

STORY #5A SYNOPSIS

1st Lt. Lloyd Bentsen, Jr.

October 16, 1944



Born- Texas
23 Years Old

717th BS, 449th BG
B-24 Liberator bomber

- Bomber Pilot
- Bombing mission to St. Valentin Tank works in Steyr, Austria
- Primary target not located- alternate targets bombed including St. Vert Marshalling Yard by Bentsen crew
- One engine inoperative, two engines sporadic
- Jettisoned all possible equipment
- Landed on Vis successfully with no crew members hurt
- Bentsen returned to base that day by P-38 recon plane
- Crew returned to base at 1700



449th Bomber Group

- Grottaglie, Italy - Nov 1943- April 1945
- Three bomber squadrons: 716th, 717th, 718th and 719th
- B-24 Liberator heavy bombers with 10-man crews: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, radio operator/waist gunner, engineer/waist gunner, nose gunner, tail gunner, ball turret gunner, and top gunner
- Flew 254 combat missions to France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and the Balkans
- Dropped 14,951 tons of bombs – 135 aircraft lost in combat



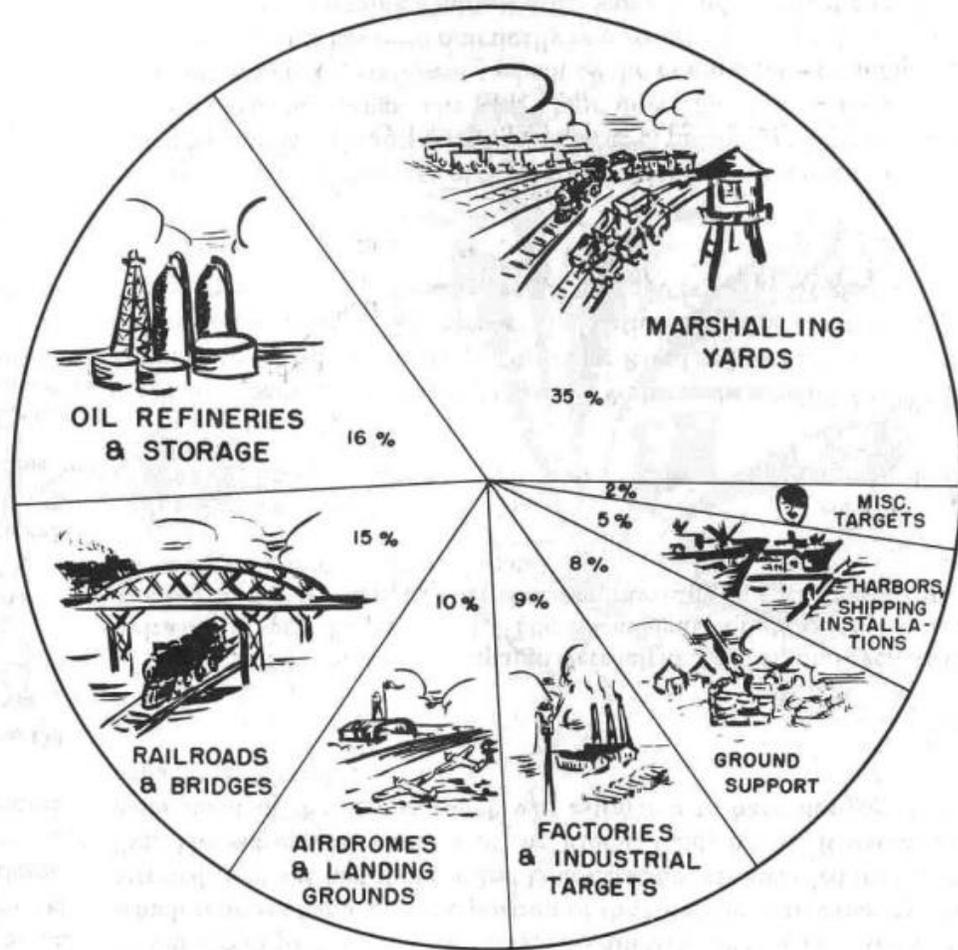
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Grottaglie Airfield



