

August 1944 ceremonies held for last B24 Liberator bomber, Tulsamerican, built at Douglas' Air Force Plant No. 3.

Tulsamerican Fell 30 Years Ago

Bomber's Crash Recalled

World's Own Service

MUSKOGEE — Thirty years ago this week John F. Toney was recovering in a British hospital in Yugoslavia from injuries received when the B24 Liberator bomber Tulsamerican crashed in the Adriatic Sea.

The Tulsamerican was the last four-engine bomber turned out by Tulsa's Douglas Aircraft Co. plant. The plane — No. 952 — had been bought by Douglas employees here through purchase of war bonds.

Toney, now a retired postal employee, was a nose gunner

on the Tulsamerican, the lead ship in the squadron that day on a run from the 15th Air Force Base in Italy to Blechhammer in Germany to bomb a munitions factory. The date was Dec. 17, 1944.

"WE ENCOUNTERED SEVERE German fighter attacks," he remembers. "Before we reached the target the Tulsamerican had lost two engines."

The pilot turned back to the base. But a third engine quit and the decision was made to "ditch" in the sea.

"Our bomb bay doors were

open," says the former AF gunner, "and the hydraulic system had been shot out during the German fighter attacks."

"When we hit, the bomber started sinking rapidly since water rushed in through the open bay doors. I don't remember escaping. We were wearing Mae Wests, and it was lucky for me since I couldn't swim. We were picked up by some fishermen and taken to the hospital.

Later, those of us who survived were returned to Italy. When I was pulled in by the fishermen my right flight

boot, my right shoe and sock were missing. I had a fractured ankle."

TONEY, LT. VAL MILLETT of Duncan, bombardier, and the copilot escaped the crash. The pilot, navigator and the Staff Sergeant Hazen, pilot, died.

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Official Army Air Forces Photo.

TULSAMERICAN'S CREW—This group will fly the plant's last B-24 into combat. Assigned to the ship at the Topeka Army Air Field, they are: left to right, front row, Flight Officer William Donald, pilot; Flight Officer Allen Smith, co-pilot; Second Lt. Stuart Lefkowitz, navigator; Second Lt. Everett Lorenz, bombardier; back row, Sgt. John Walling, engineer; Sgt. Angelo Marino, radio operator; Cpls. Ernest Balint, Cleo West, Robert Lick, and Vernon Miller, gunners.

Letter Tells Tulsamerican's First Stop Is Birmingham

Aug. 11, 1944

First word of the whereabouts of our last B-24, "Tulsamerican", came this week through Marjorie Jean Clark, Time-keeping. Monday she received a letter from Ray Todd, an employe at the Betchel McCone Modification plant in Birmingham, Alabama who wrote*

that the ship had arrived there August 2, and as he started to work on the ship he had noticed all the names written on the fuselage.

He picked out her name and address and wrote:

"I believe I will be the first boy to write you a letter from Birmingham. I found your address on the B-24 that came from Tulsa. I believe that was the last B-24 to be made at your plant, is it not?"

"This ship arrived in Birmingham today, the second of

August, and when I went out to check the equipage on this plane I was amazed at all the addresses on the plane and the big insignia on the nose.

"It looked all right to me."

He followed with the name of his plant and a few comments about his work, closing with a request for her to write. Dorothy says she thinks she will.

Two days later, Faye Bonham, Joining A-26, received a letter from another employe at Birmingham.

Tulsamerican Gunner in Surprise Visit, Comes on 'Service Tour'

Unannounced, and expecting no special welcome, Sgt. John F. Toney, who was nose gunner on the Tulsamerican the day she ditched in the Adriatic sea, arrived at the plant Wednesday.

Accompanied by his wife, Florence, he had come from his home in Muskogee for a look at the plant that turned out his favorite B-24, the last one assembled here.

"We'll never forget the Tulsamerican," he insisted. "She was lead ship in our squadron . . . and we always liked to be assigned to her . . . seemed like she flew a little better than the rest."

It was on a run to Blechhammer, Germany, in December that 200 Jerries hit Toney's formation. Before the Tulsamerican reached her target, two engines were knocked out.

The pilot headed the ship's nose for an emergency landing field, but before it could be reached, the third engine quit and Tulsamerican crashed in the Adriatic.

