
PLAIN HISTORY GENEALOGY GROUP

Covering Plain, Sauk Co, Wisconsin and Beyond

<http://tinyurl.com/53dn2>.....*Haas Bauer Main WebSite*
<http://tinyurl.com/4tirt>.....*PHHG ALL Newsletters & Meeting Handouts*
<http://tinyurl.com/4rrfv> <http://tinyurl.com/66w3v>.....*Newsletter Table of Contents*
<mailto:garyhaas2005@yahoo.com>.....*eMail Contact*
<http://garyhaas.blogspot.com>.....*Stuff I Find Interesting BLOG*
<http://tinyurl.com/at9w8>.....*Online Searchable Index*
<http://tinyurl.com/22e2ua>.....*Loreto, Sauk Co, Wis*

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Meeting & Events Schedule

Saturday, May 10th, 2008
9:30 am, Plain, WI
Kraemer Library and Community Center

We will discuss how to use Internet resources of libraries to research your family and local history from your home including Newspaper Archives and Heritage Quest. We will also review how the roads in Plain, WI have changed. Our meetings are a good opportunity to meet other researchers and get expert advice. Everybody is welcome.

Profiles of German Emigrants
Saturday July 12, 2008
Baerbel Johnson
Whitewater, Wisconsin

Profile of a 19th Century German Emigrant
Understanding Occupations in German Research
Strategies Solving German Research Problems
German Marriage Laws & Customs

Do not miss this annual day-long conference on German genealogical research. It is tremendous plus they will have lots of books and research tools for sale. Check the website for more information and a registration form.

http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wigig/workshop_page1-general_info.html

Southwest Regional Convention
Sauk-Prairie Area Hist Society Aug 16 2008

Internet and Goodies

PBS WWII Series

http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_home.htm

This was a tremendous series about the most important event of the 20th century.

This is a fantastic site to see an interesting presentation about WWII.

PBS Wisconsin WWII Stories Series

<http://www.wisconsinstories.org/worldwar2/program/watch/index.cfm>

If you missed this series, you can view it on line. Instead of having to view the entire hour-long show, you can view the show in segments that are less than 10 minutes long.

Racine Dominican Catholic Sisters

<http://www.racinedominicans.org/>

The Dominican Sisters based in Racine Wisconsin provided me with a grade school education. They also provided education to many immigrants to Wisconsin from the 19th century on. This site gives information about the order and individual nuns.

Google Videos on Ed Gein

http://video.google.com/videosearch?num=100&hl=en&pwst=1&resnum=0&q=ed+gein&nochrome=1&oe=UTF-8&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=vw&ol=property_suggestions&resnum=0&ct=property-revision&cd=2

Ed Gein is the famous deviant and murderer from Plainfield WI. Google Videos has numerous and wide ranging videos discussing his life.

Beaver Hill road relocation between Plain and Spring Green

http://books.google.com/books?id=yckNAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA239&q=sauk+county+wisconsin+plain&as_brr=1&ei=e-v6R-mmLpK2ygTArK2IAw&client=firefox-a#PPA239,M1

There are a lot of nifty books on Google. this 1918 Wisconsin State highway commission report has a picture of the road between Plain Wisconsin and Spring Green Wisconsin. It Has an Interesting photo of the Beaver Hill Road

RootsWeb resources for Wisconsin

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/roots-I/USA/wi.html>

Roots Web is a great genealogical resource for information on lots of locations. This website lists a number of resources about Wisconsin. Be sure to scan the entire list. There are lots of nuggets of information hiding waiting for you to find them.

Opteka Digital Duplicator - Copy Slides

<http://www.opteka.com/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=49>

<http://www.47stphoto.com/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/neeizito/2210576976/>

Copying slides to a computer with a scanner is a slow torturous process. Opteka creates a device that screws onto a digital camera and allows you to take a photo of the image. A scanner can take anywhere from two to four minutes to copy a slide. The Opteka takes only seconds.

The quality of the digitized image is acceptable. if you tinker around with a scanner for many minutes for a higher-quality scan, but for me it is not worth to the additional time.

