

Biography of Adolph Chester Bialecki

Czeslaw (Chester) Bialecki was born in Poland in 1887. Malgorzata (Margaret) Coniskey was born in Poland, June 15, 1889. They were married, and Czeslaw earned a living as a molder in Boston, Massachusetts. They had five children, four boys, Chester, Alfons, Edward, and Adolph, and a girl, Mildred. All the children were bilingual, being able to read, write, and speak Polish fairly well. Adolph Chester Bialecki was the youngest, born July 23, 1921, in Chelsea, Massachusetts.

Chelsea is a section of Boston located across the Mystic River from East Boston, and the Bunker Hill monument, just north of Logan Airport. The Bialecki's lived at 59 Broadway, near the Mystic River bridge. This is where the children grew up and attended school.

On July 13, 1922, Malgorzata Bialecki died. Adolph was not a year old. In 1933, Czeslaw Bialecki died and was buried with his wife in Holy Cross Cemetery, path 33, grave 43 East, in Malden, Massachusetts. Adolph, now 12 years old, moves up the street to 65 Broadway in Chelsea, and lives with his aunt, Lillian Kaminski.

Adolph completed the 9th grade specializing in industrial trades in 1937. That year he went to work as a iceman's helper for six months. In 1938 and 1939 he went into the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) as a mess steward. In 1940, he went to Bakers and Cook school in North Reading and Lawrence, Massachusetts. He became first cook in Warner, New Hampshire for seven months.

He went to work for Knight Leather Company, Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts in 1941, where he cut linings and covers for tourist cases; ran a skiving machine, skived leather down to size for \$19 per week. He worked there 21 months, until August 10, 1942.

He was drafted August 11, 1942 and took the oath in Boston, Massachusetts. The 21 year old, five foot seven inch tall, 141 pound Adolph was in the Army now. He was processed August 24 and 25, 1942 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, assigned Army serial number 31159853, and then sent to Atlantic City, New Jersey on August 26th thru September 11, 1942, where he attended the 988th Student Squadron. From here, he was sent to Scott Field, Illinois on September 13th, 1942, to attend the 34th Technical School Squadron to train as a radio operator and mechanic. The general nature of the duties of a radio operator were to operate the aircraft radio, direction finder, radio compass, etc; to relay data by radio to personnel in the group; receive weather and other information; and as a gunner during attack. He graduated on January 30, 1943, after twenty-two weeks, with specialty 756.

On February 1, 1943 he is assigned to the 719th Aerial Gunnery Training Squadron in Miami, Florida. There he was assigned to the Basic Air-to-Air Free and Fixed Gunnery School. He learned to fire machine guns and track aerial targets and the duties required in an aircraft, such as informing the pilot of approaching enemy aircraft and servicing the guns and turrets in flight. After completion of the six week course, he graduated on March 22, 1943, as a flexible gunner, right waist gun, with specialty 611.

On April 1, 1943 he was promoted to Sergeant with a pay increase to \$78 per month and assigned to a casual reserve pool in Salt Lake City, Utah. Then was assigned to the 6th Bomb Squadron, as a radioman and gunner-specialty 757.

He moved to Pocatello, Idaho where he was assigned to the 539th Bomb Squadron (H) on the 30th of June 1943. On July 22, 1943 he was assigned to 411th Bomb Squadron, 29th Bomb Group at Pocatello. Adolph was 22 years old.

On July 28, 1943 thru September 13, 1943 he was assigned to the 537th Bomb Squadron (H) at Pocatello.

By now the crews had been assembled. The crews are identified by their pilot's name. The pilot of Adolph's crew is First Lieutenant Kermit A. Fuchs. The crew consists of:

- Second Lieutenant Harry E. Culbertson--co-pilot
- Second Lieutenant Phillip R Westcott--bombardier- left waist gunner
- Second Lieutenant Albert G. Ripley--navigator
- Sergeant Adam F. Illik--nose turret gunner
- Staff Sergeant Rudolph Vidmar--engineer-top turret gunner
- Sergeant Charles J. Hess--right waist gunner
- Sergeant Roy N. Bohlen--ball turret gunner
- Staff Sergeant Adolph C. Bialecki--radio operator
- Sergeant Kenneth N. LaBonte--tail turret gunner

Fuchs's crew had grown close training together and their lives now depended on each other. A band of brothers had been formed.

