



## Operational History 668<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron (416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (L) WWII

(Written at the time of occurrence)

February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944 to March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945

THIS LOG WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN BY SGT. WAYNE WILLIAMS  
AND CPL SCHIER IN OPERATIONS STAFF OF THE 668<sup>TH</sup> BOMB SQUADRON.  
LT. COL. CHESTER C. WYSOCKI ALSO HAD A HAND IN THIS DOCUMENT.

2

February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1944

3

Today, Abraham Lincoln's birthday, 1944, operations by the 668<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (L) in the European Theatre got underway with an hour-long flight in an A-20G-25 by Major Clarence S. Towles Jr., Commanding Officer.

The operations equipment including all files and supplies collected and packed in the United States for use overseas, arrived and was unpacked by S/Sgt. Raymond C. Kindelspire, and his assistants, Sgt. Arnold Markowitz, Cpl. Wayne T. Williams, Lester A. Schier, Wayne Daran, and Pfc. Paul E.J. Bergfelder.

Early in the evening the air raid siren signaled an alert at this field and surrounding fields. No enemy planes neared this particular field and after 45 minutes the all-clear signal was given.

At the present time, this squadron has possession of three A-20G-25's. Other departments of this squadron are now in the process of setting up their offices for training operations and future combat missions.

Operations officer for this squadron is Captain William Battersby, who has had overseas experience in the Caribbean area.

Captain Richard B. Frontice formerly on antisubmarine patrol duty off the eastern Atlantic

coast and Cuba, is acting as assistant operations officer and First Lieutenant Wilfred L. Luckasen

is the assistant operations ground officer.

Today, for the first time since our arrival at this location, several pilots and bombardier-navigators got into the air to fly a total of seven hours and fifty minutes of

testing and training missions. And, I presume, most of our squadron flying officers welcomed the opportunity to get into the air, the pilots in particular, since most of their flying activities to date have been confined to Link Trainer.

Pilots and their flying time for our second day of operations include Second Lieutenant Loring G. Peede, twenty minutes, Second Lieutenant Richard D. Poindexter, one hour, Major Clarence S. Towles Jr., one hour and thirty minutes, Captain Richard P. Prentiss, one hour, First Lieutenant Lucien J. Siracuse, one hour, Second Lieutenant Arthur N. Osborne Jr., one hour, Second Lieutenant Michael F. Kleopfel, one hour. Squadron Bombardiers/Navigators making their first flights in this Theatre of Operations were Second Lieutenants Alfred H. Maltby, William M. Lytle, and Richard T. McBrien.

The operations staff proceeded further in setting up the office by installing desks and chairs and cooperating with Captain Battersby in drawing up charts and duties to be accomplished by the clerks in forthcoming operations.

Group Operations called regarding attendance of ground school by combat crews and this formation was secured through the effort of Captain Hiram F. Conant and First Lieutenant Lucian J. Siracuse, leaders of "A" and "B" flights respectively.

4

Once again the Germans flew over England in the evening, carrying out the most extensive bombing raid since our arrival. Although this field was spared (and we are all thankful for that). Flares dropped by the raiders and flak tossed up by the ground defenses

was clearly visible from the field. Several men reported seeing burning airplanes plunging to the ground. All in all, it was quite an eventful and exciting evening. Cpl. Eugene Faran served as night alert men.

February 14, 1944

Due to inclement weather, all flying was temporarily suspended around 1230 this afternoon.

Eight operational training flight were carried out during the time the field was open, culminating in a total of eight hours and twenty five minutes of flying.

Our Bomb Group suffered its first death this morning, when a pilot from another squadron died in an A-20G-25 resulting from a stall while on an orientation flight near the field.

February 15, 1944

Today was "buzz" day at this station. A P-47, cutting up like a colt with a brand new pair of horseshoes, put on quite a show this afternoon, while a P-38 and an A-20G also buzzed the field.

But it remained for Lt. "Gee" Meredith, of this squadron, to furnish the real excitement of the afternoon. Upon trying to land following an orientation flight, Lt. Meredith found that both his hydraulic and emergency systems had gone out and hit a gully at the end of the runway before bringing the ship to a halt. Meredith was uninjured, but the ship sustained a bent propeller blade, broken nose wheel, and dent in the right side of the fuselage. S/Sgt. Raymond C. Kindelspire provided the most picturesque

description of the accident by saying that the “ship looked like a catfish, with its head in the ground and its tail in the air.”

Merediths’ crew, consisting of gunner Sergeants Leroy R. Shay and Clarence F. Gray, also escaped, unscathed from the crash.

February 16, 1944

Today the squadron suffered a very sad blow when our ever likeable, and efficient Squadron C.O. Major “Spotty” Towles was “kicked upstairs.” His leaving will be felt very deeply from privates right up thru the ranks. We all wish him all the success in the world and expect to hear great things about him cause he is really “on the ball.”

5

Our new C.O. is Major “Jug” Price, whom we all know and like, so here we go all putting our shoulders to the wheel giving him all our cooperation.

February 17, 1944

Another quite day. Inclement weather prevented all flying. The day was spent in catching up on work around the office.

February 18, 1944

The advent of snow at this station today ushered in several exciting events, which were capped by a midnight air raid alert.

The snow wasn’t the first we’ve seen since we started the trip over, but it was the first intensive snow to fall since we arrived in this country. Intermittently throughout the day, rain and sleet peppered the field, turning to snow around noon, when a number of A-20’s being ferried here for future operations, spent approximately 45 minutes attempting to land at this field.

All of them finally got down; the one was damaged in a minor accident. The snow of course, prevented all flying but the field was open for several minutes in midafternoon and several planes took off, only to be called down a few minutes later. One of the disappointed pilots, who was anticipating flying today, was our Operations Officer, Capt. Wm. “Pat” Battersby. He stomped back into the operations office, which he had left

only a few minutes before, saying something about “no sooner get ready to take off than they call off flying.”

A long silver B-17, stripped of all armament and accessories and looking for all the world like an over grown greyhound without a collar and chain, landed here also, and later, in taking off the pilot made such a steep turn to the left that the plane appeared to stand on its wing tip and the body revolved around it in an orbit. Needless to say, the B-17 pilots execution of the trick brought gasps of admiration from the A-20 flyers who were watching from our office windows.

As if to prove its stunt was no fluke, the fort circled, buzzed the field, and then laid back his --- and hurriedly disappeared toward its home field.

Shortly after midnight tonight, when most of us were buried deep in warm bunks piled high with blankets and overcoats, which made us quite oblivious to the cold wind cutting across the snow swept wastes outside, we were blasted out of bed by the words “This is an air raid warning, go to your shelters,” repeated several times in succession.

The drone of planes overheard was easily discernible and while a few preferred to remain in bed, the majority thought it best to get into the air raid shelter.

At one time both officers and enlisted men alike, standing outside the shelter, heard what they took to be the hiss of a falling bomb and all scampered into the shelter in 6

less time than a “chow hound” can gobble up a heavy meal. The hissing, however, turned out to be a series of sounds from the public address system. Nevertheless, the incident displayed to all of us the alacrity, and instinctiveness, with which we could act under actual bombardment.

The Jerries smacked fields neighboring ours tonight. Most of us agreed it was quite a show – a production complete with flares, which lit up other stations with all the brilliance of a July sun, flak, bursting bombs, and fires. Throughout the entire performance, we could hear the motors of many planes, some directly overhead, and as each formation passed over us we turned our eyes skyward and prayed, some

silently, and a few sullenly, that no bombs would fall our way. As the raid wore on, our groups were steadily augmented by drowsy soldiers who had stayed in bed and then decided to get up when they heard the words, “This is a red air raid warning, Evacuate the barracks.”

The clusters of flares, red and light and all very luminous, cut some beautiful figures in the sky and if we could have wiped away the drone of enemy engines and the tension, which prevailed, it could have been an evening exhibition of Fourth of July fireworks. But war is real and the planes weren’t carrying duds!

The alert lasted approximately an hour. When we crawled into our bunks, to again experience the comforting satisfaction of warm blankets, we probably realized for the first time just how cold it was outside. We didn’t mind the freezing weather to any great extent. Most of us were too busy speculating upon the raid.

Tonight’s alert marked our fifth air raid since our arrival at this field.

Today’s issue of Stars and Stripes Daily newspaper of the Armed Forces in this theatre carried the announcement that the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force was now operating from this country. We learned, shortly after our arrival here, that we were assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force, but were forbidden to say anything about it. Now, presumably, the story can be told. The text of the article follows:

“Supreme headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, disclosed last night that elements of the Ninth Air Force had been incorporated with the Allied Forces controlled by Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory.”

“It was the first Allied acknowledgment of the Ninth’s presence in this theater, although its aircraft have been operating from British bases for some time.”

“Maj. Gen. Louis H. Brereton, who was its commander in the Middle East and in North Africa before the force moved here to form a team with the Eighth and the RAF, is in command, the announcement said.”

“As a tactical air force, the Ninth will show its full strength with medium bombers, fighter-bombers, attack bombers, and fighters, the announcement said.”

7

“It pointed out that a pattern for entry into Europe calls for air superiority before the land battle commences, and that Gen. Montgomery has always insisted that the enemy’s air forces be neutralized before the ground forces went into battle. Action toward this goal would be the first assignment of the Ninth, headquarters said.”

“A second assignment, it continued, would be systematic attack on the railroads, marshalling yards and truck convoy routes leading to the enemy’s replacement depots behind the lines. Still third assignment, after the landings had been effected, would be to bomb selected targets in the battle area along with other elements of the U.S., British and Allied Air Forces.”

Despite the snow, an air raid, and a minor aircraft accident, the day’s only casualty was a wooden, hand-carved stove lifted, fashioned by Captain Richard B. Prentiss (Burlington, Vt.), assistant operations officer, who saw his work of art, completed in two days of arduous and intensive whittling, go up in flames when Sgt. Arnold Markowitz (Brooklyn, N.Y.) inadvertently stuck his masterpiece in the fire.

February 19, 1944

Station 170

We were notified today that the A-20G-25, piloted by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. “Gee” Meredith, which nosed into a ditch near the field on February 15, had been lost by this squadron. The plane, with a twisted fuselage and other defects, will be used for salvage and spare parts in the future.

Again, unfavorable weather prevented flying until late today, when Captain R.E. Prentiss and Wm. Battersby and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Joseph F. Meagher took off to span the skies for a total of four hours flying time.

February 20, 1944

Station 170

Our pilots and combat crews flew their first formation flights today for a total of 13:10.

As the planes winged over our office time and again today, pilots who were not flying kept remarking upon the general sloppiness of the formation. Evidently, and this suggestion stems from one who has done all his Army Air Force flying from the ground, the pilots were a bit “rusty,” due to over a month of traveling.

If the soldiers of this field are red-faced tomorrow, their scarlet complexion will have come from holding their breath during tonight’s air raid alert. Hitler’s aviators dumped their bombs all around this field, but once again....and we thank Heaven....we remain unhit.

8

Searchlights, looking for all the world like long bars of silver strands groping in the murky darkness that is typical of this country, illuminated the sky for over an hour tonight as the low rumbles of exploding bombs followed flares which were dropped on surrounding fields.

Ack-ack, sounding like a series of rapid beats in a moderate Krupa drum solo,

found its mark in at least two cases, for observers reported seeing two flaming planes plummeting toward earth in the heat of the air raid. At least, we hope the burning ships were German, and not our own night fighters.

At Group Headquarters, the plotting board revealed that the Jerries flew over this field several times during the raid, yet not a bomb was dropped in this area.

Cpl. William Wursburg, a member of Group Intelligence, reported that one Nazi, evidently having bailed out of his flaming plane, had become entangled in a tree about a mile from here and had bled to death from a flak wound in the leg. The German was rumored to have been about 17 or 18 years of age, but having been in the Army long enough to take nothing for the truth, which stems from the "grapevine." None of us took too much interest in the tale.

S/Sgt. Eddie Hampton, a member of this squadron's ordnance section, was on duty as charge of quarters at the picket post during the alert. "Some guy," related Hampton, "threw a rock on top of the picket post and I made a dive for the floor. Later I crawled on the roof to get that rock, thinking it might roll off again and scare the hell out of me."

The all-clear signal was the most welcome thing we've heard in a long time, and that includes the call for chow too. These Germans can produce some heavy raids, no less despite our constant bombardment of their production centers.

February 21, 1944

Station 170

Once again, formation flying was the order of the day for this squadron. Six to eight ship formations, soon to graduate into 18 and 36 plane combinations, kept the operations staff busy running from window to window to throw up critical observations on how our boys were doing.

All combat crews are endeavoring to get in their eight hours of flying for January and February before the month is out.

Those of us who thought our ships were having trouble landing today finally learned the reason the majority of the planes pulled up and circled the field again before setting down. Seemed the pilots wanted to get in an extra ten minutes of flying time.

9

For the second consecutive night, we experienced an air raid in the area, but perhaps we have lost our fear of the Jerrie's bombs or it's maybe that we've become accustomed to raids; at any rate, few of us had enough ambition to stir from our bunks and head for the Air Raid shelter.

Unlike last evening's raid, tonight's alert lasted only a short while. Bomb flashes could be discerned in the distance. Very few of the explosions however, could be heard, as the wind carried the noises away from us.

February 22, 1944

Station 170

A fleeting snow, lasting a little over ten minutes today, was sufficient to force a group formation, including three planes from this squadron, to turn tail and seek another field on which to land.

Lt.Col. Theodore R. Aylesworth, Major H. A. Radetsky, and Lt. Johnson were flying our planes at the time. As a result, the operations staff was forced to estimate the time for the daily flying activity report.

Again, and air raids are becoming monotonous, we had another alert tonight...late tonight, by the way and those who had the fortitude to rise from their bunks were rewarded with a 50 yard line seat at the most intensive duel of flak versus planes that we've seen since our arrival here. In addition, G.I. onlookers witnessed another ship going down in flames. Some explained profusely that the ship had flown directly over this field and into the barrage of flak to crash several miles away.

Other bunk-weary clairvoyants reasoned that the pilot had surely gone down with the plane, for hadn't everyone heard the final two snorts from the engines as he tried to pull the ship out of its dive? The crash of the ship sent up a dull red light like the placid --- of burning ---- in a dark room and was visible for miles over the countryside. Whether the pilot ever got out of the ship still remains a mystery, but everyone agreed on one thing... crashing in a burning plane is a helluva way to die.

February 29

Station 170

A dismal, dank, and marrow-penetrating blanket of fog dismissed flying operations at this field until mid-way this afternoon when our boys took off to fly for one

hour in a nine ship formation, including seven ships from other squadrons and two from our outfit.

The two planes piloted by Lt. Col. Aylesworth and Major Radetsky, forced to land at another base yesterday because of snow at this field, returned today, but our other missing planes, flown by Lt. Johnson, is still absent from this station.

10

All anticipated tonight's air raid, and coming early in the evening, the alert afforded those who heard the alarm and were interested enough, a display of flak that resembled an exhibition of Fourth of July night fireworks.

The apparent effortless with which the flak followed the beams of searchlights has always been something to marvel at...the coordination between those handling the ack-ack and those in charge of the lights has undoubtedly played an important part in the defense of this country.

It was hard to determine if any planes fell tonight, for the raid was several miles away, and some burning ships could have been mistaken for flares; the bursting flak, appearing as tiny stars twinkling and living only for the breath of a second before receding in death as the night which formed the backdrop for the entire setting, certainly made things uncomfortable for Hitler's Night Raiders during this evening's mêlée.

Second Lt. Blair – Bradford experienced a few anxious moments this afternoon when the ship, which he was piloting, ran off the hard-surface landing runways this afternoon immediately after the entire formation had come down. The incident was of little consequences, however, as several engineers nearby went to work and soon had the plane back on the concrete again. Never having been particularly enthusiastic about

calisthenics, the entire operations force today found themselves without a jeep and confronted with the problems of walking or hitching a ride from the office to the mess hall and barracks (with the exercise as added measure). The jeep was recalled by the motor pool this afternoon.

Our squadron received three new pilots today. They are first lieutenants Galen F. Bartmus, Wayne E. Downing, and Eldon B. Kreh, to whom we extend a hearty welcome and a glad hand to join our little group.

February 24, 1944

Station 170

Today was peaceful enough and even at intervals, the sun shone. Several B-26 airplanes in formation, their fuselages glistening and brilliant in the sun, roared over the field now and then, causing everyone to look toward the sky and observe their antics. Once again, our pilots and combat crews engaged in formation flying and late in the afternoon, Major R.F. Fries, commanding officer, advised the group upon landing procedure from formation, producing a short but heated discussion among all concerned. Our missing A-20B, forced to set down at another field February 22, returned at 1:30 this afternoon, piloted by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ernest L. Johnson, assigned to another squadron at this field.

The Germans were over again last night, dropping bombs several miles away so no one took much notice of the alert. It was just another raid.

11

February 25, 1944

Station 170

Formations again filled the sky today and to make the cloud gazing a little easier on the eyes, the operations staff even cleaned and washed windows. B-26 and B-17 outfits roared overhead and to add a complete touch to the picture, a flock of P-47's in formation also appeared.

In the late afternoon, several pilots attempted to get in their flying time for the month. They succeeded admirably, to be sure, with the aid of the little P.I. (penciled in) time. Everybody got a good night's sleep this evening. For the first time in several nights of successive air raids, the Germans failed to appear.

February 26, 1944

Station 170

The highlight of today's activity was a four squadron group review on the --- this afternoon, with Colonel Harold L. Mace, commanding officer, Lt. Col. Thomas R. Ford, and an R.A.F. official as the reviewing officers. For most of us, it was a belated revival of our days of last summer in this station, and as First Sergeant John A. Stevens told us after the formation, "It's surprising how much you forget about reviews if you haven't had one for awhile." Evidently the parade came off commendably, for Colonel Mace complimented each Squadron Commander profusely on his outfit's fine showing. Otherwise, the events of the day were concerned with routine matters. Inclement weather prevented all flying.

February 27, 1944



Station 170

Another, bleak dull day, with everyone busy with last minute flight certificates and reports. A briefing for all pilots, bombardier-navigators, and gunners occupied the greater part of the afternoon.

February 28, 1944

Station 170

Our pilots today flew a total of 22:25 of formation time in an otherwise drab day. A total of 18 ships in all took part in the formation. First Lieutenant Richard F. Shaefer also flew 1:05 in an orientation flight over the field.

12

February 29, 1944

Station 170

Our squadron made its first practice bombing run today. Major Robert F. Price, commanding officer, and Second Lieutenant Arvid R. Hand, bombardier-navigator dropped the bombs on an un-named range.

Seven new planes arrived at this field today, one of them being flown by First Lieutenant Shaefer all the way from Ireland. None of the new ships were assigned to this squadron.

March 1, 1944

Station 170

A bit more excitement provided at the field today as our bomb group made it's first practice combat mission. Rumors always quite prevalent in the Army, circulated through all offices and hangers during the early morning hours and by 11:00am, even the most skeptical soldier agreed that evidently something was up.

Around noon, the ships took off, led by Major Walter W. Farmer, a West Point graduate, new assigned as Operations Officer for this group. As the ships circled over the field, numbering 18 (according to the count taken by the Operations office staff), we little realized that we would see them again in a very short time.

March 2, 1944

Station 170

Very little flying today, with the crew chiefs wrapping up their ships early in the afternoon. Formation once more, but rumors are circulating that tomorrow is the "big day." Captain William Battersby, operations officer, submitted a manning list of pilots, bombardier-navigators, and gunners to Group Operations from this squadron for tomorrow's proposed mission.

Tonight, engineering personnel, numbering approximately 22, were busy getting their ships ready. Other members of the squadron were loading bombs, but doubt exists in many billets hall-sessions tonight that the mission will actually result in a combat raid.

March 3, 1944

Station 170

Today has been a big day for members of this bombardment group. For this morning, alerted combat crews flew their first mission...but; they did not reach their objective. As a matter of fact, the ships were headed for the airdrome at Poix, France, on

a bombing mission, when they received word from the Ninth Bomber Command that they were to turn back ... that the target was obscured. Since it has been ruled that indiscriminant bombing, without having first made certain the target, is a court martial offense, the ships just touched the coastal-----of France before leaving for home again. For the ships were gone not more than 30 minutes, or 45 minutes at the most, when we heard and saw the planes approaching the field. Shortly thereafter we learned that the mission was only a practice run. Second Lieutenant Richard T. McBrien, Bombardier-Navigator was the only member of this squadron to make the run. We experienced a short air raid alert tonight, but no bombs were dropped near here.

All planes returned intact, though some had very little gasoline (or petrol as it is called here) left after the wheels touched the runway at this airfield. Pilots from this squadron making their first sortie against Hitler's Europe were 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Raymond K. Cruze, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert D. Leshner, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. L.E. Hill, Captain William Battersby, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Gustave Ebenstein, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richard D. Poindexter.

Bombardier-Navigators included 2<sup>nd</sup> Lts. Richard T. McBrien and Arvid R. Hand. Gunners making the mission were Sgt. Doyle H. Simpson, S/Sgt. Roy Bankston Jr., S/Sgt. John R. Herttua, S/Sgt. Joseph E. McCreery, S/Sgt. E.S. Dickenson, S/Sgt. Flpidio A. Damico, S/Sgt. William H. Coe, S/Sgt. Earnest E. Kelly, S/Sgt. Carl F. Love, S/Sgt. Fred L. Adair, S/Sgt. John A. Fejes Jr., S/Sgt. Earl R. Judd Jr., S/Sgt. Adolfus J. Anatanatis, S/Sgt. Harold R. Hedrick, S/Sgt. James N. Hume, S/Sgt. Clarence H. Yost Jr., S/Sgt. R.W. Burch, S/Sgt. F.E. Brown, S/Sgt. Lewis M. Daugherty, S/Sgt. Charles L. Hibbs, S/Sgt. Holley Perkins Jr., Sgt. S.P. Newell, T/Sgt. Leo G. Robbins, and Sgt. Vern E. Muliver.

How does it feel to be on your way to blast the Axis, realizing that this is your first combat mission and that you're green and untried? Second Lieutenant Richard T. McBrien, former student of advertising who really admits he'd "like to stay in the Air Force after the war," aired his opinion on the above question today.

"No kidding," said Lt. McBrien, "I was anxious as all hell. I was surprised to find myself so eager (a well used Air Corps term there) when we finally reached the coast of France. When we started out on the mission, I didn't think much about it, but the closer we got, the more I wanted to see what I could do in my first test."

Captain William Battersby, Operations Officer for this squadron, wasn't as loquacious. "I looked down there, saw the coast of France, and said to myself, "Well, this is it," when the call came through for us to about face and head for home."

While today's mission was something new for our flying officers, it was renaissance of old time of fighting the Japs in the South Pacific for S/Sgts. James N. Hume, who now has 69 missions to his credit; Holly Perkins Jr. 59 missions; S.P. Newell, 56 missions, Doyle H. Simpson, 48 missions; John R. Herttua, 24 missions.

Staff Sergeants Herttua and Hume, by the way, received their gunnery training from a British Royal Air Force school.

Thus, our first mission, the not actually a combat mission, has been set down in

the record books. We all hope that forthcoming missions will see our planes returning with equally favorable results.

March 4, 1944

Station 170

Another formation against France today followed yesterday's proposed assault, but once again, the weather prevented the combat crews from two other squadrons of this Group in their efforts to hit Occupied France for the first time since our arrival here. Rumors circulating around the base tonight have it that the planes were actually over their objective, but could not bomb, for the target was hidden from view. Faulty landing gear on one A-20C-25 prevented the pilot and his gunners from landing here after returning from the mission. Rather than take a chance on crash landing the ship with a full load of bombs aboard, the pilot Lt. Ostrander, of a sister squadron here, and his gunners bailed out, with the ship, presumably, crashing in the North Sea. Those in the know reports that the trio landed safely and are in good condition, though Lt. Ostrander, who is said to have landed in the North Sea, is suffering from shock and exposure. The gunners, on the other hand, experienced more favorable landings, on slightly in the middle of a village street and the other in a spacious field. The loss of the plane, perhaps, affected no one, excepting its crew chief, with a heavy dose of melancholia. The important thing still remains...the crew came back, and will soon be ready to fly again, hoping, no doubt, that their next assignment will be carried out under less hazardous conditions.

March 5, 1944

Like the proverbial bridesmaid who was never a bride, the combat crews of this squadron are beginning to wonder if they're ever going to run up against the real thing. They may be impatient... a bit too impatient for their own good, in most respects, and after getting up in the middle of the night to eat chow, don their regalia and beat a path to the briefing room to receive full information on their target and all other aspects of enemy warfare that they might meet during the raid, no one can blame them for being disappointed.

Things started off like a G.I. wolf in an old maids dormitory around here this morning, in preparation for the day's assault, presumably against some airfield in France, but fog and inclement weather forced the cancellation of the mission and as the day grew on, everyone resigned themselves to another afternoon of routine flying. Their eagerness was perverted...temporarily, at least.

15

Major Clarence S. "Spotty" Towles, former commanding officer of this squadron who lists 119 combat hours in a B-25 to his credit in his Form #5, flew one of our ships this afternoon, and we were all glad to have him back in the office again. He was transferred to Group Headquarters as Assistant Operations Officer several weeks ago and since has had little time to visit in this office. Major Towles flew for 2:00 in an A-20B, with Second Lieutenant Richard T. McBrien (who has a penchant for breaking into this chronicle quite frequently), as Bombardier-Navigator, and Sgt. Vern E. McIver and Staff Sergeant John A. Fejes Jr., as gunners.

After landing, doffing his flying clothes, but still leaving his aviator's cap upon his head, Major Towles stomped into the office in his heavy flying boots to heap praises to all and sundry of McBrien's ability as a navigator. "Yes sir," said Major to McBrien, "you were really on the beam, boy. You were really navigating, for I was watching you. Very nice flight. Very nice. I enjoyed it very much." "Thank you," said McBrien, "thank you, sir." That, in itself, seemed sufficient, but McBrien persisted in beaming all over the place.

The three most recent additions to our pilots roster, First Lieutenants Eldon B. Kreh, Wayne E. Downing, and Galen F. Bartmus, have been making orientation flights during the past two days and Lieutenants Bartmus and Kreh logged some more time this afternoon, along with Second Lieutenant Blair H. Bradford.

First Lieutenant Richard F. Shaefer, West Point '43', who formerly flew B-25's before joining this A-20 outfit, came up with a surprise today when he walked into the office with a box filled with chocolate bars and chewing gum under his arm. The chocolate bars and chewing gum proved to be the rations intended for our combat crews on their first mission on February 3, but at that time, the items were not available, so Captain Battersby, with Lieutenant Shaefer, spent a good part of a half hour doling out back rations to gunners who happened in the office. And incidentally, the operations staff managed to hook two chocolate bars, and a similar quantity of gum.

March 6, 1944

Station 170

16

If "E for effort" awards are ever given out by any government agencies other than the War Production Board, all of us feel sure that the combat crews of this squadron will be among those possible recipients most deserving of such an honor.

This outfit flew another mission today, with good intentions of bombing the hell out of an airdrome at a place called Conches, France, or some airport whose geographical designation, spelling, and pronunciation comes close to such a spot just across the English channel.

During the morning, the briefing went off as scheduled, and at 10:40, when the crews were climbing into their ships, they were recalled to hear that the proposed take-off had been postponed an hour. In addition, they learned that the usual 50 missions, or a tour

of duty in this theatre, wasn't worth an American half-dollar in this country. For, according to the latest dope, emanating from the boys who wear the Stars and Bars in that elevated sanctum known as higher Headquarters, have decreed that 50 missions does not necessarily mean the end of a tour of duty and a trip back to the States, all expenses paid, of course, by the United States Army Air Force.

The pilots did get into the air at 11:40 or thereabouts and returned, all crews intact, around 1400 in the afternoon. They either missed their fighter escort or the fighter escort missed them. At any rate, Hitler and his Hordes didn't feel the weight of this squadron's bombing blows, and so the big day, the day we've been waiting for... when our boys would smack their first blow against the continent of Europe, has again been

postponed.

March 7, 1944

Station 170

Today has been an All-American day for the men of this light bombardment group, for this afternoon, a total of 20 planes roared into the sky to cross the channel, with the protection of a fighter escort of R.A.F. Spitfires, to rain death and destruction upon the German airdrome near the city of Conches, France.

The bursting bombs which were dropped upon the field heralded the debut of the first All-American light bombardment unit to begin operations against the enemy in the European Theatre.

To make the feat even more feasible, a Virginian, Major Clarence S. "Spotty" Towles Jr., former commanding officer of this squadron, led the formations and accomplished what other leaders had failed to do. He led his men to the target. Three other missions have been scheduled, but have been postponed due to inclement weather and other difficult conditions.

Major Towles, who recently passed his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday with this statement, "Well, boys, I'm a year older today. I made it for another year," was a happy man tonight, as was everyone else around the place.

17

Gone was the strain and tension, which had mounted this morning when a light snow fell and forced the take-off to be postponed until shortly after noon, when the weather relented somewhat.

First Lieutenant Chester R. Jackson, operations officer of one of the squadrons, which flew the formation, commented, "Man, what a raid. I was in the number seven spot, a good spot from which to see what was going on. I pulled out, banked over, and looked down. Bombs were bursting all around. 'Hrump 'Hrump! I said to myself, 'Boy, I hope there are a lot of Nazis down below.'"

After the interrogation, all pilots started asking a mutual question, "Where are the pictures of the raid?" But the pictures hadn't been developed by then. It made little difference, however. The training, which had started many months ago in the United States, including all the new monotonous formation, navigation, transition, simulated mission, and other phases of schooling, had finally paid off in big dividends. The raid had been a complete success. All ships returned intact, although a few were forced to stop at auxiliary fields before completing the final lap of their combat mission.

Everyone seemed satisfied tonight, except First Lieutenant Robert O.

Grustmacher. He was peeve because everyone else dropped their bombs and he hadn't had a chance to get his away. No doubt he's looking forward to the next mission with the vow, "Boy, I drop "drop em this time."

According to intelligence reports, the planes encountered only light flak and no fighter opposition at all.

Thus, our first mission has been marked down in the record books, and we hope that future sorties will prove just as successful. To add an extra note to the celebration tonight, even the mess hall came up with a few giant cans of ice cream. In all it was quite

a day.

March 8, 1944

Station 170

As was expected, things cooled down somewhat here today, following our first attack on a French airfield. Pilots and combat crews from this squadron and another squadron were on the alert for a mission today, but by mid-morning the alert had died down and our boys spent the remainder of the day ironing out the sore spots, which other pilots had encountered during yesterday's run on the target.

A total of 15 pilots underwent cockpit checks on the A-20G modified and the A-20B unmodified today, under the guidance of Captain Richard D. Prentiss, he has been quite busy the past two days since Captain Battersby, operations officer, is on pass.

18

The transition flights and a navigation flight, the latter flown by Major Clarence S. Towles Jr., constituted all the flying by this squadron for this date.

March 9, 1944

Station 170

Again things were peaceful around this airdrome today. The only flying consisted of a flight of 1:25 by Major Walter W. Farmer, Group Operations Officer, who was accompanied by Second Lieutenant Max A. Papa, Navigator-Bombardier, and Captain J.B. Cooney, Group Communications Officer.

March 10, 1944

Station 170

A low-lying fog kept all planes on the ground today.

March 11, 1944

Station 170

Practice bombing missions occupied our pilots and crews today, as Capt. William Battersby, with Captain Prentiss and First Lieutenant Richard V. Miracle, West Point '43' started the bombs rolling with formation-bombing missions in mid-morning. By afternoon, First Lieutenants Eldon B. Kreh and Galen F. Bartmus, along with Captain Hiram F. Conant, had also completed their practice bombing runs.

Major Walter W. Farmer, Group Operations Officer flew one of our ships for 1:55, terminating the day's activities. As yet, no further news has come up concerning no other mission against the European Continent, so the majority of us are resigned to unit and ----, which is nothing new in the Army.

March 12, 1944

Station 170

No flying was accomplished of this squadron for this date.

March 13, 1944

Station 170

19

Favorable flying weather prevailed today, and our pilots took advantage of it to get in a total of 15:20 of activity, including two gunnery missions and on bombing mission.

First Lieutenant Richard F. Shaefer, with gunnery Staff Sergeants John A. Fejes Jr., and Carl R. Judd Jr., and Second Lieutenant Robert D. Leshner, with gunners Adolphus J. Anatanatis and Harold R. Hedrick, conducted our first gunnery mission in this Theatre of Operations; each gunner fired 1,000 rounds.

Second Lieutenant William M. Lytle gained the dubious honor of dropping the first practice bombs today, when he let 10 eggs go from a height of 3,000 feet. First Lieutenant Arthur E. Osborne Jr. acted as pilot, and though his ship was buffeted by a strong wind, the strongest we have seen in this area, but typical of March weather, succeeded in keeping the plane on its course so that Lt. Lytle could drop his pellets. "We should have bombed from 7 or 8,000 feet," Lt. Lytle said after he had landed, "but there was a cloud bank at 3800 feet, so we had to stay under it."

Captain William Battersby, Operations Officer, test-hopped one of our newer ships for 1:30 in the morning, and then turned it over to Captain Richard B. Prentiss, Assistant Operations Officer, who flew to a nearby field to check out Lt. Col. John G. Simpson, Hq. 99<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing, as an A-20 pilot.

March 14, 1944

Station 170

Three more gunnery missions were conducted today, as well as a practice bombing mission. Pilots flying gunnery missions were First Lieutenant Gustave Rubenstein, and Richard V. Miracle, and Second Lieutenant Luther E. Hill. Rubenstein's gunners, Staff Sergeant Holley Parkins Jr., and Sergeant Doyle H. Simpson, each fired 900 rounds.

Captain William Battersby piloted an A-20B on a practice bomb run. Second Lieutenant Arvid R. Hand was the bombardier, dropping ten practice pumpkins from a height of 3,000 feet on a bombing range located near here. Captain John M. Mowry, Squadron Aviation Medical Examiner, accompanied Captain Battersby and Lieutenant Hand on their mission, and got in flying for this month.

This morning, a representative of an operations office in the 409<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group visited us, for the purpose of learning how we had set up our section in combat. The 409<sup>th</sup>, having only recently arrived in this theatre, and being a light bombardment group also, is now in the process of getting their equipment set up and will soon begin operations.

Today's issue of the Stars and Stripes carried a story stating that, according to an unnamed Army official, the U.S.A.A.F. and the R.A.F. may soon notify the German Reich of the targets we intend to bomb, in order to force the downtrodden Luftwaffe into

20  
a showdown battle. Tonight, the so-called "downtrodden" got up off the canvas and smacked hell out of England, for the first time since the night of March 1.

Again, flares dropped all around the field here, and the flak and rockets were the heaviest seen since our arrival. Evidently, and I think we are safe in assuming this, the Luftwaffe still has a few planes capable of taking off on bombing missions now and then.

March 15, 1944

Station 170

Pilots Joseph, F. Meagher and S.B. Ritchie Jr conducted more gunnery missions this afternoon. Each took his gunners up for practice firing. First Lieutenant Lucian J. Siracuse and Second Lieutenant Arvid R. Hand had good intentions of dropping a few practice bombs this afternoon, but after 40 minutes of flying, were informed that the range they had intended to use had been close.

March 16, 1944

Station 170

This outfit gained two ships and lost one this afternoon. One of the ships, an A-20J, caused much comment upon its arrival here. The other new plane, a G-25 was lost in the shuffle of conversation when Major Clarence S. Towles took the A-20J up for a test hop. The ship we lost, an A-20B, went to the 409<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, which contains many former members of this group.

March 17, 1944

Very little of interest going on today. The only activity was 2:00 of formation flying.

March 18, 1944

In contrast to yesterday's lull of quietude, a total of 34 planes from this Light Bombardment Group swished down the runway today on another mission against France, this time to bomb rocket-gun emplacements at Vacqueriette, France.

Over the target, Major Robert F. Price, commanding officer of this squadron and pilot of the lead ship, opened his bomb bay doors so Second Lieutenant Arvid R. Hand, his bombardier-navigator, could drop the pills. But apparently there was no need of Lieutenant Hand being there at all, for the bombs rolled out as soon as the doors were opened. Other ships, bombing off the lead plane, dropped their high explosive calling cards at the same time, and though the area around the target was hit, it was doubted if any real change was caused by the premature release.

Returning crewmen reported lots of flak, so thick, in fact, that one didn't have to look for it. It was so close, according to certain parties, that they could have spit on it with very little difficulty. The planes did not encounter any fighter opposition.

21

Second Lieutenant Richard D. Poindexter, a pilot from this squadron who hails from Honolulu, Hawaii, and was there when the Japs stabbed at Pearl Harbor, had the closest call of any flyer yesterday. Piloting another squadron's plane, Lt. Poindexter returned to this field with a piece of flak stuck in his plane in a spot not more than 18 inches from his head. Tonight Lt. Poindexter had the piece of flak in his possession and was proudly, but dubiously, passing it around to onlookers at Group Headquarters. With the exception of Lt. Joseph F. Meagher who dropped three bombs out of four, the remainder of our pilots got rid of all their eggs in short order when over their objective.

The results of today's raid were not to encouraging and mark another milestone on the arduous road that stretches before a squadron uninitiated in actual combat.

March 19, 1944

Station 170



In Air Corps vernacular, if a soldier is sleepy, he's "sack happy." After today's combat mission against rocket gun emplacements at St Omer, France, many of our pilots, bombardier-navigators, and gunners were sleepy, but what's more...they had a serious case of a now common malady in this theatre of operations...in other words, they were flak happy.

When our planes returned today, flak holes were clearly seen in every part of the ships. Our squadron now has ten planes in its possession, and all ten flew on today's raid,

and all ten came back seriously damaged by flak. The following is a resume of the damage:

A-20G-25 43-9194.... Leading edge of right wing out, three flak holes in right wing, with one piece of flak sticking in the prop blade on the left engine. Also a small hole in the rudder.

A-20J-5 43-9444.... Hole in plastic nose. Second Lieutenant Vernon H. Powell, Bombardier-Navigator assigned to another bomb squadron, was cut on the forehead by the flak, which damaged the nose of this airplane. When this plane landed, it was met by an ambulance, which removed Lt. Powell to dispensary for treatment.

A-20G 43-9182.... This aircraft, piloted by Hiram F. Conant, perhaps the most loquacious member of this squadron, had a close call today. A bomb from another airplane fell off the right aileron of 182, seriously damaging the aileron and scaring hell out of Captain Conant and his gunners, S/Sgts. Earnest Kelly and Joseph McCreary. The bomb tumbled off the aileron and continued on its downward flight to explode on French soil for -----, but not until it had turned Captain Conant's complexion from rosy red to the whiteness of a bad sheet. The aileron will have to be replaced, and to 22

add to the worries of Crew Chief Robert G. Delano, bespectacled T/Sgt. From California, the left engine nacelle was also hit by a piece of flak.

A-20G-25 43-9223.... T/Sgt. Melvin Bjartness breathed easily after he had inspected his pride and joy, 223, for -- --- -----from the flak barrage with only a hole in the nose of the fuselage on the right side.

A-20G-30 43-9745.... In contrast to 223, 745 suffered a hole in the left engine nacelle, a nicked battery cable, a hole in the right wing, a hole in the bomb bay door, and a hole near the radio hatch.

A-20G-25 43-9836.... Flak holes in this ship were found in the rudder, elevator, right wing, fuselage, and bomb bay.

A-20G-25 43-9195.... Flak hole in the fuselage under the right wing near the trailing edge.

A-20G-25 43-9360.... Some soldiers have nicknamed this ship "The Flying Sieve." Flak holes were detected in the left engine nacelle and in the nose near the top left gun, while pieces of shrapnel were imbedded in the right engine and in the left tire. This plane, with 182, was the hardest hit of any in the squadron.

A-20G-25 43-9379.... Flak hit 379 in three spots... left engine nacelle near the oil cooler, elevator and right wing.

A-20G-30 43-9701.... Also hit in a trio of places...right engine nacelle, right fuselage near the leading edge of the wing, and rudder.

Major Robert F. Price, who flew his fourth combat mission today, hit the ground from 223 upon landing and immediately blurted out, "Boy, this sort of stuff makes you stop and think!"

One of his gunners, S/Sgt. Fred L. Adair, a slow-talking nasal voiced former cabbie and truck driver who hails from the vicinity of Kansas City, Missouri, was very glad to be back. "Boy," he said, "am I tickled to set my feet on the ground again. What a grind. It was really rough up there. I'm sure glad we're back home." "I saw a Fortress get hit," Adair continued, "and I saw guys bailing out of it."

Presently he was joined by Major Fries, who asked Adair if he had seen the Fortress go down. "Yes sir," I did, answered Adair, "and I also saw a B-26 go into a spin."

First Lieutenant Gustave Ebenstein, a dynamic, former refrigerator salesman from New York City, whose stature lends him the appearance of a -----, looked as if he had aged ten years when he climbed out of his ship and began inspecting it. He found a hole about 18 inches from the gas tank in his right wing where a piece of flak had ledged, and 23

upon inspecting it, Lt. Ebenstein commented, "Boy, am I glad that piece of flak didn't get any closer."

One of Ebenstein's gunners, Sgt. Doyle M. Simpson, who has already done a tour of duty in the South Pacific, stated that he did not see any enemy fighter planes, but intimated that the flak was the heaviest he had witnessed to date.

A former cavalryman that decided he wanted to fly, Second Lieutenant Loring G. Poole, aired his opinion of flak with these words, "Boy, my ship was hit at least five time,

I could feel the ship rise every time it was hit."

Tonight, it was rumored that a plane from another squadron, piloted by Lt. Horace E. Pair of the 671<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron, had been forced to land just after crossing the English Channel on his way back to the field.

Of the pilots who flew our planes, only one failed to drop all his bombs. He was Major William J. Meng, who had Lt. Powell along as his bombardier-navigator. Lt. Powell, it will be remembered, was injured by the piece of flak, which exploded in the nose of his ship, 444.

