



John Travers Baum (1920 -1943)

John T. Baum was born on October 3, 1920 in San Francisco, CA. In 1930, he was living in Los Angeles California. In 1935, he attended Pt. Loma High School in San Diego, and later attended Chaffey College, Ontario, CA. & St. John's Military Academy, L.A prior to WWII. His father, Charles "Spider" Baum was a pro baseball player for the Pacific Coast League. They lived at 639 D Street in Chula Vista, CA His father was the athletic director at Rohr aircraft when he received word that his son was killed on active duty. He joined the Army Air corps in April, 1942 and later received his wings in August, 1943. He was a former employee of Rohr Aircraft.

John Baum was a pilot of a B-17 and assigned to the 550th Bomber Squadron, 385th Bomber Group, 8th Air Force. He was the co-pilot of a B-17 "Flying Fortress" bomber aircraft. This bomber group flew 297 combat missions over France and Germany between June 11, 1943 and May 2, 1945. This bomber group flew from Great Ashfield airdrome located in Suffolk, England. A crew consisted of four officers, and six enlisted.

Their mission on 16 September, 1943 is included in the following USAAF report:

1. 131 of 147 B-17's dispatched hit two targets in Nantes; 79 hit Nantes harbor installations at 1502-1512 hours and 52 hit Nantes/Chateau-Bougon Airfield at 1509-1512 hours; they claim 22-2-5 Luftwaffe aircraft; 7 B-17's are lost, 1 is damaged beyond repair and 47 are damaged; casualties are 9 WIA and 60 MIA. This mission is escorted by 79 P-47's; they claim 2-0-1 Luftwaffe aircraft and suffer no losses or casualties.

2. 93 of 148 B-17's hit La Pallice harbor installations at 1755-1758 hours, Laroche/Laleau Airfield at 1755-1758 and Cognac/Chateaubernard Airfield at 1731 hours; they claim 22-3-8 Luftwaffe aircraft; 4 B-17's are lost, 5 damaged beyond repair and 17 damaged; casualties are 44 KIA, 9 WIA and 30 MIA.

He died in reduced visibility in the early evening on September 16, 1943 as a result of his B-17 having a mid-air collision with another bomber from the 95th Bomber Group at Rickinghall, England. The nickname of the aircraft was named the "Mary Ellen II" and the serial number of the aircraft was # 42-30601.

He is now buried at Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Portland, Oregon (interred January 22, 1949). He was survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Baum and his wife, the former Martha Jane Dowling of Van Nuys, whom he married in December, 1942. They all lived in Chula Vista, CA. A street in the Montecito Ridge subdivision of Otay Ranch honors his name.

