

# **Buel C Robinson - an exceptional life**

Eagle Scout, WW2 Bomber Crew Navigator, POW, Physics Teacher  
The forgotten story of heroism and valour and a life well lived

## **Table of Contents**

Principals	2
Introduction	2
1943 - 1945	5
1945-2009	16
Epilogue	17
Capt. Herschel L. Smith	18
2nd Lt. Winston J. Strehorn	18
2nd Lt. William Caplinger	19
Staff Sgt. Oscar S Cox	20
Staff Sgt. Edwin F Rogers	20
References	21

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## **Principals**

Buel Calvin Robinson (husband of sister-in-law of sister of author)

BIRTH 30 JUL 1924 • Augusta, Butler, Kansas

DEATH 7 MAY 2009 • Aurora, Arapahoe, Colorado

Married: Abt. 1947

Lorraine Eva Johnson (sister-in-law of sister of author)

1927–2018

BIRTH 11 JUN 1927 • Salina, Saline, Kansas

DEATH 4 APR 2018 • Aurora, Arapahoe, Colorado

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## **Introduction**

This is a story that has not been fully told. The Robinson and Johnson families knew that Buel had been shot down and taken prisoner in 1944. But, the details of that event, before and after, have been shrouded in mystery. This may be because Buel chose to keep this information to himself. We will never know his motivations. However, historians have done extensive research on the 492nd Bomb Group (heavy) stationed at North Pickenham Airfield in England for period April 1944 to August 1944.

Ultimately, *“The 492nd had lasted 89 days. They flew 67 missions and dropped 3,653 tons of bombs. Fifty-five bombers had been lost, 234 men killed in action, 26 wounded, 131 became POWs and 129 were interned in either Sweden or Switzerland.”*

**BRENDAN MCNALLY (HARD LUCK OUTFIT: THE STORY OF THE 492ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP)**

Buel C Robinson was one of those POW's. Let's rewind the years and open this forgotten page of history and see exactly what happened.

Buel was born in Augusta, KS in July 1924. He was probably named after a great uncle - Buel Landon Robinson (1848-1914). Augusta is a small town about 10 miles east of Wichita, KS. His parents were Howard and Grace (nee Chapin) Robinson. Howard Robinson was a college graduate and Superintendent of Schools for Augusta. So, you can imagine there was a certain expectation that Buel would excel in his school work - which he did.

In Feb 1942, at the age of 17, Buel was awarded Boy Scouting's highest award - Eagle Scout Badge.

## WILL RECEIVE EAGLE BADGES



DURING THE CURRENT national Boy Scout week, the four boys pictured above will receive Eagle badges, the highest award given a Scout. The presentations will be made Monday night in a city-wide rally and court of honor at Augusta, with J. Logan Thayer, Quivira council commissioner from Wichita, making the awards. Russell Allison, upper left, became a tenderfoot in 1932. He was second class in 1934, first class in 1936, star in 1937 and life in 1938. Kenneth Ingold, upper right, became a tenderfoot in 1936, second class in 1936, first class in 1937, star in 1937, life in 1939. William Barr, lower left, joined with Ingold in 1936. He became second class in 1936, first class in 1937, star in 1938, and life in 1939. Buel Robinson, lower right, also became a tenderfoot in 1936, receiving his second class advancement in that same year. He was made first class in 1937, star in 1938, and life in 1939.

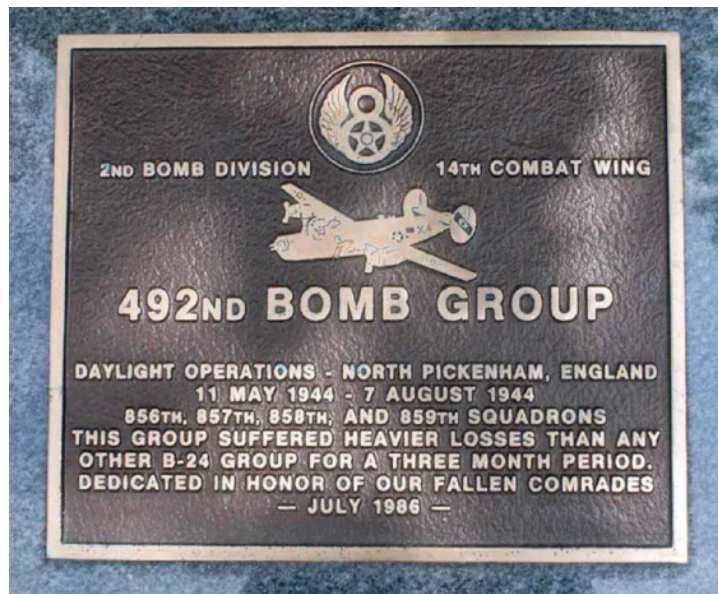
Following high school graduation in 1942 Buel attended Kansas State University (then called Kansas State College) in Manhattan, KS. In Dec 1942, he registered for the military draft - created as the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

FORM APPROVED  
Budget Bureau No. 33-R012-42

**REGISTRATION CARD (Men born on or after July 1, 1924, and on or before December 31, 1924)**  
(Also for the registration of men as they reach the 18th anniversary of the date of their birth on or after January 1, 1943.)