I purchased my Opteka device from 47th Street Photo. Use the keywords OPTEKA DUPLICATOR to see the package selections that you have to choose from .The Opteka Duplicator is standard for all cameras and the package includes a specific adapter for digital camera models.

Resources for creating online presentations

<http://mashable.com/2008/02/16/forget-powerpoint-online-presentations/>

For many people, Microsoft PowerPoint is the ideal tool for conveying information. This web site has links to 13 online presentation creators which allow you to create presentations that can be viewed online

HIST Wis Historical Society - Historical Images

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/advancedSearch.asp>

The Wisconsin historical Society has a tremendous collection of images that they make available online. They frequently add new images to their online database. Their advanced search form allows you to sort these images by the date that they were added making it easy to check for new photos

Funeral Homes use of technology

<http://www.gundersonfh.com/content/obituaries/index.jsp>

Many funeral homes include online services to help their clients remember their family and friends who have passed on. Many funeral homes have online obituaries and places for people to leave comments. The Gunderson funeral home also includes live video casts of the service

Mid Continent Railroad

<http://www.midcontinent.org/>

<http://www.midcontinent.org/history/history1.html>

<http://www.midcontinent.org/archives/archives.html>

The midcontinent Railway Museum in North Freedom Wisconsin is, list of things to visit the summer. It opens for visitors on May 10. Their web site is a tremendous source of information about North Freedom Their information includes free access to videos, audio recordings, and postcards.

FEEFHS

<http://feefhs.org/maps/ethnic.html>

FEEFHS is a genealogical organization dedicated to the research of Eastern European genealogy. They have assembled a neat page of links to some fantastic research sites.

Legal Land Descriptions in the USA

<http://www.outfitters.com/genealogy/land/land.html>

<http://www.outfitters.com/genealogy/land/twprange.html>

<http://www.outfitters.com/genealogy/land/twprangemap.html>

Land ownership records are useful when doing genealogical research. This site describes the various land description methods used in the US.

Spanish Flu Pandemic 1918

http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/worst_case_scenarios/4219884.html?series=31

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/10disasters>

This was a deadly pandemic that affected the entire country in 1918.

Headstones and their meaning

<http://www.oldheadstones.com/index.html>

This is an interesting and large collection of headstones and what they mean. I liked the humorous ones.

BBC Animation of WWI battles / events

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/launch_ani_western_front.shtml

WWI was a major event in my grandfather's life. This website is like "Cliff Notes" for understanding what happened in WWI.

New York Times Archives Online & Free

<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/nytarchive.html>

The "old" New York Times are a great source of information about ancestors arrivals in Castle Garden / Ellis Island. There are great background stories about these immigration sites. The Marine Intelligence section of the paper is a great source of information about ship arrivals with detailed information about the voyage, length of voyage, the Captain, and the weather on the voyage.

How to Speed Read on the Web

<http://evermve.com/2008/02/11/how-to-speed-read-on-the-web/>

Just some thoughts on how to read stuff on the Internet faster.

Using 2 monitors on a Laptop

99% of people reading this will think this is a something that only game-playing geeks should be interested in. **If you use your PC for more than just checking e-mail, this is something you definitely will want to do.**

The main benefit of using two monitors is that you can view information on two screens at the same time. Here are some examples:

- On one monitor you have an old plat map on the other monitor the current satellite photo from Mapquest Internet site.
- You can compare one family photo on one monitor to another family photo on the other monitor. This will allow you to zoom in on each screen separately to try to determine if the guy in one photos actually Uncle Joe.
- I have a digitized marriage document from Germany written in the hard-to-read script. On one monitor I can zoom in on individual words in the document. On the other monitor I can transcribe the document into a wordprocessing program.

- There are many times that I want to do a write-up on a photo, a program, a book, or an Internet web site. I can have the item I want to write about up on one monitor and type in the information in a wordprocessing program on the other monitor.

Setting up the hardware:

The following is a general description of how to set up the hardware.

