

Santa Anna News Archives 31 Dec 1942: SA Flier Missing In Action

By Carl Langford

The, Rev. J. W. Burgett of Santa Anna (pastor of Cumberland Presbyterian Church) have received a message from the US War Dept. that their *son Quentin W. Burgett*, member of a bombardment squadron is reported missing in action since December 20. It was at this time Rev. Mr. Burgett said, that 100 American bombers made a raid over Northern France and on that occasion six American bombers failed to return. (Mission #26, 80 B-17s, & 21 B-24s dispatched, to attack air field at Romilly-sur-Seine: 72 bombed the target, with six B-17s loss to German fighters). We feel there is a 50-50 chance that our son is a Prisoner of War. He finished high school at Jellico, TN. and had attended Eastern New Mexico College at Portales, NM.

The Rest of the Story: **Lt. Burgett** entered the Army Air Corps on Nov 12, 1941. He received his training (B-17 bomber pilot) at Kelly Field, San Antonio, Thunderbird Field, Phoenix Ariz., Gardner Field, at Taft Calif., Chandler Field, Ariz., and Windover Field, Utah. The training at Windover Field proved to be a challenge. The base was growing faster than the facilities and housing could keep up. Officer had to sleep 6 per room and enlisted men in tents, with mud knee deep, cold nights with snow, with this a shortage of training aircraft. On 1 Aug 1942, ground crews started their journey to England on the Queen Elizabeth, which had about 4000 beds, but with 16,000 on board sleeping was rotated in shifts on the deck to down below in crowd conditions. Those on deck faced cold wind, sea spray, drizzle and rain, while below warm stuffy quarters, with some getting sea sick, arriving at Thurligh, England on 6 Sept 1942. The 35 aircraft and flight crews on the way over had problems, also. Only 33 made it over when one blew up when switching to long range fuel tank, the other engine problems, ditching in shallow water off coast of Ireland, all walked to shore. The 306th BG fully operational on 28 Sept 1942.

On, 9 Oct, 1942, Squadron participated in biggest daylight raid staged by American forces. The target LILLE. France. The 367th, all six bombers went on that mission, on one of those, Pilot-John R. McKee, **Co-pilot, Quentin Burgett** and flight crew, with four other squadrons. One bomber had engine trouble and was falling back, when six to eight enemy fighters swooped down on it. It was believed no one survived.

On, 20 Dec 1942, Romilly Raid – Again the 367th Squadron sent six aircraft along on this mission, and three failed to return. Twenty-nine officers and the crews did not return. On, one bomber, Lewis McKesson (Pilot), **Co-pilot, Quentin Burgett** and flight crew. The plane was shot down, the crew bailed out safely over land as the aircraft headed out to sea. The Squadron Diary records daily events. All were captured by the Germans and sent to prison camps. **Lt. Burgett, Quentin W.** in Detaining Camp: Stalag Luft 3 Sagan-Silesia Bavaria and survived it. There are many stories about survivable in these POW camps.

In late January 1945, the entire camp was rousted late at night and ordered to start marching. They marched near Nuremberg (69 miles) to a temporary camp. From there they were marched on foot to Stalag VIIA in Mooseburg. There they remained until liberated by General Patton's Army on 29 April, 1945. While marching to Mooseburg, they frequently were stopped at farmhouses along the way and given soups and other hot dishes by the occupants of the farm, as the Germans were low on food themselves and certainly did not want to "waste" it on Prisoners of War.



On Veteran Marker, **CW03 Quentin W. Burgett**, US Army Air Force WWII POW. Memory Gardens of the Valley, Weatherford, Tx. **Find A Grave Memorial# 44602025**.