

WWII & the Boys from High Rolls

The true story of seven Mexican American boys born to a poor immigrant family between 1917 to 1924. All were born in the same home located in the mountains of New Mexico at a place called High Rolls.

All seven entered the US armed forces during WWII and experienced firsthand the destruction and horror of the most intense, brutal and destructive war the world had ever witnessed.

They served in the US Merchant Marines, US Army, US Army Air Force and US Navy. They survived enemy attacks in the Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and southwest Pacific Ocean. Four of them participated in the battle of Normandy after D-Day. They fought in and over the countries of France, Belgium, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. One participated in multiple amphibious operations in the invasion of the Philippines.

Six of them experienced combat firsthand, and were very fortunate not to have been killed, with two experiencing serious wounds during combat with enemy forces.

Charles Nogales

The story of 2nd Mate Albert Flores by Patrick Flores

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The High Rolls Connection

Damacio Garcia Nogales was born in Mexico in 1873 in the city of San Juan de los Lagos. Inez M Escoto was born in 1882 in the province of Chihuahua, Mexico. They married on November 17, 1900, in Santa Bárbara, Chihuahua, Mexico. They lived in Mexico and had two daughters, Donaciana (1903) and Eufrocina (1907). During 1907 the family migrated to the city of La Luz, New Mexico. During the next six years Inez Nogales gave birth to three more sons, Gregorio (1908), Rosario (1910), and Daniel (1914). Around 1914 Damacio, Inez and the five children moved into a home in a town called High Rolls, New Mexico which was located in the Lincoln National Forest.



Photograph shows the Nogales Family in 1916 – Left to right. Eufrocina is 10 years old, Mother Inez Escoto age 34, Rosalio 7 years old, Daniel 2 years old, Father Damacio age 44, Gregory 9 years old, and oldest daughter Donaciana 14 years old.

The family lived in a single-story house off the main road and Damacio Nogales worked as a section foreman for the Southern Pacific railroad. In July 1917, Inez and Damacio had their 4th son, named *Francisco (Frank) E Nogales*.

Also in 1917 Donaciana, known to all as Chana, married Manuel B Flores, who was a railroad worker. In May 1918 Chana and Manuel gave birth to their first son named *Ramon N Flores*.

The 1920 Census shows both the Nogales family and the Flores family (Manual, Chana, and 1 year old Ramon) residing in the same home in the County of Otero, the village of High Rolls, NM. In the entire county of Otero,

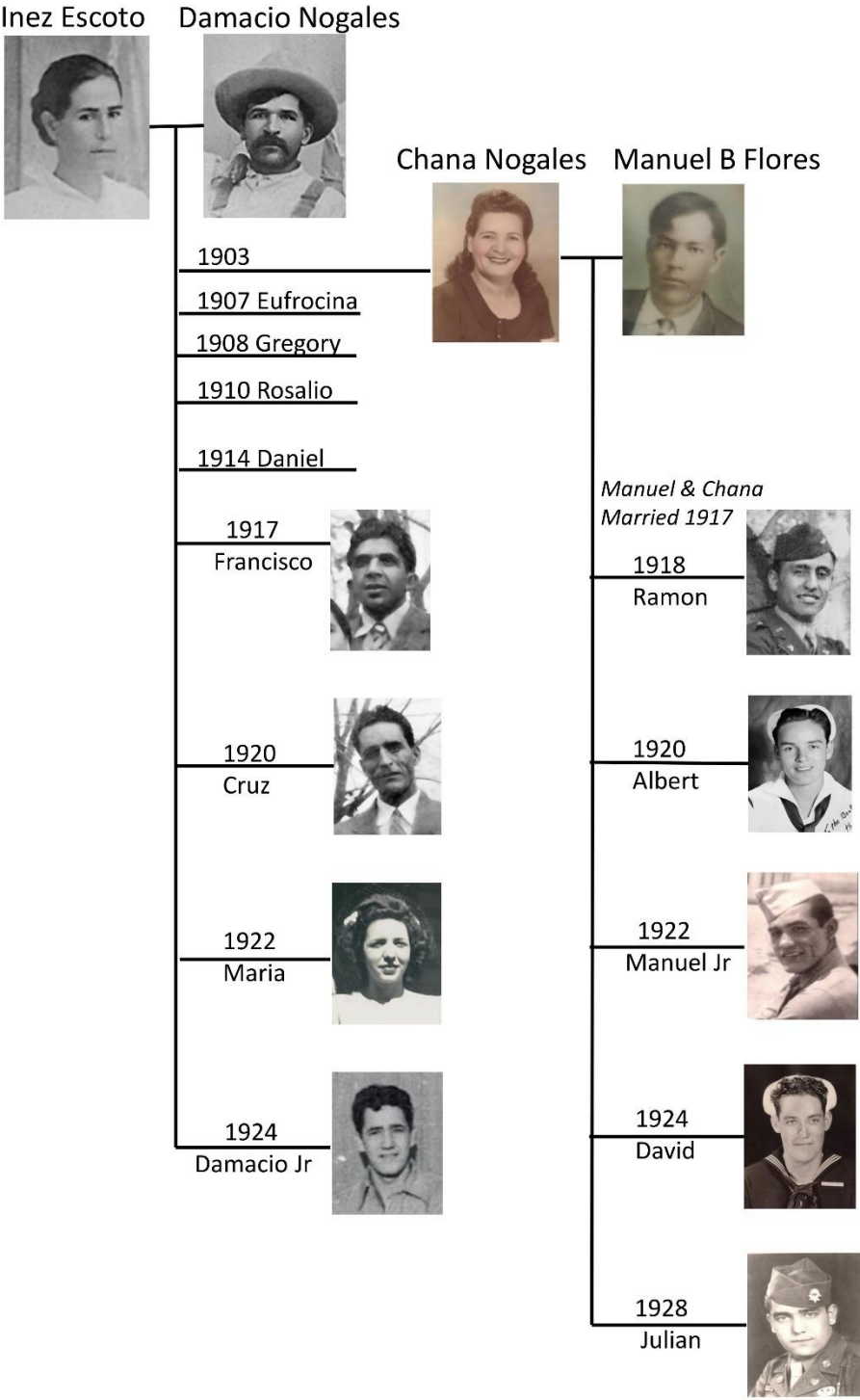
the total population was 7,902 inhabitants, which included the city of Alamogordo.

In May of 1920 Inez gave birth to a son named *Cruz E Nogales* and in December Chana had a boy named *Albert N Flores*. In July 1922 Inez gave birth to a daughter named *Maria E Nogales* and Chana had her 3rd son who was named *Manuel N Flores Jr*.

The year 1924 witnessed the birth of *David N Flores* (Chana's 4th son) in October, followed in December by another boy from Inez Nogales (last child for Inez and Damacio) who was named *Damacio E Nogales Jr*. And so, it came to be that in seven calendar years (1917 to 1924) seven boys and one girl had joined the Nogales and Flores families in their home in High Rolls, NM. The family did not have access to medical care and all the children were born at home.

Their home in High Rolls was next to the local Elementary School and down the road from a Catholic Church. The parents provided a loving environment and made sure the children attended school and religious services. Damacio Sr. would wake up early to ring the morning bells before the first Mass in the Catholic Church every single day. Inez would start grinding the corn, soaking the beans and

cutting onions, celery, and other produce for the meals of the day. Chana and Eufrocina would go to the local open market to round out the daily meals. Come snow, rain or shine Damacio Sr. and Manual Sr. would go to work six days a week 10 to 12 hours a day.



The children did have a magnificent “backyard” which was the Lincoln National Forest. Populated with tree covered hills, pine tree areas, canyons, trails, swimming holes, waterfalls, wooden trussells, and plenty of forest wildlife the children had nature as their playground. Despite their poverty and minimal medical access all the children were healthy and attended primary and secondary school.