This was the crew that would fly into combat in a four engine B-24 Bomber. Training was about finished and they were ready to be assigned overseas. Adolph was promoted to Staff Sergeant on September 13, 1943, making \$96 per month. But, because he was a crew member on flying status, flight pay, which was fifty percent of his base pay, was added for a total of \$144 per month.

In September, Adolph received his aircrew wings to wear over his left breast pocket. He was also awarded his Good Conduct medal for one year of service as recommended by his commanding officer for exemplary behavior, efficiency and fidelity.

Adolph qualified as a sharpshooter with a 45 caliber pistol on October 1, 1943. He had already qualified as a marksman with a carbine on September 8th.

Toward the end of October, the crew went on leave before being sent into combat. Adolph returned to Massachusetts to visit friends, relatives, and his girl friend. On a fall afternoon Adolph and his girl friend made a surprise visit to his brother, Alfons and his wife, Elise, and their two children, two and a half year old Beverly, and four year old Richard. They lived in Newton Highlands, nine miles west of Boston. Alfons, a house painter, arrived home from work late in the afternoon as the sun was setting, to find his brother, Adolph and his girl friend, waiting for him. He rushed to get his camera to get pictures before the sun had set. His kid brother was home and it was a time to celebrate this jubilant gathering. Around the supper table that night was the joy of being together and the sorrow of the soon to be separation. There was a discussion where Adolph said he would like to win a purple heart. This was very upsetting to Elise. The young are naïve and Adolph could not foresee the horrors that lay ahead. That evening ended sadly as Adolph left for the unknown. This would be the last time they would see him..

On December 1, 1943, he is attached to the 8th Air Force, Army Air Force (AAF) Station (STA) 594, European Theater of Operations, (ETO) casual pool.

On December 3, he was assigned to Reserve and Training Squadron, AAF STA 113.

On January 22, 1944, he was assigned to the 704th Bomb Squadron, 446th Bomb

Group, ETO Army Post Office (APO) 634, AAF station 125, Flixton near the town of Bungay, Suffolk, England. Bungay was a small town three miles from Flixton, and 113 miles northeast of London. The town was rich in historic lore. There was a castle which had been the stronghold of a Norman follower of William the Conqueror in 1075. Even the Devil, himself, figured in Bungay's history. The Devil was supposed to have paid the town a visit one Sunday morning in 1577. Appearing as a black dog, he strangled two parishioners in a church. The black dog is still in Bungay, but he swings on a weather vane in the town square. In 1258 an Augustinian nunnery was founded at Flixton. The small town with stores and homes with the old world architecture was surrounded by farmland and bicycles were a way to get around. The weather was lousy and it was always muddy.

Flixton airfield was located two miles south of Bungay and had three intersecting runways, that formed a triangle. Runway 05-23 at six thousand feet long, was the main runway; 10-28 at four thousand four hundred forty feet long; and 36-18 at four thousand two hundred feet long. The airfield had two hangers, fifty hard stands, headquarters site, technical site, sick quarters, four defense sites, eight communal sites, and one Women's Army Air Forces (W.A.A.F.) site. Bungay's main resident was the 446th Bomb Group (Heavy) which gained the nickname "The Bungay Buckaroos". Commanded by Colonel Jacob J. Brogger, the group had four squadrons of B-24 Liberators--the 704th, 705th, 706th and 707th. The 446th first mission was flown on December 16, 1943. The target was Bremen, Germany.

Bombers form into formations to increase offensive and defensive strength. Bomber Squadrons form into two types, depending on the mission. The squadron stagger formation. Where, with nine planes, there are three aircraft in three sets of three in a "V", like Canada geese. Three to the left in a "V" of the first "V", and three to the right in a "V" of the lead "V". In the lead set of three, the lead aircraft is in front with a wingman to his left, to the rear and above him. The third aircraft is to leads right and below him, behind the left wingman's aircraft. Each aircraft is at a different altitude. The second set of three is in the same formation as the first three, but it's lead aircraft is behind and above the left wingman of the first set. The third set of three is located with it's lead aircraft behind the first sets right wingman, but below him. The second type, is the javelin down formation. This formation, again with nine aircraft, has three sets of three. The first set, lead in front with wingmen on either side, behind and above. Second set same formation as the first with it's lead behind the first sets lead but above the first sets wingmen. The third sets lead is behind and inline with the leads of the first two sets, but above the second sets wingmen.

