

Teaneck's Lieut. Amrhein Back From 40 Air Missions

Wears Air Medal, Seven Oak Leaf Clusters Showing
Participation In Raids On Rome, Beach Points

By LEE BRODERICK

He bombed Rome the two times it was plastered. Once he flew in the leadship of Mitchell Marauders that came in over the Holy City at 12,000 feet.

Now that the 28-year-old Lieutenant John J. Amrhein is back home at 505 Queen Anne Road, Teaneck, these runs over Rome are nothing but two of the even 2-score missions negotiated by his medium bomber all over the underbelly of Europe.

What the bombardier remembers like yesterday and now tries to forget, are the times he had with his barracks roommate, Lieutenant Kenneth Wodenschek of 280 Marlboro Road, Wood-Ridge.

FAL WAS KILLED

The Flying Fortress pilot and star athlete out of Rutherford High School got orders one day to take off on a bomb run. He came back dead that day, September 23, to his Tunisian airbase.

Bombardier Amrhein was hurt on the second bomb run in October



LT. JOHN J. AMRHEIN

and he was scared, real scared for maybe the first time, he says.

"Splinters of flak tore through the nose of the plane", he said, "tore across my right arm, and scraped my left eye knocking me out for what seemed an eternity but they tell me I recovered in a matter of seconds and went about the business of the target objective."

"Because there is much more to do than to think about yourself, I did not give myself any thought. On the way back I took a look at the hole in the nose, and at my

limp arm, and broke out in a cold sweat. Reaction, I guess."

Amrhein had no cold sweat July 15 the day of the first raid on Rome. His 6-man Marauder came in at 12,000 feet, ran through in-different flak, and dumped its six 500-pound eggs on the freight yards nearest target objective to Vatican City.

"Everything was as simple as that," he said, "and no different from any other mission except that we had orders to be extra careful about the Vatican. We had a briefing on this run the night before and twice before that. Each time we were cautioned against plumbings the Vatican."

"As we came in at the end of a 1½-hour run, the motors set for 200 m. p. h., I could see the steeples in Vatican City against the sky. The antiaircraft was not too accurate against us even in the medium altitude. Our ship wasn't hit."

REMEMBERS JUNE FIGHT

More than once before this the Marauder came through fire with scars, mostly in the area of Castelbanfrano in southwest Sicily.

Clear in his mind is the tangle of June 20 in that area where 35 enemy planes fought the invaders.

"By the time we reached the target objective," he recalled, "the enemy had detached the bombers from our fighter escorts and the fighters lay away back. We had to fight off a new wave of planes and plenty of flak. The contact lasted 15 minutes but in that time, two B-24s came head on toward our plane. We fired and maneuvered."

HIS PILOT HIT

"Our hydraulic line was shot out and the center flap and landing gear were riddled into disuse."

"Flak tore through the nose and missed me. The pilot got hit in the leg. One of the motors was hit and then began cutting out."

Pumping 50-mm. shells from the machinegun in the nose of the plane, Amrhein had a bit of a scare. "That was the second time I really sweated," he said.

Amrhein bombed Marseilles and Pantelleria; Palermo, Messina, Gela, and other points in Sicily; Salerno and other beach points, and installations in Italy.

He is back with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Amrhein, waiting for January 17 for reports for new assignment at the Atlantic City Redistribution Center of the Air Force. He is a bombardier-navigator.

He wears the Air Medal with seven Oak Leaf clusters and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

1-22-44

FIGHTER ON LEAVE

(Special to the Bergen Evening Record)

Sampson, N. Y., Jan. 24—Sergeant Second Class Emil Fichter of 57 South Prospect Terrace, Teaneck, N. J., and Harold Cells of 8-124 Cloverdale Avenue, Paramus, have completed basic training here and are on leave.

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Three To Study

Engineering Work

(Special to the Bergen Evening Record)

Brooklyn, N. Y., Jan. 24—Salem Bennett of 390 Sunset Avenue, Englewood, N. J.; John M. Sanborn of 250 Broad Avenue, Leonia; and Kenneth R. Williams of 1294 Beaumont Avenue, West Englewood have been assigned to the engineering courses of the Army Specialized Training Unit here at Pratt Institute.

