crawled from the tail guns just as the fire in the radio room grew worse and more fighters attacked.<sup>104</sup> Smith drove off the FW-190s with the waist guns, fought the fires, threw out burning equipment and ammunition, and stabilized Gibson so he wouldn’t bleed to death.<sup>105</sup>

Johnson, concentrating on flying the damaged plane, was unaware of Smith’s actions until the plane landed. The damage was so extensive, Johnson and the surviving crew were surprised that the plane hadn’t exploded or broken up.

The ensuing publicity focused on Smith, but all the crew granted interviews. Johnson was featured in an article for *The New York Tribune*, which contrasted Johnson’s actions in the air with a new group of striking miners back home in Harlan County, Kentucky. McCallum



was quoted when he was debriefed by the assembled press, “I wish we had that old moose, John L. Lewis, along today,” referring to the president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW).<sup>106</sup> Reporter Homer Bigart imagined Johnson meeting with the striking miners to tell them about his wartime exploits. Johnson’s statements to the press were refined. Johnson told *The New York Times*, “Sergeant Smith’s “complete self sacrifice and utmost efficiency were responsible for the safe return of the aircraft and the lives of everyone aboard.”<sup>107</sup>

Decades later he revealed he didn’t recommend Smith for the Medal of Honor.<sup>108</sup> Maynard “Snuffy” Smith was awarded the Medal of Honor anyway in front of the assembled 306th Bombardment Group, and Johnson and McCallum received the Silver Star, on May 20, 1943.<sup>109</sup> Johnson was the second officer in the 306th Bombardment Group to complete twenty-five missions.<sup>110</sup>

Back in the United States, Johnson was one of five officers ordered to form the nucleus of the 452nd Bombardment Group. On October 31, 1943, he landed a damaged B-17 at Pendleton Field, Oregon.<sup>111</sup>

As a commercial pilot, Johnson flew with Pan American Airlines from the end of the war until 1981.<sup>112</sup> Johnson married Lolita June Labres on December 31, 1949, a stewardess who also worked for Pan American Airlines at the time. A young pilot, Johnson had seniority because of work for Pan American he did during the war.<sup>113</sup> They initially lived in New York City and moved to Naples when he retired.<sup>114</sup> To emphasize his pleasure with life he would say that L. P. stood for “Lucky Pierre.”<sup>118</sup> Towards the end of his life, he had a stroke in 2006. Johnson died in Pella, Iowa in 2007.



*Lewis P. Johnson on December 23, 1942.*  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.

## **STANLEY N. KISSEBERTH**

*January 3, 1922 – August 6, 1993*

Stanley Kisseberth was born in Berkeley, California, to Harriett A. Lees and Irvin V. Kisseberth.<sup>119</sup> They moved to Phoenix, Arizona where he attended Phoenix Union High School.<sup>120</sup> He was working in a filling station while attending his first year of college at the University of Arizona when Pearl Harbor was attacked.





1939 Phoenix Union Yearbook.  
COURTESY ANCESTRY.COM.

Kisseberth was in the Air Corps Cadet Training Program, and enlisted on January 7, 1942.<sup>121</sup> His Service Number was 0726039.<sup>122</sup> He graduated from Albuquerque, New Mexico Flying School as a Bombardier on June 13, 1942.<sup>123</sup> Kisseberth was detailed to fly from Westover Field, Massachusetts to the United Kingdom with Pervis E. Youree's crew in B-17F 41-24475 "Old Faithful" on July 31, 1942.<sup>124</sup> Kisseberth completed five missions and received the Air Medal on February 1, 1943.<sup>125</sup> He followed that up with his first Oak Leaf Cluster on February 22, 1943, and another was awarded on May 7, 1943.<sup>126</sup>



Kisseberth on June 14, 1942.  
COURTESY ARIZONA REPUBLIC.

Kisseberth was wounded for the first time on February 16, 1943 over St. Nazaire and received the Purple Heart with twelve other 8th Air Force airmen on February 23, 1943. He was promoted to First Lieutenant on April 4, 1943. During the May 1, 1943 mission to St. Nazaire, flying in Johnson's B-17F 42-29649 as Bombardier, Kisseberth was again wounded in the leg over St. Nazaire.<sup>127</sup> He received his second Purple Heart in June 1943.<sup>128</sup>

He returned to the University of Arizona in 1945, where he was inducted into Sophos, the national honor society.<sup>129</sup> Kisseberth was discharged on June 27, 1947 into the Reserve Air Force. He was released from the reserves on January 31, 1962.<sup>130</sup> Notice of his divorce from Lorraine D. was published in *The Arizona Republic* on October 4, 1967. Kisseberth died in Phoenix, Arizona.



Stanley N. Kisseberth in FME4418.  
COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.

## MACK MCKAY

April 22, 1919 – October 25, 2002



Kisseberth on December 23, 1942.  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.