"The bomb bay doors were open," Toney recalled, "and the wheels were down. When we landed in the sea, the wings broke off. The pilot, navigator and engineer didn't get out. The co-pilot went out the front of the ship."

Just how John got out he'll never know. He was crouched behind the pilot when the ship hit water, and his head struck against the seat. When he came to, the Tulsamerican was five or six feet under water, and he was inside. Somehow he managed to escape.

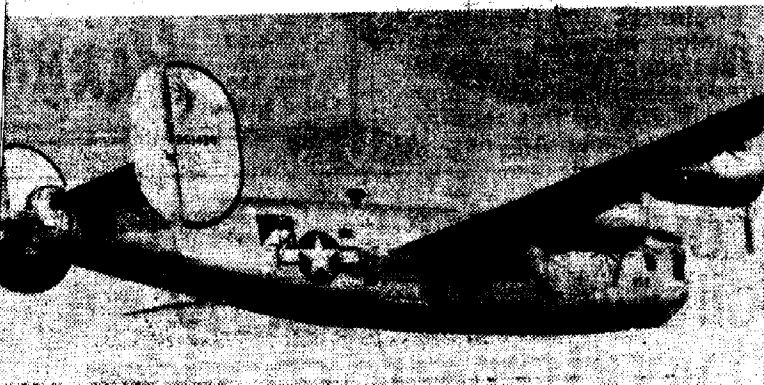
The boys all wore Mae Wests . . . "which was darned lucky, because I couldn't swim," Toney remembers. "We floated around for a long time . . . none of us knowing any of the others were safe . . . and were picked up by some fishermen."

After two weeks in the hospital, John was sent home, and will have some time in Muskogee before being reassigned. In his seven months overseas he went on 38 missions . . . but the one he'll always remember is the last day of the Tulsamerican, Tulsa's last Liberator.



Douglas Photo by Wilnot Dahlem

"PUT YOUR JOHN HANCOCK HERE"—Sgt. John F. Toney and his wife, Florence, sign in at the lobby desk before he makes the servicemen's tour Wednesday. Nose gunner on Tulsamerican, Tulsa's last B-24, John is just home from overseas and wanted to see the plant where his plane was made.



A brilliant combat record in Europe was marked up by Tulsa's final Liberator named "Tulsamerican." It is shown flying from Tulsa's runway. Although the aircraft is numbered 952, it is the 962nd B-24 built and delivered.



Vol. III—No. 2

Friday, April 20, 1945

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Tulsamerican's Bombardier Here

What happened to the Tulsamerican on her last mission over Germany? How many of her crew escaped death when she crashed into the Adriatic sea?

Employees will hear the answers to these questions Saturday when Lt. Val Miller, bombardier on Tulsa's ill-fated Liberator, tells his story over the plant public address system.

Revenge for the loss of the last B-24 from Tulsa is the spur of the Seventh War Loan drive . . . the drive that will send a full squadron of Invaders to replace the ship bought in last summer's bond campaign.

Val will tell of his missions on the Tulsamerican . . . of the respect that the flight group and ground crew had for the gal-

lant bomber . . . and of the last day, when she accounted for 10 enemy fighters before plunging into the sea.

Young Lieutenant Miller, a native of Duncan, Ok., was seriously injured when the Tulsamerican crashed. He spent many hours in icy water before a rescue squad arrived. "But I just kept praying, and I guess God heard me," he remembers.

On leave from Borden General hospital at Chickasha, he arrived here this morning accompanied by his wife.

Speaking to bond coordinators and captains at two special meetings in the Main cafeteria, he briefed his experiences . . . the same adventure-packed story he will tell to all employees tomorrow at first and second shift rest periods.

WESTERN UNION

(03)

Mr. Tolson	
Mr. E. A. Tamm	
Mr. Clegg	
Mr. Glavin	
Mr. Ladd	
Mr. Nichols	
Mr. Rosen	
Mr. Tracy	
Mr. Carson	
Mr. Egan	
Mr. Gurnea	
Mr. Hendon	
Mr. Pennington	
Mr. Quinn	
Mr. Nease	
Miss Gandy	

KMB107 56 GOVT=WUX WASHINGTON DC 9 600P

MRSFLORENCE V TONEY=

1945 JAN 9 PM 6 08

1409 BALTIMORE ST

REGRET TO INFORM YOU YOUR HUSBAND WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED IN
ACTION IN MEDITERRANEAN AREA SEVENTEEN DECEMBER UNTIL NEW
ADDRESS IS RECEIVED ADDRESS MAIL FOR HIM QUOTE STAFF SERGEANT
JOHN F TONEY SERIAL NUMBER HOSPITALIZED 128 HOSPITAL SECTION
APO 698 C/O POSTMASTER NEW YORK NEW YORK UNQUOTE YOU WILL BE
ADVISED AS REPORTS OF CONDITION ARE RECEIVED=
DUNLOP ACTING THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

2628 698 C/O.