ANALYSIS OF TARGETS ATTACKED

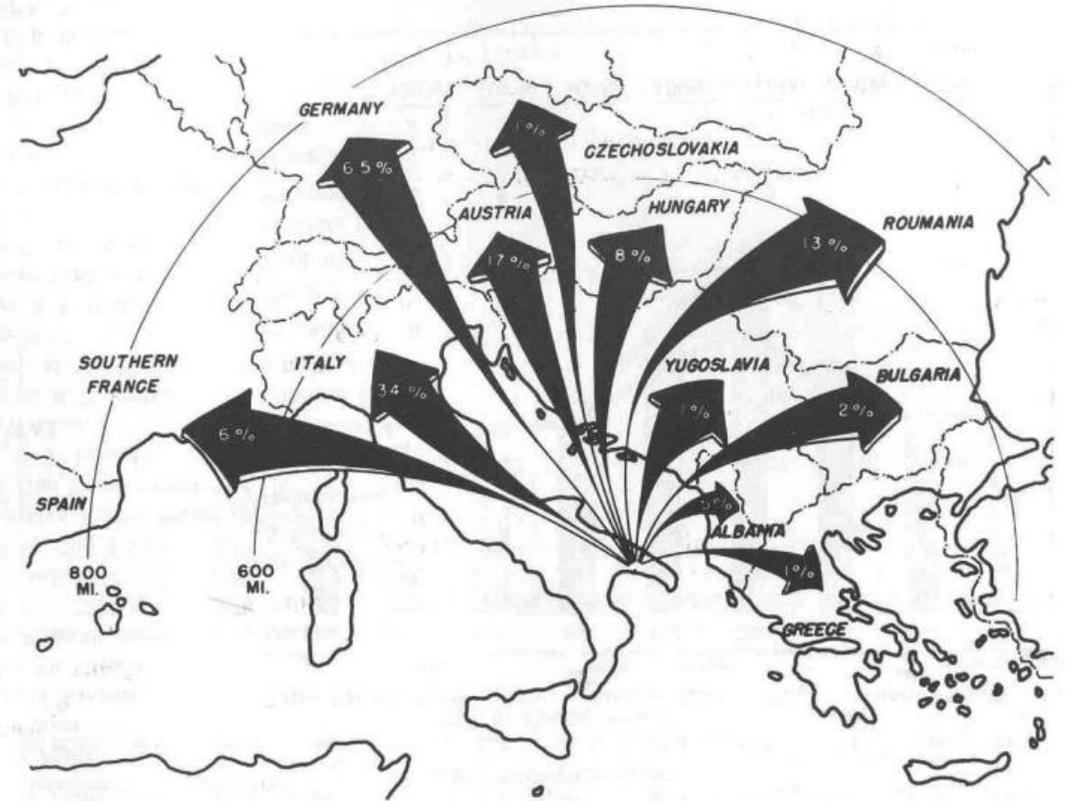
1944



ANALYSIS OF FLIGHTS MADE

PERCENTAGE OF ATTACKS BY COUNTRY

1944



Lloyd Millard Bentsen, Jr.

- Born on February 11, 1921 in Mission, Texas & grew up there
- Son of Lloyd Millard Bentsen, Sr. & Edna Colbath
- Two brothers and a sister
- Father was real estate developer
- Graduated Sharyland H.S. in 1936 at age 15
- Eagle Scout
- Graduated Univ. of Texas Law School in 1942, admitted to the bar



REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)

SERIAL NUMBER 1759 1. NAME (Print) Lloyd Millard Bentsen JR. ORDER NUMBER 10608
 T. (First) (Middle) (Last)

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) Mission Hidalgo Texas
 (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)
 [THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]

3. MAILING ADDRESS 214 Arhway Austin Texas
 [Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same]

4. TELEPHONE 81981 5. AGE IN YEARS 21 6. PLACE OF BIRTH Mission Texas
 (Exchange) (Number) (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.) (Town or county) (State or country)
 DATE OF BIRTH Feb. 11 1921

7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Lloyd Bentsen SR. Mission, Texas

8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS None

9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS None
 (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE
 D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42) ☆ GPO 16-21630-1
 (over) (Registrant's signature) L. Bentsen Jr.

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT

RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION	
			Sallow	Light
White ✓	6' 1"	165		
	EYES	HAIR	Ruddy	
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Dark	
	Gray	Red	Freckled	✓
Oriental	Hazel	Brown ✓	Light brown	
	Brown ✓	Black	Dark brown	
Indian	Black	Gray	Black	
		Bald		
Filipino				

Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification
 U. I. brand on his chest.

