

# Heroic Initiative

George Cummins

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Submitted by Cindi Cummins Doman, clipping found in her father's effects.

## S/ SGT. GEORGE CUMMINS CREDITED WITH AN ACT OF HEROIC INITIATIVE

Staff Sgt. George W. Cummins, son of W.J. Cummins of Metropolis, Ill. and former resident of Edwardsville, Ill., was recently credited with saving a bomber and its near-by personnel from destruction when an engine fire broke out in a B-17 Flying Fortress warming up for a combat mission at an 8th Air Force bomber station in England.



When the fire started, Cummins, ordnance section chief in the 381st Bombardment Group, was several yards away waiting for mechanics to finish their routine pre-combat warm-up before beginning his job of inspecting the loaded and fused 500-pound bombs in the plane's bays.

Suddenly he saw flames spurt from the left outboard engine and in a matter of seconds he was at the ship playing the contents of a fire extinguisher on the blaze. He knew that immediate danger lay in the Fortress' fully loaded wing tanks, which might have exploded under the intense heat, thereby setting off the bomb load.

Sergeant Cummins succeeded in checking the conflagration partly before other ground crewmen arrived. When they took over the fire-fighting job he commandeered a truck, got to the nearest phone and put a call for the base fire department.

Cummins and the men under his direction fought the blaze for more than 10 minutes, finally bringing it successfully under control. Damage was confined to the engine and surrounding wing surfaces.

The sergeant, who is a veteran of nearly three years army service and overseas duty of 21 months, graduated from Edwardsville High School in 1939. He served as H-Y and school band president during his senior year. He was employed at the Western Cartridge Company, East Alton, Ill. at the time of his induction in July, 1942. Trained as an aviation ordnance man at Aberdeen, MD., he joined the 381st Group in January, 1943 at Pyote, TX. His grandfather, Rev. J.W. Cummins, was formerly pastor of St. Johns Methodist Church.