Components of a formation are divided into four parts. There is the "element", consisting of two to four aircraft. These aircraft are part of a squadron. A squadron consists of two to four or more elements. The third component is the group. A group is two or more squadrons. The 446th had four squadrons. A combat wing consists of two or more Groups. The 446th was part of the 20th combat wing which consisted of the 93rd, 446th, 448th, and 489th bomb groups. So, the 704th Bomb Squadron could have eight or more aircraft. The 446th Bomb Group could have thirty-two or more aircraft. The 20th combat wing could have one hundred twenty-eight or more aircraft. The 20th combat wing was part of the 2nd Bombardment Division which consisted of the 2nd, 14th, 20th, and the 96th combat wings. There could be over 500 aircraft in this division. And there were 3

divisions in the mighty 8th Air Force.

Adolph and crew met the combat aircraft they would fly during fourteen combat missions and five aborts. The aircraft was a B-24J-55-CO, serial number 42-99942. It was built by Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Company, San Diego, California under U.S.A.A.F. contract number 35312, specification number ZD-32-020, dated August 20, 1943. 42-99942 was a block fifty-five aircraft. Block fifty-five contained fifty aircraft, serial numbers 42-99936 thru 42-99985. 42-99942 was the seventh aircraft in block fifty-five and was sequence number 3091, or the three thousand ninety-first B-24 built. The B-24 had been given the name "Liberator" and would be the most produced American bomber of world war II. This aircraft would be given the name "Brown Noser" and would be assigned to the 704th Bomb Squadron, 446th Bomb Group, 20th Combat Wing of the 2nd Bombardment Division in the 8th Air Force. There was also a "Brown Knowser" (42-7659) in the 705th Bomb Squadron, whose pilot was Thomas Frank Brown. This aircraft crashed June 10, 1944 near the field returning from a mission to Wineroux. One crewman was killed.

The 446th Group aircraft are coded for identification. All the Groups aircraft are marked with a white circle with an "H" in it on the outside of the vertical tail and on the outside upper surface of the right wing. Each squadron has it's own code which is displayed on the aircraft fuselage by the waist gunners station. The 704th Squadron code is "FL". The 705th Squadron code is "HN" The 706th Squadron code is "RT" The 707th Squadron code is "JU"..Each aircraft is also given an individual letter identification displayed on the lower vertical tail. Brown Noser's code is FL-E and is painted an olive drab on top and gray on the undersides.

February 1944. Flixton airfield. On the third, a German "nuisance raid" dropped bombs just a mile and a half from the field.

Thursday, February 10, 1944. Adolph's first mission. Mission 21 for the Group. The target was Gilzw-Rijen airfield, Holland. However, "Brown Noser" had to abort due to frost and poor visibility. This was the first of five aborts by "Brown Noser", so this mission did not count for the crew. The crews of the 446th got up early and went to breakfast. Flashlights blinked in the darkness, and trucks barely visible with blackout lights disappeared in the mist. After breakfast, to the briefing room. Radio Operators briefed with the pilots. Then to the lockers to empty pockets of all personal items and climb into flying gear. The airmen's clothing is bulky and weighs heavily on them. Each man wears closest to his skin woolen long johns or an electrically heated suit. On top of this is heavy olive drab clothing. Next, a flying suit to be zipped up, and a leather jacket over that. There is room on top of the jacket for a Mae West, the individual life preserver. And of course there's room on top of the Mae West for the parachute harness and the bulky chute itself. They wear sheepskin-lined flying boots. In combat they wear flak suits, a front and back armor attire to keep pieces of shrapnel from flak from the center of their bodies. They will wear leather flying helmets and an oxygen mask with dangling bladder and hose line. Then they put on heavy, thick flying gloves which extend well back over their forearms. All this equipment is uncomfortable and, on the ground, hot. In just a few minutes the men perspire freely. Rivulets of sweat run down their necks and backs and they begin to stink. But the sweat will freeze when they get to altitude if they don't dry it first.

They are driven in jeeps and trucks to their aircraft and so begins another day at

the office.