I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

None that I know of

Katharine M. Hamilton
 (Signature of registrar)

Registrar for Local Board 2 Austin Texas
 (Number) (City or county) (State)

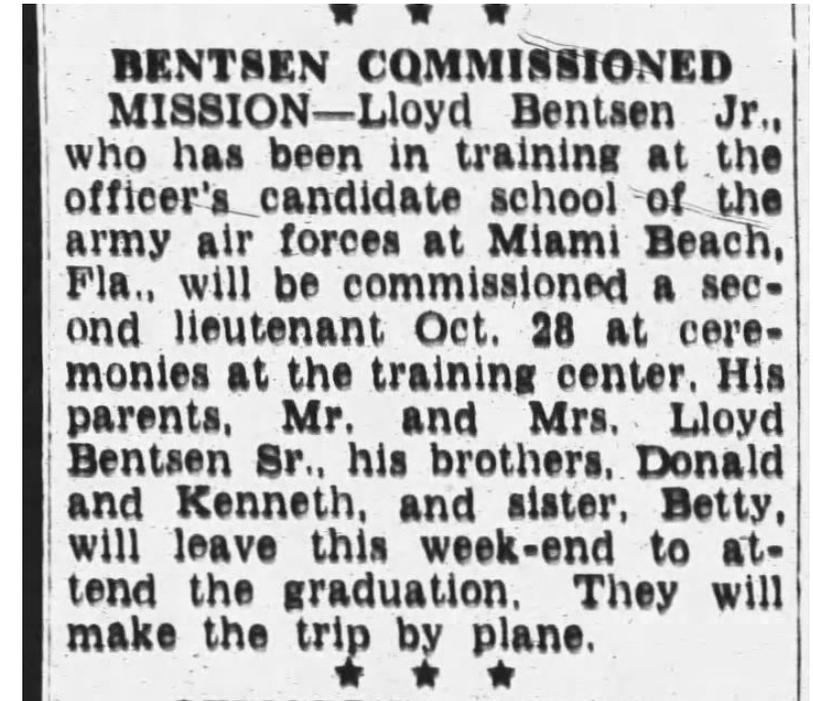
Date of registration 2/16/42

Local Board No. 2 85
 Hidalgo County 215
 FEB 21 1942 002
 Federal Bureau of Investigation
 MISSION TEXAS LOCAL BOARD

(The stamp of the local board having jurisdiction of the registrant shall be placed in the above space)

Military Career – 1942-1945

- Enlisted on April 11, 1942 at age 21
- 11 Bentsens from Mission enlisted
- Commissioned October 28, 1942- stationed with AF HQ staff in Wash. D.C.
- 4 months in Brazil on an AAF intelligence mission
- Transferred to flight training school in Nashville in June 1943
- Married Beryl Ann Longino Nov 27, 1943
- Lived in Columbus, Mississippi after marriage while in flight training



Bentsen was sent to Brazil but quickly sought a transfer to flight training in the United States because, as he told his commanding officer, he had to combat an emergency at home.

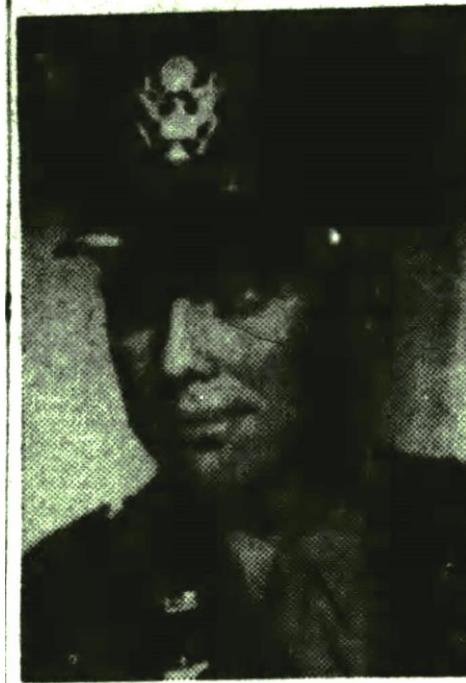
Asked what that was, he explained that he feared a rival suitor, a Navy man, would take away his girlfriend. "That is an emergency," the commanding officer replied. Bentsen got the transfer and won the hand of Beryl Ann "B.A." Longino of Lufkin. They were married Nov. 27, 1943, shortly before he was sent to Europe.



LT. LLOYD BENTSEN JR. AND HIS ATTRACTIVE BRIDE cut the first piece of their wedding cake. They are making their home at the Gilmer hotel, Columbus, Miss., where the wedding supper was given following their marriage the last of November. Mrs. Bentsen is the former Miss Beryl Ann Longino of Lufkin and New York City where she was a photographic model. Lieutenant Bentsen is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Bentsen of Mission.

- Graduated from Columbus Army Flying School Jan. 15, 1944 & received his silver wings
- B-24 flight training and other training through June 1944

Despite his stately reserve, Bentsen liked to recall a youth of derring-do. He recalled that when he was in Army flight training during World War II, he took a plane too far into a dive and barely avoided a crash. He thought he had gotten away with it until the trainer found corn cobs stuck to the plane.



