

## *Sgt Herbert E Sunderland - Airplane Gunner*

---

### **Herbert E. Sunderland Memories**

Herbert Sunderland was the oldest son of four children born to William and Jennie McMichael Sunderland on August 1, 1918. Siblings Harold, Helen and Mildred completed the family.

The Sunderlands, a hard working farm family from Vermillion, Kansas, had migrated from central Pennsylvania to northeast Kansas in the late 1800s.

Mother Sunderland described her oldest as a child so full of boyish glee. Father taught him the Sunderland work ethic which would serve him well in his further endeavors.

Herbert attended school in Vermillion where he enjoyed many sports like football and tennis.

Herbert met his future wife, Lois Evans, daughter of Foster and Zula Reed Evans in school. Mr. Sunderland took second in high school tennis tournament and Lois took first in the tournament while working on her teaching certificate at Ottawa University. By coincidence the Evans family had also migrated from central Pennsylvania to northeast Kansas in the late 1800s.

Herb graduated from Vermillion High School in the spring of 1938.

On July 16, 1941, The 22 year old enlisted for the Air Corps at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. He listed his occupation as farm hand.

The next several months were spent in training in places like Barksdale Field, Shreveport, Louisiana in preparation to go overseas.

On Jan. 31, 1942, traveling on troop ship USS Scott, Herb and his bomb group arrived in Brisbane, Australia on Feb. 25, 1942. His first assignment was as a mechanic with the 5th Air Force Bomb Group 19 Squadron in Australia where he soon took duty as an engineer/gunner in a B-26 Martin Marauder. His pilot was Lt. Barry Burnside.

Working conditions were less than ideal with the scorching heat, long hours, mosquitoes and lack of equipment. Spare parts had to be scrounged from wrecked planes. Their clothes were often what ever they could come by and with lack of sleep, grounds crews were often seen drifting off sitting on the ground beside their planes.

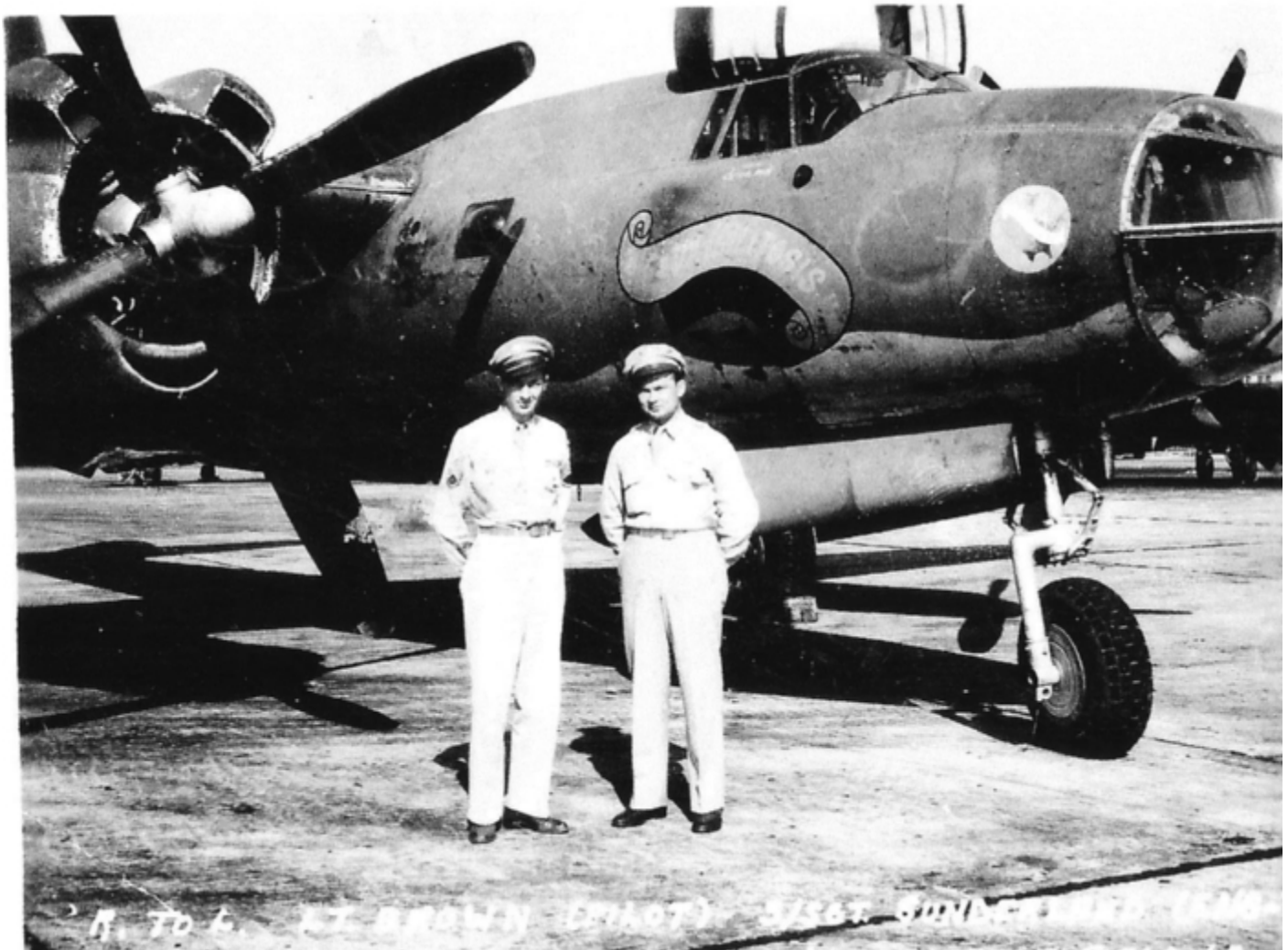
Between duty stations, Herb got a long furlough back in the states, He was picked up at the bus station in Topeka, by Foster Evans (future father-in-law). Once they returned to Vermillion, Mr. Evans also picked up Lois. The first thing Herb asked if she was married yet, to which she replied, "Not unless you asked me." After she said yes, she accompanied Sgt Sunderland to his next duty station in Shreveport, Louisiana at Barksdale airbase. The two young people, so in love and so full of expectations, were married on Nov, 20, 1943.