The group took off at 09:33 and climbed to twenty-one thousand feet where it was forty-two degrees below zero. There were no enemy fighters or flak and they were escorted by P-47 fighters. Because of a failure on the GH pathfinder plane and heavy overcast, of the eighty-one 2nd Bombardment Division B-24's dispatched, only twenty-two aircraft reached the target and dropped their bombs. The weather was especially bad with five crewman suffering frostbite. The weather also caused a few close calls, and minor collisions among the aircraft. No aircraft were lost to enemy fire, but four B-24's were lost in operational accidents. The group landed at 14:10.

Friday, February 11, 1944. Mission 22. This is Adolph's first mission that counts. Today's mission was a Noball, (V-weapons) site at Saint-Pol/Siracourt near Pas-de-Calais on the French coast. This would truly be "Brown Noser"'s first mission. Weather prevented the planes from dropping their bombs, but one plane, which could not form up with his own group, tagged along with the 93rd Bomb Group on their mission. "Brown Noser" got credit for their first mission to Chateau DeBosmelet.

February 12th a new officer's club opened at the base, and a week later, on the 19th, a new enlisted club opened.

Sunday, February 20, 1944. This was the beginning of "Big Week" (Operation Argument) against German aircraft--industry targets. Today's mission for the 2nd Bombardment Division B-24's were several aircraft--industry factories around Brunswick and Gotha. Mission 24 for the 446th would hit Gotha and would be the longest mission to date for the group. Takeoff was at 09:12. This was the second mission for Adolph and the first one thousand bomber mission ever attempted. The 2nd Bombardment Division joined the 1st and 3rd Bombardment Divisions in dispatching one thousand twenty planes to hit Leipzig/Mockau Airdrome, Tutow Airdrome, Brunswick, Gotha, Oschersleben, Rostock, and Bernberg Germany. The 446th climbed to seventeen thousand feet, where it was thirty degrees below zero. They were escorted by three P47's and eight P-38's. The Group encountered no enemy fighters or flak. A total of four hundred forty-four bombs were dropped by the 446th B-24's through heavy cloud cover. Twelve, five hundred pound bombs were dropped by "Brown Noser". Of the two hundred forty-four aircraft of the 2nd Bombardment Division dispatched, eighty-one B-24's were obliged, for various reasons, to attack several wide-ranging targets of opportunity. Eight B-24's were lost. Of the one thousand twenty aircraft dispatched, only eight hundred twenty-three completed the mission due to aborts and various reasons. A total of two thousand two hundred eighteen tons of bombs were dropped. The 446th returned to Flixton airfield at 16:57. "Big Week" had begun.

Monday, February 21, 1944. The 446th is briefed to attack Handorf, Germany. This is "Brown Noser"'s third mission. Heavy clouds and bad weather causes a change in plans and disperses the B-24 formations of the 2nd Bombardment Division. Achmer Airdrome is attacked by only eleven aircraft, while two hundred three others attack targets of opportunity. The 446th bomb Hesepe airfield and Lingen Germany. "Brown Noser" bombs Munster Airdrome. Bombs were seen falling on a runway, a railroad, and a camouflaged building. Three B-24's were lost with thirty crewmen.

Thursday, February 24, 1944. For their fourth mission, mission 27, "Brown Noser" was going back to Gotha. On this mission "Brown Noser" would lose a crew member. The Eighth Air Force will dispatch five hundred five heavy bombers against

aviation-industry targets at Gotha, Kreising, Posen (Poznan Poland), Schweinfurt, Rostock, Eisenach, and Tutow, Germany. One hundred sixty-nine B-24's of the 2nd Bombardment Division, attack Gotha. The weather is clear. There is heavy flak and several fighters. Approximately one thousand seven hundred fifty tons of bombs are dropped on this mission by the 8th Air Force. Over Gotha, fragmentation bombs are used for the first time. An aircraft factory airfield, where forty to sixty planes are parked, is hit. The factory and the city were also hit with good results. Flak was intense and accurate. The 446th bomb group is escorted by P-47's, P-38's and P-51 fighters. The weather is clear and it is twenty-six degrees below zero at their bombing altitude. A B-24, "Lady Barbara" (42-99978), receives a direct hit in the fuel tank by anti-aircraft fire. All ten crewmen bailed out and were taken prisoner. Flak also hit's a second aircraft (42-10082), piloted by Second Lieutenant Carl Kroells, but limps to Vilvoorde, Belgium where it crashes. Sergeant Jack Renner and Sergeant Marshall Murray are killed in the crash. The other eight crewmen, including Lieutenant Kroells, Second Lieutenant Richard Paquette (co-pilot), Second Lieutenant Abraham Dorsman (bombardier), Second Lieutenant James Toolan (navigator), Sergeant Claude Fisher, Sergeant Earl Minnoe, Sergeant Richard McAuley, and Sergeant Rudolph Vidmar, are taken prisoner.