<b>SERIAL NUMBER</b> W <u>9a</u>	<b>1. NAME (Print)</b> Buel Calvin Robinson (First) (Middle) (Last)		<b>ORDER NUMBER</b> <u>11077A</u>
<b>2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)</b> <u>43 Cliff Drive</u> <u>Augusta</u> <u>Butler</u> <u>Kansas</u> (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)			
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON LINE 2 ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]			
<b>3. MAILING ADDRESS</b> <u>1126 Blumont</u> <u>Manhattan</u> <u>Wiley Co.</u> <u>Kansas</u> (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same, insert word same)			
<b>4. TELEPHONE</b> <u>3093</u>	<b>5. AGE IN YEARS</b> <u>18</u>	<b>6. PLACE OF BIRTH</b> <u>Augusta</u> (Town or county) (State)	
<b>7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS</b> <u>Mr. H.H. Robinson, Father</u> <u>43 Cliff Drive</u> <u>Augusta</u> <u>Kansas</u> (Exchange) (Number) (Mg.) (Day) (Yr.) (State or country)			
<b>8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS</b> <u>Student</u>			
<b>9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS</b> <u>Kansas State College</u> <u>Manhattan</u> <u>Butler</u> <u>Kansas</u> (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)			
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.			
DSS Form 1 (Rev. 11-16-42)		e16-21630-4 (OVER)	
		<u>Buel C. Robinson</u> (Registrant's signature)	

Here we have a mystery. When did Buel Robinson enlist? Where was his training? Where is his discharge record? Other than the *Missing Air Crew Reports*, filed in July 1944, the military records of Buel C Robinson seem to be missing. Where are his full and complete military records? I have a theory and it's related to the 492nd Bomber Group history.



As can be seen on the memorial plaque at the National Museum of the US Air Force, Dayton, OH, the 492nd took heavy losses. By August, 1944, *"18 of the group's 50 bombers were operational. But by early August, Bomber Command had had enough. They ordered the 492nd disbanded. But rather than have to admit what had happened to them, the 492nd unit designation was given as cover to the 801st Provisional Group, an OSS special operations unit better known as the Carpetbaggers. In this way **the 492nd's loss got papered over**. The official histories never mentioned what happened. Decades would pass before historians started figuring it out."*

#### BRENDAN MCNALLY (HARD LUCK OUTFIT: THE STORY OF THE 492ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP)

My theory is that the military records of Buel Robinson and other crew members were mostly expunged from public records during the Bomber Command cover up. Thus, all we can do is piece together the available fragments of his military record and make a few assumptions.

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## 1943 - 1945

Per his Draft Registration, we know Buel was a student at Kansas State University in Dec 1942. Procurement of qualified air cadets for pilot, gunnery, bombardier, navigator crew training is a subject unto itself. It's well known that colleges and technical schools were primary sources for air crew candidates. I surmise that Buel had above average math skills, which would make him an excellent candidate for navigator. Further, I surmise that at the end of spring semester, 1943, Buel left Kansas State, enlisted in the Army Air Force and started training as such.

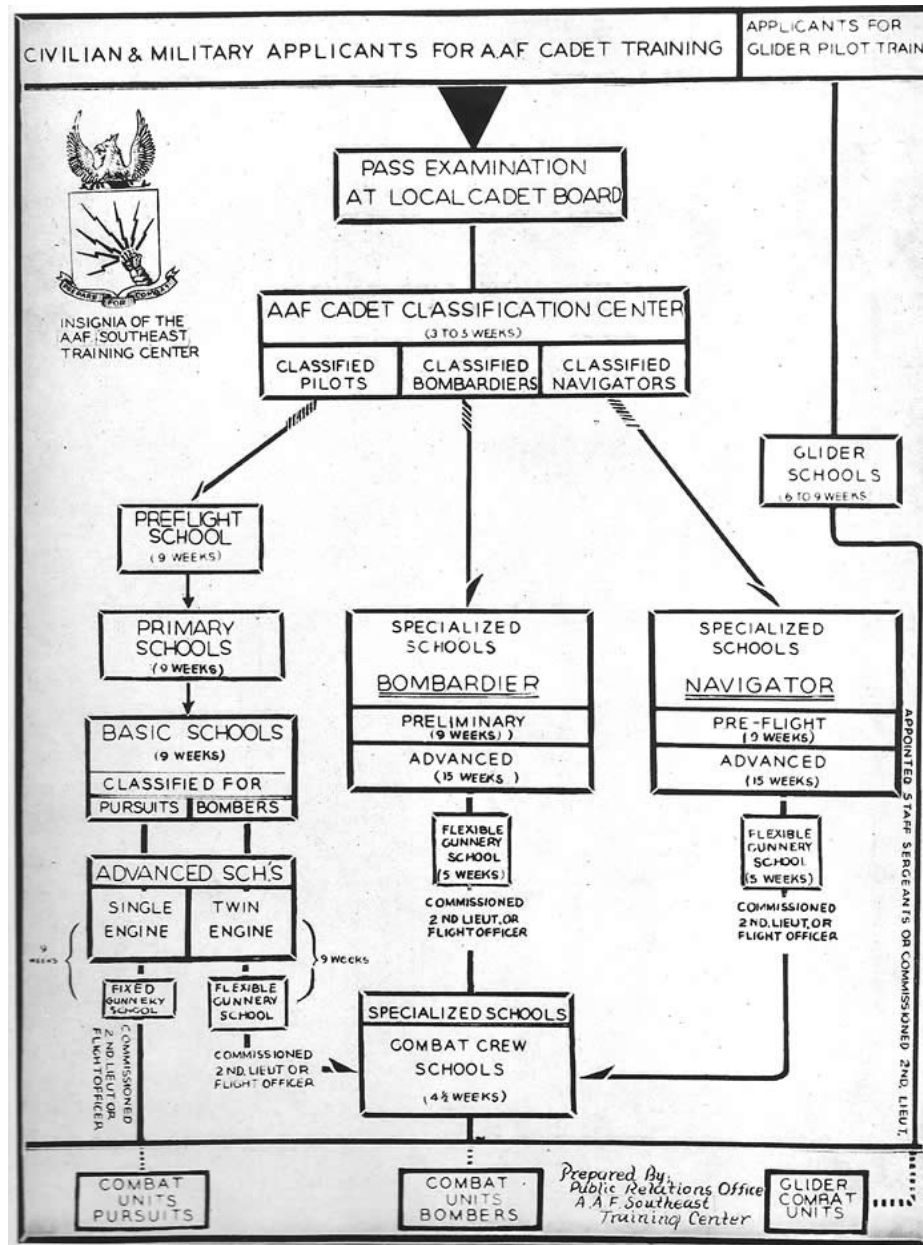
**Preflight School:** 10 week course. Trainees attend the same preflight school. Both bombardiers and navigators take 48 hours of code; 28 hours of mathematics; 24 hours of maps and charts; 30 hours of aircraft recognition; 12 hours of aero-physics; 9 hours of altitude equipment.