STUDENT OFFICER

MISSION—1st Lt. Lloyd Millard Bentsen Jr., above, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd M. Bentsen Sr. of Mission, was a student officer in the 21st class of aviation cadets to graduate from the advanced twin-engine Columbus Army Flying school near Columbus, Miss., Friday.

He received the silver wings of a flying officer and was transferred in rank at graduation to the army air forces. Lieutenant Bentsen entered pilot training last May and was a student officer while attending flying schools at LaFayette, La. and Montgomery, Ala.

Before entering pilot training he had attended University of Texas at Austin. He is a member of Sigma Nu fraternity.

★ ★ ★



717th Bomb Squadron

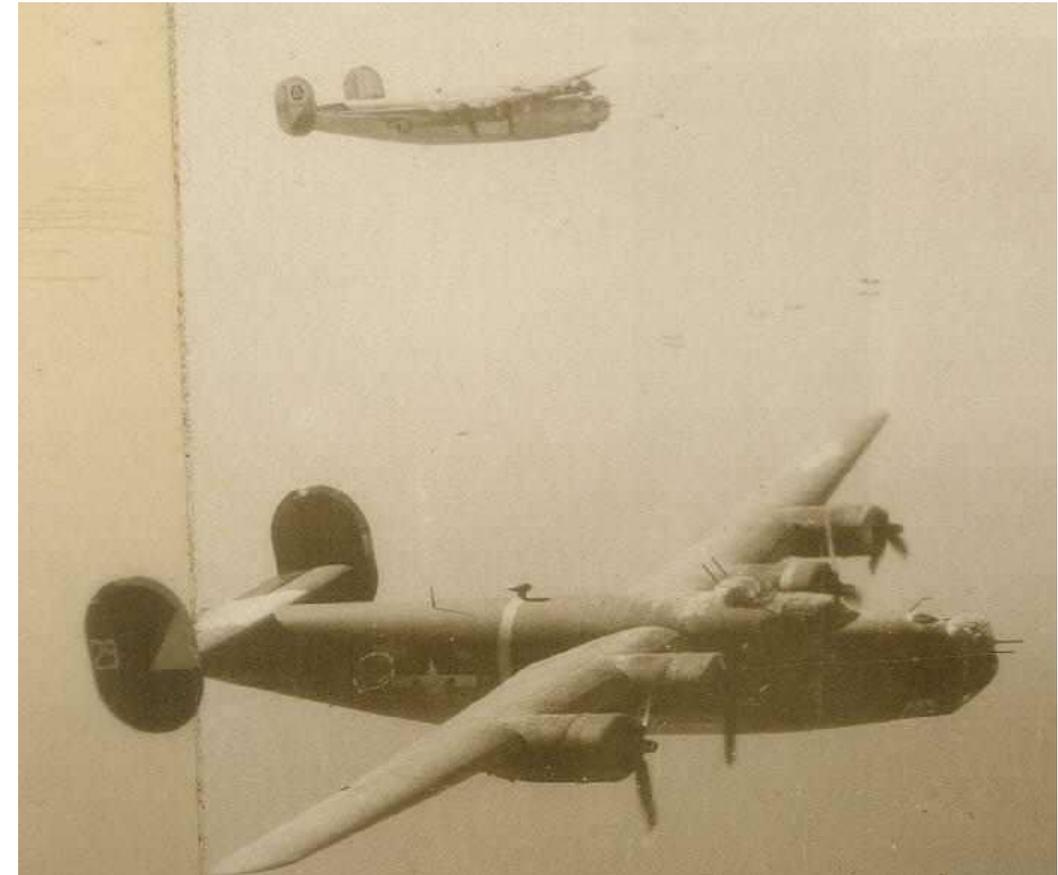
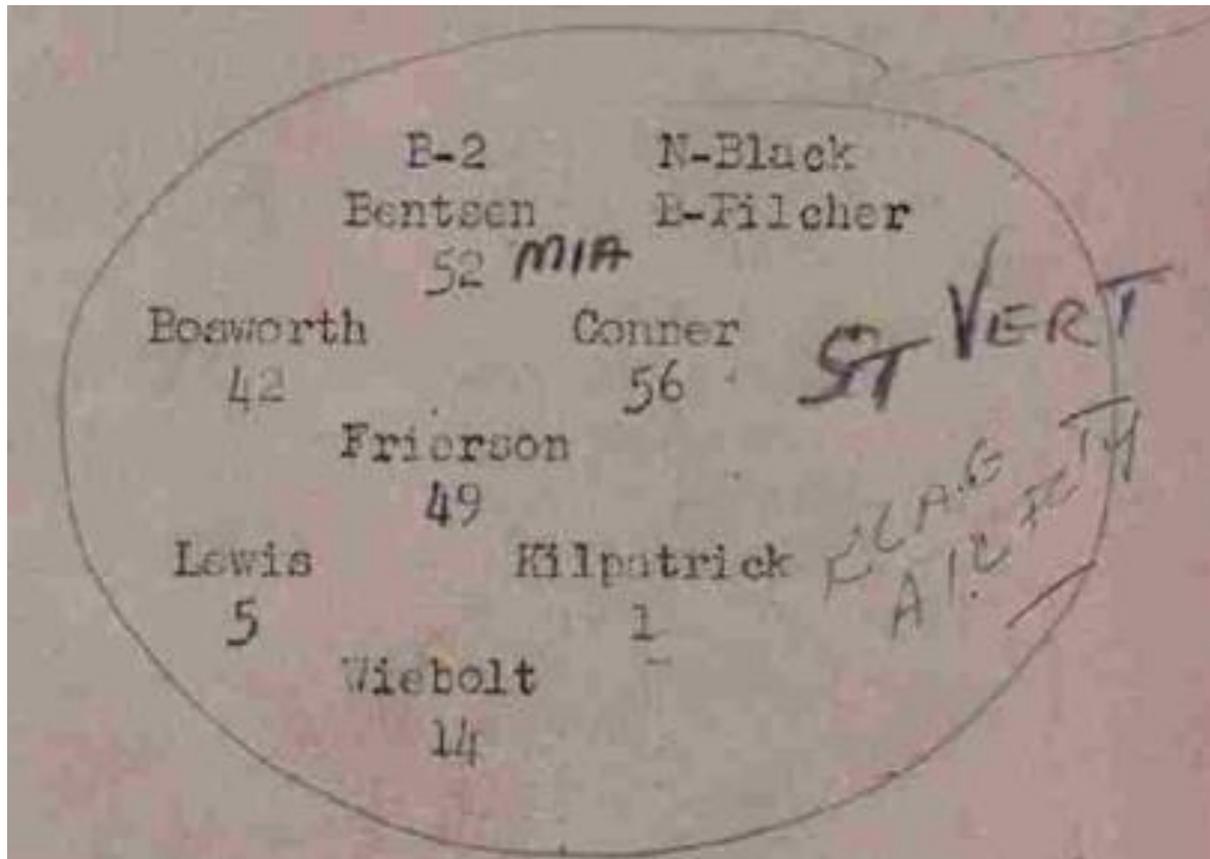
- 1Lt Bentsen joined the 717th in Grottaglie, Italy in July 1944 without a crew
- Flew missions with operations-assigned crews
- Shot up by flak on mission to Trieste Port on September 10th
- Landed on friendly field at Pescara, Italy- back to Grottaglie at 2030
- Promoted to assistant operations officer
- Bentsen would fly on 46 credited missions

