

**Kolacia Crew**  
778<sup>th</sup> Squadron  
464<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group  
Fifteenth Air Force

The following is an account of the missions flown by Frank Villano (TG) of the Kolacia crew as compiled by Frank's daughter, Patti Dwyer-Clarke. This account does not necessarily apply to all members of the crew.

Joseph Cyril Kolacia (Pilot)  
Frank (Francis J) Villano (Tail Gunner)  
Jerry McGrath (Navigator)  
John J Margaroli, Jr  
Robert Babcock  
William Douglass  
James Corr  
Chic Banchiere  
Charles Lammerding

November 4, 1944

Ship: W(hite)-Z "Green Hornet" First Raid  
Linz, Germany-Austria  
Target-Benzol Petroleum Works  
(Herman Goering's)  
Altitude: 20,500 feet Temp: -28C  
Bomb load: 10-500lb bombs  
Heavy-Moderate-Accurate Flak  
8 hours, 10 minutes

November 7, 1944

Ship: W-P "Bonnie Annie Laurie"  
Isarco/Albes, Italy  
Target: Railroad Bridge & Supply  
Line from Brenner Pass  
Altitude: 14,000 feet Temp: -7C  
Bomb load: 10-500 bombs  
No flak, no fighters – Milk Run  
7 hours, 30 minutes

November 16, 1944

Ship: W-R "Big Ed"

Munich, Germany

Target: Marshalling Yards

Altitude: 26,000 feet Temp: -40C

Bomb load: 6-50 lb bombs

Heavy-Intense-Accurate, Flak

There was a wall of flak all around us. Two B-24s went down in flames, another in a dive.

McGrath passed out because his oxygen hose came apart. He was revived when discovered. (my dad hooked him up again) Our electrical system went out. No instruments, no interphone, no heat for our heated suits. No power for turrets...no power for anything. This was Chick's birthday. He was 20 years old.

Running out of gas, have to make a forced landing. Landed just in time. Number 4 engine out, and others going. Landed at 97<sup>th</sup> BG (B-17s) didn't have enough gas to go around and couldn't land on runway because B-17s were coming in. Landed downwind in plowed field. Beautiful landing made by Joe. Ship not damaged a bit by landing. That's about all.

8 hours, 30 minutes

November 19, 1944

Ship: Y-S

Linz, Germany

Target-Benzol Petroleum Works

Altitude: 23,000 feet Temp: -28C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Intense-Accurate

Started to run out of gas as we approached field. No 1, 2 and 4 engines conked out just after we hit the ground.

7 hours, 45 minutes

December 2, 1944

Ship: W-S

Blechhammer, Germany-Austrias

Target-Oil refinery

Altitude: 23,500 feet Temp: -28C

bomb load: 6 demolition bombs, 2 delayed action bombs (all 8-500lbs), 1 propaganda bomb.

Heavy-Intense-Accurate

Today was the heaviest I've ever seen, flak. The sky was just black with flak. I saw Red jig when it came back and it wasn't a very pretty sight. Jerry just missed getting hit by a few inches. It broke the plexiglass window. Plane went down in flames, saw one chute open.

8 hours

#### December 6, 1944

We didn't fly today, but a few things happened, so I'm putting them in.

On take-off today, a 465<sup>th</sup> plane exploded. 6 of the 10 bombs went off. All that was left were pieces of the plane and personnel.

The boys went to Yugoslavia today and were intercepted by fighters. First time in months. Steven's and Roche's crew went down. The "Green Hornet", W-Z and W-H were the planes.

#### December 17, 1944

Ship: W-U

Blechhammer, Germany

Target: Oil refinery

Altitude: 20,500 feet Temp: -31C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Intense-Accurate

Today's raid really surprised all of us. Blechhammer, being one of our toughest targets. We expected the usual. It was heavy and intense, but it was very inaccurate.

8 hours, 20 minutes

#### December 19, 1944

Ship: W-U

Blechhammer, Germany

Target: Oil refinery

Altitude: 24,500 feet Temp: -33C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

No flak

When we reached the target, we ran into weather and we didn't drop our bombs.

Number 1 engine went out and number 3 wasn't pulling full power. We flew all the way from the target to the base with number 1 feathered. We jettisoned our bombs while in enemy territory.

#### December 28, 1944

Ship: W-H

Roudnice, Germany

Target: Oil storage

Altitude: 22,500 feet Temp: -40C

Bomb load: 8-500 bombs

No flak, no fighters

Today was a milk run, but it was a very long trip. On the way up two planes went down when they collided in midair.