**Navigator School:** 20 week course. Following gunnery school navigator trainees spend 104 hours in the air on practical navigation problems, and 782 hours in ground school. The latter includes: pilotage, 8 hours; instruments, 83 hours; dead reckoning, 54 hours; radio, 8 hours; code and recognition, 9 hours each. Upon completing the course, trainees are awarded navigator's wings, appointed flight officers or commissioned 2nd lieutenants, and advanced to unit training.

#### BOMBARDIER AND NAVIGATOR TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Initial training coursework could have been at Kansas State, as courses required for preflight training (College Training Detachments - CTDs) were often taught by college professors.

Preflight training would have continued at the Southeast Flight Training Command Center, Maxwell Field in Montgomery, AL. Following that, flight training for Buel would have been at the 63rd Army Air Force Training Detachment, Douglas, GA.



30 weeks of training (preflight and navigator) would be about 8 months. So, assuming Buel Robinson enlisted in May 1943, his training and promotion to 2nd Lt. would have completed about Dec 1943.



We know from examination of the crew roster on the 492ndbombgroup.com page that Buel was transferred from the 12th Antisubmarine Squadron at Langley Field, VA to 492nd Bomber Group before May 1944.

*"It was first activated in October 1942 as the 517th Bombardment Squadron, when the Army Air Forces replaced National Guard observation units that had been mobilized and were performing antisubmarine patrols off the Atlantic coastline. A month after its activation, the squadron was redesignated the **12th Antisubmarine Squadron**. In August 1943, the Army Air forces began turning the antisubmarine patrol mission over to the Navy and the squadron moved to California, where, as the 859th Bombardment Squadron, it formed the cadre for the 492d Bombardment Group."*

#### WIKIPEDIA - 859TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

By March, 1944 2nd Lt. Buel C Robinson, at the tender age of 19, was assigned the navigator position on "Smith Crew 906" stationed at Alamogordo, NM. The pilot and aircraft commander was Captain Herschel L Smith (Sept 1919 - Jul 2010).



#### Back row, left to right...


- Winston Strehorn, co-pilot
- Buel Robinson, navigator
- William Caplinger, bombardier
- Herschel Smith, pilot
- Edwin Rogers, gunner

#### Front row, left to right...

- Oscar Cox, left waist gunner
- John Brown, radio operator
- Leonard Warren, gunner
- Alfred Darbyshire, right waist gunner
- Joseph Jackson, engineer


Interestingly, Bill Caplinger, the bombardier, was a professional baseball player who had given up his career (pitcher with the St. Louis Cardinals) to serve his country.

From Alamogordo, NM the aircraft (SN: 44-40211, Mdl: B-24J) and Smith Crew 906 flew to North Pickenham, England, arriving Apr 18, 1944. There, they began bombing missions in early May 1944.

Original Roster for Smith Crew 906				
Position / MOS	Name	Rank	Serial #	Notes
Pilot MOS 1024	Smith, Herschel L	1st Lt	O-660298	Obtained from 12th AS Promoted Capt POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563
Co-Pilot MOS 1024	Strehorn, Winston J "Bill"	2nd Lt	O-811154	Obtained from Strehorn CCTS crew 1109 POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563, Stalag Luft I
Navigator MOS 1034	Robinson, Buel C	2nd Lt	O-711478	Obtained from 12th AS POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563
Bombardier MOS 1035	Caplinger, William Jr "Bill"	2nd Lt	O-668703	Obtained from 12th AS Promoted 1st Lt POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563, Stalag Luft I
Engineer MOS 748	Jackson, Joseph L	T/Sgt	20349483	POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563
Radio Operator MOS 757	Brown, John D	T/Sgt	20349431	Obtained from Loose CCTS crew 1099 POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563
R Waist Gunner MOS 611	Darbyshire, Alfred R	Pfc	37704427	Arrived to the UK via the Queen Elizabeth Promoted Sgt 15 Jun; promoted S/Sgt POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563, Stalag Luft IV
L Waist Gunner MOS 748	Cox, Oscar S	Sgt	38424797	Obtained from Loose CCTS crew 1099 1 Jun; promoted S/Sgt POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563, Stalag Luft IV
Gunner MOS 748	Rogers, Edwin F	Sgt	16074978	Obtained from Loose CCTS crew 1099 1 Jun; promoted S/Sgt KIA, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563
Gunner MOS 612	Warren, Leonard P	S/Sgt	11027668	POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563, Stalag Luft IV
Others Who Flew with Smith Crew 906				
AME MOS 3162	Spivack, Seymour E	Capt	O-381210	859th Squadron Flight Surgeon Flew to England with the crew
Lead Navigator MOS 1034	Sturla, Harry L Jr	2nd Lt	O-692351	From Newman Crew 913 POW, 12 Jul 44, MACR 7563, Stalag Luft IV