★ ★ ★
PROMOTED
MISSION—First Lt. Lloyd M. Bentsen of Mission, first pilot on a B-24 Liberator bomber serving in the Italian theater, has been made assistant operations officer at his base, messages to his wife and parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Bentsen Sr. have revealed. Lieutenant Bentsen and all of his crew were saved September 10 when their plane was shot down as it returned from a mission over enemy territory. The Mission officer managed to pilot the plane back over the Allied lines before it was abandoned and all members of the crew were back at their base within a few hours.

October 16, 1944

- Mission to Steyr, Austria – Bentsen crew bombed alternate target St. Vert Marshalling Yard
- One engine out, two others sporadic
- Jettisoned all equipment, barely made it to Vis
- Successful, but rocky landing
- No crew hurt
- Bentsen returned to base by P-38 and crew later at 1700
- Second crew from 719th BS piloted by Lt. William Allen also landed on Vis successfully

Box B-2 led by Lt. Bentsen



Bentsen in plane #52 called Big Fence (navigational aid station) and asked for reading to Vis

Our Group A/C Losses:
(Time) (Altitude) (Place by name & coordinates) (Description and No. Chutes seen)

1225	19000	Just after left Jalisco 20-68	Reached Palomares parachute out over adobe runways
1227	19000	Same place	52 Called Big Fence and asked for heading to Vis Pilot Bentsen

Other A/C Losses:

Account by Tail Gunner
S/Sgt Earl Kindred
account written later

CREW:

Pilot: 1Lt Lloyd Bentsen

Co-Pilot: Unknown

Tail Gunner: Earl Kindred

Gunner: Vasilios

Pappaconstantinou

Gunner: Joseph Netsch

Engineer: David Snow

Radio Opr: Walter Smith

Navigator: James Black

Bombardier: David Pilcher

Waist Gunner: Unknown

Bentsen's Crew Crash Lands At Vis

After bombing Vienna, 23 August '44, we came away with one engine out and another at partial power, losing altitude. It became apparent that we would have to either ditch or find an emergency landing field. The Island of Vis was selected, hoping that it was in Allied hands.