8 hours, 30 minutes

January 8, 1945

Ship: W-F

Klagenfurt, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 26,000 feet Temp: -47C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

No flak and no fighters

We were headed for Linz, but we ran into weather and hit the 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate.

Villach, Austria

6 hours, 15 minutes

February 8, 1945

Ship: W-Q

Vienna, Austria

Target: S. E. Goods depot

Altitude: 24,000 feet Temp: -28C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Scant-Moderate-Accurate-Flak

Today we only received a couple of holes in our ship. Vienna is really a rough target. They must have been sleeping.

7 hours, 15 minutes

February 14, 1945

Ship: W-H

Villach, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 19,000 feet Temp: -32C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

No flak, no fighters

We were headed for Vienna, but we ran into weather, so we turned around and hit Villach. We really plastered the place. They won't hit it for quite a while.

7 hours

February 16, 1945

Ship: W-Q

Regensburg, Germany

Target: Air Drome

Altitude: 24,500 feet Temp: -38C

Bomb load: frag bombs, 216 of them

Heavy-Scant-inaccurate, flak

We bombed field of ME-262 jet planes. We were expecting enemy planes and were surprised when none showed up. Had beautiful fighter cover by, P-38s. I saw one B-24 hit by flak, go down in flames. The weather was awful forming up. We really sweated out going up through the overcast.

8 hours, 15 minutes

February 19, 1945

Ship: W-Q

Graz, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude; 25,000 feet Temp: -40C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Moderate-Accurate flak

We were headed for Vienna, but headwind over the target was so strong, they would have picked us off like clay pigeons, so we hit the 1<sup>st</sup> alternate, Graz.

7 hours, 50 minutes

February 22, 1945

Ship: W-U

Portomaguro, Italy

Target: Railroad bridge

Altitude: 15,000 feet Temp: -16C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

No flak was encountered at the target, but the lead ship did a 360 and we ran into some. Today was a big effort by all Air Forces in European Theater. We couldn't get to primary target because of weather, so we hit this alternate.

6 hours, 50 minutes

February 25, 1945

Ship: W-F

Linz, Austria

Target: Ordinance Depot

Altitude: 25,500 feet Temp: -40C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Flak-Heavy-Intense-Accurate

Today, I thought our number was up. They really put it up there today. Our group got shot up pretty bad. I grabbed for my chute a few times and was ready to hit the silk at any minute. I've had enough of Linz for a while.

7 hours, 40 minutes

March 8, 1945

Ship: W-H

Verona, Italy

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 23,500 feet Temp: -40C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Intense-Accurate, flak

6 hours

March 12, 1945

Ship: W-H

Vienna, Austria

Target: Florisdorf oil refineries

Altitude: 23,000 feet Temp: -30C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Intense-Accurate flak

7 hours

March 14, 1945

Ship: W-Y

Nove Zamky, Hungary

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 20,500 feet Temp: -30C

Bomb load: 10-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Scant-Inaccurate flak

8 hours

March 18, 1945

Ship: W-H

Amstetten, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 22,500 feet Temp: -29C

Bomb load: 8-500 lb bombs

No flak, no fighters

7 hours, 45 minutes

March 20, 1945

Ship: W-H

Amstetten, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 20,000 feet Temp: -30C

Bomb load: 5-1000 lb bombs

Heavy-Moderate-Accurate flak

Flak was from primary target, St. Valentine. We were 30 seconds from bombs away at primary but couldn't drop bombs because target was obscured by heavy haze, so we went to Amstetten, the 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate.

6 hours, 45 minutes

March 23, 1945

Ship: W-Y

Gmund, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 22,500 feet Temp: -30C

Bomb load: 40-100 lb bombs

No flak, no fighters

7 hours, 30 minutes

March 25, 1945

Ship: W-H

Prague, Czechoslovakia, Capitol

Target: Letnany Airdrome

Altitude: 22,500 feet Temp: -30 C

Bomb load: Frag. Bombs

Heavy-Scant-Accurate flak

Number 4 engine went out just after the target. We thought we were going to lose #1. We were really sweating out #1. The Alps and enemy fighters we didn't lose though.