In 1928 Chana, her husband Manuel and her four boys moved to Alamogordo and got their own place. The same year Chana gave birth to their final child, a boy named *Julian N Flores*.



High Rolls and Alamogordo, New Mexico had tight knit Mexican American community. The families all looked out for each other. Photograph of boys around 1932 attending school costume party. Alejo Gonzales, Francisco Sanchez, Samuel Baca, Albert Flores, Francisco (Frank) Nogales and Octaviano Duran

In the mid to late 1930s the great depression made access to higher education and non-laborer type jobs almost nonexistent. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7th, 1941, and the military response sent all seven young men on a trajectory they never could have imagined.

The seven boys born in High Rolls; Francisco, Ramon, Cruz, Albert, Manuel, David, and Damacio all entered military service. *Here are their amazing stories from WW II.*

The youngest boy, Julian, also joined the military but did not deploy till after Japan surrendered.

Pfc Frank Escoto Nogales – Born July 14th, 1917, in High Rolls, NM

On July 17th, 1917, Inez gave birth to Francisco (Frank) Escoto Nogales at their home in High Rolls. The family called him Pancho and he had plenty of siblings to play with. He went to the local grammar school with his older brother Daniel and later attended Alamogordo high school. After high school, Frank worked at various jobs and his draft registration had him listed as a farm hand at Cochise, Arizona. He was drafted in Aug 1942, and completed training in Camp Claiborne, Louisiana qualifying as an Army Truck Driver.

Frank was assigned to the 634th Tank Destroyer (TD) battalion and on 10 Jan 1944 the battalion arrived in England and was garrisoned in southern England. The 634th battalion joined millions of soldiers that were preparing for the largest sea invasion in the history of mankind. The 634th TD battalion landed on Utah Beach on 30 Jun and saw first action south of the city of Carentan, France.



Frank was assigned to the Supply Section of Battalion HQ Company which supported the 634th Companies (A, B & C) with ammunition and TD supplies. Each company had twelve M10 TD vehicles attached to different regiments of the 1st Infantry Division.

Operation Cobra – On 25 Jul 1944, the US 8th and 9th Air Force would conduct a massive saturation bombing of a 2x3 mile area near the city of Saint-Lo, France and the US First Army would launch a major attack on remaining German forces. The intense and brutal bombing punched a hole in the German lines and the 1st Infantry Division (ID) quickly drove towards the cities of Coutances and Avranches, France. Pfc Frank Nogales and the 634th TD Battalion (Bn) participated in the first major breakthrough of the Normandy Campaign.

Battle of Northern France – Beginning on 14 Aug the 1st ID and the 634th TD Bn moved rapidly eastward not encountering any significant German resistance. While this occurred the entire German Army Group in France was surrounded near the town of Falaise. Over 50,000 German soldiers were killed or captured by Allied forces. By Aug 24th the entire German forces were in full retreat towards Belgium. The 634th TD Bn advanced 20 miles per day northeast towards Belgium and was one of the first US Army groups to enter Belgium.

Battle of the Mons Pocket – On 31 Aug, near the city of Mons, Belgium the 1st Infantry Division with the 634th TD Bn ran into German columns attempting to reach the German border. They were joined by the US 3rd Armored Division and the US 9th Infantry Division to trap multiple German divisions in a pocket. The 3rd Armored Division set up roadblocks on the road between Mons and Avesnes, and the 1st ID with the 634th TD Bn *spearheading* attacked to the north-west from Avesnes into the German forces. The German forces were badly disorganized and lacked fuel and ammunition which resulted in American forces controlling the battlefield. The 1st Infantry Division and 634th TD continued to

eliminate German positions and took large numbers of prisoners. In total 25,000 Germans were captured and approximately 3,500 killed.

Battle of Aachen, Germany - By 15 Sept the 634th TD Bn had reached the German border just south of Aachen, Germany. The 1st Infantry Division joined four other Infantry (9th, 28th, 29th, and 30th) Divisions with two Armored (2nd, 3rd) Divisions for the first battle on German territory in WWII. The battle for the city of Aachen began with the American forces surrounding the city thereby cutting off supplies and reinforcements. The 1st infantry units began the attack into the city, led by the M10 companies of the 634th TD Bn, which blasted buildings and fortifications being used by 18,000 Wehrmacht soldiers. Despite snipers and panzerfaust equipped Germans, Pfc Frank Nogales and the supply crews drove trucks to continuously transport ammunition to the lead 634th units. On 21 Oct all resistance ceased, and the remaining Wehrmacht forces surrendered to the Americans.



Three M10 destroyers moving through Aachen looking for enemy positions. The 634th TD units worked closely with the three infantry regiments of the 1st Infantry Division. Each regiment (16th infantry, 18th infantry and the 26th infantry) had a "Company" of M10 destroyers assigned consisting of twelve M10 destroyers each. They served an invaluable service in knocking out pill boxes, machine gun nests and any fortification pinning down the infantry units. They became an indispensable force in the capture of Aachen, Germany.

Battle of Hurtgen Forrest – Nov 1944, this was a long and brutal battle involving up to 10 US Army Infantry Divisions and 2 Armored Divisions and the German Wehrmacht assigning up to 13 divisions to counter the allies. Some progress was made by the 1st ID and the 634th Battalion, but it was a grueling advance, and many casualties were incurred by both sides. On 6 Dec the 1st ID and 634th were relieved for much need R & R.

The Battle of the Bulge – On 16 Dec, a huge German offensive was launched in the Ardennes Forest by a desperate Adolf Hitler. The Wehrmacht 5th Panzer army, 6th Panzer Army, and the 7th Army consisting of over 400,000 soldiers launched a huge offensive against American positions in the Ardennes. On 18 Dec the 634th TD Bn was dispatched to seize, occupy, and hold the town of Weismes, Belgium. For the next 2 weeks the Battalion held their position in spite of determined enemy attacks. By 25 Jan 1945, the German forces were completely driven back, and the largest and most costly battle in the history of the United States was won.

The Ludendorff Bridge and Encirclement of the Industrial Ruhr – On 7 Mar the U.S. 9th Armored Division had seized the railway bridge across the Rhine River at Remagen. On 15 March, the first elements of the 634th TD Bn. used the Ludendorff Bridge to cross the Rhine and moved into the

eastern bridgehead that had been established. Two days later, the 1st Infantry Division attacked German positions to expand the bridgehead east of the Rhine River. Determined resistance was met as the Battalion drove generally north to the Sieg River. By 4 April 1945 the US Ninth Army, driving southeast and the US First Army (with the 1st ID) driving northeast encircled the Ruhr region with some 370,000 German soldiers were surrounded! This pocket yielded some 317,000 prisoners to the American Forces.

Battle of Harz Mountain - During the early part of April, the Battalion moved into the central part of Germany. The Harz Mountains region was defended by fourth German Corps who put up tough opposition to the 1st Infantry and the 634th. German tanks and self-propelled guns opposed the advance, some towns were captured with little or no resistance, while others like Osterode, Benneckenstein, and Thale were taken only after hard fighting. After the Battle of the Harz Mountains, the battalion traveled a distance of more than 200 miles and by 23 April the 634th TD battalion had entered the northwestern part of Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia 23 Apr to 8 May - Not all the fight was out of the German Army during the last days of the war, and although in some places the enemy gave up with little resistance, there were instances when they fought fanatically. On 4 May, Company B of the 634th contacted one of these fanatical groups at a range of 100 yards and fired their 3-inch-high explosive shells at the enemy who were determined not to give ground. The 634th physically overran four machine gun nest with the TDs, throwing hand grenades out of their vehicles into fox holes occupied by the Germans.

