

Lt. W. A. Buchecker Bails From Flak-Riddled Liberator Into Channel On Invasion Day

JUL 10 1944

Misses Being On First Craft To Land In France When Ordered To Take To 'Chute — Wind Drives Crew Into Water

Lieut. William A. Buchecker, 1033 North Main Street, this city, just missed being in the first United States Liberator bomber to land on re-captured French soil, it was revealed today by the Eighth Army Air Force.

It so happened that when the Liberator landed, Lieut. Buchecker was floating in the English Channel waiting to be picked up by British craft after he and seven other members of the crew bailed out when their plane became disabled.

The plane on which Lieut. Buchecker was navigator completed a bombing mission and was severely damaged by flak. When the motors failed and it became apparent the bomber couldn't return to its base, the pilot and co-pilot ordered the crew to bail out while they tried to land on a new strip along the French coast.

BLOWN INTO CHANNEL

When the crew bailed out it was thought a land wind would carry the eight safely inland on French soil occupied by Allied troops, but a shift in the wind caused all to be carried out over the English Channel where they were picked up in a few minutes by British ships.

Buchecker's Story

"I bailed out and as I came down the small boats were circling in the channel below me waiting to pick me up. I was in the water only two minutes. We were within three miles of the front lines. Everything was going forward and nothing back. Mine fields were everywhere, and they were marked off with white tape. Instead of trying to shoot snipers out they were blowing up buildings in which they were hidden. At night we could see the flash of guns of naval craft in the channel shooting onto the shore.

"The night we were there the Germans sent a few planes over which bombed and strafed nearby, but they were not in any great force. We were brought home in an ST which was part of a large convoy returning ships for more men and supplies and carrying wounded and prisoners back to England. The food we had was better than anything since we left the states. This was my second parachute jump so I'm putting in for troopers. The weather has been

Jul 10, 1944