## Starke County No. 63 --- Verne Trinoskey

Another Greek Tragedy – this one in January 1944-----

Veterans have many stories to tell after their service to their country. Some are never told. Some of this story was reported in the North Judson News, April 18, 1944, then later on May 4, 1944. The story is about Verne Trinoskey from North Judson and his B-17 bomber.



The B-17 was known as the flying fortress. It had thirteen 50-caliber machine guns on board. Enemy fighters could hardly get close to it. Verne was the tail gunner on his plane.

Nazi Germany had been taking over Europe. The United States military had driven them out of North Africa, and by January of 1944, had taken over Italy. The U.S., during a very cold winter, now had airfields on the island of Sicily. On January 11, 1944, squadrons of B-17s departed Sicily to bomb the ports of Greece in the fight against Germany.

With dozens of bombers flying through the cold, icy clouds, windows in the planes froze over, making it hard to see. As the first squadrons unloaded their bombs on the targets, they turned back to Italy. Instead of turning and returning in a different elevation, they turned into the path of the oncoming squadrons. Plane after plane destroyed one another. Fifty three airmen lost their lives.

Verne Trinoskey's plane was sliced in two by one of the other bombers. A plane without a tail cannot fly. Likewise, a tail without a plane cannot fly. , Already injured from the crash, Verne found himself falling fast, still in his tail section. Somehow he worked himself free from the wreckage and pulled the ripcord on his parachute. He landed in the snow on the foot hills of a mountain range and was saved and hidden from the Nazis by the local Greek patriots. In April, 1944, three months later, he and two of his fellow airmen





made it back to Sicily. He had been "missing in action" since January 11, 1944. He had completed 45 combat air missions for his country.

The North Judson News report, May 4, 1944, states – **Missing In Action, Local Boy Arrives Home Safely** 

"'Back home again,' the dearest words I've heard in a long time," says S/Sgt. Verne Trinoskey, as he arrived in North Judson, Tuesday noon.

Jim Shilling Starke County Historical Society

http://www.starkehistory.com http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/