Heat waves held the damaged ship off the runway. Capt. Bentsen alerted the crew to "hang on" and forced the ship down, only for the nose wheel to collapse and end up in the bomb bay with the aircraft skidding to halt with the tail high into the air. A P-38 photo reconnaissance ship also landed and took Capt. Bentsen to 15th Air Force Headquarters at Bari, Italy. Just prior to sunset, in came the sweetest B-25 to pick us up. Bentsen earned the DFC. He had arrived into the 449th without a crew and flew combat missions with operations-assigned crew members in the 717th, and also in the 716th after he became Squadron C.O. in November '44.

-- Earl Kinerd and Lloyd Bentsen
717th Squadron



Bentsen's Crew On The Ground At Vis.

Left to Right: Earl Kindred (TG); Nitsch (G); Snow (F/E); crouching, Smith (R/O); above him, Pappas (G); Navigator (unk); Bombardier (unk).

Top left, is the WG (unk). The remaining crew member is the copilot (unk), atop the CP window.

Pilot Lloyd Bentsen is not in the photo. He was picked up by a P-38 that also landed at Vis, and was flown to 15th Air Force headquarters at Bari.¹⁴

On one mission, Bentsen said, his four-engine plane had taken so much flak damage that he had to crash land on an island in the Adriatic Sea, unsure whether the territory was held by Nazis or the Allies. A group of armed men rushed the downed plane.

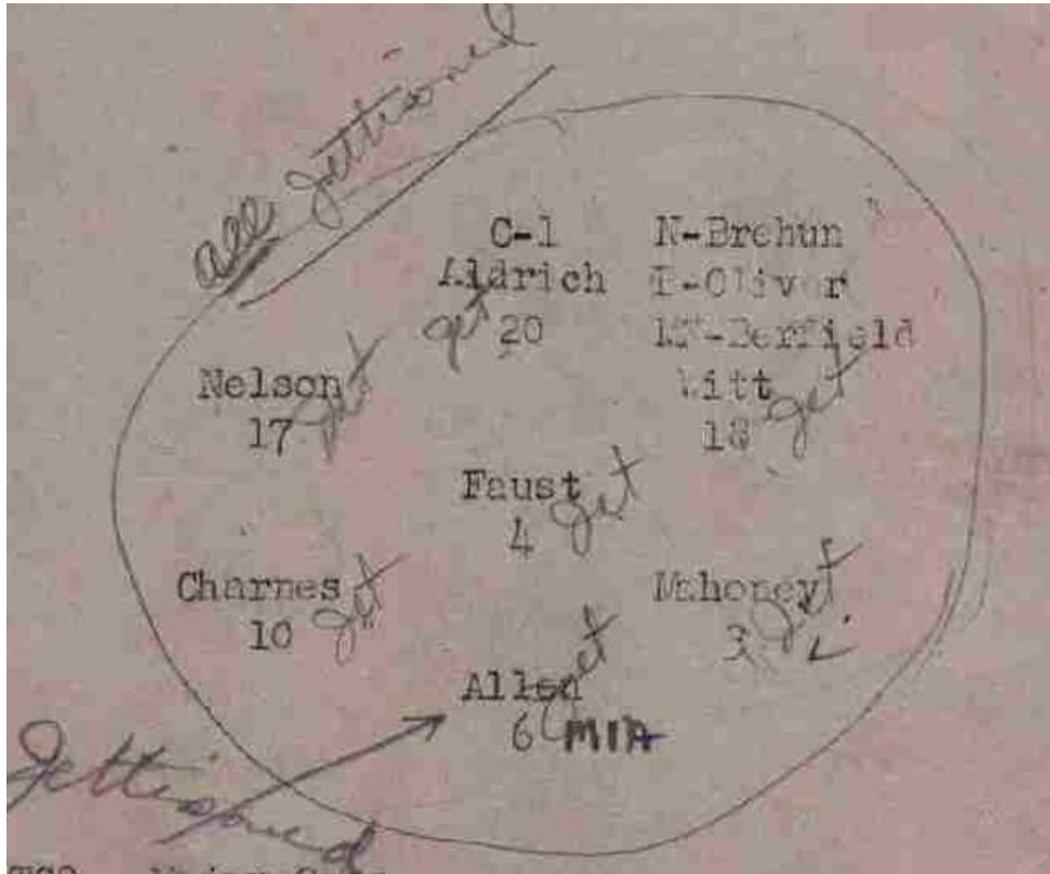
“My pulse rate was pretty high, and I got out and started walking toward them,” Bentsen said. “All of a sudden I saw one of them and said, ‘I know you.’”