First Lieutenant Frank J. Harrold Jr., of ----- squadron here, failed to fill in his take-off or landing time or his total time for the mission, but called about 24:00 tonight to at-test that he had flown for 2:50.

March 20, 1944

Only seven of our planes flew today's mission against Tourneben, France; of the seven, tow came back damaged. The were 223, with a small hole in the fuselage above the nose guns, and 701, with a small hole in the left elevator landing edge, small hole in the left wing, leading edge, near engine.

March 21, 1944

Station 170

Operations officers, in their opinion, are the most abused soldiers in the U.S. Army Air Forces. They readily admit that they'd much rather be "throttle pushers" in an airplane than be weighted down with paperwork and worries, while taking care, in a befitting manner, of their pilots, bombardier-navigators, and gunners. Yet, if these alleged operations officers ever decide to abandon the Army and try to earn an honest living as a civilian, they might find employment as chefs and be a great deal happier.

Not that any pilot, despite his endless reserve of talents, could ever hope to produce dishes to warrant a deserving compliment from such an exceptional connoisseur of epicurean dishes as luscious -----, or write of tempting dishes in a style resembling Prudence Pennay. But they could hope, in an attempt at vanity, to produce a

24  
stew or soup with a flavor similar to that delicious concoction of vegetables and broths conjured up by O. Henry in his short story, "The Third Ingredient," the saga of a stew. Now, a chef tosses everything he can lay his hands on into the make-up of a stew, and though he's no chef by any means, Captain Richard B. Prentiss, assistant operations officer, threw all types of flying into yesterday's activities, including practice bombing, gunnery, and formation.

Hitler's Aerial Circus, which has been playing these parts quite infrequently of late, never having gotten a very warm reception here at any time, paid us a visit last night, but found another cold audience awaiting its appearance. Hostile in disposition, and reason, and cold in body.

The flak and rocket barrage tossed up by the defenders of this country surpassed anything yet seen in this vicinity. This morning's radio stated that the raiders were over the East and South East coasts of this country and added that nine enemy planes were shot down.

One ship, according to the radio, had been going down in flames near the coast. In another, two German airmen parachuted out, only to land on a farm and find themselves captured in short order.

March 22, 1944

Station 170

A busy morning of diversified activity around this airdrome came to nothing this afternoon when the proposed mission, delayed from mid-morning until afternoon was suddenly cancelled.

Pilots and combat crews who had worked themselves into their flying gear, a process which, no doubt, had resulted in a state of nervous anticipation, were milling around their planes like a bunch of old maids at a sewing circle when a flare from the control tower notified them of the cancellation. Instead of being relieved, most of the flyers were disappointed. It did seem like so much motion to hurry through a briefing, clamber into flying togs, and then be notified that all your efforts were wasted.

March 23, 1944

Station 170

Planes based at this field took off today to carry out an offensive sweep against

the Nazi-occupied airfield at Montdidier, France, and returning crews told of increased flak barrage tossed up by the Germans.

Although all planes returned, several were full of more holes than a winter overcoat after it has been stored all summer.

25

Second Lieutenant Anthony R. Durante, assigned to another squadron here, was cut about the left side of his face when a piece of shrapnel tore through his cockpit window just after he had crossed the coast of France.

The day was perfect, exceptionally good weather for England, and unlimited visibility facilitated the completion of the mission. After the planes had made their bomb run on the target, they flew on, almost to Paris, before turning tail and heading for home. Second Lieutenant William M. Lytle, bombardier-navigator who made the trip, stated that he could not see the Eiffel Tower in Paris, however, S/Sgt. Vincent N. Sherry, a gunner assigned to another squadron, had trouble distinguishing between the Spitfire escort provided our formation and planes he thought were German Messerschmitts.

“I looked up and saw a bunch of planes coming at us once,” S/Sgt. Sherry stated before the interrogation this afternoon, “but they looked like German Messerschmitts. I took another glance and this time, I recognized them as our fighter escort.”

Crewmen spoke of seeing many formations of B-26's, escorted by P-47's and P-51's, and indication that the Marauders were again having a field day against Nazi airfields, railroads, and industrial plants in France.

Captain Hiram F. Conant, who has been in service in the Caribbean area, had a close call today when a piece of flak gnawed its way through the bottom of his cockpit and continued on to tear a piece of leather out of his flying gloves. Another piece, evidently much larger, hit Captain Conant's radio system and forced him to fly home deprived of any contact with the other members of his crew, Second Lieutenant Alfred M. Maltby, Bombardier-Navigator, and Staff Sergeants Adolfus J. Anatanatis and Harold R. Hedrick, gunners.

By virtue of this afternoon's mission, gunners S.P. Newell, Holly Perkins Jr., Adolfus J. Anatanatis, Harold R. Hedrick, Earnest E. Kelly, Charles L. Hibbs, and Lewis M. Daugherty have accomplished five sorties in this Theatre of Operations and are now eligible to receive the Air Medal.

Of the pilots, Major Robert F. Price, commanding officer, is the only one to have five missions to his credit.

March 24, 1944

Station 170

26

“Americans are funny people,” Captain Richard Prentiss stated today as he did a strip tease with his flying togs.

“All those guys out there (indicating the pilots, bombardier-navigators, and gunners) are yelping because today's mission was called off. Here we get ready and now they're disappointed because nobody will be able to shoot at us.”

The preceding dramatic statement tells the story of today's activities. A mission

was scheduled; once again the combat crews were about to enter their ships, when red flares from the control tower cancelled the tête-à-tête in a hurry.

Captain Prentiss stood by the window and said, "They say the weather's good over the target, but it's lousy over here. It would be hard to fly today, trying to get information in this stuff. It would be a rat race."

Things were quiet for the remainder of the afternoon. Major Robert F. Price, commanding officer, made today's only flight.... A test hop of one-hour duration.

March 25, 1944

Station 170

Inclement weather again perverted an attempt by the members of this light bombardment group to carry out another bombing mission against the Nazi-occupied European continent. Once more, flares shot from the control tower told combat crews dispersed at different points of the field that the mission had been cancelled.

In the afternoon, soldiers and officers of this group and of the service group stationed here gathered in the hanger to hear a talk by Colonel Harold L. Mace, commanding officer of this base.

Colonel Mace appealed to each man to know his job thoroughly and to know the other fellow's job too, for, as he put it, "when D-Day, the day of the invasion comes, we want to be ready." He asked that each man equip and ready himself for field conditions. Every pilot, armorer gunners, mechanic gunner, and bombardier-navigator must know his job thoroughly, "Colonel Mace stated, "for the time may come when a crew chief will not be available to you and you will have to ready your plane for combat by yourself."

"We are over here to do a job," continued the Colonel, "and the sooner we accomplish what we set out to do, the sooner we will be able to go home. I ask that every man know something about field conditions. I ask every man to know something about camouflage and first aid. And you cooks; are you going to neglect your field ranges? Yours is a mighty important job. You must serve the best food that you know how to prepare. All of us are important, whether we load bombs, load guns, or help in the details that come up before a mission can be set up. We must all work together."

27

In closing his talk, Colonel Mace appealed to every man to keep himself in good health, and to steer clear of political entanglements in this country. "For," as the Colonel put it, "if you are ill, or in the guard house, you I know. Seemed to me everybody else was out down there; for I couldn't see any sign of activity."

In another part of the interrogation room, Sgt. Earl Corrin, a gunner, was paralleling Major Meng's statement with these words, "We made timber out of that target. Was awfully dead down there. Looked like everybody had go to church. Boy, we put those bombs right in there where they'd do the most good. Looked like a perfect strike."

About the only activity around the target, according to several gunners, were three or four mobile units moving along a road, which was photographed by the raiders.

1st Lt. Arthur F. Osborne Jr., who once served in Ordnance in the Air Forces before deciding to apply for aviation cadet training, eligible for the Air Medal today by

completing his fifth mission with these remarks, "I'll never forget that sight as long as I live. It was beautiful. The first box dropped all their bombs at the same time and the second too, dropped theirs right on the minute."

S/Sgt. Sterling F. Alden was the only crew member to state that he was saw enemy aircraft.

"I thought I saw three ME-109's," Alden reported, "and our Spitfire escort took after them."

The Special Service office at this base provided a box of chocolates for all combat crews and everyone was in high spirits as they gleefully munched the delicacies. That is, everyone except S/Sgt. Edwin A. Anderson of New Haven, Connecticut. "Doggone," complained Gunner Anderson, "I hear the mess hall had creamed chicken for dinner today. Sure sorry I missed it." But Anderson's protestation was only a small voice in the wind. Everyone else was too happy about the success of the mission to pay any attention

to his plight.

March 26, 1944

Station 170

Aided by unlimited visibility which facilitated bombing, A-20 type airplanes of the first complete All-American light bombardment group to operate in the E.T.O. today bombed German military installations near the town of Vacqueriette, France, with considerable success.

The A-20's led by Lt. Col. Thomas R. Ford of Lansing, Michigan, had comparatively easy time of it today, encountering neither flak nor fighter opposition. Today's mission was a story with a different title for Col. Ford and his boys. On previous

sorties, their ships had limped home bearing as many flak holes as a well used punch

28

board and the lack of anti-aircraft opposition today turned the mission into nothing more than a "milk run" for pilots and crews.

Lt. Col Ford, the first man to enter the interrogation room after the planes had landed, commented, "Beautiful weather today, Beautiful weather." Asked if his bombs had hit their mark, the Colonel replied, "I guess they did. Smoke was still coming up from the target after we had made a 180-degree turn and I could still see smoke ten miles after I had left the target. We laid 'em right in there."

1st Lt. Thomas Boukamp, West Point '43', commented on the lack of flak, "We just sat there on our bomb run, which lasted about a minute, and not a shot came up."

The bombs were released from around 1200 feet and according to S/Sgt. E.R.

Kelly, a transplanted Oklahoman turned gunner, "every bomb hit in the target area."

Major William J. Meng, commanding officer of one of the light bombardment

squadrons, which took part in the mission today, agreed with Kelly. "We dropped all of our bombs, "Major Meng said, "and they were all right on the target. We might have hit the Charge of Quarters on duty there for all.

March 27, 1944

Today, England demonstrated her famed renown for bad weather. The field was encased in fog and light rain. Flying was abandoned and the combat crews turned to “ground school”. Sgt. Wayne Williams, formerly of the Operations Staff and the originator of this “log”, had his ambitions full-filled today. He was transferred from here, to Public Relations, where he can display his talent in a fuller capacity. The “log” has been turned over to Cpl. Schier, who hopes he can do one-half as good as Sgt. Williams has done. Williams has set a high standard, which will be difficult to equal.

March 28, 1944

Due to bad weather again, flying was abandoned. Rain and fog persisted once more to the disgust of pilots and crews. Ground school again predominated.

March 29, 1944

All we have heard in the past of English weather is being realized now. Again today, rainy and foggy weather persisted. The end of the month drawing near, has put the Operations Staff into renewed activity. The order of the day seems to be “Reports, reports, reports.”

March 30, 1944

Today, we have at last “flyable weather”. With everyone growing “stale” due to the last three days of inactivity, Capt. Battersby started the ball moving. Bombing and 29

Gunnery practice missions were planned and carried out to the letter. The pilots were glad to be “up in the blue” again. Eight (8) hours of gunnery were flown, with almost four (4) hours of bombing. Formation flying seemed to be the order of the day. Capt. Battersby, with eight other pilots flew a very commendable formation practice flight. It is a treat to see a well-flown formation, and we were treated today. Total hours flown by this squadron today were 43:15. Truly a damn good days work!

March 31, 1944

Again, we are favored by fortune’s smile. Good weather and all anticipating flying again. No one was disappointed either. Formation and Gunnery were the keynote today. Capt. Conant, originator of the “screwball design” and a renowned “charcoal manufacturer”, led the formation. Twelve hours and thirty minutes (12:30) were scored up, with three hours (3) of gunnery by Lts. Hill and Peede. Lt. Osborne conducted a chemical practice mission. Congratulations are in store for “Pop” Osborne, being the father of a 7 lb. Boy. Chicago population increases, and the odds are “Jr.” will be a future pilot. He will have to go some to equal his “old man’s” record. Five combat missions in the short time we have been here. Words cannot be written to describe Capt. Battersby after he returned from a vigorous night flight. (15 min. to be exact.) He was recalled after just getting off the ground. Such is life!

April 1, 1944

Today, “April Fool’s Day” was fitting for us. The weather turned again, and we were fooled. Bantering about in honor of the day, proved morale is in a high state. The team of Prentiss, Osborne, and McBrien led in the “cut ups”. Lt. Siracuse seems to be on the receiving end. Rumor persists in our moving and being introduced to “field conditions”. Very rough, if true. Probably of latrine origin.

April 2, 1944

Another day of inclement weather. Lt's Osborne, Meagher, and Leshner with Lt. Maltby were sent with three (3) of our ships to a B-26 base for experience in "hot combat

mission's (rumor). The B-26's well long to be remembered for the swell work they are doing in the ETO. Good luck to our boys. We anxiously await their return.

April 3, 1944

Weather permitted flying once more. Six (6) hours formation was logged by this squadron. We gained one more ship, A-20G #377, a non-combat ship. It will be used purely for training flying. Again, fortune smiled on one of our officers and deservedly so. Major Towles (Spotty), formerly C.O. of our squadron, was ordered to report to the Combat Wing as Operations Officer. We hate to see him go, as he really proved to be an asset to the Group. He came by and bade us all "good-bye", and as final tribute, buzzed the field in an A-20. He is truly a fine officer and pilot and an example for all of us. Our wish--- "Good Luck, and Happy Landings."

30

April 4, 1944

Inclement weather predominated till late in the afternoon. So as not to have a wasted day, flying was ordered. Three (3) hours of formation were logged by Lts. Poindexter, Siracuse, and Shaefer. Night flying is now to be flown as much as possible. This is to acquaint the pilots with the "troubles" involved in the darkness. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. L. G. Peede made the first flight, and Lt. W.E. Downing made the second flight. A beautiful moon made conditions pleasanter, and the flights came off as planned.

April 5, 1944

A mission was planned today, and hopes were high as the planes took off. The weather never held out, however, and the mission was rather disrupted. The echelons never formed, due to the low ceiling, and the "recall" was sent out. The flights returned independently, and our last ship came in many hours later. A night flight of practice formation and navigation was planned, but called off due to inclement weather. Two formation flights were accomplished in the afternoon, which gave us flying time for the day. Capt. Prentiss, Capt. Battersby, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Kreh, pilots with previous combat records, had their pictures taken today. These pilots, with Capt. Conant (who failed to be for the picture-taking), will if not already, receive medals for their past services. What we want to know is---how come Capt. Conant missed the picture taking? Those nurses? --- Could be!

April 6, 1944

The expression "no flying due to inclement weather" will probably be well repeated in this log. That, again, sums up the activity of this squadron and field today. In situations like this, ground training assumes the leading role. Lts. Poindexter, Bradford and McBrien (Irish?), spent their time in the Link Trainer. Other activity was confined to lectures and meetings.

April 7, 1944

Today, we were shown what the term "buzzing" means. A B-24, from one of the



surrounding fields really gave us the works. The first time he nearly took our roof off, the second time, almost the grass. Rumor has it the pilot of this ship was formerly from our neighbor, the 669<sup>th</sup>. Col. Mace flew our ship #895, and Lt. Kreh attempted "one night flying. I say, "attempted", because he was called back when a light haze began to creep in. Society News; Capt. Conant (the nurse's delight) truly believes "things are rough in the ETO." Alas--- the nurses have left. He now carries the woe-begone expression, of our "the sad sack."

April 8, 1944

It can never be said that our squadron doesn't try. We started off early this morning with some practice gunnery missions scheduled. Then the order came from 31

higher up, to prepare for a briefing. So another combat mission was planned. Everything proceeded well, and the planes took off in the afternoon about one-half hour out, bad weather was encountered and the mission was left uncompleted. All flights were ordered back. Fate again deemed that we are not to throw our punch. Society News, laurels are again won by one of our squadron. This time Capt. "Rick" Prentiss is the bearer of the prize. This afternoon he was presented with the much-coveted Air Medal. This came as the result of his fine work on flying anti-sub patrol, previous to his coming to our squadron. Our congratulations to one fine pilot and officer. Knowing our pilots ability, we predict that more Air Medals will come to this squadron. Sigh gals, he's a dark, handsome New Englander. So the day was finished, and we look forward to Easter, tomorrow.

April 9, 1944

Happy Easter, that seemed to be the spirit of the day. As the day progressed it appeared we might have a day of rest. Our hopes were shattered, however, and a practice mission was planned. All four squadrons contributed, and in the late morning, thirty-six (36) planes took off. They assembled and flew formation to Cambridge and then flew around the surrounding territory. The mission proved to be a success and everyone came back in good spirits. In the afternoon, Capt. Prentiss tested our ship A-20G-25 43-9362. In the evening and following morn, Lts. Downing, Ebenstein, Peede and Bradford flew night navigation practice flights. So ended the Easter Holiday, with everyone more or less content.

April 10, 1944

Destiny had planned that we were to pay for our day of rest of yesterday. Today was to prove the mettle of the Group. And it did, to our advantage. Early rising, breakfast, briefing, and the strain of a mission faced many. Again the ships took off to pay Jerry for past services rendered unfavorably. The target was --- Bois De Huit (no ball) France, and it proved to be "plain hell." Those who dropped bombs did so from 14,000 feet midst extremely heavy flak. Our squadron narrowly missed being caught in a box of flak. Disastrous, to those who have been caught in it. Trouble set in, and Lt. Paines of the 669<sup>th</sup> was first to drop out and down. When last seen, he was heading to earth, giving out distress calls. As yet no word has been heard from her. Lt. Cramsie of the 671<sup>st</sup> was doomed to be next on the unlucky list. His ship was hit, and he ordered his gunners

to bail out. They did, and landed safe in friendly hands. When last heard, Cramsie and his ship had ditched in the Channel. Now word from him, and he will be considered "missing". The length of time one can exist in the Channel's icy waters is eighteen minutes, this time of year. Lt. Street, 669<sup>th</sup> squadron, was destined to be next. Combination of skill and a degree of luck, aided him in bringing his damaged ship to England's shores where he crashed landed. He was not injured nor his gunners. The rest of the ships came back pretty well chewed up. Poor weather and damage proved the results to be "fair". Damages suffered by our ships were as follows --- A-20G's #223 and #701 were sent to the Service Group; cause--- fuel cells hit. A-20G #895, presumed lost in France. # 963 suffered right outer wing change, due to damage inflicted. A-20J # 640--32

-flak in right engine. Not so serious flak damage in the other ships summed up the rest of the damages. All together it was a costly mission.

Not being content with the mornings work, the men and ships were ordered on another mission in the afternoon. Once more our ships were winging their way to France. This time it was Longham, France, another "Noball" target. Again the flak was plentiful, but all ships came back. The first box never dropped their lethal charges, but the second did. The results were fair, with pictures taken to prove some damage was inflicted on the enemy. S/Sgt. Newkirk had a close call. A piece of flak came through to rest 8" from his head. That gunner from Pennsylvania laughed when shown---guts for a teenage boy. Our personnel from "---" with the B-26 outfit, returned with stories to tell. They flew with a B-26 group on a mission, and saw that famous plane in action. Our ships lead by Lt. Osborne in an A-20J, flanked by Lts. Meagher and Leshner in A-20G's, lead in an antiradar

flight. Lt. Maltby flew in the nose of the "J" with gunners Kelly and Bankston offering protection. Gunners in the other ships were S/Sgts. Damico, Dickenson, Anatanatis, and Hedrick. Their mission was very successful and all planes returned unscathed. So sums up the day's activity. Much was learned today by all; it was the hardest day chalked up since we have been here. Many of our combat personnel have earned their Air Medal now, and in the future they shall be entered in here when they receive it. To these "men-of-the-sky"--- laurels for difficult work, well done!

April 11, 1944

Those who were crying for action in the earlier days of this squadron are now getting plenty of it. Today, again, our planes took to the sky once more. This time the target was Beauvoir, France. (A no-ball target) the weather around the field wasn't too good, but over the target it cleared considerably. Quoting Lt. Ebenstein, a New York former salesman, "the flak was moderate and very accurate. We had a good run on the target and laid our bombs in there." He wasn't exaggerating as the photos taken backed his statement. All planes returned bearing the evidence of plenty flak. Capt. Conant's ship

was hit hardest of all, bearing many holes, and is now possibly considered lost in respects to repair. Conant's gunner, S/Sgt. J.R.Orr, was wounded in the leg by flak, and will receive the Purple Heart. Our ship A-20J-5 # 43-9640 had sixty-four holes in it when

counted. Other ships were hit considerably. Other participating in this mission were Lts. Bartmus, Shaefer, Miracle, Ritchie, Downing, and Hill. The pilots running "interference" with anti-radar, were the trio of --- Lt. Osborne, leading in the A-20J with Lt. Maltby (B/N); Lt. Meagher, in number two position, and Lt. Leshar in number three position. These were former pilots who received experience with the B-26 group. When the mission returned, flying was called off for the remainder of the day, so repairs, rest, reports, and etc. came to importance.

April 12, 1944

This morning a low ceiling made outlooks doubtful as to a mission. But miracles do happen, and by noon a nice day presented itself. Result---plane roaring off in the blue  
33

on a mission of destruction. Today, Vacqueriette, France (no-ball) was to be on the receiving end. Information from Capt. Battersby—I quote "a milk run." The weather was good, but low clouds covered the target. Even so bombs were dropped and hits were recorded. The most striking note of all was the absence of flak from below. All the planes returned free from all damage. It was one of those rare occasions where the target was in fair view, and no opposition to mar the bombing attempts. Pilots on this mission were; Capt. Battersby, Lts. Peede, Poindexter, Shaefer, Kleopfel, Bradford, Ritchie, Cruze, and Miracle. Again, the established trio of Lts. Osborne, Meagher, and Leshar went on the "window mission". They have been doing a great job on busting up the radar system. Lt. Siracuse logged 1:30 hours at night. Night flying was called off after the first flight, due to Jerry coming over. He struck away from this field and the night was serene.

April 13, 1944

Missions every day are the work of the squadron now. Back in the States we thought we would never get in action. Now, we are seeing plenty of action and doing a goodly amount of damage. This morning held little promise of a mission, but the afternoon spelled different. The ships took off to plaster the target of ---Yvrench Bois Carre (a no-ball target.). Preceding the formation were the ever-present trio of Lts. Osborne, Leshar, and Meagher and their "window task." These boys have been doing a good job and deserve a lot of credit. The plane found their mark amidst the ever-present flak and dropped their lethal load. Results; twenty-seven (27) bomb bursts in the west edge of target; 1 near miss, and a possible direct hit. The results were classified as "good". Our pilots on this mission were; Major Price, in the A-20J with Lt. Hand, Lts. Downing, Siracusa, Kreh, Bradford, Ebenstein, Miracle, Shaefer, Ritchie and Bartmus. Nearly all of the pilots have their Air Medals now and some are nearing the "clusters". All planes returned with little damage, and the day was considered fruitful.

April 14, 1944

Today was one of those days where everyone waited to get another mission off, and conditions were adverse. It was a very quiet day, with the only flying being two night navigation missions by Lts. Kreh and Poindexter. An appreciated day, after the last week's operations.

April 15, 1944

Flying was more or less secondary today. Fame and honor was again captured by

a member of our squadron. It was Capt. Battersby's day. He received the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross) and the Air Medal with Palm. This gives him quite a string of ribbons and medals now. Among them are; Before Pearl Harbor Ribbon with Star, American Theatre Ribbon with Star, DFC, Air Medal with palm, ETO Ribbon, and others

are surely to come. Next important occasion, historic no doubt, was the official occupation of the field by the Americans. The ceremony took place in front of Group Headquarters with the British ranking officials presenting the field to us.

34

Colonel Mace, the Group C.O. received the honors. Grim, humor prevailed during the ceremony. One of the Armorers was working on a ship, and accidentally a 50 cal. Machine gun was fired sending five rounds in the direction of the ceremony.

Consternation was evident at the ceremony at that time, but all was explained and everyone was happy once more. The only flying for the day was accomplished by Capt. Conant and 1st Lt. Kreh. They both flew practice gunnery missions and logged around two-and a half hours apiece. Thus was ended on the really eventful days of the squadron, and Group.

April 16, 1944

Today was one of those days that are appreciated by many. Rain and low ceiling covered the field, preventing any activity what so ever. Rumors of our "practice" move were becoming more louder every hour, and finally the news was received that it was evident that "something was up". The day was spent in packing, and "sweating out tomorrow".

April 17, 1944

Much was to be learned from today's happenings. The "advanced-echelon" moved out bright and early this morning, starting the practice move. Trucks of all description, and men in battle dress, were lined up on the line making quite an impressive sight. Those from operations who were in the "advanced echelon" were Kindlespire, Markowitz, Williams, and yours truly, Cpl. Shier. Weather conditions---lousy (typical English weather). No sarcasm, just actual facts. The convoy traveled for two hours and then stopped for a nature call. Then moving again for an hour, it was halted again. This time was "chow-time". How we looked forward to our lowly "K" rations. Why do GI's get disgusted? No chow! Some gentleman of official capacity over-looked that little item. If anything breaks morale, it's not eating! P.S. Morale was low! The convoy moved for about three hours and returned to base. It proved interesting enough, and showed that we were capable of moving out on quick notice. The only flying was "test flights" made by Capt. Battersby, and Major Price. Incidentally, we all hit the "sacks" early that night and slept the sleep of the dead.

April 18, 1944

With the rising comes the rising crescendo of motors warming up for the coming mission. That was the early picture being painted today. All morning and early afternoon, preparations were being made. Finally, late in the afternoon, the ships took off with Charleroi-St. Martin, Belgium being the target. This target was a "Marshalling Yard".

The first box went over the target and laid their eggs. The second box never dropped their bombs; the reason being the target was not in sight. There was no flak to bother the airmen, and all planes returned safely to their home base. Due to the increased activity of the squadron, medals are pouring in. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne has already won the Air Medal with palm. Gunners with the same honor are; Gunners Perkins, Judd, Love, Adair, Brown, Kelly, Anatanatis, Hedrick, Damico, Dickenson, and Coe. Our hats are off to these men  
35

for their good achievements in the air. Very near all flying combat crews have the Air Medal now, and the above received the palm with it. When ten missions are accomplished, the palm is given. Call him "Hawkshaw" Prentiss now. Capt. Prentiss has left for a week's schooling in camouflage and mine detecting. We can picture him in "field conditions"--- things are rough in the ETO! (Quote a well-used verse here) The day was climaxed by Nite Flying by Lt's. Shaefer, and Meagher, with Capt. Conant. Another interesting note today, was an experimental flight by Lt. Osborne. He took off on a practice-bombing mission with eight bombs instead of the usual four. The extra four were carried on the wings. The results were a cutting down of air speed and unmanuverability. The opinion being, that the extra bombs hamper the ship to a goodly extent, which is not advisable in combat. Osborne being a pilot, Operations Officer when needed, now an experimentalist: Going up!

April 19, 1944

Things really got "hot" today. Bright and early this morning, the planes took off to slap Jerry once more. After being gone for over an hour, they returned. We knew it was too early for them to have accomplished their task, and awaited the story. The haze was pretty heavy over the channel, and showed no let-up, so the mission was recalled. So,

do we give up? Hell no! Comes afternoon, and the ships are off once more to erase Bois de Huit Rues off the map. This "no-ball" target lies in northern France, infested by German vermin. Somehow, all the months and years of training were shown that they were not in vain. For, the bombs went true to the mark, and pictures showed hits all over the target. An amazing fact was the lack of flak or resistance. Enemy planes have never once attacked our ships, but they have been seen in the distance. All ships returned in good shape, and smiles were on the faces of the combat crews. Pilots participating were: Major Price, with Lt. Hand as Bombardier; Lt's Siracuse, Bartmus, Downing, Kreh, Meredith, Hill, and Capt. Conant. Gunners were: McCreary, Newkirk, Anderson, Judd, Fejes, Love, Brown, McIver, Daugherty, Hibbs, Shaw, Gray, Bankston, Yost, Rureb and Orr. A salute to these airmen, for a damn good show. Our Group has been commended by the Ninth Air Force for the swell work they have been doing. The enlisted men's Aero Club opened up recently on this station. It is backed by the Red Cross, and is a swell recreation center for those with free hours. Thus ends another day.

April 20, 1944

Another day, another target. That seems to be the ruling now. The mission took off this morning with Gorenflos, France (no-ball) to be in the bombsights. Everything went well till the Channel was reached. Then a heavy, obscuring, haze was reached, and

it covered all the surrounding territory of France and our target. After looking about for a while, the order was given to return, and thus the ships came back. The only thing lost was the gas to and from the base. With the sun shining brightly here, another mission was planned for the late afternoon. Optimism was high, and the planes soared away once more. Again, history repeats itself, and this target was encased in a heavy haze. The target this time was to have been Yvrench /Bois Carre (no-ball), and it was reached, but no bombs ordered away. Flak was quite heavy, but no one or no ship was affected to any 36

extent. Thus Lady Luck was with Jerry today. Lt's Meagher, and Kreh accomplished night flying. At least we have been recognized by the public. A story and pictures were released in the "Stars and Strips" of the missions over France and our occupation here. The Group's A-20's were shown on the front page and an ensuing story followed. We are the first Group of Light Bombardment aircraft to go into action in the ETO. So far our record is admirable---here's hoping it stays that way. With night comes rest---and wonderings of the future and tomorrow.

April 21, 1944

"Up and at em", and those were no idle words today. At 1000 A.M. the planes took off to blast Yvrench /Bois Carre, France. Another "no-ball" target. The first box wasn't successful in finding the target, but the second made up for them. Ablely lead led by Major Price, with Lt. Hand doing the "finding", the target was hit with tons of explosives. These two eagles are a good team together, and their record shows it. Pictures proved the success of this bombing, and all ships returned to make a complete show. A "stand-down" was called in the afternoon, giving all a brief rest. This enabled the Engineers, who have been doing a great job in keeping the ships flying, to check over their pride and joys. Night flying was planned, and Lt. Cruze, with Lt. McBrien took off at 2300. Intending to be "up" for only one and a half hours (1-1/2), they were forced to fly for three (3). A minor plane accident on the field prevented anyone landing, and they had to sweat it out. Night flying was called off for the night after this, and peace ensued.

April 22, 1944

"Two missions a day, puts Jerry away" seems to be the jingle of the day. That is the way it has been recently. Today, around 0900 A.M., the ships took off to take Behen, France apart. Again, this was to be another "no-ball" target. The bombs were released and fell to the left of the target. The flak was ever present, and our ships brought evidence of it back. Preparations then were made for another mission in the afternoon. Ground crews made repairs on their ships, and once more a mission took off. Lingham, France (no-ball) was to be re-visited, and so it was. The first box hit the target area with sounding blows, and the flak wasn't as bad as the previous morning. All ships returned in good shape, and everyone to a good deserved rest. Reports were heard of the mishap of a neighboring B-24 Group. It seems these large powerful bombers were circling for a landing, after just having completed a mission. Then out of no-where came a flight of German ME109's and did much destruction to the B-24's. Reports were the enemy shot down sixteen (16) of these bombers before they knew what had happened. The report

seems authentic, but sounds fantastic. So ended another day.

April 23, 1944

This day will be remembered by all of this squadron and Group. Many have considered it as one of the toughest missions as yet. The mission took off, led by our own  
37

Major Price in an A-20J, with Lt. A.R.Hand as the bombardier-navigator. Another  
“noball”

target was to be in the bombsights, this time Bonniereres, France. The flak was very bad, an equal to anything we have ever experienced. The 671<sup>st</sup> Squadron had bad luck; Lt. J.T. Schouten took a hit midship and tore the plane in half. Eyewitnesses reported the ship breaking in half and spiraling to the ground. No parachutes blossomed, and the pilot and gunners are reported as “missing”. The bombs were laid on the target and the results were classified as “good”. Major Price came back with 29 flak holes in his ship. One propeller blade had a hole in it. Capt. Conant, in another ship, brought 38 holes back in his ship. All other ships had plenty holes also, and there was lots work to be done in patching them up. Luckily, no one from our squadron suffered injuries. It was a rough day for us, but rougher for Jerry. Captain Prentiss returned today from his camouflage and ---detecting school. We summed it up in one word---“rough”.

April 24, 1944

Intentions were good today, but results were poor. A mission was planned and the ships took off. They reached the coast of France, and then were “recalled”. Overcast was present and would have made bombing inaccurate. Lady Luck was to desert the Group again today. Lt. A.A. McDonald of the 669<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. and gunners paid the supreme price. While flying on the mission, with the rest of the Group in the overcast, they just disappeared. Reports came back to base that the plane or rather what was left of it and the

occupants, was found on the ground. No one can give a logical explanation of what could have happened, or what did happen. A “stand-off” was called by Headquarters, giving everyone a chance to get caught up on their work. Night flying was flown by this squadron, with a four-plane formation. This ended the day’s activity, and welcome rest was gained by all.

April 25, 1944

Things really brightened up today, for a change. It was a day that makes good conversation after the war is over. First crack in the morning was a mission heading to de Bois Dernfer, France (no-ball0, to do it no good. The flak was quite heavy, and the target was hit with fair success. Consternation was experienced by Lt. Siracuse (Screws) of Palisades Park, “Joisey”. Readers, he really has the “Joisy” talk to go with it. We would like to know the thoughts in Lt. McBrien’s noggin, as they slowly lost altitude. All crews were unhurt and returned in good spirits. That wasn’t enough for one day, so another mission was sent off. Brother, they weren’t kidding this time, as St. Pierre Du Mont, France will testify. This is a “tactical target”. Reports and pictures show the target literally blown to hell! The amazing fact of all was the absence of flak, this may have accounted for the excellent bombing. Trying to hit the target midst a lot of flak will turn

the hair of anyone gray. All planes returned, and a good day was chalked up by the Group and Squadron "A". Unofficial figuring done by this office shows that 556 bombs have been dropped on enemy soil by this squadron, totaling 278,000 lbs. of high explosive. This computation is from March 3, 1944 (first mission flown by us) to the present day April 25, 1944. No night flying was attempted after this rather busy day.

38

April 26, 1944

It will never be said that we aren't pulling our own weight over here. Today is a good example of that. In the morning, a mission took off with twelve (12) crews from this squadron. After being up for an hour they were recalled, due to poor visibility and heavy overcast. Thus the mission returned, thirty-six (36) planes in all. Early in the afternoon, the weather cleared and briefing began. Then around 1800 hours the mission took off on one of the longest journeys flown here. The bombsights were to be centered on Louvain, Belgium; a "marshalling yard". After flying one and one half hours (1-1/2) of grueling formation, the target was sighted. Capt. Battersby, with Lt. Lytle as bombardiernavigator, led the second box, of which our boys were in. The first box didn't make out so good on the target due to flak etc. But with the perfect guiding of Lt. Lytle, and master leading by Capt. Battersby, the second box came through without a scratch and blew the hell out of the target. Pictures don't lie, neither does smoke and flame, and all of these were present afterwards. The mission returned in good shape, and very fatigued.

Experienced sky-men like Capt's Prentiss, Conant, and others, showed and admitted their fatigue. It is "rough" when these men show strain. We are working under the strain of not having enough crew personnel. Many gunners have already 18 missions in the brief space of time we have been here. To fly two missions a day in nothing now and very frequent. Steel nerves are needed, and these men have them. Night flying was planned after the mission returned, but it was finally called off around midnight. Lt. Lytle really put those bombs in there, and the pattern was excellent. P-47's escorted our bombers over the target, and kept all enemy fighters away. All ships landed just at dusk. Pilots on this top mission were: Captains Battersby, Prentiss, Conant, Lt's Miracle, Ritchie, Bradford, Shaefer, Kleopfel, Cruze, Poindexter, Peede, Leshner, and B/N Lytle. Gunners were: S/Sgts Molver, Gray, Adair, Love, MacDonald, Kelly, Sieg, Burkhalter, Simpson, Robbins, Judd, Fejes, McCreary, Orr, Ritchie, Newkirk, Coe, Hill, Shaw, Banskton, Anatanatis, Hedrick, Hibbs, and Daugherty. A salute to these men.

April 27, 1944

Today was a two-mission day again. The planes took off at 0800 this morning with Charleroi, Belgium (marshalling yard) foremost in everyone's mind. Fate was to favor this target, as overcast made the target obscure. After searching around for a hole, the ships had to return, no hole to be found. All ships returned, no bombs dropped. With the morning results in mind, a mission was planned for the afternoon. This time the weather conditions were on our side, as Arras, France (Marshalling Yard) found out. I mean they really found out what a hard-hitting Light Bomber Group can do. The first box, led by Major Price with Lt. Hand as bombardier-navigator, laid the eggs right on the



nose. An engine shed was seen to be a direct hit from those two, and the following planes made a perfect pattern with their bombs. The old team of "Price & Hand" working again. The target was hit---hit hard! There was very little flak, and no ships were hit. Spitfires covered our bombers, and kept all enemy fighters away. Here is a new note of importance. This mission was the first with our bombers using wing racks, thus employing two more bombs for Jerry. This increased hitting power really causes havoc where employed. The extra weight causes the planes to slow down, and not become as

39  
maneuverable as before. All ships returned from this target in good condition. "News of the Day". It is no longer 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. A.R. Hand any more. Silver out-sparkles gold, so gentlemen let me introduce 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. A.R. Hand, bombardier-navigator of Squadron "A". Our congratulations Lieutenant, you really deserve them. So winds up one more day in the ETO.

April 28, 1944

Another day, another mission. That briefly sums up today. The planes took off early this morning, winging their way over enemy territory. After being out for an hour they were "recalled" for some reason unknown to your humble reporter. All ships returned, and a "stand-down" was called for the rest of the day. At night, a formation of six ships took off for a little practice in night formation and navigation. Lt. Siracuse led in an A-20J, followed by Lt's Bartmus, Cruze, Hill, Leshner, and Miracle. They landed after one and one-half (1-1/2) hours of flying, thus ending this un-eventful day.

April 29, 1944

This will be the second quiet day in a row, something to be marveled at. Today, weather and "stand-down" conditions, kept most of the planes on the ground. The engineering section and the operations section did much work. Being near the end of the month, the wheels of progress were really moving. Towards mid-afternoon, Capt. Prentiss test-hopped an A-20G #216, and later Lt. Osborne test-hopped an A-20G #195. Those were the only flying hours logged today. "News of the Day"; It has just been learned and verified that silver bars are present again. This time the proud wearers are 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard D. Poindexter, of sunny Hawaii, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Blair L. Bradford of the Middle West. Congratulations gentlemen.

April 30

We paid for the rest of the last two days today. First crack cut of the box was a mission winging its way to Bonnieres, France, a "No-ball" target. Capt. Battersby led the second box in an A-20J with Lt. Lytle as B/N, and Gunners Love and Adair. The escort was good and the bombs were dropped. Upon returning with pictures, and after being briefed, the results were termed as "poor". That must have been the inspiration for the afternoon's activity. Another mission was planned, and the ships took off around 1700. This time Busigny, France, a "marshalling yard" was to pay a heavy price. The escort was good and the ships found their target with no trouble from enemy activities. The bombs were dropped and hit "right on the nose". Strings of oil fires and ammunition were blown up and pictures show much damage with smoke and flame high in the sky. A good job was done, and afterwards it was termed as "excellent". Spitfires provided a perfect

escort, and there was no flak present. Our pilots on this mission were: Lt. Ebenstein, in the A-20J with Lt. McBrien, as B/N, and Gunners Perkins and ----. Others were: Lt's Poindexter, Leshar, Miracle, Cruze, Meredith, and Kreh. Gunners were: S/Sgt's Robbins, Simpson, Anatanatis, Hedrick, Sieg, Burkhalter, Love, Adair, Molver, Gray, Yost, and Burch. In summing up we may say that it was a good day for us, and poor for the Jerry.

40

May 1, 1944

The beginning of a new month and we got off to a good start. Speculations are high, as to what the month will bring, as the invasion time draws near. There wasn't much time lost in speculation today. Though first thing in the morning was a mission of destruction to Charleroi-Montignies, France, a Marshalling Yard. We furnished twelve crews for this job, and a good job it was. Pictures show hits in the target area, but nothing outstanding. Spitfires again gave good escort, and flak was small. All planes returned in good shape, and everyone content. This afternoon was to bring on a better target, with better results. The ships took off again around 1700, with Blanc-Misseron, France, a Locomotive and Wagon Works, to be ill fated. Again good escort was provided, and very little flak was present. The bombs were dropped and buildings in the immediate area went up in flames and smoke. Pictures gave proof to all of this, and the results were classified as "good". The combat crews are really getting in the missions now. Gunners with over twenty missions to their credits now are: S/Sgt's Love, Adair, Anatanatis, Hedrick, Robbins, Judd, Hibbs, Daugherty, and Shaw. Pilots with fifteen missions and over to their credit to date are: Major Price, Captain Battersby, and 1st Lt. Osborne. We were the first complete A-20 outfit to come over from the States. At present now, we have been informed, the 409th and 410th are here too. Looks like the A-20 is to make a formal debut with Jerry paying for it all.

May 2, 1944

Today was one of those days where you "sweat out activity". A mission was planned for the morning, but postponed for a few hours. Then after waiting around impatiently, the word came to go. So, around 1400 the ships took off. This time we furnished twelve crews. The target was the same as yesterday---Locomotive and Wagon Works, at Blanc Misseron, France. The escort was Spitfires, and our pilots and crews were in the first box. Upon return, pictures showed direct hits by the first box, and near misses by the second box. There was very little flak, and all ships returned in good shape. The day was climaxed by a night practice formation flight, with Lt. Shaefer (West Point) in an A-20J leading a six-plane formation! With him in an A-20G's were Lt's Meredith, Bradford, Kreh, Ebenstein, and Downing. Capt. Battersby also tested an A-20G #701 for one hour in the afternoon.

May 3, 1944

The only activity today was an inspection of the Operations Office by Group Officials. The flying activity can be described by one word "stand-down". We received a new A-20J-10, #125, which was tested by Capt. Conant. Major Price tested A-20J #444, which was just received from the 4th Serv.Gp. It had been there for battle damage. With no night flying ordered, everyone concluded a peaceful.