Pfc Frank Nogales had survived *306 days of continuous combat*, except for a three-day period in August and a four-day period in December. Much credit for the efficiency of the TD Bn goes to Frank's HQ Company, who furnished supplies and ammunition (under enemy fire) to all three 634th tank destroyer companies during its battles against the German Wehrmacht.

The end of hostilities in Europe did not mean that Pfc Frank Nogales and his fellow 634th soldiers were allowed to return to the states. The battalion remained and was stationed in the city of Dinkelsbuhl, Germany (45 miles southwest of Nuremburg) as an occupation unit. Frank would remain in Germany till early October 1945.

On the 20th of October Frank would finally be back home with his mother, father, siblings, and nephews. Frank had spent *1 year, 9 months, and 14 days* overseas serving his country during WW II.

Lt. Ramon Nogales Flores – Born May 31st, 1918, in High Rolls, NM

Ramon Flores was the first child of Donaciana (Chana) Nogales Flores and Manuel B. Flores. During this period, they lived with Chana's parents in High Rolls, NM. Ramon went to the local grammar school and attended Alamogordo high school.

In 1942, Ramon was accepted to the Army Pilot Cadet training program to become a 4-engine bomber pilot. By late 1943 Ramon was in the Army Air Forces Training Command in Roswell, NM learning how to fly B-17 Flying Fortresses. In May 1944, 2nd Lt. Ramon N Flores and his assigned bomber crew was shipped off to England to join the 8th Air Force. They were assigned as a B-17 "replacement" crew for the 332nd Bomb Squadron which was one of four bomb squadrons which made up the 94th Bomb Group, stationed at Bury St. Edmunds, England.

Lt. Ramon Flores and his crew's first mission was on 22 Jun 44 against a railyard facility near Nucourt, France. The Allied armies in Normandy were having a difficult time advancing on Wehrmacht



positions from Caen to Saint-Lo in France. The 8th Air Force bombers continuously attacked supply chain positions (railroads, fuel dumps, key road intersections) in Northern France to prevent troops and supplies from re-enforcing German positions in Normandy. So, five of the next six missions flown by Ramon and the crew were against German positions in northern France. On 11 July the 94th bomb group returned to bombing strategic locations in Germany.

Munich, Germany 11 Jul 44, Today the 8th Air Force would launch 1,176 B-17 and B-24 bombers to targets around the Munich area. It was a sight to behold for Lt. Flores and his crew, hundreds of bomber and fighter formations all heading to the same area! The German anti-aircraft fire (called flak) over the target was moderate to intense and no enemy fighters were encountered. By this period of the 8th Air Force bombing campaign on German war factories and military infrastructure, the bombers had American fighter escorts protecting them to the deepest targets in Germany. Lt Ramon Flores and the rest of the bombing formation were able to release their bomb ordnance on the target. Good mission with all 94th BG formations returning to base with no losses.

Regensburg, Germany 21 Jul 44, Today's mission was to the industrial area of Regensburg, Germany. The specific target for the 94th BG was a Messerschmitt aircraft factory. During the bomb run over Regensburg the flak shells were exploding all around Ramon's formation (12 bombers per attack formation). The B-17 flying in front of Lt. Ramon Flores suddenly staggered from a flak shell hitting its right wing. The stricken B-17, piloted by Lt Kenneth Gregg, with engines on fire rapidly dropped from the formation. Ramon and his crew had witnessed fellow crew members being "blown out of the sky". Lt Kenneth Gregg and his entire crew were killed.

Merseburg, Germany, Leuna Oil Complex – 28 Jul 44 - As the formations approached the "initial point" to start the bomb run all hell broke loose. The flak explosions started and quickly became

intense, surrounding the bombers with continuous flak explosions, and there was nothing the airmen could do but sweat and “hang on”. Ramon saw the sky covered with black and red explosions, and his B-17 was flying through the center of this gantlet. It was by far the most intense flak storm these airmen had ever experienced. Somehow Lt Flores’s B-17 survived the bomb run with no injuries and returned to base.

August 1944 was very busy for Ramon and the crew. They completed 12 missions over enemy territory and the crew began to realize that they may possibly complete the required 35 mission and make it out alive. They also knew that the level of stress would become much greater as they got close to the last missions.

Ramon Flores had transition from working at a movie theater in Alamogordo, NM three years ago, to flying a B-17G four-engine bomber, responsible for 8 airmen under the most horrible conditions one could ever imagined. He questioned if he would make it back to his wife Daria and his 3-month son he had never seen.

By the beginning of September, Lt Ramon Flores had completed 26 missions. Nine more missions and his combat tour would be complete. During this month the Lt Ramon Flores crew and the 94th Bomb Group would attack major industrial complexes at Gustavsburg, twice at Bohlen (just south of Leipzig), and Ludwigshafen, Germany.

Bohlen, Germany 11 Sept – As the bomb group was over the target Ramon witnessed a horrible accident involving two of his fellow pilots when the B-17 piloted by 2nd Lt. Merle Green slid over and struck another B-17 in the same formation. The 2nd B-17 was piloted by 2nd Lt. Charles Duda and was rammed near the ball turret causing the B-17 to fracture into two parts! The two sections of the plane dropped from the sky and no parachutes were witnessed. Unfortunately, midair collisions within bomber formations were not uncommon!

Berlin, Germany 6 Oct – Lt Ramon Flores’ B-17 was part of three formations in a group when 30 or more Luftwaffe Fw 190 fighters aggressively attacked. The enemy fighters concentrated on the “high”



formation which lagged behind the other two. Multiple squadrons of German fighters were able to isolate, swarm and shoot down all of 11 B-17s in the high formation. *Of the 101 airmen on those aircraft, 35 survived and became prisoners of war (POW) and 66 American airmen were killed in action (KIA).* The Luftwaffe was still able to inflict major damage to the 8th Air Force over Germany.

Due to very poor weather, Lt Flores and the crew didn’t fly until 30 Oct. On that day the 94th bomb group returned to bomb the oil production facility at Merseburg, Germany. Despite the extreme concentration of flak zones the group sustained minimal damage. On 4 Nov the crews 34th mission was to Hamburg, Germany to bomb railroad facilities.

Saarbrücken, Germany 9 Nov 44 - This was it! Mission number 35 and if they survive, they will complete their tour of combat. The target was Saarbrücken which was on the German French border. Due to heavy cloud cover the 94th formations needed to use “lookdown” radar called Mickey equipment which the lead and “deputy lead” B-17s had on board. As they approached the bomb run it was reported the Mickey equipment on BOTH planes had failed. The formations turned back and returned to England with all bombs still on board.

After landing, the crew was informed that this mission was credited as a sortie! Time to pop the champagne. Lt Ramon Nogales Flores and his crew had completed 35 missions over enemy territory. On 11 November 1944 Ramon was officially removed from combat status and preparations started for him to return to Alamogordo, NM to his young wife, baby boy and a loving family.

