

## Exploring the Cemetery – Luther Hackman



The beautiful monument erected in Section 6, on lot 154, for Luther Hackman, is a cenotaph. Luther is actually buried at the American Cemetery and Memorial Park in Lorraine, France.

Luther was the son of Charles C. and Estella (Leeking) Hackman, born Jan. 29, 1923. He graduated from Warwick High School in 1941, and attended Franklin and Marshall College for one year before being inducted into the US Army Air corps on February 11, 1943. In September 1944 he was deployed to England with the 493<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group at Debach, Suffolk, England.

From May through December of 1944, Hackman's 493<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, 861<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron, flew 18 missions over Merseburg, Germany, in order to bomb a synthetic fuel factory. Merseburg is west of Leipzig and deep in the heart of Germany. The campaign resulted in the loss of 157 B-17s with 665 crewmembers killed or missing and 822 captured as prisoners of war.



*861<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron HQ in Debach.*



Luther was radioman and gunner on 2Lt. John M. Miller's B-17 named *Proud Pappy* when that bomber was shot down over Germany on November 25, 1944. The flight began smoothly but weather was bad over the target and flak was heavy.

*Proud Pappy* was hit and exploded over Muschwitz, which is about 30 km southeast of Merseburg. Seven crewmembers, including Hackman, were killed and two others were taken prisoner. The bodies were buried in the village cemetery and exhumed after the war to be reinterred in the American Cemetery in Lorraine.



*Merseburg's fuel factory in 1945.*

And so, we remember Luther in this, the month of his death, 72 years ago.