

BOMBER CREWS' LAUGHS KEEP OFF NERVE GREMLINS

How Chicagoan Saved Self in Sky.

BY LARRY RUE.

(Follows Times Free Press.)
LONDON, April 24.—When, after death in daylight bombing upon the nerves of a bomber crew? There is such a thing as being "dick happy" and pilots and crews after a specified number of operations against the enemy are given other duties where the risk to their lives is less.

At one of the United States bomber stations here the Tribune correspondent heard the story of a famous psychiatrist who was sent here especially to study the reaction of pilots and crews after bombing operations.

For Doctor's Remedy.

Someone spotted the psychiatrist and pilots, gunners, bombardiers, navigators, engineers, and radio operators put on an act. The game was begun when a pilot went to the psychiatrist with this question: "Ray, doctor, do you take a revolver with you every night when you go to bed?" When the psychiatrist answered, "Of course not," the pilot continued:

"I do. I got to do it. Then when these Focke-Wulf 109 (German fighter planes) come around I just pick them off, boom boom, one right after another."

The doctor hadn't recovered from the when a tall-gunner stepped in. "I don't need a revolver," he said. "I go to bed and just put the darkness all around me and they can't see me flying."

A third airman contributed. "I have claustrophobia and I've seen the sides of the plane pass together and squeeze me so I can't get out."

Hangs in Mid-Air.

A fourth said: "My damn parachute always bothers me when I am sleeping. I just hang and hang in the air and it won't come down and I just stay there in the air."
"Schizophrenia is my trouble when I go to sleep," another interposed. "I find myself sitting in the tail gunner seat while the other part of me with whom I am trying to talk is in the pilot's seat running the airplane."

"This kept up for three days and when the psychiatrist left, one flyer commented, "he was the one who needed a psychiatrist. I'll bet the first thing he did when he got home was to get in touch with his own family doctor."

Lives 4 of 18 Planes.

This story was told just after the Bremen raid a week ago when, according to all reports, American Flying Fortress encountered the toughest 109 (anti-aircraft) that they had ever seen. Those who told the story had taken part in the raid. One station, the Tribune correspondent visited had lost six of the 18 planes officially admitted to escape.

While those who come back invariably did about their fears, there is an underlying use of satisfaction among those who have gone a long way toward completing their operational duties.

"We've only got two more to go."

It was suggested to one gunner. "Yes, but those two I've left are regular ones. These I've made. I only take one bad one, you know," he replied.

Adventures in Skies.

Staff Sgt. Walter C. Budiaz, 5101 McLean avenue, Chicago, had a unique experience in the Bremen raid. He is credited with downing three enemy aircraft in 18 operations and claims another Focke-Wulf 109 over Bremen.

When the attack came in the Bremen raid, enemy bullets riddled the doors of the bomb bay turret in which Budiaz was gunner. The doors were back support of the gunner and when they flew open, Budiaz nearly fell out. He managed to keep himself from being hurled out, however, by holding on to the rim and then pointed himself into the body of the plane, the opening was only 18 inches wide.

Budiaz is rather steadily built and what he did was difficult. But if you want to know his exact feelings in danger—he was "too busy to think of anything," he said.

Crumpled in Air.

Sgt. William C. Gray, 3117 North Jefferson, Peoria, Ill., turret gunner on the "Heavyweight" Anti-Aircraft No. 1, was in the same Bremen raid. He is 26 years old, the Budiaz has 18 relatives to his credit and claims to have downed an enemy fighter.

"I've had a couple of mates, but I've never claimed them," he said. "This one I shot down was only 15 yards away when I let him have it. He wasn't attacking us, but he appeared to just crumple in pieces in the air."

Chief Illinoian who flew from this station over Bremen that day was Sgt. Oliver J. Blackworth of Toulon, a bomb turret gunner; Sgt. William A. Bennett, waist gunner, 1542 Francisco avenue, Chicago; Radio Operator John P. Armstrong, 2511 Essex avenue, Chicago; Tail Gunner Charles J. Davis, Woodlawn avenue, Chicago, and Sgt. Irving E. Richter, gunner, of 2506 North Sawyer avenue, Chicago.