May 4, 1944

41

Today was one of those days where a little of everything occurs. Early this morning around 0500, a secret mission took off and returned roughly around 0700. Utmost secrecy is demanded on this mission, so no information can be given here. Of course wild rumor is rampant once more, but nothing is known for sure. In the afternoon bombing practice flights were flown by Capt's Battersby, Conant and Lts Cruze and Osborne. Capt. Prentiss test flighted A-20G #223. So much for flying news. "News of the

Day" --- We extend our greetings to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Warren Forma, formerly of the 670<sup>th</sup> Squadron. He is "swapping" with 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. A.H. Maltby, formerly of the 668<sup>th</sup> Squadron. We wish to give to Lt. Maltby our best wishes and luck in his new squadron. Both men are bombardier-navigators. In the afternoon, all the ground crew of this Squadron was treated to a "make-believe briefing". Here we were shown the procedure of a real briefing, from the time the crew enters the room till they leave after having completed their mission. It was very interesting, and gave everyone an idea of the problems involved in running a mission. Colonel Mace is responsible for this "treat" and we really enjoyed it. What happens when pilots get together at night, and there is no flying? Ah! Gentle readers --- you find out the next morning! CASUALTIES: "Rick" Prentiss - stitches in right hand; "Pat" Battersby -- looking mighty sad and rough; "Art" Osborne - unaccounted for; "Hiram" - unaccounted for; the rest of the pilots - unknown. DAMAGE: Broken tables, chairs (ah! My poor head!) Eggs, etc. Brothers - believe it or not, it does wonders for morale.

May 5, 1944

Lt's Siracuse, and Forma (B/N) flew a navigation flight. This was the bats-eye mission that is becoming popular and very frequent. In the afternoon, bombing practice flights were undertaken. Capt's Conant, and Battersby each flew a practice mission with Lt's Forma and Lytle. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne also flew a practice-bombing mission with Lt. McBrien as (B/N). That ended all the time for the day.

We also received five new gunners to the Squadron today. They are: Sgt. Douglas (NMI) Hantake, S/Sgt. KE. Hornbeck, S/Sgt. Daniel R. Schenck, Sgt. Everett (NMI) Shelton, and S/Sgt. Howard J. Sylva. These boys are very welcome, as they will relieve some of the pressure on our old gunners. It is a fact that we do not have enough gunners to do all the work we have been doing lately. We now have nineteen combat crews.

May 6, 1944

The quote "All Quiet On The Western Front" would be very correct for today's activities. It was another of those "mission-less" days. Training flying was the keynote with much navigation and formation time. First was Capt. Battersby, with Lt. Lytle, on a navigation practice flight. Capt. Conant, with Lt. McBrien, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma, flew the next two navigation flights. Formation flying was next on the program with Lts. Poindexter, Hill, Shaefer, Bradford, Meredith, and Peede participating. The day was finally ended with the good news of no night flying, on every one's lips. Exit the sun for another day.

42

May 7, 1944

We can claim the proverbial “A” for effort today. That really sums up today’s activities. Good intentions were had by all, as the planes took off early this morning, with Blane-Misseron, France, (Locomotive & Wagon Works) to be bombed. The ships weathered all the hazards, only to find the target claimed by low haze and fog. In a case like this, there is nothing to do but turn back. Thus, they all returned with chagrin and disappointment written over everyone’s face. Dinner was had by all and another briefing was had.

This time, late in the afternoon, hopes were high as the ships took off once more. Bonnières, France, (a no-ball target) was to receive our gifts, but again fate intervened for Jerry. After riding out heavy flak, the ships found their target covered with haze and overcast. Again, all returned, but not in such good shape. All ships bore signs of flak, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ritchie, with Gunners Hibbs and Daugherty, had a story to tell. A large piece of flak, followed by smaller pieces, hit the ship amid-ships, and raised quite some havoc. A piece of steel, wedged between Hibbs and his tunnel gun, setting off a few rounds. Had it been a few inches closer, it would have seriously injured him. Upon landing, the ship was in such bad shape, that it had to be sent to the 4<sup>th</sup> Service Gp for battle damage. No one suffered any injuries, but all suffered moments of anxiety.

It is a pretty rough deal, to fly missions in enemy territory, and not be able to drop your load. That was on every ones mind, as the “sacks” were hit early.

May 8, 1944

Two missions were again planned for today, with results varying on each. First, in the morning, the planes took off to visit a new target to this Group --- Aerschot, Belgium (R.R. Marshalling Yards). It proved to be the same old story, no bombs dropped – due to haze and overcast. It must be understood that the weather varies quick over here, and one cannot always count on conditions at the target, the same as here. Anyway, the ships all returned in good shape, with no injuries of any importance to the ships. Quick dinner, and then another briefing.

Off again in the afternoon, with determination in every ones thoughts. At last the luck changed, or rather the weather and luck. The target was the old favorite Bonnières, France, (no-ball target). This time the target was clear, and the bombs were dropped with precision and accuracy. Pictures showed hits on and around the immediate target area, and the results were classified as very good. Flak was severe, as 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Scott R. Ritchie will testify. This West Point aviator was in “hot water” yesterday, as you remember. His ship was hit with heavy flak, knocking out the right engine, and lightly wounding his two gunners S/Sgt’s Newkirk and Anderson. The ship was brought in with one engine in service, and only two wheels. An excellent landing was made, considering the conditions, and the plane wasn’t harmed as much as expected. A vote of praise to Ritchie for expert piloting. As the wounds were very light, it is doubtful if the gunners will merit the Purple

43

Heart. These two veteran gunners (20 yrs. old) still retain the same calm composure as they have always held. Score one for American guts and breeding. So the curtain closes

on another act in this drama over here.

May 9, 1944

This will be one of the saddest entries ever to be made in this log. Today, our squadron suffered a blow that was felt by each and every man. One of our pilots made his last flight into the blue today, never to return. He was, Captain William Battersby, Operations Officer of this squadron, and holder of the DFC Air Medal, and numerous citations. A proud father, a superb pilot, an example of the perfect officer, died in the line of duty. After completing his eighteenth combat mission, he took to the air to test flight a ship A-20G, 43-9223. Upon returning to land the plane, the ship plunged to the earth, exploding and then burning.

Fate was very cruel, as it was discovered later. PFC Charles W. Coleman, of the parachutes department, chose to fly this hop with Captain "Bat". This wasn't his first flight with Captain "Bat", but it proved his last. His remains were found along the plane. A reason cannot be given for this tragedy. An expert pilot, and a good ship; but fate deemed it not to be a "happy landing". It will be hard to forget this man, who was more of a father than a superior officer, who always had time to listen to your troubles, and give a hand when needed. Who bolstered morale, when it was low. Who fought for the rights of his "boys", when the going was rough. We won't forget. There is a plane "in the blue" where all eagles go to rest, when their time is up. Hope they are now getting in the front row, with the best of them.

Yes, "Bat", you will be with us when we break a bottle in Berlin, and when we drink a toast in Tokyo. When it is all over, and we are home, America won't forget your breed of men, who made the supreme sacrifice for her freedom and democracy.

We are proud, each and every one of us, to have served with you; and now, humbly in comradeship – we salute you.

(Note: Two missions were flown today, hitting the enemy again. In the morning it was Aerschot, Belgium (Marshalling Yards) and in the afternoon it was Bois d'enfer, France, (no-ball). Results were good on both).

May 10, 1944

Early this morning, around 04:30, a "special mission" took off. Secrets surrounded it, and to this minute nothing is known. They landed around 0700, with no apparent damage or trouble. Those participating were: Capt. Conant, Lt's Peede, Shaefer, 44

Meredith, Bradford, Ritchie, and Osborne. Stand down was called for the rest of the day. Captain Conant and Lt. Osborne flew to ----- to pick up A-20J #444, which was there for modification. No night flying was ordered, and everyone got a needed rest.

May 11, 1944

Today was another two-mission day, with results varying. First in the morning a mission took off. The first box in lead, with the second box following. For some unexplainable reason, the second box lost sight of the first box, and was forced to return. As our squadron was in the second box, they returned with their bombs and received no credit for the mission.

In the afternoon it was a different story. Aerschot, Belgium (Marshalling Yards) was hit by the Group with good results. The flak was light, and the escort consisted of Spitfires. All ships returned in good shape at dusk. A few ships had punctured tires, but skilful maneuvering brought them in safely. S/Sgt Kindlespire, Sgt. Markowitz and Cpl. Schier attended the services in Cambridge for Captain Battersby and PFC Coleman. It was a mass service, with about twenty-five flag-draped coffins there. Roll call was given, and individuals present saluted their friends for the last time. Then four Chaplains gave a short sermon each, and the rifle salute was fired. Tapes were blown, and re-echoed. It was a stirring ceremony and we all shall remember it. Officers and enlisted men are buried side by side there, the democratic way. Rows on rows of white crosses are there, giving testimony to American bravery and valor.

May 12, 1944

We are nearing our 50-mission mark, with missions 45 and 46 being run off today. In the morning, the planes took off to bomb the airdrome at Monchy-Breton, France. For some reason, the bombsight and apparatus malfunctioned, and no bombs were dropped. There was no flak, and P-47's provided escort. All ships returned in good shape.

In the afternoon, the results were much better. This time Beauvoir, France (noball) was hit by the Group with good results. The flak was very heavy, and extremely accurate. Our ships suffered great flak injury, and at one time there were only six ships in commission. The 571<sup>st</sup> Bomb Sq. suffered a blow. Lt. R.E. Stockwell, with Lt. A. Jedinak (B/N) and gunners Foster and Rust, were seen to blow up from a direct hit. Pieces of the plane floated down, giving evidence to no one's escape.

We heartily welcome R.R. Svenson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. (pilot) and S/Sgt. G.H. Phenning, (gunner), Sgt. P.G. ---- (gunner) and Francis L. Flacks (gunner) to this squadron. Interesting fact to note – S/Sgt Flacks has seen action in England, Africa, and Italy. He has been gunner on various flights of General Dwight Eisenhower. We are sure glad to see these fellows, as they are sorely needed.

May 13, 1944

45

The old 50-mission day isn't so far off anymore. Today, we ran Group Missions No. 47 with Beauvais-Tille, France (airdrome) sponsoring it. They were the ungrateful receivers of a heavy load of bombs. Spitfires escorted our bombers over, and prevented any enemy fighter interference. Although there was heavy flak, no ships were lost, and all returned to the base safely. Our gunners have received injuries in the past few missions. S/Sgt's Newkirk, Anderson, and Daugherty are up for the Purple Heart. Luckily, none of these injuries are very serious.

In the afternoon a "stand-down" was called, giving the ground crew time to patch up their ships. The only activity was a practice bombing flight by Major Price and Lt. Hand.

A good example of the little things that plaque a pilot is as follows: NOTE: Capt. "Hiram" Conant, and Lt. "Gus" Ebenstein (a real spark-plug) lose their 48 hour passes due to retracting their wheels too quick. Whew! Such language, gentlemen. The chaplain

will listen to you, seems no one else will. No one will even console them.

May 14, 1944

“Stand-down” still exists. No flying what so ever was accomplished today. The enlisted men stood impregnated clothes inspection. These clothes are worn during a gas attack. (God forbid ever such occasion). The rest of the day was spent in peace and quite.

NOTE: in the distance can be heard the grumblings of that dynamic, little, Sparky Lt. (Guess who/?). Seems the control tower isn't such a good place to hang out. That, plus the “pass” deal. We all agree – T.-.!

May 15, 1944

We broke the ice after a siege of “stand-down. This morning, the ships took off with Creil, France (Airdrome) on their mind. They were escorted over by Spitfires, and had to contend with very little flak. With all these conditions in their favor, the bombs were dropped true to their mark, and the results were classified as good. Pilots taking part in this mission were: Capt. Conant, now Operations Officer; Lt's Bartmus, Bradford, Cruze, Downing, Hill, Kreh, Leshner, Meredith, Miracle, Poindexter, and Siracuse. A “stand-down” was called for the rest of the afternoon. 1st Lt. Osborne now assumes the responsibilities of Assistant Operations Officer. Capt. Prentiss is now “A” Flight Leader. Rumors are now becoming stronger on nearness of the possibility of the “second front”. I can say for most of us that we are very eager to begin the show.

May 16, 1944

With “stand-down” conditions still existing, training flying is the keynote. Those getting various types of flying in were: Lt. Ebenstein – 1 hr. Nav; Lt. Svenson – 1 hr. Form. and 1 hr. orientation; Lt. Hill – 1 hr. Nav.; Lt. Shaefer – 1 hr. Form.; Capt. Conant 46

and Lt. McBrien – 1:20 (PDI). Thus sums up the day's activities in the flying respect. Smiles on Svenson's face show he is getting his orientation flying in, so he can participate in combat.

More new faces appear in the Squadron. We are fortunate in having three new pilots joining us. They are: 2nd Lt's Charles G. Mish, Anton Peter Nikas, and Thomas J. Sims. Also, four more gunners now swell our roster. They are: S/Sgt. C.J. Clark, Jr., Sgt. R.F. Chustz, Sgt. H.W. Larsen, and Sgt. J.C. Williamson. Our heartiest welcome to these men. They relieve a lot of pressure on the veteran combat crews. A lot of Orientation flying awaits these men, so “stand-down” conditions are of great help.

May 17, 1944

A goodly amount of training and orientation flying is being flown, with “standdown” still prevailing. Today, Lt's Shaefer, Siracuse, Svenson, Sims, Bartmus, Mish and Nikas gained formation time. Flying navigation were Capt. Prentiss, and Lt. Lytle as B/N. in the PDI section were Major Price, with Lt. Hand (B/N) and Capt. Conant, with Lt. McBrien (B/N). Lt. Osborne, between being harried with Operations responsibilities managed to test flight A-20G # 684 finishing flying for the day.

Although getting a certain amount of rest from this “stand-down”, the combat crews are anxious to resume combat missions once more. Maybe it is the 7-day pass that comes after the 25th mission is completed. Could be! NOTICED: “Rick” Prentiss back

from pass, with a contented look on his face. We wonder.

May 18, 1944

Still on "stand-down" status, with orientation and training flying being accomplished. Flying formation today were: Lt's Shaefer, Nikas, Siracuse, Sims, Svenson, Mish, Meagher, and Bartmus. Flying "PDI" were: Major Price, with Lt. Hand; Capt. Conant with Lt. McBrien; Capt. Prentiss, with Lt. Lytle; 1st Lt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma. Ending the day with Navigation flying were: Major Price/Lt. Hand; and Capt. Conant/Lt. McBrien.

May 19, 1944

The siege of "stand-down" has finally been broken, with Mission No. 49 being flown in the afternoon. Previous to that in the morning, training and orientation flying was stressed. A six-ship formation was flown, logging over an hour. Then two navigation flights were made, and one bombing (PDI), finishing the morning.

Late in the afternoon, after briefing, the planes and crews took off to Beauville Fille, France (Gun Installations). "A" box didn't drop their bombs for an unknown reason, but "B" box made a good show. There was very little opposition from flak, and there was no damage to the returning planes. An incident occurred which cast a shadow on the days results. Lt. Crispino, of the 670th Bomb Sq., and his Gunners S/Sgt. Conopask 47

and S/Sgt. Walsh were trapped in a heavy overcast. Suddenly the plane went into a spin, and hurtled to the ground. The pilot managed to bail out, but the Gunners rode the ship to their death. Lt. Crispino is now in the hospital, and this meager information was gained from reports on his statement.

May 20, 1944

Today should be an anniversary and celebration of some kind. It marks the Group's 50th mission. To anyone but our squadron, the day might be considered an event. We all feel rather low. The ships took off this morning, on a mission that was to last for three hours and thirty minutes. (3:30). The target was an airdrome at Beauvais-Tolle, France. The area surrounding this airdrome was known to be heavily defended. We sent twelve (12) combat crews from this squadron, and only ten were to return. 1st Lt. B.L. Bradford, with S/Sgt. McIver and S/Sgt. Gray were seen going down in trouble. Someone reported seeing three parachutes blossom out, so hope is held for them. They went down somewhere in France. 1st Lt. M.E. Kleopfel (made 1st today), with gunners S/Sgt.

Bankston, and S/Sgt. Shaw never came back. Their fate is unknown, as no one saw them go down or drop out. All we know is they never returned, and must assume that they too went down "somewhere in France". We only hope these six men made it down to land, the fate of a prison camp, rather than the last count.

Others were to have trouble on this mission. 2nd Lt. J.F. Meagher, with gunners Damico and Hantake, had plenty of trouble on their heads. Flak damaged their ship so bad that they were forced to land their ship at Saling, literally coaxing the ship all the way. Luckily, not one of the three was hurt. The remains of the ship are turned over to the

Sub Depot at Saling, for an indeterminable length of time.



“Rick” Prentiss was made to sweat also in this fracas. With him were: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Lytle (B/N), and Gunners Orr and Flacks. Their ship, and A-20J #640, was shot up very heavily, and no one knows how they ever brought it back. It too is in the Sub Depot, under-going severe repairs. Again fate decreed that they were to go unscathed, after such a beating. Our humble thanks to the unseen powers.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. L.E. Hill (made 1<sup>st</sup> today) had plenty worries too. With him were Gunners Burch and Yost, who gained a few gray hairs. Their ship was plastered heavily with flak, and Lt. Hill suffered injuries to the back of his head and neck. He will receive the Purple Heart for this. Nothing stops these game “eagles” as he was seen walking around with bandages swathing him; ready for the next mission.

All the other ships suffered from flak damage, not so much as the before mentioned. The results were classified as “good” (target results).

Another pilot to trade in gold for silver was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.D. Leshner. Congratulations to these three men. Summing up Lt. Hill’s day we find that; he received his 1<sup>st</sup> Lt’s bars, received the Purple Heart, and Most Important – received a 7 day leave. With him on leave goes 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. R.K. Cruze. Have a good time – you fellows deserve it. Their Gunners

48  
rate this leave with them also – S/Sgt’s Love, Adair, Burch, and Yost. This mission proves the mettle of the men, men who are ready for the next mission.

It proved the next mission wasn’t to be far off. In the afternoon, after briefing, the planes soared off with Cormiellles-eu-Vexin, France (airdrome) in the bombsights. This time we had seven combat crews from this squadron participating. There was no flak, and thusly the ships suffered no damage. The results on the target were classified as very good. You might say getting revenge for this morning’s price. This mission lasted 3:40 – a long journey. So ended the day – a day of varied circumstances, feelings, results, and musings. We will miss not seeing certain faces at mess, shows, pubs, etc. to quote the old adage – “Gone, but not Forgotten”.

May 21, 1944

We looked forward to a “stand-down” today, maybe due to yesterday’s strenuous activity. The day wasn’t wasted, however, as much training flying was done. On these flights the veteran pilots go up with the new comers and put them thru the paces.

In formation flights were Lt’s Shaefer, Mish, Sims, Svenson, Nikas, and Capt. Conant. In the Oxford, Lt. Shaefer was checking out Lt’s Bartmus, Ebenstein, flying navigation “Gee” were; Capt. Prentiss and Lt. Osborne. That sums up the days flying activities.

Probably not enough is said about the Ground Crews in this log. They aren’t very glamorous, as the combat crews, but they sure work like hell. It must be remembered that if the ships aren’t in shape, there are no missions. They have been working very hard on the ships, and have kept a very high rate of ships in commission. It is not uncommon for them to put in from 14 to 16 hours a day on their charges. So here is a salute to all the engineers, armourers, radiomen, and armament, etc. They sure are doing a great job.

May 22, 1944

The “stand-down” lasted till noon today. During the morning, training and

orientation flying was the order of the day. Getting in their time were; Lt's Mish, Nikas, Sims, and Svenson/(Navigation). Capt. Conant and Lt. McBrien flew 2:05 PDI time; and Lt's Osborne, Bartmus, and Meagher all acquired time in the Oxford.

In the afternoon, the order came for briefing, with all alerted crews ready. After briefing, the crews took off, to bomb Cormeilles-eu-Vexin, France, an airdrome. They had a good escort of fighters, and the weather held out all the way. Very little flak was encountered, and it was a day for the Bombardiers. Bombs were dropped, and they went true to their mark.

Upon returning, pictures showed direct hits on the field, and destruction was wrought all over the target. The classification of the results on the target was "excellent". All ships and crews returned with no damage, and everyone was satisfied with a good day's work done.

49

"Drop-Dead" Osborne is rapidly learning the ropes of Operations Officer. With this job goes the mammoth task of trying to please all, and subdue the quiet natures of such timid souls as McBrien, Ebenstein, Prentiss, etc. Gray hair – could be Lt! It was learned that "Mike" Kleopfel will soon be a proud father. That youngster can really be proud of "Mike". Many a feminine heart will twinge when learning of "Brady" Bradford. That suave, handsome eagle is somewhere in France with Mike. Gals, he will be back when we march into Berlin.

May 23, 1944

Today was one of those days where missions are planned, crews are alerted, and then the weather never permits. All day long missions were planned and scrubbed, due to poor weather. It really reaps havoc on one's nerves.

The only flying accomplished by this squadron was a test hop by Capt. Conant in A-20G #176. Incidentally, the story about the bomb dropping on his wing from "Jug" Price's ship is really getting around. It has appeared in U.S. home papers, English papers, and has now made the Stars and Stripes. It is no secret that "Hiram" can get into the damnest situations. One of the best pilots, as he always gets out of them. The only other time in the air was flown by Lt. Osborne and Lt. Forma, in the Oxford. This ship has been

used a lot for "Gee" Navigation.

We want to welcome Sgt. Harold W. Smith and Sgt. George W. Scott, both Gunners, to our squadron. They are in a "top" outfit, and will fill the shoes of some "great" Gunners, who are no longer present. Good Luck to you boys.

Rumor is growing stronger and stronger, on the forth-coming invasion. Wild waging, and individual strategies are ever present. We're ready and eager – let it come!

May 24, 1944

This Squadron chalked up another two missions day, today. In the morning, after briefing, the planes took off to bomb the Airdrome at Beaumont-Le-Roger, France. The escort consisted of P-47's, those swift pursuits that have made a great record over here. There was no flak to cause consternation, but for some reason the bombs fell of their intended target. All ships returned to the base.

In the late afternoon, briefing was again ordered, and alerted crews took to their ships once more. This time the planes took off with the Airdrome at Abbeyville-Drucat, France, the target. This was known to be a rather heavily defended area, and all expected trouble. Again, P-47's escorted our bombers, and presented a formidable defense. The planes arrived at the target with no interferences from flak or fighters, and dropped their bombs with exact precision.

50

Upon returning to the base, and at interrogation, photos proved direct hits on a hanger and installations at the field. The mission was classified as "excellent", giving consolation for the morning's results.

Again, "Gus" Ebenstein was to suffer for a technicality. He returned with his bomb load, due to an unfortunate mismanagement of his bomb controls. "Jug" Price influenced him to spend an hour practicing with the bomb control buttons. Much to the enjoyment of fellow colleagues. "Rough in the ETO". So dropped the curtain of night on this delightful scene.

May 25, 1944

With the rising sun this morning, came Mission No. 55. That is a good account for a Group that has been operational for such a short time. The □ X Bomber Command has

commended us many times for extraordinary achievements.

The Airdrome at Monchy/Breton, France was to be on the receiving end today. P-47's again escorted our bombers thru a field of light inaccurate flak. The mission consisted of two boxes, of which our pilots were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> box. Upon returning to the base, pictures were shown proving direct hits on the target by the 2<sup>nd</sup> box. The results were again classified as "excellent". Lt. Svenson flew his first combat mission today, and Lt's Sims, Nikas and Mish flew theirs yesterday.

"Stand-down" was called in the afternoon, and training flying was the order. The Gunners were directed in the practice of loading and unloading bombs from the ships. There was no night flying, and everyone gained a good night's sleep. For those who might be interested – we haven't had an enemy action around here for a long time. Knock-on- wood!

May 26, 1944

The "stand-down" held thru from yesterday, till 1100 today. Then the order came thru to stand-by ships. After noon chow, briefing was called, and mission #56 was planned and plotted.

Late in the afternoon, the two boxes took off on their mission of destruction. The target this time was to be Beauville-Tille, France, an Airdrome. Intentions were good, but the mission was destined not to be completed. For some reason, the fighter escort was not at the rendezvous, but the bombers continued anyway. After penetrating into France for miles, the orders came thru over the radio to return to base. Thus the mission was recalled.

All ships returned in good shape and nothing was lost but time and gas. The only other flying for this day consisted of "Gee" time in the Oxford, and a Navigation flight by

Major Price and Lt. Leshner. Thus this uneventful day was brought to an end.

51

May 27, 1944

This is another day, where words are not just tribute for actions rendered. Today was another two-mission day, with varying results. It is difficult writing about men, who don't come back. More words can never do justice for their achievements, their loyalty, or their lives.

In the morning, we furnished eight combat crews, one of which was to fly a "window mission". The weather appeared perfect, and the target was to be the Marshalling Yards, Amiens, France. After having been gone for over an hour, the "recall" was given and the ships returned. All in good condition, with nothing unusual to report.

The afternoon was to tell a different story. This time twelve crews were drawn from our squadron. The target was the same, and the weather gave good promise. The planes found their target, and dropped their bombs. Fate was to turn against us, as we soon found out.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. L.J. "Screws" Siracuse, and his gunners S/Sgt's Hume and Brown were the first to encounter trouble. Flak struck their ship, causing a fire. By rights that would stop the average pilot. Did that stop the Brooklyn Brother? Hell no! With ship afire, he flew over the target and bombed it. Then he ordered his gunners out, and jumped himself. Eyewitness's saw this, and won't soon forget it.

One of our new pilots matched this bravery and heroism. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. T.J. Sims caught a packet of flak, before making his bombing run. With a fractured arm, and ship shot to hell, he made his run and bombed the target. Not able to keep up with the formation, he fell out and headed for home. Faint and weak from loss of blood, he ordered his gunners (Sgt. Harry W. Larsen, and Sgt. Julius C. Williamson Jr.) to bail out. They did, and he continued on his way. Fighting a tremendous battle all the way, injured, (himself, and ship) he made the coast of England, and crash-landed. Upon landing he passed out and was taken to a hospital. At present, he is coming along fairly well, and we sure are pulling for him. You don't need adjectives to describe these men. We all miss these men who bailed out in France, but most important, we know they are alive. We will be over for them soon.

The 669<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron suffered heavily also. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Gullion, son of Major Gen. Gullion, and Lt. Hewes, also went down in France. Their deeds of valor are also recorded in the Airman's Hall of Fame.

Many ships made breath-taking landings upon returning; and all bore evidence of rough encounters. Thus ended the day. With the sun's last rays on busy ground crews, working against time for the morrow's mission.

May 28, 1944

52

Up comes the sun, and with it a medley of thoughts. Again we had two missions facing us today. With yesterday's happenings fresh in mind, the crews were briefing for today's encounters.

In the morning, nine crews were picked from this squadron to make up the formation. The target was to be the Radio Directional Finder Station at Bruges/St. Michel, France. P-47's did the escort work, and the bombers found their mark with no enemy resistance. There was no flak to cause consternation, and upon returning to the base, pictures gave evidence to "good" results on the target.

We were to take pride for the afternoon's achievements. Our mission was divided into two boxes, each of which was to lead a neighboring Group into the target. We have sister groups over here; they are the 409<sup>th</sup> and the 410<sup>th</sup>. We were chosen to form two boxes, and lead these two groups into the target. The target was Vacqueriette, France (noball).

Each box did admirable work upon their leadership, and the results of the bombing were classified as "good". There was mild accurate flak to contend with, as S/Sgt Francis L. Flacks was to find out. This gunner, new to our squadron, was caught with a burst of flak, and suffered painful injuries. Upon landing, he was rushed to the hospital, where he is now. He will receive the Purple Heart for this misfortune. Grim humor presided in the fact; "Flacks caught Flak". Funny, maybe, to everyone but him.

This second mission ended the day's activities. The field was given an "alert", but Jerry caused no trouble.

May 29, 1944

We started off this week with mission #62 this morning. Leading both boxes were 668<sup>th</sup> men. Major Price led the 1<sup>st</sup> box, with Lt. Hand as B/N. leading the second box, and getting quite renown, was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne (Chicago take pride) with his B/N was 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Forma. P-47's gave the usual excellent escort, and no flak was encountered. It was a perfect set-up for the bombers, and they really poured it on. The airdrome at Achiet, France was left in ruins. The results of the 1<sup>st</sup> box were good; while the 2<sup>nd</sup> box scored "excellent". This team of Osborne & Forma is "hot stuff". All ships returned, and all enjoyed satisfaction. It was learned that Lt. Forma put those bombs 73' from a direct hit. The effective range of these 500 lb. Destroyers is 250'. Damn good bombing, if we do say so.

In the afternoon, a "stand-down" was called. Ground crews thus had time to work on their respective charges. In Operations, the gang was kept busy with the end of the month drawing near. It is though concentrating on work, with thoughts of Bardsfield going thru the Kindlespire – Markowitz mental network. Such stories that are coming back. The day was peacefully ended with no night flying!

May 30, 1944

53

The old squadron is getting pretty hot now. Today was mission #63, and it proved to be a good one. This time Capt. Conant led the second box, with the "Irishman" (now 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.T. McBrien – sigh, you Cambridge gals) in the Bombardier's seat. The target was another Airdrome, this time at Denain/Prouvy, France. We furnished seven crews from this squadron. P-47's again gave escort, and unbelievably there was no flak. To do justice to his Irish ancestors, McBrien dropped them right on the nose. The Airdrome was

put out of commission, as pictures proved. The results were again classified as "excellent". All ships returned in good shape and contentment reigned. With "stand-down" being called in the afternoon, for some unexplainable reason, training flying was ordered. This time a Group practice mission was planned, and executed with precision. We furnished ten crews, and the average time logged was three hours. This ended the day's activities, and again there was no night flying. As it comes to all "shave-tails", so came it to five of our boys. Silver bars came floating down out of the blue, and were welcomed very profusely. Proud wearers are: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Cruze (one of the best); 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. McBrien (grinning from ear-to-ear); he has proven more than once that he earned it); 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Meagher (quiet and very dependable); 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Meredith (of long record, and swell showings). To all these "eagles", the squadron's sincerest congratulations. No telling how far they will go.

May 31, 1944

Last day of the month, and a good month it was. Good in respects to the work accomplished. We miss a lot of faces that made these results possible.

In the morning, a mission was planned but was post-poned every hour. Finally the word came down that it had been "scrubbed". Lt. Osborne in A-20G #9194 flew the only flying this morning. This was a test hop of 45 minutes. With nothing doing this morning, everyone congregated in Operations. There ensued an hour's duration of all kind of "shenanigans". Gentle readers, there is no limit as to what these boys will do, when not occupied. McBrien's heckling; Prentiss's give and take; Osborne maintaining the peace, then giving up the hopeless task, and pitching in; Shaefer indulging in a frenzy of action. This is putting it mild. Confidentially, we enjoyed watching this show, it demonstrates good morale.

Someone knew that idle hands get into mischief; so another practice mission was planned and executed in the afternoon. This time we furnished nine crews from this squadron. They logged about 1:45 apiece. This ended the day's activities, and peace and quiet reigned. Lt's Nikas, Mish, and Sims (still in the hospital) can now be called veterans. They have an average of three and four missions to their credit. Everyone is still wondering about the commencement of the "invasion". Lets get going!

June 1, 1944

54

Today, the beginning of the month, proved to be a "mission-less" day. This is attributed to the fact that typical English inclement weather provided. One of those days where it rains, then clears up, then rains.

During one of the lulls, an incident occurred, which makes writing this log a treat. Two of our experienced "pride & joys", namely Capt. Conant and Lt. Osborne, decided to fly that basic training plane, the AT-6. We one here, used mainly for navigation flight. Now this type of plane is one of the first a fledgling fly's during training days. "Hiram" (with nearly 2000 hours) & Drop-Dead" (with nearly 700 hours), both with much combat experience, took up this lovely, charming, delightful AT-6. After watching them "shoot" several landings, we tired of it. Then some inner urge prompted us to look out the window. Have you ever seen a ruptured duck; well, we saw the nearest thing to it. For

there was the AT-6, props digging the ground, left wing on the ground, and one landing gear buckled. That was something never expected, but the best part was yet to come. Let me describe the ensuing scene. These two gentlemen returned to Operations, where they received ovations of sarcasm, “cracks”, etc. It brings to memory, the picture of two boys caught stealing cookies from the cookie jar. Very Sheepish! Here are some sentences of conversation that followed.

“You call him and tell him about it!”

“Naw, you call him, maybe he isn’t there!”

“But Hiram, after all -----“

“ Oh, alright, I’ll call him!” (Who were they about to call? Right – the Colonel)

The above description is very brief, and doesn’t do justice to the actual scene that took place. It is best to draw the curtain no, and leave the rest to your imagination. The only other flying for the day was a short PDI flight by Lt. Shaefer, with Lt. Lytle. This ended the day’s activities. Truly a remarkable day.

June 2, 1944

Weather finally came through on our side today. So to celebrate the event, a mission was planned and executed. We furnished twelve crews for the mission, with Lt’s Shaefer and Bartmus as Flight Leaders. To Lt. Bartmus, our congratulations on assuming this position.

The target to be on the receiving end was Gorenflos, France (no-ball). P-47’s again provided escort, and the bombers had only to contend with light inaccurate flak, which fortunately did no damage. The mission was in a two-box formation, of which our squadron was in first box. The bombs were dropped with accuracy, and pictures proved results to be classified as “good”. All ships and crews returned in good condition. This was mission #64.

55

Other flying for the day was; Lt’s Kreh and Cruze, 1:00 Navigation; Lt. Meagher test flighted A-20G #360, and Capt. Conant and Lt. McBrien flew a PDI trip of one hour’s duration.

June 3, 1944

This morning much practice flying was accomplished. Getting in their time on smoke practice missions were: Lt’s Cruze, Ritchie, and Osborne. In the Oxford, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Bartmus gained “Gee” time. This British ship is used mainly by this squadron for these Gee Navigation flights.

In the afternoon, mission #65 was flown, without a happy ending. This mission was one of the deepest penetrations into enemy territory by this Group yet. Again we furnished twelve crews, with Major Price leading the first box, with Lt. Hand as B/N. Capt. Conant led the second box, with Lt. McBrien as B/N. Gunners Adair and Love accompanied Major Price, and Gunners Orr and Herttua accompanied Capt. Conant. The target was Chartres, France (an airdrome). Upon hitting the enemy coast, flak was bad enough to hit Lt. Ebenstein’s ship, causing him to turn back. Lt. Nikas had his ship damaged, but managed to continue. The bombers were protected by P-47’s and continued on their target. Upon reaching their target, the planes made their run. Again,

Lt. Nika's plane suffered hits, and this time for keeps. He was seen going down, badly damaged, over the target. With him were Gunners Newkirk and Scott. The rest of the ships returned to the base, all bearing evidence of flak. Pictures showed the results to be classified as "fair".

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Anton Nikas, a new pilot to the squadron, hails from good old Chicago. There, during school, he gained a name in the football field, and attended various colleges, where he continued his football fame. He had six missions to his credit, and had earned the Air Medal.

Sgt. George W. Scott was also a new comer to this squadron. He also held the Air Medal, with eight sorties to his credit. Not being with us long, we hadn't time to learn much about him.

S/Sgt. Arlington W. Newkirk is a boy hard to forget. I say "boy" because he was only twenty years old. He came from all over, most recently from Pennsylvania. There his girl friend and sister held his interest. He was a great follower of "Bugs Bunny", a character that adorned his flight jacket. You couldn't top his ingenuity when it came to anything artistic or mechanical. His drawings are represented in the Aero Club. A person of continuous vigor, wit, and unflinching spirit. He is the holder of both Air Medal and Purple Heart. He had 33 sorties to his credit with this squadron. With no mother or father alive, he consistently spoke of his girl and sister. If he is still alive, I hope we meet again, in Berlin. Happy Landings, Scotty.

56

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma led the mission with anti-radar defense. His gunners S/Sgt's Kelly and Gee accompanied them. The last sun's rays shown on busy ground crews patching up the ships.

June 4, 1944

This morning was spent with various types of training flying being accomplished.

Rumors are repeatedly coming stronger of the forthcoming invasion.

In the afternoon, we flew mission #66. We furnished nine crews with Capt.

Conant and Lt. McBrien leading the box. With them were gunners Kelly and Coe. The target was the coastal defense at St. Pierre Du Mont, France. Flak was classed as light accurate and P-47's gave escort.

With flak as light as it was, it seemed aimed at our boys. Major Radetsky, in A-20G #701, returned on one engine. Upon climbing out of the cockpit, he discovered three holes very near where he had been sitting. He made a good landing under those conditions.

Capt. Conant and his crew, an A-20J #125, were the ones who really had the story to tell. They dropped their bombs, and then were hit. The VHF equipment caught fire, and the gunners had their hands full. Finally, they managed to put it out. Conant next made the announcement that one engine was out, and the hydraulic fluid was lost. To add to that, one bomb was still on the wing rack. They heard from Lt. McBrien, and he had been hit in the leg and was bleeding.

They had trouble lowering their wheels, but finally did, and made a good landing under those conditions. Even if the landing didn't conform strict to the runway. McBrien



was taken to the hospital where his injuries proved minor. To add acid to the wounds, pictures proved that the bombs missed their target.

June 5, 1944

Everything assumed a quiet respite today. The only flying was done in the Oxford, this being "Gee" Navigation.

An interesting note was all ships being painted in black and white strips.

Speculation ran high as to the reason for this. Also, all ships were in commission at the 1900 report tonight.

June 6, 1944

57

Today will undoubtedly be one of the greatest in the history of the world. It marked the beginning of the invasion of German-held Europe. Hopes, fears, various emotions are all renewed, with this new stroke of freedom.

Our part in this show? Early this morning, our planes took off to give support to the ground forces. Those taking part on this first "invasion mission" were; #444 – Price, Hand, Judd, Fejes; #442 – Osborne, Forma, Kelly, Coe; #0194 – Ebenstein, Newell, Perkins; #0176 – Miracle, Sieg, Burkhalter; #894 – Poindexter, Robbins, Simpson; #226 – Meagher, Hantska, Damico; #745 – Leshner, Hedrick, Anatanatis; #963 – Cruze, Adair, Love; #0154 – Hill, Burch, Yost; #195 – Svenson, Wild, Phanning; #684 – Kreh, Shelton, Schenck; #210 – Downing, Dickenson, Hornbeck; #194 – Ritchie, Anderson, Clark, and Lt. Col. Farmer, with Lt. Papa (B/N), Gunners McDonald, Hill.

The target was the crossroads at Argentan, France. There was no escort and no flak. The bombs hit with a good degree of accuracy, and the results were classified as good. This bombing was done at low level, and eyewitnesses reported seeing villagers waving to them. The Channel, it was reported, was a solid mass of boats. The beachhead was swarming with troops. Returning crews told of enormous activity, both in the air and on land, a light quote and say, "This is it"!

June 7, 1944

In the afternoon was mission #70. It was two boxes, with each box assigned a target. Major Price led the first box, and Lt. Osborne led the second box. The target for the first box was Balleroy, France (road junction). Under Lt. Hand's expert guiding, the target was found and bombed. Upon returning to the base, after no opposition, the results were classed as "excellent".

1st Lt. Osborne led his men to a different target. Theirs was Littry, France, known to be a Nazi Field Headquarters. Lt. Forma was the B/N, and a good job he did. The target was located in the woods, and our bombs took the woods apart. The ships all returned, and the results were termed as good. This isn't the first time our squadron furnished men to lead the missions. It is something to be proud of. Latest reports on the invasion states severe fighting all along the line.

June 8, 1944

Low ceiling and poor visibility prevented much activity today. Although later in the morning, a mission took off to bomb Vitre, France (Railroad Bridge). We furnished eight crews for this mission. The ships came back as the overcast was too low for any

bombing. They had penetrated into France, but to no avail.

In the afternoon, everyone sweated out the weather, but to no consequence.

Finally, late in the afternoon around 1800, the Group attempted a mission. This time we furnished eight crews. They took off, but were forced to return after a half hour's flight. Thus, we tried hard, but weren't very successful.

58

June 9, 1944

Typical English weather prevailed today, making any flying activity impossible.

Low ceiling, with spasms of rain dampened everyone's ardor.

During one brief break, where it ceased raining for a while, Lt. Osborne with Lt. Forma and Lt. Shaefer with Lt. Burg accomplished some PDI flying. This was the only time flown for the day.

This weather has prevented the Air Force from supporting the invading ground forces. Now, when they are needed most, the planes rest on the ground. Latest reports state the invasion forces holding their own.

June 10, 1944

Inclement weather prevented any flying activity today. Most of the day was spent in doing the little jobs that this idle day allowed.

Word came down from Headquarters, stating that Crew Chiefs with 50 missions on airplanes with no mechanical failures, are rating the Bronze Medal. Closest to this mark is T/Sgt James Brabham, with 49 missions, and no returns due to mechanical failures. Both 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. T.J. Sims, and Pvt. John Herttua (gunner) have been transferred from this squadron.

All personnel of this Group have been alerted in case of a "counter invasion" by Jerry. For two days now, the men have been carrying battle equipment, and armed with weapons and ammunition. Guards have been doubled on all planes, and general tension exists. Invasion news is very satisfactory, with the Allied Forces gaining ground.

June 11, 1944

Early this morning, Mission #72 was flown. Although conditions here, in respects to the weather, looked bad, the planes took off. We furnished twelve crews from this squadron, with Lt. Shaefer and Lt. Burg in the A-20J.

The intended target was the Road Junction at Falaise, France. I say "intended" because no attack was made on the target. Low ceiling obscured the target and prevented any bombing. Escort was provided by P-47's, and very little flak was present.

"Stand-down" was called for the rest of the day. Training flying presided, with various types flown. Time was gained on Formation, Navigation, and Practice Bombing.

