

Bob Orzel 4/8/09

Bernard "Bob" Orzel Born Buffalo, P.S. 42 on Grand St.
Burgard H.S. 4^{yr}
(1941 grad) Aviation Tech. H.S.

Worked at Bell Aircraft on Elmwood about 3 mos. Went to
Curtiss as aircraft leftman. Oct. he joined aviation
cadet ^{corps} to San Antonio, TX. Enlisted; Dec. 14, 1942 called
Enlisted in April.

Qualified for Pilot. Washed out; Aerial observer, sent to
Ft. Meyer FL, gunnery school ~ 46 wks.

machine guns 30 caliber on ground / 50 calibre airborne
RADAR TRAINING, ground school Boca Raton FL.

after 2 mos, mother ill, gives leave, to Bflo. She died,
and within 2 wks, missed out on completing class so reverted
from Corporal to enlisted status. Fort Lauderdale beaches.

Next course up to be completed formal training. To Orlando
for aerial training.

Met Pilot in A20, took ride. Roy Seigel, pilot who turned
up, stayed until cracked up at mt. at beginning of Battle
of the Bulge.

Wayne - Back to initial training... graduated course
appt. Flight Officer, met Roy Seigel.

" " like 2nd Lt. duties. Radar operator on
the Aircraft. Sat in back of A20s modified as P 70 (?) night
fighter. Radar school - IN ITS INFANCY.

Pilot - 2 planes one target, one follows. Daytime. Switch
P 70s in KISSIMEE, FL. Squad being formed.
When finished training in Fresno CA, flew to San Fran,
train to outside NYC.

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Went overseas from New York port in convoy to
Not Stasick. Arrived in Engl. end March or April 1944.
422nd Squadron. Field in Northern England. Flying
English Anson twin engine trainer
a BT 10 - crew had taken, crashed & died over
young woman's house.

P 6els.

Orient to new aircraft and new Radar set. Comparison to
now it was primitive radar but to them advanced.

After D Day they took on active role over own sector,
US Forces on coast of France. British handled till then.
Used British Wellington bomb to train night fighters.
Pr. tolerant of young, aggressive, inexperienced Yanks.

1st combat mission Routine (for Orzel). Controlled by
ground radar at assignment area. No lights. East & west
Artillery fire gave some idea of front line. Summer.

On 2 nts, off 2 nts. Two crews up. 2 1/2 hrs, next 2 crews
Went on 2 missions a nt. usually. Winter later, sometimes 3.
Rather ~~slow~~ boring, except for Pilot. Only when you controlled
gave a friendly or enemy target, radar op used.

There were guns on board if u latched onto

Both pilot & the radar had to identify plane so
you identified & didn't shoot friendly. 4 engines vs. not
a Coerman. A British - Lancaster, Halifax, Stirling, Liberator B17
by US.

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In 9th Air Force, left Engl for France, in tents in primitive:
Bombed out German airfields: runways fairly solid.

P48, P47s, P51s in DAY FIGHTERS. Short missions
sometimes hour away. Went up in direct support of ground
troops. Bombing, machine gunning, rocketing.

As many as 30 at a time, 2 off at a time. Belgium.
2 missions a night. Ground crew repleish, ammo + fuel
Oatmeal + coffee at mess tent.

He, Bob Orzel, is in 8th Air Force Historical Society —

Different: he did 2 hrs, they 8

Altitude 10,000 ft. " 20-30,000 feet

Problem at Mt. to avoid British Bombers who flew by
joined intervals at varied altitudes. NOT FORMATIONS.

Corp. CONTROLLERS wouldn't know Br. raid times.

Prior to Battle of Bulge. Airfields east of front lines
to catch German planes before they got to our " " .
Cologne, Gr. raids. Saw flat.

17th or 18th, beginning of BP-Bulge. Not known to them
(Orzel) that Br were making a move)

Range on Radar scope was limited to the altitude
above ground. Eg 1 mile up, see 1 mile away. If at
grd. level got grd clutter.

German's dropping flares — us running out of fuel
failing too, at low altitude, pull up. Fog in (Belgium to
Holland + No. France) Up over 3 hrs.

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Directed to other fields - Fog. Only (his field) had any
Night landing facilities - 1 string of lights

A 8th Chevremay(?) field. Number of passes
Sent a guy to end of runway w/ a flare - glow.

Another crew member in another plane cracked up then.
Roy: either go up to bail out, or down, last try.

Crashing, rolling, got out top hatch to cockpit, where Roy is
trapped. Orzel fired one shot from a Pistol. Off the field
when located. Jeep, truck, wrecker truck freed Roy.

Hospitals in Brussels. Didn't see until after the war. Seigel
hosp & sent home.

All the guys were hungry for missions.

Squadron had twin engine light bombers for wt. fighting.
Similar to training. Wt. fighters sent out to bomb as calculated
from day fighters. (4) 500 lb. Bombs dropped.

Orzel got permission to fly as a turret gunner. Till end of war.
3 or 4 times as Radar operator after Roy gone.

Got as far as Leipzig, which became part of Russian territory.

War ended, slated to Pacific; to States. Then on their way

From France to Germany, to boat when war in Pacific ended.
So they were about a month in France, got a boat to States.
(40 + 8) Either 40 men or 8 horses HORSES.

"Cigarette man" Camp from Lattinnes.

Berms - so hard to penetrate in Normandy, built berms over
centuries ^{barrier}

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Ellwood R. Cassata - helped squadron.
Orzel still in regular contact w/ his pilot.
Solid organization.

Squad. estab. after war, #22 test + evaluation, outside Vegas.
Fall 9th squadron number & insignia.

only 2 night fighter squadrons in Europe w/ P61
excluding med. it.

Discharged in States. Feb. 1947. Had a rehab
to find cause of his vision trouble. Walter Reed - type
or there? Young men surviving largely because they
were together.

Problems w/ sight. Never driven. Eventually got
a degree in Social work.

2nd Tape in. Problem w/ sight noticed after war
ended; at camp. Playing baseball. B25 went over, Orzel
couldn't refocus after glancing up. Camp Kitner (?) testing, had
optic neuritis in both eyes, degeneration of optic nerve.
Arrested. Rehab. Learned Braille. Loftman job - required
Acute vision; ^{put} forms & image onto metal... his desire had
been to fly. Social work. Used GI Bill for some; had
saved toward engineering degree he hoped for originally.
Flight officer at 20% pay.

He has a
Younger Bros. 2 yrs behind, grad. 3 1/2 yrs same H.S. school
Went to Pacific as flight officer. #

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Joined UFW / stayed in contact with those he served with
and telephones.

How did time affect his life - totally.
Maturation fantastic, positive.

would have done college at UB if as planned.

Did have a leave to London, negative to Paris day ^{exp.} or two.
Britains tremendous to Yankees.
= m. long