

No scratches



No deaths, no injuries, no bullet wounds was the scorecard reading when S/Sgt. Dick Granstrand and his crew wound up 50 missions over Africa last year. The only one to take a beating was the Flying Fortress which carried the boys over enemy targets. The "Hun-Pecker" had to be changed, repaired and altered after several of the missions.

Gunner flew 50 safe missions None of crew got hurt

"Shucks, no," he chuckled, "that's a lot of bunk. All that stuff about tail gunners is just so much hooey. They say that you have just so many seconds to live under actual fire. That's not true. The percentage of men who come back from a mission is high, real high."

And after talking to S/Sgt. Dick Grandstand we began to believe him. We had sat around for an hour Monday morning, waiting for the good-looking aerial gunnery instructor to come down from a mission, just to ask him that question.

50-Mission Vet

Dick is a returned tail gunner from Africa, fifty missions old.

WATER is scarce

The post's water supply is threatened by excessive waste that MUST be eliminated if the present conveniences are to be continued here.

It is imperative for the good of all that all water waste be reported to your superior. Report leaky faucets, taps, water connections and other cases of water extravagance that may come to

Gunner flew 50

(Continued from page one)

sion. The guns froze at high altitude and the frightened kids were helpless. The ship was lost near Bizerte and the crew is interned in Hungary today.

Not All Easy

But the remainder of Grandstrand's crew flew their missions without a scratch. However, don't get him wrong. It wasn't all cream and butter, sitting up where the Nazis are out searching for your blood.

We don't envy Grandstand his 15 minutes spent on the way back from Palermo, Sicily. There were only 100 rounds left on the entire ship and they were all in the top turret guns. Dick stuck to his tail position, swinging his guns as threateningly as he knew how. For some life-giving reason, the relentless Nazi fighters stayed at a far distance, throwing lead all over the sky. Their marksmanship was just that little off.

"How come you were selected for the tail, Dick?"

Liked Solitude

ed it. Those were the days when the 'five seconds to live' stories were running around. I thought I'd like it. You were all by yourself and there were two guns that were all your own. And the tail, let me tell you, is no more dangerous than any other position."

"How close did you ever come to getting hit?"

"Well, there was one bullet hole six inches from my head."

Although none of the men was ever hit, the close ones are beyond count. Grandstrand has a different idea of combat now than he did immediately following his third mission, a raid against Lille, France.

Crowded Off Target

Hun-Pecker was riding the outside element of a huge formation. The plane was crowded off the target and was unable to drop its bombs. That would have been all right with some pilots. But Lieutenant Broderick refused to carry his bomb load back home.

He banked the Hun-Pecker and returned for a bomb run. It was a fine trip and the bombardier scored six direct hits on a steel mill (as shown by photographs). By this time, however, they were five miles in back of the formation. The Hun-Pecker was hopped by 12 enemy fighters. In the long fight that followed, three Nazis were sent down and two more registered as probables. But poor Hun-Pecker never looked the same. She limped home as a complete wreck, punched with a thousand holes.

"No scratches?"
"Not a scratch."
"Ever bail out?"
"Never."
"Ever have to ditch the ship?"
"Never."

"Let's get this straight. Did any member of your crew ever get hit during the 50 missions; any ever get killed?"

"None."
"Anything ever happen?"
"Well, it's not that easy. You see . . ."

Of the 11 men who made up the crew of the Hun-Pecker which flew over Europe and Africa, 11 men came back. Of those 11 not a single man was ever injured in 240 hours of combat flying!

These men are all back in the states, serving as instructors. They are lucky men, it is true, but living testimony that a good crew will always come back.

The only man lost to them was their pilot, Lt. Bill Broderick, and he was shot down when breaking in a green crew on a first mission.

(Continued on page six)

Retreat Winners

Outstanding organizations at Retreat, beginning with the formation on May 6, are listed below:

GARRISON PERSONNEL

Sec. C, Flight II 1
Sec. C, Flight IV 1

Change Ships

The crew had to change ships, picking up a new Hun-Pecker and burying the old. The new Fortress ran into the same type of difficulties 17 missions later, over Gabes in Africa. Lt. Broderick again made a separate run on an airdrome, leaving his squadron behind by a matter of seconds.

Ten German fighters ganged up on the loose plane this time. The goddess of battle smiled on the Hun-Pecker boys again and they all returned unscathed. However, the plane was badly battered and was out of action for more than two weeks as ground crews worked on the necessary repairs.

Grandstrand had quite a time comparing the Las Vegas gunnery school of today with the one of

1942 when he went through as a student. The comparison is glaring—something like a streamlined 16-cylinder job against an ancient Ford.

Volunteered

All gunners were volunteers then and there was an urgent need for men. The pressure was so strong that Grandstrand went to school the day he reached the field and shipped off it the day he finished the course, five weeks later.

There were no B-17s, no pursuit curves—just AT-6s and a general idea of what gunnery meant. Students had to go up one at a time and fire 30-calibre guns from the rear cockpit of an AT-6 at a tow target. 400 rounds were all the boys got to fire.

Students only fired 50 rounds of 50-calibre during the entire course, and this was all from the ground. There was only one 50-calibre machine gun per class. As a matter of fact, the first field stripping job Grandstrand ever did was after he joined his squadron.

Lone Ball Turret

The school only had two top turrets for inspection and use by the classes. There was a lone ball turret but it was behind glass and protected by a sign, "Hands Off!"

Shooting skeets was done with shotguns minus sights. No one had ever dreamed of such modernistic gadgets as Waller Trainer, Jam Handy or gun camera.

The course today is so much more thorough and exacting that a comparison is superfluous. Grandstrand thinks the present schooling is grand and will help the future gunners immeasurably.

But he still rates experience as the world's greatest teacher. Especially in aerial gunnery.