Sergeant Rudolph Vidmar was the engineer--top turret gunner on "Brown Noser", but, on this mission, Sergeant James M. Perry may have taken Sergeant Vidmar's place on "Brown Noser".

A third aircraft "Henry's Pride" (42-7574) was severely damaged by cannon fire. It makes it back to England where the crew bailed out, but Second Lieutenant Cecil Miller (pilot) stays with the aircraft. It crashes and Miller is killed. Miller was posthumously awarded the Silver Star.

On this mission, several fighters were seen going down and forty-four B-24's accidentally bomb Eisenach, Germany. The 8th Air Force loses sixteen B-17's and thirty-three B-24's with four hundred eighty-four crewmen missing.

Friday, February 25, 1944. Mission 28. Adolph's fifth mission. The 8th Air Force would put up six hundred fifty heavy bombers, dropping one thousand six hundred sixty-seven tons of bombs on aircraft assembly, component and aircraft engine centers at Regensburg, Stuttgart, Augsburg, and Furth, Germany. The 2nd Bombardment Division would send one hundred seventy-two B-24's to attack aircraft-industry factories at Furth.

Incendiary bombs were dropped with direct hits observed on an aircraft factory and field. Flak was intense and accurate. The 705th Bomb Squadron of the 446th Bomb Group had a streak of twenty-five consecutive missions without a loss. Today it would end. First Lieutenant William Hockensmith's crew of "Rigor Mortis" (42-7589) had to bail out after being hit by flak over France. All were taken prisoner. First Lieutenant Peter Kartovsky shot down a ME 109 and Staff Sergeant Raymond Oliver and Robert White each shot down FW 190 fighters. Losses for the day were twenty-five B-17's and six B-24's with three hundred five crewmen killed or missing. "Big Week" comes to an end. February ends with the 446th completing thirteen missions. Adolph flies five missions during the month, but crew member Sergeant Vidmar is a POW and "Brown Noser" has a new engineer-top turret gunner.

Friday March 3, 1944. Mission 31. Today's target is the big "B". The 8th Air Force heavy bombers, seven hundred forty-eight dispatched, are to attack industrial and aviation-industry targets in Berlin, Oranienburg, and Erkner, Germany. This is Adolph's

sixth mission.

The 446th Bomb Group takes off at 08:30, climbing to twenty-eight thousand feet. It is extremely cold, fifty-seven degrees below zero. Contrails very thick. Visibility is poor. They are escorted by P-47, P-38 and P-51 fighters. Just after passing Hamburg, Germany a recall is issued because of the weather. The mission is not completed. Six hundred sixty-nine aircraft are recalled. Only seventy-five B-17's and four B-24's attack targets of opportunity. Eight heavy bombers are lost to enemy fire, and three are downed following a midair collision.

Thursday, March 9, 1944. Mission 35 for the 446th Bomb Group and the seventh for Adolph. The target is an airframe factory at Brandenburg, Germany. The Eight Air Force sends 489 heavy bombers to drop twelve hundred tons of bombs, but weather conditions force them to find targets of opportunity. The 446th attack various antiaircraft concentrations instead with unknown results.

March 10, Adolph is promoted to Technical Sergeant

On March 15, Adolph was awarded the Air Medal. The citation read: For exceptionally meritorious achievement, while participating in five separate bomber combat missions over enemy occupied continental Europe. The courage, coolness and skill displayed by these officers and enlisted men upon those occasions reflect great credit upon themselves and the Armed Forces of the United States. By command of Major General Doolittle.