#	Date	Target	Country	#	Date	Target	Country
1	22-Jun-44	Nucort	France	19	9-Aug-44	Furth	Germany
2	23-Jun-44	Epernay	France	20	13-Aug-44	Garenne	France
3	25-Jun-44	Vercors	France	21	14-Aug-44	Mannheim	Germany
4	29-Jun-44	Wittenburg	Germany	22	15-Aug-44	Handorf	Germany
5	6-Jul-44	Ambricourt	France	23	16-Aug-44	Rositz	Germany
6	8-Jul-44	Barenton	France	24	25-Aug-44	Rechlin	Germany
7	11-Jul-44	Munich	Germany	25	27-Aug-44	Berlin	Germany
8	16-Jul-44	Stuttgart	Germany	26	8-Sep-44	Gustavsburg	Germany
9	18-Jul-44	Cuxhaven	Germany	27	9-Sep-44	Lemuy	France
10	21-Jul-44	Regensburg	Germany	28	11-Sep-44	Bohlen	Germany
11	24-Jul-44	Saint-Lo	France	29	12-Sep-44	Bohlen	Germany
12	25-Jul-44	Saint-Lo	France	30	17-Sep-44	Nijmegen	Holland
13	28-Jul-44	Merseburg	Germany	31	27-Sep-44	Ludwigshafen	Germany
14	31-Jul-44	Munich	Germany	32	6-Oct-44	Berlin	Germany
15	1-Aug-44	Echallon	France	33	30-Oct-44	Mersburg	Germany
16	2-Aug-44	Saint-Ouen	France	34	4-Nov-44	Hamburg	Germany
17	5-Aug-44	Mariental	Germany	35	9-Nov-44	Saarbrücken	Germany
18	6-Aug-44	Marienfelde	Germany				

Lt Ramon Flores piloted 35 combat missions in a B-17G Flying Fortress against enemy targets.

T/Sgt. Cruz Escoto Nogales – Born May 03rd 1920, in High Rolls, NM

Cruz Nogales was the seventh child of Inez and Damacio Nogales and joined the rest of the family in their home at High Rolls, NM on May 3rd, 1920. He went to the local grammar school and attended and graduated from Alamogordo High School. In December of 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Cruz was working as a hull riveter for Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego, CA. Like many of the men his age he was called into service in late 1942.

During early basic training, Cruz was subjected to a battery of “aptitude tests”, where it was determined that he should be assigned to Sioux Falls, SD. This was the location of the Army Air Force Technical Training School for Radio Operations. After completing radio school Cruz received the rank of Staff Sergeant and was assigned to a *B-24 Liberator* training base in McCook, Nebraska. Here he trained to be a 4-engine B-24 radio operator and aerial gunner.

In late 1943 a new bomb group was established called the 493rd Bomb Group and he was assigned to pilot Lt Roy Murphy with 8 other airmen and trained for 4 months. During May of 1944 the crews and staff of the 493rd Bomb Group was transferred to a newly constructed Army Air Base in the area of Debach, England.



The first combat mission for Cruz, Murphy and crew was on June 20th, 1944, and the target was German V1 rocket launch platforms in northern France. Unfortunately, the weather over France turned cloudy and the bomb squadron returned to base without dropping their ordnance. The next three bombing missions were in Northern France attacking V1 rocket sites and Luftwaffe air bases.

Fallersleben, Germany 29 Jun 44 – The target was in the heart of Germany! Mission for today the destruction of a Junkers aircraft components (Volkswagen) plant. During the bomb run, with the bomb bays open, the flak was heavy and accurate. Suddenly the B-24 right in front of Murphy’s aircraft received a direct flak hit

in the open bomb bay just after the bombs were released! The aircraft named “Little Warrior”, piloted by Lt. John H Hansen, was enveloped in smoke and flames. The plane fell from sky and all 10 airmen that Cruz trained with during the last six months were killed.

The next 4 missions for Cruz and the Murphy crew were against various V1 rocket sites (northern France) and a Luftwaffe airfield in Montdidier, France. No issues were encountered.

Caen, France 19 Jul 44 - The 493rd Bomb Group, sent 4 squadrons to attack German artillery batteries that were facing the British and Canadian positions. Forty-two B-24s, each fully loaded with 52 x 100lb bombs, attacked German artillery installations that would have caused major casualties to advancing British and Canadian forces.

Operation Cobra 25 July 44 - The 493rd joined the entire 8th Air Force on *Operation Cobra*, the saturation bombing of enemy positions near Saint-Lo, France. Throughout England, American bomber

groups combined to form a total of 1,400 heavy bombers, all headed right across the channel to saturate bomb a strip of land and destroy an entire German Panzer division. T/ Sgt Cruz Nogales had no way to know his nephew, Lt Ramon Flores was flying on the same mission. Even more remarkable was the fact that his brother, Pfc Frank Nogales was in Saint-Lo waiting to move out towards the target area once the 8th Air Force bombers had cleared the way. Frank had a “birds’ eye” view of the bombers as they destroyed the German positions.

August 1944 - The month of July ended with Cruz and the crew having completed 11 missions. With the exception of two, all missions had been against targets in northern France. This was to continue into August with all but one mission being against tactical targets (railroad hubs, key road hubs, oil storage units, etc.) in northern France. The goal was to make life miserable for the Wehrmacht units as they attempted to counter the Allied troops in Normandy.

During the end of August, the 493rd bomb group would transition from B-24 Liberators to B-17G Flying Fortresses. After a training period, during which no combat missions were flown, the 493rd BG group reverted back to combat status (8 Sept 44) flying only B-17s.

Ludwigshafen, Germany 13 Sep 44 - The target was the I.G. Farben Chemical works facility located in Ludwigshafen, Germany. As Lt Murphy turned into the bomb run, the flak became intense. Suddenly, a major impact was felt that lifted the left wing up and pushed the aircraft to the right. Wow, what the hell just happened. The B-17 had taken a direct hit on the left wing!! Miraculously the wing did not shear off and the plane was piloted back to the airbase by Murphy.



The huge explosion in the wing sent a shrapnel piece through the radio room and struck Cruz on the back of his flak helmet. He was seriously wounded and knocked unconscious. When the B-17 landed, Cruz was transported to the 65th General Hospital and placed in the “head trauma” area of the hospital. The impact had opened a wound in the back of his head and caused a severe concussion. It would be several days before he gained consciousness, and he would remain in the hospital for 3 weeks.

On 1 Oct 1944, Lt Murphy and the crew came to the hospital and convinced the doctor to

release him so he could return to the crew for the next mission.

Kassel, Germany 2 Oct 44 - Cruz and the Murphy crew were back in the air. The target for the 493rd Bomb Group was the "Henschel & Sohn" Tiger Tank factory located at Kassel, Germany. The group was able to destroy the bridge and railyard needed to deliver the tanks. The German flak was accurate with pockets of high intensity that managed to “Swiss cheese” some B-17s, no one was injured. Cruz was still not fully recovered (both physically and mentally) so the mission was very difficult, but somehow, he managed to do his duty.

Over the next dozen days, Murphy and the crew flew on four combat missions. Targets at Munster, Merseburg, Gustavsborg, and Cologne were all bombed with minimal damage to the 493rd BG formations. The worst mission was to Merseburg (as usual) but, despite many close flak explosions no 493rd bomb group aircraft were lost. Other bomb groups were not so lucky with multiple bomb groups losing B-17 bombers.

Ludwigshafen, Germany 5 Nov 44 - The 493rd BG returned to bomb the I.G. Farben Chemical Plant at Ludwigshafen. The German flak guns pounded the formation, and two B-17 were hit. One B-17 took a hit on engine number two, which knocked the propeller off and set the engine on fire. At the same time another bomber was hit on engine # 3. Two 493rd BG B-17s lost within seconds of each other! *(11 men were KIA and 9 taken POW)*. The bombing campaign was a brutal war of attrition.

The next 3 missions were targets at Neumunster, Koblenz, and Duren, Germany. These went well and no major flak or enemy fighters were encountered. On 21 Nov the Murphy crew took off for their 35th and hopefully their last combat mission (Merseburg). Success!

Both Lt Ramon Flores and T/Sgt Cruz Nogales returned to their families in late Dec 1944. They had physically survived their combat missions, but the terror, death and destruction they had experienced would remain with them for a very long time. Like most men who returned from this brutal war, they did not talk about it.