1. Start your laptop
2. Plug your 2nd monitor into the laptop
3. Display the same screen on both of the monitors
4. Right click on an empty part of the desktop
5. Select Properties
6. Click on the Settings tab
7. Click on the Display dropdown list
8. Select the 2nd monitor
9. Click on "Extend my Windows desktop onto this monitor"
10. Click on the Apply button
11. Click on the Identify button
12. Arrange the monitors in order
13. Click on the Apply button
14. Click on the OK button

Using the 2nd monitor:

I strongly recommend that you get somebody to demonstrate the how to use two monitors to you. Using a 2nd monitor is "weird" and not the way you would expect it to work.

Here are some things that aren't readily apparent.

- You move the mouse from one monitor to the next by moving the mouse to the left or right and the cursor will magically appear on the other monitor.
- You can not move a MAXIMIZED window from one monitor to the next. First MINIMIZE the screen, click and drag the screen by its title bar to the next screen. You just keep moving the screen using the mouse and it magically appears on the other monitor.
- Sometimes you will want to open up a 2nd instance of a program. This will allow you to have two separate word processing, images, spreadsheets, websites on different monitors at the same time.

- You can cut and paste between the two monitors. This is really neat.

If you want to do this with a desktop, you will have to add a second video card.

Now if you really are a geek, you might want to hook your laptop up to your 42" LCD TV screen. My laptop has a S-Video output. Unfortunately my laptop has a 7-pin s-video port and my TV has a 4-pin port. These cables can be expensive. I got a 24 foot cable for under \$30.

<http://www.svideo.com>

If you have a laptop, I strongly recommend that you find a geek and explore the wonderful world of using two monitors. You don't even have to buy any software or hardware, the laptop has everything you need.

Check out this website for additional information and PC screen shots of how to use 2 monitors on one laptop.

<http://tinyurl.com/6zw7d4>

Digitizing Things

A scanner is a device that converts an image into a digital format that can be worked with on a computer. This covers a lot of ground.

We will focus on three areas:

- **what I do with scanners,**
- **hardware, and**
- **software tools for scanning.**

My biggest use of scanners is to organize the thousands of my research documents and images.

One rule that I live by is that it is much better to have a copy of the document than it is to have notes about a document. Many times when I look back at a copy of the original document, I find some new fact.

For years I searched for my great-grandfather's home town in Germany. One of the first documents I scanned was the Wisconsin marriage certificate of his brother. Years later I

took a second look at this scanned document and noticed that it listed his home town in Germany.

I also want to have access to all of my stuff at all times. A bunch of documents sitting in a filing cabinet at home is not useful. My primary computer is a laptop with an external hard disk from Western Digital. This external hard device fits in the palm of my hand and holds: over 50,000 images, over 200 cassette tapes, over 100 books, several movies, and over 100 CD disks.

I find it easier to find an item on one hard disk than searching through several filing cabinets and piles of stuff. Imagine converting three filing cabinets and a couple bookshelves to a 6 inch device that you can hold in your hand.

Having all my stuff on one external disk makes it easier to back up.

DVD disks are a good method of storage. I have an external dual layer DVD burner that can store 8 billion bytes of data on one disk. This is enough to back up the recent stuff I am working with. The really neat thing about these 8 billion byte dual layer DVDs is that they can be read in a normal DVD drive.

If I want to make a complete backup of all my stuff, I just plug the external hard disk into another computer and copy it to another hard disk. Copying all of my stuff in one pass is less error-prone than having to work with over 20 separate backup DVDS.

Having my stuff in a digital format allows me to e-mail images to people.

Scanning a photo with rips and tears allows you to do some magical repairs.

I have lots of documents written in the hard to read old German script. Working with a digital image allows me to zoom in on the hard to read areas. This also works great with examining old photos.

Pretend that I am jumping up and down and yelling at the top of my voice to get your attention. A really neat trick that you can do with a laptop is to plug in a regular computer monitor and have two screens working off of the same machine.

With one monitor, I am constantly switching between a webpage, photo or document and a word processing document. With two monitors I can seem both at one time, eliminating the switching. This also works with a 40" LED TV.

Recently I got my hands on the truly remarkable research book. This book is a typed record of all people emigrating from my ancestors' home town in Germany, covering the late 1700s through the 1920s. Unfortunately this book was written in German.