The heavily armed man replied, “Sure, I used to sack groceries for your mother at the grocery store in McAllen.”

It turned out that his plane had come down safely on the Allied-held island of Vis, off the coast of what was then Yugoslavia.

“Bentsen Recalls Fear, Valor of his War Years “(Austin_American_Statesman_Sun__Jun_5__1994)

Lt. William Allen & crew from 719th BS in #6 also landed on Vis successfully that day



Squadron 711 Group 149 A/C No. 6 Crew No. 7-16 Bomb Load _____

Position in formation C-7 Target ST. LAZARUS PT.

Pilot ALLEN TTC. _____

Co-P. THOMPSON Waist R. MARTIN

Nav. WERRANIN Waist L. MASSIE

Bomb. TOMICH BTG. ALLEN

Nose G. BONKER Tail G. _____

Observer WIS 1700 Photog. WOODWORTH

Time off 0701 Time Landed 19:00 Rounds fired None

Courtesy of Mark Coffee, 449th BG Association historian

Promoted to Captain & 449th BG received Distinguished Unit Badge in October 1944 (though he wasn't on that April 4th mission)

Captain Bentsen Gets Citation

MISSION — Capt. Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr., serving with the Fifteenth Army Air Force in Italy, has received the Distinguished unit Badge as a member of the group recently commended for outstanding performance in the European Theater of Operations.

Bentsen, whose wife and small son he has never seen are making their home with his parents in Mission while he is overseas, is a first pilot of a B-24 Liberator and serves as assistant operations officer of his squadron.

His group was cited for its heavy bombardment against the railyards at Bucharest, Romania, when it performed the remarkable feat of destroying 40 Nazi planes while achieving destruction of the target. More than 90 planes attacked the Liberators, then unescorted, using rocket guns, cannon, machineguns and aerial bombs in a desperate effort to halt the American bombers. The battle raged for an hour and a half and at its zenith, The big bombers dropped their lethal load on the marshalling yards and accomplished their return trip with a loss of only seven planes. The unit has participated in over 130 attacks on enemy targets.

One of the B-24s Bentsen flew
“Betty Jane” for his wife



Courtesy of Mark Coffee, 449th BG Association historian

Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for Vis Landing on January 9 1945



LLOYD M. BENTSEN, JR., O-564794, 1st Lt., Air Corps, 717th Bomb Sq, 449th Bomb Gp (H), United States Army. For extraordinary achievement in aerial flight. Lt Bentsen was pilot of a B-24 type aircraft that was severely damaged by intense and very accurate anti-aircraft fire while on a mission to Austria on 16 October 1944. Finding the primary target completely obscured by the weather, Lt Bentsen led his box to an alternate target. Maintaining his formation despite the fact that two engines were operating sporadically and one engine was entirely inoperative, Lt Bentsen displayed consummate skill and craftsmanship and as a result of his superior and outstanding ability enabled his section to bomb the alternate target. Unable to remain in the formation upon leaving the target, Lt Bentsen with cool leadership and determined action ordered his crew to jettison all equipment possible to keep the plane airborne. With only one engine operating properly he succeeded in reaching friendly territory and successfully landed the plane without injury to any of the crew. By his superb professional skill, extraordinary achievement and outstanding leadership, Lt Bentsen has upheld the highest traditions of the Military Service and has reflected great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Commander of 716th BS from November 1944 through February 1945



Valley Man Leads Bomber Squadron

MISSION— Capt. Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr., B-24 liberator pilot based with the Fifteenth Army Air Force in Italy, has been made commander of a 15th AAF Liberator squadron. He wears the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters and his group has been awarded two War Department citations.



CAPT. L. M. BENTSEN, JR.

15TH AAF IN ITALY—Shown above is Capt. Lloyd M. Bentsen, Jr., whose parents live at Mission, Tex., as does his wife, Beryl Ann, and son, Lloyd III. He recently was made commander of a 15th AAF B-24 Liberator squadron based in Italy.

Promoted to Major February 1945 – age 24



15TH AAF IN ITALY—Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr., 24, whose parents reside at Mission, Tex., has been promoted to a majority at a 15th AAF B-24 Liberator base in Italy. He commands a heavy bombardment squadron.

