

CELEBRATE YOU LUCKY BASTARD.

This is to certify that S/SGT ARTHUR DOBIAS having taken part in many aerial assaults against Nazi Germany and having successfully returned from each mission in spite of flak, fighters and foul weather, has been unanimously elected a member of the LUCKY BASTARD CLUB. To him and to all the intrepid and fortunate members of this exclusive organization, this verse is dedicated.

*Oh, hero of combat, pride of a nation,
Bemedalled receiver of high decoration,
Object of womanhood's rapturous sighs,
Battle-scarred veteran of war in the skies,
You've completed your tour with undaunted soul
And though flak bursts have threatened your flying control
You have flown many missions with highest resolve
To stamp out the gangsters, so peace may evolve.
You have blasted the Nazi with thousands of tons
Of explosive and pulled all the sting from his guns;
You have paved the way for the march through the Ruhr
And have helped to make freedom and victory sure.
Crusader for righteousness, Gallahad, you
Will never receive all the honors you're due,
So go home to your whiskey, your women and jive;
You're a lucky bastard to be alive.*

Falling from English skies

■ 'The next thing I saw was flames'

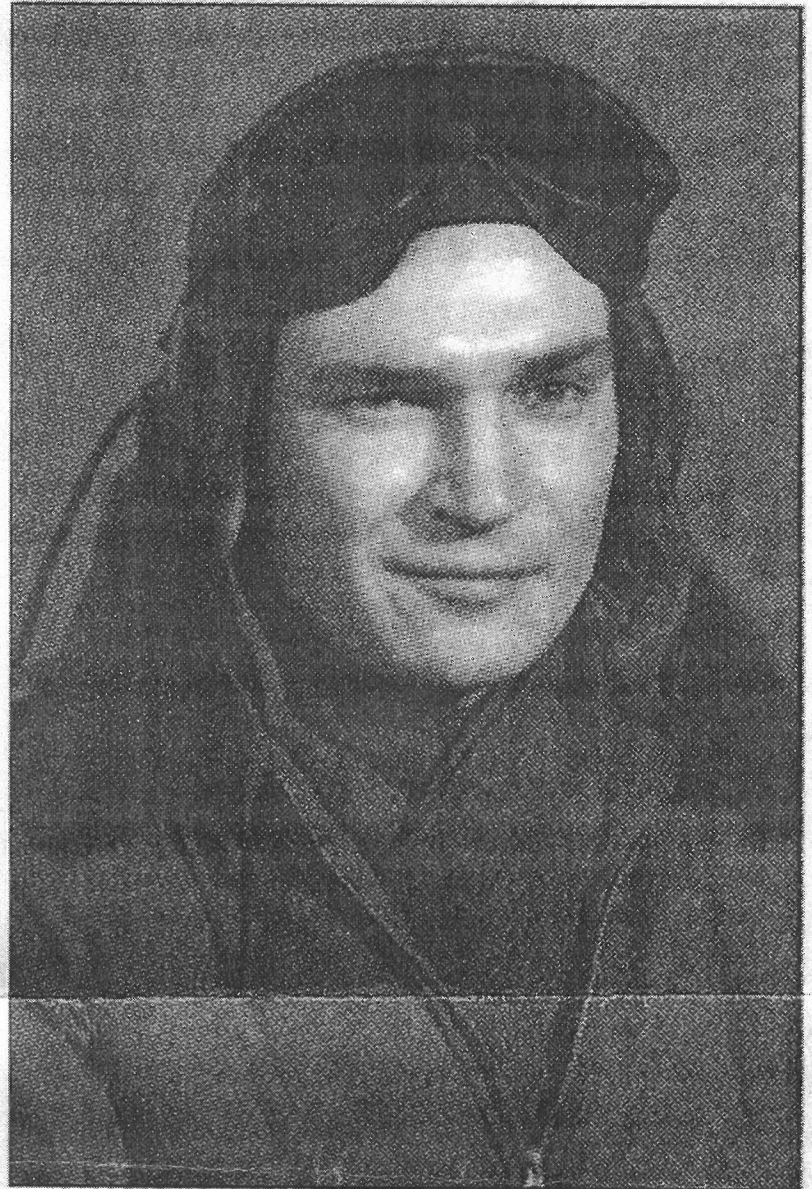
By Art Dobias
U.S. Army veteran

It was the morning of Jan. 10, 1945, somewhere in England. It was dark, and it was snowing that morning. Each man went about his job in the usual way, some not knowing it was their fatal flight. Our bomb load was four 1,000-pound bombs instead of the usual six, as we were the chaff ship.

We had just gotten airborne and were slowly gaining altitude. I was standing at my usual position at the right waist gunner station looking out when suddenly the entire plane began to shudder like a live thing. The engines were roaring their all, it seemed, but we were losing altitude fast. I felt the treetops of a hedge beat against the belly as we just cleared. The next instant we struck. I remember falling forward — then nothing.

The next thing I saw was flame, flame all over the waist. I was lying somewhere where the lower ball turret had been. It was burning up — only one thing was in my mind — to get away and fast. I got up and ran back to the waist door. The lower ball gunner and the radio man were trying to get it open, but it was jammed. Just how I do not know, but somehow we got it opened and stumbled out into the snow.

We had covered only a short distance when the gas tanks went up in one big "whoosh" — shooting flame high into the air. After this, I remem-



Art Dobias: "It is only by the grace of God that we escaped with our lives."

ber very little except that occasionally I remember that I wanted to return — my pals were in that plane — but the lower ball man would not let me. I reckon he saved me by so doing. Two of the bombs exploded when we were about a half mile or so from the wreckage. I faintly recall it as it knocked us in the snow. After this I remember nothing till we walked into a farmhouse. The ball gunner bandaged my head, as I had a cut that was bleeding some. Our pilot, co-pilot, engineer and tail gunner were killed. The bombardier and navigator were severely injured.

It seems like a dream, but the empty bunks in our barracks proved it was not. We attended the funerals of our fellow crewmen, whom we learned to love as brothers. And I feel it is only by the grace of God that we escaped with our lives.

Dobias lives in Angus, Minn.



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DOBIAS
BRUCE
ARTHUR



1973

Airman Bruce Dobias assigned to Chanute



BRUCE DOBIAS



SAN ANTONIO - - Airman Bruce A. Dobias, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Dobias of R. R. 1, Angus, Minn., has been assigned to Chanute AFB, Ill., after completing Air Force Basic training.

During his six weeks at the Air Training Command's Lackland AFB, Tex., he studied the Air Force mission, organization and customs and received special instruction in human relations.

The airman has been assigned to the Technical Training Center at Chanute for specialized training in aircraft maintenance.

Airman Dobias is a 1969 graduate of Warren (Minn.) High School.





Offut AFB Nebraska
stop over on way to Spain.
Aug 1974



Feeding time for the "Blackbird".
SR-71 takes fuel from Cobra I over
the Mediterranean, just North of Crete.



Cobra I off our left wing,
Cobra 3 off our right wing
over Italy



F-4 in formation - waiting
his turn for fuel.



RC-135V Just before he pulled
in for refueling.



F-111 moving in to
take fuel