



459th Bombardment Group Heavy
B-24 Liberators of World War II



S. Sgt, Vincent J. Agius, Bio and Background - 759th Squadron

As we know it, Agius (**2nd from right, back row**) officially entered the Army Air Corp service on June 21, 1941, arriving in Europe on the 16th of April, 1944. The first part of Agius' career was as a Drill instructor, then joining the Air Corp in late 1943, training as a tail gunner in a B-24, throughout the US, until being shipped overseas in the spring of 1944. He served with his crew in the Middle Eastern, African and European Theatres. Fought in the Balkans, Normandy, Rome and Italy and East Africa.



Their plane was shot down on their 26th mission, on June 16, 1944, (Just 60 days after arriving) in a raid over Vienna on an oil refinery (this crew earlier flew in the famed Ploesti Oil Field raids). Shortly after dropping their bomb load, a squadron of German ME-109's attacked the bomber Group, and specifically their plane after being badly hit and partially crippled by flak and other anti-aircraft fire.

Agius, Hunt and McCord (tail and waist Gunners), were all wounded, with the plane hit badly and communications out, Lingobardo gave the crew in the back the bail out order, and the first four crew members parachuted from the hit plane, parachuting out over Hungary. Three of these four landed safely, though two were badly injured with Hunt dying of his wounds fairly soon after landing. All were captured.

Meanwhile in the air as the badly damaged plane lumbered on, the rest of the crew, Broshiers, Nose Turret Gunner; Gordon Hovet, Bombardier; Martin Harris, and Navigator; George Ostrout, Jr., led by the Co-Pilot George Tice, bailed, with Lt. Joe Young, the Pilot, remaining in the cockpit and at the controls to attempt a crash landing. After their parachute landings, the entire crew was found and rooted out by Hungarian and German troops and captured as prisoners of war. It would be a long year to liberation! And, yes, the Pilot, Young, made it out of the plane just in time.

Initially, after being shot down and for several weeks following, the family was actually notified that Vincent was KIA (Killed in Action) so imagine the dreaded happiness to find out that he was alive, but in a POW camp. Still better than being killed.

Agius was moved from Prison to prison during his confinement as the war effort circled in the Germans, spending the majority of his prison time in prisoner hospitals due to severe leg, hip and foot injuries sustained from flak and anti aircraft fire. He was shipped home, after nearly a year as A POW, on June 15, 1945. Arriving back in Macon Georgia, Cochran Field, again spending the vast majority of the time between his July, 1945 arrival and November 15 Discharge in the Cochran Field Convalescent hospital due to wounds received.

The day he was discharged, November 15, 1945 was the opening of Deer season in Michigan, so Agius made his way home in time to hunt with his father and brothers and to spend that Thanksgiving and Christmas of 1945 with his family. And never stopped hunting or fishing after that! He was an avid outdoorsman. According to his discharge papers, he left Cochran field with \$161.23 in his pocket with an additional \$140 or so due to him for the time he was in the POW camps. I suppose most of that went to Thanksgiving, Christmas and new Years for the family, including ammo and clothes for him to hunt in for the remainder of that season.

Immediately after the war, Agius settled in Alpena and spent the remainder of his life living between Alpena and Grand Lake, eventually retiring in Rogers City. He travelled almost extensively by car, never getting too far from Alpena. In fact (And I guess you can't blame him) he only flew two or three times after the war. Once to Hawaii – the only way to get there, and once that I know of to attend a 459th reunion.

Vincent Passed away in August of 2006 at the age of 88, he would have been 89 in November of that year. He lived a full life. Before the war, he and a group of buddies traveled to all 48 states, Canada and Mexico on Pre-war Harley Davidson and Indian Motorcycles. Quite a trip by all descriptions as well as the few photo's that remain. He had 5 children that grew up in Alpena, Mary, Theresa, Walt, Paul and Ruth Ann. Was married to Gertrude (Trudy) and eventually divorced; Owned and operated the "Custom Color House" furniture and decorating store, first on Chisholm Street in Alpena than relocated to US 23 South, semi-retiring in 1974.

He loved to hunt and fish, shoot and be in the outdoors.

Dad- We miss you and love you. You Are Our Hero!