#	Date	Target Area	Country	#	Date	Target Area	Country	T/Sgt Nogales
1	20-Jun	La Haye	France	19	10-Sep	Darmstadt	Germany	
2	22-Jun	Etamps	France	20	11-Sep	Fulda	Germany	
3	23-Jun	Coulommiers	France	21	13-Sep	Ludwigshafen	Germany	
4	25-Jun	St. Avord	France	22	17-Sep	Rotterdam	Holland	Hospital
5	29-Jun	Fallersleben	Germany	23	22-Sep	Kassel	Germany	Hospital
6	8-Jul	Le Grand Valle	France	24	26-Sep	Bremen	Germany	Hospital
7	14-Jul	Montdidier	France	25	30-Sep	Bielefeld	Germany	Hospital
8	18-Jul	Caen area	France	26	2-Oct	Kassel	Germany	
9	20-Jul	Russelsheim	Germany	27	5-Oct	Munster	Germany	
10	25-Jul	Saint -Lo	France	28	7-Oct	Merseburg	Germany	
11	31-Jul	Creil Air Base	France	29	9-Oct	Gustavsborg	Germany	
12	1-Aug	Quincampoix	France	30	14-Oct	Cologne	Germany	
13	3-Aug	Ghent	Belgium	31	5-Nov	Ludwigshafen	Germany	
14	5-Aug	Halberstadt	Germany	32	6-Nov	Nuemunster	Germany	
15	7-Aug	Andenne	Belgium	33	11-Nov	Koblenz	Germany	
16	10-Aug	St. Florentin	France	34	16-Nov	Duren	Germany	
17	13-Aug	Seine River	France	35	21-Nov	Merseburg	Germany	
18	14-Aug	Angouleme	France					

Lt Roy Murphy, T/Sgt Cruz Nogales and the rest of the crew completed 35 missions against enemy positions.

2nd Mate Albert Nogales Flores – Born December 5th, 1920, in High Rolls, NM

Albert Flores was the second son of Chana and Manuel B. Flores. During this period Chana and Manuel continued to live with Chana's parents in High Rolls, NM. Albert went to the High Rolls Mountain Elementary school where he became good friends with Bill Mauldin. At Bill's home he would hear stories from Bill's father, Sidney Mauldin, who was an artilleryman in WW1. Albert and Bill stayed friends, even after Bill became a renowned editorial cartoonist who won two Pulitzer Prizes for his works.

Like his older brother Ramon, Albert was impacted by his father dying when he was 15 years old. Albert was able to graduate from Alamogordo High School. He noticed a poster about the Merchant Marine Academy and submitted his application, his goal was to be an officer.

Albert was accepted into the Merchant Marine Academy and completed the officer requirements to and started his career in the US Merchant Marine force. Before he could be assigned a commission he



was required to apprentice as an "able body" seaman. An early assignment was on the ship USS Wilscox which sailed from San Antonio, Chile to New York city starting on the 16 Nov 1941 arriving on the 10 Dec 1941. Not only did he turn 21 years of age during this trip, but the US was now at war with Japan and Germany. "Death and hell on the sea" was now the reality for the US Merchant Marine force.

Military records of that associate WW2 Merchant Marine sailors and officers with WW2 convoys are not available. Unlike the US Navy that generated "Report of Changes" and "Ship War Diaries" I have not been able to locate archives from the US Merchant Marines. (There are some Liberty Ships manifest that list Albert Flores in USMM positions)

Albert's son Patrick Flores wrote the following about his father and his Merchant Marine experience.

"One thing about my dad was he didn't like talking about his experiences in the war. I have a good idea of where he'd been but not a lot of specifics. Like when I asked him what ships he was on, he'd say too many to count, or it was a different ship every time they dropped off a load and when they went back to pick up more supplies. He did often say he worked hard to get into the Merchant Marine Academy but once he figured out, he'd probably not live through the war, he worked harder trying to get out.

I did say he made many North Sea runs to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Russia. He also said that most of the convoy's ships never made it. He was sunk by a Japanese aircraft off the coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean and was injured. He had shrapnel in his eye and leg. He said they floated for several days until they got picked up. He said he worried most about the Japanese finding them because they

didn't take prisoners. He ended up in a hospital in Bombay (now Mumbai) India where luck would have it, there was an eye doctor that saved my dad's vision.

Another story he once told me was in a convoy in the southern Atlantic Ocean. They got caught in a hurricane and a U-Boat sub attack. The hurricane made it so they couldn't be defensive, so all the ships made a run from the U-boats. He said there was always a predetermined plan to escape where each boat had an escape route. It so happened that my dad's escape route was a southern route, and they sailed all the way around South America, back through the Panama Canal to New Orleans. This took a couple of weeks and in the meantime, there had been no contact with the ship, so they presumed they'd sunk. Grandma Chana received notice from the government that my dad had been lost at sea and presumed dead. When my dad got to New Orleans, he called his mother, and my dad said she became hysterical thinking his "ghost" was on the line!

I know he was on D-Day and many days afterward, taking supplies back and forth from England to Normandy. This is a little unclear to me, but I thought he told me once that one of the ships he was piloting over got hit by a torpedo and sunk like a rock. I think he said they were bringing train cars and locomotives.

He spent most of his time in the European Theater, but I did ask if he was ever in Asia. He said after the Germans surrendered, they headed to the Pacific and started taking supplies to the Philippines and preparing to invade Japan. He said he was sure that if we would have invaded Japan that he wouldn't have lived through it."

The Arctic convoys of World War II were large convoys which sailed from the United Kingdom, Iceland, and North America to northern ports in the Soviet Union, primarily Arkhangelsk (Archangel) and Murmansk in Russia. There were 78 convoys between August 1941 and May 1945, sailing via the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, with two gaps with no sailings between July and Sept 1942, and March and Nov 1943. About 1,400 merchant ships delivered essential supplies to the Soviet Union under the Anglo–Soviet agreement and US Lend-Lease program, escorted by ships of the Royal Navy, Canadian Navy, and the US Navy. *Eighty-five* merchant vessels and 16 Royal Navy warships (two cruisers, six destroyers, eight other escort ships) were lost during these dangerous convoys!

D-Day 6 Jun 1944 – In early 1944, most merchant ships were assigned duties in support of invasion of northern France. Operation Neptune /Overlord required an extraordinary amount of equipment and supplies to be staged in southern England. Merchant ships operated continuously from the US, Canada and UK colonies to amass landing crafts, tanks, trucks, jeeps, artillery, weapons, ammunition, food, medical equipment, etc. to support an invasion force of over *1.2 million* soldiers and support personnel.

The invasion fleet, which was drawn from eight different navies, comprised 6,939 vessels: 1,213 warships, 4,126 landing craft of various types, 736 ancillary craft, and *864 merchant vessels*. And June 6th was only the beginning of the supply chain. By the end of June, Allied ships had landed 850,279 men, 148,803 vehicles, and 570,505 tons of supplies.

USS John A Treutlen 29 Jun 44 – On this date 3rd Mate Albert Flores was conducting his normal activities on this Liberty Ship which was transporting equipment to Normandy. At 15.28 hours German U-boat U-984 fired a spread of two LUT torpedoes at convoy ECM-17 about 30 miles south of the Isle of Wight. The first struck the USS Edward M House and the second the USS H.G. Blasdel. Six minutes later, the U-boat fired a single torpedo at one of the damaged ships and missed but struck USS John A. Treutlen.