59

The "alert" was called off for the personnel of the field, and conditions assured a normal aspect.

June 12, 1944

A mission was flown today, with Major Price and Lt. Osborne, each leading their respective box. The target was the Railroad & Bridge at Epernon, France. P-51's gave escort and there was light inaccurate flak. The results were "gross" for reasons unknown.

We furnished twelve crews from this squadron.

The rest of the day was spent in training flying. Lt's Poindexter, Shaefer, and Svenson participated in Formation, PDI, and Night Flights.

June 13, 1944

We furnished seven crews for Group Mission #74 today. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Shaefer, with Lt. J.J. Burg as B/N, and Gunners Fejes and Judd, led the third box in an A-20J. The formation was composed of three boxes. The target was the road junction at St. Sauveur-Le-Vicomte, France. The bombers experienced light inaccurate flak, and were protected by "area cover". All boxes dropped bombs, with varied results. The results being shown by photos.

The first and third boxes received "gross" for their work, and the second box received "excellent". Incidentally, crews from this squadron comprised the second box. All ships returned in good shape, and crews in good spirits. The rest of the day was spent on training flying, and groundwork.

Honors to Capt. H.F. Conant for passing his 2000-hour mark. That is an achievement to really be proud of.

The squadron held its long awaited "beer party" in the area last night. Everyone enjoyed a good time, even if the next day proved rough.

June 14, 1944

Today turned out to be a two-mission day. In the morning, Mission #75 was flown, three-fourths the way to the 100 mark. This squadron furnished twelve crews, of which three were in the A-20J's. Capt. Conant, Lt. Shaefer, and Lt. Osborne flew in these 20J's as box leaders and deputies.

The target was the road junction at Aunay-Sur-Odon, France. The mission lasted three hours, and no flak was met. Escort was provided preventing any enemy fighter attacks to our bombers. Three boxes's composed the flight, and all received "Excellent" on this mission, this squadron dropped 64 bombs (500 lbs. each) comprising 32,000 lbs.

60

of explosives on the target. This is just the weight of one squadron. Figuring four squadrons to this Group, that is a hell of a lot of damage done on one mission. All planes and crews returned in good shape.

In the early afternoon, un-predictable weather arrived. This is nothing new, and we are getting used to it. It seemed every ten minutes, a cloud would blow over and it would rain a little. Then – presto—clear sky. All was serene, until the order came for combat crews to report to the briefing room.

Thus, around 1800, midst odd weather, Mission # 76 took off. This time we furnished seven crews, with Lt. Col. Farmer, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Papa (B/N), in an A-20J with our gunners Hentake and Newell.

Gremlins were present, as Lt. Cruze never left the ground. After taxiing down to the runway, he experienced throttle trouble, and was forced to return. Lt. Mish was next to have "difficulties". He flew with the formation for about 45 minutes, and then noticed his engine getting hot. Trying to adjust his cowl flaps, he found they wouldn't budge. Rather than having an over-heated engine, he returned to the base. That left four crews

from this squadron, plus Lt. Col. Farmer's crew.

The target was the bridge at St. Hilaire Du Harcourt, France, and was reached with no flak difficulties. Upon returning, after a three-hour journey, the results were classified as "poor".

Capt. Bailey, Intelligence Officer, tasted his first combat mission. He accompanied Capt. Prentiss in an A-20J. This mission climaxed the day's flying. The squadron logged 63:15 of flying. A lot of time for one day.

June 15, 1944

Mission # 77 was flown today, rather this morning, with eleven crews from this squadron. Each of the box loaders were from this squadron; Major Price leading the 1<sup>st</sup> box, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne leading the second box. Captain Conant was deputy leader of the first box. We're pretty proud of the fact that the leaders are picked from the 668<sup>th</sup>. The target was the bridges at Lessay, France. Again area escort was provided and no flak bothered the bombers. The bombs were dropped with precision, and the ships all returned after a three-hour flight. "Excellent" was scored for the 1<sup>st</sup> box's results, and "Good" for the second box's results. To celebrate the good work, and feeling cocky, Maj. Price led the whole formation of 36 planes on a "buzz" job of the field. It was a pretty site.

To illustrate the hitting power of this Group, the following statistics were obtained. On this mission the Group dropped 179, 500 lb. General-purpose bombs, or 61

89,500 lbs. of explosives on the target. That is one hellava blow, for a light bombardment group. We take much pride in our A-20's.

Briefing was the order in the early afternoon, and mission # 78 was planned and executed. This time we sent only six crews from this squadron, with Lt. Shaefer, and Lt. Burg, and Gunners Fejes and Judd in the A-20J. They led the third flight in the second box. The target this time was a fuel dump at Domfront, France. Again area cover, with no flak opposing our ships.

All the planes returned, after a 3:30 journey. The results varied. 1<sup>st</sup> box rating "excellent" for their work, and the second box "fair". This time the Group dropped 157 bombs, totaling 78,500 lbs of explosives.

In summing up, for one day's activities, we find that; this group dropped 168,000 lbs. of explosives. All of this done in support of the invading Allied Armies. We had several "alerts" on the field last night, but nothing to worry about, yet! Un-verified source ----- Jerry sending over "pilot-less" bombers on these raids. The bombers being controlled by radio. So ended the day.

June 16, 1944

A day like today puts gray hairs in the heads of many. A mission was planned and scheduled, but the weather never permitted action. All day the crews stood by, but never once did the weather show promise. The strain of continuous waiting weighs heavy on a person.

The only flying done was one lone flight in our Oxford by Squadron C. Lt. McBrien was given the Purple Heart, when found. He was in the last place expected to be

– the briefing room. The only action for the day was a tussle between Lt. Poindexter and Lt. McBrien. Capt. Prentiss and Lt. Osborne didn't exactly represent angels.

June 17, 1944

Today was completely devoted to training flights. "Stand-down" was ordered previously, and the Operations Officers planned training programs.

Acquiring "Gee" time in the Oxford were: Capt. Conant, Lt's Shaefer and Downing, with Lt's Forma and Burg as the B/N's. Practice bombing seemed to be the prime importance, and several flights were run off. Lt. Shaefer, with Lt. Burg flew two missions at the Holb---- Range, dropping 6-100 lb. practice bombs each time. Next, Major Price, with Lt. Hand flew two missions at the same range. They dropped 4-100 lb. Practice bombs each time. Finishing up on the practice bombing was Capt. Conant, with Lt. Forma. They made a flight dropping four bombs. Total flying time logged by the squadron for the day was 25:30.

62

All squadron personnel have fired their arms at the range in the past three days. Some good shooting was done by carbines, sub-machine guns, and .45 cal revolvers. Squadron training is being heavily emphasized, with the nearing of the POM teams.

June 18, 1944

This morning mission # 79 was briefed and planned. This time we furnished twelve crews with Capt. Conant, and Lt. Osborne in the A-20J's. With Capt. Conant was Lt. Mazanec, of Intelligence, riding out his first combat mission.

The target this time was the fuel dumps at Foret de Conches, France. Area cover was provided, and no flak caused any interference. Upon reaching the target, it was found to be heavily obscured by low overcast. In a case like this, there is nothing to do but turn back. The risk is too great of bombing without complete assuredness of accuracy. Thus, all planes returned to the base, with nothing to show for.

In the afternoon, a "stand-by" was called. Without wishing to wasted time, some training flying was accomplished. This consisted of a practice bombing flight by the team of Conant and McBrien, and two 4-ship formation flights. Newest activities are pilot less bombs being sent over by Jerry. In many locations, a continuous alert exits. Best news in the severing of the Cherbourg peninsula by the Yank Infantry.

June 19, 1944

"Stand-down" conditions existed today, and training flying and groundwork assumed the leading role. The biggest event was the entry of seven new pilots and ten new gunners to the squadron. The Newcomers are: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. C.J. Andersen, formerly of the Infantry; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J.P. Kenny, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. A.J. Welsh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. T. Clausen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J.K. Colquitt, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. F.W. Harris, and Flight Officer B.E. Baxter (distinctly something new for this squadron). The Gunners are: Sgt. R.E. Wright, Sgt. S.G. Novak, Sgt. C.Fetko, Jr, Sgt. D.M. Brown, Sgt. S.H. Giesy, Jr., Sgt. F.R. Cherry, Sgt. R.L. Ernstrom, and Sgt. H.A. Potter. We sure need and appreciated these men.

Flying accomplished by the squadron was as follows: Lt. Bartmus (tall, distinguished of California origin) flew the Oxford gaining "Gee" time. Lt. Ebenstein flew an A-20G, logging navigation. Lt. Shaefer test flew A-20G #684. All the new pilots

averaged one hour of transition time.

The “pilot-less” bombs, now used by Jerry, have started asserting themselves. When a veteran like Capt. “Rick” Prentiss starts noticing such things, there must be something to it. It seems a man can’t spend a peaceful night in London anymore.

June 20, 1944

63

“Back in the harness again”, as the old saying goes, today we flew two missions, No.’s 80 and 81. Both of these were flown against the rocket gun installations that are believed to be sending over the “pilot-less” bombs”

Mission #80 was flown in the morning, the target at Ligescourt II. France, (noball).

We furnished seven crews from our squadron, with Lt. Shaefer, Lt. Burg (B/N).

Gunners Fejes and Judd, in the A-20J, leading the third flight of the second box. Area cover gave protection, and there was no flak. The bombs dropped with results later classified as “Fair”. All ships and crews returned unharmed.

Mission # 81 was flown in mid-afternoon, the target at Le Grand Rossegnol, France (no-ball). This time the box leaders were picked from this squadron – they are: Major Price, with Lt. Hand as B/N; Gunners Fild and Phenning. Including these leaders, we furnished twelve crews from this squadron. Area cover existed again, and there was light flak. The results varied on this mission. In the first box, led by Capt. Conant, the results were classified as “Fair”. All ships and crews returned in good shape. This type of target is the most difficult to hit.

Night flying was planned, but called off due to inclement weather. PCM team made its inspection, and all seemed to be pleasing. Rumors are of our move in the near future.

June 21, 1944

“Sweat it out”, that is the best description of today’s story. Early in the morning, a mission was planned, but conditions always seemed adverse. Rather than wasted the time, the morning was spent in putting the new pilots thru their training phase. Major Price, in an A-20J, led Lt’s Welsh and Kenny in a formation flight. In the afternoon, Capt. Prentiss and Lt. Bartmus led Lt’s Colquitt, Clausen, Harris, and Andersen in formation practice. Capt. Prentiss also test A-20J # 719 in the morning.

Late in the afternoon, the word for briefing was sent. That was the signal for Mission # 82. We furnished seven crews for this trip, from this squadron. Lt. Shaefer with Lt. Burg (B/N), in the A-20J and Lt’s Miracle, Leshner, Ebenstein, Hill, Meredith and Poindexter in the A-20G’s. Lt. Shaefer was deputy leader of the second box, and the rest of our pilots flew the second flight of the first box.

The target was Middel Straits, France (no-ball). We had two B-26’s lead us and the bombing was done thru the clouds. Thusly, the results were unobserved. Area cover, and there was no flak to hinder the bombers. First in this squadron to reach his 50-mission mark is S/Sgt. A.J. Anatanatis. His pilot, H.D. Leshner, leads the pilots with 37 missions to his credit. Congratulations to both of them on their achievements.

“Stand-down” was called tonight, for tomorrow. The “pilot-less” bombs are still raising havoc here in England. News of Cherbourg battle is very promising.

64

June 22, 1944

It was demonstrated again, that one can never be sure of the future while in the Army. Capt. Conant burned the candle late last night, planning a training program for today. "Stand-down" had been called, as previously was stated. The first formation flight took off in the morning, on a training flight, when orders came to brief and prepare for a mission. This caught everyone on the unawares, and a bedlam ensued. All planning for the day was called off, and all departments worked in high gear.

Giving proof to the Group's ability, the planes took off at 1300 on their mission of destruction. This time we furnished twelve crews from this squadron, plus Lt. Shaefer, with Lt. Burg – Gunners Fejes and Judd in an A-20J, leading the three-ship "window" mission. The target was a hot one, one of the hottest. It was the Cherbourg battle area, and we were to bomb enemy gun emplacements there. Those who were there reported the area completely in flame and smoke. Flak was deadly accurate, as the returning planes bore evidence. One ship came in earlier than the rest, and for good reason. It was the A-20G # 764, with Lt. L.K. Hill, and Gunners Burch and Yost. Flak had caught them proper, in wings, fuselage, and most important – hydraulic assembly. Under expert hand, the ship was brought to a stop, off the runway. I can say for sure, that everyone "sweated

out" that ship with held breath. The ship is at present in the Sub Depot, the crew all OK.

All our ships returned, and half bore heavy flak damage.

NOTED – Lt. Svenson and crew anxiously scanning A-20G # 195 for flak damage, and not disappointed. Quoting S/Sgt. Fild – "After the first two bursts, I just held on and ducked my head".

On the contrary, Lt. Miracle with big grin – "Not a scratch!" Everyone when asked were awed at the inferno going on below. Our salute goes to the boys in the ground forces, who are going thru that hell down below.

There was a medley of aircraft on the base. A B-24 Liberator, some in with brilliant red markings on the silver body. A large British Halifax came in with the crew for the Halifax-grounded here for engine change. A B-26 Marauder made its appearance for a brief stay. Altogether, there were planes of all description here.

This squadron suffered a loss, which hasn't previously been mentioned. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.

William Lytle, Bombardier-Navigator, was transferred to the 669<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron. He has been with us a long time and done a swell job. We shall miss him not flying with us.

This is the second B/N we have lost to our sister squadrons now.

Two alerts were sounded on the field, late at night, giving evidence to the "pilotless bombs" still around. Rumor is that someone claims to have sighted a B-29 over here.

June 23, 1944

65

Today was purely a training day, with "stand-down" conditions existing on the field. Formation, navigation, and practice bombing were the types of flying stressed. Logging formation time were: Lt's Welsh, Kenny, Andersen, Clausen, Colquitt, Harris,

Downing, Meagher, and F/O Baxter. Lt. Downing took the Oxford on a “Gee” Navigational flight. Lt. Shaefer, in the A-20J, with Lt. Burg as B/N flew a practice bombing flight. They dropped six – 100 lb. Practice bombs on the range. That climaxed the day’s flying for the squadron, with thirty-eight (38) hours flown by the squadron. Two more gunners have reached their 50-mission mark. The proud men are: S/Sgt. Bennett C. Sieg, and S/Sgt. John R. Orr. Top pilot for the squadron to this day, with 38 missions to his credit is Lt. Luther F. Hill. To these men go our wished for the best of luck in the future.

Again the field was “alerted” with the “doodle-bugs” making their appearance.

The “doodle-bug” being Jerry’s pilot-less bombs. So far none have hit the field – knock on wood!

June 24, 1944

Everyone will quite agree that today was one of the busiest days the squadron’s history. Not only were two missions flown, but training flying was accomplished along with night flying. To back up that statement, compilations show the squadron logged that 67:45 flying time. Night training and operational time comprised the total.

Mission # 84 was the first mission flown in the late morning. We furnished six crews from this squadron – they being: Lt’s Meagher, Mish, Poindexter, Ebenstein, Cruze and Svenson piloting the A-20G’s.

The target picked for the punishment was Middel Straits, France, a “no-ball” target. The protection provided for the bombers was “area cover”. Again, we had two B-26’s (Marauders) lead the two boxes. Thus the bombing was done from above the clouds, and the results were unobserved. There was no flak to hinder the progress of the planes. All ships and crews returned to the base in good condition.

In-between missions the practice flying was accomplished, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ebenstein led a formation flight, with Lt’s Colquitt and Kenny. Lt’s Shaefer and Meredith took Oxford for a little “Gee” navigation.

After briefing and show, Mission 85 was planned and plotted. This time we furnished twelve crews, with two to act as “spares”. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne, and crew (Lt. Forma,

B/N; Gunners Kelly & Coe) led the first box in an A-20J, while Major Price and crew (Lt. Hand, B/N; Gunners Fejes and Judd) led the second box in an A-20J. It was the first mission for the following men: 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Andersen, with gunners Hugh & Shafer; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Kenny, with Gunners Spadoni & Noteriani; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Colquitt, with Gunners Giesy & Cherry; and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Harris, with Gunners Ernstrom & Potter.

66

The target this time was Bagnoles De L’Orne, France (a fuel dump). Again “area cover” was provided, and there was light inaccurate flak present. Upon returning, pictures proved results to be classified as “fair”. All ships and crews returned unharmed. The flight lasted roughly 2:15.

The day climaxed with night flying. Those participating were: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Welsh on 1<sup>st</sup> flight; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Clausen on the second flight, and F/O Baxter on the third flight. Thus the day was ended, a trying day for all.



We lose another swell fellow from this squadron. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.F. Shaefer was transferred to Group to act as Asst. Group Operations Officer. A West Point graduate of high standing, he has proven his ability to handle this responsible position. We will miss him, and give him our best wishes on this new position.

June 25, 1944

Keeping in pace with yesterday's activities, Mission 86 was flown this morning. From this squadron were picked six crews, all of them flying in the third flight of the first box. The chosen few were: Capt. Prentiss, gunners McCreery & Sylva; Lt. Hill, gunners Burch & Yost; Lt. Kreh, gunners Shelton & Schenck; Lt. Poindexter, gunners Simpson & Robbins. Two more "firsts or baptisms" were flown – Lt. Welsh, gunners Wright & Novak; and Lt. Clausen, gunners Fetko & Brown.

To be on the receiving end was Foret D'Andaine, France, a fuel dump. It can be assumed from now on, that with our gains in France, area cover will be the protection. There was no flak to mention, and area bombing was executed. Upon returning to the base, it was learned the results were "successful". All ships and crews returned with most crews agreeing it was a "milk-run".

"Stand-down" was called for the afternoon, and training flying was planned and executed. Those logging formation time were: Capt. Prentiss, Lt's Harris, Kenny, Clausen, Cruze, and Colquitt. Major Price with Lt. Hand, Lt. Osborne with Lt. Forma, and Capt. Conant with Lt. McBrien all flew practice-bombing flights. That, very briefly, sums up the training period.

Again we lose a veteran from this squadron. This time it is 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Richard D. Poindexter. He was transferred to 97 Combat Wing to assume new duties there. It is a good break for him, and we wish him the best of luck. A new T/O has come out, not being met very favorably by the enlisted men. Several "doodle-bugs" came over at night, landing close and shaking the buildings.

June 26, 1944

The "stand-down" carried over from yesterday. Training flying was the order for the day. These days are opportune for the new pilots to get their pre-combat training. Logging formation time were: Lt's Cruze, Andersen, Colquitt, and Kenny; with F/O 67

Baxter. Of this time no one can acquire enough. In the navigation field were: Lt's Meagher and Meredith.

The B/N Teams were not to be idle during the day. Like artists in other fields, these men train in spare moments to reach perfection. We believe they come as close to perfection as is humanly possible. The following teams indulged in practice bombing during the day: Major Price with Lt. Hand (B/N); Capt. Prentiss with Lt. McBrien (B/N), and Lt. Osborne with Lt. Forma (B/N). Thus the day was spent in ironing out any wrinkles that may appear in combat flying.

News in France is heralded by the fall of Cherbourg. Again, as demonstrated 25 years ago, Yank "guts" take the offensive in France. The Allies are on the move. Rumors prevail of our forth-coming move to France. We're all ready!

June 27, 1944

Still holding over—"stand-down" holds forth for today. So, the old grind of practice, practice, practice is in progress. Formation flying was accomplished by Lt's Ebenstein, Harris, Meredith, Cruze, Andersen, Clausen, Welsh, Colquitt, and Kenny. They presented some pretty sights in what formations should look like. Lone-wolfing it in an A-20G was Capt. Conant, flying plain transition. He gets consolation in the blue, when desiring to get away from the ground duties of Operations Officer.

Never relenting, but consistently driving the practice bombing are Major Price and Lt. Hand. They flew two missions of non-operational "egg-laying". Right up even with them are Lt's Meagher and Burg (B/N), with two flights of practice bombing. So, on it goes, this striving for perfection.

We welcome to our squadron Capt. Gerald M. McNulty, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Francis H. Bursiel. They are a B/N Team, transferred from our sister squadron the 670<sup>th</sup>. Both have a long record of combat with this Group. Capt. McNulty, formerly with the RCAF, is qualified in numerous types of aircraft, British and American. He has over 1500 hours of flying to his credit.

Nothing disturbed the peace and quiet of the night. A very rare occurrence.

June 28, 1944

We could chalk up today's results against English weather and adverse conditions. All day was spent waiting for the weather to clear up. This is the third day of inactivity, and it is getting tiresome. No one plane left the ground in this squadron. There wasn't any excitement even in Operations. It is believed that everyone got in a lot of "sack" time. Night flying was scheduled, but called off due to inclement weather. Thus, we batted a complete zero for the day.

68

June 29, 1944

We broke away from our inactivity today and we paid a price for it. It was Mission # 87, one that can't be easily forgotten. We furnished six crews from this squadron, of which three ships were to return, with their three crews.

Our ships were flying in the third flight of the first box. The target was St. Hillaire/ Vitre Railroad, in France. There were six flights in the two boxes, and each had a target. Jerry must have waited for this moment, for he threw up a barrage of intense flak.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Shaefer, with Lt. Burg (B/N), and gunners Fejes and Judd led our box. Our flight was marked, and they caught a popular conception of hell. F/O Baxter, his first mission, and gunners Ernstrom and Potter, their second mission – caught a fatal burst. Their ship A-20G #684 was caught dead center, and went down in flames. No one saw the occupants escape. You don't realize what happened till you look at the empty beds at night. Then it dawns on you that these veterans (20 yrs. old each) won't be back. The French have a word for it – "C'est la guerre"!

Under expert hands, Lt's Shaefer and Downing brought their ships back to the English coast, where they were forced to land. The ships badly shot up – the crews unharmed. Capt. Conant (destined to carry the flak magnet) came in on a wing and a

prayer. His hydraulic system shot out, and with other flak damage, he brought the plane down. It promptly went to the Service Gp. Capt. Conant, with gunners Novak and Wright

– OK! He’s a hard man to beat. So out of the whole flight, two ships came back, ready for the next mission. The results of this mission were classified as “gross”. Ours was the only flight to pay such a heavy price. The sun sinks, and night falls on mixed emotions. What will tomorrow bring?

June 30, 1944

Mission # 88 was heralded by the early pre-fighting of the planes. Busy crew chiefs making last minute preparations before the crews appear. We were represented by twelve crews this time. Flight leaders this time were: Capt. Prentiss, with Lt. McBrien (B/N), and gunners McCreery, and Sylva; and Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg (B/N), and gunners Robbins and Simpson. The planes took off a little before 0700, and returned about 50 minutes later. They were called back for some good reason.

After “sweating it out” for a couple hours, the order to take to the air was given.

Again the ships took off, this time completing the mission. The target was the Road Junction at Thury-Harcourt, France. Our ships formed the second and third flights of the first box. Area cover was provided, and there was very little flak. All ships returned after dropping their lethal load, and the results were classed as “fair”. If the day could only be ended here.

69

Another blow on the chin was in store for us. The old adage of “when it rains – it pours” is true. Three more “eagles” take the one way trip to the blue. On a chemical smoke mission with the RAF, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Scott B. Ritchie, West Point – 42; and gunners Anderson and Smith met their fate. No one can find an explanation for it. One minute the ship was seen flying in the air – the next, a twisted crumpled heap on the ground. Lt. Ritchie, renown for bringing ships in under pressure, was a great pilot. He proved his ability in bringing a flamer in at Lake Charles. Next, bringing a sieve of a plane in here after a mission. S/Sgts Anderson and Smith, two well liked veterans from the states. One 20 yrs. old, the other 21. All three had a long combat record. This accident brings back memories of “Bat” Battersby. There will be a big re-union up there tonight.

None of these entries are intended to be dramatic. It is just the expression of sincere feelings, formed from friendships in the service.

July 1, 1944

“Stand-down” was called for today, and more or less welcomed. All day was spent in getting little jobs done up. In Operations, the monthly flood of reports were received and sent out.

Flying was attempted in the afternoon. Capt. McNulty and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Cannon flew formation for an hour. In the Oxford, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Peede (now Gunnery Officer) and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Andersen logged 1:15. That was the only flying done by this squadron.

We want to welcome 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. L.E. Cannon, and gunners Sgt’s Robinson and Ersesinski to our squadron.

Jerry’s “buzz-bombs” seem to be coming closer. The Nissen Huts are beginning

to quiver a little. Neighboring towns have suffered hits by these deadly missiles.

July 2, 1944

Conditions have carried over from yesterday, for today. There was no combat flying, and very little other flying. The only time logged was in the formation field. There, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Leshner, led 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt's Cannon and Harris on a three-ship formation flight, lasting for one and one-half hours (1-1/2). The day was profitably spent by the ground crews puttering around their ships.

July 3, 1944

We experienced the first real "English downpour" of rain today. It lasted all day and flooded many of the so-called "water-proof" structures around here. This weather prohibited all flying, and not one minute was logged by this group. At intervals during the day, various drowned-out pilots came in to heckle the now acting-acting Operations Officer (1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne. Capt. Conant being away on a week's leave. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.K. Cruze  
70

has taken over the temporary job of Ass't Operations Officer, and proving very capable of the task.

Inspections are being held, preparing the way for our future move. Tomorrow being the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, will herald "fireworks" of some kind. Time will tell.

July 4, 1944

Independence Day, and ironically enough we are fighting today to preserve the freedom for which it is celebrated. Mission # 89 gave proof of our actions to celebrate this day. We furnished twelve crews from this squadron, and also box leaders. Leading the first box was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma (B/N); and gunners Kelly and Coe. Leading the second box was Major Price, with Lt. Hand (B/N); and gunners Fild and Phanning. Deputy leaders were Capt's Prentiss and McNulty.

The target was the gun installations of the Germans on the Normandy Peninsula, determined by grid coordinates. Two B-26's, acting as pathfinders, led the bombing run. This was done above a cloud formation, and the results were unobserved. Area cover was provided, and there was no disturbing flak. Planes and crews returned to the base unharmed after a three-hour journey. Gunner F.R. Cherry (Sgt.) flew with Lt. Col. Farmer in A-20G #195. This was the only flying for the day.

Following this day's entry is the Group Loading List for the Mission. It will interest those who have never had the occasion to examine one.

In Cambridge, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Scott Ritchie and Gunners F.A. Anderson (S/Sgt) and Harold W. Smith (S/Sgt) were laid to rest. Those who died for the freedom they cherished. To them goes our last salute.

On the lighter side were the antics of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. E.B. Kreh. At dusk, to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup>, he fired off quite an amount of shells from a pyrotechnic pistol. They illuminated the sky and surrounding vicinity. In response an unknown plane buzzed the field. A dance was held at the Aero Club for the enlisted.

S/Sgt. Holley Perkins left the squadron on a well-earned trip. He will report back to the states after a long siege of overseas service. Perkins, a gunner, has combat time in the Pacific Theatre of Operations and the ETO. Rumor has it that other veteran gunners,

namely S/Sgt. Simpson & Sgt. Newell, will soon join him. These boys have also flown combat in the Pacific.

Rumors of our forthcoming move are being substantiated every day.

July 5, 1944

Today was a mixture of training flying and combat flying. In the morning, a formation flight of six ships was flown. In an A-20J, and leading the formation were 1st Lt. Ebenstein and myself, Cpl. Shier.

In the nose of this A-20J, I commanded a full view of the flight. Words can never express the thrill of leading a formation flight over the countryside. I saw the precision with which these men fly, and the strain of close formation flying. We buzzed a British field, and showed them Yank skill. The flight lasted 1-1/2 hours, and was perfect in all respects.

In the afternoon, practice bombing was the order. Major "Jug" Price, with 1st Lt. "Aching" Hand made the first trip. Upon their return, Capt. McNulty and Lt. Bursick took off on a similar flight. Finally, finishing the practice bombing, were Capt. "Rick" Prentiss and 1st Lt. "Boots" McBrien. (Proud owner of a flashy pair of boots--- Eastern style.)

After all of this, came the word for a mission. Preparations were made and briefing began. Thus Mission # 90 was born. We furnished twelve crews from this squadron, of which two were spares. Capt. Prentiss was deputy leader of the first box, and Capt. McNulty was deputy leader of the second box. The target was Mari---, France (German No-ball Headquarters). It proved to be a "hot" spot, with flak medium and very accurate. The Group dropped 164 – 500 lb. Bombs, or 71,500 lbs. of explosives. The first box scored "excellent" on their bombing, and the second box scored "poor". The following ships returned with flak damage, none on which were very serious; A-20G #--- (Lt. Anderson) A-20G # 907 (Lt. Ebenstein); and A-20G # 819 (Lt. Kreh). Fortunately no

one of the combat crew was hurt. Lt's Svenson and Meredith were used as "spares" on this mission.

Still the day wasn't over. Night flying was next on the list. A six-ship formation flight, led by Major Price and Lt. Hand in an A-20J, took off at 2300 and landed at 0130. Lt. Kenny took off in an A-20G at 2400 on a night transition flight and landed at 0030. Then Lts Anderson and Colquitt took off at 0130, on a night transition flight and landed at 0300. This was to be the last flight for the day. The squadron logged 57 hours for the day. Summing up – one hellava rough day!

July 6, 1944

After yesterday's strenuous activity, we damn near matched it today. It was a beautiful day, very rare here, so two missions were flown. In the morning, mission # 91 was planned and executed. Seven crews represented this squadron. Lt. Osborne, with crew, in an A-20J led the third flight of the first box. Flying in the same box with him were; Lt's Ebenstein, Downing, Leshner, Peede, and Miracle. Lt. Hill started out with them, but was forced to return because of electrical trouble.

The target was the Marshalling Yards at Epernon, France. Area cover was

provided and there was provided and there was no flak. All ships and crews returned safe, and the results of the mission were "fair". It was a long flight, lasting four hours, taxing the strength of both ship and men. On this mission each flight had a target assigned to them. Our flight had a bridge. There were 36 ships on the mission, and 143 bombs dropped, or 71,500 lbs. of explosives dumped on the target.

72

Late in the afternoon the next mission took off. It was Mission # 92. This squadron had twelve crews for its representatives. Leading the first box was Major Price in an A-20J. Leading the second box, also in an A-20J, was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Osborne with crew. This is a frequent story, our pilots leading the boxes.

The target was Verneuil-LeLoupe Railroad in France. Again each flight was assigned a target. The targets varied from bridges to track installations. There was no flak to mar the aim of the bombardiers. This was verified by Lt. Hand's "excellent" scoring on a bridge. Lt. Forma (Osborne's B/N) couldn't distinguish his target, so he blew the hell out of another bridge. Because he didn't get his intended target he was given "poor" for the scoring of the bombing. "You can't win"!

The journey lasted three hours and thirty minutes. All ships and crews returned safe to the base. This time the Group dropped 144-500 lb. Bombs, or 72,000 lbs. of explosives. Thirty-six ships from the four Squadrons made up the two boxes. Lt's Downing, Hill, Peede, and Leshner vie for top honors with 40 missions to their credit. In the Gunners field, S/Sgt. C.L. Hibbs is top man with 52 sorties to his credit. The night was peaceful with no "buzz-bombs" to disturb the peace.

July 7, 1944

Today was another day where the mission was "sweated out". All morning and afternoon, the ships and crews were placed on a one-hour availability. So as not to waste time, training flying was accomplished during this siege of waiting.

Lt. Hill flew our A-20J # 717 back from Stanstead where it was undergoing modification. Capt. Prentiss, with Lt. McBrien, got in some practice bombing on the bombing range. Accompanying him and flying formation in other A-20's were Lt's Cannon and Harris. The only other training was flown by Major Price in the Oxford. At 1800, the call for briefing was given. Then at 2000 the ships took off on Mission # 93. We had twelve combat crews in the two boxes, with Capt. Prentiss and crew as deputy leader of the first box. The rest of our crews flew in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> flights of the second box. Area cover was provided again, and there was no flak to cause consternation. The target was St. Pierre Sur Dives, France (a bridge). When the planes arrived over the target, haze and darkness presented a problem. The bombs were dropped, and the ships headed back. All planes and crews returned unharmed to the base. Pictures when developed were not discernable, and thusly the results of the bombing were undetermined. It was after midnight when the last ship landed. The journey lasted four hours, very near the limit of the ships.

July 8, 1944

To beat today's activities, any other squadron would have to go some. We had two missions today, plus training flying and night flying. First, and early in the morning

73

was Mission # 94. We had twelve crews again, representing the 668<sup>th</sup>. The box leaders were chosen from this squadron, the being Major Price and Lt. Osborne. Leading the first box, Lt. Osborne had Lt's Ebenstein, Leshner, Miracle, Colquitt and Peede in his flight. The second box had Major Price in lead with Lt's Meredith, Mish, Hill, Svenson, and Harris in the first flight.

The target was Caen, France, an enemy strong troop concentration. The bombing was done in direct support of our troops. Area cover with little flak summed up the fact of

no damage. After landing, and pictures being developed, it was learned that the results of the bombing were "excellent". Those hours of practice bombing are now showing in strong results on actual missions.

In between missions, practice and training flying was accomplished. Lt. Mish logged transition time; Lt. Leshner formation time; Lt's Bartmus and Downing Oxford time; Lt. Cannon navigation time; and Capt. Prentiss with Lt. McBrien on practice bombing.

Come late afternoon, and briefing for combat crews. We furnished seven crews for loading list this time. The team of Prentiss, McBrien, McCreery and Sylva flew "window mission". Lt. Leshner, with gunners Anatanatis and Hedrick, acted as "spare".

Lt. Osborne and crew flew deputy leader of the second box.

There were two targets this time, one for each box. The second box, of which six of our crews were in, had the Rail Junction at Avranches, France for their target. Our flight bombed, scoring "excellent" results. Again, it was area cover, with very little flak. All planes and crews returned in good condition. The flight lasted 3:45. The target for the first box was the Railroad, North of Combourg.

Night flying was yet to plague us. This time the burden fell on Lt's Colquitt and Cannon. Each logged night transition time. It was a busy day for all concerned. The total time flown by this squadron for the whole day amounted to 73:10. One hellava lot of time! The pilot-less bombs of Jerry were ever-present, but not bothering us much-yet!

July 9, 1944

Stand-down presents the picture for today. There wasn't much flying done, due to rather poor weather. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg as B/N, flew two flights of practice bombing. In the same field, were the ever-present teams of Capt. Prentiss and Lt. McBrien. The only other type of flying logged by this squadron for the day was a six-

ship formation flight. Those participating were; Lt's Colquitt, Bartmus, Cannon, Harris, Mish, and Lt. Shaefer (now of Hq, 416<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp. (L).

At night the field was treated to Jerry's pastime, the "P" bombs. A few buzzed over, lighting off the field in the distance. Everyone snored on.

74

July 10, 1944

In summing up the day's activities, we could say – "A" for effort. All day was spent in sweating out the mission. There was a one-hour alert for all combat crews. Late

in the afternoon, briefing was called and the ball got moving. Crews went out to their ships, got in, and made ready to start engines. Red flares from the control tower announced the scrubbing of the mission. They do it every time!

There was little flying during the day. Lt. Osborne flew 1:30 "Gee" Navigation; Capt. Prentiss flew 1:15 PDI; and Lt. Mish flew: 40 plain transition.

We really got one thrill, long to remember. Every pilot takes pride in his "buzz" ability. It took a B-26 pilot, unknown, to really set the pace. He came from the South at a hot pace, and buzzed the control tower. The pole had a distinct list to it after he left. It was the best job this field ever got. Those who saw it will long remember it. The occupants inside the tower didn't quite realize what happened. Incidentally, it took quite a while to straighten the towers flagpole.

July 11, 1944

Early this morning the weather looked as if it were to call everything off. Then by early noon, conditions had improved. Training flying was beginning to start. Lt. Peede, in the Oxford, flew 1:15 of "Gee" Navigation. Lt. Bartmus tested A-20G #226. By this time it was noon-show time.

In the afternoon, the call came for briefing. Late in the afternoon, Mission # 96 took off. We furnished eleven crews from this squadron. 1st Lt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma and Gunners Sylva & McCreery, led the second box. The rest of our pilots and crews flew in the second and third flights of the second box. Lt. Meagher, with crew, was deputy box leader. We had B-26 pathfinders leading us, and bombing was done thru the clouds. As a result, the bombing damage was unobserved. The target was the Rail Embankment near Bourth, France. There was no flak, and crews and planes landed here safely. In brief – it was a "milk-run".

In the evening, night flying assumed the important role. To those who participated in the air and on the ground, it is a pain in the neck. Lt. Bartmus led a three-plane formation, with Lt's Harris and Kenny as wingmen. They logged almost two hours of night formation. So ended the day's activities.

July 12, 1944

Mission # 97 got off bright and early this morning. All crews were wakened about 0400, and after breakfast and briefing the planes took off at 0730. We had five crews representing us in this mission. Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg and gunners Robbins and Simpson, were in the A-20J as deputy leader of the second box. Other were; Lt. Mish with gunners Clark & Chustz, Lt. Andersen, with gunners Fuerher & Schafer, Lt.

75

Ebenstein with gunners Hantske & Newell; and Lt. Svenson with gunners Fild & Phenning. B-26 pathfinders again led the mission, with bombing being done thru the clouds. As before, the results were unobserved. The target was the fuel dump at Couterne,

France. No flak to cause damage, all planes and crews came back in good shape. The trip lasted 3:45.

In the afternoon, attempts were made at another mission. The planes took off with a heavy overcast overhead. In trying to penetrate it, the formation split up and was forced



to return. The ships came back and landed after an hour's duration. With this low ceiling still persisting, operational flying was called off for the day.

The only training flying for the day was a three-hour flight in the Oxford by Capt. McNulty. At night, a plane was picked from each squadron for night flying. Our representative was 1st Lt. Ebenstein, in a A-20G. Their flight lasted 1:15. This ended the day's flying.

July 13, 1944

Today can be summed up by "no flying due to inclement weather". Rain, with a low ceiling grounded all ships. Major-General Brereton was to visit the base, but was detained. This visit is post-poned to some very near future date. Awards will be given out the day of his visit, to crew chiefs and combat crewmembers. Best scene of the month was a cutthroat poker game between the inseparables – Prentiss, McBrien, and Osborne.

July 14, 1944

The weather cleared up enough today for flying. So Mission # 98 was planned. After briefing, the crews went to the planes and proceeded to warm them up. Red flares from the control tower, signals a delay in the mission. Not an uncommon occurrence. From here on it was a matter of "sweating it out".

During the lull, three new pilots to the squadron – Lts Parker, Montrose, and McCreery flew some transition flights. They entered the squadron about three days ago. With them were: Sgt's Galloway, Kochan, Gandy, Fuehrer (no relation to Adolf), Parkman, and Felkel. Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg, logged 1:30 "Gee" Navigation in an A-20J. Getting in practice bombing skill was Capt. "Red" McNulty, with Lt. Bursiel. They flew two practice missions logging 3:40 and dropping eight 100 lb. bombs.

In the late afternoon, another attempt was made at the mission, and this time completed. We had ten crews in the second box, with Lt. Osborne and crew as box leaders. The target was the railroad embankment, at Bourth, France. Again B-25-6 pathfinders led the way, and bombing was done thru the clouds. Results – unobserved. There was little flak to disturb the bombers. The journey lasted 3:45.

Lt. Meredith, with gunners Euga and McDonald, had a little difficulty. Upon returning from the mission, they were forced to land at Ford, England, due to engine  
76

trouble. The ship was brought down safely, and crew unharmed. Capt. Conant picked them up later in the Oxford.

Night flying was scheduled, but later called off. Thus ended this rather quiet day. Capt. Conant, acting CO, will be relieved when Major Price returns tomorrow from a 7-day pass. Pictures of his offspring from home brought smiles to Lt. Osborne. Now he can celebrate his 7-day pass in style.

July 15, 1944

Stand-down tells the story today. Training – Lt's McCreery, Montrose, and Parker flew transitional, 1 hour each, and formation, 2 hours each. Capt. McNulty logged 2:00 "Gee" time in the A-20J. Lt. Downing flew 1:45 nite formation. This ended the day's flying activities. Sporting his new silver bar is 1st Lt. C.C. Mish. Several officers and enlisted men received Air Medals, etc. in a presentation at Group Headquarters.

July 16, 1944

We had a difficult time getting Mission # 99 of the ground today. Twice, once in the morning, and once in the afternoon, the planes and crews were alerted. Each time the order was given for an hour's delay. It was getting on one's nerves.

Finally, late in the afternoon, the planes took off on their mission. We had six crews from this squadron in the formation. B-26 pathfinders led the Group, and the bombing was done thru the clouds, with the results being unobserved. The target was St. Hillaire-Du-Harcourt, a railroad bridge. The trip lasted 3:45, with no flak to cause damage to crew or plane.

The following crews flew this mission – Capt. McNulty, with Lt. Bursiel and gunners Fejes and Judd; Lt. Peede, with gunners Giesy and Hibbs; Lt. Cruze, with gunners Love and Adair; Lt. Bartmus, with gunners Orr and Hantske, Lt. Cannon, with gunners Robinson and Erzehenski; and Lt. Clausen, with gunners Fetko and Brown. Throughout the day, training flying was accomplished. Lt's Montrose and Parker logged about 2 hours each of formation; Major Price and Lt. Meagher logged one hour each of "Gee" Navigation. Capt. Conant, with Lt. Downing, flew Lt. Forma to a "rest Home for a 7-day furlough. There was no night flying for this squadron.

July 17, 1944

Another one of those days, where you wait-wait-wait! All day we tried to get a mission off, but were unsuccessful. All day was spent in a standby, or one-hour delay. Thoughts were turned to the training aspect of our flying over here.

77

Lt. Downing logged 2:15 in the Oxford, Capt. Conant --: 40 in the Oxford. Capt. Prentiss, with Lt. McBrien slugged away at the practice bombing range. Major Prentiss gained 1:25 navigation in an A-20J.

