

## HELL'S ANGELS vs MEMPHIS BELLE

*Hell's Angels Was the First 8th Air Force B-17 to Complete 25 Missions.  
Don't Let Anyone Tell You Otherwise.*

The 358th B-17F #41-24577 Hell's Angels, from which the Group later named itself, completed its 25th mission on 13 May 1943.

It became the first 8th Air Force B-17 to complete 25 combat missions. The Memphis Belle, a 91st BG(H) B-17, sometimes reputed to claim the first 25-mission feat, completed its 25th mission on 19 May 1943, six days after the Hell's Angels. The Memphis Belle was,

however, the first 8th AF B-17 to complete 25 missions and be returned

to the United States. The crew that accompanied the Memphis Belle was a makeup crew of men who had completed 25 missions. It was not the original Memphis Belle, Captain Morgan crew. Hell's Angels went on to complete 48 missions and delayed returning to the United States on its own "Flag-Waving Tour" until 20 January 1944.



*303rd BG (H) members signing their names on Hell's Angels prior to her Bond Tour.*

MISSION DATE	TARGET	303rd BG MISS#	HELL'S ANGELS MISS#	BALDWIN MISS #	91st BG MISS #	MEMPHIS BELLE MISS #	MORGAN MISS #
07 Nov 42	Brest	--	--	--	01	01	01
09 Nov 42	St. Nazaire	--	--	--	02	02	02
17 Nov 42	St. Nazaire	01	01 BR(1)	01 BR(1)	03	03	03
18 Nov 42	St. Nazaire	02	--	--	04	--	--
22 Nov 42	Lorient	03	02 BR(2)	02 BR(2)	05	--	--
23 Nov 42	St. Nazaire	04	--	--	06	MA	MA
06 Dec 42	Lille	05	03	03	07	04	04
12 Dec 42	Rouen	06	RP(3)	--	08	--	--
20 Dec 42	Romilly	07	--	--	09	05	05
30 Dec 42	Lorient	08	FTO(4)	FTO(4)	10	06[B]	--
03 Jan 43	St. Nazaire	09	04	04	11	07	06
13 Jan 43	Lille	10	05	05	12	08	07
23 Jan 43	Lorient/Brest	11	06	06	13	09	08
27 Jan 43	Wilhelmshaven	12	07	07	14	RP	--
02 Feb 43	Emden(Hamm)	13 GA(5)	GA(5)	GA(5)	15(5)	RP	--
04 Feb 43	Emden(Hamm)(U)	14	08	08	16	--	09[X]
14 Feb 43	Hamm	15 RE BR(6)	09 RE BR(6)	09 RE BR(6)	17 RE(6)	10 BR	10 BR
16 Feb 43	St. Nazaire	16	10	10	18	11	11
26 Feb 43	Wilhelmshaven	17	11 [A]	--	19	--	12 [X]
27 Feb 43	Brest	18	12 [A]	--	20	--	13 [X]
04 Mar 43	Rotterdam	19	13	11	21	MA	MA
06 Mar 43	Lorient	20	14	12	22	12	14
08 Mar 43	Rennes	21	15	13	23	MA [C]	--
12 Mar 43	Rouen	22	16	14	24	13	15
13 Mar 43	Amiens	23	17	15	25	14	16
17 Mar 43	Rouen	RE BR(7)	RE BR(7)	RE BR(7)	RE BR(7)	--	--
18 Mar 43	Vege sack	24	18	16	26	--	--
22 Mar 43	Wilhelmshaven	25	19	17	27	15	17
28 Mar 43	Rouen	26	20	18	28	16	18
31 Mar 43	Rotterdam	27	21	19	29	17[D] BR(8)	--
04 Apr 43	Paris(Billancourt)	28	22	20	30	MA	--
05 Apr 43	Antwerp	29	23	21	31	RP	19 [Y]
16 Apr 43	Lorient	30	--	--	32	18	20
17 Apr 43	Bremen	31	--	22 [B]	33	19	21
01 May 43	St. Nazaire	32	--	--	34	20	22
04 May 43	Antwerp	33	24	23	35	--	23 [Z]
13 May 43	Meaulite	34	25	24	36	21 [E]	--
14 May 43	Kiel	35	26	25	37	22 [F]	--
15 May 43	Heligoland	36	27	--	38	23	24
17 May 43	Lorient	37	28	--	39	24	25
19 May 43	Kiel	38	--	--	40	25 [E]	--
21 May 43	Wilhelmshaven	39	--	--	41	--	--
29 May 43	St. Nazaire	40	--	--	42	--	--

## Footnotes

- [A] Hell's Angels Pilot - 1stLt James H. McDonald on 26 Feb & 27 Feb 43 - Captain Baldwin on leave
- [B] Memphis Belle Pilot - Lt James Vernis (Morgan Crew CoPilot) on 30 Dec 42 - Capt Morgan was sick
- [C] Memphis Belle Pilot - Capt E.D. Gaitly, CoPilot & Col Stanley Wray on 08 Mar 43
- [D] Memphis Belle Pilot - Capt H.W. Aycock on 31 Mar 43
- [E] Memphis Belle Pilot - Lt C.L. Anderson on 13 May - Capt Morgan in London & 19 May 43 - Capt Morgan had completed his combat tour
- [F] Memphis Belle Pilot - Lt J.H. Miller on 14 May 43 - Capt Morgan in London
- [W] Captain Baldwin flew in #41-29644 Jersey Bounce, Jr. 358th BS (VK-C) on 17 Apr 43
- [X] Captain Morgan flew in #41-24515 Jersey Bounce 324th BS (DF-H) on 04 Feb, 26 Feb & 27 Feb 43
- [Y] Captain Morgan flew in #41-24480 The Bad Penny 324th BS (DF-C/B) on 05 Apr 43
- [Z] Captain Morgan flew in #41-24527 The Great Speckled Bird 324th BS (DF-Y) on 04 May 43

FTO - Failed to take off due to mechanical problems

RE - Division recall due to bad weather

GA - Group aborted mission due to bad weather

RP - B-17 stood down while under repair

MA - Mechanical abort after takeoff before target reached

BR - Bombs returned to base

U - Exact target unknown - Group Navigator believed that six 303BG B-17s bombed Groningen

- (1) Group unable to locate target - Credited mission
- (2) Bomb rack malfunction over target - Credited mission
- (3) Bomb release intervalometer test requested
- (4) #3 Engine failed to start
- (5) Recall 30-40 miles off dutch coast. Non credited crew sortie
- (6) Recall between coast & Dokkum Holland - Credited mission
- (7) Recall between beacon 8 & 10 - Non credited mission
- (8) Weather obscured target - Credited mission