COURTESY OF 492NDBOMBGROUP.COM



<b>Smith Crew 906</b> <b>492nd BG Mission Record</b> <b>859th Bomb Squadron</b>					
Crew Mission Number	Group Mission Number	Group Mission Date	Aircraft Serial Number	Primary Target	Mission Notes
01	➡ <u>01</u>	11 May 44	44-40211	Mulhouse, France	Target: Marshalling yard
02	➡ <u>02</u>	12 May 44	42-110091	Zeitz, Germany	Target: Oil refinery
03	➡ <u>05</u>	19 May 44	44-40211	Brunswick, Germany	Target: Marshalling yard
04	➡ <u>09</u>	25 May 44	44-40153	Belfort, France	Target: Marshalling yard
05	➡ <u>10</u>	27 May 44	44-40211	Saarbrücken, Germany	Target: Marshalling yard
06	➡ <u>11</u>	28 May 44	44-40211	Zeitz, Germany	Target: Oil refinery Bombed with A Section
07	➡ <u>13</u>	30 May 44	44-40211	Rotenburg, Germany	Target: Air depot
08	➡ <u>15</u>	2 Jun 44	44-40211	Berck-sur-Mer, France	Target: Airfield
09	➡ <u>16</u>	4 Jun 44	44-40211	Avord, France	Target: Airfield
10	➡ <u>17</u>	6 Jun 44	44-40211	Normandy, France	Target: D-Day invasion coast
11	➡ <u>20</u>	8 Jun 44	44-40211	Angers, France	Target: Railroad junction
12	➡ <u>26</u>	14 Jun 44	44-40211	Emmerich, Germany	Target: Oil refinery
13	➡ <u>28</u>	15 Jun 44	44-40156	La Frillière, France	Target: Railroad bridge Led B Section Bombed target in Le Mans
14	➡ <u>30</u>	17 Jun 44	44-40068	Tours, France	Target: Airfield
15	➡ <u>34</u>	20 Jun 44	44-40211	Politz, Germany	Target: Oil refinery Bombed with another group
16	➡ <u>40a</u>	25 Jun 44	44-40132	La Vaupelière, France	Target: Tactical
17	➡ <u>42</u>	28 Jun 44	44-40211	Saarbrücken, Germany	Target: Marshalling yard Lead Ship Damaged by flak
18	➡ <u>49</u>	12 Jul 44	44-40130	Munich, Germany	Target: Railroad station Led B Section Lost, 1 KIA, 10 POW, MACR 7563

COURTESY OF 492NDBOMBGROUP.COM

On Smith Crew 906, four of the crew's wives were expecting a baby in September. Since they were to become pops in September they named their ship *SEPTEMBER POPS*, **SN: 44-40211**. However, the Smith Crew 906 was lost on 12 Jul 44 while flying another bomber, **SN: 44-40130**, no nickname/nose art.

Of the 18 missions of Smith Crew 906, two stand out:

- **Jun 6 1944**; D-Day aerial support of Allied invasion
- **Jul 12 1944**; shot down by flak over Munich, Germany

## Jun 6 1944; D-Day aerial support of Allied invasion



### Mission 17

The daily briefing began with an announcement that D-Day had already begun. The 492nd would put up whatever it could to support the invading assault forces at Normandy. Col Snavelly would take personal command of the mission flying with the Orthman Crew 806. The Group was assigned to bomb a target in the Pointe-et-Raz area on the Normandy coast. The timing was set for first light as the beach stormers were coming to shore. The Group took off at 0247 in the morning.

The 492nd dispatched 41 of its planes only to have two of them abort for mechanical reasons. That might have been all of the planes that could have been sent up. The Group hadn't received all of its replacement planes. They still had some damaged planes in the shop waiting for parts. Plus, earlier the Group had been ordered to exchange some of their brand new B-24Js for half worn out B-24Hs from other groups. Not only did these battle worn H models require more maintenance than the new Js, but the ground crew chiefs didn't have a ready supply of H parts.

### Fighter Protection

The Group had plenty of escort fighters, as every fighter was put into the air.

### Enemy Resistance

None. Absolutely no flak nor enemy fighters were encountered. The crews had only to worry about mid-air collisions. The Sachtleben crash was still fresh in their minds and nobody had ever seen this many planes in the air before.