Mack McKay was born to Malcolm T. McKay and Bernice M. Starkey in Ballinger, Texas.<sup>131</sup> The McKay family moved from Texas to California when Mack was four years old.<sup>132</sup> He was refused entry to the local elementary school because his given name, Mack, was thought by the registrar to be a nickname. He was told to find out his "real" name and come back. His mother sent him three times before he was enrolled.<sup>133</sup>

He joined the Navy Reserve while enrolled at Compton Junior College at age seventeen in 1937.<sup>134</sup> He didn't approve of the class



division between the officers and men in the Navy, and thought the officers were arrogant. Regardless he was friends with Harold E. Roach, who left the Navy to become a Marine Corps fighter pilot in the Solomons.<sup>135</sup> McKay did meet Admiral William Halsey, then the Commanding Officer of U.S.S. Saratoga, and was deeply impressed by that officer.<sup>136</sup>

He joined the Air Corps while still in college at March Field, Riverside, California on November 23, 1940.<sup>137</sup> He transferred to the Army Air Force on July 11, 1941<sup>138</sup> after a year of active duty and two years in the reserves with the Navy.<sup>139</sup> McKay was issued Service Number 0421269.<sup>140</sup> McKay learned to fly at Mesa Del Rey Field in King City, California, Class 43-J.<sup>141</sup> He trained on B-25s until joining the 306th Bombardment Group.

McKay arrived at the 306th's 423rd Bombardment Squadron to lead "A" Flight in late April 1942.<sup>142</sup> McKay was promoted to Captain in late July 1942.<sup>143</sup> Orders issued on July 28, 1942 detailed McKay to fly as Command Pilot from Wendover Field, Utah in B-17E 41-9067 to Westover Field, Massachusetts, and then to the United Kingdom in B-17F 41-24660 later named "Little Audrey" on July 31, 1942.<sup>144</sup> This was part of the movement of the 306th Bombardment Group into the European Theatre of Operations. Johnson was Co-Pilot, Pollock navigated, Alleman was Engineer and Top Turret Gunner, and Henn and Gibson were gunners for the cross-Atlantic flight.<sup>145</sup>

On August 1, 1942, McKay and Lieutenant John Brady enjoyed the officers' pool at Chanute Field, Illinois while the rest of the air echelon visited slot machines.<sup>146</sup> The next week, the ground echelon crossed the Atlantic via the *Queen Elizabeth*, and they were excited to see McKay in "Little Audrey" buzz the ship while on submarine patrol.<sup>147</sup>

On October 22, 1942, McKay, along with Lieutenants John Barnett, John B. Brady and William R. Warner, executed a test flight maintaining 500 feet altitude. McKay and Barnett's aircraft clipped foliage from trees that the ground crew found when they landed.<sup>148</sup>

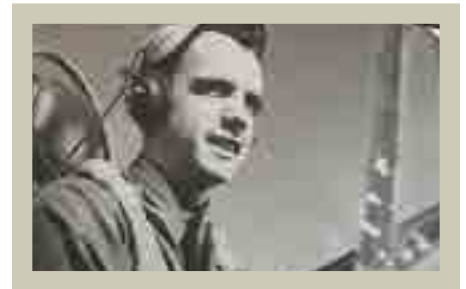
On November 8, 1942, McKay and Lieutenant Loyal M. Felts joined the 369th Bombardment Squadron on an attack on submarine pens at



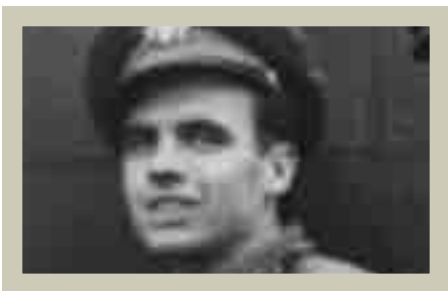
*1936 Compton College Yearbook.*  
COURTESY ANCESTRY.COM.



*Mack McKay and first wife Geraldine  
Morton McKay with Harold Roach  
(left) and an unidentified man.*  
COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.



*During flight training circa 1941.*  
COURTESY ARIZONA REPUBLIC.



*McKay in FME4418.*

COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*McKay on December 23, 1942.*

COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.

Lille. Initially unopposed, the 369th aborted the bomb run and set up again when German fighters attacked. The 369th experienced many losses on that mission but McKay and Felts returned unharmed.<sup>149</sup>

During a visit to Oxford Hospital on December 20, 1942, McKay drove and many officers accompanied him. While the 423rd's Combat Diary doesn't explicitly mention alcohol, McKay drove the vehicle into a ditch on the way back.<sup>150</sup>

McKay was awarded the Air Medal on January 12, 1943.<sup>151</sup> On January 20, 1943, McKay was selected to command the 368th Bombardment Squadron. The 423rd's Combat Diary recorded, "Capt. Mack McKay, after taking part in ten completed missions without a slip or abortion--a truly remarkable record--was chosen today as the next commanding officer of the 368th Bomb Squadron. While we all, without exception, hate to lose Mack, it is an honor and a promotion for him personally, and in that we are all honored in his being chosen for the job."<sup>152</sup> McKay flew sixteen missions with the 306th Bombardment Group, often in B-17F 41-24660 "Little Audrey" but in several other aircraft as well. McKay took part in every mission, starting with the 306th's first on October 9, 1942, and was the lead plane for the entire group at the end of his tour.<sup>153</sup>