In the night field were; Lt's Meagher, Colquitt and Andersen. This was a formation flight, with Lt. Meagher in an A-20J; with Lt. Burg as B/N. They led the flight for duration of 1:30. This was the last flying for the day. All day we were sweating out Gp. Mission # 100. What will tomorrow bring?

July 18, 1944

"What will tomorrow bring?" As I look back at yesterday's entry, that wording has an ironical ring. It is understandable when one says "I hope tomorrow never comes" as comprising on the disastrous days in the squadron's history. In the morning, we furnished seven crew for the celebrated 100<sup>th</sup> Mission. Capt. McNulty, with Lt. Bursiel and Gunners Fejes and Judd, led the first box on their raid. In the deputy position was Capt. "Rick" Prentiss, with Lt. McBrien and Gunners Fild and Phenning. Flying in the first box, with their crews were; Downing, Kreh, Leshner, and Welsh. Lt. Hill was scheduled, but at take-off his airspeed indicator wasn't working, and he scratched.

The target was a strong point at Giberville, France. The flak—intense. Over the target Capt. McNulty's ship was hit in the nose by flak, destroying and disabling the bombsight. Lt. Bursiel was hit in the face, but not seriously. All other ships received a pasting, but continued on. With the lead ship unable to bomb, and the target in smoke from previous raids, the ships returned to the base unsuccessful. Capt. Prentiss made a

hot landing, due to a flat tire. Upon landing, both of the 20J's were taken to the Service Group for battle damage. The journey lasted 3:30.

On the lighter side, in the early afternoon, was a visit to our base by Lt. Gen.

Brereton. His appearance was indeed an honor, and he gave out medals at a ceremony.

Recipient for our squadron, bringing back a DFC on his chest was Lt. C.C. Mish. He sure earned it, and our salute and respect goes with it.

Business must go on as usual, and after the pomp and glory was over, an order for briefing and the inevitable mission came. This time thirteen crews represented us.

Leading in his A-20J was Major Price, with Lt. Hand and Gunners Fejes and Judd. In the deputy position was Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg and Gunners Robbins and Simpson.

Flying "window" was Lt. Bartmus.

The target was Gles-Sur-Risle, France – a railroad junction. Our ships were in the first box, and they bombed the hell out of the target. The scoring being "excellent". We were destined to pay for the good bombing, and we did—heavily. Again the Jerries had our number, and the flak was intense and deadly. All ships suffered hits. On the way back, 1st Lt. R.K. Cruze, with his gunners Sgt's Giesy and Cherry, were forced to "ditch" in the Channel. They did so, and it proved fatal to two of them. Lt. Cruze, as the story is  
78

told, either had his "Mae West" damaged or discarded it, and tried to swim towards the on-coming Air-Sea Rescue Boat. As a result, he drowned before they could get to him.

Sgt. Cherry was picked up, and they worked on him for hours, but couldn't bring him around. Sgt. Giesy was the only one to escape, and he is in the hospital now – alive. We

will miss these men, one new and the other a veteran of the squadron. Words are weak, and can't do justice to these men who gave their all for freedom of the world.

The rest of the ships returned to the base flak riddled. Upon landing, Lt. Kenny's plane was taken straight to the Service Group for battle damage. Ground crews spent many long hours patching and repairing the rest of the planes.

One more boy goes to the soil of Cambridge. Not previously mentioned, for reason, S/Sgt. William H. Coe, Gunner, was injured with other gunners on their way to the railroad station. They were on the first hour of their 7-day leave. For unknown reasons, the jeep bearing these boys cracked up. All occupants were injured, Coe's injuries being the worst. We were pulling for him, day after day, and word was received tonite that he passed on. Nineteen or twenty years old, with 47 missions to his credit, --  
it

doesn't add up. What does in a world at war?

Tonite will be spent by many, in silent tribute and thought, to three Americans who will never see their homeland again. There will be no weeping and crying here—only the strengthening of the resolve to drive the enemy back and win the peace these boys died for.

So ends another day, with glory and tragedy melded together in pool of twentyfour hours.

July 19, 1944

Now over the 100<sup>th</sup> mission, days like today are being considered as routine. The

day was spent with training flying in the morning, and an operational mission in the afternoon.

In the morning, the newest pilots were given a heavy schedule. Lt's McCreery, Montrose, and Parker flew formation with Lt's Bartmus and Downing more or less watching over. Thus in the early afternoon, these three newcomers flew straight navigation. Slugging away at the practice bombing range, were the bombardier-navigator teams. First in the morning was Major Price with Lt. Hand. Immediately following was Capt. McNulty and Lt. Bursiel. Rounding out the morning and early afternoon were Capt.

Conant with navigation flying and Lt. Meagher with Lt. Burg in an A-20J, logging "Gee" time. So ended the training period.

Late afternoon brought on the mission. It was Mission # 102, with seven crews participating from our squadron. The target this time was the Fuel Dump at Bruz, France. Things proved lively for Capt. Prentiss and crew before take-off. He was scheduled in the A-20J # 444, and while pre-fighting, it caught fire. That is the radio and "Gee" equipment caught fire. The plane was unfit for service as a result and the crew had to rush

79  
to Squadron "C" for another A-20J. They made the grade OK, and were the last plane off the ground.

Upon reaching the target, clouds and shadows obscured it, and the bombs were not dropped by our flight. There was no flak to cause havoc, and "area escort" was provided. All planes and crew returned to the base unharmed. The journey lasted an average of four hours. Lt. Miracle flew the "window" mission.

This ended the day, with the ground crews servicing the planes late in the night.

July 20, 1944

"Stand-down" was called for today, and a heavy schedule of training flying was in effect. Everyone received training flying on one phase or another. To top off the day, night flying was in effect, with the last ship landing at 0045.

July 21, 1944

This marks the second day of inactivity. Somehow this is more ragged on the nerves than is a mission day. Conditions just don't seem to be favorable – either weather or some unknown reason.

The day was spent with training flying being heavily stressed. In the formation field were; Lt's Parker, Montrose, Miracle, McCreedy, Cannon; flying navigation were; Capt. McNulty and Lt. Meagher; and finishing the day with practice bombing was Major Price with Lt. Hand.

"Sweating it out" his first 7-day leave was Lt. Svenson. Also eagerly anticipating their leave was the incorporable team of Capt. Prentiss and Lt. McBrien. All England look out and take cover – they're loose.

July 22, 1944

Back in the operational field once more, with Mission # 103 being run off. During the morning and early afternoon, training flying was in progress. Logging transition were Lt's Parker, Montrose, and McCreery. Following in the formation time were; Lt's

Miracle, Parker, and Montrose. Capt. Conant test flighted A-20G-35 # 894. Late in the afternoon the mission was received and the crews alerted. We had eleven crews from our squadron flying the mission. Leading the first box was Major Price and crew. As deputy leader of the first box was Capt. McNulty and crew. The target was Bourth, France (Railroad Embankment). Again we had B-26 pathfinder leading the way, and the bombing was done thru clouds. As a result, the bombing was unobserved. After a journey of four hours, all the planes and crews returned to the base safely.

80

We have a new Operations Officer in the squadron. Capt. "Red" McNulty is replacing Capt. "Hiram" Conant. Capt Conant will go back to his old position as Flight Leader. Inspiring to combat crews in the news of fourteen-day furlongs coming up. Observed also are the new A-26's occasionally flying over.

Wearing shiny silver bars is 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. F.H. Bursiel, who received them about two weeks ago.

July 23, 1944

Both operational flying and training flying composed the day's activities. In the morning, the planes took off on Mission # 104. We had six crews, all of which flew in the flight of the first box. Capt. Conant, with gunners Robinson and Brzezinski, was flight leader. Flying "window" were Lt's Mish and Kenny.

Again a B-26 pathfinder led the flights; thus the results were unobserved as the bombing was done thru the clouds. The target was the Railroad Bridges and Embankment at Evreux, France. With 3:45 in the logbook, the crews returned to the base. The rest of the day was spent in training. Lt. Osborne with Lt. Forma flew a practice bombing and "Gee" flight. In the formation field were Lt's Parker, Leshner and Montrose. Lt. Ebenstein tested A-20J # 719; thus ending the day activities. Nite flying was in effect again, and the honors were to Lt's Parker and Montrose. After being up for 1:15, they landed and finished the day's activities.

A much looked forward to A-26 landed at the field today, causing much excitement and speculation. We also gained five new gunners to the squadron. Former B-17 gunners, they are; S/Sgt. Frank Noteriani, S/Sgt. D. Raines, S/Sgt. K.G. Lagerman, Sgt. W. Leonard, and Sgt. J. Roberts.

July 24, 1944

All day was spent in "sweating out" a mission that never did come off. Around three o'clock in the afternoon, crews went out to the planes and were recalled. The day was not wasted, however, as training flying was accomplished.

Lt's Meredith, Cannon, Parker, Montrose, and McCready flew a formation flight of 1:30 duration. Lt. Meagher, in an A-20J with Lt. Burg, flew both navigation and practice bombing. They dropped six 100 lb. practice bombs on this range. Lt. Ebenstein ended the flying activities with 1:30 navigation.

Late in the afternoon, Col. Mace assembled the Group in the hanger for a talk. In it he commended all sections for their fine work demonstrated during an inspection by

81

□ X Bomber Command. The Group got a rating of “superior”; for which Col. Mace expressed his gratitude to all squadrons.

July 25, 1944

Back into operational flying, with Mission # 105 being flown. Early this morning the planes took off with an important target in view. We had thirteen planes and crews participating from this squadron. Capt. McNulty, with Lt. Bursiel and gunners Newell and Burkhalter, was deputy leader of the first box. The rest of our crews comprised the second and third flights of the second box.

The target was what is known as “area bombing”, and we bombed in support of the ground forces in France. The exact location was the area surrounding St. Gilles, France. As there is no specific target, the effect of the bombing is given in a percentage. The second box, which our boys were in, received a 90% on their bombing. The first box rated a 75%. There was little flak, and all ships and crews returned to the base intact, after a journey of 3:15.

We had to “sweat out” Capt. McNulty, who had trouble getting his landing gear to function properly. His nose-wheel wouldn’t lock into position, and after an hours gyrations, he finally accomplished the difficult task of putting it in place. He landed the craft safe and sound – he was as cool as a cucumber. “Red” McNulty is a veteran over here since the days of the blitz. Formerly he was a pilot in the RAF, and is capable of handling most all of their ships. Red hair, and deep clear eyes, he never fly’s without his traditional orange silk scarf. It has carried him well so far.

Capt. Bailey and Lt. Mazanec, both of Intelligence, went along to observe the results. This being the second mission for Capt. Bailey.

Training flying was the aim for the rest of the day. The team of Price and Hand were on the practice bombing range again. Following were Osborne and Forma, dropping six practice bombs. Capt. Conant and Lt. Ebenstein both gained navigation time. With no night flying in view, the day’s activities ended.

Report has it the Lt. Powell – 670<sup>th</sup>, is top bombardier in the 97<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing.

Our own Lt’s Forma and Hand, rank second and fourth respectively. That makes three from this Group in the first five positions. Quite an honor for these boys and our squadron.

July 26, 1944

Early this morning brought Group Mission # 106, with seven crews from the 668<sup>th</sup> taking part. As deputy leader of the second was Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg (B/N) and Gunners Robbins and Simpson. Flying in the second flight of the second box were the teams of; Bartmus – Orr & Kochan; Andersen – Euga & Schafer; Mish – Clark & Chustz;

82  
Miracle—Sieg & Burkhalter; Clausen – Fetko & Brown; and McCreery, Leonard & Fuehrer. Lt. Kenny and crew acted as “spare”.

The target was a strong point at Marigny, France, and we gave support to the armored forces of the Allies. It was area bombing, and the results were abortive because of weather and visibility. All planes returned safely.

In the afternoon training flying assumed its role. Capt. McNulty and Lt. Bursiel

made two flights of practice bombing, logging 2:50 and dropping 12 practice bombs. Lt. Meagher followed suit, with Lt. Burg, logging 1:00 and dropping 6 bombs. Lt's Welsh and Cannon were on the "night shift" each logging 1:10 of night navigation. That ended the day's flying activities.

Around 1400 we had a day "alert". A robot bomb came over the field on the northeast side, causing quite a sensation. We followed its path thru binoculars and saw it come down and explode roughly three miles away. This is the first time many of us have seen them in the daylight, especially at this field.

July 27, 1944

This morning can be classified as the "A" for effort. A mission was scheduled and after briefing the planes took off only to be recalled after an hour's duration. That was to be all the operational flying for the day, as no more missions were attempted. Even the training flying phase was brief, as most of our ships were alerted for a mission that never came. Getting in navigation time were: Major Price, Lt. Osborne, Lt. Parker, and Lt. McCready. Later on both Capt. McNulty and Lt. Meagher accomplished some practice bombing.

Moustaches are becoming popular lately. Latest adornment belongs to Lt.

Osborne; at present we are skeptical of its presence.

July 28, 1944

Today was more or less of a routine day, with both a mission being flown and training flying being accomplished. In the morning was Group Mission # 107, with B-26's leading as "pathfinders". We furnished eight crews from our squadron, with two acting as "windows". Capt. "Red" McNulty again led the first box with his crew, and the rest of our boys flew in the second flight of the second box. Colonel Mace was along in A-20G # 701.

The target in the bombardier's sights was the ammunition dump at La Gouesniere, France. The results were unknown – no cover "PFF". All planes and crews returned after a four-hour flight. Flying the "window" were; Lt's Kenny and Welsh with Gunners Spadoni, Hornbeck, Wright, and Kovak. There was no flak to cause difficulties.

83

For those who were not "alerted", training flying was in progress. Flying a three ship formation were; Lt's McCready, Cannon and Ebenstein. Lt's Meredith and Kreh flew local navigation. On the practice bombing range was Lt. Meagher with Lt. Burg.

July 29, 1944

Bright and early this morning, Mission # 108 was planned. Chow and briefing were accomplished predawn, and after the sun came up – the planes took off. We had seven crews representing us. After an hour and a half duration, they appeared over the base, having been recalled. So all the early rising and attempt was for nothing.

"Standdown"

existed for the rest of the day, and some training flying was done.

Out of the peace and quiet of the afternoon came the order for Operations to move to an adjoining building. The "beavers" (McNulty & Osborne Inc.) decided to better things and conditions. The wheels of progress were in motion, and by night things were

just settling down. All files, furniture, etc, were moved to the new building, and Operations is carrying on from there. "You never know in the ETO!"

July 30, 1944

Today marks another "first" in the history of the Group over here in England. We ran Mission # 108 in the morning, with a different type of bomb load. Instead of the usual 500 lb. G. P.'s, the planes were loaded with fragmentation bombs. The target this time was "area bombing" at Caumont, France, in support of the Allied ground forces. With a low ceiling prevailing, B-26 pathfinders were used to lead the way.

We had seven crews take part in the bombing, of which two of them were box leaders. Again, it was Major Price in A-20J # 717, with Lt. Hand as B/N, and Gunners Lemonds and Naifsh (their first mission). They led the first box, while Lt. Osborne in A-20J # 640, with Lt. Forma B/N and Gunners Kelly and Lagerman, led the second box. It was a case of bombing through the clouds, and the results at that time were unobserved. Later however, reports came through from higher headquarters that the bombing was successful, and was partly responsible for a successful drive in that area. All planes returned with no damage after a 3:30 journey. Another mission was "sweated out" but never came off. So ended operational flying.

Training flying took over with formation flying most prominent. Landing a sixship formation was Lt. Bartmus, with Lt's Parker, Clausen, Colquitt, Montrose, and Cannon. Capt. Prentiss and Lt. McBrien (fresh back from Torquay after a 7-day pass) logged 1:45 navigation and practice bombing. This finished the day's flying activities and ended another day in Squadron "A's" history.

July 31, 1944

The sun introduced a busy day to the squadron today. First of the bat, in the morning, was Mission # 109. We had a "break" in the fact that we only furnished six  
84

crews. Leading them in the A-20J # 717 was Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg (B/N) and Gunners Robbins and Simpson. Flying in the other planes were; Lt's Downing, Clausen, Peede, Colquitt, and Cannon. Lt. Meagher led them in the second flight of the first box. The target was the Marshalling Yards at Liseaux, France. This was the only target left as low ceiling obscured the primary and secondary targets. The first box made their run and bombed, but the second box didn't get the chance. A low cloud formation covered the target and rather than bomb haphazardly, they never dropped their bombs. Pictures showed the results of the first box's bombing as "Fair". Lately these have been "milk-runs" with no flak etc. to hamper operations. The planes and crews returned safely after a 4:15 journey.

Upon their landing, ground crews labored steadily to prepare for the forthcoming mission. They hadn't much time to spare, as a few hours later, Mission # 110 took off. We sent twelve crews out on this mission, with two A-20J's along as flight lead planes. In them were Lt's Osborne and Meagher (twice today), with their respective crews. Osborne led the third flight of the second box with Lt's Peede, Downing, Andersen, Kenny, and Leshar in it. Lt. Meagher led the second flight of the second box with Lt's Svenson, Harris, Meredith, Kreh, and Miracle in it.



The target was the bridge at Mantes/Gassicourt, France. This target was the primary target for this morning. Nothing obscured it this time, and the boys blew hell out of it. The bombing was done in flights, with each flight varying in success. The flights we are interested in scored as follows: 3<sup>rd</sup> flight, 2<sup>nd</sup> box – (Osborne's) "excellent". 2<sup>nd</sup> flight, 2<sup>nd</sup> box – (Meagher's) "good".

It was another happy landing, with crews and planes in A-1 condition, with one exception. Lt. Leshner, on his take-off, experienced right engine trouble. Rather than turn back, he nursed it as long as he could, hoping to correct the ailment. After a 45-minute battle, he found that he was losing altitude, and then the engine "conked" out altogether. He jettisoned his bomb load, and notified the Gunners of a crash landing. He brought her in on a belly landing, doing a good job of it. Gunner – S/Sgt. A.J. Anatanatis suffered a broken leg out of it. Gunner – S/Sgt. H.R. Hedrick suffered minor lacerations, and assisted Anatanatis and Leshner out of the plane. Lt. Leshner escaped with no injuries. Anatanatis at present, resting comfortable in the hospital.

These two missions took up most of the day, and there was no training flying to speak of. All in all, with the exception of the accident, it was a good day for the Group and Squadron. At present Operations is getting "acclimatized" to the new location and conditions.

August 1, 1944

First of the month, and spelling headaches for the Operations Gang. Flying was limited to training, today, and not much of that. Lt's Colquitt, Cannon, Clausen, Svenson, 85

and Harris logged formation; while Major Price, Capt. Prentiss, and Lt. Bartmus gained navigation time. In all there was only a little over eleven hours flown by the squadron. Night flying was planned, but called off to everyone's satisfaction.

August 2, 1944

Back into the old routine today, with Mission # 111 being flown. We furnished eight crews for the loading list, with Lt. Svenson acting as "spare". There were two planes acting as "window" ships, manned by Lt's Ebenstein and Shaefer (Group Hq). Leading the second flight of the first box, in a A-20J, was the team of Prentiss, McBrien, McCreery and Sylva.

The target this time was the ammunition dump at Caudebeck, France.

There was some flak over the target, but the planes dropped their bombs impartial to it. On the return trip back, Lt. Cannon experienced some trouble. His right engine started a fuss, evidently having been hit by flak. Loosing altitude all the time, Lt. Cannon was forced to make a landing at Ford, England. Himself and crew (Gunners Robinson & Przezinski) were unharmed, and returned later to the base with Capt. Conant. The rest of the ships returned safely after a 3:15 journey. The bombing was done by flight with varying results. Our flight scored a "Fair" on their bombing.

The rest of the day was spent in training flying. Capt. McNulty and Lt.

Bursiel were at the practice bombing range. Lt. Clausen flew navigation. Lt. Svenson logged 1:15 of combat formation.

Our "greetings" to a new crew in this squadron, namely – Lt. Hale and

Gunners Geyer and Bentzler. Fresh from the States by was of Ireland. Interesting Notes—Lt. Peede top man in combat hours in this squadron with 156:35 to date. Lt. Downing, 2<sup>nd</sup>; Lt. Bartmus, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Leading with total hours as pilot is; Capt. Conant, 1<sup>st</sup>—2062:10. Capt. McNulty, 2<sup>nd</sup>—1585:25. Capt. Prentiss, 3<sup>rd</sup>—1248:30. These figures were computed as of the present date.

August 3, 1944

At 0230 this morning, “stand-down” conditions were called down from Group Headquarters, for today. Automatically, the day’s activities were confined to various training flying. The most prominent of these being individual training navigation hops by pilots. Total time logged by the squadron with these single flights amounted to 28:15.

Everyone more or less took care of those little things that wait for spare moments. News from all fronts predicts an early ending of the enemy activities. With the Russians continuing their terrific drive, and the Americans and British supporting from the west, the pressure is being applied. Xmas dinner in the States would look good to all of us.

August 4, 1944

86

All day was spent “sweating out” a mission that finally took off at early evening. Previous to this, around 11:00 in the morning, we saw a sight that will long be remembered. A flight of B-17’s returning from a mission caused everyone to stare at the sky. They looked very majestic, with the sun glistening on their silver sides. Suddenly one of the ships, above all the rest, was seen to be streaming parachutes in its wake. No one of us on the ground realized what was happening, till it fell to the ground three miles away, and blew up. We counted nine chutes, praying that all of the crew made good their escape. Having its last word, the plane blew up once more, spreading smoke and parts all over the surrounding territory. It was a scene that made an indelible mark on everyone’s memory.

Training flying was conducted all afternoon, till the order for briefing and “ready time” came through. We had ten crews take to the planes on this Mission # 112. Leading the first box was Major Price, and leader of the second box was Capt. McNulty. The target in the Bombardier’s sight was the Marshalling Yards at Beauvais, France. The bombing was done in flights, with all planes dropping their bombs. Flak was everpresent, and evasive action was used by the leaders. The planes were hit by flak, but not one suffered serious damage. They all returned to the base after a journey of 3:15. Films after being developed give various testimonies to the bombing of the flights. Our flights—first flight—first box (Major Price) scored a “good”. 1<sup>st</sup> flight—2<sup>nd</sup> box (Capt. McNulty) also scored “good”. The mission was considered successful in all respects.

Latest rumors speak of a shake up in Group Headquarters. The unofficial story is that Col Mace will leave the Group. Replaced by Lt. Col. Aylesworth. Further rumor is of

a promotion for Col. Mace to Brig. Gen. Mace.

August 5, 1944

There was no time for idleness today, as it was a two-mission day. Preparations

and briefing were pre-noon, and roughly 12:45 the mission took off. There were 36 aircraft dispatched by the Group, of which seven were from this squadron. The B/N team consisted of: Lt. Osborne, Lt. Burg (B/N), and Gunners Kelly and Lagerman, in A-20J # 640. Flying in the same flight with them were; Lt's Meredith, Svenson, Andersen, Kenny, Montrose, and McCready.

The target was the Marshalling Yards at Compiègne, France, and the bombing was done by flights at 12,000 feet. There was practically no interference of any kind to spoil the bombardier's aim, and the results verified the situation. Out of the six flights, four scored "excellent" and the other two – "good". Our flight led by Osborne, scored "good". There were 192, 500 lb. demolition bombs dropped, totaling 96,000 lbs. of explosives on the target. All crews and planes returned to the base after this successful mission. This was Group Mission # 113, lasting 3:30.

The field was a scene of activity, in preparing for the next coming mission. The ground crews have shown in the past of their worthiness, and again they proved it. Just a  
87

few hours after the plane had landed, they were ready to go after being checked out, loaded and refueled.

It wasn't long before the crews returned to their planes, ready to take off. Again the Group dispatched 36 aircraft, in which we had 12 planes and crews represented us. Landing their respective flights in the A-20J's were the B/N Teams of; Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg, and Gunners Robbins and Naifeh; Capt. Prentiss, with Lt. McBrien, and Gunners McCready and Sylva. This was Group Mission # 114, of 4:00 duration.

The primary target was the Railroad Bridge and embankment at Laigle, France.

This time there was some flak to hinder the bombing, but the bombs were dropped in contempt of it. There were 166, 500 lb. GP bombs dropped, causing great damage to the target. The bombing was by flights again, from 7,000 feet and 9,000 feet. Group statistics showed two aircraft failing to bomb due to mechanical failure; one aircraft destroyed in crashed landing in Normandy with crew safe; and four aircraft damaged by battle (flak). The results varied with 3 "excellent"; 1 fair; 1 gross; and 1 "no photo coverage". Lt. Meagher's flight scored "unknown" – no photo coverage. Capt. Prentiss's flight scored "excellent". All of our squadron's planes and crews returned safely to the base, the last plane landing in the near darkness.

So ended the day, a good day in the Group's history. There is no doubt that our bombing, and the bombing of the other Groups over here are playing a big part in the rapid movement of our Ground Forces. There is a deep bond between the air and ground forces, each realizing that victory is depending on the close cooperation between them. The clock ticks on, everyone too tired to wonder what tomorrow brings.

August 6, 1944

Today was more or less a repetition of yesterday, in the sense that we ran two missions again. It was the Group's biggest day for receiving fame and glory, and needless to say a heavy price was paid for it. We were given our most important target so far, since

we have been here, and we really showed our value to all.

In the morning, Group Mission # 115 took off only to become abortive. The Group sent out 41 aircraft, of which three were to act as "window". From our squadron came eight crews, with Lt. Osborne in an A-20J, leading the first box. Lt. Ebenstein flew the "window" ship, and Lt. McCready acted as "spare".

The target was the Railroad Bridge, at Oissel, France. Before they could reach it, they were recalled over enemy territory because of inclement weather. The formation returned from the vicinity of Beauchamps, France, after a 2:30 journey. There were no losses, casualties, or battle damage.

In the afternoon came the big news that set everyone to a high pitch. Headquarters Intelligence from the Ninth Air Force, notified X Bomber Command of a target that had to be destroyed. The situation was – 4 Nazi Panzer Divisions were ready to cross the  
88

bridge at Oissel, France, and it had to be destroyed before they could complete the maneuver. This was the same bridge that was our target for the morning mission, before we were recalled. Brig. Gen. Anderson had the task of assigning a Group to this job, and out of the whole damn command, he chose us; and he wasn't wrong in doing it either, as time proved.

The wheels of progress were set in motion, and Group Mission # 116 took off late in the afternoon. The Group dispatched 40 aircraft, of which three were "window" ships. From our squadron came eight crews. Lt. Osborne, in A-20J # 640, with Lt. Forma as B/N, and gunners Kelly and Lagerman (leading the whole Group in the first box); Lt. Ebenstein, with Gunners Roberts and Newell ("windows ship"); Lt. Parker, with Gunners

Galloway and Kochan; (1st flight, 1st box); Lt. Andersen, with Gunners Euga and Schafer;(1st flight, 1st box); Capt. Prentiss, with Gunners Sylva and McCreery; (1st flight, 1st box). Lt. Montrose, with Gunners Gandy and Felkel; (1st flight, 1st box); and Lt. Welsh, with Gunners Wright and Novak; (1st flight, 1st box). Lt. McCready acted as "spare" and returned to the base after a 1:40 flight.

The formation reached Oissel, and there they encountered the heaviest flak they have every experienced. They went through four minutes of deadly flak to drop their bombs. The bombing was done in flights, and all dropped their load but one flight. They couldn't drop because their leading bombardier was wounded by flak. There were four ships to go down over the target. Lt. Welsh, and crew were hit and seen to go down, with only one chute escaping from the plane. Lt. Col. Farmer, Group Operations Officer, was also hit and seen going down. The other two crews and planes were from sister squadrons.

On the way back, is when more trouble developed. Every ship in the formation was hit heavily, and the dropping out started. As this is a Squadron Log, I will confine the story to our own crews. Lt. Osborne's right engine suddenly went out, being hit by flak, and he was forced down. He coaxed the plane along far enough to land on the Normandy beachhead, where he came in on a wing and belly landing, the tire having blown out. Gunner Kelly was slightly wounded by flak, luckily, and the rest of the crew OK but for shock.

The rest of our boys made it to the English shore, where they began to drop anywhere it was practical. Lt's Parker, Andersen, Montrose, and crews all landed away from the base in England. Every ship heavily damaged by flak. Capt. "Rick" Prentiss also guided his plane to a forced landing somewhere in England.

Out of all our planes to bomb the target, the only one to return was Lt. "Gus" Ebenstein, and was he glad to be back. Thus our squadron sent out seven ships over the target, and only one returned. After all reports got back to Operations, it was established that the one crew "missing" (from this squadron) was Lt. Welsh and Gunners Wright and Novak. The rest of the planes returned to home base the next day, after being temporarily patched up.

89

Here are the results that make our group take pride. Out of the six flights, four scored "excellent", one scored "good", and one didn't bomb. As Capt. McCracken put it (□ X Bomber Command Representative) and other higher officers from Wing, Command, etc. "It wasn't good bombing, it wasn't excellent bombing, it was perfect bombing". The mission was a complete success.

Incidentally, our flight, which was led by Lt. Osborne, scored the regular "excellent".

During their short sojourn in France, they were able to find and bring back Nazi souvenirs. The most prominent being a German swastika flag of enormous proportions. Thusly, the team of Osborne, Forma, Kelly, and Lagerman made out OK in France. They won't tell us all that happened though, seems like they left the best part out.

The day ended with various thoughts coursing thru the heads of many here. We won much fame and glory for the outfit, and we paid heavily for it. We have proved beyond a doubt that we are capable of any task, and that we are ready for any task. To those who didn't return, we can safely say, they struck a blow that cannot be measured by

any scale. Their sacrifice makes it all the more sacred. We hope they remain alive, even thought it be in a prison camp. We will be there soon, to release them.

August 8, 1944

Today was the opposite of yesterday, with two missions being accomplished. In the morning was Group Mission # 117, with 39 aircraft being dispatched, of which three were window. The bombing was done by flights of six, from 10,000 feet, and 11,000 feet, and the results were varying. From our squadron came fourteen crews, of which two were flight leaders in the A-20J's. Capt. McNulty, with Lt. Bursiel and Gunners Fejes and Judd, led the second flight of the second box. Leading the third flight of the second box was Lt. Meagher, with Lt. Burg and Gunners Robbins and Haifen. The target was the Railroad Embankment and Junction at Frevent, France.

The results of our crews were undetermined, because of inadequate photo coverage. The bombs were reported falling into the smoke of the previous attack. There was moderated accurate flak, causing two aircraft from other squadrons to go down over the target. All aircraft from our squadron returned bearing evidence of flak. There were 157 x 500 lbs. GP bombs dropped on the primary target.

Lt. "Gee" Meredith probably had the worst experience of the lot. On his way to the target from the base, he noticed a pilot signaling him from a wing position. He looked out and discovered that one of the wing bombs was loose, which didn't exactly raise his morale. The bomb being armed and very much alive, caused him to nurse the ship back to the base, while the others went on. After a feather landing, he brought the ship to a stop, and left it but quick. Alls well that ends well.

90

In the early afternoon, while the ground crews labored refueling, reloading, and patching flak holes, another mission was planned. Thusly, at 1800 Group Mission # 118 took off, with 36 aircraft comprising the formation. We had seven crews from this squadron participating.

Leading the first box, and the first flight, was Major Price, in an A-20J with Lt. Hand and Gunners Haifen and Lemonds. Flying in his wake were, Lt's Svenson, Kenny, Montrose, Cannon, and Captain Prentiss. Lt. Clausen was acting as "spare" and didn't fly the mission.

The Radar Control Station at Bois De Pierre Chateau, France, was to feel the weight of our bombs. There were 142 x 500 lb. GP's bombs dropped from the altitude of 11,500 feet and 12,500 feet, and the bombing was again done by flights. Our flight scored "excellent" with the bombs blanketing the Chateau. The rest of the flights scored varying from "good" to "fair". There was some flak, but no loses or casualties to the Group. All ships returned to the base at dusk, ending a very busy day for both Group and Squadron. The journey last exactly four hours.

August 9, 1944

There was to be no let up in activities, as today turned out to be another twomission day. No one is complaining, as that is what we are here for. Bright and early in the morning, Group Mission # 119 took off to blow hell out of Jerry once more. Evidently higher headquarters were not satisfied with last night's bombing, as 36 aircraft were dispatched to the same target. We had twelve crews carrying our colors into battle. Leading the second flight of the second box was the team of Capt. McNulty, Lt. Bursiel (B/N) and Gunners Fejes and Judd. Right behind him, leading the third flight of the second box was the team of Lt. Meagher, Lt. Burg (B/N) and Gunners Robbins and Sylva.

The bombing was done by flights of six, from the altitude of 11,300 feet, and 12,000 feet. There were 134 x 500 lb. GP's bombs dropped on the primary target. Again the scores varied with our boys doing well for themselves. Capt. McNulty's flight bomber, but results were unknown due to inadequate photo coverage. The Group Bombardier rated the bombing as "excellent" as the bombs fell into the smoke of previous attacks. Lt. Meagher's flight scored "excellent" and no doubt about it. The bombs scored a long pattern right along the primary target.

The flak was moderate and inaccurate, there being no losses, casualties, or heavy damage. All aircraft returned to the base after a journey of 3:45.

At mid-afternoon the orders for briefing came over the Tanney system. The alert

was on again, and roughly at 1800 the planes were off on Group Mission #120. Group dispatched 37 aircraft this time and we had seven representatives in it. Three of the aircraft were “window” planes.

91

Leading the second flight of the first box was Lt. Meagher and crew. With him in the flight were; Capt. Prentiss, Lt's Kreh, Ebenstein, Kenny, Harris, and Svenson. The target this time was the Railroad Bridge at Chauny, France. This target was mis-identified by the first box, so they bombed the secondary target, which was a highway bridge at Apilly, France. The bombing was done by flights, and the scoring for our flight was undetermined. The Group dropped 188 x 500 lb. GP's from the altitudes of 11,300 feet and 12,000 feet.

The flak situation was in our favor, being nil, and there were no losses, casualties, or damages. All aircraft returned safely to the base after a journey of 3:30. This ended the day's operational flying. With so much combat flying being done, there isn't much time for training flying. There isn't even much time for the usual horseplay that goes on occasionally. It is a case of fly – brief – fly – hit the sack!

August 10, 1944

The pressure is really on as there was no let-up today. Both Group and Squadron chalked up two more missions. Early in the morning 39 aircraft were sent out to bomb, thus initiating Group Mission # 121. Three of the aircraft in the formation were “window” ships. We had twelve crews from this squadron in the formation, two of them being box leaders.

Major Price and crew were leaders of the first box, and Capt. McNulty and crew were leading the second box. The rest of our boys flew in the first flights of each box. The target was the ammunition dump at Foret de Romare, France, but it was never touched. The formation was recalled from the vicinity of Poix, and was forced to return. There were no losses, casualties, or damage. Lt. Harris was the only one to have a little difficulty. He was forced to land in France, due to engine trouble. He landed the ship OK, and had it up in the air once more after a few hours. The journey lasted 3:30 with nothing to show for it. One of these things.

“If at first you don't succeed, try, try, again”. That seemed most to fit the picture of today's doings. Late in the afternoon, there was a briefing, and the planes took to the air once more. There were 37 aircraft dispatched by Group, and eight of them came from this squadron. The B/N Team was Lt. Meagher & Lt. Burg, with Gunners Robbins and Heitell ?.

Another ammunition dump was the target, this time at La Lande de Louge, France. Again the cards were in Jerry's favor, as the mission turned out to be abortive. This time the weather interceded, and the aircraft couldn't bomb. The formation was forced to return from the vicinity of the target. There was hardly any flak to mention. All of our crews returned, saving one who had trouble. Lt. Kenny, with Gunners Spadoni and Noteriani, crashed shortly after take off. He was flying a squadron “A” ship, with a “window” load. Lt. Kenny luckily escaped injury, but his Gunners weren't so

92

lucky. Sgt. Spadoni suffered a broken jaw and bruises, while Sgt. Noteriani was more seriously injured. At present he is lying in the hospital with undetermined injuries. The cause of the crash landing is unknown to this time. Evidently it was engine failure of some kind.

So another day ends in the life of a bomb squadron. Time is forgotten, only to be recalled when this is all over. We were treated to one of the most impressive sights ever seen over here. Just before midnight, when the sky was clear, over a 1,000 RAF bombers went over. They had on their night-lights, and it looked like the heavens were moving. It took all of ten or fifteen minutes for them to pass over. Searchlights scanned the sky, looking for any enemy aircraft that might try to infiltrate. Those on guard duty appreciated the sight, while the rest appreciated their sack.

August 11, 1944

We chalk up another two missions for this date's activities. There's no letup now, and things are really hot. For 24 hours at a stretch, crews are working on ships. All night long and day, there is someone on the line, loading, re-fueling, repairing, etc. These are times that test the mettle of men.

Early this morning came Group Mission #123. There were 35 aircraft dispatched with three of them acting as "window" ships. From our squadron come twelve crews, with Capt. McNulty as leader of the first box, and Lt. Meagher and crew as deputy leaders of the second box. The rest of our boys flew in the second and third flights of the first box. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Colquitt flew a window ship, but aborted due to an oil leak. He was forced to return to the base after a short time in the air.

The target was the ammunition dump at Foret de Roumare, France. Thirty-one planes dropped 125 x 500 lb. GP's on the target from the altitude of 11,500 feet and 12,000 feet. Box 1 scored "gross" with strikes on buildings and roads, but quite a distance off the main objective. Box 2 scored "good" with strikes surrounding the target.

The

flak was moderate accurate, not causing any serious damage. All crews and planes returned safely to the base after a 3:30 journey. The mission was lead by B-26 Pathfinders, with PFF technique employed.

While ground crews were laboring over the returned ships, the next mission was being planned. The call for all "alerted" crews to briefing was given over the Tanney system. Two hours later the next mission took off.

Group sent out 36 aircraft on Group Mission # 124. This time we only furnished eight crews from our squadron. Capt. McNulty was again leading our flight in an A-20J, with Lt. Bursiel as B/N, and Gunners Fejes and Judd. In his flight were; Lt's Ebenstein, Svenson, Meredith, McCready, Andersen, and Hill. The planes took off at 1830 with the visibility here quite good.

93

The target to feel the weight of our bombs was the Coastal Defense Battery at St. Halo/St. Servan, France. All the planes dropped their bombs, which amounted to 214 x 500 GP's on the target. The bombing was done by flights from the altitude of 12,500 feet and 11,500 feet. The scoring was as follows; 1<sup>st</sup> box – (1) flight – excellent; (2) flight –



excellent; (3) flight – fair; 2<sup>nd</sup> Box –(1) flight – good; (2) flight – fair; (3) flight – fair. The boys from our squadron were flying in the third flight of the first box. There was no flak, so the returning planes were summed up as no losses, casualties, or damage. This makes the third day now of two missions a day. Top men in the pilot's field, with 53 missions apiece are Lt. Bartmus and Downing. Leading the Gunners with 65 missions is T/Sgt. Leo G. Robbins.

On busy operational days like these, there is hardly any time for training flying. The new device to plague men not flying is the six-hour a week close order drill. There must be a logical reason for this, but we can't find it. "C'est la guerre, mon amis".

August 12, 1944

At last comes the "breather" with only one mission being flown this day. All morning and afternoon was spent in "sweating it out". Briefing this time, training flying was in progress. There is never a minute lost at this base, and the results are gratifying. We have a new B/N Team in the squadron now. Lt. Bartmus and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. T.R. Hardy (new bombardier to the squadron) have joined forces. Lt. looks like a good match. They had their first trial on the practice bombing range. On navigation flights were Lt's Wright and Peede. In the transition and formation fields were Lt's Wright, Miracle and Ebenstein. Hooked for night flying was Lt. Hale. So ended the training time.

Late in the afternoon, Group Mission # 125 took off with gusto. Thirty-six aircraft were again dispatched, with twelve crews from this squadron in the formation. We furnished two box leaders, with Capt. McNulty leading the 1<sup>st</sup>, and Lt. Osborne leading the 2<sup>nd</sup>. The rest of the boys flew in the first flights of each box.

The target was the Road Checkpoints in the Argentan Battle Area. This bombing was done in direct support to the ground forces. There were six Groups dispatched from Bomber Command for this target. Out of them all, we got the best scores for our bombing. Thirty-five aircraft of the Group dropped 132 x 500 GP's on the target from the

altitudes of 11,700 feet and 12,200 feet. The bombing was again done by flights of six ships each. Out of the six scores, three were "excellent", two were "good", and one was "poor". Capt. McNulty's flight scored the "excellent", while Lt. Osborne's flight scored "poor". There was no flak present, thusly no casualties, losses, or battle damage. The planes returned after a 3:45 journey.

With the return of the planes was the end of the day's activities. News on all fronts continues to be good and everyone is quite optimistic.

94

August 13, 1944

The Sabbath was greeted with a crescendo of engines, as Group Mission # 126 took off on its mission of destruction. There were 36 aircraft dispatched from the field, with each one carrying four 500 lb. bombs. From our squadron were picked six crews and one spare. Lt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma and Gunners Kelly and Lagerman, led our flight in an A-20J. The rest of the crews from our squadron flew with him, comprising the rest of the flight.

The target was the road chokepoints in the Lisieux Area, France. All of the □ X

Bomber Command was sent out to bomb this target. The bombing was done from the altitudes of 11,500 feet and 12,200 feet in flights of six each. All the flights dropped their bombs with varying results. Our flight dropped a long pattern, with strikes extending from the road into the wooded area. There were one or two direct hits on the road itself. The scoring for our bombing was "fair". Flak was light and fairly accurate, causing damage to six of the Group planes. There were no losses or casualties, and all crews and planes returned to the base safely. This bombing was done to hinder the retreating Jerries in the area. The journey of the planes lasted 3:30.

Word was received from higher headquarters on a "stand-down" for the remaining afternoon. Training flying assumed its role, and ground crews were given a chance to work on the remaining planes on the ground. Lt. Wright was spared into the night transition flight, and this ended the day's activities.

August 14, 1944

The "stand-down" from yesterday afternoon carried throughout the day. Training flying was in full swing, with everyone contributing one phase or another. On the ground, Engineering and Operations had a chance to catch up on all those little things that are continually being put off. Altogether, it was a peaceful day.

