DECEMBER 1943

1. Flying high spot in the group's formation, this squadron's loss of three Forts did not prove for most crewmen to be a "milk-run" to Leverkusen, for it was all the harder. Listed as missing are Lts Noxon, Hess and F/O Sunde.

Our squadron took the heaviest beating today, losing three of the four group ships down, out of the 26 going over the target. Flak was moderate and a perfect Thunderbolt escort kept the majority of the 70 defending Nazi fighters away from the bombers. No one seems to know when, where or know how our three Forts went down, and all the members of our four returning crews wonder how it could have occurred at all under the circumstances.

Lt Noxon and his crew were just back from a rest-home, with the exception of the co-pilot and navigator, who were not regular members of the crew, were veterans of at least 16 missions. Loss of men like those reminds us of Lt Manchester and his crew on "TS Too" last October.

Solid undercast prevented any clear observation of bombing results, but bombardiers said the pattern was good at "bombs away" and a wide area was well covered with incendiaries and 500-pounders.

The four successful participants were; Lts Jobe, Ridley, Meyers and Crosson.

MIA crews were: 2nd Lts Donald E. Noxon, George Giovannini, Edison Eichhorn, Walter A. Utley; T/Sgt Peter K. Ludwigsen, Toby B. Phillips Jr, S/Sgts John E. Thompson, Harry M. Thompson, Paul T. Mogush and John S. Channell.
2nd Lts Warren C. Hess, Charles L. Smith, David Randle, Robert Wernersbach; T/Sgts Albert J. Gardella, John F. Regan, S/Sgts William M. Macklin, Philip F. Burke, Allen G. Ludwig and Edgar G. Delp.

F/O Harland V. Sunde, 2nd Lts James W. Sweeney, Roger Christiansen, O. D. Tully; S/Sgt William P. England, Sgts Claudio S. Carano, Charles J. Culver, Doyle McCutcheon, Carlton Josephson and John F. Healey.

A total of 27 officers and 42 EM of the 535th took part in the mission; eight men of the ground echelon left on furlough today.