The “John A. Treutlen” was struck by a torpedo on the port side between the #5 hold and the after-peak tank that blew a large hole in the side. The explosion lifted the stern out of the water and flames

29 June 1944 - USS John A Treutlen was badly damaged by German U-boat off the coast of England



shot into the air. The explosion forced its way forward and set off the after magazine. This second explosion blew another huge hole in the port side. The blast broke the shaft, destroyed the steering gear and cracked the vessel athwartships, leaving the stern hanging several feet lower.

The most of the eight officers, 35 crewmen and 31 armed guards abandoned ship in three lifeboats, leaving only a skeleton crew of twelve men and the master on board. The survivors, twelve of them

injured were picked up by HMCS Buctouche and USS LST-336 and taken to Southampton, England on 30 June, where one of the armed guards later died of wounds. The next morning, a tugboat towed the vessel to Southampton, where she was beached. The cargo was removed, and the vessel declared a total loss.

USS S.S. Talisman 9 Dec 44 - Prior to the voyage from England to New York, Albert Flores would be promoted to the rank of Second Mate. Albert was yet to turn 24 years old and was responsible for the entire ship, cargo, and crew when he was at the helm.

SS Sturdy Beggar 8 Mar 1945 – Albert Flores and his crew were assigned to Convoy CU61, which left New York harbor to deliver soldiers, fuel and supplies for the final push into Germany. Albert’s ship the SS Sturdy Beggar was loaded with 6,000 tons of bombs, shells, and ammunition for delivery to the port of Rouen, France. From Rouen the men and supplies were transported to the Allied front on the Rhine River.

By this time of the war the German U-boat threat in the mid-Atlantic was eliminated due to success of the Allied anti-submarine campaigns.

What the allies could not suppress was the weather. On 13 Mar 45, the convoy of 43 merchant ships and 10 US Navy escorts were stuck by a major storm which caused a dangerous environment for the convoy ships. The SS Sturdy Beggar barely missed colliding with a fuel tanker. One can only imagine the destruction that would have resulted if 6,000 tons of explosives collided with high octane fuel.

Unfortunately, the storm caused the French carrier *Bearn* to lose steering and it collided with the attack transport USS J. W. McAndrews resulting in the loss of 68 young American Soldiers and a Navy Armed Guardsman. Destruction and death was always a possibility in the open seas.

After the surrender of Germany, the US Merchant fleet and mariners moved to the Pacific Ocean for the eventual invasion of Japan. Fortunately, Japan surrendered in August 1945 and all hostilities ceased.

2nd Mate Albert N Flores would serve out his Merchant Marine requirements till early 1946. After completing his service, Albert returned to his mother Chana, his brothers, grandparents, and his extended family in New Mexico.

C/S David Nogales Flores – Born April 8th, 1924, in High Rolls, NM

David N Flores was the fourth son of Chana and Manuel B. Flores. The Flores family still lived with Chana's parents in High Rolls. Like his older brothers he went to the High Rolls Mountain Elementary school for the 1st grade and then the family moved to the city of Alamogordo, NM. He attended the local elementary school and went on to attend Alamogordo High School. In October of 1942, David left high school to enlist in the Navy.

USS Mount Vernon 6 May 1943 - David N Flores boarded the USS Mount Vernon as Seaman Second Class (S2c) performing any and all duties assigned by his superiors. The mission for the ship was the transporting of 4,664 military personnel from San Francisco, Ca. to Sidney, Australia. Aboard was the



entire ground echelon of the 380th Bomb Group, which was headed to the Fenton Airbase near Darwin, Australia. For the next 7 months the Mt Vernon would transport men and equipment between San Francisco and Australia.

USS Henry T Allen - In Jan 1944 David was promoted to Seaman 1st Class and assigned to an Attack Transport Ship (ATS) that was recently attached to US Navy Task Force number 77. On 26 March the USS Henry T Allen started "amphibious invasion" training exercises on Goodenough Island with the U.S. Army 24th Infantry Division

Operation Reckless 22 April 1944 – This amphibious operation was also called the Battle of Hollandia. The goal of the Task Force was to attack and secure two locations on the northern coast of New Guinea. Around 30,000 troops of the 24th Infantry Division (ID) and 41st ID would attack multiple locations. After a naval bombardment, the amphibious attack commenced at 0600 hours. With all "hands on deck", David and the seaman of the USS Henry T Allen made sure that all 16 landing crafts were lowered into the sea, each with 1,605 American officers and soldiers.

The 24th ID caught the elements of Japanese Imperial 2nd Army by surprise. On landing, the U.S. troops came under sporadic small arms and machine gun fire, but this was quickly suppressed. Japanese casualties amounted to 3,300 killed and 600 wounded in combat, a further 1,146 were killed or died in the area up to 27 Sept 1944. A total of 7,200 Japanese soldiers were isolated from the Hollandia region and they attempted to withdraw overland to a Japanese base at Sarmi; only around 1,000 reached their destination. Allied casualties amounted to 157 killed and 1,057 wounded. U.S. forces undertook mopping up operations in the area until 6 June. Operation Reckless was deemed an unqualified success.

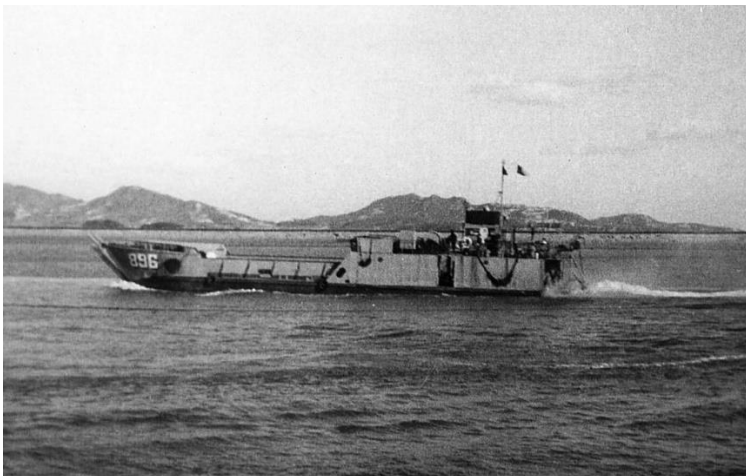
Invasion of Leyte Island, 20 to 26th Oct 1944 - The first objective in the re-taking of the Philippines was the major island of Leyte, and its invasion was designated A-Day by General Douglas MacArthur. This amphibious operation, the largest since D-Day, involved 3 Naval Task forces under Vice Admiral T Kinkaid, the US 6th Army under Lt. Gen. W Krueger, and the Army 5th and 13th Air Forces commanded by Lt. Gen. G Kennedy.

Following four hours of heavy naval gunfire on 20 Oct, seaman 1st class David Flores manned one of the "more than one hundred" landing crafts of 7th Amphibious Force that hit the beach. The 6th Army forces landed on beaches of San Pedro Bay at 10am covering a 4-mile stretch of beach between Tacloban and the Palo River. Within an hour of landing, units in most sectors had secured beachheads to enable tanks and heavy vehicles to land on shore.

Only in the 24th Infantry Division sector did enemy fire force diversion of follow-up landing craft. But even that sector was secure enough by 13:30. Securing the beachheads permitted General Douglas MacArthur to make a dramatic entrance through the surf onto Red Beach and announce "*people of the Philippines, I have returned! By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil.*"

For the next several days, David Flores and the 7th Amphibious Force were under constant Japanese aircraft attacks. It was during this battle, that for the first time the Japanese resorted to the deadly *kamikazes*, a corps of suicide pilots who crashed their bomb-laden planes directly into US ships. They chose the large American transport and escort ships that had gathered in San Pedro Bay and on 25 Oct 44 the Japanese suicide pilots sank the escort carrier USS St. Lo and badly damaged many other vessels. This was the first instance of a major US warship to be sunk by a kamikaze attack.