I used a scanner and a couple of programs to translate it to English and build a name index.

I scanned the entire book into a PDF file. Next I used an **optical character recognition** program to convert it to a wordprocessing document with the German words. Finally I used another program to translate it to English.

This book contains thousands of names but no index. **I underlined the names in the wordprocessing document. I used a simple program to extract these underlined names to an index without any retyping.**

Scanners seem like wonderful tools but they have a dark side. Locking up in the middle of a scan, PCs not recognizing the scanner and way too many options buttons to push are some of the problems with scanners.

Let's talk about copyright concerns. Almost every thing you scan can be a violation of some law. When working with digitized items, it is really easy to give somebody a copy. I mentioned that I have digitized my cassettes and books. It would be unethical to give somebody these books and cassettes. My recommendation is to not be stupid. That is unless you like to be sued.

In choosing my scanning hardware what did I consider? First, I wanted my stuff to be extremely portable. **I am also a big fan of external devices that plug in through the USB port.** When I upgrade to a new computer or visit a relative, I just plug my equipment into these machines.

I am also willing to pay for convenience. If it is not easy to use you won't use it. A few extra bucks can make the difference.

Everybody's scanning needs are different. Two key issues for you to consider when selecting scanning hardware is **what you will scan and how much will you scan.**

If I could only have one scanner, it would be a **digital camera.** **This portable copier** is great at libraries to copy books and microfilm displays.

At one library I got my hands on the research notebooks of the author of a history of my hometown containing over 1200 pages. Positioning each page a scanner would have taken over months. Using a digital camera, I was able to make a copy in about a day and a half.

What do I look for in a digital camera? It has to have a **three megapixel** resolution or better. It has to have a **lithium battery**, not the double-A batteries. It has to have a **full-size lens.** This lens has to have the name of a German company on it. **I also plan on spending about \$200 for additional batteries and storage cards.**

What thing should you consider when buying a regular scanner?

The scanner should connect to a high speed USB 2.0 port. If your computer does not have a USB 2.0 port upgrade it for less than \$20. Your scans will be 10 times faster.

Most scanners will scan a regular letter-size sheet of paper. You might want to scanner that can scan 14 inches so you can work with legal size paper. For large odd-sized documents, I use a digital camera.

The higher the scanning resolution rating are better. Look for true, optical scanning resolution. Some scanners boast a high resolution that is obtained through software tricks.

I need an **automatic document feed option.** This allows me to load up to 50 sheets into the scanner, push a button, and walk away while the hardware does all the work.

Again I caution you not to be stupid. **Do not run family heirlooms through the document feed.**

Where does the power come from? Does it require a plug into an electric socket or can it draw its power from the laptop's battery?

Scanning slides and film requires special hardware that comes with most new scanners. This is a slowing tedious process. It can take up to five minutes to position and scan one slide.

Having the right software and understanding how to use it to will determine whether you are successful in scanning.

Scanners come with free software that are complicated by lots of pretty buttons and options to set. Until you have mastered the program practice the KISS principle. Keep it simple stupid. Use the defaults built into the program as much as possible.

Many programs give you the option to scan an item as a document or a photo. Your choice can determine the default resolution or the type of file the scan is saved in.

There are three basic types of scans that you need to be aware of, **Color, Grayscale, Black-and-white.** Color scans take longer and require higher resolution to capture the detail. Grayscale scans capture more detail at a lower resolution. With Black-and-white scans, background colors are scanned as white and only strong-colored items are scanned as black. This can be helpful with documents.

Most scanners are set up by default to scan a full 8 1/2 x 11 sheet. If you are only scanning 4 x 6 color photos, this can add a significant amount of time to the scan process. Most scanning software allows you to **preview to set a custom scan size.**

What resolution should you scan your items in? Everything is a trade-off.

The higher the resolution of the scan, the larger the file will be. Don't worry about the size of the file because hard disk storage is very cheap.

