

Gunner Cited

MAY 8 1945



AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STATION, England— A fourth Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal has been awarded to Technical Sergeant Robert F. Oeschle, 26, Bethlehem, top turret gunner and aerial engineer of an Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress, for "meritorious achievement . . . courage, coolness and skill" while participating in bombing attacks upon military and industrial installations in Germany.

Sgt. Oeschle, a member of the 385th Bombardment Group commanded by Colonel George Y. Jumper, Natoma, Calif., has completed 30 operational missions in this toughest theater of aerial warfare. His group is a part of the Third Air Division, the division cited by the President for its historic England-Africa shuttle bombing attack upon the Messerschmitt aircraft plants of Regensburg, Germany, in August, 1943.

He has defended his bomber with its top turret guns during attacks upon such vital objectives as war industries of Berlin and Dresden; oil refineries of Brux and Meresburg; tire factories of Hanover; submarine pens, dock installations and warehouses of Bremen and Hamburg; heavy tank factories of Leipzig; and railroad yards and trains in Nuremberg and cities in western Germany.

Many of his attacks upon railroad yards, bridges and supplies were made in conjunction with Allied tank and infantry attacks. Several of his most recent missions were made in March, a record month for bombs dropped and sorties flown by the Eighth Air Force.

Many times his bomber has met extremely heavy flak opposition over the targets, but it came closest to disaster during a fighter attack over the oil refineries at Meresburg. A 20 millimeter shell pierced a wing, just missing a gasoline tank, but failed to explode. He and other gunners of the group were fighting off more than 30 Nazi fighters at the time.

Sgt. Oeschle is the son of Robert H. Oeschle, Bethlehem, Pa. He attended Bethlehem Catholic High School. Prior to entering the Army Air Forces in October, 1941, he was a machinist learner at Bethlehem Steel. He received his aerial gunnery wings at Tyndall Field, Florida, in July, 1943.

Oeschle, Robert

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