



STOCKTON RUSH BARTOL

1941

Co-pilot of a Liberator bomber, Stockton Rush Bartol, at the age of twenty-one, had, in five months, completed twenty-five missions over Europe. Then he volunteered for three more. He was killed in action over Hamburg on his twenty-sixth mission.

He enlisted in the Air Force in March, 1942, during his Freshman year at Princeton, was inducted the following August and commissioned Second Lieutenant in May, 1943. That September he went to England assigned to the 44th Bombardment Group.

In March, he took advantage of some "bad weather" to send some "news," news not about himself, but about friends and formates of his:

"Bigelow Watts is instructing flying somewhere in the States, as is Francis Bohlen, who is a Lt. (j.g.) in the Naval Air Corps. Francis Coleman is in some highly combative unit of assault troops and writes that he expects to see action soon. Billy Bohlen, who was in the Naval Reserve training unit at Princeton, is either about to or just has received his commission. Don Dodge is still at Camp Hale, Colo., with the ski troops and is now a S/Sgt. . . . I just received a letter from Louis Russell<sup>1</sup> who just arrived in Bougainville in the Southwest Pacific. He is flying pursuits and was the first member of his group to shoot down a Jap plane, a Zero. He too is now a 1st Lieutenant, in the Marine Air Corps. . . ."

<sup>1</sup>Louis Russell was killed in action five days after this letter was written, and Bartol himself in less than a month.

On April 8, 1944, the bombers of Bartol's unit were making a feint toward Hamburg when they got reports that Brunswick, the assigned target, was hidden by artificial fog; they therefore kept on for Hamburg. Just before entering their bomb-run, they were attacked by German fighters, and as they entered it they encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire. Within less than two minutes, seventeen of the thirty-six bombers were shot down. Bartol, while piloting, was hit by shrapnel and instantly killed. His plane got back to England, though all its aileron wires were cut and one of its motors was dead.

Courage, modesty and a warm heart were his. He thought often of his school-days, of his friends absent from one another, and of the place itself. "I always thought I would be the last to admit it, but it seems the longer I am away from St. Paul's the more it grows on me." He was there six years. Though he was light in build, his courage early made him a good athlete. The memory of him at the Lower Grounds late in an autumn afternoon, defeated but undaunted in the closing minutes of a football game, helps one to understand the spirit that carried him through his missions. In spite of his having an alert mind, interested in many things, studies did not come easily to him; but he persevered, graduated, and went to college, for a year; then in quiet simplicity gave his life.