Saturday, March 18, 1944. The 446th is going back to Friedrichshafen, Germany, for mission 39, the target they bombed on mission 38 on March 16th. Adolph's eighth. The 2nd Bombardment Division sends one hundred ninety-eight bombers to bomb the Dornier Aircraft Factory, right on the Swiss border on the banks of Lake Constance. Takeoff was at 08:10 and the 446th climbed to 20,000 feet where it is 31 degrees below zero. Flak was intense and accurate, causing one plane (42-7625) to land in Switzerland. All crewmen were interned by Swiss authorities. Bombing results were better than the previous mission, but still not what was expected. The group lands at 15:50. Twenty-eight B-24s are downed. Crew losses are 438 missing, 10 killed, and 22 wounded.

Wednesday, March 22, 1944. Mission 41. Adolph's ninth mission was back to big "B". The 8th Air Force will send six hundred fifty-seven heavy bombers to attack Berlin and a small number of targets of opportunity, dropping one thousand four hundred seventy-one tons of bombs. Twelve heavy bombers are lost and three hundred forty-seven are damaged. The 446th bombing results are unknown. "War Goddess" (42-100306) was forced to land in Sweden after suffering engine failure. It's crew was interned. Another plane, "Joker" (41-29151), piloted by first lieutenant Julius Jaslevsky, crashed. It's crew were taken prisoner, but navigator/bombardier first lieutenant Foster Harbin died in the crash.

Thursday, March 23, 1944. Mission 42. Seven hundred sixty-five bombers will take part in attacking secondary and targets of opportunity, dropping 1755 tons of bombs. The 446th Bomb Group takeoff at 07:22 and are escorted by P-47's to their target, Handorf airfield near Munster, Germany. There is 6/10 cloud cover over the target. Incendiary bombs are carried and hit runways and hangars with fair results. A few fighters are seen and a B-24 is shot down. Three men bailed out before the plane blew up. There is light flak. Staff Sergeant Mitchell Sok received credit for shooting down an ME-109. The 446th lands at Flixton airfield at 12:15. Mission ten for Adolph comes to an end.

Friday, March 24, 1944. Mission 43. The eleventh mission for Adolph. The 446th takeoff to attack Metz/Frescati Airdrome in France, escorted by P-47 fighters. Due to heavy cloud cover, the group diverts to attack Nancy/Essay Airdrome. Both the lead and deputy lead planes are damaged before reaching the target and had to turn back. The 446th had to drop with the 448th Bomb Group. The airfield was bombed, but poor results were reported.

The month of March ends with the 446th flying fourteen missions and Adolph participating in six of those missions. Awards were handed out to the group. The 705th squadron received a citation for their streak of 25 consecutive missions without a loss of a plane or crew. This came to an end on February 25th. First lieutenant Donald Ryerson became the first crewman to fly 25 missions. The Group's commander, Colonel Jacob Brogger, received a Distinguished Flying Cross for leading a mission to Berlin. There were dances held at the base, as were swing bands and classical concerts.

April 1944. Spring arrives and so does the softball season as three leagues begin play on the base. Spring also means planting season as a beautification program gets under way. New personnel arrive steadily to replace combat losses and those lucky enough to have earned a trip home. Combat crews were given furloughs to Scotland and ground crews also were given time off.

Saturday, April 8th. Mission 47 and Adolph's twelfth. The 2nd Bombardment Division dispatches three hundred fifty heavy bombers. One hundred ninety attack the assigned target, a bomber aircraft components factory, at Brunswick, Germany. One hundred thirteen aircraft attack several targets of opportunity, including Langenhagen Airdrome. The 446th bomb Brunswick from 20,000 feet in clear weather, but the group missed and hit various other places in the general area. Flak is intense and accurate and there are lots of fighters. Two aircraft are lost. "The Beast" (42-7679) and "The Princess" (42-7620) (an odd coincidence). Four men are killed and sixteen taken prisoner. One of the men was believed shot to death by German civilians on the ground. On "Sweet Moonbeam McSwine" (42-7592) the flight engineer is hit in the head, but makes it to the hospital back at the base. Lieutenant Mitchell claims one fighter shot down. Number 1 engine is shot out. Oxygen lines to the ball turret are shot out. Sergeant Roy N. Bohlen, on "Brown Noser" is credited with downing a Messerschmitt ME-109 fighter. The 2nd Bombardment Division lose thirty B-24's on this mission.

On April 9th, Adolph is awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal. Only one medal is awarded but for each succeeding award a bronze oak leaf cluster is awarded for the same achievement. The citation is the same as the Air Medal.

