



John H. (Buddy) Westhues, Jr.

Dates of service: 26 January 1943 to November 1945

Rank & role: Tech Sgt, U.S. Army Air Force, radio operator

Unit[s]: Sent first for training to Sheppard Field, Texas, then for further training in Utah; deployed to England in April 1944 and assigned to the 369th Squadron (Fightin' Bitin'), 306th Bomb Group

Medals received: Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal

Familial link to William & Theresa: Third generation through John and Olive.

Notable actions/deployments/stories:

Military service was the defining event of Buddy's whole life. He was drafted in 1943 and was honorably discharged about three years later. Like his cousin Norbert (whom he chanced to meet in England), he was in the Army Air Force, member of the nine-member flight crew for a B-17, the "Flying Fortress," to bomb targets in occupied France and in Germany. Bud had the job of radioman.

Bud began flying the bombing missions in May 1944, and completed whatever was the requisite number (probably 30 or 35 -- the quota changed from time to time) for that tour of duty. Below are scans of his crew's debriefings from the two missions they flew on D-Day, June 6, 1944. For their first mission, they left England at 4:40 AM, bombed the target on the Normandy coast at 7:09, and got safely back to England at 9:45. The D-Day attack began at 6:30 AM, so Bud's first mission that day was at the start of it. Then, after some hours of sleep, they left again at 5:54 PM, returning from their second mission at 11:05.

Bud could have returned to the United States and stayed safe for the rest of the war, but instead he volunteered to be part of the "India-China Ferry," an Allied operation to airlift supplies from Assam, in British India, across the Himalayas to Chiang Kai-Shek's army in Kunming, China. The operation lasted from 1942 until the surrender of Japan in 1945, so Bud was at the tail end of it. The airmen called it "Flying the Hump." The route was treacherous on account of the mountains as well as Japanese attack. About 3,000 planes went down, making what was called an "aluminum trail" over the mountains. Bud had good luck. He declined, however, to fly back to the United States at the end of the war, choosing instead to come home by ship from Karachi, in what is now Pakistan.

Bud would be angry with me if I did not add here that his military service left Bud hating war with every fiber of his being. He was not proud of his service or of the medals he received for it. He would have thrown them away if Mom had not kept them. When I was growing up on the farm, Bud was an executive at Chrysler in Detroit, but his medals were collecting dust in the upstairs attic of our farmhouse. During the Vietnam War, Bud was not just embarrassed but enraged that Chrysler was making military vehicles for the U.S. government.

PDFs of the debriefings from the two missions Bud's crew flew on D-Day:

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INTERVIEW FORM

SQUADRON ~~XXXXXX~~ 369 ~~XXXX~~ A/C Number: 185 Letter J Date 6/6/44

Bomb Load 12 x 500 H.E. Incend.

Position in Formation

Time Took off 1754 Time Landed 2205

X X X X X
X X X X X
X X X X X
X X X X X

LOW

1. HOT NEWS to be phoned in? Yes No
Details:

X X X X X
X X X X X

CREW: Give rank and Initials

Friendly A/C in any kind of distress:
(Give position, time, altitude, full details)

2nd Lt. F. H. Bennett Pilot

2nd Lt. E. V. Mullenneaux Co-P

2nd Lt. D. W. Mier Nav.

2nd Lt. D. F. Borchart Bomb

S/Sgt. J. H. Westhues Radio

S/Sgt. C. E. Nagel Top P

S/Sgt. J. V. M. Iacurase Mail T

Sgt. N. Chadakoff R. Waist

Sgt. E. V. Locher Tail G.

4. TARGET ATTACKED:

PFF Primary Time: 2018

Alternate Height: 15000

Last Report Heading: 2170 mag
(circle)

Duration Bomb Run:

5. Number of BOMBS dropped on target: 12 Detonated: Returned: Abortive:

4. Observed RESULTS OF BOMBING: (For this plane or others)

Own Bombs:

Other Bombing:

Any Nickels: Yes No
Number boxes dropped
Number boxes returned

5. Any PHOTOGRAPHS taken: Yes? No

6. GROUND TARGETS ATTACKED BY GUNFIRE AND RESULTS:

7. ROUTE (If different than ordered) (If ABORTIVE give time, place, height of turn; reason for returning early, and Disposition of bombs.)

As briefed

8. WEATHER: (If it affected mission)

9. FLAK: Encountered on way out, at target and on way home.

Time	Place	Height	Type (light, heavy), intensity, of moderate or slight	Color	Location of Bursts in relation to A/C
<u>Clear</u>	<u>2 miles</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>light</u>	<u>white</u>	<u>in front</u>

INTERVIEW FORM

SQUADRON ~~XXXXXX~~ 369 ~~XXXX~~ A/C Number: 185 Letter J Date 6/6/44

Bomb Load 12 x 500 H.E. ~~XXXX~~

Position in Formation

Time Took off 0440 Time Landed 0945

X X X X X
X X X X X
X X X X X
X X X X X

With Spec.

1. HOT NEWS to be phoned in? Yes No
Details:

CREW: Give rank and Initials

Friendly A/C in any kind of distress:
(Give position, time, altitude, full details)

2nd Lt. F. H. Bennett Pilot

2nd Lt. Y. R. C. Nasson Co-P

2nd Lt. D. W. Mier Nav.

F/O N. N. Gordon Bomb

S/Sgt. J. H. Westhues Radio

T/Sgt. J. E. Mellyn Top P

Sgt. J. V. Iacurase Mail T

Sgt. N. Chadakoff R. Waist

Sgt. E. V. Locher Tail G.

4. TARGET ATTACKED:

Primary Time: 0709

Alternate Height: 16900

Last Report Heading: 230
(circle)

Duration Bomb Run:

5. Number of BOMBS dropped on target: 12 Detonated: Returned: Abortive:

4. Observed RESULTS OF BOMBING: (For this plane or others)

Own Bombs: none returned

Other Bombing:

Any Nickels: Yes No
Number boxes dropped
Number boxes returned

5. Any PHOTOGRAPHS taken: Yes? No?

6. GROUND TARGETS ATTACKED BY GUNFIRE AND RESULTS:

7. ROUTE (If different than ordered) (If ABORTIVE give time, place, height of turn; reason for returning early, and Disposition of bombs.)

8. WEATHER: (If it affected mission) 10/10, about 7000 tops

9. FLAK: Encountered on way out, at target and on way home.

Time	Place	Height	Type (light, heavy), intensity, of moderate or slight	Color	Location of Bursts in relation to A/C
<u>Clear</u>	<u>2 miles</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>light</u>	<u>white</u>	<u>in front</u>



**Bomber Command Memorial in London
for WWII Allied Aviators**

