Nose Torn Off by Flak, but B17 Returns from Raid

A DIRECT hit over Cologne sent Pilot Lt. J. D. B. Ball, radio operator, 350th Bomb Group, 96th Bombardment Wing, 9th Air Force, and his crew to an emergency landing near the close of an attack. Ball, who was flying a B-17B bomber, the 458th Bomb Group Stationed at Eindhoven, France, was one of the many Allied bombers that took part in the heavy Bomber Command raid on Cologne.

The B-17B, which was carrying six crewmen, was flying at an altitude of 18,000 feet when it was hit by a 1000-pound flak shell. The explosion ripped a hole in the nose of the aircraft, tore through the cockpit, and killed the pilot, Lt. W. A. Reaves, and injured two other crewmen, including Ball. The other crewmen, who were able to escape the burning plane, reported that the oxygen system had been knocked out and that all of their instruments were out of order.

Wade F. Bishop, Navigator of the 350th Bomb Group, stated that the crew had been instructed to turn away from the target when the oxygen system was knocked out. However, they continued to fly directly at the target, and the oxygen system was not able to be restored.

The crew was able to force land the B-17B near the city of Eindhoven, where they were greeted by British medical officers and taken to a hospital for treatment.

The crew of the B-17B was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their bravery and dedication in carrying out their mission despite the severe conditions they faced.

AFN Radio Program

Wednesday, Nov. 1

American Forces Network: The Road to Berlin

* * *

Five members of a troop-carrier service have been awarded the Bronze Star for their service during the Battle of the Bulge.

They were:

- A. H. Smith
- J. E. Anderson
- W. H. Johnson
- J. M. Davis
- R. L. Brown

The service, consisting of five officers and 20 enlisted men, was assigned to the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, and was charged with the mission of supplying soldiers dropped behind enemy lines.

* * *

Oscar Ross, of Los Angeles, Calif., has been named Outstanding Airman of the Month by the U.S. Air Force.