A graduate of the University of Texas with a law degree, Major Bentsen joined the USAAF in April, 1942. He won his wings as a pilot at Columbus, Miss. on Jan. 15, 1944, and has been stationed in Italy since July. He served as squadron operations officer before assuming command of his unit in December.

A veteran of more than 30 combat missions, Major Bentsen has been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his leadership on an important mission to Nazi supply lines at Vienna. He also wears the Air Medal with two bronze Oak Leaf Clusters.

Mrs. Beryl Ann Bentsen, his wife, and infant son, Lloyd III, whom he has never seen, also reside in Mission.

Returned to U.S. in April 1945
saw his son, Lloyd, III (born 9/29/1944) for first time

Maj. Lloyd Bentsen Jr. is home on 21 day leave from duty as a Liberator pilot with the 15th Air Force in Italy to visit his wife, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Bentsen Sr., and his son, Lloyd III, born while he was overseas. Since he went overseas last July, Bentsen has been promoted to captain and major. Lately he had been squadron commander. He has flown 46 missions, with targets at Vienna, Munich, Leipzig and elsewhere in the Reich and also flew on tactical missions in support of the Russian drive. After a Vienna mission he received the Distinguished Flying Cross for making a crash landing with all his crew safe after two engines were shot away. He also has the Air Medal with three clusters and a Presidential Unit citation with one cluster. He will report for reassignment at Miami Beach, Fla.

Lloyd Bentsen- Post War

- Separated as Major in 1945 & joined Texas State Guard
- Retired in 1947 as Lt. Colonel
- Served in US Air Force Reserve from 1950-1957
- Retired as a Colonel
- Joined law firm in late 1945

Lloyd Bentsen Jr. Joins Law Firm

McALLEN—Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr. has joined the law firm of Orville I. Cox and A. W. (Ted) Taylor in McAllen. Cox announced today.

The firm name has been changed to Cox, Taylor and Bentsen.

Bentsen recently returned from overseas service with the air forces and was separated with the rank of major. He and his wife and young son are making their home here.

Cox said new construction which will add a second story to the firm's building on South Broadway and otherwise increase its space is scheduled to start by Dec. 15.

Political Career 1946-1994

- Youngest judge in Hidalgo County, Texas in 1946
- US Representative 1948-1955
- Hiatus from politics 1956-1970
- Distinguished US Senator 1971-1993
- Ran for Vice President in 1988 on Democratic ticket with Michael Dukakis but lost to the Bush/Quayle ticket
- Treasury Secretary 1993-4 under Clinton

Lloyd Bentsen, Jr. First To Enter '48 Race For Congress

Lloyd M. Bentsen, jr., the Democrat representing the 15th Texas district in the House, will not be 28 until Friday, but he is a former county judge, a position he resigned in Hidalgo County last March to begin his campaign for Congress.

He also can look back on a notable wartime career in the Army Air Forces. Enlisting as a private shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, he became a bomber pilot and served two years overseas. He advanced to command of a B-24 bombing squadron and earned a collection of decorations including the Distinguished Flying Cross.

On one of his missions, Mr. Bentsen was forced down over Yugoslavia. Friendly Partisans received him, however, and he was able to make his way to safety. He was a major when released from active service late in 1945.



Vote For
Lloyd M. Bentsen Jr.
Candidate For
County Judge
HIDALGO COUNTY
Dependable — Capable
Honest and Efficient

Famous 1988 VP debate zinger aimed at opponent Senator Quayle



"Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy"

Keynote speaker at two 450th BG Association reunions

"Maximum Effort"

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Three Noted 449th Bomb Group WWII Pilots



Left to Right:

Colonel Jack Randolph, Deputy Operations Commander, June '44 to September '44; Group Commanding Officer, September '44 to May '45. 449th Bomb Group Association President Emeritus.

Lloyd M. Bentsen, Crew Pilot in 717th Bomb Squadron, June '44 to November '44; 716th Squadron Commanding Officer from November '44 to February '45. Became Texas State Senator, and served as the U.S. National Secretary of Treasury. Lloyd Bentsen has been the principal speaker at two 449th Bomb Group Reunions.

Frank W. Elliott, Jr., Major General USAF (Retd) served a post-war career in many capacities, one of which was Wing Commander, Fairchild AFB. He was elected as the 449th Bomb Group Association President in 1984. Following his Air Force career, he served as the economic development leader in Rantoul, IL. After his death in late 1997, Chanute AFB was renamed Frank Elliot Field in his honor.

Courtesy of Mark Coffee, 449th BG Association historian

Rest in Peace

- War Hero
- Dedicated and effective politician
- Successful Texas businessman
- Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1999 for his service to the country
- Died at age 85 in 2006