WE WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

26th General Hospital (US)

1-16-45

APO 363, % POSTMASTER
New York, N.Y.

DEAR Mrs Toney:

I am pleased to inform you that on 13th January your

Husband Toney, John F. 38588581, S/Sgt

was Making normal improvement

Diagnosis† Head injury.

* Enter present status as—
Making normal improvement.
Convalescing.
† Must be written in nontechnical
language.

Very truly yours,

NORMAN O. HOLTE

Capt. Med Adm C., Registrar

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234
9 November 1944

16-42100-1 GPO

HEADQUARTERS STATION HOSPITAL
Camp Patrick Henry, Va.

Date FEB 9 1945

Please be advised that your husband S Sgt John F. Toney
was admitted to this hospital on FEB 9 1945
where he will remain only long enough to arrange for transfer to a hospital
nearer his home which is the most suitable for his care. It is not advisable
that you visit him here because of his short stay.
You will be notified immediately upon his transfer.
His present condition is satisfactory and you will be advised at once in
case of any change.

SPTAK FORM 8225
7 FEB 45

JOHN D. NELSON, Capt, MAC
Registrar

HRPE

HEADQUARTERS STATION HOSPITAL
Camp Patrick Henry, Va.

Date FEB 13 1945

Your husband S Sgt John F. Toney

Has been transferred to

DIBBLE GEN HOSP
Menlo Park, Cal.
For further observation and treatment.

SPTAK FORM 8226
7 FEB 45

JOHN D. NELSON, Capt, MAC
Registrar

HRPE

NAME → <u>TONEY, JOHN F 38588581</u>		AERONAUTICAL RATING → <u>GUNNER</u>					
EXAMINATIONS FOR FLYING	DATE	STATION	RESULT	DEFECTS	WAIVER	PERSONNEL ORDERS (NO., HQ., DATE)	F/B INIT.
	<u>28 MAY 1945</u>	<u>R.S. #2</u>	<u>D-TEMP EYE HEMORRHAGE LT</u>		<u>NO</u>		<u>TAM</u>
FOREIGN SERVICE	THEATER	DATE ENTRY	DATE DEPARTURE	HOURS FLOWN	ILLNESS OR INJURY		FLYING STATUS
	<u>ETO</u>	<u>7-16-44</u>	<u>2-9-45</u>	<u>197</u>	<u>Injuries to head, eyes, ears, left knee suspended</u>		
RESTRICTION	DATE	HQ.	RESTRICTION	DATE REMOVED	ALTITUDE INDOCTRINATION		
	<u>NOV 40</u>	<u>AAAF RS# 2</u>	<u>DUTY CONT'L IN U.S. FOR 3 MOS AND RE-EVALUATE</u>		DATE	STATION	TYPE
					<u>JAN 44</u>	<u>AAAF, TEXAS</u>	<u>742</u>
NIGHT VISION → DATE →		RATING → <u>Satis. SM. 6</u>		882			

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WAR DEPARTMENT

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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FORFEIT OF POSTAGE, \$300.

(PMDS)



Sgt. John F. Toney
Wounded in Bomber Raid
in Mediterranean Area

Mrs. John F. Toney, 1409 Baltimore avenue, was notified in a telegram from the war department that her husband, S-Sgt. John F. Toney, was wounded seriously on December 17 during air action over the Mediterranean area.

Shortly after the arrival of the telegram, however, Mrs. Toney received two letters written by her husband from a hospital in Italy, one of them dated two days after the action in which his plane was shot down. The sergeant's letters indicate that while his wounds were serious, they are healing.

He related that his crew shot down 9 or 10 enemy fighter planes before their bomber was forced out of the action and fell into the sea.