Monday, April 10, 1944. Mission 48. Adolph is on his thirteenth mission going to France along with one hundred sixty-six 2nd Bombardment Division B-24's to attack the Manquise/Mimoyescques V-weapons site, an aircraft factory at Bourges, and Bourges Airdrome. Forty-nine B-24's attack assigned secondary targets Orleans/Briey and Romorantin/ Prunieves airdromes. The 446th Bomb Group bombs the Bourges airfield, and hit the factory, a barracks, a hangar, and destroy an MPI. All twenty-eight aircraft dropped and there was no enemy opposition. The crews called this a "perfect mission."

Tuesday, April 11, 1944. Today's targets for the 2nd Bombardment Division's two hundred forty-three B-24's are aircraft-industry targets at Bernburg, Halberstadt, and Oschersleben, Germany, plus several targets of opportunity. This was mission 50 for the 446th Bomb Group and the fourteenth for "Brown Noser". Takeoff was at 07:40 and they

climbed to 20,000 feet as the squadrons form up and then the Group forms up with the other bomb groups to form the 20th Combat Wing, which in turn, form up with other Combat Wings to form the 2nd Bombardment Division. Visibility is clear. Temperature at altitude is 25 degrees below zero. They are escorted by P-47, P-38, and P-51 fighters.

The flight over the channel and the approach to enemy territory was uneventful. On the way to Bernburg, Germany they cross the Dummer Lake area, where the flak could be moderate or heavy. Crews said they believed new guns had been moved into the area as the flak was more intense than before and very accurate.

One of the aircraft flying the low left position drops out of formation and turns back toward England. Shortly after, flak is encounter. When a flak shell bursts, there is a bright red flash which disappears almost immediately to be replaced by a starkly black cloud. The red flash is seldom seen but the black cloud is quite evident as it enlarges to take on an ominous shade of gray. Flak throws out pieces of hot steel that can puncture aircraft skin, slice through fuel and hydraulic lines and control cables, and explode fuel tanks and engines. It also can embed itself in flesh, slice through flight suits and sever arteries, tendons, and appendages. There is very little defense against flak.

At 10:23, "Brown Noser" (42-99942), piloted by First Lieutenant Kermit A. Fuchs and carrying Adolph and crew, drops out of formation and descends in a shallow dive in the Dummer Lake area. It pulls out and levels off at about 7,000 feet below it's former position in the formation, apparently under control. No parachutes are seen to come from the aircraft. There appears to be no visual damage to the aircraft. No holes appear in the plane. There is no missing structure and it is not on fire. All the engines are running and not smoking. The aircraft is lost to view by First Lieutenant Melvin L. Boyer, First Lieutenant William M. Cagney and Staff Sergeant George R. Macleod and there are no further reports of it's whereabouts and is not seen to crash.

"Brown Noser" crashes at 10:27 at Iohne, near Vechta, Germany. It is 98% damaged and German reports list the Liberator as shot down by anti-aircraft fire. German records indicate that second Lieutenant Philip R. Wescott, the bombardier on "Brown Noser" was captured and became a prisoner of war.

At 10:28, the aircraft flown by First Lieutenant Sterling L. Tuck, "Werewolf"/"Princess O'Rourke", a B-24H (42-7572) of the 705th Bomb Squadron, is hit by flak over Dummer Lake. A flak shell has burst directly below the number two engine. The engine is on fire and burning fiercely. The pilots try to feather the propeller of the burning engine and turn off the fuel to that engine. The propeller fails to feather. "Werewolf"/"Princess O'Rourke" drops out of formation out of control. It is observed by First Lieutenant Thomas F. Brown, staff Sergeant John J. Malone, and Staff Sergeant Eugene L. Clark. Five or six parachutes are observed leaving the aircraft before it hit's the ground and explodes at Strohen, east of Diepholz, Germany near the Dummer Lake area.

Lieutenant Tuck and crew survive and are captured by German soldiers at 12:00 pm near Wagenfeld, Germany, except technical sergeant Fish and Technical sergeant Korte who fall into German hands near the town of Sulingen. They are taken to a jail in Wagenfeld and kept under guard. They hear the bombers fly over on their way home.

In the late afternoon a large panel truck arrived and the crew were loaded into the rear where there was canvas stretchers and shovels stained with blood. They were taken

to a field where a B-24 had crashed and, guarded by five German soldiers, were required to gather up what remained of the bodies and carry them to a corner of the field where they covered them with the remains of a burnt parachute.