Barksdale Field was named on 2 February 1933 in honor of WWI British pilot, 2nd Lieutenant Eugene Hoy Barksdale (1895–1926). While testing a Douglas O-2 observation airplane for spin characteristics, Barksdale was killed on 11 August 1926, over McCook Field near Dayton, Ohio. He could not recover from a flat spin and was forced to parachute from the plane. His chute caught in the wing's brace wires. Lt Barksdale tragically fell from his bi-plane to his death.

Barksdale was developed as an Air Corps flying school in November of 1940. The runway apron was completed mid-1941. At the new airstrip, Herb teamed up with pilot Lt. Claude Brown where they were trained on the new A-26 invaders with the ultimate goal of training other crews on the plane while overseas.





Herbert Sunderland and Pilot Claude Brown at Barksdale Field, LA

Brownie, as he was called, and Herb flew one of the A-26s from Bangor, Maine to eventually team up with the 416th Bomb Group in Europe. "Our second leg of the trip was an uneventful flight to Goose Bay, Labrador. The third leg however, was something else, indeed. We got an excellent briefing for our route which included a film of the approach to landing at Greenland airstrip. We were scheduled to land at a field known as Bluiewest 3. The film depicted the proper approach procedure to a runway that was hidden between two mountains. The runway sloped some three hundred feet from the ocean to the top end. That end of the runway rested at the foot of a glacier. The special approach was necessary because the mountain tops were generally shrouded in clouds. If you waited until you saw the runway, you would overshoot and find yourself flying up an ever-narrowing fjord into the mountains.

Sgt. Sunderland held his breath while Brownie set the plane down, the landing had gone well. After exiting the plane they noticed that a cowl flap that kept the engine from overheating, was stuck. The base engineer examined the ship and grounded the plane. The rest of the squadron was long gone when we were ready to fly the next leg. We were preparing to make the crossing alone when a Canadian pilot of a Mosquito fighter-bomber wanted to tag along on my wing. The Mosquito was so fast that he was unable to stay right on my wing. He would fly great circles around us in an effort to keep us in sight. We reached Iceland without any problems and said goodbye to the British flier never to see him again.

Our next leg was on to Scotland. We found the rest of our squadron there. Together we flew with our squadron on to Great Britain and finally arrived in Great Dunmow, England."-Lt. Brown

As temporary duty, Sunderland and Brownie were assigned to the 386th Bomb Group 553rd Squadron to train crews on the A-26. Sunderland and Brown also flew 4 test missions into Germany after training was complete. In total, Sgt Sunderland racked up 6 bombing missions for the group. After the short stint in the 386th, Sunderland and Brown were transferred into the 416th Bomb Group.

On Sept 30, 1944, they left Dunmow and arrived in France at a base designed A-55 home of the 416th Bomb Group, 671st squadron. At A-55 Navigator/bombardier Jim Kerns joined Brown's crew. Training complete, Sunderland, Brown and Kerns along with another crew involved with training, pilot Jack Buskirk, B/N Robert Hanna and gunner Charles Houston Corbitt Jr. were permanently assigned to the 671st in October of 1944. Together since Shreveport, both crews had become close friends. Herb and Corbitt shared a tent and would keep in touch after the war. A close friend from Barksdale, Mike Williams, also accompanied the group to the 416th, but soon transferred to the 409th Bomb Group.



SSgt Charles Houston Corbitt

Sgt. Sunderland and crew flew their first four missions in planes nicknamed, "Baby Alan", and "Oklahoma Outlaw/Josie", then Lt. Brown was assigned a flight lead and later a box leader flying glass nosed A-20K's and A-26's in bomb missions to the end of the war.

"The weather in Europe was lousy so most of the the missions were to spread out and climb through the weather. A B-26 especially equipped with a system of early "Loran" was the lead plane, referred to as a pathfinder. Pathfinder would fly down a radio beam until it intersected with another beam projected across the one we were tracking. This intersection was established as the drop point for that particular target. It was especially good but frustrating as you didn't find out for two or three days later what the results were, derived from photos."-Pilot Lt Claude Brown

"The climb through the clouds would usually be to 12-15 thousand altitude. We had no oxygen or heater and a few hours of that left one very humble. I had frost bite of the toes on one occasion. We had no heat because Stewart-Warner gasoline heaters were installed in the planes. They were too dangerous to use in combat."-

Lt.Brown

"The usual load in the A-26s was 4 each 1000lb bombs. The largest the A-20s could carry was 500lb. The bombardier in the A-20 would have to set the trajectory for the 1000 bombs as the load for the other 5 planes would hit the targets while the 500lb bombs went astray. There weren't very many of these when were assigned a "C" model which was the Dinah Might/ Rickey Tick II".- Lt.Claude Brown.

"Our plane frequently came back to base looking like a sieve. On one mission, we had an AA shell explode inside the bomb bay just after bombs were away. A piece of flak came up through their open bomb bay doors and blew a hole through the plane's top the size of a baseball where Sunderland and I sat."-Lt. Brown

In between missions Sunderland and Brown flew in many different planes whether they were test flights after maintenance, weather checks, reconnaissance or transferring planes to and fro.

