



Bombing Missions Of The B-17 "Bottle Baby"

Herman Van Eck completed 160.20 combat hours from February 20th, 1945 to April 16th, 1945.

Herman Van Eck finished combat training and went overseas with Capt. Bennett Young's Crew. He flew in Combat with Jacob N. Shepherd's crew. His crew was apart of the 613th Bombardment Squadron which was part of the 401st Bomb group.

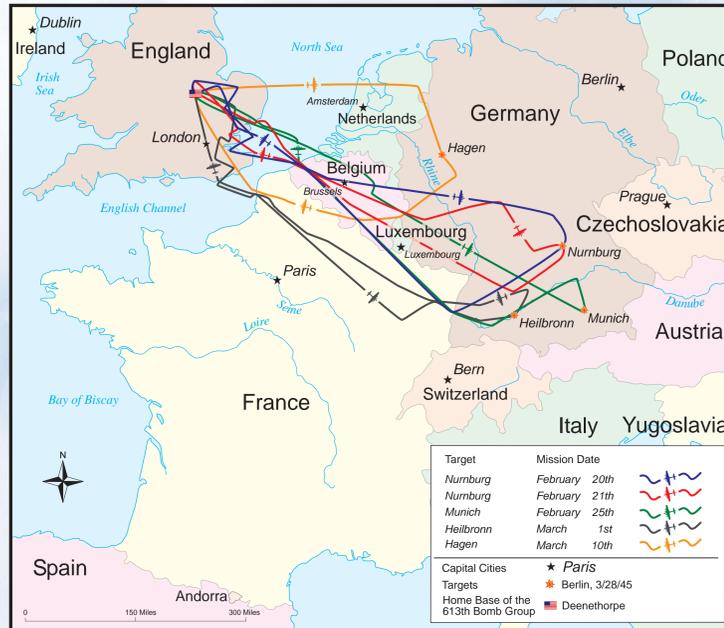
The 401st Bomb group was awarded citations for having the highest percentage of bombs closest to their targets in the entire 8th Airforce.

Although a rule was in place that a crew was not allowed to fly more than two missions a week the rule was not followed and sometimes more than two mission were flown a week.

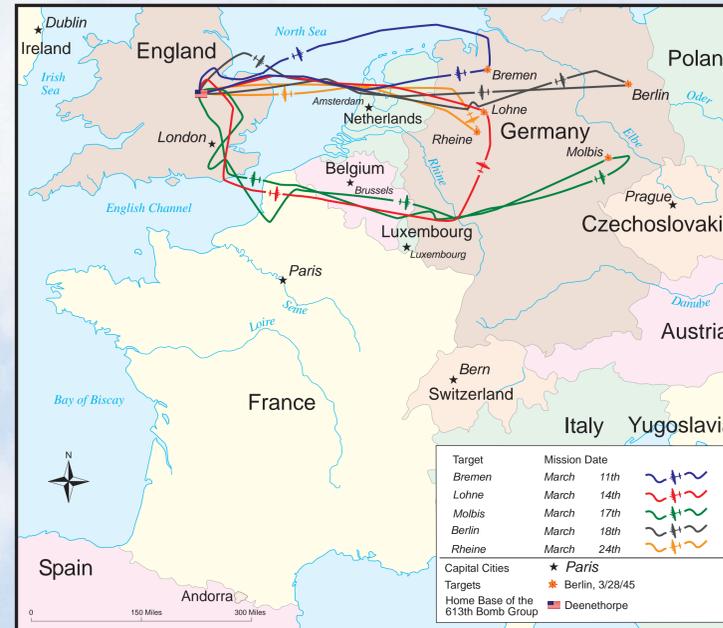
Herman Van Eck flew 20 bombing mission against German targets during World War II, 19 of them are mapped here. The mission flown on March 30th, 1945 to Berman, Germany is not shown because the navigation log was not completed for the mission. 2nd Lieutenant Herman Van Eck remembers this to be the worst mission he flew. After each mission he would write down details so he would not forget them. What he wrote down about the mission on the 30th of March is an amazing story. He wrote: "We had lost two engines during the mission due to gun fire. Our vertical stabilizer was shot away and 8 good sized holes were in the plane. When we landed the third engine conked out. When the ground crew was working on the plane they could not start the fourth engine. They found a large piece of flak that did not fall into a vital area until the engine stopped."