He was promoted to Major on February 23, 1943.<sup>154</sup> McKay commanded the 368th until April 8, 1943, and then departed England for the United States on April 16, 1943, to lecture trainees on B-17 combat operations.<sup>155</sup> Andy Rooney wrote about the 8th Air Force and Mack McKay in an article published on August 19, 1943.<sup>156</sup> Mack McKay was awarded the Silver Star in 1943.<sup>157</sup>

Assuming command of the 1st Bombardment Squadron on June 16, 1943, he trained B-17 crews until February 27, 1944.<sup>158</sup> He also consulted on the placement of gun turrets on the new Boeing B-29 Superfortress.<sup>159</sup> McKay was only 23 years old at the time. After overexertion and hospitalization for two and a half months, he retired from the Air Force on April 16, 1944.

McKay became a cargo pilot for the Flying Tigers for forty-five years.<sup>160</sup> He returned to the Air Force during the Korean War.<sup>161</sup> Later he was an



investment broker for an oil company.<sup>162</sup> He outlived his first wife and married again. McKay is buried in Riverside National Cemetery.<sup>163</sup>

## EUGENE J. POLLOCK

*April 22, 1919 – October 25, 2002*

Eugene Joseph Pollock was born to Olga Deblanc and Oscar Pollock in Chicago, Illinois.<sup>164</sup> The family moved to New Orleans. Pollock graduated from Harrison Stone Jackson Junior College In Mississippi where he majored in chemical engineering.<sup>165</sup>

He enlisted on October 8, 1941 in Jackson, Mississippi as an Aviation Cadet in his junior year of college.<sup>166</sup> He was issued the Service Number 0724068.<sup>167</sup> He went into the Air Corps and received his wings as a navigator April 1, 1942;<sup>168</sup> the same day, he was promoted to First Lieutenant.<sup>169</sup> His first assignment took him to the Pacific Theatre where he performed patrol duty.<sup>170</sup>

Orders issued on July 28, 1942 detailed Pollock to fly as Navigator with McKay's crew from Wendover Field, Utah in B-17E 41-9067 to Westover Field, Massachusetts, and then to the United Kingdom in B-17F 41-24660 "Little Audrey" on July 31, 1942.<sup>171</sup> This was part of the movement of the 306th Bombardment Group into the European Theatre of Operations.

He was promoted to First Lieutenant on September 17, 1942.<sup>172</sup> Pollock shot down a German FW-190 fighter on December 12, 1942.<sup>173</sup> Pollock was awarded the Air Medal on January 5, 1943; his first Oak Leaf Cluster on February 1, 1943; his second on February 22, 1943; and the fourth on March 20, 1943.<sup>174</sup>

Pollock developed a method of deflection shooting for the B-17 gunners using his own gunsight.<sup>175</sup> This method was deemed successful and spread throughout the 306th Bombardment Group.<sup>176</sup>

He was the first Officer in the 8th Air Force to complete his tour on April 19, 1943.<sup>177</sup> Nationally syndicated Hearst columnist Henry Mc-Lemore interviewed Pollock for his May 10, 1943 column. Pollock expressed interest in transferring to fighters, feeling that his combat



*McKay's flight jacket is preserved by his family.*

COURTESY PAMELA PATTEN.



*Pollock in 1941 when he graduated from Junior College.*

COURTESY EUGENE J. POLLOCK JR.





*Pollock in FME4418.*

COURTESY IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM.



*Pollock on December 23, 1942.*

COURTESY BRUCE B. MCKAY.



*Pollock on February 17, 1943.*

COURTESY EUGENE J. POLLOCK JR.



*Pollock in 1972.*

COURTESY THE MISSILEER.

experience with German fighters attacking his bomber would translate to fighter tactics and talked about missing his wife and son.<sup>178</sup>

He moved to Chicago. He was recalled to active duty for two years during the Korean War.<sup>179</sup> He separated from the military in 1952.<sup>180</sup> He retired from the Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel.<sup>181</sup>

After running a radio shop, Pollock joined the Civil Service and developed radar at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Pollock eventually held seven patents in radar.<sup>182</sup> In 1964 he was employed at Patrick Air Force Base. In Washington, D.C., at their 1972 convention, the Air Force Association presented their Systems Command Meritorious Award for Support Management to Pollock for his work supporting the Air Force's Eastern Test Range in Sunnyvale, California.<sup>183</sup> Pollock battled Alzheimer's disease prior to his death.<sup>184</sup> He is buried in the National Cemetery in Biloxi, Mississippi.<sup>185</sup> His son, Eugene J. Pollock Junior, joined the Air Force and provided support to Vietnamese nationals during the evacuation of Saigon in April 1975.<sup>186</sup>



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