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Drive Book, Torn, Mended, Goes On Across The World To New Hundreds In Army

This is the story of a book donated to the Teaneck Public Library's Victory Book Drive that has traveled half way around the world.

According to a letter received by Miss Virginia Scherzinger, 17-year-old Teaneck High School student, from a soldier at a station hospital in North Africa, the book's yellow tattered pages have been autographed by 239 soldiers and have been mended over and over again.

The writer, Private Jim Greenlies, believes that the book will go through Brenner Pass with the Allied troops "right into Adolph's nuthouse". The book, "The Paper Chase Mystery", by Fielding, mentions the Pass and surrounding territory.

Miss Scherzinger's address was found on the inside cover of the book, placed there when a friend borrowed it several years ago. The young high school student and her mother, Mrs. Louis R. Scherzinger of 185 Grayson Place, Teaneck, had donated 130 such books to the drive.

Private Greenlies wrote the letter October 7. It arrived at the Scherzinger home a week ago.

An immediate reply was mailed. "We would like you to know," Miss Scherzinger told the soldier, "just how many more boys will read it."

The letter follows:

"Dear Virginia: A book you gave, 'The Paper Chase Mystery' by Fielding, has found its way to the front. It is now torn and has been rebounded many times. I thought you might like to know I read it as it was handed down. Good books are scarce, and all of us like to dwell in mysteries—makes all the boys forget what they have been through. It seemed coincidental that the story should describe such places as the bombed runs in the Italian mountains, Brenner Pass, etc. If that book stays with the men now reading it, I am sure its tattered yellowing pages will march with the boys through that famous pass into Adolph's nuthouse. The book has been autographed 239 times. Your address was on the cover. I have put my address inside it, and have requested its return to me. I am anxious to see how much further it will travel. All is in our favor. Sincerely, JIM GREENLIES."

A letter was written by Private Edward Farrell of Saratov, N. Y., to the Scherzinger family several months ago. Farrell also found the Grayson Place address in the book

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he picked up at Fort Hancock where he was on duty with the Army on a mine planter. Letters were written by Farrell to the Teaneck family every day for 3 months. He is expected to be discharged from the Army, because he was over age, and in these letters said that is so he would join the Merchant Marine. Suddenly after 3 months the flood of letters from Fort Hancock stopped. Letters sent to him were returned marked "discharged".

LIEUT. HOUGHTON OF TEANECK IS BELIEVED DEAD

Mother Gives Up Hope
For Flier When Chaplain
Writes Of Crash

LISTED AS MISSING

First Lieutenant Clyde A. Houghton, 23, of Teaneck, reported missing in action since January 1 by the War Department, is believed dead by his widowed mother, Mrs. Ethel Houghton, who yesterday learned from a chaplain at her son's Southwest Pacific base, that the Liberator bomber Houghton was flying was seen to crash.

The Rev. Lewis R. Elliott told Mrs. Houghton in a letter that her son was the commanding officer of a group of planes which went out on a bombing mission.

"As the result of enemy fire, the ship your son was piloting was seen to crash. Several men were observed escaping by parachuting from the plane, but the enemy planes still attacked and shot at the parachutists, who landed in enemy waters," the chaplain's letter said.

COULD BE PRISONER

"Under very severe circumstances we hope with you that some of them may have been allowed to live and that they were taken prisoners," the chaplain wrote. Mrs. Houghton believes her son stayed at the controls until his plane hit the water, and she no longer holds to the hope that he may have been taken prisoner.

Houghton, a graduate of Teaneck High School, enlisted in the Air Force in April, 1942, just 3 months before his graduation date. He received his diploma while in training to be a pilot.

He was one of the most popular boys in his class, had been active in dramatics, was a member of his junior prom committee, of the committee in charge of planning assembly programs, and an active member of the Active Atoms, science club.

He was awarded his pilot's wings last April at Alice Air Field in Victoria, Tex., and sent overseas 4 months later. He was promoted to first lieutenant December 14, and put in charge of a combat squadron.

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