From Nov, 17, 1944 to April 4, 1945 Herb Sunderland flew 36 bombing missions with the 416th Bomb Group. Lt. Claude J. 'Brownie' Brown was his pilot and Lt. James E. 'Jim' Kerns was the B/N. Additional gunners were-SSgt Italo R. DeGiusti, Sgt Horace K. Miller, Cpl Victor F. Gross, SSgt Arthur E. DiMartino, SSgt Robert J. Mahoney, SSgt Chester R. Orvold and SSgt D. J. Rio. The first bombing mission was in A-26 41-39234 and the last bombing mission was in A-26 43-22497. In between they flew the following assortment of planes, 41-39239, 44-089, 44-560, 44-185, 44-106, 43-22023, 43-22498, 43-22499, 43-22490.

One of the things that Sgt Sunderland's wife Lois said bothered her husband most about the war was the return trip on the final flight home. He, along with his friend Robert Hanna, were reassigned to the 391st Bomb Group for the trip. They were ferrying planes back to the states. Lt. Hanna was in the lead ship. Herb and his pilot, John Barta were in one of the trailing planes when they were forced to watch as the lead plane lose control and nose dive into the Mediterranean Sea.

Herbert returned home from war a national hero. He never talked much about the war, but kept in touch with close friends from his war years. He quietly returned to farming in Vermillion. In 1956 he moved the family to Moab, Utah and took a job at Atlas Minerals Corporation as an instrument mechanic, processing uranium and vanadium ore.

Herb was able to take pleasure in his wonderful world he had fought so fearlessly to preserve. He enjoyed bowling and tennis with his wife as well as camping, fishing and just being outdoors in the quiet serenity around him.

With his loving family with him, he passed on June, 6, 2000 at age 81 into the Heavens to reunite with war buddies who had not made it home after the fighting stopped and the planes were at rest. Wife Lois, sister Helen Johnson, brother Harold Sunderland, sons Gary and Donald and grandsons Dennis K. and Kelly Keith, survived to mourn their loss and remember his remarkable accomplishments.

He is laid to rest in Vermillion Cemetery in Marshall County, Kansas.

**Prayer Of An Airman's Mother**

Dear God, It seems but yesterday, you gave this boy to me.  
The one who's many miles from home, whose face I cannot see.

The years have swiftly come and gone, so eager in their stride,  
To brush me lightly by the way, and take him from my side.

It seems to me he's still a child, so full of boyish glee,  
but pleadings of a war-torn world, have forced the man to be.

And now, dear God, he's joined the ranks of with Silver Wings,  
And soon will search the Heavens wide, for peace and finer things.

But Oh, dear God, if in his flight, he fails to come to me,  
please God, take over the controls, and chart his course to Thee.

by Jennie McMichael Sunderland,  
Herbert Sunderland's mother



An interesting side note: Herb's first assignment was with the 22nd Bomb Group which later became the 22nd Air Refueling Wing. At different times both his grandsons, Dennis K. and Kelly Keith, served with the 22nd Refueling Wing while they were in the Air Force.

---

**Sept. 30, 1944 - We left Great Dunmow today and the 386<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and landed in France about 25 miles south and east of Paris. I saw my first buzz bomb last night. We are in an A-20 Group now.**

**The base was know as A-55. After training different squadrons in the 416<sup>th</sup> bomb group, they were permanently assigned and teamed up with a bombardier/navigator, Jim Kerns and flew their first mission on November the 17<sup>th</sup> in an A-26B nicknamed "Baby Allan.**

**During their time with the 416<sup>th</sup> they flew missions in another gun nosed A-26B, several glass nosed A-20 Havocs and well as glass nosed A-26's that were set up for a Bombardier. Good friends Pilot Lt. Buskirk, B/N Lt. Hanna and gunner Houston Corbitt also flew missions in the same planes.**

**From the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force in World War II, page 125 by Rust:**

**"Early in October there was an event of special importance. The 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was to be the first 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force Group to re-equip with a new type of plane while remaining on combat status. The new plane had a longer range, greater load carrying capacity and higher performance than the A-20 then serving the group. Their crews arriving at A-55 were the same that tested the A-26 with the 386<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.**

**Each squadron took one flight off operational status and sent The crews to ground school, after which the flight was check out on the new plane. By the second week of October it was found that this procedure would take more time than desired to check out the whole group. The 671<sup>st</sup> squadron switched over to the A-26 in a dawn to after dark schedule on the 18<sup>th</sup>, intending to fully train the squadron in three or four days. Conversion and bad weather brought about incidents.**

**On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Oct. one pilot took off only to have the**

**field covered by fog five minutes later, and he had to go all the way to England before he could find a place to land."**

**671st Squadron, page 139 by Jim Kerns**

**A few days after the advanced echelon arrived at Station A-55, a formation of A-26's soared out of the blue, and by the time their wheels hit the runway, word had spread that the 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was to be trained on the combined version of the A-20, B-25 and B-26.....the A-26. This became a known fact a short time later when a mobile A-26 training unit moved on the field, and preparations were made for training both air and ground personnel. Five A-26 pilots, 6 gunners and two bombardier/navigators were assigned to the 671<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron, as well as five sleek invaders.**

**Oct. 1, 1944 – We all spent last night in a Red Cross tent sleeping on the**

**ground but we did have good meals. There are German planes and other junk lying around. We moved into Our squadron today and had our first crews assigned to us for training.**