### Bombsight

The overcast skies made it extremely difficult to see the target. However, of the 39 credited sorties, 30 were able to put their bombs on target. The other 9 were forced to dump their bombs inland.

### Returning Home

The entire mission was very quick. Most of the airmen got another look at the massive invasion armada hitting the beaches.

## Jul 12 1944; shot down by flak over Munich



### Mission 49

It was the same plan as they had yesterday. The 8th Air Force was hitting Munich again with all three divisions. The 492nd was given the same target as before, the train station in the middle of town.

Only one of the 24 planes dispatched had to abort. They discovered an oil leak during assembly. The Group formed under the command of Captain Byrne, the 857th Squadron Operations Officer. He flew with the Orthman Crew 806, now flying as Crew 701.

### Fighter Protection

Once again the fighter protection was excellent, but not needed. The Luftwaffe didn't try to defend Munich against the massive bomber armada.

### Enemy Resistance

Just like yesterday, the flak was very heavy and accurate. Had it not been for the clouds underneath the bombers, the casualty toll would have been higher for all of the groups.

### Losses

As the Group was approaching Munich, the Smith Crew 906 took a direct hit. A flak shell had penetrated right through the ball turret and into the plane. It bounced off the ceiling and laid on the floor. It had already killed the ball gunner and would have killed the whole crew were it not for the fact that it didn't go off. A severed oxygen line caught on fire, but extinguished itself when the oxygen bottle ran out. The crew threw out the unexploded flak shell and took off with their crippled ship for Switzerland.

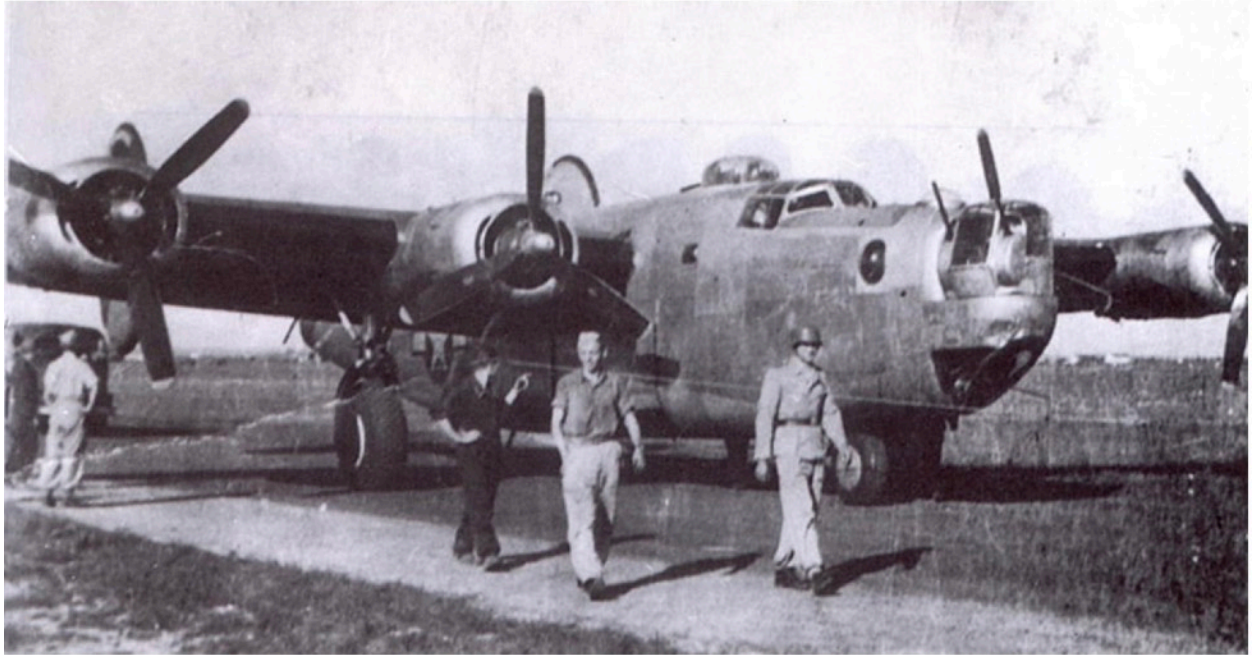
Without a good map with them, they found the Alps poking up through the clouds. Instead of finding a safe haven in the Swiss Alps, they were met by the Luftwaffe in the Italian Alps and were forced to land at Ghendi Airfield in Italy. The 10 remaining flyboys were taken POW. Two days later the 12th Air Force attacked the airfield and destroyed the captured B-24.

### Bombsight

The reports didn't mention this being a Pathfinder mission but it should have been. They might have used their updated Gee Boxes, the navigators equipment that operated on the same principle as Pathfinders, to find their exact same location as the day before. By using some method, the remaining 22 planes found their target and dropped their bombs.



Following the war, in 2004, two compelling photos emerged that, through thorough analysis, confirming the captured Smith Crew 906 aircraft, **SN: 44-40130**, and crew, including, 2nd Lt. Buel C. Robinson.



**2nd Lt Buel C Robinson**  
**Navigator**

COURTESY OF 492NDBOMBGROUP.COM

The captured Smith Crew 906 was first sent to Dulag Luft Wetzlar Camp, near Frankfurt, Germany. Opened near the end of the war, this camp was mainly used for prisoner collection, interrogation, and transfers to more permanent prison camps.