The higher the resolution of the scan, the longer it will take to scan an item. **Time is an important factor because if the scanning project is going to take a long time you might procrastinate and never do it.**

Resolution should be determined by what you going to use the item for. I use a low-resolution for scanning bills. I use a higher resolution for items that contain detail I want to capture. I use the highest resolution possible for unique things that are one-of-a-kind that I might never have opportunity to scan the item again.

You can go to the Internet and get lots of recommended resolutions depending on whether the image will be displayed on a computer monitor or printed. These recommendations are good for today but what happens when future technology changes can take advantage of higher resolutions. **My recommendation is to use the highest scanning resolution as long as it doesn't take too long. This is at least 300 dpi to 600 dpi.**

There are lots of different opinions about what format to save your scans in.

JPEG is the standard used today because it is a compressed format with smaller file sizes. This is my primary choice for photos and documents that I might want to enhance or repair in the future. The main drawback to JPEG files is that every time you save the, you lose some of the quality. That is why I try to keep my first scan as a master and make changes to a copy.

PDF format is good for multipage documents that you will want to read.

TIFF /BMP formats have huge file sizes and capture all the details. I will use this formats have for one-of-a-kind items.

Many of the scanning programs will allow you to set brightness, contrast, and saturation options. My preference is to not use these options and make enhancements in a **full-featured image editor**. I use paint shop Pro 7.0. Paint shop Pro can take care of red eyes, color problems, brightness issues, and more complex repairs like scratches and tears.

I use **Omni Page 14.0** to do optical character recognition processing to convert images into actual words and numbers. This is a full-featured program that has features and what you find in the OCR software that comes free with many scanners. OCR programs can be very complicated, but OmniPage give you a step-by-

step guide. Plus OmniPage comes with foreign language dictionaries so it can correct many errors automatically.

Even if you do just a moderate amount of scanning, before long you can accumulate thousands of images on your hard disk. If you don't know what you have and where there is it is lost.

You need some sort of filing and indexing system.

Group photos are the classic example of filing and indexing issues. This is a group photo of my great-great-grandfather Paul Kramer, his wife, his children and their spouses. If I filed images underneath surnames, I would have to make at least four copies because of the numerous surnames.

In my system I would assign this image a unique number, file it in one location on my hard disk, and **build an index to keep track of the details of the image.**

I strongly recommend that you get the free program from Google called **Picasa**. This is a great tool to work with multimedia files on your computer. However I would not recommended this as a program to index your files.

Google is a large and strong player in the computer industry, today. Will they still be around in 10 years from now? This is not something I want to bet all my hard work on something that might not be around.

I recommend that you **build an index using a spreadsheet program**. Entering data consistently is extremely important thing. A byproduct of building an index in a spreadsheet program is that you can search and sort your holdings. You can also easily convert spreadsheet data to almost any program. OK, maybe I should say that a geek can easily convert it.

If you don't have Microsoft Excel, **OpenOffice** is a free program that is very compatible with all Microsoft office suite products, including word and PowerPoint.

Assign each image an ID including the computer folder where the file is stored and a sequential

number. You need a column for the name of the person or thing being index. A column for the date is needed. I include a couple of columns for a short and a long description.

Think of each line in the spreadsheet as being a 3 x 5 card. I will create a 3 x 5 card or line for each item in the image that I want to index. For the image of my great-great-grandfather and his family I created 13 3 x 5 cards or 13 rows in the spreadsheet.

I have my own code that I use to identify where a person appears in the photo. R1-1 indicates that the person is in the first row, first on the left. R3-4 indicates that the person is in the third row, fourth from the left.

The main drawback to an index is that it separate from the image file itself. When I die, if my relatives going through my stuff don't find the index, they won't have any idea as to what I have.

Just like my ancestors who were thoughtful enough to write names and dates on the back of their photos. I want to do the same with my digital images.

You cannot write on the back of the digital image file, **but you can store a tremendous amount of information in inside the file itself.** The geek name for this information that you add to files is called META DATA.

One way to add information to image file is to write **right-click** on the file, **click on properties** and go to the **summary tab.** There our lots of spots to it information. That way somebody can find out about an image file by just right clicking on it.