**Oct 2, 1944 – Everybody just about froze in the tent last night. We did get a couple of stoves for our tent. Brownie and I took our crew up for a flight today.**

**Oct. 3, 1944 – Today Rio, Mike, Corbitt and I found some straw to stuff in our mattresses to try and keep warm. Put a floor in the tent, banked up around it, and wrote to Lois.**

**Oct. 4 to 13, 1944 – We haven't had much happening the last few days.**

**Oct. 14, 1944 – Mike, Corbitt and I went for a bike ride around the country today, saw some Ox working the fields.**

**Oct. 15, 1944 – A bunch of our ships went up this morning and the weather closed in so they could not land, they got lost and one crash killed 4 men, another cracked up when it landed. Don't know where the rest are.**

**"On Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> the tower permitted several ships to take off in unfavorable weather. The 670<sup>th</sup> was undergoing their training and Lt. Leischman, in this squadrons A-26, no 196, was unable to land after taking off, and crashed, killing the whole crew. Another ship crash landed, while several others landed in England and other fields**



**in France." 671<sup>st</sup> Squadron, by Kerns.**

**Nov. 10, 1944- 671<sup>st</sup> operations burnt down. All of our pilots lost everything they owned.**

**In a letter from Claude Brown: "The Germans had left little in their retreat. There was only one building left standing in our area. This building was claimed as the 671<sup>st</sup> operations and the remaining rooms were claimed by the A-26 crews as their quarters. This went well for a few weeks, as the only other option was a tent. We rigged our stove to burn our used airplane oil as heater fuel. One morning someone started the fire as usual, but failed to regulate the flow of fuel to the firebox. Our jury rigged stove had a hose clamp for a regulating valve. During breakfast, shouts told us the building was on fire. She was burning gently, when some "would be fireman" hit the drum with a bucket of water. Away it blew, spreading the fire everywhere. We lost everything in our rooms, but were able to salvage records from the front offices before it blew up. The reason the building didn't blow with the rest of the destruction the Germans left is unknown, but we were sleeping over land mines for a good while, unaware of our close association with potential death."**

**Nov. 11, 1944 – Mike, and H.P. left us today going to the 409<sup>th</sup> to covert them. Rio, Corbitt and I are the only ones left.**

**At this point, Lt. Brown, Lt. Kerns and Dad were permanently assigned to the 416<sup>th</sup> on combat status, no longer training other crews.**

**Nov. 17, 1944 – Rio, Corbitt and I made our first mission with the 416<sup>th</sup> today, the first in two months. I don't know the name of the place but it was north and east of Nancy.**

**Dad's mission log said it was at Haguenau. From Rust's "9<sup>th</sup> Air Force" " It was on 17 Nov. that the 416<sup>th</sup> flew it's first A-26 mission. Detailed to attack a stores depot at Haguenau the Group took off in a light rain but met worse weather at the target, 15 miles north of Strasbourg. Dropping down to 8000 ft. the bombardiers in the A-20's were able to pick up the depot in their sights and bombs were laid on target with damaging results. Flak was weak and no damage was incurred by the planes, and of the six groups dispatched during the day by the 9<sup>th</sup>, the 416<sup>th</sup> was the only one to bomb."**

**Nov. 18, 1944 – Lt. Brown and Buskirk went to Paris to get some**

clothes.

**Nov. 19, 1944 – Lt. Brown, Lt. Kerns and I went on two missions today. Rio and Corbitt went on the first one. We went to some place close to Metz trying to hit a troop concentration. This afternoon we did not get to the target because of the weather.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns: "Three boxes were deployed by the 416<sup>th</sup> Group, 41 A-26s and 8 A-20Ks. Forty seven dropped their bombs on and in the vicinity of the primary. The formation had to go over the target area from 6000 to 6200 feet. Weak inaccurate heavy and light flak was encountered, two aircraft receiving battle damage."**

**Nov. 20, 1944 – My first anniversary. We are supposed to go on a mission but the weather was to bad.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns: " Nov. 29, 1944 – While ten other groups of the Ninth Bomb Division went out to bomb with PFF, the 416<sup>th</sup> was sent to bomb the defended village of Mariaweller, one mile northwest of Duren, employing visual method. A 3-5/10<sup>th</sup> cloud cover was met in the target area and the lead bombardiers were unable to identify the target. An A-26 flown by Lt. McBride, received a direct hit and exploded in mid-air after the two crew members bailed out. They landed in friendly territory and both are safe. Six other planes received battle damage."**

**Dec. 5, 1944 – Went on my 12<sup>th</sup> mission today, it was my first where we used PFF.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns: "Braving bitter cold and icing conditions, the 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group hit the defended town of Kall, 25 miles south of Duren, by Pathfinder technique in the morning."**

**Dec. 6, 1944 – Today I went on no. 13, another PFF.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron, Kerns: "With the 416<sup>th</sup> Invaders again taking advantage of Pathfinders, another highly important defended town was plastered with bombs mid-day on 6 December 1944. The A-26's hit Erkelentz, a town of 6,000 population 20 miles north of Duren. It is five miles inside the German defense line and in the path of the U.S. 9<sup>th</sup> and British 21<sup>st</sup> Armies."**

**Dec. 8, 1944 – Put in my 14 today, another PFF. Corbitt and I go on**

**detail tomorrow.**

**Dec. 12, 1944 – We went on another mission today and did not drop our bombs. This makes my 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns: "From the middle of November until the middle of December a number of changes were made on the combat status of the 671<sup>st</sup>, not including the crews finishing up their tour. Of the A-26 crews which came in to train the squadron, two crews were retained, Lt. Claude J. Brown's and Lt. John A. Buskirk's Lt. James Kerns, an A-20 replacement was assigned to Lt. Brown as his bombardier-navigator and they have teamed off as a probable top flight combination, having flown a number of deputy leads already. The Buskirk/Hanna duet had flown together in training and also with the 386<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group in operations, having already proved themselves. Three gunner/engineers, S/Sgt Sunderland, S/Sgt. Rio and S/Sgt Corbitt, were also permanently assigned."**