**DECLASSIFIED**

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

KU. 2465.

Munich  
Munichen

July 12, 1944  
GHEDI-BRESCIA

Stamp: Dulag Luft Wetzlar  
July 17., 1944  
central file and reporting  
center.

Liberator 24 - J  
X 4 0 440130 Q  
859  
492 P

Air-Base: W. Peckingham  
Brussels 2447

Verona: 641

- 1.) Cpt. SMITH, Marshal L.
- 2.) 2nd Lt. STRECKE, Winston, J.
- 3.) 2nd Lt. STURLA, Harry L.
- 4.) 2nd Lt. ROBINSON, Bruce G.
- 5.) 1st Lt. CAPLINGER, Wm. Jr.
- 6.) T./Sgt. BROWN, John D.
- 7.) T./Sgt. JACKSON, Joseph, Lawr.
- 8.) S./Sgt. ROGERS Sam (dead ? )
- 9.) S./Sgt. WARREN, Leonard Jr.
- 10.) S./Sgt. COX, Oscar, Simpson
- 11.) S./Sgt. DEREYSHIRE, Alfred R.

- 3 -



**DECLASSIFIED**

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

**Meldung über den Abschuß eines  
US-amerikanischen Flugzeuges**

Abschuß-Nr. EU 2465

Abschußtag und Zeit: 12.7.44  
Abschußort: Gheddi-Brescia, Italien  
Flugzeugtyp: Liberator  
Meldende Dienststelle: Lg. Verona

**Besatzung:**

Name und Vornamen: Geburtsdag und -ort:	Dienst- grad	Erk.- Marke:	gef.: verw.: tot:	Verbleib: welches Lager Art d. Verwundung Grablage
SMITH 25.9.19	Herschel Leo Ohio, Jackson, Township	Cpt.	0-660298	gef. Dulag-Luft
CARLINGER 13.9.18	William jr. Arizona Glendale	1.Lt.	0-668703	gef. Dulag-Luft
ROBINSON 30.7.24	Bruce Calvin Augusta, Kans.	2.Lt.	0-711478	gef. Dulag-Luft
STREHORN 19.2.12	Winston Jerome Denison, Tex.	2.Lt.	0-811154	gef. Dulag-Luft
STURLA 6.12.16	Harry Lawson Cincinnati, Ohio	2.Lt.	-692351	gef. Dulag-Luft
JACKSON 23.9.18	Joseph Lawrence Baltimore, Md.	T/Sgt.	20349483	gef. Dulag-Luft
BROWN 16.7.20	John D. Johnsburo, Tenn.	T/Sgt.	20349437	gef. Dulag-Luft
WARREN 10.7.21	Leonard Pitt jr. Kennebunk, Maine	S/Sgt.	11027668	gef. Dulag-Luft
COX 21.7.07	Oscar Simpson Ala. Russellville	S/Sgt.	38424797	gef. Dulag-Luft
DARBYSHIRE 18.12.24	Alfred R. Lamar, Col.	S/Sgt.	37701427	gef. Dulag-Luft

Bemerkungen: 75-3

DULAG-LUFT, den 26.7.44 No.

You will take note in the above German documents that Buel Robinson's first name was changed to **Bruce**. Was that intentional on his part?

From Wetzler Camp, Smith Crew 906 was split up and sent to one of two prisoner of war camps; Stalag Luft I or Stalag Luft IV. Generally, the officers were sent to Stalag Luft I and enlisted men sent to Stalag Luft IV.

**Stalag Luft I** was located two miles northwest of the village of Barth, Germany, on the Baltic Sea. The first Allied prisoners entered the camp on 10 July 1940 (French and British POWs). The German garrison left the camp several days before the arrival of Soviet forces on 2 May 1945. The POWs were evacuated by 8th Air Force B-17s on 12-13 May 1945



**Stalag Luft IV** was located at Gross Tychow, Pomerania, 20 kilometers southeast of Belgard (53-55 N, 16-15 E). Opened in early May of 1944, only one compound was finished when the original cohort of allied airmen NCO's arrived. This camp would swell its ranks from 1500 to nearly 10,000 airmen by January of 1945.



COURTESY OF [B24.NET/POWCAMPS.HTM](http://B24.NET/POWCAMPS.HTM)

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## 1945-2009

Buel Robinson was liberated from Stalag Luft 1 in May 1945. Following liberation and honourable discharge, he returned to Augusta, KS. It's possible that he was initially sent to Fitzsimmons Army Medical Center in Aurora, CO for evaluation and rehabilitation.

It's not known how, where, or when, exactly, Buel Robinson met his future wife, Lorraine Johnson, daughter of Stanley and Elsie Johnson. Census records show that the Johnson family was living in Augusta, KS in 1944 to 1947. El Dorado and Augusta are towns in Butler County, in close proximity. Thus, it's likely Buel (abt. 19) and Lorraine (abt. 17) met during this time period. According to my sister Bonnie, Dennis Johnson (Bonnie's husband) stated that he remembers his sister, Lorraine, crying upon Buel's return from POW captivity. So, it seems likely they knew each other during Buel's tour of duty and that they married about 1947 in El Dorado or Augusta.

