

History of the Memorial on Place de la Victoire

May 29, 1943. Kimbolton Air Base, suburb of London, England.

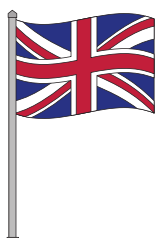
The 379th Heavy Bombardment Group is preparing for a mission targeting the Saint-Nazaire submarine base in western France. This is their first mission. The designated crews are busy and attending the briefing. The raid is planned for late afternoon, with the target set to be reached by 5 p.m. Preparations are also underway at other bases – crews, mechanics, and bomb loading.

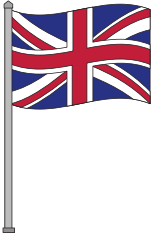
This raid will involve 169 B-17 Flying Fortresses. At Kimbolton, Lieutenant Theodore Peterson is somewhat tense. It's his first mission, and at 23 years old, he must carry out his orders and join the squadron.

He has been entrusted with the B-17F "Lady Godiva," coded LF-G, serial number #42-29878. The crew comprises ten men, including himself: Lieutenant T. Peterson, Lieutenant Jack W. Bourn (co-pilot), Lieutenant Woodrow T. Moore (navigator), Lieutenant Warren T. Rosacker (bombardier), Sergeant John M. Scott (radio operator), Sergeant Maynard M. Spencer (mechanic), Sergeant William E. Blubaugh (nose gunner), Sergeant William T. Ayres (right waist gunner), Sergeant Paul R. Cribelar (left waist gunner), and Sergeant Gideon A. Brown (tail gunner).

Around 3:30 p.m., all the B-17s take off one after another, their engines roaring. They head to the rendezvous point to form into squadrons and groups of six. Over the sea, the formation organizes itself, and Ted takes his position to the left of the group leader. On the base, a nervous calm prevails, as not all crews are expected to return. By the end of May 1943, Kimbolton housed 70 complete crews supported by 4,000 ground personnel, ensuring the logistics needed for such missions.

The first part of the flight proceeds smoothly, heading toward Argentan, where the group splits into two to create a diversion. Ted and his crew approach their target just before 5 p.m.





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Then all hell breaks loose.

Anti-aircraft guns open fire, and black smoke plumes surround the B-17s from exploding shells. To his right, Ted and his men helplessly watch the group leader's plane (B-17 #42-29792) being destroyed and falling quickly. Moments later, "Lady Godiva" is struck by flak on the left wing, creating a gaping hole of three to four meters. Both left engines catch fire. Ted quickly realizes they can't return along the planned route. Despite the situation, at 5:07 p.m., he releases the bomb load onto the target, which is successfully hit.

He decides to cross the Breton peninsula in an attempt to reach an English base. However, Ted's plane becomes a target for German Messerschmitt fighters determined to finish it off. One fighter sets another engine ablaze. Ted orders an evacuation, and the crew bails out one by one. Ted is the last to jump after finding a parachute in a cupboard at the last moment. He exits the plane at an altitude of 324 meters and lands at a place called "Meno" in the commune of Plourhan (Côtes-d'Armor).

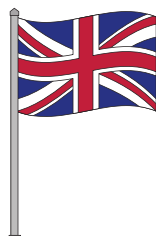
Ted Peterson later recounted that, hanging alone in the air by his parachute, a German pilot circled him and could have shot him but instead made a gesture and flew away.

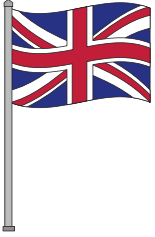
The first two parachutists landed in Tréguidel, while a third was found by a farmer but handed over to the Germans. Another injured crew member was rescued by Jean Foison. With the help of his friend Pierre Le Mener, they treated the man's shoulder wound and hid him. Later, they entrusted him to Roger Daniel, who took him to the Resistance.

Another was recovered at Croix de Meno by Louis Batard and Armand Hery.

One pilot was less fortunate, landing in Ville Guessio, where a German patrol awaited him.

Another landed in Villeneuve, in the courtyard of a farm owned by Eugène Le Doré. Yet another parachuted near the Saint-Perne Fountain, where Yolande Rebours found him.