**Dec. 13, 1944 – Brownie had an operation today. I guess we'll be off operations for awhile.**

**Dec. 14, 1944 – Got some wood for our tent.**

**Dec. 17, 1944 – It seems that the Germans broke through our lines today in a counter attack.**

***The Ninth Air Force in World War II*, page 131 by Rust. " In the early hours of the 16<sup>th</sup> of Dec. 1944 German forces under Von Rundstedt – the equivalent of eight panzer grenadier divisions supported by 500 tanks, 350 assault guns, 1300 artillery pieces and some 1350 fighters and bombers – launched operation Greif."**

**Dec. 20, 1944 – We had an alert early this morning. This evening we combed the area for strangers who might be in hiding. The weather has been to bad to fly.**

**Dec. 23 , 1944 – Corbitt and Lt. Buskirk made a crash landing when returning from a mission. Lt. Hann was hurt a little but not serious. No one else got a scratch. I made my 16<sup>th</sup> mission this afternoon.**

***The 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force in World War II* by Rust.**

**"Flying A-26's the 416<sup>th</sup> bomb group attacked a highway bridge at Saarburburg 10 miles north of Trier. Coming into the target the first of the groups eight flights failed to identify the target and did not bomb. The next three flights put their bombs right on target with excellent and superior results. The leading A-20K of the fifth flight was pouring smoke from it's left engine and bombs of this flight landed on buildings near the bridge. The plane was nursed off target and crashed near Rheims injuring the bombardier. The sixth flight scored a superior and the last two flights virtually finished off the bridge before the lead flight made its second run and bombed with excellent results.**

**Concerning the afternoon flight on Dec. 23, Pilot Lt. Brown sent me the following. The story was also related in *Attack Bombers* by Conte.**

**"Jim (Lt. Kerns) and I were assigned a mission in the deputy lead position. I was the lead in the right-hand flight of six airplanes, on the leader's right wing. At the initial point, the leader called the initial point, IP. This was the point where we broke off into individual flights, and followed the leader on the bomb run. My bomb release would trigger the other five aircraft to drop their load. At the IP I didn't hear anything from my bombardier. I said, "Jim, they called the IP." Jim said, "I'm sorry Brownie, I don't see a damn thing I recognize." So I'm following the leader down the trail maybe thirty seconds or a minute behind, and they opened their bomb doors. Again, there was silence. "Jim, they have opened their bomb bay doors." "Brownie, I'm sorry, just don't see anything I recognize." Another few seconds went by and the leader announced "bombs away." I said with considerable emotion, "they have dropped their bombs!" "Sorry Brownie, I still don't see anything." So we closed the bomb doors. As we left the target it was customary to put the aircraft into a slight dive to pick up about 300 mph and scoot out of the area as quickly as possible. On this occasion I called the leader and asked him for permission to re-attack the target. "Can I make another run?" "No way, request denied, take them home." I thought we had pulled a major SNAFU."**

**I got on poor Jim's back all the way home. Said a lot of ugly things to him for the next two hundred miles. "Jim we practiced all winter, and the first time we have an opportunity to make a name for ourselves you screwed up." I felt we were going home in big trouble.**

**We landed without incident, with our four thousand-pound bomb load. We taxied to our area and our hardstand. Who should be waiting for us but the Squadron Commander! Oh brother I thought, here it comes. I was sure a courts martial was coming our way. As I climbed out of**

the air plane he was all smiles, approaches us and put an arm around me and said, "Great job Brownie." I said, "Sir you don't understand, we still have our bombs." He said, "Yeah, I know." Then he went and shook Jim's hand. By this time the crew truck has come around to take us to debriefing. I'm in a quandary. I don't know what is happening. When we got to debrief there was a lot of hell raising going on. The leaders navigator mistook the city he was supposed to bomb and he bombed on our side of the line. The bombs struck a jump off point that General Patton was establishing. It contained a large reserve of fuel and supplies. As I understood it, he lost most of his gasoline reserves. The lead bombardier was court marshaled and reduced in rank.

This particular mission stood us in good shape, and we were the talk of the squadron for a few days. Shortly thereafter, we were promoted to leading the second box it consisted of four flights of six aircraft. Our squadron was one of four in the group and lead every forth mission.

The group effort was normally forty-eight airplanes. Our crew now led every forth mission, the second box of 24 planes. Later we were promoted to leading the entire group. This honor we shared with the Squadron Commander. So every eighth mission we flew group lead.

At that time fifty missions was the ticket home for rest and recuperation. But we never reached that point. As we got more and more missions, the Air Force kept increasing the number required to get home. As the second box leader we got only one in four missions. As group leader we got only one in eight missions. The war could have lasted along time and we still would have not flown enough missions to get home. I still kid Jim that his skill at target identification kept us from getting home from Europe before V\_E Day.

Dec. 26, 1944 – We had our first air raid alert today – rather tonight.  
One German ship came down and strafed but did no  
Dam

Dec. 27, 1944 – We went on another mission, my 18<sup>th</sup>. We had another alert tonight but nothing happened. I haven't heard from anyone at home for a long time.

Dec. 28, 1944 – We had another air alert tonight.

Dec. 29, 1944 – I went on my 19<sup>th</sup> mission today. We were supposed to To bomb a bridge but the weather was to bad.