For you geeks in the crowd I recommend that you get **IrFanView** to add information to your image files and **Exifer** to extract this added information to a spreadsheet program.

Careful. Some programs will trash any information that you add images. So I would test a program to see what it does to this added information. I would check any program that allows you to open and save an image file.

Some final recommendations are that you get a plan for your scanning process and most

importantly find a geek. **15 minutes with a geek can save you months in getting your scanning projects started.**

Remembering Eugene Prouty

NOTE: I am working on a pamphlet summarizing the information I gathered and my analysis of it. See my website on Loreto, Sauk County, Wisconsin for a download-able version.

<http://tinyurl.com/22e2ua>

Born:	Mar 12, 1922
Enlisted:	Jun 22, 1942
Last Mission:	Jun 5, 1945
Execution:	Jun 28, 1945
Reported Missing:	Jul 16, 1945
Wisconsin State Journal	
Detail of Execution:	Feb 25, 1946
Witness Yamada	
Declared Dead:	Jun 17, 1946
Wisconsin State Journal	
Graves Registration Report:	Jun 22, 1946
Investigations by Lt. Sullivan:	Nov 20, 1946
Burried Jefferson Barracks Nat'l Cemetery	
	Nov 21, 1949

Having researched numerous historical topics, I have learned that there is no such thing as absolute truth. This pamphlet is my opinion and interpretation of the information I found.

This pamphlet is about **Eugene Joseph Prouty** who was killed in action by the Japanese during World War II. This project started at Our Lady of the Fields Chapel where there is a flag donated by the family of Eugene Prouty. There is a dedication card at the chapel.

"This United States flag has been donated to 'Our Lady of the Fields Chapel' by the Walter Prouty family of Wisconsin Dells in honor of their son, Sgt. Eugene Joseph Prouty who was executed by the Japanese, July 14, 1945 when he was 23 years of age. 'There is no place I would rather it to be than near my old home.' wrote his mother, Mrs Ella Walsh Prouty."

How does one research this type of story? My primary source of information comes from the Internet. Researching on the Internet is more of an **art-form than a science.** My approach to

Internet research is to “cast a wide net” to start. At a minimum you need to be willing to scroll through hundreds of items. This is tedious but there are several benefits.

One benefit is that reviewing hundreds of items gives you a better understanding of what is available. Seeing different words and what Internet sites are in the results list allow you to refine your search criteria.

Another benefit deals with persistence. I don't know how many times I have found the really good stuff after trudging through a few hundred items. In order to find gold, you need to mine through tons of worthless ore. Who knows what key fact is hiding disguised as meaningless data?

My starting point for Internet research is **www.google.com**. My starting search criteria is also simple. In my opinion, spelling is the curse of Internet searches. Knowing alternate spellings and similar words is key to successful searching.

In this case do you search for Gene or Eugene? I used the following search criteria

prouty (gene OR Eugene)

Note: **OR** needs to be capitalized

This was one of those rare searches where the really good stuff was in the first 5 results. **The real treasure is the web site of the 444th Bomb Group with great data from Betty Gracie, the niece of Eugene Prouty's crewmate Sgt. Pete Sabo.**

This site has some tremendous photos and lots of strong supporting documentation

www.444thbg.org/petesaboblackjacktoo.htm

Searching for Eugene Prouty's enlistment record was a little more difficult. The government agency NARA has online databases of enlistments for WWII. The trick is the search the *Reserve Corps Records* file for Eugene Prouty. The enlistment data is suspect. It shows the following:

Enlisted: Jun 22 1942 at Madison, WI
Defer Date Jun 1944
Born: 1922 2 years of college Single
Civilian Occupation: Actors and actresses
Box 0213 Film Reel Number 2.70#

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=GP23>

There is a lot of documentation of the events in Eugene Prouty's life. The purpose of my analysis is to summarize and comment on this documentation. Keeping in mind that there are no absolute truths in historical research

Eugene Prouty was born on March 12, 1922.

He enlisted on June 22, 1942 in Army Air Force with a defer date of June 1944. He was a single person with 2 years of college. This information was gotten from one of NARA's online database. As with most online databases the information is only as good as the person who typed it in. The online record showed his civilian occupation as an Actor. (He also received his education at the one-room school house at Loreto, Sauk County, Wisconsin.)

