

Hartzell, Donald F.

## Sgt. Hartzell Home After 50 Missions

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### Air Corps Gunner Admits He Was "Scared and Lucky" Many Times

"I was scared a lot of times" grinningly confessed Donald F. Hartzell, air corps sergeant, in commenting on his fifty missions over Europe from March 25 to July 7, from which he emerged without a scratch in spite of having been in some rather tight scrapes.

He is on leave at his home, 1428 Iron Street, until the end of the month when he will spend two weeks at Miami Beach, Florida, until he receives further orders.

He expects to be assigned to duty as gunnery instructor.

Sergeant Hartzell considers himself lucky having secured in such a short time the coveted fifty missions making him eligible for a furlough. In his diary is a cross before the date July 7, when he made his last mission, over Germany.

He flew at least every other day and sometimes two or three days in a row. His missions were over France, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Germany. He acted as gunner and photographer.

He almost became a casualty, he said, when a flak hit the oxygen tent of the plane he was in and the impact knocked him 10 feet. He was, however, unhurt.

Every mission lasted about eight hours, he related. The flak over Germany was "tough," but once over Vienna most accurate, when their tail gunner got hit and they were forced to land, on return, with one tire.

A good pilot was responsible for their getting back safe that time, he said. He considers himself extremely lucky in getting out of that scrape and others unhurt.

"If you don't come back with holes in your plane," the sergeant commented, "you think something's queer."

Before sailing for America, the sergeant spent a night at the Isle of Capri, but had no time to see the famed blue grotto there. He



SGT. DONALD F. HARTZELL

was eager to get back to the United States, anyway, he said, because contrary to what romantic-minded Americans think, air service is just "flying and sleeping."

He will spend his time here with his parents, City Mercantile Appraiser Paul T. Hartzell and Mrs. Hartzell, and with his fiancée, Miss Helen Hujcs. He expects to do some fishing.

Sergeant Hartzell has the Presidential citation medal for bombing and several other decorations.

He entered service April 24, 1943, received basic training at Greensboro, N. C., got his gunnery wings at Lowry Field, Colo., and was made sergeant at Langley Field. In early July he became staff sergeant.

He was formerly employed by the Bethlehem Steel Company.

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