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City Pilot Flies Paratroops In Invasion of Normandy



Lt. Bartram H. Dilks, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Bartram H. Dilks, Sr., of 217 North Fourteenth street, who was a pilot of a Ninth Air Force Trooper Carrier Command plane which participated in the invasion of Normandy, is shown above with members of his crew shortly before they took off. Those in the group are, left to right: Lieutenant Dilks, Lt. Vincent K. Prince, Jamestown, N. Y., co-pilot; Tech. Sgt. George Watterson, High Bridge, N. J., crew chief, and Cpl. William Hauptman, of Brooklyn, radio operator.

Piloting a C-47 "Skytrain" in the largest armada of troop-carrier planes ever assembled, Lt. Bartram H. Dilks, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Bartram H. Dilks, Sr., 217 North Fourteenth street, returned to England safely from the D-Day invasion of Normandy after dropping his cargo of paratroopers. His plane was hit by flak in 22 places.

Speaking of his experiences, Lieutenant Dilks said:

"I had no fear of enemy opposition from the air, due to the thousands of Allied fighter planes that provided an umbrella for us, but the flak was very intense along the coastline and near the objective. We had to come out low after dropping the boys, and as a result, we ran into heavy machine gun fire. I could feel the bullets hitting the plane and it started to get out of trim. I made inquiries over the interphone as to how the crew were, and when told that they were all o. k., I informed them that we would try for our home base if our gas would hold out. We landed with very little to spare, and that was leaking out fast."

It was Lieutenant Dilks' third invasion since going overseas early in 1943. He previously took part in the initial landings in Sicily and Italy.

A graduate of Sunbury High School, class of 1939, he entered the service January 13, 1941. After preliminary training he was assigned to Ellington Field, Houston, Texas, where he completed his course on July 3, 1942, and received his wings and appointment as a staff sergeant pilot. He was promoted to the rank of flight officer in January, 1943, and to lieutenant on June 1, 1944.

Holder of the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and two Bronze Stars, Lieutenant Dilks is the husband of Mrs. Gladys M. Dilks, who resides in New Haven, Mich. They have a 10-month-old son, Bartram H. Dilks, III.

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