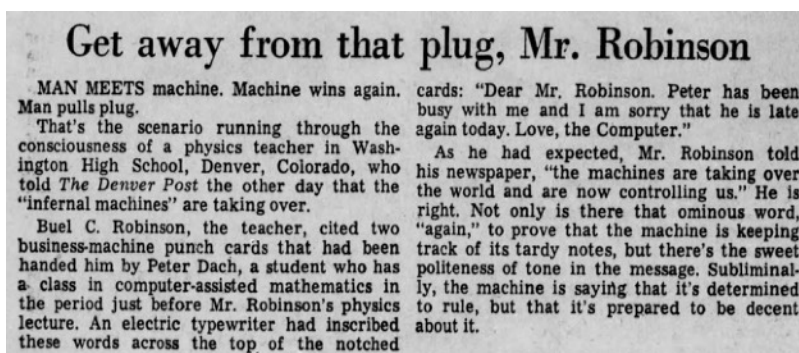
A 1949 residence record for Buel and Lorraine indicates they were living in Boulder, CO and that Buel was student. Thus, it seems likely he was a student at the U. Of Colorado, finishing a degree he started prior to the war.

Buel, Lorraine, and their infant son lived in Colon, Panama between about 1950 and 1952. Travel records have been found to support this travel and residence. It is thought that Buel was serving there as a teacher. There is no 1950 federal census report for this family. In May 1951, a second son was born to Buel and Lorraine in Colon, Panama.

By 1953, the Robinsons had settled in El Dorado, KS. Buel was employed as a teacher. Also in 1953, Buel was awarded a Master's Degree by the American Institute of Physics in Denver, CO. In 1954, Buel was appointed as a new teacher by the Kansas Education Board.

In 1967-1968, Buel was an American Exchange teacher, living near Derby, England.

In 1972 Buel was teaching physics at George Washington, HS in Denver. Buel was Teacher of the Year Runner Up in 1980. Oddly, there's this from May 1972, which was picked up by many national news services:



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## Epilogue

- While doing research for this story, I found a Kansas Selective Service record for Buel that indicates he enlisted Nov 13 1942 in Augusta, KS. However, this does not explain why he registered for the draft the next month in Manhattan, KS. And, the service number in this record - 17166329 - does not match with the service number in later records - O-711478. No fold3.com military records were found for SN 17166329.

### World War II Selective Service Records

#### Buel C. Robinson

Name	Robinson, Buel C.
Entry into Service	Enlisted 13 November 1942
Branch	Army
Service Number	17166329
Registration	Registered, order # 11077A
Place	Augusta, Butler County (Board #2)

- “The U.S. Army Air Force’s 492nd Bombardment Group was brave and highly skilled, but it was their unlucky fate to find themselves, repeatedly, at the wrong place at the wrong time.”

“...brave and highly skilled, but it was their unlucky fate to find themselves, repeatedly, at the wrong place at the wrong time. And though they were faultless, for their sins, they got wiped out not once, but twice. The first time was by the Luftwaffe, which inflicted such heavy losses on them they had to be stood down and disbanded. The second time was by their own generals, who, rather than acknowledge their defeat, performed an act of bureaucratic legerdemain to cover it up and in essence, expunge them from history...”

“The official histories never mentioned what happened. Decades would pass before historians started figuring it out. Today, a handful of 492nd veterans remain alive. They call themselves the “Happy Warriors,” and hope to receive some unit commendation or at least official recognition before they’re all gone. But the chances of receiving any are slim.”

**BRENDAN MCNALLY (HARD LUCK OUTFIT: THE STORY OF THE 492ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP)**

I checked the available military records (via Fold3.com) for this crew and found minimal information. I checked for 1945 news articles about the crew and found the following:

Capt. Herschel L. Smith

## Dayton Wives Get Medals For Husbands

Presentation of medals for prisoner and missing air force husbands was made yesterday to a Dayton and an Osborn wife by Patterson Field officers.

The silver star presented Mrs. Doris F. Smith, 346 North Cherry drive, for her husband, Capt. Herschel L. Smith, reported prisoner, was awarded "for gallantry in action while leading a squadron of B-24 aircraft on an bombardment mission."

The citation pointed out that the bomber piloted by the captain was hit by flak and the fuselage engulfed in flames from the wing back. Nevertheless, the pilot kept his aircraft in the lead position over the target, enabling the squadron to complete its mission successfully, the citation said. The oak leaf cluster was awarded Captain Smith "for meritorious achievement in accomplishing with distinction, several aerial operations over enemy-occupied continental Europe."

The Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), presented Mrs. Alice B. Spriggs of R. R. 1, Osborn, was awarded her husband, Lt. Earl D. Spriggs, "for extraordinary achievement while participating as copilot in aerial flight."

The occasion was an attack on an enemy naval task force, during which, "through intense anti-aircraft fire" the formation sank four destroyers, and Lieutenant Spriggs' ship damaged the stern of an enemy vessel and effectively strafed it.

The oak leaf cluster was awarded for "meritorious achievement while participating in sustained operational flight missions in the Southwest Pacific."

## Women Voters Support New Courthouse Plan

"This Montgomery county courthouse is all worn out. We need a new one."

The League of Women Voters said this and then they started in to do something about it.

First, they came out with a pro-

walls have serious cracks. Window frames are worn out, letting in dust and cold air. They were lined with felt this winter for warmth. Floors are hollow tile, heavy of themselves, and loads of records moved about add more weight.

