

## **Personal Account**

**1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Frank A., Carrico, O-795019.  
882nd. B-29 Pilot, 1093.**

**Lt. Carrico was the Aircraft Commander of Z Square 24, Pride of the Yankees. This is the aircraft that suffered two engines out on one side but managed to make it safely back to base without any loss of life. Lt. Carrico and Lt. Robinson did suffer from the severe cold that they experienced upon depressurization.**

The mission pattern stayed much the same after LeMay's takeover. Strikes against the top priority targets – aircraft engine planes dominated the list, and Target 357 was assigned its share. LeMay tried his luck 27 January, sending 76 bombers against Musashino. But the weather protected the area; 56 of the bombers dropped on their secondary targets and six bombed the alternate targets. Nine Superforts were lost, and one almost didn't make it back. It was *Pride of the Yankees*, Z Sq. 24, from the 500 Bomb Group and its commander was Lieutenant Frank A Carrico. This was his debriefing report:

'When we hit the coastline, we picked up our first fighter, which came up, got our altitude, and followed us in and out of the target. Just before the IP, we picked up a twin-engined Irving (Nakajima JINI 'Gekko'), nine o'clock level, which stuck out there for a few minutes throwing bursts at us from his turret, then he made an attack on our ship and the boys got him.

'We were jumped good and hard before we got our bomb doors open. All guns were blazing away and just as we let the bombs go, a Tony (Kawasaki Ki-62 "Hsen") got a good burst in our number two engine. Lt. (Morris M.) Robinson was flying because we were on the left side of the formation, and I told him to stay on the controls and stay in formation.

'I tried to feather the damned prop and naturally it won't feather. Its burning good by this time, and I yell to Lt. (Albert H) Woodward to cut it off and pull the extinguisher. He'd already cut it off and when he pulled the fire extinguisher, the whole installation came out of his panel.

'Just about that time, the prop ran away and blew the fire completely out. Our speed dropped, and we lost the formation. In the meantime we had another attack on the nose which shot out two of the large glass panels and put a bullet through the side, under my instrument panel and between my feet. My bombardier was wounded in the legs, and that left our nose unprotected. After we dropped out of formation, we

received nine concentrated attacks on the nose.

'Our astrodome was blown out when we lost pressurization, and we had a wind blowing through the nose compartment which I thought would surely freeze Lt. Robinson and myself, it was 40 below zero Centigrade outside. We had on jackets, gloves and boots but our legs were freezing. So we gathered flak suits, caps and anything else we could find to wrap around them. One man would fly for a few minutes and then start shivering so much he couldn't stay on the controls. The crew in the meantime had gotten ready to bail out, because I didn't want them to ride the burning plane down from 25,000 feet.

'I told Lt. Robinson to fly until the prop came off so I could watch and see where it went. By this time I had all the men in ditching position. At 1625 hrs. the prop came off, but it hadn't read the SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) on how props were to come off. The metal of the nose section melted on the inboard side and the prop peeled off to left and flat pitch. It held there an instant and then went hurtling into the number one engine. It broke the two bottom mount braces and bent the upper two: at the same time all four blades on the number one prop bent almost double. The prop would not feather and the vibration was terrific.

"The left wing was vibrating through an area of about 20 feet, and I had the crew ready to bail out again and was just pressing the mike switch to give the order when the damn prop feathered. Capt. (Horace E.) Hatch came up then and asked what our condition was, so we got an accurate position report from him and worked out an ETA (Estimated Time of Arrival) to our base. We didn't have enough gas to make it.

"I asked Capt. Hatch to stick close, as all our navigation aids were out and all we had to navigate with was a map and a pencil. We flew until dark and the moon was very bright, so I decided to keep going and make a moonlight ditching. After dark I found my instrument lights were out and the moon was bright enough to counteract the fluorescent paint glow from my instruments, so Lt. Robinson flew until 2100.

'At that time we ran into instrument conditions and it took both of us to hold

the ship. We both flew from his panel, he kept the wings level and I held altitude.'

'We figured a very accurate ETA to the base and we were ten minutes short of gas. I called Capt. Hatch and told him we would fly until 15 minutes remained and then we would ditch under the overcast. I got the crew in ditching position again, and then my engineer called to say he'd found 75 more gallons of gas in the reserve tank. We came on in.'

'When we got to the base, we had to make the normal right-hand traffic pattern because I couldn't turn the plane into the dead wing. We held 2000 feet of altitude, and when I got on base leg, we took out all the trim and let down the wheel. I flew the approach at 1500 feet until I knew we could get down, power off. We chopped all power and stuck the nose down and still lost too much speed because when we got below 140 miles per hour we lost aileron control.

"But when we leveled off, we picked up our aileron control and she landed good. Our landing was strictly a two-man job also. Everyone was okay with the exception of the bombardier and myself, we both picked up a little flak in our legs." Frank A Carrico.

28 January 1945

Note –

**Lt. Carrico's  
Crew was the  
Alternate on  
Z Square 24**

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Carrico's return was one of the first times a B-29 had been flown back from a mission on two engines. It was a difficult tiring, risky condition for a fresh crew. It was doubly difficult, tiring and risky for a crew that had flown to Japan and fought its way to the target. Not many B-29's with two engines made it back.