Dec. 30, 1944 – Weather was bad all day. It snowed a little, the first

**I've seen over here. We had our usual alert. Put another light in our tent.**

**Jan. 1, 1945– The new year came in with a bang. Germans dropped bombs and we were up most of the night because of alerts. The bombs dropped a good five miles away.**

**Jan. 2, 1945 – Bad day for the 416<sup>th</sup>. We lost four ships on take off. Tonight was the first one in nine we didn't have an alert.**

**Jan. 3, 1945 – Had two letters from my little wife today telling me we have a baby boy. I with several others were presented with the Air Medal. Two nights without an alert.**

**Jan. 5, 1945 – I went on my 20<sup>th</sup> mission today. Got a letter from the Hunt's telling me they were an Aunt and Uncle.**

**Jan. 6, 1945 – Today we had our first big snow, about 6" and the fellows built a snowman. They lifted the restriction. Rio and I got some stuff to build an oil burner.**

**Jan. 9, 1945 – We got a little wood. We are sawing up old stumps and I don't know what we'll burn after that.**

**Jan 11, 1945 – I made my 21<sup>st</sup> mission today and was it ever cold, everyone like to froze.**

**Jan 12, 1945 – Never did much of anything today. Received three letters from Lois, said Gary Kent was getting along fine. Snowed a little more and turned cold as the devil. I was on guard.**

**Jan. 14, 1945 – We lost another ship on takeoff when it crashed and blew up. Stypenski made his first mission and crash landed in another field. Several ships landed at another field.**

**Jan 16, 1945 – Another mission today, the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We flew window ship for PFF. We got our coal rations for 15 days, don't expect it to last.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns:**



**Continuing it's war against bridges to isolate the battle areas from German supplies, the A-55 bombers dropped approximately 75 tons of bombs on the Sinzig Railroad bridge with excellent and superior results on Jan. 16, 1945.**

**Jan. 21, 1945 – Rio and I went up to group today to see "Rapsedy in Blue," a really good movie.**

**Jan. 23, 1945 – The group went on a low level mission today and none of them made it back to this base. They had 100% battle damage. Glad I wasn't on it.**

**Jan 26, 1945 – Rio and I tried out our bath tub today. We went into Malun and caught the 6:00 train to Paris. It took 1 ½ hours to make the trip.**

**Jan. 29, 1945 – We got some more wood today. Lts. Brown and Kerns flew a couple of hours. It snowed more last night.**

**Jan. 30, 1945 – It rained most all of the day. We had to go through the gas chamber and clean off the taxi strip. Ice is all over everything.**

**Feb. 1, 1945 – They went on a mission today. Lt. Brown, Rio and I got in 5 hours of flying time. Received a very nice V mail from Lois.**

**Feb. 2, 1945 – Rio and I flew on missions today. His 14<sup>th</sup> and my 23<sup>rd</sup>. Lots of flak.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns:**

**With clearing skies over Germany the 416<sup>th</sup> Invaders dropped tons of fragmentation bombs on the town of Euskirchen with devastating results on the morning of Feb. 2. Four flights received excellent ratings with tight bomb patterns in the center of town, while the two remaining flights were believed to have done equally as well, but due to violent evasive action photos were not taken. Lt. Brown and Lt. Kerns led the 671<sup>st</sup> flight. Though flak was intense they made two runs on the target and scored excellent results. However, they could not receive a rating as one of the photos was taken from the oblique.**

**Feb. 8, 1945 – Our group flew their first mission using all A-26's today. Our crew came to England on D.S. Ran into some bad weather and for once I was very glad to be back on the ground.**

**Feb. 12, 1945 – We flew a short mission. Have lots of trouble getting our planes serviced. They don't have much to work with.**

**Feb. 15, 1945 – A B-26 brought down a tire for the ship today and we changed it with screwdrivers. Was it ever a job.**

**Feb. 19, 1945 – Our ship went on the blink, batteries went dead. Brownie and Kerns finished up anyway. They took the good ship. Now we have to get parts before we can leave.**

**Feb. 27, 1945 – We came back to base from England today. Hit some more bad weather and got lost. Nice to be back. Corbitt is ahead of me on missions now.**

**Mar. 1, 1945 – I made my 24<sup>th</sup> mission, nothing exciting.**

**Mar. 3, 1945 – 25<sup>th</sup> mission.**

**Mar. 4, 1945 – Another mission, my 27<sup>th</sup>. Rough weather again. Rio was transferred to the 670<sup>th</sup> yesterday.**

**Mar. 8, 1945 – I was grounded today because of my ears. Corbitt flew with Brownie and Kerns this afternoon.**

**Mar. 9, 1945 – I'm still grounded. Lt. Brown made another mission. Two cake runs I missed. Brownie was talking to Doc. He said I shouldn't be grounded long.**

**Mar. 11, 1945 – We went on another mission, no. 28 for me. We led the second box. Saw no flak and all ships returned. Brownie and Kerns second mission as a box leader.**

**Mar. 12, 1945 – Another mission. No 29.**

**Mar. 13, 1945 – Today was a little exciting for the group. They encountered flak on both missions but lost no ships. My 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns.**

**Pathfinders were again employed in the afternoon when the 416<sup>th</sup> was dispatched to the Neheim/Huston Marshalling Yard, east of Dortmund. Results of the bombing were believed excellent although there was no**

**Feb. 12, 1945 – We flew a short mission. Have lots of trouble getting our planes serviced. They don't have much to work with.**

**Feb. 15, 1945 – A B-26 brought down a tire for the ship today and we changed it with screwdrivers. Was it ever a job.**