THE JOURNAL HERALD, DAYTON, OHIO, MAR. 1945

2nd Lt. Winston J. Strehorn

## Flier From Dallas Reported Missing

DALLAS, Aug. 25 (Spl).—After completing 19 bombing raids with the 8th Air Force in less than two months, Second Lt. Winston J. Strehorn was reported missing July 26 on his 20th mission as pilot of a Liberator. His mother, Mrs. Mary Ellen Strehorn of Dallas, has since been notified that he is a prisoner of war in Germany.

Strehorn's bomber, in which he flew his crew to England in May, was one of the first to arrive there still in its silver paint. On D-Day he flew it in support of the invasion forces. On his last flight it was one of 1,500 planes with Munich as a target.

He now holds the Air Medal with two clusters.



LIEUTENANT STREHORN.

Hamilton Fish Drone

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM, AUG, 1944



## 2nd Lt. William Caplinger

# Between The Sport Lines by WILBUR ADAMS

Lieutenant William Caplinger, who was held a prisoner in Germany for 14 months, took a workout at Doubleday Park this week in a Solon uniform which he wore before the war. Bill is the property of the Sacramento ball club and he hopes to return to the game one of these days.

"It sure feels good to throw a baseball again," said the tall right hander. "It helps take your mind off those 14 months in the concentration camp. When I get my discharge I would like to return and pitch here."

### May Get Discharge

Caplinger has more than 100 points, which should gain him his discharge from the service.

Bill says the whole experience in Germany is like one long, bad dream. His plane was knocked down after bombing the target. The enemy took his pilot and shot him immediately.

"They grabbed me and a couple of the other fellows from our ship and headed for the nearest tree with ropes," said Caplinger. "When you say I was just plain scared stiff you are not underestimating my feelings. I don't even remember whether they were talking in German or English. But a German captain saved our lives."

### Held In Cell

"For 11 days we were held in a little cell under ground with practically nothing to eat. It was as dark as pitch. The Germans thought we were on some kind of a secret mission so we were interrogated

every day. Naturally we told them nothing and we finally were sent to a concentration camp. There we did our own cooking when we had something to cook. We were given a small ration of black bread, turnips and cabbage and occasionally a little horse meat and that was about all."

To supplement their menu, Caplinger told of catching five cats which were around the yard.

### Trapped Sparrows

"We skinned them and we were so hungry that they tasted great—something like any other kind of a small animal," Bill explained. "But one cat had to be divided up among eight of us, so you can see we weren't stuffed. And we trapped sparrows and cooked them. They weren't very big after they were picked, but they were better than nothing. We ate the whole bird, bones, entrails and all."

The lieutenant got down to about 130 pounds while he was locked up.

He attempted to escape, spending weeks digging a long tunnel. But when he popped his head out of the ground a German guard was sitting there with a gun on him.

Caplinger was on his twenty first mission when he was shot down. He was a bombardier flying out of England.

Bill came to the Solons from Po-catello in the Spring of 1941. He won three games and lost five for the club in his "freshman" year here. He was here early in 1942 when the army called him. He had enlisted in January. Bill throws a deceptive screwball and should have a bright future in baseball after the war.



Bill Caplinger

THE SACRAMENTO BEE, JULY 1945

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## Staff Sgt. Oscar S Cox

service.  
Of the two Grand Prairie men in the list, the family of one of them had already heard directly from him of his liberation. He is Staff Sgt. Oscar S. Cox, bomber gunner, who had been a POW since July 12 when his plane was shot down over Munich.  
His wife, however, was pleased to hear the good news again and asked, "how is he and when will he be home?" Mrs. Cox works for the Lone Star Gas Company in Dallas and lives with her mother, Mrs. Lillie V. Shouse, in Grand Prairie.



FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM, MAY, 1945

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## Staff Sgt. Edwin F Rogers

**Citations For Salem Man Killed July 12**

Salem — A certificate was sent to Mr. and Mrs. Ben Rogers from the president of the United States, which states: "In grateful memory to Staff Sergeant Edwin F. Rogers: A Citation of honor from the United States Army Air Forces to Staff Sgt. Edwin F. Rogers, who gave his life in the performance of his duties on July 12, 1944, signed by H. H. Arnold, General U. S. Army, Commanding General, AAF."

Also, the Purple Heart was awarded to Staff Sgt. Edwin F. Rogers for military merit and wounds resulting in his death, July 12, 1944. The Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters were also awarded Sgt. Rogers, and a citation for the above was also sent to Mr. and Mrs. Rogers from Edward F. Witsell, Brig. General. The Air Medal and two Oak Leaf Clusters will be presented by a local officer through the commanding general, Seventh Service Command, Omaha, Nebr.

THE MOUNT PLEASANT NEWS, IOWA, JAN. 1945

*According to Buel's son, Mark, in 2007; "My father, Buel Robinson, spent a bit less than a year in POW camp prior to being released when the camp was abandoned in the face of oncoming Russian troops. He speaks of the experience rarely but without anger, as part of a war, and seems to hold no grudges at the Germans running the camp. Never enough to eat he says, but then the guards didn't have much more themselves.*

*I thank my father and those who served with him for placing the world in our hands in a pretty good state. All the world owes his generation a debt of gratitude for their courage and strength, both of which I fear we are not carrying forward to our children. Let us promise those left to do better in the future, and with a bit of luck handing off to our children a world as fine as that they gave us."*

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***Family Stories I've Found:*** <https://allkinconsidered.blog/>

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