

Easter Sunday, 1944

Tail turret gunner on a B-24 Liberator Bomber, Sgt. Johnson was decorated for his devotion to duty on a mission to eastern Germany in which he stayed at his gun despite a bullet in his back and destroyed an enemy fighter after he had been wounded. Awarding of the decoration was announced by Brig. Gen. J. P. Hodges, commanding General of a liberator division in England.

Sgt. Johnson's heroism was described after the mission by Capt. L. C. Sharrard, pilot of the plane:

"We were attacked by 48 enemy fighters which passed through the formation firing numerous ~~22~~ 22 MM shells and machine gun bullets. The ship I was piloting suffered at least six hits. One of these bullets entered the tail turret and severely injured Sgt. Johnson. Immediately after the attack he called me on the interphone and said, 'Capt. Sharrard, I've been shot in the back.' One of the bullets had hit the No. 3 engine at the same time and I was fighting to get the ship back in formation, so I could'nt ask him any further details for about a minute. During this time another fighter, ME 109, attacked from an 8 o'clock position."

"Sgt. Johnson, even though severely wounded, stuck to his guns and fired 50 or 75 rounds as the German approached. He observed several hits go into the canopy and then the ME 109 went into a spin with the pilot apparently dead or wounded."

"Immediately after this attack Sgt. Johnson called me again over the interphone and said, 'I got him.' A few minutes later he reported that his turret was out."

"By this time I had got the ship back in formation and was able to ask him how badly he was hurt. Sgt. Johnson answered that it was painful and said he could feel blood trickling down his back. I sent the navigator back immediately with a first aid kit to treat him and determine how seriously his injuries were."

"The navigator, on pulling Johnson out of the turret and cutting through his clothing, found a deep wound in the muscle part of his back. He treated him, laid him face down and covered him up as warmly as possible for the three hour run from the target back to the base. Later, at the hospital, a German 13 MM bullet was probed from his back."

"We ~~XX~~ lost many ships on this raid and Sgt. Johnson was awarded the Silver Star. His devotion to duty, after being wounded, apparently saved the ship and crew."

Capt. L. C. Sharrard.