In response to the invasion of Leyte Island, the Japanese Imperial Navy sent the entire Japanese Fleet to destroy the American landing force. For several days the US 3rd and 7th Fleet engaged three Japanese task forces throughout Philippine waterways. The multiple naval battles (referred to as the Battle of Leyte Gulf) led to the virtual destruction of the Imperial Japanese Navy.



After this operation, David Flores was promoted to the rank of Coxswain (T) V6. He would now pilot his own LCT Mark 6 landing craft for all future 7th Amphibious Force operations. This new rank also meant that David would be responsible for a crew of 11 to 12 seaman required to operate and support the LCT.

There would be multiple amphibious operations to come, but none larger than the main Philippine Island of Luzon.

Invasion of Luzon Island (Lingayen), 6 to 11 Jan 1945 - The next major operation was the invasion of Lingayen on the island of Luzon, Philippines. The final objective (much later) would be Manila, capital of the Philippines. The U.S. & Australian Fleet of more than 800 ships carried over 200,000 troops from the 6th Army to the beaches of Lingayen Gulf, on northwest Luzon. In the early morning of 6 Jan 1945, the large Allied naval force began bombarding Japanese positions along the coast of Lingayen Gulf for three days. On 9 Jan, the U.S. 6th Army landed on a roughly 25-mile beachhead and attacked Japanese coastal positions.

As in the Leyte operation the 7th Fleet with the 7th Amphibious came under relentless kamikaze attacks. Ships damaged by kamikazes numbered over 50 with 18 (Transports, Destroyers, Cruisers, and Escort Carriers) either sinking or suffering extensive damage between 3–11 January.

148 Landing Crafts, including the LCT boat operated by Coxswain David Flores transported troops and equipment on to the beaches of Lingayen. Back and forth these landing crafts would make the round trip from transport ships to the beachheads under Japanese attack. Fortunately, the Japanese resistance on the beach and inland was weak. The Japanese Imperial forces on Luzon, under General Yamashita had decided to set up defensive lines many miles inland.

A total of 203,608 soldiers were eventually landed over the next few days, establishing a 20-mile beachhead, stretching from San Fabian west to the central town of Dagupan, and then to the far Western town of Lingayen. Following the landings, the Lingayen Gulf area was turned into a vast supply depot for the rest of the war to support the Battle of Luzon and the liberation of the Philippines.

After the landing of American troops and equipment, the 7th Fleet returned to their bases in New Guinea. Many smaller amphibious landings would be conducted by the 7th Amphibious Force for the remainder of the war, but none of the magnitude of Leyte and Luzon.

David N Flores remained in the Navy as a Coxswain operator for LCT landing crafts for the rest of the Pacific war. David remained at sea till the surrender of Japan on 15 Aug 1945. David Flores, from High Rolls, New Mexico had spent 27 contiguous months in the Pacific Ocean as US Naval sailor fighting for the United States of America.

He returned to New Mexico where his mother, brothers, grandparents, uncles, and aunts were very happy and relieved that another of the High Rolls boys were back home safe and sound.

S/Sgt Damacio Escoto Nogales Jr – Born Dec 18th, 1924, in High Rolls, NM

Damacio (Deano) Nogales was the ninth child of Inez and Damacio Nogales and joined the rest of the family in the High Rolls home. He went to the local grammar school and attended and graduated from Alamogordo High School in June 1943, two months later Deano was starting basic training in the Army. In June 1944, as his older brother Cruz was starting bombing missions over France and Germany, Deano started training at Army Gunnery school at Yuma, Az.



Afterwards Sgt Deano Nogales was training as an aerial gunner in a B-24 Liberator bomber as part of an Army Air Force replacement crew. The pilot of the crew was Lt. Alfred J Cohn from Buffalo, NY and in the summer of 1944 the crew trained on a daily basis.

The massive all-out training of Army airmen led to errors where there was no margin. Training mistakes led to takeoff crashes, mid-air collisions, and landing crashes. A mid-air collision of two B-24 aircraft could result in the immediate death of 20 young airmen. The number airmen that died in US training accidents was *10 times the number of American deaths on D-Day*. Between Dec. 1941 to Aug. 1945, *14,903 US army airmen were killed* while training at bases in the continental United States!

Bomber aircraft accounted for 54 percent of all aircraft training deaths. Not surprisingly more airmen trainees were killed in B-24 accidents than any other aircraft. Unfortunately, the crews knew the situation they were dealing with, there was a sad reason the B-24 bomber was nicknamed the “flying coffin”.

On 12 Nov 1944 Lt. Alfred Cohn, S/Sgt Deano Nogales and the rest of the crew joined the 577th bomb squadron, part of the 392nd Bomb Group, which was stationed at Wendling, England.

Battle of the Bulge Dec 1944 - On 16 Dec, the Wehrmacht launched a huge offensive against American positions in the Ardennes Forest on the Belgium border. The German armies were able to create a huge bulge. This remarkable progress was made possible by the very poor weather, which not only made Allied bombing and strafing impossible, but allowed multiple “supply lines” to feed the German panzer and infantry divisions in the bulge.

Ruwar, Germany 24 Dec 1944 – The weather was finally clear. The 8th Air Force saw an opportunity to finally make a major strike against the German supply lines. Dozens and dozens of key bridges, railroad marshalling yards, key roadways and communication centers were identified. *Mission # 760 of the 8th Air Force saw more B-17s and B-24s put into operation than ever before*. Lt Cohn, S/Sgt Deano Nogales and the crew attacked a railroad traffic center at Ruwer. Bombing photo analysis showed good results.

For the remainder of December 1944, and into the 1st two weeks of 1945, the 392nd Bomb Group concentrated on transportation and supply points, especially marshalling yards and bridges that could be used to supply the Wehrmacht forces in the Ardennes.



Photo of Deano Nogales at work.

Without question the waist gunners, Deano and Walt, experienced the worst conditions of the air crew. Manning the waist guns in front of an open window (60 below zero) was freezing beyond compare and hazardous, even with heated suits and gloves. Frostbite, hypoxia, and the challenge of operating in bulky flight gear and flak jackets made aiming and firing the guns a constant challenge.

Euskirchen, Germany 31 Dec 1944 – The target was marshalling yards and the formation started on its bomb run. Suddenly the squadron was hit by 15 Me 109 enemy fighters which made firing passes at the squadron. With adrenaline at full capacity, Sgt Deano Nogales fired his 50 caliber machine guns at the attacking Messerschmitt's which fired 20mm canon shells at the B-24s. For some unknown reason the Me 109s only made two passes at the bomb group and there was one enemy fighter claim in this short engagement. The attack caused the 392nd bomb group to abort the mission with all bombs being jettisoned to lighten the aircraft. It was time to get the hell out. Several airmen in other B-24 were wounded by shrapnel from the 20mm shells.

Over the next 8 weeks, S/Sgt. Nogales flew major missions to Lauta, Germany 16 Jan 1945 - synthetic oil complex near Dresden, Magdeburg, 3 and 9 Feb – oil refinery, Aschaffenburg, 25 Feb – marshalling yards, Bielefeld, 10 Mar – viaduct system, and Hesepe, 17 Mar – Luftwaffe airfield.

Wesel Drop Zone 24 Mar 45 - The mission for the 392nd BG was to drop supplies at the American Wesel zone to support the US paratroopers during *Operation Varsity*. Lt. Alfred Cohn and the other pilots were instructed to fly at the altitude of 500 ft to ensure surprise. The pilots were warned not to exceed 150 mph air speed at time of dropping lest parachutes be destroyed, and the supplies lost. Bundles were to be released from a height of 300-500 feet. Deano was on the hook to push out multiple bundles making sure the static line did not catch his feet. To land in the designated drop zones, all large bundles had to leave the plane in less than *20 seconds*.