Sergeant Toney was nose-gunner on the Tulsaamerican, B-24 Liberator bomber built at the Douglas Aircraft factory in Tulsa and paid for by bond purchases by Oklahomans, and he had flown at least five missions on that plane according to a recent press release by the 15th AAF in Italy.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Toney, live at 1112 Kentucky avenue, Sergeant and Mrs. Toney have a 5-month-old daughter, Elizabeth, whom her father has not seen yet.

Sgt. John Toney Wounded
Seriously in Air Action

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Jan ON Boat to COPY

Sgt. John Toney Given Cluster to Air Medal

15TH AAF IN ITALY—Sgt. John F. Toney, 21, of 1409 Baltimore avenue, Muskogee, Okla., nose gunner in a B-24 Liberator group commanded by Lieut. Col. Philip R. Hawes, Pearl River, N. Y., has been awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster in place of another Air Medal "for meritorious achievement in aerial night while participating in sustained operational activity against the enemy."

Sergeant Toney entered the army Aug. 30, 1943, and received training in aerial gunnery at Harlingen, Tex. Prior to his entry in the army, he was employed by the Midland Valley railroad. He is a graduate of Central High school, Muskogee, where he played in the school band.

His wife, Mrs. Florence Job Toney, lives at the above address. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Toney, live on route 2, box 104, Muskogee.

From a destroyer base in the Mediterranean comes word that Lieut. Commander E. M. Foster of Muskogee, a destroyer, has been in that theater.

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Former Employes in Italy Tell Of Tulsamerican's Missions

In a recording made by the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces, which was played over the plant's public address system last week, workers heard two former employes, Staff Sgt. Al Kiefer and Cpl. Alvin Smith, tell about Tulsamerican.



KIEFER

Tulsamerican's fine record:
"Now that I'm flying in

tor, and Smith, a ground forces mechanic, appealed to the people at home to join in the Sixth War Loan drive.

Smith, who installed engines in Final Assembly, mentioned the

of working on them in the factory. I've seen many planes built in my former plant. As a matter of fact, our squadron got a new ship a few weeks ago named Tulsamerican.

"The Tulsamerican is a good ship, too. We're proud of her and the people who sent her to Italy.



SMITH

have been shot down with flak or enemy fighters, but the Tulsamerican seems to bear a charmed life. There's not a flak hole in her."

Kiefer worked in the Machine Shop.

Tulsamerican was the last B-24 built here and was purchased through bonds bought by employes.

Tulsamerican's Crew Awarded Unit Citation

Tulsamerican has participated in "several terrific bombing raids," according to word from Italy, and its group has earned the Presidential Unit Citation.

Staff Sgt. John Young, with

the 765th Heavy Bombardment Squadron in Italy, began writing to Faye Bonham, Fuselage Joining A-26, when he found her name on Tulsa's last Liberator.

Another Tulsamerican letter came to Imogene Phipps, Minor Sub Assemblies, Mod Center, from her friend, Pfc. James A. Woody. He is a bombardier with the same squadron as Tulsamerican.

In a letter which she received this week, Johnnie said: "Oh, yes, I wanted to be sure and tell you our group received the Presidential Unit Citation."

Imogene is the niece of Jess W. Landers, who also works at the Mod Center, in Sheet Metal.

Lab Weathers Tough Going

The "TulsAmerican," last B-24 Liberator bomber produced at the Douglas Aircraft plant here, already has seen nearly a score of bomb runs over central Europe and has weathered many bitter attacks by enemy planes and flak, it was disclosed today.

And air forces report, carried in The Douglas Airview News this week, relates that the big silver plane is the favorite of more than 50 officers and enlisted men from Oklahoma who are at her base. Among them are:

S. Sgt. Lowell D. Kiefer, aerial gunner who once worked at the Douglas plant, and Sgt. John F. Toney, Muskogee, a nose gunner who flew on five of the TulsAmerican's missions.

"It's a grand ship," said Sergeant Toney. "She's held up through some pretty rough missions. Every time we've flown, she's drawn flak like a magnet. She's pulled through showers of steel over both Munich and Augsburg, and once, over Belchammer, Germany. I could hear fragments ripping right around my nose position."

Worst mission, said the APF report, was a raid on the Marlbor marshaling yards in Yugoslavia.