August 15, 1944

Back in the swing of things once more, with Group Mission # 127 starting things off with a bang. Early this morning, Group dispatched 41 planes. We had seven crews and one spare in the formation as it took off. The mission turned out to be abortive as the formation was recalled for reasons of tactical expediency. All the planes returned before reaching enemy territory. No losses, casualties, or damage. Thusly, Mission # 127 still hung fires. The target would have been the Railroad Embankment at Neauphle-le-Vieux, France.

We hadn't long to wait, for mid-afternoon the call for briefing came over the Tanney system. Soon after the planes were roaring down the runway for another crack at Mission # 127. This time it was to be completed though.

95

The loading list was the same with our seven crews and one spare taking part. Flying in the second flight of this box were; Lt's Miracle, Leshner, Peede, Meredith, Andersen, and Montrose. Lt. Meagher and crew were leading the first flight of the third box in an A-20J. Correction – Lt. Leshner was flying a "window" ship, and Lt. McCready took his place in the formation.

The target differed from this morning, being the Fuel Dump at Foret-de-Chantilly, France. The bombing was done by 12's from 11,500 feet to 12,000 feet. Area bombing was the method used. Our boys bombed with the majority of bombs falling in the target area in a dispersed pattern, hitting a wooded area. The results were undetermined. Flak was very light, with only three aircraft suffering battle damage out of the whole formation. Thirty-five aircraft dropped 542 x 250 GP's on the target.

All planes and crews returned to the base in good condition after a 3:50 journey.

Lt. Col Aylesworth, now Group CO, flew as "spare" in our A-20J # 444.

Rumor has it that Lt. Peede, with 52 missions now, will earn a trip back to the

U.S.A. after his 65<sup>th</sup> mission. He's sweating it out!

During the day training flying was accomplished in between missions. Night flying was predominant with Major Price and Lt. Hand trying night bombing without success. This ended the day's activities.

August 16, 1944

This morning Mission # 128 was attempted, but like yesterday morning, was recalled before the planes reached enemy territory. Upon the return of the planes, higher headquarters called down a "release" for the day, giving way to training flying. The day was spent with a heavy schedule of training flying.

We were visited by another "robot bomb" today, (one yesterday). That makes the second in two days to come over in the morning. It crashed and blew up about 1-1/2 miles from the base. They come so fast that the alert is sounded when they are gone.

August 17, 1944

In the operational field once more with Group Mission # 128 being flown in the latter part of the morning. Thirty-four planes took off carrying a load of 186 x 500 lb. GP's. From our squadron came fourteen crews with three of them being B/N Teams in A-20J's. Capt. McNulty and crew led the first box, with Lt. Meagher and crew in the Deputy Leader position. The B/N Team of Lt. Bartmus and Lt. Hardy led the second box.

The rest of our boys flew in the second and third flights of the second box.

The target this time was the Road Bridge at Montfort sur Risle, France. The Group Formation was led by B-26 Pathfinders, with the bombing being done through the 96

heavy overcast. From the altitude of 11,700 feet the bombs were dropped, with no photo cover or visual observation of the results. All planes returned from the mission with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. The journey lasted 3:20.

The rest of the day was spent in "stand-down" with training flying being stressed to all pilots.

Science has for a long time been measuring speed in various ways. The speeds of light, electricity, sound, etc. are dazzling; that has been proven. STOP!!!! for A.E. Osborne Jr. has set the world's speed record. He entered Operations today to learn of his promotion; his face was lit up to the nth degree. The next second lo and behold, there were the railroad tracks on his collar. Somehow they had multiplied as he stood there. (Confidentially, we think he has been carrying those Captain bars in his pocket just waiting).

That night was the night of nights. The celebration was on, and brother what a celebration. Children of the future will hear of it from the knees of doddering old grandfathers. It will be told how 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. "Gee" Meredith was promoted to General Meredith, with full authority to command higher headquarters. It is best that I go no further. Enough said – I leave it to your wandering imaginations.

August 18, 1944

"Stand-down sums it up, and training flying plagues all. Everyone has learned about the future "dry-run". Move we are going to have, and preparations are being made.

It will consist of the advance echelon pulling out, and the rear echelon operating as best they can. The test is to see if they can operate with the rest of us being gone. This will be the second trial for this, and we are getting tired of it.

The new plague is the drilling of all personnel. Combat crews must get six hours close order drill a week, and other personnel three hours a week. Being overseas and acting as a recruit camp is something hard to get "acclimatized" to.

"a3%^&"#@%a#\$&!!!!" (We quote 99.9% of the Group.)

August 19, 1944

The "stand-down" still exists with the only flying being on a training basis.

Everyone is preparing for the future move, which should take place in a few days. We are damned sorry to lose 1st Lt. McBrien from the squadron. Because of Operational Fatigue he will take a leave of absence. He has been with us a long time and has always been a spark plug in the squadron. With him go our best wishes for whatever he does. So long "Mac", Happy Landings.

We received a letter of commendation from Colonel Backus of Higher Headquarters. A copy will follow this entry, giving testimony to some of the bombing we have done.

97

August 20, 1944

Operations were more or less on a Stand-by basis today. The weather never permitted a plane to take off, and late in the afternoon "stand-down" was called for the rest of the day. There was no flying time logged at all.

Tomorrow is the day for the advanced echelon to pull out on the "dry run". If today's weather is a forecast, we will have a muddy day and night. Somebody sing the ETO Blues; Lt's Meredith, (The Giant Killer) Hand, and Leshner go up in the Enlisted Men's Hall of Fame, for trying to slip one leaf from the Group's Laurel. Each one of them are "on the beam" as far as we are concerned. Gung Ho!

Lt. "Gus" (They will never understand me ---) Ebenstein will probably follow the theme of the song - "Take It Easy". Here's hoping he can pull his nose out of the black clouds ahead. We're for him.

98

Secret

From 97 TH Combat Bomb Wing 07/1527B

TO CO 416TH Bomb Groups (L)

PRIORITY CONFIDENTIAL BT

97 CBW A - 42 - A

FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM COMMANDING GENERAL, IX BOMBER COMMAND, QUOTE BY REQUEST THAT YOU ASSIGN THE 416TH BOMB GROUPS OF YOUR COMMAND TO ATTACK THE OISSEL BRIDGE WAS PROMPTED BY MY GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE GROUP'S ABILITY AND COURAGE. THE BOMBING OF THE BRIDGE ON 06 AUGUST FULLY JUSTIFIED MY CONFIDENCE. IN SPITE OF INTENSE OPPOSITION AT THE TARGET THE ACCURACY OF THE BOMBING WOULD REFLECT CREDIT ON

A GROUP BOMBING ON A PRACTICE RANGE. AS A RESULT A TROUBLESOME AND IMPORTANT TARGET WHICH HAD ALLREADY COST IX BOMBER COMMAND FOUR AIRPLANES LOST AND MANY MORE DAMAGED WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY DESTROYED. PLEASE INFORM THE GROUP OF MY ADMIRATION FOR THE COURAGE AND BOMBING ACCURACY DISPLAYED. OISSEL WAS AN IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENT SUPERBLY ACCOMPLISHED.

ANDERSON UNQUOTE.

TO THIS COMMENDATION, I WISH TO ADD THAT I AM INDEED PROUD TO BE THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE WING IN, WHICH THE 416<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP (L) IS SUCH AN EFFICIENT AND OUTSTANDING MEMBER. I DEEPLY REGRET THE LOSSES SUFFERED IN YESTERDAY AFTERNOON'S MISSION, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I WISH TO COMMEND YOU HIGHLY FOR THE SUPERB BOMBING ATTACKS CARRIED OUT AGAINST YESTERDAY'S TARGET. THE OISSEL BRIDGES, AND UPON THE COMPINGNE MARIGNY MARSHALLING YARDS ON 05 JULY 1944. YOUR DESTRUCTION OF THESE TARGETS WAS OF GREAT MILITARY VALUE AND IMPORTANCE.

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This is a true exact extract copy from the 416<sup>th</sup> Historical files at the Historical Library, Bolling, AFB, Washington, D.C.

99

August 21, 1944

Yesterday's weather sure was a prediction of today. Rain, fog, and general bad weather greeted the early risers. Regardless, the whole Group prepared for the forthcoming move. After all packs were rolled and equipment packed, the men fell out for roll call. After roll call, the move was called off because of weather. The advanced echelon then returned to their barracks for the rest of the day. To those of us who were late for formation, Capt. Chester "Nose" Wysoski happily gave detail. To say everyone was disgusted is putting it mild.

There was no flying of any type, and the rear echelon kept watch all day and night. Gunners were put on guard duty, which caused more grumblings. Altogether, it was a hellava day.

August 22, 1944

More rain and foggy weather. The advanced echelon is still "alerted" and the rear echelon is operating alone.

Today was a day that will be remembered by many. We know how it feels when the dead come back to life. In the entry of 29 June 1944, we remember how F/O Baxter, and Gunners Ernstrom and Potter, telling a fantastic tale which was very true.

He had parachuted out of the falling plane in enemy territory. The plane went into a spin on the way down, and he didn't see anyone else escape. While floating down, he was continually shot at by the Jerries. When he reached the ground he was captured, and sent to a prison camp.

While there he made the acquaintance of an Australian pilot, also a prisoner. After six weeks of imprisonment, they made their escape together, and hid out with a French family in occupied France. There they lived in hiding, in civilian clothes. One morning he woke up to find the town in American possession. He reported to the Hqtrs of the Command, where he was questioned, identified, and sent back to England. He returned to the squadron today, 15 lbs. lighter and quite pale. Damn glad to be back. He will go back to the States for a good rest. S/Sgt. Anatanatis, veteran gunner, is transferred from here because of his injuries.

August 23, 1944

The weather was spasmodic today, good enough for training purposes, and not good for operational flying. The day was spent in breaking in the newest pilots on formation flying, and letting them become acquainted with the surrounding territory. The team of Lt's Bartmus and Mardy has been putting in many hours on practice bombing and navigation. This will be the B/N Team to replace the old team of Prentiss & McBrien.

100

We have gained some new flying personnel in the past few days. In the pilot field are: Lt's Stanley, Evans, and Saidla. The new Gunners that came with them are: Sgt's Merritt, Cavanaugh, Harris, Holterfield ?, Collier, and Sheens. This fills out the squadron once more, and we are darn glad to have these boys with us. In general it has been pretty quiet around here, we haven't flown a mission in almost a week. It has that old appearance of the lull before the storm.

August 24, 1944

Typical English weather today, rain, fog, and low ceiling. During the breaks in the weather, some training flying was done. Lt. Meagher and Capt. Osborne banged away at the bombing range again. The rest of the training centered on formation and navigation. So much for flying.

We did have a little excitement today, with Lt's Peede and Hill giving it to us. Lt. Peede was checking Lt. Hill out in the UC-64A. After shooting a landing with Lt. Peede at the stick, Lt. Hill took off to shoot a landing. He did, but had a little trouble. Upon landing the plane, it veered to the left. He tried to correct it with the rudder, but wasn't very successful. As a result the plane ground-looped, causing damage to the left wing and landing gear. Neither one of the pilots were hurt, and the plane was towed off to the Service Group.

It has been just about a week since we have run a mission. Everyone is rather restless, and eager for action once more. The news from the French battle line is very promising. We watch with interest, as much of our bombing has been in direct support of the advancing Allied ground forces.

Lt. Peede is getting in all the missions he can towards the 65 mark. Then he will

be given the opportunity of returning to the States. He will have earned it.

August 25, 1944

The weather finally broke for Group Mission # 129 to be flown. This mission was to be the first of its kind for this Group. The journey was to be over 800 miles long and would necessitate refueling at a base on the English Coast. To fly the mission and return to the base without fueling would be impossible, our planes are at their maximum range now.

Group dispatched 39 aircraft, of which three were to act as "window" ships. From our squadron came eight crews, with Major Price leading the whole Group on the mission in an A-20J. With him were Lt. Hand – B/N, and Gunners Naifer and Roberts. Flying a "window" ship was Lt. Downing. In the first box, first flight, with Major Price were; Lt's Meredith, Ebenstein, Peede, Parker, Colquitt, and Mish.

The target was the Brest/Kerviniou (Coastal Defense Battery), France. The bombing was done in flights of six from the altitude of 11,300 feet to 12,000 feet. The 101

results varied from "fair" to "excellent"; our boys scoring "good" on their bombing. There were 112 x 500 lb. GP's dropped on the target, with telltale effect. Enemy opposition consisted of little flak and no enemy aircraft. The planes returned to the coast of England, where they re-fueled and then headed for home. All planes returned with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. The journey lasted on an average of 5:20. Truly, one hellava long hop for our type of bomber.

Those who didn't participate on the mission were hammering away at training flying. Everyone is more or less contented at being on operational standing again. If only the weather holds out for a while yet. News from France continues to be good.

August 26, 1944

Back in the groove again with two missions today. In the morning was Group Mission # 130, with 36 aircraft being dispatched for the bombing. From our squadron came twelve crews. In the A-20J's, leading their respective flights were; Capt. Osborne and crew, and Lt. Meagher and crew. The rest of the crews flew in the flights ably led by these two men and their crews.

The target for this mission was the Fuel Dump at Compiègne/Clairox, France. Lt. Mish and crew never got airborne at all, due to engine trouble. Upon reaching the target, the bombing was done in flights of six from the altitudes of 11,800 feet and 12,500 feet.

The Group was really on the beam as the six scorings were; three "excellent", two "goods", and one "fair". Each of our flights scored "good" on their bombing.

After 3:45 of flying, the mission returned to the base with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. Again no flak or enemy plane opposition. There were 139 x 500 GP's dropped on the target.

Now came the interlude where the ground crews refueled, reloaded, and rechecked the planes. Soon after they had finished, the call came over the Tanney System for briefing for the next mission. One hour later, the crews were out to the ships, ready to take off.

Late in the afternoon, Group Mission # 131 left the ground with a crescendo of

noise. This time they were loaded with fragmentary bombs, indicating a load for a troops or vehicle concentrations. There were 39 aircraft sent out by Group, three of them being "window" planes. Our squadron furnished seven crews, led by Capt. Osborne and crew in the A-20J # 444. Two of these were forced to turn back. Lt. Kreh returned with an ailing Gunner on board, and Capt. Prentiss developed engine trouble and was forced to return. The rest continued on their way.

Troop and vehicle concentrations at Rouen, France were to be bombed. Of the six flights comprising the formation, only one bombed. The rest were forced to hold back, due to weather closing in. there was no photo coverage of the one flight's bombing due to clouds interceding. Flak was medium accurate, with ten planes being damaged. There

102  
were no losses of crews or planes, although one crewman was injured. The planes returned after a 3:30 flight. This ended the day's activities.

In between missions, training flying was invariably going on. These who weren't alerted flew practice formation, navigation, and bombing. All in all it was a very busy day for all personnel.

August 27, 1944

Conditions allowed only one mission today. It took off late in the afternoon, after all morning was spent in "sweating it out". In Group Mission # 132, we contributed 12 crews from our squadron, plus two box leaders. That made a total of fourteen crews and planes from the 668th. Major Price, with Lt. Hand and Gunners Naifer and Roberts, in A-20J # 444, led the first box. Capt. Osborne, with Lt. Forma and Gunners Lagerman and Newell, in A-20J # 717, led the second box. The rest of the crews flew in the first flights of each box. Flying "window" for the first box was Lt. Miracle, while Lt. Leshner flew "window" for the second box.

The bomb load consisted of Fragmentary bombs, which were dumped on the troop and vehicle concentrations at Rouen, France. From the altitude of 12,000 feet, there were 96 x 500 Frag clusters rained on the melee below. The bombing was done in flights of six; there was no photo coverage of the results due to clouds. Of the six flights, only four dropped after the 2nd bomb run. Reports came in later of the "excellent" results of the bombing of these four. Our boys comprised two of the flights that bombed. The two flights that didn't bomb were under the handicap of clouds, haze, and smoke.

Flak was present, and two of the planes suffered battle damage. There were no losses or casualties. The planes returned at dusk, after a 3:20 journey.

With the rapid advance in France, rumor has it that we may move any one of these days. We have been anticipating this a long time, and everyone knows we have had enough "dry runs" in preparation for it.

August 28, 1944

Today ushered in Group Mission # 133. All morning was spent in "sweating it out" and finally in mid-afternoon, the planes took off. We had seven crews representing our squadron, with Capt. McNulty, Lt. Bursiel, and Gunners Fejes and Judd, in the A-20J. Flying with him in his flight were; Lt's Kenny, Cannon, Peede, Stanley, Wright, and



Evans. This was the “first” for Lt’s Stanley and Evans.

The target for the bombers was the Fuel Dump at Douzens, France. Thirty-eight (38) aircraft were dispatched by Group, loaded with 500 lb. GP’s. The planes arrived over the target with nothing to disturb them, and dropped their loads from the altitudes of 11,300 feet and 12,000 feet. Bombing was done by flights of six, and the results were gratifying. Of the six scorings, three were “excellent”; two were “fair” and one was

103  
“good”. Our boys were in the second flight of the second box, and they had the scoring of “excellent”. All planes returned with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. The Group dropped 210 x 500 lb. GP’s on the target, after a journey of 2:45 duration. This ended the day’s operational flying. As usual training flying was accomplished before and after the mission.

Word has been officially received that Lt. Siracuse is a POW, and Lt. Nikas and Gunners Newkirk and Scott are POW. The rear echelon has been given word of a practice move in the near future. Turn-about is fair play.

August 29, 1944

“Stand-down conditions exist today, and training flying is pre-dominant. This is a welcome opportunity for all ground personnel to get caught up on back work. On the line, crew chiefs are giving their planes the “extra” touches that are only possible when this condition exists. The rear echelon is preparing for their practice move tomorrow. Night flying was scheduled, but called off to everyone’s satisfaction.

August 30, 1944

Today we had a “release”, which means there would be no operational flying. Thusly the picture of training flying was painted, and carried out thoroughly. Night flying was also scheduled and accomplished.

The “rear echelon” had their move today, and it was quite successful. They drove out one gate, and came in the other; a journey of two miles. Ain’t war hell?

We are losing a good pilot from the squadron. Lt. Hill, veteran of 53 missions and 163 combat hours, is going to France to fly liaison planes. He was with us from the States and was a helluva swell fellow. Our best wishes go with him.

We now have the successor to the famous tune “Maizy-Doats”. It was cheerfully originated and contributed by those bright and shining B/N’s Lt’s Forma & Bursiel. It is sung to the tune of “Mademoiselle From Armentieres”, I quote;

“Capt. McNulty will win the war, parlez-vous,  
Capt. McNulty will win the war, Parlez-vous,  
Capt. McNulty will win the war – so what the  
hell is Osborne for – Hinky, Dinky, parlez-vous.”

(Exit B/N’s – the curtain falls at the end of a peaceful day in the ETO)

August 31, 1944

The “release” held till noon today. From there on, there was a one-hour availability for a mission that never came off. All afternoon, and during the evening, training flying was accomplished. There was no operational flying for the day.

104

Lt. Miracle was the bearer of some swell news. He just returned from a field in Southern England, and reported that he had seen and talked to Gunner "Scotty" Newkirk. You will remember was reported missing, then a POW.

The story went as follows, quoting Lt. Miracle. "Newkirk had parachuted out of the plane, and was captured by the Jerries. He made his escape later, and fell into the hands of the French Maquis (Underground). After establishing his identity, he joined forces with them. He is credited with killing six Germans, and knocking out numerous machine gun emplacements. His other activities he never mentioned, due to lack of time. He has different captured German equipment with him, mainly guns of various sorts". Most of us agreed at the time that when Newkirk was reported a German prisoner, he would cause them a headache. He did!

September 1, 1944

First of the month, and a mission to inaugurate it. Take off was early in the morning, roughly at 0730. That means everyone is up and out of the sack at about 0400. Group sent out 39 aircraft on the mission, of which we had twelve crews participating. The B/N Team of Osborne and Forma led the second flight of the first box, while the B/N Team of McNulty and Bursiel led the third flight of the first box. The rest of our crews comprised the strength of the two flights.

The target was Brest/St. Marc, Recouverance (enemy Gun Positions). After a twohour journey to reach the target, the aircraft were forced to turn back. Weather had interceded, and the bombs couldn't be released because of low ceiling and rainy conditions. The formation returned from the T/A. with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. The entire journey last four hours. This was Group Mission # 134.

On the return trip, Lt. Mish, and Gunners Chustz and Clark, developed engine trouble and were forced to land in Southern England. The landing was made in excellent style, and the ship and crew came back in the evening.

Again in the early afternoon a Mission was attempted. After the entire formation had taken off and been airborne for ten minutes, they were recalled. All planes landed, and that ended the day's flying. Weather closed in and made flying impossible.

Gen. Patton and his men are really driving in France. With this rapid taking of ground by the Ground Forces, our move in the future is drawing very close. We hope!

September 2, 1944

No operational activities at all today, due to inclement weather. In fact there was only 4:30 of flying done by the whole squadron. Winter is drawing near, and flying is decreased all the time. Our hope is that we don't have to "sweat out" another winter over here in England. We had a taste of it when we arrived over here early in this year.

105

Things in the squadron are even quiet. Everyone is trying to derive some conclusions from all the rumors circulating around.

September 3, 1944

Finally off the ground today, with Group Missions #'s 135 and 136 being accomplished. In the morning, 37 aircraft were dispatched from the base with seven coming from our squadron. Leading the third flight of the first box, in an A-20J was

Capt. McNulty and Lt. Bursiel, with Gunners Fejes and Judd. Flying in the same flight were; Lt's Kreh, Leshner, Wright, and B/N Team of Bartmus & Hardy as deputy flight leader.

A Strong Point at Brest, France was to be the target. Again fate was with Jerry as weather caused the formation to turn back over the target. This is getting everyone down, as it is disappointing to fly a mission and not be able to drop the bombs. All planes returned with no losses, casualties, or battle damage.

In the late afternoon, a formation took off again to bomb the same target. This time we supplied twelve crews to the loading list, with two B/N Teams leading the two boxes. Major Price with Lt. Hand and Gunners Roberts and Naifer led the first box, while Capt. McNulty and Lt. Bursiel with Gunners Fejes and Judd led the second box. Six flights made up the formation, and over the target only two were able to drop their bombs before the weather closed in. The results of these two flights was classified as "poor" as a cloud cover necessitated a short bomb run. The rest of the flights never attempted to bomb at all.

On the way back, Capt. McNulty's flight was forced to land in Southern England to refuel. The rest of the planes returned to the base in A-1 condition. This ended the flying activities. With so much of France in Allied hands, there aren't many targets left to us within our range. With this in mind we hope to ship to France soon. The order is out for us to convert our English money to French currency.

September 4, 1944

Just plain "lousy weather" again to ease all activities. No flying at all was recorded by the squadron. Capt. McNulty's flight hasn't returned, due to poor flying weather. Even as this is being written, reports are coming in of new advances in France. At present the Allied Ground Forces are very close to German boundaries. The bomb line is over Belgium and extending into Holland. Things are happening so fast it is almost impossible to keep up with it all. Nothing new on our forth-coming move.

106

September 5, 1944

With the clearing of the weather today, came Mission # 137. Early in the morning, thirty-six aircraft left the base to bomb Jerry. From our squadron came seven crews. Major Price & Lt. Hand, with Gunners Roberts & Naifer, in the A-20J # 444 leading the third flight of the first box. In flight formation behind them were; Lt's Kreh, Meredith, Leshner, Evans, Andersen. Lt. Kenny was acting as "spare" and returned after logging 2:15.

The target was the same, as in the last three days. Enemy Strong Points in the Brest area were to be bombed, and were bombed. There was no flak, or clouds to hinder operations, and the bombs were dropped with devastating effect. The results of the bombing varied, with bombing being done in flight of six, from the altitudes of 11,700 feet and 12,000 feet. The flight in which our boys from this squadron composed scored "excellent" on their bombing. Quote: "Excellent concentration of bombs on DMPI blanketing target with probable destruction of buildings and severe damage to strong

point". Altogether, Group dropped 144 x 500 lb. GP on the target. All planes and crews returned to the base unharmed.

Interesting to note is the fact that our Group was the first to bomb that target on this day, and we led the "heavies" into it. Upon our withdrawal from the target, there was seen many formations of bombers just going in on the target.

A mission was planned for the afternoon, but was never accomplished. Training flying was stressed all afternoon, with the newer pilots doing most of the flying. Rumors of our forthcoming move to France are decreasing. At one time we were "hot" but at present it is a cold deal.

September 6, 1944

We can honestly admit, today was one of the busiest days we have ever had. Not only flying two missions, but training and night flying to top it all.

In the morning, and darn early at that, came Mission # 138. Take off was at 0630, and thirty-six planes left the ground to bomb Jerry again. From this squadron came twelve crews, with two of them being B/N Teams in the A-20J's. Leading the second flight of the first box was the B/N Team of Capt. McNulty & Lt. Bursiel. Major Price and

Lt. Hand led the third flight of the first box. The rest of our crews comprised the flights behind these two flight leaders.

The target was the now battered Brest area, with Enemy Strong points being singled out. The formation went all the way over to the target with no interference of any description. The weather was in our favor, and the bombs were dropped with great accuracy from the altitudes of 9,500 feet and 10,000 feet. With everything being in our favor, the results were bound to be good. They were, with the Group scoring five 107

"excellent" and one "No photo coverage". Both of our flights scored "excellent". All planes and crews safely returned to the base after a journey of 4:00.

Roughly three hours after they had landed from the first mission today, the planes were off again on Mission # 139. Thirty-seven aircraft took to the air, with seven of them coming from this squadron. The B/N Team for this mission from our outfit was Lt. Bartmus & Lt. Hardy in A-20J # 719. They led the third flight of the second box. Again it was back to Brest, to further pulverize what was left. The trip to the target was uneventful, but our luck ran out. Cloud formations had closed in, and the bombing was erratic. Three flights failed to drop their bombs because of this cloud disturbance. Those who did bomb scored from "fair" to "good". Our flight never dropped their bombs. One of the Group ships was hit, and the right engine caught fire. When last seen it was heading back, with the two Gunners having bailed out. At this time we don't know the fate of the pilot and ship. The rest of the ships returned after a long journey of 4:30. The landing was made near dusk.

All during the day, between missions, training flying was going on. At night, Lt's Andersen and McCready logged 2:00 of night navigation. The total flying time logged by the squadron for the day and night amounted to over 92 hours. That, my friends, is a hell of a lot of time.

Maybe you have some idea of the pulverizing Brest got. I think it can be said that the Air Corps has a lot to do with the success in France etc.

September 7, 1944

Inclement weather prevented any flying what so ever today. Rain and damp cold atmosphere made everyone realize that winter is coming to England. Where the hell was summer?

Combat and ground crews enjoyed rest, after yesterday's grueling activities.

Lectures and training subjects were stressed by all sessions. Best news of all is the return of the 48-hour passes to non-combat personnel. It's about time they awoke to the fact that

the ground personnel put in just as many hours and work as the combat crews do.

September 8, 1944

We had a "release" for the whole day, which automatically meant that training flying would be stressed. It sounds funny to speak of training flying in a combat area, but it was shown its worth with the "excellent" scores on our bombing. To get those scores means perfect co-ordination with every member of the formation. Training flying makes it possible to achieve such good co-ordination.

108

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Peede has 61 missions to his credit. He is on every leading list, so he can get his 65 missions in, and then back to the States. Silver bars now adorn the proud shoulders of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R. Svenson.

Sgt. V.E. McIver, who was shot down over France, is reported back and seen in London. He relates the same story as S/Sgt. Scotty Newkirk, i.e. captured, escaped, and lived and fought with the French Marquis. He is a little thinner, but the same old McIver. He raised plenty of hell with the Jerries while he was with them.

Also back in England, but in the hospital, is 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. A.J. Welsh. He was shot down, if you remember, and was captured with his Gunners. He was hospitalized in Paris,

and was there when the French took over. His Gunners Sgt's Wright and Novak are POW's. He is recovering at present, and coming along fine.

As each day passes, more of our "missing" crews are turning up. It's damn good to hear that these boys are OK and with us once more.

September 9, 1944

The "release" held out till noon today. All morning was spent in training flying.

Then as if arranged by some unseen hand, the weather became poor and very spasmodic rainfalls took place. As a result, nothing much was accomplished during the afternoon.

Finally recovered from a sprained ankle, falling off of a horse, 2<sup>nd</sup> J.J. Burg in back in commission. After going thru the hazards of a mission, it took a little thing like that to put him out of commission. Ironic!!! At least it is becoming more definite of our move to France. Things are becoming very hot. This is it – we hope!

September 10, 1944

The siege of inactivity is broken with Group Mission # 140 chalked off. We supplied the loading list with twelve crews, of which two were B/N Teams in A-20J's.

Leading the first box was the team of Price & Hand, with Gunners Roberts & Burch; while the team of Osborne & Forma, with Gunners Metzler and Sittarich, led the second box. Group dispatched 37 aircraft loaded with 500 lbs. GP's.

The target was the Strong Points and ammunition stores at Foret de Haye, France. There was no flak or any other disturbances to mar the journey, and the visibility over the target was very good. As a result, 147 x 500 lb. GP's hurtled to the earth with devastating effect, from the altitudes of 10,800 feet and 11,200 feet. The results justified all the training time spent when we were non-operational. Out of all the results, of which there were six, four were "excellent". Incidentally, the two flights composed of our twelve crews scored "excellent".

After completing the bomb run, all planes and crews returned to the base after a journey of 3:50. So ended another mission, with complete success.

109

With the rapid taking of ground in France, the robot bomb sites are now in Allied hands. In the last week, we haven't had any of the bombs over here. In fact, things are so quiet; it is getting on everyone's nerves. It can be safely said that most of us are anticipating our forthcoming move to France, and more or less be in an action zone once more.

September 11, 1944

Still active with Mission # 141 being flown this morning. From our squadron came seven crews to swell the loading list. In one A-20J, leading the flight was Capt. Osborne & Lt. Forma, with Gunners Newell and Lagerman. Comprising the rest of the flight were Lt's Kreh, Peede, Mish, Andersen, and Kenny. Lt. Cannon acted as "spare" on this mission. There were 36 planes dispatched from the field for this job.

The target to feel the impact of our bombs was the Communications Headquarters at St. Julian Les Metz, France. There was mild accurate flak over the target, but not enough to deter the aim of our bombardiers. From the altitude of 11,200 feet and 12,000 feet, 174 bombs hurtled to the earth. The results were varying with 2 "excellent", 2 "good", 1 "fair", and one flight didn't attack. Under Lt. Forma's guidance, our flight scored "excellent".

All planes returned to the base after 4:00 of tedious flying. Of the 36 aircraft, there were eight that had minor flak damage. Our planes and crews from this squadron came back unscathed. Thus ended one more mission.

"Stand-down" took place for the rest of the afternoon, and training flying reigned supreme. Night flying also took place, and at 2330 the last plane landed, finishing the day's activities.

We gained more combat men to the squadron in the past few days. Lt. W.

Babbage and F/O T. M. McCartney are two new bombardiers. They will comprise the two new B/N Teams for our squadron. It will be the B/N of Lt. Andersen & Lt. Babbage, and the B/N Team of Lt. Miracle & F/O McCartney. To swell the pilot's roster are Lt's J.H. Carver and W.H. Roberts. In the Gunners category are Sgt's Windish, Stewart, Hood, and Graham. All of these men are heartily welcome, for we anticipate much action in the near future.

September 12, 1944

We strike a historic note today, one of the busiest days we have seen over here. It was a two-mission day, with the first striking at home on German. This is our first bombing of actual German land, and everyone was quite excited over it. Before it has always been German-held land that we have bombed.

In the morning was Mission # 142. There were 36 aircraft sent out, of which twelve of them came from our squadron. In an A-20J, leading the second flight of the 110

first box was the team of McNulty, Bursiel, Fejes, and Judd; while leading the third flight of the first box, in an A-20J, were Meagher, Burg, Robbins, and Neifeh. The rest of our crews flew in position behind these two flight leaders. Take off was at 0730.

The target was the Marshalling Yard at St. Wendel, Germany. This is located 10 or 12 miles northeast of Saarbrucken. The strangest part of all was the absence of flak and fighter planes, of which both were greatly expected. The bombers arrived over the target to find it encased in haze and fog. Of the six flights, only two bombed with results unknown. The rest of the flights scored "no attack". All the bombers were forced to return, more or less downhearted, after a long journey of 4:15. That sums up our first bombing of Germany proper. Not very wonderful, but the beginning of a cherished dream. We were the first A-20's to bomb Germany, from a base in England. It is a long hop for our type of bomber.

As if in revenge for the poor luck this morning, the planes set out on a mission in the afternoon, and really put on a show. This is undoubtedly our best bombing since we have been here.

The call went out over the Tanney System for all alerted crews to report to the briefing room. Thus, Mission # 143 was on its way. Roughly one hour and a half later, at 1550, the bombers took off. Thirty-six aircraft took off, with seven of them being from this squadron. Leading our boys in the third flight of the second box (B-3-1) was Lt. Meagher & Lt. Burg with Gunners Roberts & Naifeh. Flying in formation behind him were; Lt's Kreh, Peede, Mish, Cannon, Montrose, and Kenny.

Sharing the destruction and inferno of perfect bombing were the artillery replacements, and observation posts of the Jerries, at Foret De Haye, France. Over the target there was little flak to bother anyone, and the bombs were released at 11,300 feet and 12,200 feet. The bombing was done in flights of six, and cameras proved for bombing of our flight to be perfect with the scores of "excellent". Thus every flight scored "excellent" and that is perfect bombing to a "T". All planes and crews returned to the base after a trip of 4:00, with spirits high and everyone OK. Thus ended the day's activities, and everyone was pretty darn thankful to turn in.

He finally made it. Lt. Loring C. Peede now has 65 missions to his credit and the States. One of his Gunners S/Sgt. Hibbs has 70 missions and grateful feeling to know that you are finished for a while. That is all for tonight now, the big event should take place very soon.

September 13, 1944

-----today, with "stand-down", conditions existing, training flying

was in store for most of the newest pilots, and ground training for the Gunners. All total, there was 33 hours logged by the squadron for the day.

111

Word has it that we will pull out Friday or Saturday morning, and everyone is feverish getting boxes packed and equipment loaded. All leaves and passes are cancelled and we are restricted to the base. Looks promising this time.

September 14, 1944

Early this morning, thirty-six aircraft took to the air to bomb Brest, France. From our squadron came twelve crews, with Capt. Osorne and crew leading the first flight of the first box. Leading the second box in the first flight was Capt. McNulty and crew. This was Group Mission # 144.

The journey over was a "milk-run" with nothing causing interference. Luck was again with us though, as a heavy haze encased the target. There was no alternative but to turn back and bring the bombs home. On the way back, Lt. Downing developed oil pressure trouble and was forced to land in Normandy. The rest of the planes and crews returned safely to the base; the journey lasting 4:15. This ended the operational flying for the day.

Everyone in the "advanced echelon" is preparing for the forthcoming move to France. Orders have come thru to leave the base tomorrow morning very early.

September 15, 1944

It finally happened today, the "advanced echelon" moved out of Wethersfield, bound for France. The echelon consisted of two parts, (1) trucks and supplies, and (2), the

troops. From Operations were Capt. Osborne, and S/Sgt. Kindlespire & Cpl. Schier. We were aroused at 0330 and immediately went to breakfast. The next two hours were spent in packing and having roll call. We left the base in trucks at 0630. Arriving at 0700 at Sybil Hedingham, we boarded the awaiting train, and left the area at 0725. This was to be the first leg of our journey.

The trip aboard the train lasted for six hours, of which we spent the greatest part of the time by whistling out the windows at the English girls. Going thru Southern England, we saw some of the prettiest country in a long time. We were furnished with "K" rations for a two day period. Dinner was thusly consumed from these aboard the train.

We reached our destination, Southhampton, at 1430. After unloading and donning all our equipment, we marched to a park about a half-mile from the train station. There we loaded the awaiting trucks and proceeded to the Marshalling Area. We reached the Area at 1515 and moved into the empty tents that were pitched there. Roll call again, and then "chow time". This was our first disappointment, as "chow" consisted of the "C" rations. There were three choices – hash, meat & beans, or vegetable stew. As the KP handed the cans to you, you had no choice in the matter. We were beginning to feel like soldiers.

112

The whole area was enclosed by barbwire, so the evening was spent playing cards



and “batting the breeze”. Those who didn’t participate in either spent the evening looking longingly at the gals, pubs, etc. outside the barbwire. We slept in tents with no lights or fires.

In general the spirits were high, as we have been anticipating this move a long time. Of course wild speculations ran as to what the future held. Altogether, the day passed remarkably well, with only a few discouragements.

September 16, 1944

Woke up this morning, stiff and uncomfortable from the cold. All day was spent in the “area”, and all meals consisted of “C” rations. Often you could hear a groan as someone got another can of hash. It is considered about the worst of the three choices. The day consisted of lounging around and doing nothing in general.

A roll call was held at one o’clock, of which “yours truly” and four other “dogfaces” missed, not knowing of it. As a result, Capt. C.C. Wysocki ably administered punishment. (He dotes in doing this). A two-hour tour was prescribed, being done with full pack. “C’est la guerre!”

The evening was spent in camp again, with a few brave individuals sneaking out for a “short one”. With no lights or fires in the tent, everyone was in the sack by 0900.

September 17, 1944

At 1000, the order came through for us to pack up and be ready to leave the area by 1230. A general hub-hub ensued, and by miracles everyone was ready to go at the appointed time. At 1300 we left the area and began a hellava long hike to the docks. It took over two hours to make the journey, and by the time we arrived all of us were pretty bushed. All the way the boys were tossing out money to the kids and raising hell in general.

A treat was in store at the docks, as the Red Cross had their renowned coffee and doughnuts waiting for us. It took about an hour to lead onto the ship and by 1700 we were comfortably installed. The troops were a mixture of Negro and Whites of all branches of the army. We even had 18 nurses aboard the ship. On board ship we were issued the 10-1 ration, a new one to us. It provided us with three meals. Our squadron was lucky enough to draw berths for the trip over.

The night was spent in the harbor, and entertainment of GI talent was supplied by Special Services. Nurses, Officers, and ---all made up the show. It kept everyone of nervous tension from thinking of the next day.

113

September 18, 1944

We were awakened this morning by the gentle pitching of the boat. Our ship, “Lady of Man”, was formerly a channel ferryboat from the Isle of Man to the English homeland. It was a comfortable boat, and the Channel was considered calm. We were in a sizable convoy, and all of us enjoyed a good view of the trip. Our journey lasted ten hours and nothing out of the ordinary occurred.

Our destination was reached at 1310. We unloaded from the boat into waiting LCT’s. At 1340 we pulled away from the ship and began our trip to the mainland of France. Many of us thought of how the first boys must have felt traveling like this, to

make the first invasion landing. Our landing barge reached the jetty with no effort at all, and we disembarked on the shores of France at 1413. Vive La France: on the way in we saw rows of scuttled and sunk ships giving testimony to past activities.

We marched from the sands of Utah Beach to a marshalling area about 1000 yards from the waters edge. Noted were the heavy defenses the Jerry had all along the beach. They were pretty well pulverized by bombings from planes of both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force. There were many German POW's along the beach, doing labor work under guard. They looked pretty subdued, and we noted some were pretty young.

Re-forming, we began the long trek from the beach to a bivouac area. It was a hellava long way and the packs became damned heavy. We passed by several French homes and the occupants didn't pay much attention to us. It is an old story to them.

After

a four-mile walk, we reached an area that we thought was ours. Sighs of relief were heard as packs hit the ground. Ten minutes later, they were on our backs again, and we were seeking another area. The first area wasn't the right one. Another two-mile hike, and another area was found. This time it was the right one. Irregardless, no one would have donned their packs again, we were pooped. The order to pitch tents wasn't given, as transportation was expected to take up further inland. At dark, still no transportation, so we finally pitched tents – in the dark with rain beginning to fall. Yup, the hard way – the Army way!

September 19, 1944

The sound of rain dripping from the trees onto our pup tents woke up the squadron today. Men sore from the damp and cold rolled out of the tents and soon fires were made and "K" rations consumed. We are now beginning to feel like infantrymen with our hiking, pup tents, rations, etc.

At noon, the trucks rolled in, and we made ready to leave the area. It was a goodsized convoy, and we left the area at 1300. It was a rough ride and lasted about an hour.

We passed thru the town of Carentan, and noted it was practically demolished. All along the road were German prisoners under guard, doing the hard labor of making roads serviceable and buildings livable. Other small towns were passed thru, and they were pretty well all shambles.

114

Our next bivouac was a field near a chateau, about four miles from Insigny. We pitched our pup tents, and had our first warm meal in a long time. A General Mess was located about four blocks from our area. All throughout this country are German "Achtung Minen" signs. Pill- boxes are located all over, Jerry was pretty well established. Come darkness, and everyone hit the sack with nothing else to do. We have always been restricted to our area since we left Wethersfield. Our present location is a very short distance from Ortiz, France.

September 20, 1944

After waking up this morning and eating breakfast, we had a little time before noon to look around the chateau. The area is pretty desolate and there isn't much of anything left. After dinner, we received the orders to pack up and get ready for

transportation. We moved to an adjoining area and waited with full packs for the trucks. As usual they didn't show up. Complaining doesn't help, as transportation is the big problem over here.

At 1500 we discovered we were to spend the night here, roughly 150 yards from last night's bivouac. Luckily, there were some squad tents erected, so we moved into them. Being in the field, and under field conditions, the bathing and toilet facilities are rather poor. This is probably the biggest discomfort of all.

The only relaxation offered has been gambling with the French money. As long as there is light, you can find a game going on somewhere. Come darkness and the only alternative is to hit the sack. It is a toad-up as to who gets your food first, the bees or you.

A spectator might think we were leading a concert, with everyone waving their arms, knives, forks, spoons, etc., trying to keep the bees away from the food. With this display of action goes enormous amount and volume of cussing.