**Feb. 19, 1945 – Our ship went on the blink, batteries went dead. Brownie and Kerns finished up anyway. They took the good ship. Now we have to get parts before we can leave.**

**Feb. 27, 1945 – We came back to base from England today. Hit some more bad weather and got lost. Nice to be back. Corbitt is ahead of me on missions now.**

**Mar. 1, 1945 – I made my 24<sup>th</sup> mission, nothing exciting.**

**Mar. 3, 1945 – 25<sup>th</sup> mission.**

**Mar. 4, 1945 – Another mission, my 27<sup>th</sup>. Rough weather again. Rio was transferred to the 670<sup>th</sup> yesterday.**

**Mar. 8, 1945 – I was grounded today because of my ears. Corbitt flew with Brownie and Kerns this afternoon.**

**Mar. 9, 1945 – I'm still grounded. Lt. Brown made another mission. Two cake runs I missed. Brownie was talking to Doc. He said I shouldn't be grounded long.**

**Mar. 11, 1945 – We went on another mission, no. 28 for me. We led the second box. Saw no flak and all ships returned. Brownie and Kerns second mission as a box leader.**

**Mar. 12, 1945 – Another mission. No 29.**

**Mar. 13, 1945 – Today was a little exciting for the group. They encountered flak on both missions but lost no ships. My 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns.**

**Pathfinders were again employed in the afternoon when the 416<sup>th</sup> was dispatched to the Neheim/Huston Marshalling Yard, east of Dortmund. Results of the bombing were believed excellent although there was no**

photo coverage due to the cloud cover. The lead PFF ship was attacked by a lone ME 109, but after the tail gunner fired a couple of bursts, the Jerry fighter hauled ass. Weak flak was met in the bridgehead area, but all ships returned safely with minor battle damage.

**Mar. 15, 1945 – Rough mission but saw no flak. I got my 31<sup>st</sup> and should have 20 to go.**

**Mar. 17, 1945 – Corbitt and Rio went to Paris. Buss and Hanna came back from leave. Went on my 32<sup>nd</sup> mission.**

**Mar. 18, 1945 – The Gp. lost 4 ships over target. I went on the afternoon mission, did not see any flak. Lt. Brown and Kerns took over box lead.**

**From the 671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns**

In the afternoon the 416<sup>th</sup> shifted it's attack to the Cologne sector where the clouds were thick and heavy and the flak nil. The Invaders led by Pathfinder, dropped on the Kreustal Marshalling Yard located at a junction of two main lines leading north from the Glessen-Cologne rail line. Traffic at this rail center had increased greatly in recent weeks. Results were unobserved.

**Mar. 23, 1945 – Fiddler, Maupin and I went for a long walk and took pictures of a German cemetery, some 88 guns an old plane and some bombed out houses.**

**Mar. 26, 1945 – Went on no. 38 today. Brownie lead the first box and Lt. Buskirk lead the second.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns**

**Mar. 26, 1945 – The 416<sup>th</sup> put a new box-leading pair into operations on 26 March, as Lt. Claude Brown and Lt. James Kerns took the formation and Lt. John A. Buskirk and Lt. Robert C. Hanna the second box....against the Gemunden Marshalling Yard on a line leading into Frankfurt. The 671<sup>st</sup> combinations both scored superior ratings and took the formation in and out without loss or damage.**

**Mar. 27, 1945 – Went to school this morning and shot skeet this afternoon. 16 the first round and 17 the second. Not very good.**

**Mar. 31, 1945 – We went on another mission today, 39 for me. I was PFF. For once I saw the bombs hit on a PFF mission**

and they really hit dead center.

**Apr. 3, 1945 – Corbitt is really worrying about having to go to C.B.I before he gets his missions in.**

**Apr. 4, 1945 – I received a picture of Lois and Gary Kent today, really great.**

**Apr. 8, 1945 – I made my 40<sup>th</sup> today. We got lost and wandered around Germany for over an hour before we found the target.**

**Apr. 13, 1945 – Maupin got his face all cut up the night before last coming home drunk.**

**Apr. 15, 1945 – I guess Maupin is getting along all right. Fiddler left for the 387<sup>th</sup> today, They transferred seven other gunners with him.**

**Apr. 16, 1945 – Maupin came back from the hospital today, he looks pretty bad. I haven't been doing much of anything. Jim got back from Paris.**

**Apr. 18, 1945 – No missions today but a lot of local flying, training missions they call them. We flew three hops and one night formation.**

**Apr. 20, 1945 – We went on a mission today, 41 for me. Suppose to hit a fuel dump.**

**Apr. 23, 1945 – Mike Corbitt was here today. Lt. Brown, Kerns and I did some more local flying this morning. We also flew a weather check.**

**Apr. 26, 1945 – Made another mission today. 42 for me. We were supposed to hit an airstrip which jets were operating on.**

**671<sup>st</sup> Squadron by Kerns**

**Mar. 31, 1945 – To further deplete the enemies supplies the 416<sup>th</sup> Group and five other 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force Divisions struck at a storage area in Marienburg, across the Main River from Wurzburg. The vast storage area comprises 21 warehouse type and 20 smaller buildings, a permanent barracks area and a large motor park. American tanks and infantry were reported meeting resistance in this area.**

