

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY-SIXTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), A. A. F.
Office of the Awards Officer

SRS/dtc

AF0 559
U. S. Army,
2 March 1945.

201 x 200.6

SUBJECT: Distinguished Flying Cross Recommendation.

TO : Second Lieutenant Raoul A. de Mars, O-814877, Army Air Forces.

1. The following is a true copy of the narrative recommending you for the Distinguished Flying Cross. This recommendation was considered by an awards board at higher headquarters and the Air Medal awarded instead for the action involved.

Lieutenant RAOUL A. DeMARS distinguished himself by his heroism and skill while serving as co-pilot of a B-17 aircraft on a high altitude bombardment mission to Stettin, Germany, 11 April 1944.

Lieutenant DeMAR's aircraft was flown in No. 6 position of the high squadron of a composite group led by aircraft of the 388th Bombardment Group. The pilot was 2nd Lieutenant KENNETH E. BETHUR, O-753847.

Approximately an hour and a half before reaching the target area, the formation of which Lieutenant DeMAR's ship was a part was attacked by a large force of twin-engine enemy fighter aircraft, which knocked down two of the bombers in the high squadron and partially disabled No. 2 engine and wrecked No. 3 supercharger on his airplane. Lieutenants BETHUR and DeMARS, despite this damage which seriously affected the power of the ship, skillfully maneuvered their Fortress into No. 4 position in the formation when the plane in that position was shot down.

Over the target a second wave of enemy fighters attacked. The attackers this time were FW-190's. Two singled out Lieutenant DeMAR's ship and made vicious, close-in thrusts, coming as near as 15 feet from the bomber. A 20 mm. shell from one of the attackers burst in the cockpit and Lieutenant DeMARS received a serious and painful facial wound. Nevertheless he remained at his controls, giving the greatest possible assistance to the pilot until shock and loss of blood made it impossible for him to continue, when he made his way to the radio room where he received first aid and was able to lie down. By this time he was nearly unable to see, the wound having swollen his eyes, particularly the right, almost shut.

In the second attack, the ship was so badly crippled that a crash landing was necessary. The pilot brought the ship down in Danish territory. Both wings came off and the fuselage crumpled in the middle when the plane hit. Yet in spite of the shock of the crash landing and the weakness and pain resulting from his wound, and acting with the greatest courage and the most praiseworthy devotion to the welfare of the others in the crew in refusing to allow himself to be in any way an impediment to their swift flight to safety, Lieutenant DeMARS played his full part as a member of his combat "team" in effecting its eventual escape to neutral territory, disdaining at all times any special attention or privilege his condition might have warranted but which could have held up their progress for even a moment. His stubborn courage was a principal factor in the remarkable escape of this crew, which entered neutral territory as an intact unit -- ten men who came through hell together.

The skill, the coolness and the great courage shown by Lieutenant DeMARS reflects the highest credit upon himself and the Army Air Forces.

INCL 2

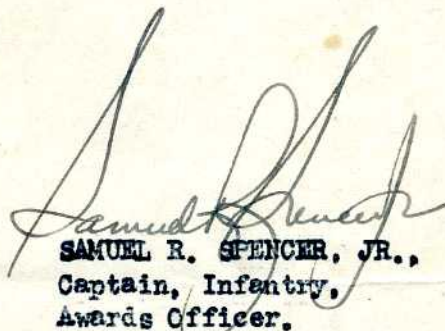
Marcus J. Lemley (s)
MARCUS J. LEMLEY, (t)
Lt. Col., Air Corps,
CO, 339th Bomb Sq (H).

200.6 1st Ind. JLT/gwr
HEADQUARTERS, 96TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H), AAF, APO 559, U. S. Army, 6 May 1944.
TO: Commanding General, 3d Bombardment Division, APO 559, U. S. Army.

1. Approved. Lieutenant DeMARS is deserving of high praise for his heroic devotion to his comrades and to the skill and coolness he displayed as a Co-Pilot on this occasion.

James L. Travis (s)
JAMES L. TRAVIS, (t)
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

S E C R E T


SAMUEL R. SPENCER, JR.,
Captain, Infantry,
Awards Officer.

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