September 21, 1944

At last it happened, our transportation came today at noon. We all loaded onto two trucks with trailers and moved out. It was extremely crowded, and the truck drivers didn't waste time. As a result we darn near turned over a couple of times, the roads being very bad.

We pulled into an airfield at 1400, where C-47's were utilized. The airfield consisted of two landing strips, and nothing else. The flying transports came in and left with a load every half hour. They deserve an awful lot of credit for the great job they are doing. Without their work, the speed of our Allied offensive could never be maintained. A C-47 took us to our field where we are now installed. The trip took about 1:15 and was exceedingly interesting. We saw enormous bomb craters all over; we saw towns that were ruined by battle; we saw enemy airfields and flak towers; we saw all the sights that make up a battleground. Our route took us to the skirts of Paris. We circled our field  
115

and landed in the rain. Because of the rain and cloud conditions we never got a good look of the field from the air.

After landing, we were met by trucks and taken to our present squadron area. Pup tents were pitched and darkness closed in. At 1900 everyone was in their sack. The location of our airfield is very near the town of Melun, France. This is home, as drab as it looks at present. Whoever said "Sunny France" is sadly mistaken.

September 22

Rain still greeted us as we crawled out of our pup tents this morning. The first job was to make some kind of a makeshift breakfast, and then roll call was taken. Details were made up of the men, and all personnel set to work. The field is very large, and wreckage of all descriptions are strewn all over. The Jerries evidently left in a hurry, as they had to leave some of their planes behind. Of course they were damaged beyond repair. German papers and propaganda were found all over. Throughout the day, civilians of both French and Polish nationality came over to eye us. The boys who could speak their language obtained some information about this field.

The Jerries used this field for both bombers and fighters. When they left, they loaded their ships with bombs and boomed the field. Then they strafed all the remains and used incendiaries. Results were that everything was in ruins. Evidences of booby traps and land mines are present, and everyone is warned of such.

We spent the whole day in cleaning the debris out of a chateau in the squadron area. Plans are to install the Orderly Room and Medical Dispensary in the ground floor of the building. The buildings and surrounding area are in complete shambles. The Mess Hall was set up in the open and a warm meal awaited us both at noon and at night. As it gets dark at 1900, everyone was in bed and sound asleep by 2000. The end of a hard day's work, as all will agree.

Morale is high, and it is evident we can operate from this field. Steady, hard work is needed, and co-operation is essential. We are located sixteen air miles from Paris in a southeastern direction. At present, "field conditions" still exist; they probably will for a long time. There is no electricity, running water, etc. England was a heaven compared to this set-up.

September 23, 1944

Today was much the same as yesterday; with the exception that the rear echelon came in. We have 22 airplanes here now, comprising the strength of the squadron. The rest of the ground personnel came in by C-47's. They had breakfast in England and dinner in France. The work of cleaning out the debris, and making and installing buildings continued.

116

A big work project was started by the engineering firm of McNulty & Osborne, Inc. all the Gunners were drafted into labor, plus the Operations personnel. A former German wooden shack, located in a field half a mile away, was dismantled and moved to our location. This was finally accomplished under the directing and supervising of the crew foreman – Boss Osborne. By nightfall the shack had the four walls standing, rickety as they were. Thus Operations had its first growing pains in France. Quite a few tents sprung up with the coming of the rear echelon.

The motorized echelon arrived one hour later at the field than we did. At present, all personnel but a few are located now at this field.

September 24, 1944

Everyone is working to get things in shape now. In the morning a formation was held, and details were singled out. Men were detailed to put up squad tents, dig latrines, clean out the rubble, etc. In operations the work continued on the shack. Frequent rain is making things difficult for all of us. By night, the Operations shack looked impressive with its grotesque appearance.

We were visited in the early evening by four of the "mademoiselles" from the nearby French town. They caused quite a sensation by their appearance, although they were not much to look at. Everyone was trying out their high school French. Passes are not being given out yet, and the evenings drag. With no lights to write letters by, there is nothing to do but hit the sack. Truck drivers, who go to Paris for loads of gas, report of the city's allure. From all stories, it is a place not to miss.

September 25, 1944

Conditions are improving now, with the essential work being done. We are prepared to run a mission anytime now, and are getting rather eager. Tents are put up for Engineering, Armament, Tech Supply, etc. Much work is still being done in cleaning up the areas of wreckage and rubble. There are enough tents up now for some of the men to move into. Officers and Gunners rated first.

The Operations shack is proving to be a headache. The roof leaked, so a mixture of tar and oil was spread over the roof. As a result, tar and oil are leaking through and getting all over us and the equipment. We have electricity now, with our generators now in action. Two lights adorn the ceiling of the shack.

Morale is getting rather low, with no passes being given as yet. Since we have arrived here, it is a case of working from dawn to dusk. We still have no lights to write by, as the majority of us are living in our pup tents as yet.

117

September 26, 1944

We attempted our first mission today, but without success. Briefing was held, and all crews took to their ships. Just as the ships were being warmed up before takeoff, a red flare signaled the scrubbing of the mission. It was disappointing to all of us.

The field is looking better now. There are enough squad tents to go around now, and the days of the pup tent are over for the present. The Operations shack received a tin roof in hopes that this will stop the leaking of both rain and tar. We also have a large tent for Operations and for the personnel. With them luxuries, everyone is a little more contented.

Conditions are normal now, as the 24-hour alert is on again. Group has requested that a Commissioned man be in Operations at all times, which is a break for all of us. No more night alert duty – we hopes.

September 27, 1944

Another historic day for the squadron, today, for we ran our first mission from French soil. This was Group Mission # 146. Mission # 145 was from England, while we of the “advanced echelon” were on our way to France. The target was a Dike in Bath, Holland, for Mission # 145. There was medium accurate flak and the returning ships bore evidence of this. The bombs were dropped with “Good” results. Lt. Meagher led our crews in the third flight of the first box. The 669<sup>th</sup> Squadron suffered the loss of two planes and crews. The journey lasted 2:30.

This was the only mission flown from English soil after we left. The remaining time was spent by the rear echelon getting ready for their move to France. While we were gone, a buzz bomb hit on one of the runways on the field, causing minor damage.

Getting back to Mission # 146, we sent twelve crews from this squadron. Lt. Bartmus with Lt. Hardy (B/N) led a flight consisting of; Lt’s Meredith, Mish, Downing, Montrose, and Wright. Their position was the second flight of the second box. The team of Lt’s Meagher & Burg were in the third flight of the second box, leading Lt’s Kenny, Svenson, Ebenstein, Hale, and Parker in flight.

The mission turned out to be sortie-abortive. Weather interceded and the target

was obscured. The planes returned with their bombs after a flight of 3:00. The target was reported to be in the vicinity of Aachen, Germany. A “stand-down” was called for the rest of the day.

The field is getting in better shape all the time. Rumor has it we are to receive passes to Melun soon. Congratulations to Capt. Bartmus, he is now the proud owner of two silver bars know as “railroad tracks”.

118

September 28, 1944

We ran our second mission from France this morning. Group dispatched 36 aircraft from the base loaded with 500 lb. GP's. From our squadron came a flight of six ships and crews with Capt. Bartmus & Lt. Hardy (B/N) leading the flight.

The target was the troop concentrations at Foret de Parroy, France, just southeast of Nancy, France. Again Jerry was in luck, with adverse weather conditions prevailing. Out of six flights that went over the target, only one dropped their loads. The target was discernible for them for a brief moment, so they dropped their load. The results were unobserved. The bombing was done from the altitude of 11,000 feet. Crews of the flight that dropped bombs reported “good” results on the basis of visual observation. All planes and crews returned to the base safely after a trip of 3:00. Lt. Evans acted as a “spare” on the mission.

A “release” was ordered for the remaining part of the day. This gave ground crews time to check their planes thoroughly. The afternoon was spent by the Operations staff in digging a slit trench for insurance against any enemy “sneak” raids. Fields have been known to be strafed at night by enemy fighters. The ban is lifted off the passes, and many anticipated a night spent in the Cafes of Melun. This will be the first time off the base for many, since we have arrived here.

September 29, 1944

We are really on an operating basis now, with two missions being flown today.

First in the morning was Group Mission # 148. From our squadron came twelve crews, two of them are B/N Teams and box leaders. The team of Major Price & Lt. Hand led the first box, while the team of Capt. Osborne and Lt. Forma led the second box. The rest of our crews flew behind in flight formation.

The target was in Germany, as will most of them be in the future. The Marshalling Yard at Bitburg, Germany, received the weight of our bombs. The bombing was done in flights of six from the altitudes of 9,000 feet to 11,200 feet. Flak was very much in evidence, and the 670<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. was to pay the price. One of their aircraft and crew received flak hits, and was observed to break up over the target. The other plane was seen gliding with both engines afire, due to flak hits. No chutes were seen, so six men are considered missing. The rest of the planes returned to the base damaged by flak. Our box and flight, led by Capt. Osborne, scored an “unknown” due to a camera malfunction. So ended this rather costly mission.

Crews were already briefing for the next mission, as the planes were being refueled and repaired. In the late afternoon, the crews were at the planes, preparing to start again. At 1530, the first plane left the runway on its mission of bombing.

The squadron added six crews and one spare to the loading list for the mission. Lt. Meagher & Lt. Burg were the B/N Team leading our flight. Another B/N Team going  
119

along for the trip was the team of Lt. Miracle & F/O McCartney (a new bombardier to this squadron. this is one of the new teams formed with the entry of the two new bombardiers to our squadron), the other B/N Team that accompanied the flight was the team of Lt. Andersen & Lt. Babbage (the other new bombardier). Thus two new B/N Teams were broken into the field of operations.

The target was the Marshalling Yards at Julich, Germany. Out of the 36 aircraft and crews dispatched, only 20 dropped their bombs. Weather interceded, causing three flights to return with their bombs. Flak was severe again, causing the Group to lose three more planes. All planes were severely damaged by flak, and all returned but the three before-mentioned above. A Gunner from the 670<sup>th</sup> Sq. was wounded and bled to death before the ship landed. Luckily, all of our squadron crews and planes returned to the base. This was Group Mission # 149, lasting 3:20. Throughout the night, ground crews were working to patch and repair the planes. Two planes from other squadrons were forced to make belly landings, with their landing gear being damaged beyond control.

In summing up, we can say that today was one of the worst days the Group has had. Five planes and crews are absent, and one Gunner dead. Our squadron, for once, didn't carry the burden of losses this time.

The first outdoor movie was attempted on the base last night. It was a failure as the current supplied by our generators burned out the motor on the projector.

September 30, 1944

A "release" was ordered for us today, probably due to losses the Group suffered yesterday. The ground crews spent all day patching and repairing the planes. The Group received over 15 A-26's today; rumor has it we will use them for training purposes. Each squadron will receive four or more, and pilots, gunners, and ground crews will be "checked out" on them. This is a pre-monition to our future activities in combat theatre. The A-26's are the last word in the newest light bombers.

October 1, 1944

Beginning of the month here in France and the weather for flying still pretty bad.

All day was spent on a "one hour availability". The result was the conditions never were favorable, and it was a "mission-less" day.

Training on the A-26's began, with both ground and air crew going to "school".

All who come in contact with its various characteristics holds the A-26 in high esteem. Each squadron has four of these sleek, silver bombers, and it is the ambition of all to go up in them. It may be probable that we will train in these planes, and after the war is over in this theatre, we will move to the Jap theatre with A-26's. That seems to be the conclusion drawn by most of the men.

120

A Tanney System has been installed in Operations, and it is the fond toy of all concerned. Now, instead of hunting various personnel up, a call can be sent out over the system. It will be used for warning of air raids also.

At present, it may be a reality for all combat crew personnel with 65 missions or over, to return to the States. We have nine Gunners and one Pilot "sweating this out".  
October 2, 1944

We hit the 150 mark today, with a mission being flown in the morning. For Mission # 150, we supplied twelve crews from this squadron. Leading our two flights were; Capt. Bartmus & Lt. Hardy (B/N), in an A-20J, in the A-3-1 position. In front of them in the A-2-1 position were; Capt. Osborne & Lt. Forma.

Germany was again the target, with the Area "A" Buildings in the city of Ubach to receive the bombs. There were four Groups assigned to this target, each with a different area to bomb. The trip over was a "milk run" with no interference of any type. Jerry still had a horseshoe in his pocket, as all aircraft failed to bomb due to adverse weather over the target. The formation returned from the target area after making three attempts to attack. There were no losses, casualties, or battle damage, after this flight of 3:30. This ended the operational flying for the day. Only other flying accomplished was in the A-26's by the crews training.

The Group and Squadrons both are getting disgusted with all of these abortive missions. After flying long inland distances with bombs, it is discouraging to have to bring them back because of weather. Yet, this has been the story for the last few missions. The boys in the front can use the result of our bombing, that is what hurts. There is a strong feeling of admiration by the Air Corps, for the Ground forces. It is not uncommon to hear a pilot "bitching" at the weather, because it grounds the planes. He knows the men in the front lines are still fighting; bad weather or good, and can use the aid from the air. It is discouraging to all that we hold up our warfare in the air, because of adverse weather conditions.

October 3, 1944

Mission # 151, today, and the very same results as yesterday. Again the boys went into Germany on a long journey, and the weather closed in. the only alternative was to turn back with the bombs, and suffer a "no attack" for the payoff. The target was the Marshalling Yards at Duren, Germany.

From our squadron came six crews, with two B/N Teams. Leading the flight in an A-20J was the team of Lt's Meagher & Burg. Right along with them in the deputy position were; Lt. Miracle & F/O McCartney (B/N). The journey lasted 3:00 with no flak or fighter encounters.

121

The trip back to the States is definite for nine of our combat crew with their record of 65 missions and over. 1st Lt. L.G. Peede is the only pilot going back. Gunners going back are; S/Sgt's Adair, Love, Dickenson, Hibbs, Fejes, Judd, Orr, and T/Sgt. Robbins. This is a "good deal" for these boys, and they sure have earned. The average combat time they have is 200 hours and over.

We are operating a lot more comfortable from the field now. A lot of improvements have been made, and individual adjustments to France are taking place. It doesn't take the "GI's" long to learn the necessary French words for the things they want.



Special Service has it rumored that the glamorous Marlana Dietriech may visit the field. That's worth waiting for.

October 4, 1944

We merit "A" for effort for today's activities. In the morning a mission was planned and all crews briefed. Planes had been pre-flighted, and were being warmed up when a red flare signaled the scrubbing of the mission. We went automatically on a "onehour"

alert. The results were – we were alerted all the day, and nothing ever became of it. Training on the A-26's continues with everyone very impressed by them. Truly, they are a fast, hard-hitting plane and surpass our present A-20's. The fact remains, that in the states, they no longer build A-20's. So, our future seems to point to the A-26. The question is – how long will "Red" or "Mac" McNulty keep his abundance of red hair with out streaks of gray appearing? Lately, he has had cause to merit gray hair. Could be some of the pilots are getting French Fever? Oui, les mademoiselles sont teas jolie; C'est la guerre, moe amis.

October 5, 1944

We came a little closer today in getting a mission completely flown. In the morning, the planes took off and headed for Germany. After expending one hour's gas, the word came over the radio to return to the field, so back they came after a 2:30 journey. Another one of those things.

On the field now, things are in good order. The squadron is functioning with the usual preciseness of the past. Paris is still the target for everyone when it becomes "on limits". It is beginning to cause a strain on our mental facilities, as we envision that fabulous city.

October 6, 1944

It finally happened today, Group Mission # 152 was planned and executed. We had one of these days where nothing caused interference, namely weather. Thirty-eight aircraft were dispatched from the Group, of which twelve crews from our squadron 122

swelled the loading list. The B/N Teams of Major Price & Lt. Hand; Capt. Osborne & Lt. Forma, led the first and second boxes respectively. Take-off was at 0915.

The target was the Marshalling Yards at Duren, Germany. All the way over, it was a "milk run" till the target was reached. There the formation encountered light accurate flak. Thirty-seven aircraft and crew dropped 208 x 500 lb GP's on the target from the altitude of 11,700 feet and 12,000 feet. Bombing was done in flights of six, and ten planes out of the formation received flak hits – none of them serious. The first flight led by Major Price scored "excellent" on their bombing; the first flight of the second box, led by Capt. Osborne, scored "fair" on their bombing. All planes and crews returned safely to the base with no casualties, losses, after a trip of 3:30 duration. So ended the only operational flying for the day.

Training on the A-26's continues, with crews being checked out every day. These who have flown them and who have flown in them, solidly swear by the A-26. The opinion of the crew chief's who work of them, finds the A-26's easier to work on than

the

A-20's.

The base itself is assuming a business-like air, with all departments functioning smoothly. The period of adjustment to the new location is now over.

October 7, 1944

A mission came in early this morning, but conditions didn't prove favorable till late afternoon. Thusly, at 1500, thirty-seven aircraft left the ground to complete Mission #

153. This time we sent six crews out from this squadron, with the B/N Team of Lt's Meagher & Burg leading the flight. We had a "wheel" flying with us today, none other than Brig. Gen. Backus, CO of the 97<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing. He flew in the A-20K, a wing plane under our maintenance.

The target to appear in the bombardier's sights was the warehouse at Trier, Germany. This time all conditions were in our favor, and the results of the bombing prove it. Flak was encountered over the target, and it proved fatal for one of our crews. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J.B. Saidla, with Gunners Cavanaugh and Harris, received serious flak hits, and had to bail out over the target. Three chutes were seen to land on the west side of the target. Other planes were hit, not causing serious damage.

The results of the bombing were of the best. Out of the six flights that bombed, four received "excellent", one "good" and one "poor". Our flight, with Lt. Burg doing the bombing in the lead ship, an A-20J, scored "excellent". Thirty-six planes returned, with nine of them flak damaged. The journey was of 3:00 duration.

Lt. Saidla and his Gunners are considered missing in action. They had eight missions completed with our squadron – and so the war goes on.

123

October 8, 1944

We continue on the one mission a day tempo, with Group Mission # 154 flown today. We contributed twelve crews to the loading list, with thirty-eight aircraft and crew dispatched for the mission. Leading the A-2-1 flight in an A-20J was the B/N Team of Capt. Bartmus and Lt. Hardy; while leading the A-3-1 flight in an A-20J was the B/N Team of Lt. Meagher & Lt. Burg.

The town of Linnich, Germany felt the impact of 210 x 500 GP's from the altitudes of 11,000 feet to 12,000 feet. Over the target, the planes experienced light inaccurate flak, causing damage to six aircraft. One plane crash-landed 18 miles NE of Reims, in it was Lt. Kreh, and Gunners Shelton and Schenck. They received a burst of flak over the target, which caused them to crash land, after continuing ten minutes off the target. Lt. Kreh belly-landed the plane, and luckily no one was injured. They were later picked up in the C-64 by Capt. McNulty. The plane is considered lost. The rest of the planes reached the base safely after 3:00 flight.

Outside of these missions, there isn't much else doing in the squadron. The A-26 training continues and life is more or less routine now. Almost forgotten were the bombing results for today's mission. Both of our flights scored PNB (primary not bombed). A dense haze prevented the bombardier from picking up the target in time for

the run. Bombs were salvoed one minute past the target as briefed.

October 9, 1944

Just plain lousy weather grounded all aircraft today. So as not to waste manpower, all enlisted personnel were detailed on squadron fatigue. The Mess Hall was re-arranged, and other details were cleaning up the general area. We had a peer day in every respect.

October 10, 1944

A continuous rain and low ceiling made any flying what so ever impossible day. The never-ending rainfall kept all activities confined to the tents. We were fairly convinced that when we left England, we were free of rain. France is sure proving how wrong we were.

Within the last four or five weeks, we have gained new personnel to the squadron. In the Pilot category are: 1st Lt. H.M. Evans, 1st Lt. C.J. Andersen, 1st Lt. C.S. Stanley, 2nd Lt. J. H. Carver, 2nd Lt. R.C. Buchanan, 2nd Lt. W.H. Roberts, 2nd Lt. L. J. Prucha, 2nd Lt. W.W. Annin?, and 1st Lt. O. F. Jacobsen. New B/N's to the squadron are: Gunners Skeen, Merritt, Hindman, Calabrese, Graham, Windish, Reed, Ferguson, Wilson, Kaminski, Hicks, Rivard, Fauker, Gooch, Pettinicchi, Mohr, Holterfield, Collier, Vancalder, and Pylie. With these new additions to the combat crew roster, it will be possible for the "veteran" combat crew personnel to return to the States when their "tour"

is over. At least that is what everyone is hoping for.

124

A casual trip into a neighboring village in the evening, proved rather fatal to Lt's Svenson, Downing, Harris, etc. (whose names I can't recall). I guess we are all learning that it is difficult to navigate after evening's bout with vin, calvades, "kish", etc. its still "rough in the ETO".

October 11, 1944

Adverse weather still clings to this part of the country. Again the planes were grounded because of weather. Late in the afternoon, Capt. McNulty broke the siege, by test-hopping A-20G # 701. This was the only flying for the day.

A visit by Lt. Col. Meng, of Group Headquarters, set the ball-a-rolling in this Operations "shack". New pilots were brought in for examining, and records were dug out of there seclusion. For a while, things were quite active – I do mean active! Seen lately is the bright and beaming face of Lt. "Van" Vanover, sweating out his papers, etc. in Operations. A former pilot, at present grounded, he adds life to the Operations inner sanctum. His first trip to Paris is his inspiration for being in France. Lookout Mademoiselles, C'est le wolf. What a man – Van.

Part of this section is missing, so if this reads funny, it is because there are words missing.

-----very poor, Group Mission # 155 took off early this  
-----crews from this squadron, two which flew in the  
-----of Capt. Osborne & Lt. Forma le the second flight  
-----third flight of the second box, was the team of Lt's  
-----0840.

-----of Langerwehe, Germany, located a short distance north-  
-----been very instrumental in getting supplies, munitions  
-----ying Aachen. The town was also known to contain a  
-----cards were stacked against us, as the target was en-  
-----ing. Five of the six flights didn't bomb, because of  
this condition. One flight, namely the flight led by Lt. Meagher, bombed and scored  
"good" on their bombing. They had a brief opportunity for the target, and they didn't  
miss it.

The trip both over and back was uneventful, the journey lasting 3:30. Flying the  
"windows" planes were; Lt. Montrose, and the B/N Team of Lt. Miracle & F/O  
McCartney. All planes returned with no losses, casualties, or battle damage.  
Reaching the exalted "65" Missions mark are: Lt's Downing, Ebenstein, and  
Leshner. Gunners with the same number of missions are; Damico, Daugherty, and Sieg. A-  
26 training for the combat personnel of this squadron continues, with ground school now  
prevailing. Men in every department comprising the squadron are also training on the  
A125

26. Rumors of 48-hour passes to Paris, for the combat crews are now circulating around  
the squadron. The boys are sure "eager".

October 13, 1944

With the results of yesterday's mission still in mind, the crews made up for it  
today. Mission # 156 took to the air this morning, with the weather conditions in our  
favor for a change. We contributed twelve crews to the loading list, with two B/N Teams  
as box leaders. The B/N Team of Price & Hand lead the first box, while the Team of  
Osborne & Forma led the second box. Lt. McCready flew in the "spare" position.  
Thirty-seven aircraft took to the air, loaded with 500 lb. G.P.'s. Lt. Kreh  
experienced trouble while taxiing, and was forced to turn back, the trouble being weak  
brakes. Right back to yesterday's target, the formation flew, with Langerwehe, Germany  
taking the bomb loads. The weather over the target was good, and the missiles were  
dropped with precision. The A-1-1 flight led by Major Price, scored "excellent" under Lt.  
Hand's aim. Incredibly, this makes about 15 "excellents" in a row for this team; with Lt.  
Hand being distinctly dubbed as being "hot". The B-1-1 flight led by Capt. Osborne, with  
Lt. Forma on the bombsight, scored "good". The bombing as a whole was described as  
"very successful".

The journey proved uneventful in the line of enemy opposition. All planes and  
crews returned safely to the base. Lt. Mish flew "window" on this mission. The mission  
lasted 3:00.

Remainder of the day was spent in training flying. All the newcomers to the  
squadron averaged 2:00 on transition flying. Something new has been introduced into the  
squadron. From higher headquarters has come a request for volunteers for "night  
intruder" activities, employing the A-26's. As to the actual duties this will involve is  
unknown, but it is logically surmised that it will detail great risk and much night flying.  
We expect to know more about this in the near future.

October 14, 1944

The greatest ally of any war machine, namely weather, was against us today. Mission # 157 was received, briefed, and take-off was at 08:50. We added thirteen crews to the loading list, with two of them B/N Teams. The newly formed team of Capt. Prentiss & Lt. Bursiel, led the second flight of the first box. Leading the third flight of the first box was Capt. Bartmus & Lt. Hardy. The rest of our crews flew in formation behind these leaders.

Our target was located within Germany, namely the town of Mayen. A railroad bridge here, proved to be a valuable asset to Jerry, as it was ordered destroyed. The weather

was again with Jerry, as the target was covered by overcast. With no alternative but to turn back, the crews and planes chalked up a "no attack".

126

Thusly, three hours of steady formation flying over enemy territory, was to avail. A "stand-down" was ordered for the rest of the day, eliminating all operational flying. Shiny, new, silver bars are floating around the squadron again. This time the proud wearers are; 1st Lt's J.K. Colquitt, J.P. Kenny, J.H. Harris, P.K. Parker and T.D. McCready. To these boys go congratulations for work well done.

October 15, 1944

Torrential downpour will sum up the lack of activity today. We are learning what the word "rain" really means. In many cases it is a necessity to bail out water from housing. "Quack-time" was enjoyed by all, but the unfortunate on detail.

October 16, 1944

No let-up from the weather again today. More rain and low ceiling make flying impossible. And we are located on flat country, the wind and rain has a good chance to work on our tents. This the second day of grounding.

October 17, 1944

Mission # 158 was flown today, but in the odds in the Jerry's favor. In the morning, thirty-seven planes took off, loaded with 500 lb. G.P.'s. Leading the two flights, composed of crews from this squadron were; Lt. Meagher & Lt. Burg, and Lt. Miracle & F/O McCartney.

This was a PFF mission, with "pathfinders" leading the boxes. The trip over was a milk run, and the target was found with a 10/10 cover. For an unknown reason, the pathfinders never dropped their bombs, so the rest of the planes refrained from unleashing their loads. All planes returned to the base, with no interference from enemy activities. The trip over and back last 3:15, and we chalk up another "abortive" sortie. We had a release for the rest of the day, and local transition flying was accomplished. Ground training for the A-26 crews is in full swing, with the A-26's being loaned to the 670th Sq. Other combat crews with 65 missions are; Lt's Leshner, Lt. Ebenstein, Lt. Downing, S/Sgt. Sieg, S/Sgt. Daugerty, S/Sgt. Damico. The trip back to the States is insured for these boys any day now.

October 18,19,20,21,22, 1944

Part of this section is missing, so if this reads funny, it is because there are words missing.

-----enlarging the truth, when its claimed that the  
----- “stinking”. During the space of these five days  
-----sure of flyable weather. Never one space long

127

-----lawn. High winds accompanied by rain, have made living miserable. The ceiling has never left us over a period of two or three hours. During the period where the weather was good, training flying was undertaken.

During this space of time, certain events have taken place, and have been forecasted. ----- Osborne, and his combat shadow “The Kid” Forma, have received the Purple Heart. Major General Vandenberg in to visit the field in the future and hand out a few decorations. Those who are known to receive so far are; Capt. Osborne, Lt. Forma, Lt. Hand, and Lt. Hill (formerly with this Squadron). The decoration is the DFC – Distinguished Flying Cross.

Lt. Meredith left France for a rest in a “flak farm” in England. Lt’s Pruga, Annin, Buchanan, and Roberts flew to Ireland in a P-17 to ferry some A-20K’s back here. These planes will be used to lead the A-26’s on missions. There are not enough plex-nosed A-26’s. Lt. “Van” Vanover appointed Training Officer for the squadron. He’s already requisitioned several bottles of Aspirin. He’ll need them. Capt. “Rick” Prentiss now again a flight leader, complete with B/N and all. Lt. Bursiel now rides in the nose, “sweating out” that strictly hot pilot. Lt. Downing “sweating it out” and ready to transfer into a fighter squadron. “Eager Beaver”. Let it be known that it is Major C.C. (“The Nose”) Wysocki. Confidentially, we think he has those leaves stenciled on his long handles too. Major “Jug” Price, still ramrodding the outfit, flying the bombers in the air – and the jeeps on the ground. With that, we exit for the day – and dream of that discharge.

October 23, 1944

More rain and bad weather. This makes the sixth day of inactivity, due to the weather. The future visit of Major General Vandenberg has been postponed. There isn’t much doing anywhere.

October 24 thru 30, 1944

It still continues to be the same old story – inclement weather, no flying. During this space of one week, not one mission was flown. When we had a break in the weather, we accomplished training flying. Never have there been conditions suitable to accomplish a mission. To sum it up – we’re all pretty damned disgusted and discouraged. The only news to tabulate is squadron activities.

Five more members of combat personnel are enroute to the States. With 65 and over missions to their credit, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.D. Leshner, S/Sgt’s B.C. Sieg, A. Damico, L. K. Daugherty, and J.C. Burkhalter have all left for the States. Again we wish them the best of luck from there on out. The members of the original combat crews are rapidly dwindling. As fast as they go out, we get more replacements. Most recent to the squadron are; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt’s R.J. Lackner, C.J. Parkhurst, R.A. Russell; (pilots) R.E. Shaft, B.C. Norris, and F/O J.R. Plaunt; (B/N’s) and Gunners Mussarra, Miller, Fidler, and Newman. All of these men are fresh from the States with no previous combat records.

128

Ground training continues on the A-26's, with the planes being loaned out to the 671<sup>st</sup> Bomb Sq. At present we have eight full crews considered ready for combat in the A-26's. The day is drawing near, when we use these ships in actual combat. Recently in Paris, an A-20 from this Group was dedicated to the French people. This plane has over one hundred missions on it, with never an abortion against the plane itself. That is, the plane was never forced to return to the base with engine trouble. The 670<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. is the proud owner of this plane. We have one A-20 in our squadron with 98 missions to its credit.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. W.E. Downing has taken the big jump recently, and got married in Cherbourg. Now he takes his place next to Capt. "Red" McNulty, in dreaming about their "Mrs." on this side of the pond. Capt. "Art" Osborne getting eager on his 60 completed missions. Lt. "Van" Vanover still "sweating it out". Lt. "The Beaver" Kreh, ramrodding Operations every day. "Little -Gus" Ebenstein, keeping out of sight. Capt. "Rick" Prentiss, looking awfully sleepy these days. So it goes – on and on – still hoping for decent weather.

October 31, 1944

With no mission being flown since 17 October 1944, there isn't much to say in an "operational" sense of this log. During these two weeks, we made the change we were all waiting for. With weather still not favorable, we made the change from A-20 bomber group, to an A-26 bomber group. At last we have them.

On 4 November 1944, all flyable A-20 aircraft left this field in formation to fly to England. This was a ferrying mission, taking our last A-20's we were ever to work with. After having them for about almost two years, we are bound to miss them. Combat personnel from this squadron that took part in this move were; Capt. McNulty & Lt. Bursiel, in an A-20J; Lt's Evans, Chalmers, Brewster, Stanley, Hale, Kenny, McCready, Meredith, Svenson, Montrose, Jacobson, and Roberts. Their mission was to fly the A-20's to England, and return with new A-26's.

In the late afternoon, 6 November 1944, these men returned back to the field flying in low formation with the A-26's. The sight they presented will be hard to forget. It

was on of the prettiest sights we have ever seen. That day, we gained eleven A-26's to the squadron. A correction must be made at this point. We kept one A-20J, and two A-20K's in the squadron. These planes will be used to lead the A-26's in formation on missions. So, the transformation was finally made. The A-26's are sleek, new, fast, and hardhitting. We lost S/Sgt. "Speedy" Newell from this squadron. Finally, he is on the way home, with combat service in two theatres. He has much combat service to his credit, and has deserved this break a long time ago. We gained a complete crew to this squadron recently. Ironically, we lost them recently also. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. R.C. Miles (pilot), 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. W.G. Kelly (B/N), and Gunners Morrissey & Pepe, came to us on the 8 November 1944. On 129

their first transition flight here, 11 November 1944, they had an accident, killing all four of them. They were reported coming out of the overcast, on their back and in a spin. The

plane crashed to the ground and exploded. One of the Gunners tried to bail out, but he didn't fasten the chute properly, and hurtled to the ground. They ended their career abruptly and quickly.

Almost duplicating this incident, were Lt's Ebenstein and Vanover. They took off in the C-64, from the 409<sup>th</sup> field, and had their plane catch fire. With "Little Gus" at the controls, and "Van" sweating along with him, they brought the plane down in a cow pasture in a dead stick landing. Two very lucky men climbed out of the ship.

A little lighter picture was the awarding of the Distinguished Flying Cross to members of the Group. From the squadron came four combat personnel who had the honor of receiving this award. Proud owners are; Major. Price, Capt. A.E. Osborne, 1<sup>st</sup>Lt. A.R. Hand, and 1<sup>st</sup>Lt. Forma. 1<sup>st</sup>Lt. L. Hill, formerly of this squadron, received the award also.

Going back to the depth of darkness and despair again, is the new punishment deled out for violators of rules. The old system of the Burma Head is in effect again. For being found in "out of bound" places, and other infractions, the unfortunate is given 7 days of hell. This consists of living in a pup tent and eating "k" rations for the tour. During the day, marching in full field pack for many long hours is conducted. The blankets are allotted a man, and that isn't enough over here. It gets damned cold now, not accounting for the rain. We have the officers (Lt's Blount & Morris) and seven E/M's from this squadron participating at present. It is pretty strong punishment, and we're all damned sore at the originator of these punishments.

Rumors are flying around again, and sound pretty reasonable. It seems that very soon we are to leave again. This time we won't be very far from the German border. We're all ready, as it means one step closer to getting home. We expect to find things much rougher when we get there. So far it is still rumor.

The weather itself continues to be very lousy. The few days we have had this two weeks have been spent in checking out pilots and crews on the A-26's. At present we have about twelve crews ready for combat in the A-26. Twice missions have been set up, but weather has interceded every time. Soon we expect to run our "first" with the A-26's. This sums up about all that has happened for these two weeks. What the future holds is anybody's guess.

130

November 14 thru 16, 1944

These three days have been spent in "sweating out" the weather. We are now considered operational with the A-26's, and are awaiting our first chance to go into action with them. Once we were successful in flying a mission; the planes were taxing for takeoff,

when a red flare signaled the scrubbing of the mission. Shortly afterward, the weather closed in, and would have forced the planes back had they become airborne.

More promotions have come into the squadron. Sporting a pair of "railroad tracks" is Capt. J. Meagher. Leaving the "shave-tail" class, are now 1<sup>st</sup>Lt's J.M. Wright, J.H. Montrose, and W.L. Hale.

Passes are now being given to Ground Personnel for P----. It is now legal to enter



that famous city and partake of its many offerings. Reports from those returning state that it is a GI's Heaven.

November 17, 1944

With one month passing since our last mission, we flew our first mission from France today. Needless to say, it was damned good to see our planes take off to give support to the front line troops. This was mission # 159.

Although our planes were used for this mission, we didn't have one crew from this squadron taking part. In the morning, 28 A-26 ap's and 6 A-20 ap's left the ground, with the Stores Depot in Haguenau, Germany the target. On these missions, the A-20's lead the flights of A-26's. The planes were loaded with 250 lb. GP bombs, and in all there were 208 bombs dropped on the target. These missiles were from 8,000 feet and 8,500 feet, with the planes bombing in flights of six. The planes encountered weak, inaccurate, heavy flak, but it caused no damage. There were no losses, damage, or casualties suffered by the Group. The scorings of the flights were; 3 - excellents; - 1 fair, and 2 - unsatisfactory.

The mission was summed up as being very satisfactory, but there were errors due to the newness of the planes. The formation was a little ragged, because of lack of time to get in practice formation time. None of the pilots have many hours of training flown in these planes. The future will speak for itself, as we become more proficient with the airplanes.

November 18, 1944

Back in business once more with Mission # 160 being flown today. This was the first mission with A-26's and our combat crews at the controls. It will be recalled that yesterday's mission was flown with a crew from this squadron.

131

We furnished seven crews to the Group Loading List; six of them flying A-26's while the other led a flight in an A-20K. Who led our flight? You're right - 65 or bust, "Chicago by Xmas", Gotta-get-home" Osborne. With him were Lt. Forma (B/N) and Gunners Lagerman & Simmonds. Flying the "first" in A-26's were; Lt. Colquitt & Gunner Raines, Lt. Chalmers & Gunner Fortner, Lt. Evans & Gunner Merritt with Lt. Morris as B/N, Lt. Wright & Gunner Profita, Lt. Montrose & Gunner Felkel, and Lt. McCready & Gunner Schenck. Their flight was led by Captain Osborne in the second box, second flight position.

The target the Railroad Bridge at Breisach, Germany. Five flights attacked this target from the altitude of 12,000 feet; the other flight was assigned another target. The flak was light, inaccurate, and slightly damaged six planes. All aircraft returned to the base with no losses, casualties, and light battle damage. The bomb load used with the A-26's consists of 1,000 lb. G.P.'s, and pictures showed the devastating effect they created. The results were; 4 - excellents; 1- undetermined (no photo coverage); and 1- no attack (bomb-sight malfunction). The journey lasted 3:30, and the mission was considered "very successful". The only "hitch" in plans was Lt. McCready's failure to find the formation. Our flight scored "excellent" on their bombing. Laurels to Lt. Forma.

November 19, 1944

Today was like old times, with two missions being flown. The only difference was seeing a formation of A-26's take to the air, instead of the old A-20's. In the morning was Mission # 161, with twelve crews from this squadron taking part. We furnished two box leaders again, namely Major Price & Captain Osborne. Major Price led the first box, with Lt. Hand at the bombsight.

The planes took off at 0830, loaded with 1000 lb. GP's. The target was enemy strong points in the Merzig, Germany area. As there was no specific target, "area bombing" was employed. This type of bombing is done in direct support to the Ground Forces.

The planes arrived at the target at the appointed time, and the bombs were dropped. There was no flak or enemy action to mar the bombardier's aim. All planes returned to the base after a journey of 3:00, with no casualties, losses, or battle damage. In the estimate of many, it was a "milk-run".

After a quick lunch, briefing for the next mission started. Ground crews feverishly worked on their planes, loading, refueling, and preparing in general. Mid-afternoon, the crews reported to the planes, ready to takeoff. We had twelve crews again participating from the squadron. This time the B/N Teams of Bartmus & Hardy, Meagher & Burg led our flights. Capt. Bartmus led the third flight of the first box, while Capt. Meagher led the second flight of the first box.

This was Group Mission # 162, with a 3:00 duration. Lt. McCready suffered engine trouble after takeoff, and had to return to the base, causing an abortion.

132

Bartmus attained his 65<sup>th</sup> mission today, making him eligible for a return ticket to the States. We can also consider today a "red letter" day, as it was our first day to accomplish

two missions with the A-26's. After such a long space of time while acquiring these new planes, it was with good spirits that everyone hit the sack, feeling that they had accomplished a good day's work.

November 20 thru 28, 1944

As if to pay for our good luck of running two missions on the 19<sup>th</sup>, weather has closed in on us, making operational flying impossible. Typical French rainy, windy days are here, turning the ground into a quagmire. Only local flying has been attempted, during the brief lulls in the weather.

In the squadron, various events have taken place, worthy of mentioning. Capt. C.F.

Bartmus and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Gustave, Ebenstein are finally on their first leg of the journey home. They both have 65 missions to their credit, and over 200 hours of operational time. Capt. Bartmus will sojourn in his native California, while "Little Gus" "Ebengoose", etc. Ebenstein will relax in New York. We already miss these two men, as they were two of the best we have had the pleasure of being with. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. W.E. Downing is more or less "sweating out" events, which will lead to his transfer or departure also.

The DFC's were given out during this period of time to Capt. Osborne, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt.

Forma, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Hand, and Captain Meagher. They might have presented a debatable

appearance, as the night before was spent in giving the "Goose and Bart" a send-off. That can be effectively done with the brand of firewater these French put out over here. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Hill, flew over here in his L-5, to be present and also receive the DFC. He practically flew the wings off of the Operations Shack. He spent a few days with us, and everyone had the chance to go up in the scrappy L-5. It wasn't uncommon to see the plane doing all kinds of gyrations, when someone new took the controls.

Paris continues to be open for passes, and continues to awe everyone who is fortunate enough to go in. rumors of a forthcoming move nearer to the front are beginning to circulate. At present it looks as we will spend the winter in France. One high spot of the month was the turkey dinner put out by the Mess personnel. It wasn't as good

as Mother used to make, but it reminded many of what is in store after peace returns once more. The only ones who weren't impressed by the Thanksgiving dinner were the KP's who had a lot of extra work. That about sums up the squadron events that occurred during

this siege of bad weather.

Mission # 163 was flown today, but without much success. With weather conditions very unpredictable, the formation took off in the afternoon. We had twelve crews on the loading list, with Osborne & Forma and Prentiss & Bursiel leading the two flights composed of our crews. It will be recalled that these A-26's are led by A-20's, especially kept for this purpose.

133

The defended village of Mariamweiler, Germany was the assigned target, but was spared with a low ceiling hiding the target. This bombing would have been done in direct support to our Allied ground troops. Again the bombers were forced to return with their bomb loads. Flak was present, labeled as heavy inaccurate. One A-26 from a sister squadron was hit, and knocked down. The crew was seen to bail out in friendly territory. This makes the first A-26 lost in combat to date.

All of our squadron planes returned, bearing flak holes. S/Sgt. J.R. Simmons, turret gunner with Capt. Osborne in the A-20K, stopped a piece of flak from wounding this gunner. This was the only close call the squadron had from this mission. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Annin, hailing from Southern California, was scheduled for the mission, but didn't become airborne, due to a flat tire. The duration of this mission was 3:30. The rest of the day was spent under the statue of "stand-down"

November 30 thru December 1, 1944

The inevitable lull, ever present in between missions, where weather and other conditions make flying impossible. Most activity centered in Operations, where the end of the month means reports, reports, reports.