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The Oak of “Meno”

Ted Peterson landed in a field above the Gacon Valley, in an oak tree that remains visible to this day. Henri Poulouin, who was working in the fields, quickly came to his aid, helping him out of his parachute and hiding him. Ted was taken to Saint-Quay-Portrieux, where he reunited with his radio operator, Scott. Only these two were not captured. After numerous difficulties and a journey through Paris and Spain, they returned to the English base on August 16, 1943.

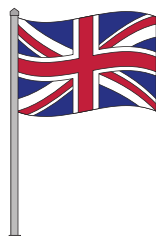
The rest of the crew were captured and spent the remainder of the war in German Stalags. The B-17 crashed into the sea about a nautical mile from Saint-Quay-Portrieux, on the Roche des Poulains. Some wreckage of the bomber, named after the English legend of Lady Godiva, remains today.

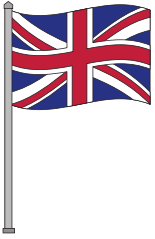
The Gestapo Strikes Back

Realizing the airmen escaped with the help of the local population, the Gestapo conducted numerous arrests: Eugène and Marcel Fleury, Gaston Pedron, Yolande Rebours, Eugène Le Doré, Joseph Daniel, Hélène Séguin, Louis Batard, Armand Hery, and Roger Daniel.

Some, like Marcel Jaffrot and Marcel Bolloch, managed to escape to the Resistance. Without sufficient evidence, most detainees were released. However, three were deported after brutal interrogations:

- Louis Batard: Dachau (liberated April 29, 1945).
- Roger Daniel: Hannover-Stöcken (died February 16, 1945, aged 23).
- Armand Hery: Dachau and Dora (died March 27, 1945, aged 32).





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In 1987, Ted Peterson returned from America to inaugurate the memorial on Place de la Victoire. A propeller from the B-17, recovered from the sea, forms part of the monument. The names of Plourhan residents who were deported following these events, including Armand Hery and Roger Daniel, are engraved on the monument. Our deepest gratitude goes to all these individuals who gave their lives so that we might live in freedom. Their sacrifices will be remembered and honored.

Acknowledgments:

Mr. Jean Foison

Mr. Jean-Michel Martin

The ABSA Association

Lady Godiva

8th Air Force - 1st Combat Wing
379th. B.G. - 526th. B.S.

B-17F-75-BO
42-29878
LF-G

Pilot / Pilote
1st. Lt. PETERSON Theodore M.
EVD / Evadé

Co-Pilot / Co-Pilote
2nd. Lt. BOURNE Jack W.
POW / Prisonnier.

Top Turret Gunner - Engineer
Mitrailleur Dorsal - Ingénieur
T/Sgt. SPENCER Maynard M.
POW / Prisonnier.

Radio Operator / Opérateur Radio
T/Sgt. SCOTT John M.
EVD / Evadé

Navigator / Navigateur
2nd. Lt. MOORE Woodrow
POW / Prisonnier

Bombardier - Front Gunner
Bombardier - Mitrailleur Avant
2nd. Lt. ROSACKER Warren J.
POW / Prisonnier

Ball Turret Gunner / Mitrailleur Ventral
Sgt. AYRES William T.
POW / Prisonnier

Right Waist Gunner / Mitrailleur Sabord Droit
S/Sgt. BLUEBAUGH William E.
POW / Prisonnier

Left Waist Gunner / Mitrailleur Sabord Gauche
S/Sgt. CREBELAIR Paul R.
POW / Prisonnier

Tail Gunner / Mitrailleur Arrière
S/Sgt. BROWN Gideon A.
POW / Prisonnier.

Extra crew members
Aviateurs supplémentaires

Crash Date / Date de crash: 29/05/1943
Town - Z.C. / Ville - CP: SAINT-QUAI-PORTRIEUX 22410
Mission Target / Objectif Mission: SAINT-NAZAIRE
Mission # / N° Mission: 61
Take off airfield / Base Aérienne: _____

Crash Site / Site de Crash: Crashed into the sea 1 mile off the coast, close to SAINT-QUAI-PORTRIEUX / Tombé en mer à 1 mile des côtes, près de SAINT-QUAI-PORTRIEUX
Crash Reason / Cause du Crash: _____