There are several clues as to the places Eugene Prouty served. The bomber group he served with at Tinian had also been stationed in Africa. I am not certain that Eugene Prouty served in Africa. In Eugene Prouty's obituary it was noted that he was “previously awarded the Air medal with three clusters for operational missions into China while stationed in India.”

Eugene Prouty's last mission was June 5, 1945. 473 B-29's attacked Kobe, Japan with 3077 tons of incendiary bombs. Over 4 square miles of Kobe were burned off. B-29's downed 86 Japanese fighters. 11 B-29's were lost.

<http://home.att.net/~sallyann6/b29/56years-4506a.html>

The best source of information about this mission is the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) prepared on June 7, 1945 using witness testimony by Major Harold Shelden.

The mission was in a B-29-16-BA nicknamed the Black Jack Too which was part of the 444th Bomb Group. The plane took off from the West Field of the island of Tinian.

There is some question whether the Black Jack Too was damaged by anti-aircraft fire or Japanese fighter attacks.

Major Shelden witnessed that the Black Jack Too “feathered” engine #3 after leaving Kobe, Japan. Major Shelden's plane acted as an escort for Prouty's plane.

A heavy flame broke out in engine #3 which caused the wing to break off and the plane to crash. There were 11 crew members, but only 10 parachutes were seen.

Additional information was gotten from testimony from Japanese witnesses obtained after the war.

The plane crashed near Shimazu. Part of the plane hit the home of Mr. Iwasaki killing him and all four members of his family.

7 of the 11 crewmembers were captured the day of the crash. 3 other members of the crew were captured June 9, 1945.

Sgt Romanelli had a bullet wound in the thigh. His body was buried and later identified on June 9, 1946 by the 108th QM Graves Registration platoon. His body was found in the crash wreckage.

One of the members of crew received head injuries while parachuting and died under medical care by the Japanese. It is possible this that crew member was Eugene Prouty.

Part of the US Army investigation dealt with an unfounded claim that policemen and civilians brutally killed the crewmembers after they were captured. In my opinion this did not happen.

On June 28, 1945, the remaining 9 crew members of the Black Jack Too and 2 other captured fliers were executed. They were executed without a military tribunal because Japanese command officers deemed them "war criminals" because of their attacks on civilians. These Japanese command officers were later tried for murder.

The 11 American fliers were beheaded in the traditional Bushido manner. While beheading is a terrible way to die, the intent of the Japanese appears to be that the executions be "respectful".

The bodies were buried. A little over a month later the bodies were cremated.

The Wisconsin State Journal July 16, 1945 reported that Eugene Prouty was declared missing in action.

The Wisconsin State Journal June 17, 1946 reported that Eugene Prouty was officially declared dead. Viewing records on the Internet site Ancestry.com website, I found that Eugene Prouty and other US military members were buried in a mass grave at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, 2900 Sheridan Road, St. Louis, MO Section 82 Site 1e.

The Internet site <http://interment.net> gave the burial date of November 21, 1949.

While individual facts of Eugene Prouty might be inconsistent, the one hard fact is that a young man gave his life in service of his country.

Analysis of Group Photo:

There was a photo of 11 crewmembers and the Black Jack Too on the 444th bomb group's web site. There are no names.

Looking at symbols on the plane there are:
12 camels (supporting that the crew was stationed in Africa)
11 bombs

Using the crew list which listed ranks is the best clue. Let's start by eliminating the crew members that weren't Eugene Prouty.

The four men standing were likely Lieutenants. Prouty was a Sergeant. So I can eliminate them.

Of the seven crouching members, I eliminated 5 members because they did not resemble a "known picture" of Eugene Prouty.

This left the 4th and 5th persons from the left.

I eliminated the 4th person. Eugene Prouty was a regular Sergeant. The arm emblem of the 4th person indicated he was a Staff Sergeant.

This leaves the 5th person from the left as person likely to be Eugene Prouty, if he was in the picture.