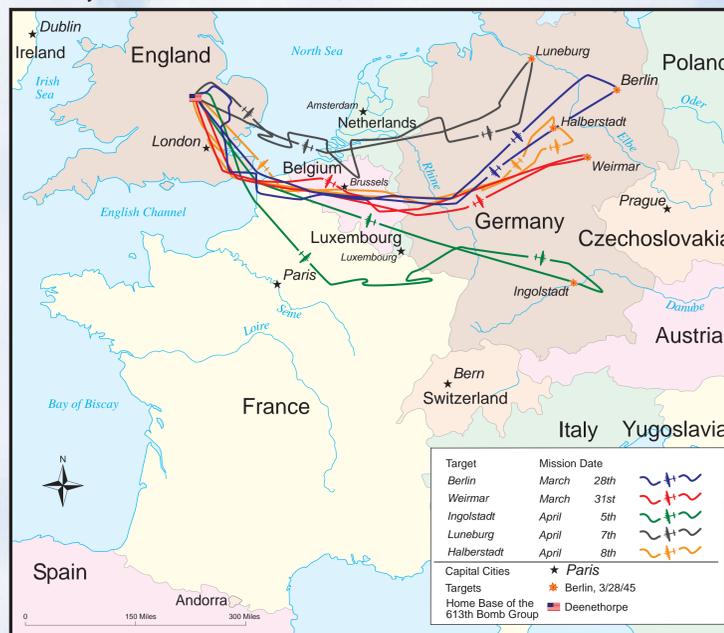
Herman Van Eck served as the Navigator aboard the B-17 "Bottle Baby"



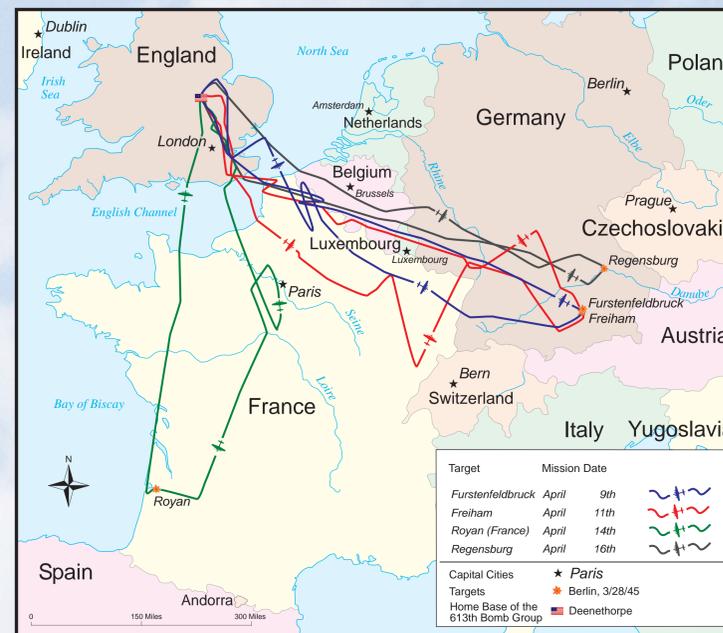
February 20th, 1945 - March 10th, 1945



March 11th, 1945 - March 24th, 1945



March 28th, 1945 - April 8th, 1945



April 9th, 1945 - April 16th, 1945



BEN YOUNG'S CREW
Top Row L to R: Frank Seavey, Herman Van Eck, Phil Funk, Ben Young
Bottom Row L to R: Johnson, Bramble, Isham, Hennig, Peters

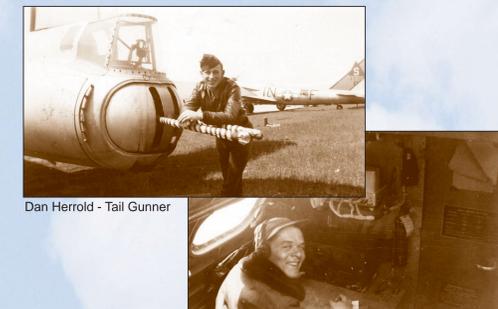


JAKE SHEPHERD'S CREW
Top Row: Alles, G.C., G.C., G.C., Belfond, Margolies, Herrold
Bottom Row: Collins, Shepherd, Skiffington, Van Eck, Davis



Jake Shepherd - Pilot

Tom Skiffington - Co-Pilot



Dan Herrold - Tail Gunner

John Collins - Radio Operator



Herman Van Eck in uniform, standing by a B-17



613th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

Drawn by the famed cartoonist Walt Disney, this "punching bomb" is symbolic of a squadron which was "always right in there, punching!"



Malcom Margolies - Ball Turret

Ground Crew

Arnold Davis - Engineer- Top Turret

Bob Alles - Front Turret- Toggler



Silk escape map to be used if shot down during a combat mission

With loving respect for my Grandfather who is and always will be my hero.