"We flew that trip through some ugly weather," said Toney, "and most of it was over those jagged mountains in an overcast as thick as butter. Just over our target, the soup lifted enough for us to drop our eggs, but that was just enough for the ack-ack boys to spot us."

"A slice of flak cut our No. 4 turbosupercharger and another took out our No. 3 engine. We were really humping when we came back."

When the TulsAmerican left the plant, everyone who bought a war bond was allowed to write his or her name on the fuselage.

Air View News Friday, Dec 22, 1944

22. Members of the crew of the Tullamarian, 5-14 Liberator, who made history in Europe before it was shot down over Germany, may be safe.

Lieutenant Wilbanks wrote his father that on a mission to Osterdal, Germany, the Tillamook was knocked out of formation by heavy flak, forcing a crash landing on the Adriatic, but the escape of another Obliskoman, Lieut. Victor Miller of Dunbar, led the former Stillwater resident to express the belief that the crew members were rescued.

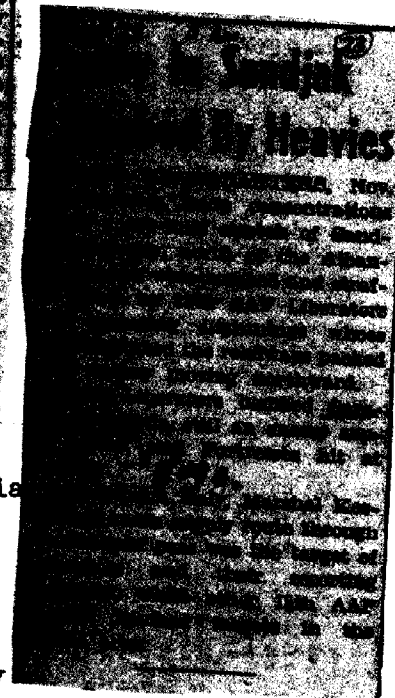
The Duncan officer was bombardier on the Palamarian, last of the Liberators built by the Tulsa Douglas plant, and paid for by employers there.

[illegible]

No. 20
10-23-44 Munich, Ger.
Ship 24 8 Hr. 30 Min.

No. 21
11-1-44 Vienna, Austria
Ship 23 7 Hr. 50 Min.

No. 22 M/Y
11-4-44 Augsburg, Ger.
Ship 24 8 Hrs.



No. 16 M/Y
10-7-44 Vienna, Austria
Ship 23 8 hrs.

No. 37
Oct. 30

No. 17 M/Y
10-10-44 Veneto, Italy
Ship 23 6 Hr. 45 Min.

No. 18
10-12-44 Store Depot
Bologna, Italy
Ship 23 6 Hrs. 30 Min.

No. 24 M/Y
11-16-44 Munich, Ger.
Ship 23 7 Hr. 15 Min.

No. 25
11-18-44 Airdrome
Villafranca, Italy
Ship 27 7 Hrs.

No. 26
11-20-44
Blechhamer, Germany
Ship 24 9 Hrs.

Bombers Hit Nazi Evacuation Fields

MAAF HEADQUARTERS, Sept. 24—Airfields from which Germans have been evacuating troops from southern Greece took a battering today when medium forces of 15th AAF Liberators, escorted by Mustangs, bombed airdromes in the Salonika area, according to an official communique. Athens, Greece

Railroad yards at Salonika and subpens and harbor installations at Skaramanga, on the south coast, were also attacked. No enemy fighters were encountered. Accompanying Lightnings carried out a strafing attack over the area.

Fortresses tackled installations in the "Sudetenland" section of Czechoslovakia 45 miles south of Dresden, Germany, and rail yards at Wels on the main Linz-to-Salzburg line in Austria.

Fighters Bag Nazi Planes

MAAF HEADQUARTERS, Oct. 1—Heavy bombers of the 15th AAF returned to the skies today to pound targets in Austria, Upper Hungary, and Hungary. Escorting Mustangs, Lightnings, and P-51s bombed targets in Upper Austria and in the Blechhammer area. Thick cloud and heavy flak visibility also prevailed over targets in the Vienna area.

Heavy attacks were continued in the Vienna area. In addition to targets in the Vienna area, which included the main railway station, the city of Vienna was also bombed. The city of Vienna was also bombed. The city of Vienna was also bombed.