8 hours, 30 minutes

March 26, 1945

We didn't fly today, but something happened that hit us all. Pete Wilson (the navigator they trained with) went down with Captain Steeves, just after Bratislava. We all hope to God he is safe and sound. (they learned later, he did not survive-my dad thought about Pete all throughout his life)

March 31, 1945

Ship: W-Y

Villach, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 25,000 feet Temp: -40C

Bomb load: 18-250 lb bombs

Heavy-Scant-Inaccurate flak

Coming back, 3 engines went out at once over the Adriatic Sea. We were told to stand by to bail out. We lost 4,000 feet in a couple of seconds and then the engines came back in. We landed at a P-38 fighter strip on the Italian coast. Hit 27,600 feet today.

8 hours, 30 minutes"

April 2, 1945

Ship: W-H

Graz, Austria

Target: Marshalling yards

Altitude: 22,000 feet Temp: -23C

Bomb load: 10-800 lb bombs

Heavy-Moderate-Accurate flak

I flew the nose turret today and actually enjoyed it. Today was Joe's birthday.

6 hours, 30 minutes

April 6, 1945

Captain Steeves came back with most of the crew. He came back in a Ju-52 with 4 Germans who gave themselves up. Pete Wilson is reported killed as far as he knows. I hope to God it's untrue. Captain Steeves' escape from Germany was something you'd see in the movies.

April 7, 1945

Ship: W-Q

We were supposed to bomb a target in the Brenner Pass, North Italy, but due to bad weather, we had to turn back. We did get near enough to the target to get credit for it.

6 hours, 40 minutes.

April 9, 1945

Ship: W-Q

Lugo, North Italy

Target: Ground Installations

Altitude: 22,000 feet Temp: -29C

Bomb load: 40-100 lb bombs

Heavy-Scant-Accurate flak



Today's mission was a highly secret mission which had been planned for weeks. We were to give support to the British 8<sup>th</sup> Army by knocking out gun installations and using frag bombs against the German troops. It was planned wonderfully. There were white arrows, white lines, smoke pots and friendly flak to point out the enemy's position and distinguish the enemy lines from our own.  
5 hours, 30 minutes

April 10, 1945

Ship: W-U

8<sup>th</sup> Army Front

Target: Ground Installations of the German Army

Altitude: 19,000 feet, Temp: -29C

Bomb load: Fragmentation bombs

Heavy-Intense-Accurate flak

Today's mission was carried out about the same as yesterdays. Saw Black N go down. Turned over on its back, left wing snapped off and went down in a ball of flame. Rest of plane went into dive and exploded when it hit the ground.

5 hours, 40 minutes

April 12, 1945

Ship: W-X

Ponte Di Piave, Italy

Target: Railroad bridge

Altitude: 20,000 feet Temp: -13C

Bomb load; 8-500 lb bombs

No flak, no fighters

Oh happy day, more of them.

6 hours

April 15, 1945

Ship: W-K

Bologna, Italy

5<sup>th</sup> Army Front

Target: Enemy installations

Bomb load: 40-100 lb bombs

No flak, no fighters

7 hours, 20 minutes

April 16, 1945

Ship: W-Y

Bologna, Italy

5<sup>th</sup> Army Front

Target: Enemy installations

Bomb load: 18-250 lb bombs

No flak, no fighters

7 hours

April 17, 1945

Ship: W-Y

Bologna, Italy

5<sup>th</sup> Army Front

Target: Enemy installations

No flak, no fighters

7 hours, 30 minutes

April 20, 1945

Ship: W-U

Rovigo, Italy

Target: Highway bridge

Altitude: 20,200 feet Temp: -25C

Bomb load: 5-1000 lb bombs

Heavy-Scant-Accurate Flak

7 hours

April 24, 1945

Ship: W-K

Brondolo, Italy

Target: Railroad bridge

Altitude: 24,000 feet Temp: -30C

Bomb load: 10-500 lb bombs

Heavy-Scant-Accurate flak

Joe and Chuck finished up today.

6 hours, 15 minutes

April 25, 1945

Jerry finished up today by going to Linz. His first and last were Linz. That's what I call starting and ending with a rough target. Had trouble with airplane and had to land at Zara, Yugoslavia.

April 26, 1945

Ship: W-H

Northern Italy

Had bad weather and couldn't drop our bombs. Got credit for it though. Shorty, Red and I joined Club "35" today. It was quite the opposite of Jerry's last one.  
6 hours

I finished exactly one month after Pete went down. Still hoping.

As most, my dad started in combat at age 18 (11/28/1925-10/22/2021) and finished his missions at age 20.