**Apr. 8, 1945 - The target in the afternoon was the town of Sondershausen. It was reported by ground forces to be a center of resistance to elements of the First U.S. Army, fighting in the vicinity of Mulhausen. Its destruction would hamper communications in the area and would probably destroy supplies and personnel in the town. Taking off in late afternoon the formation found the target covered by haze and smoke, caused by previous bombings. Lt. Brown and Lt. Kerns were leading the first box and Lt. Buskirk and Lt. Hanna, the second. Lt. Kerns led the formation to the IP but his Gee box went out and he was unable to pick out the target at the time. The rest of the flight went on to the target and dropped from 9500 to 4900 feet. Almost all of the bombs fell in the city with devastating results. Lt. Kerns finally got his Gee set to function after about an hour of circling over Germany.**

**The smoke and haze had cleared by then and he dropped his bombs with excellent results. The crews in Lt. Brown's flight logged over five hours of flight time.**

**Apr. 20, 1945 In an after supper attack the 416<sup>th</sup> hit a fuel depot for the German Air Force south of Berlin at Annaburg with highly successful results.**

**Apr. 16, 1945 - The airfield at Plattling, 40 miles southeast of Regensburg, was rendered unserviceable by the 416<sup>th</sup>'s bombing attack on 26 April 1945. The field was used for tactical opposition to Allied Forces by single and twin engine fighters.**

**Lt. Brown and Lt. Kerns and Lt. Brewer led the first box and Lt. Buskirk and Lt. Hanna the second. Both scored excellent results.**

---



INDIVIDUAL COMBAT RECORD

NAME Sunderland, H.E. 416TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (LIGHT)  
 671ST BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (LIGHT)

RANK AND SERIAL NO. Sgt.

DUTY Gunner STATION NUMBER A-35

[REDACTED]

DATE	PLANE	MISSION	TARGET	DURATION	TIME TO DATE	RESULTS
9-6-44	A-26	Bomb		1:40	3:40	
9-10-44	A-26	Bomb		1:45	7:25	
9-12-44	A-26	Bomb		1:30	14:25	386 BG 553 Sq
9-14-44	A-26	Bomb		1:30	18:55	
9-16-44	A-26	Bomb		1:00	20:55	
9-19-44	A-26	Bomb		1:00	23:55	
11-12-44	A-26B	Bomb	Haguenau	1:50	26:45	Good
11-19-44	A-26B	Bomb	Mertz Area	1:10	29:55	Excellent
11-19-44	A-26B	Bomb	Landau	1:00	33:55	Abortive
11-29-44	A-26B	Bomb	Marloweiler	1:00	36:55	Nil
12-5-44	A-20K	Bomb	Kall	1:55	39:50	Good
12-6-44	A-20K	Bomb	Erkelenty	3:00	42:50	Not observed
12-11-44	A-20K	Bomb	Bridge at			
12-12-44	A-20K	Bomb	Schleiden	1:00	49:05	Abortive
12-23-44	A-20K	Bomb	Waxweiler	1:45	51:50	Nil
12-25-44	A-20K	Bomb	Hiltzheim	3:15	55:05	Not Observed
12-27-44	A-20K	Bomb	Elker	1:55	59:00	Excellent
12-28-44	A-20K	Bomb	Neuchingen	1:45	61:45	Nil
1-15-45	A-20K	Bomb	Simmer RB	1:40	65:45	Not Observed
1-16-45	A-20K	Bomb	Simmer RB	1:30	70:15	Forward Casual Party
1-16-45	A-20J	Bomb	Sinzig RB	3:45	74:00	Superior
2-2-45	A-20K	Bomb	Kuskirchen	3:30	77:30	Excellent

Sunderland

R E S T R I C T E D  
I N D I V I D U A L C O M B A T R E C O R D

NAME SUNDERLAND, HERBERT E.

416TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (LIGHT)

RANK AND SERIAL NO. 1ST LT

671ST BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (LIGHT)

DUTY GunnerTESTATION NUMBER A-69

DATE	PLANE TYPE	MISSION	TARGET	DURATION	TIME TO DATE	RESULTS	Sortie No.
3-1-45	A-26C	Bomb	Eller	3:00	80:30	Undetermined	24
3-2-45	A-26C	Bomb	Iserlohn	3:25	83:55	Undetermined	25
3-4-45	A-26C	Bomb	Lesackbeck	3:37	87:45	Unobserved	26
3-5-45	A-26C	Bomb	PIREBURG	3:25	91:15	Unobserved	27
3-11-45	A-26C	Bomb	Witten	3:40	94:55	Unobserved	28
3-12-45	A-26C	Bomb	OPSEN	2:40	97:35	Unobserved	29
3-13-45	A-26C	Bomb	Wolheim/Huston	3:15	100:50	Undetermined	30
3-15-45	A-26C	Bomb	Piomasens	2:40	103:30	Excellent	31
3-17-45	A-26C	Bomb	Braun/Hamburg	3:35	107:05	Unobserved	32
3-18-45	A-26C	Bomb	KREUZTAL	4:05	111:10	Unobserved	33
3-19-45	A-26C	Bomb	NASSAU	2:25	113:45	Excellent	34
3-21-45	A-26C	Bomb	VREDEN	2:25	116:10	Excellent	35
3-22-45	A-26C	Bomb	BERKEN	3:10	119:20	Excellent	36
3-24-45	A-26C	Bomb	BOCHOLT	2:50	122:10	Undet	37
3-26-45	A-26C	Bomb	SEMUNDEN	3:10	125:40	Superior	38
3-27-45	A-26C	Bomb	MARIENBURG	3:20	129:06	Excellent	39
4-8-45	A-26C	Bomb	SONDERSHAUSEN	3:00	134:00	Excellent	40
4-20-45	A-26C	Bomb	ANNABURG	4:50	138:50	N.A.O.	41
4-26-45	A-26C	Bomb	PLATTLING	4:35	143:25	Excellent	42

SUNDERLAND, H.E.