By early April, German resistance became non-existent in combating the Allied bombing raids, the end was in sight. On 20 Apr, S/Sgt Deano Nogales, Lt. Alfred Cohn the rest of the crew would fly their last mission. The 392nd bomb group would fly its last combat mission on 25 Apr 1945. There were no more targets for the 8th Air Force. On 30 Apr, Adolf Hitler committed suicide and one-week later the once mighty German Third Reich would surrender unconditionally.

On June 6th, 1945, exactly one year after D-Day, S/Sgt Deano Nogales would be back on American soil. Like his nephew Ramon and his brother Cruz, Deano was part of the largest and most comprehensive bombing campaign the world had ever witnessed.

#	Dates 1944 - 1945	Target	Country	Target Type
1	12-Dec	Hanau	Germany	Marshalling yard
2	24-Dec	Ruwar	Germany	Enemy Traffic Center
3	28-Dec	Kaiserslautern	Germany	Marshalling yard
4	31-Dec	Euskirchen	Germany	Marshalling yard
5	7-Jan	Landau	Germany	Railroad Station
6	10-Jan	Dasburg	Germany	Enemy positions
7	16-Jan	Lauta (Dresden)	Germany	Synthetic Oil plant
8	29-Jan	Hamm	Germany	Marshalling yard
9	3-Feb	Madgeburg	Germany	Oil Refinery
10	9-Feb	Madgeburg	Germany	Oil Refinery
11	21-Feb	Nuremburg	Germany	Rail facilities
12	22-Feb	Northeim	Germany	Marshalling yard
13	25-Feb	Aschaffenburg	Germany	Marshalling yard
14	27-Feb	Halle	Germany	Marshalling yard
15	1-Mar	Ingostadt	Germany	Marshalling yard
16	5-Mar	Harburg	Germany	Oil Refinery
17	10-Mar	Bielefeld	Germany	Viaduct System
18	17-Mar	Munster	Germany	Marshalling yard
19	21-Mar	Hesepe	Germany	Luftwaffe airfield
20	24-Mar	Wesel (drop zone)	Germany	Equipment drop
21	11-Apr	Regensburg	Germany	Ordnance facility
22	17-Apr	Beroun	Germany	Marshalling yard
23	20-Apr	Schwandorf	Germany	Marshalling yard
	25-Apr	<i>Last combat missions by the 8th Air Force</i>		

Lt Alfred Cohn, S/Sgt Deano Nogales and the crew flew 23 combat missions which ended when Germany was defeated.

Cpl Manuel Nogales Flores – Born October 21st, 1922, in High Rolls, NM

Manuel N Flores Jr was the third son of Chana and Manuel B. Flores. During this period Chana and Manuel continued to live with Chana's parents in High Rolls. Like his older brothers he went to the High Rolls Mountain Elementary school, but the family moved to Alamogordo in 1930. He attended the local elementary school and went on to attend Alamogordo High School. Needing income, Manuel left high school in his senior year to become a painter's helper.

In January 1943 he was inducted into the Army and started his basic training at Ft. Bliss, El Paso, Texas. Manuel was evaluated and tested, and he was assigned for training as an aircraft and engine mechanic. He was assigned to the Army Air Force Technical Station located at Amarillo, Texas.

Manuel's training as an aircraft and engine mechanic took the better part of 1943. He was prepared to be assigned to a B-17 bomb group when he was informed that the War Department had increased the demand for the C46 and C47 transport units for both the European and Pacific theaters.



Cpl Flores remained stateside and was mostly assigned to an Air Transport Unit. *Records of Cpl Manuel Flores assignments from 1944 to August 1945 have not been located.* In September of 1945 Manuel is listed as a member of the 2nd Combat Cargo Group. This group is part of the 5th Air Force which was assigned to the South-West zone of the Pacific and had its headquarters in Brisbane, Australia from 1942 to Nov. of 1944. It subsequently moved to New Guinea, the Philippines, Okinawa and Japan. At its peak the 5th Air Force had 10 Bomb Groups, six Fighter Groups, four Troop Carrier groups, and the 2nd Combat Cargo group.

On 15 August 1945, the Empire of Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allied forces effectively ending World War II. Over the next several weeks the U.S. and Japan began negotiations over the official surrender of Japanese forces in Japan and the occupation of Japan by the U.S. After the "official" surrender on 2 Sep 45 the Americans took possession of Tama Airfield near Tokyo. The first Army Air Force unit to arrive in Japan was the 2nd Combat Cargo Group with men and supplies to convert the Tama Airfield into the 1st US Air Base in Japan. Four squadrons of C46 and C47 transports started operations with a limited ground crew.

Cpl Manuel Flores was among the ground support personnel that traveled by ship to Japan to join the 2nd Combat Cargo group and establish a fully functional Army Air Force base. The airbase was renamed the Yokota Air Base and ground support units (traveling by ship) arrived in Tokyo Bay on Sept 30th, 1945 and were transported by trucks to Yokota base.



On 9 Mar 1945, 302 B-29s conducted a nighttime low-level bombing using incendiary bombs. The raid's impact was devastating on the residents of Tokyo. The individual fires caused by the bombs created a general conflagration, which could only be classified as an enormous firestorm. When it was over, sixteen square miles of the center of Tokyo had gone up in flames and nearly 100,000 people had been killed. The remainder of March 1945 through July 1945 witnessed the continued "fire-bombing" of Tokyo and all major industrial cities in Japan.

What Manuel witnessed was beyond belief. The capital city of Tokyo was essentially destroyed beyond recognition by the American bombing campaign. Block after block, unimaginable urban destruction left only piles of rubble and burnt debris in the landscape.

Old men, old women, families with babies and children lived on cleared sections of land without any real shelter. During Manuel's convoy through Tokyo, women and children would stand by the road, looking and pleading with their eyes for food and water. The landscape was one district after another of sheer destruction and devastation, populated with indigent and starving families.

Manuel would work long days servicing C-46 and C-47 aircraft. The maintenance and repair work was critical to keep these transport aircraft in the air and bring much needed material and supplies. The situation in Japan was desperate with insufficient food, drinkable water, medical supplies, oil, gasoline and anything one could think off. Millions of Japanese civilians were left homeless due to the US bombing campaign. The supply aircraft and crews were pushed to their limits bringing in basic supplies.

This relief effort by the 2nd Cargo Group continued till February 1946. The demobilization of combat groups impacted the 2d Combat Cargo Group and ground personnel returned to the USA. On 25 Feb 1946, Cpl Manuel N Flores boarded a troop transport vessel and returned to Fort Bliss, Tx for final discharge. His Honorable Discharge record show his date of separation as 16 March 46.

Manuel was the last of the High Rolls boys to returned to New Mexico where his mother, brothers, uncles, and aunts were so happy and relieved that the last boy was home safe and sound.

Frank, Ramon, Cruz, Albert, David, Damacio and Manuel had experienced firsthand the horror and brutality of World War II. They had left as boys and returned as American patriots and undisputable members of the greatest generation.



Pfc Frank E Nogales
1st Army, 634th Tank Destroyer Bn



Lt. Ramon N Flores
8th Air Force, 94th Bomb Group



T/Sgt Cruz E Nogales
8th AF, 493rd Bomb Group



2d/M Albert N Flores
US Merchant Marines



CS David N Flores
US Navy, 7th Amphibious Force



S/Sgt Damacio Nogales Jr
8th AF, 392nd Bomb Group



Cpl Manuel N Flores
5th AF, 2nd Cargo Group