They were driven to a farm house where they were joined by an American officer. He said he was a crew member of a B-24 that had crashed nearby. He said he was the bombardier on that plane. (Was this second lieutenant Philp R. Wescott, the bombardier on "Brown Noser"?) Later, they were taken to the crash site to recover the bodies. Upon arrival, it was obvious that some of the bodies had been blown apart and others had been burned. Not a pleasant smell nor pleasant sight. The bomber had gone in at a 30 degree angle. The pilot and co-pilot were in their seats and the engineer was standing directly behind them. It appeared that they might have been trying to pull out of a dive. All three were badly burnt. The bodies were removed and lieutenant Tuck and crew were taken to Vechta airfield headquarters A 17/XI, Vechta, Germany where they were put into cells. About 10 pm in the evening the Germans gave them dark bread and jam made with beet sugar. Lieutenant Tuck and crew spent thirteen months in Germany. The officers were sent to Stalag Luft I and the enlisted men to Stalag 17B.

The 446th Bomb Group bombed Bernburg airfield. The flight hanger was hit, and other bombs fell near a factory and hit runways. In first lieutenant Griffith's aircraft, First Lieutenant Homer S. Gentry is killed by a flak burst, and in First Lieutenant Melvin L. Beyer's aircraft Staff Sergeant Roland Wilson is wounded. Staff Sergeant Edward J. Partridge and Staff Sergeant Daniel A. Morrarty receive wounds. "Sweet Moonbeam McSwine"(42-7592) is hit by flak and has 11 holes in the aircraft. Number 4 engine is hit and feathered. There were no enemy fighters. The remaining aircraft return to Flixton airfield and land at 14:15 in the afternoon. The 2nd Bombardment Division lose twelve B-24's on this day, April 11, 1944.

On April 12th the bodies of Staff Sergeant Adam F. Illik, Sergeant James M. Perry, Technical Sergeant Adolph C. Bialecki, Staff Sergeant Raymond A. LaBonte, Second Lieutenant Harry E. Culbertson, and First Lieutenant Kermit A. Fuchs were buried at the military Russian cemetery of Vechta in the Oldenburg district, in graves 295 to 300. Two unknowns, later identified as Second Lieutenant Albert G. Ripley and Staff Sergeant Charles J. Hess, are both buried in grave 301. Staff Sergeant Roy N. Bohen, who was probably found later, was buried on April 20th in grave 306. Adolph Bialecki is buried in grave number 297. Sergeant James M. Perry was the replacement for Staff Sergeant Rudolph Vidmar who flew in 42-10082 on February 24th and became a prisoner of war.

The 446th Bomb Group flew 273 missions, the last being on April 25, 1945 to Salzburg. The Group flew 7,259 sorties and dropped 16,818.95 tons of bombs and lost 58 aircraft. There were 206 B-24's assigned to the 446th during their tour of duty. Six thousand four hundred thirty-eight airmen served in the 446th and four hundred fifty-six of those rest with wings forever folded.

Summer 1944. Captain Wasson W. Lawrence, commanding officer, Army Air Base Unit, Logan field, East Boston, posthumously awards the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and an American flag to Adolph's brother Alfons Bialecki of 15 Brewster Road, Newton Highlands Massachusetts.

On August 17, 1944 the adjutant general's office of the War Department posthumously awarded Adolph the Purple Heart Medal. The medal was established in

1782 as the Badge of Military Merit. It is given in recognition for a wound which necessitates treatment by a medical officer and which is received in action with an enemy of the United States. The medal was shipped to his brother Alfons.

Other medals awarded to Adolph, which most veterans of World War II are entitled to, are: the American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

On March 27, 1947 Alfons received a letter from the War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General, that furnished information on the burial location of Adolph. It is evident that Adolph's remains had been relocated from the military Russian cemetery at Vechta, Germany to Belgium. No American combat dead are buried in Germany. The letter indicated that Adolph's remains were interred at the United States Military Cemetery at Neuville-en-Condroz, plot N, row 9, grave 219. The cemetery is located nine miles southwest of Liege, Belgium. The War Department was authorized to comply, at government expense, with the next of kin regarding final interment, here or abroad. Alfons declined to have Adolph's remains relocated to this country.