December 2, 1944

With overcast and low ceiling prevailing, Mission # 164 was flown under PFF conditions. Thirty-six aircraft were dispatched loaded with 250 lb. frag bombs and 500 lb. GP's. From our squadron came seven crews, two of which were B/N Teams. Capt. Meagher flew in the A-1-2 position, acting as Deputy box leader. Leading our flight in

the second box, second flight position was the team of Miracle & McCartney. The defended areas in the Saarlautern district were the targets, and area bombing was employed. This bombing was done in co-ordination with the Allied ground forces, advancing in this area. The trip over was a milk run, till the target area was reached. It was there the formation found out what intensive flak can do.

Captain Meagher in an A-20K, with Lt. Burg (B/N) and Gunners Fetko & McCreery, suffered flak hits, causing serious damage. He was forced to make a crash landing, which he did, fortunately in friendly territory. His crew, seeing he did not come out of the plane, investigated and found that he had been hit by flak. He never mentioned it over the inter-phone, not wanting to worry anyone. He was hit in the leg and foot, and was very weak from the loss of blood. They took his boot off and poured the blood out of

it. Lt. Burg gave him a shot of morphine, and he was taken to the hospital, where he is recovering at present. Fortunately, he was the only one wounded. The plane was very badly damaged.

The rest of the planes in the formation returned to the base, very badly chewed up. Outside of Capt. Meagher, no others of the squadron were injured on this mission. 1st Lt. 134

Renth, of the 669<sup>th</sup>, was knocked out of the sky on this mission. A West Point graduate, he and his crew escaped death by a close margin, as the plane plummeted to earth. Both boxes were scored, as it was a PFF mission. The first box scored a “superior”, a rating seldom given, and very hard to get. The second box didn’t bomb the primary target. One aircraft in the 1<sup>st</sup> box dropped his bombs prematurely due to a malfunction; this was the 64<sup>th</sup> mission for Capt. Meagher, and for Gunner McCreery, and almost ending up in disaster.

December 3 & 4, 1944

Inclement weather again prevails, these two days, making any phase of flying impossible. A few notable happenings in the squadron are worth reporting. He will now be addressed as Captain Richard V. Miracle. This flight leader and West Point graduate received his “tracks” just recently. Now he is on even par with Captain R.F. Shafer, (West Point also) formerly with this squadron.

S/Sgt. F.L. Flacks took leave of the squadron, to return to the U.S. this very experienced gunner returns to the States to be an instructor. He has many sorties to his credit and has seen action in Africa, and the England-France-Germany theatre.

1st Lt. W.E. Downing, with 65 missions to his record, took leave of this squadron, and transferred into the 670<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sq. (Light). With him go our best wishes in his future operations.

It’s the old story – they come and they go. Soon, we are to lose the remaining bunch of “old” gunners that are left. These Gunners are the same that came overseas with us. Definite orders haven’t been cut yet, so the names are withheld at present.

Newcomers come in everyday, it seems. Newest are; 1st Lt. J.P. Phillips, 1st Lt. W.M. Taseter?, 2nd Lt. F.R. Tank, and F/O H.G. Guakel?, all pilots. Gunners accompanying them are; Cpls. F.R. Harmon and L.J. Grzona.

December 5, 1944

With an overcast presenting a low ceiling, Mission # 165 took off early this morning. It was a PFF mission with a B-26 leading, and three window ships giving support.

Flight crews from our squadron were on the loading list, two of them being B/N Teams. Capt. Osborne led one flight, with Lt. Forma and Gunners Simmons & Phенning comprising his crew. Leading another flight was Capt. Prentiss, with Lt. Bursiel, and Gunners Sylva & Schenck right along with him. This was # 64 for Capt. Prentiss. The target was a defended village in Germany, under the name of Kall. It was one of the villages, which was slowing up the advance of the Third Army. The trip over was 135

uneventful in respects to flak or fighters. Clusters of 250 lb. & 500 lb. bombs were dropped from the altitude of 13,000 feet and 13,500 feet. Leaving the bombed area the formation was unchallenged from any enemy source. The planes returned to the base after 3:15, with no losses, damage, or casualties.

Results on the mission were classified as "good". This was the only mission for the day, as weather wasn't very much in our favor.

December 6, 1944

Today's mission is very near identical to yesterday's mission. This was Group Mission #166, with six crews from this squadron. Leading our flight in an A-20K was Lt. Stanley, with F/O Blount as Bombardier, and Gunners Collier and Brzezinski manning the .50 cal. Flying in formation with them were; Lt's Meredith, Kenny, Annin, Prucha. The Group "wheels" were along too, with Capt. Shaefer, Col. Aylesworth, and Capt. Fontaine in A-26B # 218.

Erkelenz, Germany, another defended village was the picture seen through the bombsight. Again this was a PFF mission, and bombing was done thru the clouds. The bombing was done by boxes from 13,000, and 154 x 500 lb. GP's hurtled thru the clouds to fall on the target. There was little flak, and no fighter action present, and the formation returned to the base for the day.

I learned today that we are losing two bombardiers from this squadron. Both 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J.F. Hardy, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. B.C. Morris are transferring to the 410<sup>th</sup> Bomb Gp. Rumor has it that they will go on special duty with this mixed bomb group.

December 7, 1944

On this anniversary of "Pearl Harbor Day", we did nothing in the line of revenge, but sit and mope. Again, today, it was the old story of no flying, inclement weather. Low heavy ceilings, and incessant rain are to common over here. Being on a broad level plain, the wind has full advantage of us, also we are discovering one of the greatest enemies of any force is mud.

December 8, 1944

A break in the weather, and presto – a mission! This morning saw Group Mission # 167 take off, with eight of our crews in the formation. Leading his flight, in an A-20K, was Lt. Andersen, with Lt. Babbage at the bombsight and S/Sgt's Euga and Schafer manning the guns. This was a PFF mission, as a ceiling was known to be over the target.

The railroad bridge at Sinzig, Germany was the target. It was observed that this bridge was very valuable in helping Jerry transport troops and supplies to the front. As a result, it was ordered destroyed by the Ground Forces.

136

The formation arrived at the target with no enemy interference of any type. As previously assumed, a cloud ceiling covered the target. The planes dropped their loads from the altitude of 13,000 feet, bombing in flights of six. After leaving the bombed area, the course was due home, and no interference was present.

All planes returned to the base after a journey of 3:40. The results were “undetermined”, as cloud coverage prevented the use of cameras, in recording the path of the bombs. This was the only operational flight for the day, as poor weather clouded in, and the planes were grounded.

December 9, 1944

We were fortunate today in accomplishing two missions. The formation took off this morning at 0900, marking Group Mission # 168. The sky overhead was blue and cold, with unlimited ceiling. After our planes had departed on their assignment, we beheld an awe-inspiring scene. Wave upon wave of heavy bombers, escorted by fighters, passed over the field at high altitude. Each plane left a “vapor trail” in its wake making a beautiful lacy pattern against the blue sky. This is deadly as well as beautiful, as it is a dead give-away to enemy ack-ack gunners. The formation paused over for at least twenty minutes, and an estimate of strength was made at over 500.

From this squadron came six crews, to form a flight, and it was led by B/N Team of Andersen & Babbage. Flying in flight formation were; Lt’s Evans, Cannon, McCready, Prucha, and Buchanan.

Using PFF bombing technique, the target to feel the weight and destruction of our missiles was the defended locality of Saarwellington, Germany. A enemy supply point her, defended by heavy German Artillery fire, which pinned down movement of an American Infantry division nearby, was struck with force. The bombing was done from over 13,000 feet, and 153 x 500 lb. GP’s were dropped.

The results “undetermined” as no photo coverage or visual observation were possible due to clouds. All planes returned to the base unharmed, logging 3:00.

In the afternoon, Group Mission # 169 was ushered in. everyone was very skeptical, as the ceiling was low and quite turbulent. Approximately at 1400, thirty-eight aircraft and crews took off on their mission of destruction. A PFF B-26, with the protection of three “window” planes, led the formation.

From this squadron come nine crews, of which two were flying window ships.

Captain Osborne led the first box in an A-20K. This was his historic day, as it was 65. Leading the second box was his sidekick Captain “Rick” Prentiss. In the two “window” planes were Lt’s Mish and Svenson. The rest of our crews comprised the first flight in the

second box.

137

The defended village of Dilsburg, Germany was the target. The formation reached

this village with no interception from the enemy, neither flak nor fighters. The bomb run was made with the PFF plane conducting the show. For some reason the B-26 didn't bomb; later it was found the PFF equipment had failed. As a result, this formation didn't bomb, as orders were to bomb on the B-26.

All planes returned to the base after a flight of three hours duration. The trip back was identical to the trip over, and all planes returned with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. As it was dark when they returned, flying was ended for the day. The results on the mission were classified as "no attack".

December 10 & 11, 1944

Inclement weather prevented any flying for these two days. The only noteworthy happenings that took place here recently, are as follows:

The last group of gunners that came overseas with us left the outfit just recently. In that group were; S/Sgt's E.E. Kelly, K. E. Hornbeck, R.W. MacDonald, R. W. Burch, J.R. McCreery, D.E. Raines, C.K. Yost, A.A. Hill, and A.L. Shelton. All of these men had over 50 missions, and were eligible to return to the states, after completing their tour in the ETO. Of the above, S/Sgt's Raines, Shelton, and Hornbeck, did not come over with us. They transferred over to us, after completing several missions with the heavies.

We received more emplacements in the squadron recently. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt's E.B. Spence, R.M. Cross, C.J. McCarthy, and J.R. Schwartzkopf. With these new men, we have at present, thirty-six crews available.

"Sweating-it-out" to go back soon, are Capt. Osborne and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Meredith. They have 65 missions to their credit, and have earned the trip back to the U.S.

This sums up the notable occurrences that have taken place in the squadron in the past two days. With the lift in weather will come some action, we hope.

December 12, 1944

With weather conditions very doubtful, Group Mission # 170 took off around noontime with a B-26 leading the formation. This was to be another PFF bombing mission, with six crews coming from this squadron.

The B/N Team of Mish & Shaft led our crews in the third flight of the second box. Flying in this flight were Lt's Hale, Meredith, Lackner?, Parker, and Cannon. The team of Andersen & Babbage were in an A-20K, but aborted after forty-five minutes of flight. The nose-wheel was stuck and wouldn't lock, finally after many gymnastics; they shook the wheel in place and landed safely.

138

The defended village of Schleiden, Germany was the target. This was another obstacle in the path of the Third Army, and we were to try and knock it out. The target was reached without any mishaps, and the bomb run made. For some reason, unknown to us, the PFF plane didn't drop, so the rest of the formation held their bombs. After 3:30 of flying, the formation returned to the base with full bomb bays. All aircraft landed safely, with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. This was the only operational flying for the day. So, the mission was dubbed -"no attack".

December 13, 1944

The mission for today was in many ways similar to yesterday's mission. We

furnished twelve crews to the loading list, and the formation was again led by a "PFF" B-26. The B/N Teams participating were; Miracle, & McCartney, Mish & Shaft, and Stanley & Blount. Capt. Miracle was deputy leader on this mission.

The target was Gemund, a defended village in the path of the Third Army. This was not the primary target, as the primary was inaccessible. The bombs were released using PFF methods, from the altitudes of 12,500 feet. There was no photo coverage or visual observation of results due to cloud coverage. All planes returned to the airdrome with no losses, casualties, or battle damage, after a trip of 3:30. This was Group Mission # 171. So ended the day's operational flying.

December 14, 1944

Poor weather conditions prevented any flying what so ever today. Intermittent rain with high winds made things miserable in general.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Robert "Gee" Meredith has the hallowed "65" finished now. He is ready for the trip back to the states. Captain J. F. Meagher is transferred from this Group to a hospital, where he will recover from his recent flak wounds. His bombardier, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. J.J. Burg (Chicago, Ill) will fly with Captain Miracle.

At last it has happened: word was verified today of an occasion we never thought would occur. American girls lost a feather from their caps, when it was learned that a "limey" gal snared Capt. "Rick" Prentiss. A London girl finally roped that dark, suave, pilot. His present plans are to complete his tour over here, and then return to the States with his bride. With him will go our best wishes for a happy future. And so, one more confirmed bachelor hits the dust.

December 15, 1944

Back in business once more, after a day's rest. Today was Group Mission # 172, very much the same as the last ones. Again it was PFF bombing with the results being "undetermined". Another defended village, Reimbach, Germany was the target. B/N Teams from this squadron were; Miracle & McCartney, and Stanley & Blount. From this

139  
squadron came seven crews. It was a "milk-run" with no interference of any kind. The time logged on this mission was 3:20. Just another routine day, with nothing new.

December 16 thru 22, 1944

Although we haven't flown a bit this week, the field and all personnel are far from relaxing. Incessant rain and fog have made flying absolutely impossible. It is hard to believe such poor weather exists, till you have seen it.

Fate deals pretty hard blows, and is very responsible for the termination of this war. The big push headed by Von Runstedt, has begun, and we are powerless to assist our troops with air cover. It is maddening to see the planes grounded by weather, when they are so badly needed at the front.

The field itself is under a heavy guard, with a guard on the planes for twenty-four hours a day. The perimeter of the field is also under guard. The reason, parachute troops of the enemy have been dropped in the area, and a general alert exists. With heavy fog and dismal rain, guard duty is indeed a task. All night long, shots punctuate the stillness, as a guard imagines he sees or hears something. An alert was also given for enemy



aircraft in the vicinity. Very frequently at night, the drone of unidentified aircraft can be heard, which makes guards alert to a high degree. Reports have been received of Jerries infiltrating, which automatically puts our airplanes in danger of attempted sabotage and attack. Everyone is armed and wears full field equipment. X-mas looks pretty dismal at this time. Our thoughts are with the boys in the front lines, who are leading a hellish life. Good fortune has finally smiled on one of our men. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. "Van" Vanover is placed once more on flying status. After being grounded for almost two years, he finally received word that he is back on status once more. He was formerly with the P-26's, and grounded for fatigue. Needless to say, his happiness cannot be matched. Even being Officer of the day during these hectic times, has not dimmed his joy. He has felt like a clay pigeon, as nervous guards trigger very quick.

During this week, both the EM and Officers have had their Xmas parties. Both were great successes, due to the presence of good wine and French women. Everyone had their hangovers, and memories both good and bad.

Two more Gunners are eligible to return to the States, they are S/Sgt's Chustz and Schenck.

December 23, 1944

It was our day, today, as the sun came up with a clear sky and a heavy frost on the ground. This was our chance to hammer the enemy drive and bomb his supplies and communications. Both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force went all out today.

140

Forty-eight aircraft were sent from the field today, to hammer at the German drive. Their bomb load consisted of 1000 lb. GP's, and at 0830 they took off. From our squadron came twelve crews, of which two were box leaders. Leading the first flight of the first box was the B/N Team of Price & Hand, with S/Sgt's Fetko & Heitell as Gunners. Flying with them were; Lt's Harris, Parker, Parkhurst. The team of Prentiss & Bursiel led the second box, with Lt's Cannon, Wright, Roberts, and Lackner forming their flight. This was the Group Mission # 173.

The Road Bridge at Saarburg, Germany was the target, and the boys really went after it. The bomb run was made from the altitudes of 11,500 feet and 12,000 feet. There was no interference from the enemy, and the visibility was perfect. As a result, the bombs hurtled to their mark. The results, 2 "superiors"; 3 "excellent", 2 "undetermined"; and one unsatisfactory. Upon returning to the base after a 3:00 flight, photos showed the bridge to be completely demolished. Lt. Bursiel and our flight scored a "superior". Lt. Hand and his flight scored an "undetermined", but reported "excellent" on basis of visual observation. Needless to say, the mission was a complete success. All planes and crews returned safely with no losses, casualties, or battle damage.

No sooner had the planes returned to their hardstands, when the ground crews were swarming around, refueling, re-loading, and preparing for the next mission. They hadn't long to wait, as the crews were briefed and out to the planes at 1430.

The roar of planes taking off soon filled the air, as thirty-seven aircraft left the base. This was the afternoon mission, Group Mission # 174. we furnished six crews this time, with the B/N Team of Miracle & Burg leading our flight.

This time Communications Center at Waxweiler, Germany was singled out by headquarters. The trip was uneventful, but for light inaccurate flak over the target. Out of the whole formation, only one flight bombed the primary target. Other flights developed difficulties, and bombed casual targets. There was no scoring on the bombings, and the planes returned to the base after a journey of 3:15. Out of the formation, five aircraft were damaged by flak, none of which were damaged seriously.

Thus ended the day's operational flying. Now that the cold clear weather is here, the future holds promises of being very busy. Xmas draws near, but no one has much time to think about it.

Our Group was very lucky on this morning's mission. Several other Groups on reaching their target were beset by enemy fighters, and havoc ensued. Fate smiled on us, as not a single enemy plane was seen. Other Groups had a hellish time.

December 24, 1944

A day before Xmas, but there will be no Xmas here. Everyone has the incentive to drive, and drive hard. Now that the weather is good for flying, the planes won't rest for a moment.

141

Just after noon, Mission # 175 left the ground with strength of forty-three aircraft. In the bomb- bay's were numerous 250 lb. GP's. From our squadron came twelve crews. Lt's Andersen and Babbage were the B/N Team leading the second flight of the first box. Leading the third flight of the first box were Evans & McCartney. The rest of our crews comprised these two flights.

The communications center at Zulpich, Germany was the sought-after target. This was a military objective of prime importance, and would be prominent in halting the German drive. The orders were to get that target, and get it dead center.

The formation was met with heavy flak, but preceded to make the bomb run. On the bomb run, one A-26 was hit, but continued on to drop its load. After releasing the bombs, the plane crashed. One chute was seen to land near the crashed aircraft. The rest of the formation returned to the base, intact. Eleven of the aircraft were damaged by flak. The results were very gratifying. Of the seven scores, two—superior; three—excellent, one—no attack, one-undetermined, and one-unsatisfactory. Bouquets go to our boys again. Lt. Babbage's aim scored an excellent for his flight, while F/O McCartney did one better and scored a "superior". Bombing like this, for these men with such inexperience in combat, really deserves the highest praise.

This ended the day's activities, and Xmas Eve fell upon us. For many, it consisted of guard duty and other details. A midnight mass was held for all men of all faiths, lending the Xmas spirit to those who attended. The clear, starry, frosty sky lent warning to a busy day tomorrow – Xmas or no Xmas.

December 25, 1944

Merry Christmas; -- in peacetime those words would carry a wonderful feeling. Here, it marked the end of the trail for some of our best boys. Men, who came all the way with us, were lost today, one of the blackest days in the squadron's history. They gave their lives on the very day that signified "peace on earth". Their sacrifices must never be

forgotten, and never have to occur in the future generations to come.

Those who won't answer the roll tonite are; Captain Richard B. Prentiss, Captain Richard V. Miracle, 1st Lt. Robert R. Svenson, 1st Lt. Jack J. Burg, 1st Lt. Francis H. Bursiel, S/Sgt. D.M. Brown, S/Sgt. P.G. Fild, Sgt. A.O. Wylie, S/Sgt. John H. Simmons, and S/Sgt. A.F. Galloway. The status of these men is unknown; they may be dead or alive. In many cases, witnesses doubt their chances of being alive. Time will tell, whom fate smiled on.

Very early on this Xmas morning, the formation took off to secure peace and happiness for the future world. Thirty-five aircraft were sent out, six of them containing crews from this squadron. The B/N Team of Miracle & Burg, with Gunners Simmons and Galloway led the second flight of the second box. Flying with them were; Lt's Chalmers, Prucha, Montrose, Jacobsen, and Lackner?.

142

The trip over was mild until nearing the target. Again it was a communications center target, this time at Munstereifel, Germany. Heavy accurate flak came up, and took its toll. Just before the point of releasing bombs, a burst caught Capt. Miracle directly in the bomb-bay. The plane was seen to explode in mid-air, and that was all there was to it. Thus ended the career of four of the best men to have ever entered the squadron. Capt. Miracle was a West Point graduate, with a very promising future in the air. He had over 55 missions. Fate was against Lt. Burg, as he almost was lost on Capt. Meagher's last flight. S/Sgt. Simmons, young and curly haired, had twenty missions to his credit. S/Sgt. Galloway was on the sure par with Simmons. This was one of the smoothest B/N Teams in operation. Several pilots on the mission claim to have seen one chute come from the plane. A dim ray of hope still shines for one of these men.

Another plane and crew was lost of another squadron. The rest of the formation returned intact to the base, badly riddled. Enemy planes were seen, but didn't attack due to our perfect fighter cover. This mission was of 3:30 duration. Needless to say, everyone felt pretty bad when learning of the news. Xmas had ceased to exist for many. The results were good, with one "superior", two P.N.P., and one "no attack".

Refueling, re-loading and repairing was the order prior to the next missions takeoff. Ground crews working feverishly had the planes ready in a little over an hour's passing.

At just a little past 1400 hours, the next mission was already taking off. This was Group Mission # 177, and was to strike us another hard blow. We had nine crews take part from this squadron, two of them leading both boxes. Captain "Rick" Prentiss, with Lt. Bursiel and Gunners Brown and Wylie, led the first box in an A-20J. Right behind them, leading the second box was Major Price, with Lt. Hand and Gunners Fild at the .50 cal. This was Fild's 51st mission, and upon return he would return to the States. These are the twists of fate that cut deep.

The target was the defended village of Hillsheim, Germany. Again, all of this bombing was done to put a crimp in Von Runstedt's drive. The flight over was quite, till the target area was reached. Then all hell broke loose, the effects—devastation. "Rick" Prentiss rocked his plane all over the sky in evasive action, but to no avail. The flak was

heavy and intense, and clawed at the planes in the sky. Bursts of flak surrounded Prentiss's plane, and also caught his wingman and deputy. Both were seen going down, with no chutes blossoming. They crashed, and no one escaped to the knowledge of the eyewitnesses. "Rick" Prentiss was to be married in three months. He had over 45 missions to his credit, holder of the Air Medal and DFC. "Frank" Bursiel was one of those dependable bombardiers and an excellent officer. S/Sgt Brown was Chief Gunner of the squadron, and was doing a great job. It was Wylie's second mission, and he was eager always. "Swede" Svenson was always sweating them out to get back to Ohio and the Mrs. Fild was happy in the fact that it was his last, and he too would be able to go home to Ohio. Christmas will be remembered by many this year.

143

The rest of the formation made it back to the base after dropping their loads. They were very battered and broken up, and both Major Price and Lt. "Buck" Buchanan couldn't bring their planes back to the area. They had to be towed back. The flight lasted 3:00 and all planes bore evidence of flak. It was dusk as the last plane landed, signaling the end of the day. Christmas Night, and empty beds filled the tents. No one reveled or rejoiced in wild abandon. Thoughts were with those men – "somewhere out there".

The results on the last mission were undetermined, with no photos taken due to the severe evasive action used. Another of our aircraft was forced down, piloted by a crew from the 669th. The crew reported later, safe and sound.

The curtain fell on Christmas of "44". It is better to leave words unspoken.

December 26, 1944

Somehow, things wouldn't run smooth today. Both in the morning and afternoon, formations left on missions, but were recalled each time. It seems that the formation and fighter escort couldn't meet. Each time the formation waited for the fighters, but they never showed up. As a result, nothing was gained in an operational sense.

There was one outstanding occurrence that happened at night. Rather I should say early in the morning of the 27th. At 0100, we received an air raid alert on the field. In the bitter cold, everyone piled into their foxholes. For thirty minutes nothing occurred, and the "all clear" was sounded. Everyone crawled back in the sack for a good rest. Roughly five minutes later, the roar of machine guns and cannon filled the air. In nothing flat, the tents cleared, no one waiting for the siren. GI's were sitting in foxholes, some in only their underwear. The field received a pretty good strafe job by what was believed a JU-88. It lasted for about five or ten minutes, and then the "all clear" was sounded again. It was discovered that someone had set a flare in the field, and guided the enemy plane in. That was the information we received from a higher source. Luckily there was no damage, and no one was injured. This was the first strafe job in the squadron's career. Needless to say, it had a remarkable effect on everyone.

December 27, 1944

With the strafing episode fresh in mind, we were out for blood today. At roughly 1100, twenty-nine aircraft left the ground, loaded with 1000 lb. GP's. This was GP Mission # 178. We supplied six crews from squadron, with the B/N Team of Mish & Shaft leading our flight. The others included; Lt's Harris, Roberts, Jacobsen, Carver, and

Annin. After forming and circling the field, the formation headed out for the target. It was the same target that was assigned yesterday, but never reached. This time was a different story, and the Group really did a perfect job. The trip over was a “milkrun”

and no interference was encountered. The bomb run was made in flights, from the altitude of 11,500 feet with perfect visibility. “Bombs away” was sounded, and 87 – 1000

lb. plus 26 – 500 lb. bombs hurtled to the target. The formation then left the target and 144

headed home. Again a quiet trip back, and the formation landed after 3:30 of flight, with no losses, casualties, or battle damage.

Photos were developed of the bombing and they told the following story. Of the five flights that bombed, the following scores were given; three flights scored “superior”, while the other two scored “excellent”. That is undoubtedly the best scoring of the Group so far. Our flight, with Lt. Shaft at the bombsight, scored a “superior”. This B/N deserves a lot of credit, as he is new and has little combat experience.

This ended the day’s flying, as bad weather closed in and prevented any further flying.

December 18, 1944

With the bad weather hanging over from yesterday, no flying was attempted today. Heavy mist with light rain made everything take on a dismal appearance. We have had several air raid alerts since our last enemy attack. There have been enemy planes in the vicinity, but none have visited us recently.

December 29, 1944

We attempted a mission today, but it met with no gratifying results. With the weather casting very uncertain, Group Mission # 179 was flown, and thirty-four aircraft took to the sky. We had five crews partake from our squadron, with the B/N Team of Stanley & Blount leading our flight.

The journey over was very uneventful, but was to no avail as the target was enclosed by weather. Thus, the road bridge at Keuchinger, Germany was spared for a while. After making two attempts to try and see the target, the formation was forced to return to the base. All planes and crews returned safely after a trip of 3:20 duration. This ended the day’s flying activities, as the formation landed late in the afternoon.

December 30, 1944

Inclement weather prevented any flying what so ever today. The station “alert” still continues, and we have been confined to the base for two weeks now. Every other night, everyone pulls guard duty from 1st Sgt. To buck Pvt. It has been noted around the area, that foxholes have been dug deeper in anticipation of future enemy attacks.

The last day of the year, and back in the States it would call for a big celebration.

Over here it was just another day of bad flying weather, signifying inaction for the day. In the late afternoon, the weather cleared up fairly well, and at night the moon shone. That moon almost proved disastrous for us.

At midnight the air was rent by the noises of small arms firing. It was some of the

exuberant GI's bringing in the New Year. Roughly twenty minutes later a real New  
145

Year's show was put on for us, and not by request. The air raid alert was given, and being up, we went to our foxholes. It wasn't long before flashes and terrific explosions rent the air. Jerry paid his first New Year's visit to the base with a load of bombs. Luckily, his aim was terribly poor, and the bombs landed in the neighboring fields. The base was unharmed, and no one was injured. Our ack-ack guns fired at the enemy but failed to down anything. The rest of the night found nervous GI's ready to jump up at the slightest sound.

The old year went out, and the new came in with a bang. A lot can be said about 1944, but that would take up too much space. Besides, it is in the past now, the men, the instances, the tears and laughter it brought on. 1945, here it comes. New Year's Day was quiet, nothing to report, but foxholes were enlarged and dug deeper.

January 3, 1945

Mission # 161 was the first entry to mar our clean board for the New Year. The morning was very foggy, with a clear sky above the layer of mist. Twelve crews were provided from this squadron, of which only eight were to fly the mission. The B/N Team were Lt. Stanley & F/O Blount, and Lt. Evans & F/O McCartney. Each led the second and third flights of the second box respectively.

Trouble struck us before and during take off. On many planes, the heavy mist had frozen on the windshields, causing limited and sometimes no visibility. Lt's Harris & Montrose were forced to turn back with engine trouble. They never had the chance to get airborne. Lt's Roberts and Lackner? really had the misfortune. Lt. Roberts took off and just getting airborne, when his engines cut out. He landed at the end of the runway and rolled out into a field where his engines caught fire. His Gunner Sgt. Windish pulled him out of the ship and the two of them headed for the trees and for cover. It proved they made it just in time, as their load of 1000 lb. bombs went off scattering the plane all over the area. To us, back in the area, we thought another raid was on, and went for the foxholes. The concussion blew Lt. Robert's from behind his tree and slid him right across a frozen pond of water. Again, luckily, no one was hurt.

Lt. Lackner?, with Cpl. Mussarra (Gunner) had about the same trouble. The only difference was, their plane didn't burst into flames or blow up. They walked away from their crash landing, neither looking back. A silent thankfulness. A neighboring sister squadron, the 669<sup>th</sup>, lost a complete crew, when their ship blew up in the air. The cause for this has not been determined as yet. For the first mission of the year, you can say it was sent off in blood.

The target was the Railroad Bridge at Simmern. With all the trouble at the beginning, the crews were determined to make this mission a good one. They did beyond a doubt. The formation dropped their 1000 lb. missiles from the altitude of 11,600 feet and 12,000 feet, and they fell true to their mark. There was no flak coming and going, and all crews returned with no losses, casualties, or battle damage. Photos proved to the accuracy of the B/N's. The team of Evans & McCartney brought laurels back to the

146

squadron with a “superior” on their bombing. Stanley & Blount, bombing with another flight, came back with an “excellent”. All in all, there were three “excellents” and two “superiors” scored by the Group. In a way, this was some consolation for the mishaps that occurred at the beginning. This mission was the only flying for the day.

Two more “65” pilots have left for the States recently. They are; Capt. A.N. Osborne Jr., and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. R.G. Meredith. They are the last two pilots to leave of the original bunch that came over with us. To them we wish the best in their future endeavors.

The base is still on an “alert” basis, with guards posted everywhere. We have had no recent visits from Jerry, and all is rather quiet at present. Knock on wood!

January 3 & 4, 1945

Complete inactivity would sum up the story for these two days. Inclement weather had made flying an impossibility. For the combat crews, the time has been spent in lectures and practice in “ditching”, etc.

The base itself is still restricted, and a heavy guard is still maintained. A guard is posted all around the perimeter of the field, plus guards on each airplane. So far everything has been quiet, with no outstanding happenings in this category.

S/Sgt. George H. Phенning has completed his 51 missions along with S/Sgt. C.J. Clark. Both Gunners are scheduled for the return trip to the States.

January 5, 1945

Today’s fair weather ushered up Op Mission # 182. With the weather forecast very un-optimistic, it has decided to use PFF methods; thusly two B-26’s were to lead our

two-box formation. From our squadron came eight crews, with two B/N Teams leading the boxes of the formation. Leading the first box was the Team of Price & Hand, while the Team of McNulty & Forma led the second box. Both boxes were to bomb on the B-26’s.

The target was the Railroad Bridge at Simmern. This has been the same target for the last two missions. The last mission did a superb job, but failed to knock out the bridge. They tore up miles of track and installations before and after the bridge. The bridge was rendered useless, but remained standing. Today, the task was to destroy the bridge completely. The journey over was uneventful with no flak. Over the target, was the expected 10/10 cloud covering, but the bombs were dropped with the B-26’s setting the pace. The strikes were not recorded due to the heavy clouds. The formation returned after a trip of 4:00 duration. The results of the mission remained “undetermined”. This ended the flying for the day, as the last plane landed at dusk.

147

January 6 thru 10, 1945

Winter has definitely established itself here, with no flying for these five days.

Heavy snow with a low, hazy ceiling has made flying too risky, if not impossible. All the personnel of the squadron are employed in keeping the ice and snow off the planes and the runways. Missions are briefed every morning, but held up by the weather.

The latest rumor has it that P-51’s are to be stationed here. The field is so large

that higher headquarters deem it logical that these swift fighters should have a base here. It will be something new, to share our field with a fighter outfit. Not only new, but very interesting.

It has been a practice lately to send B/N Teams up to the front lines for a few days, to spend a short sojourn with the ground troops; thusly these air corps. men can see the effectiveness of air support. Major Price, Lt. Hand, and S/Sgt's Helteil? & Fetko were the first ones to go. They returned with much knowledge of the relationship between air and ground forces, and with interesting tales. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jacobsen and his Gunners Pettinicchi & Gooch were the next to go, and they came back with interesting information. These men have learned how the ground forces live, think, fight, etc. It all tends towards better co-operation and better bombing.

Our field is still on the "alert", with heavy guards still patrolling the field and planes. At present, nothing has occurred to warrant the guards. But the old proverb still holes that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. "Van" Vanover is with his old B-26 outfit now, back behind the stick again. We are "sweating out" a word from him as to how he is coming along. We are losing S/Sgt. C. Holterfield?. A few weeks ago, he blew the tip of his finger off, causing him to be grounded. The "Doc" figures the finger will stiffen, making him ineligible for combat flying. As a result, he is being transferred. That about covers the news for this period.

January 11, 1945

We finally got a break in our inactive status today, and flew GP Mission # 183. Anticipating cloud coverage, B-26's led this PFF mission. The target was the R.R. Bridge at Simmern. From our squadron came a flight of six planes, led by the B/N Team of Andersen & Babbage. The primary target was not bombed for some reason, so the secondary target was hit. The results were tabulated as follows; P.N.B. – PFF. All crews returned safely after a trip of 4:00. This was the only activity for the day.

January 12, 1945

Inclement weather automatically vetoed all flying for today. Heavy snow and bitter cold weather have pounded on the field. Engineering is now faced with the problem of ice forming on these A-26's, not equipped with defrosters or de-icers.

148

We have gained more new men into the squadron. This time we received a mixture of pilots and gunners. The new members are as follows; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt's A.V. Evarts, C.J. Vars, and L.R.----; Sgt. J.J. Griffith, Cpl's C.D. Fagan, R.K. Fay, F.L. Sareno?, and D. Youlios?.

Use a sharp eye and you are bound to see things happen. Noted lastly, are two silver bars on the shoulders of H.M. Evans and C.J. Andersen. That's right—it's Capt's Evans & Andersen.

January 13, 1945

Near zero temperatures and ice heralded the entry of GP Mission # 184. This mission was destined to run into troubles from the beginning. From our squadron came eight crews, two that never flew the sortie. Major Price, with Lt. Land and Gunners



Roberts and Edenburn led the two boxes. The rest of our crew formed the third flight of the first box. Lt. Roberts with Sgt. Windesen?, crashed on take-off due to ice forming on the plane. They just cleared the runway, when the plane started “crashing” and settled back to the ground. Lt. Nathanson with Gunner Kaminski, were forced to turn back after he couldn’t force his nose wheel up. The rest of the formation continued on to the target. A road bridge at Steinbruck was bombed under PFF conditions. There was no flak to harass the planes and the bombs were dropped. For some reason the PFF plane was off

the target, so the rest of the planes had to follow suit. As a result, the bombs fell short, netting a “poor” for the results. The weather closed in on this field, so the formation was forced to land at A-69, where they stayed over night. There were no losses, damages, or casualties on the mission.

January 14, 1944

With barely enough planes on the field to make a formation, GP Mission 185 was flown early in the afternoon. It will be recalled that yesterday’s formation landed at another field, and didn’t return till late this afternoon. The weather was poor and PFF bombing was employed. We added six crews to the loading list, one of which were B/N Teams.

The communications center at Schleiden felt the weight of our bombs. There was scant flak and the formation bombed from the lead ship at 13,000 feet. The bombs fell true to their mark, as photos proved later. Again the crews were forced to land away from the field, as weather made landing here unsafe. Two of our boys crash landed, but fortunately, were unhurt. Lt. Cannon crashed at A-69, having trouble with his landing gear. Lt. Blevins made a crash landing at A-69, with the same trouble as Lt. Cannon experienced. The rest of the formation landed at A-58, and returned to the base at dusk in the evening.

149

The journey lasted over three hours, but the score of the mission was worth it. The photos taken scored “excellent” for the bombing. Lt’s Cannon & Blevins returned to the base with their gunners, after being picked up by the C-64.

Squadron B had trouble at take-off this time. One of their aircraft took off and then exploded for some unknown reason. Both pilot and gunner were killed.

January 15, 1945

We were the only Group in the 9<sup>th</sup> Bomb Div. (M) to fly a mission today. In the morning, 45 aircraft were dispatched for this mission. From our squadron came six crews, enough to make up a flight. Leading this flight was the B/N Team of Mish & Wright (who was later scratched).

The target was the same bridge at Simmern. This was the third visit back to this R.R. Bridge. Previously, our bombings had destroyed both entrances to the bridge, but left it standing. Enroute to the target, and over the target, there was no flak to be encountered. Over the target, the bombs were dropped in flights using “Gee” bombing technique. 50,000 lbs. of bombs were dropped on the target, but the results were “undetermined” due to cloud cover. All planes and crews returned safely to the base after

a trip of over four hours duration. So ended the operational flying for the day. The base is still on an "alert" status, with a double guard being maintained. This makes all of four weeks now that this "alert" has been on. Guard duty is still pulled by everyone every other night.

S/Sgt's Phенning and Clark received their orders to return to the States, and left this morning. Big smiles told more than words could ever.

January 16, 1945

Today's bombing is the type of bombing that makes even the most unimportant person take pride. The formation took off early in the afternoon, with fair weather giving promise to the success of the mission. We flew twelve crews from our squadron with two of them leading the two boxes. Capt. McNulty, Lt. Forma & Gunners Fuehrer and Lagerman led the first box in an A-20K. Leading the second box in an A-20K was Capt. Evans, F/O McCartney, and Gunners Merritt & Skeens. The rest of our crews formed the flights behind these two leaders.

Thirty-seven aircraft set out to bomb the Railroad Bridge at Sinzig. Enroute the formation experienced weak and fairly accurate flak. At the target, moderate accurate heavy flak was encountered. "Bombs away" was given by ---- box-----from the height of 13,300 feet and 13,700 feet. 120,000 lbs of bombs hurtled down to their target. With visibility so clear, strike photos showed bursts all around the bridge. Leaving the target, all planes and crews returned to the base after 3:45 of flight. Several planes were battle damaged, but luckily no one was injured.

150

The two boxes scored the results. Box I with Lt. Forma at the bombsight scored "excellent". Box II with F/O McCartney at the sight, scored "superior". This B/M has established a superb record so far, and is becoming one of the best B/N's the Group has. This mission ended the operational flying for the day. In two day, the Group will celebrate its first year overseas.

January 17 thru 20, 1945

Just plain lousy weather has haunted us for the past four day. Frequent snows and hail storms have made flying conditions poor. Low temperature, forming ice on the planes, is a constant headache to the engineering section.

Possibly the best new occurring during this period is the new Russian Drive. Also the "alert" has been lifted off the field, and the double guard discontinued. Passes to Paris and other vicinities are open again.

In the past five days we have received three more new combat members in the squadron. 2 Lt. L.A. Eckard and F/O R.W. Harvest are two new B/N's to come to us. Cpl. F.M. Clute, Gunner, also joined us with them.

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Montrose is due to return back from the front soon. Lt. Chalmers, Capt. Andersen & Lt. Babbage are leaving soon to go up to the front. These men returning tell some interesting stories of their experiences while up there.

We had a Group of P-51 fighters stay with us recently. This is their diversionary field, when they can't make it back to their home base in England. They made a lot of friends while here, and when they left, they put on an exhibition of "buzzing" that made

history here. In many cases, the planes had to be pulled up to clear haystacks and tents. This done at 4:00 P.M. plus barrel rolls, etc. Made a beautiful spectacle. They are kings in the "Buzz" business.

January 21, 1945

A break in weather gave us group Mission # 188 today. Filling out the loading list from our squadron were; B/N Team of Stanley & Blount, Lt's Jacobsen, Harris, Prucha, Russell, McCready, and Hale. Flying "window" for the formation was the B/N Team of Mish & Shaft. Lt. Stanley led our crews in the second flight of the first box.

The target bombed was the railroad bridge at Euskirchen. The bridge was an important target on the supply route from Cologne to the German front. "Marauders" had

hit it before, but the Jerries had repaired the damage and run a track across it again. Moderate accurate heavy flak was encountered just before the target was reached, damaging the planes in formation. None were hit seriously, and the bombs were dropped with precision. The bombing was done by flights from/on Group lead from 11,000 and 151

12,000 feet. The return journey was made without any interference of any kind, and the formation landed after a journey of four hours.

Photos taken and later developed gave the results of the mission. Of the six flights, two scored "superior", one "excellent", two "undetermined", and one A.P.N.B. F/O Blount, who guided our flight's bombs, brought back a "superior" to the squadron. he is rapidly making himself a name as a bombardier. This mission ended the day's activities.

January 22, 1945

We scored another "first" since we have been in action. Today, we ran a bombing mission in the morning, and a strafing mission in the afternoon. This was the first time our bombers were ever used to strafe. The "Invader" is the most heavily armed bomber the US has, and was finally started on the strafing career.

Late in the morning, GP Mission # 189 took off to bomb in support of the Third Army. Comprising a flight of our squadron crews were; Evans & McCartney, Lt's Annin, Kenny, Buchanan, Wright, and Nathanson. Lt. Colquitt flew "window" in an A-20J. Capt. Evans was leading the third flight of the second box.

Low-lying cloudy weather necessitated the use of PFF bombing methods, which meant the use of B-26 Pathfinders. On the way over, the formation experienced weak inaccurate heavy flak, causing minor damage to one of the planes. There was no flak met at the target, and the bombs were dropped thru the clouds from the altitude of 12,500 feet in flights of six. The results were undetermined as heavy clouds hung over the target area. The trip back was a "milk-run" and the planes returned safely to the base after a four hour flight.

No sooner had the planes returned to the hardstands, when a call came down from Group Headquarters to prepare two planes for a strafing mission. We sent two of our A-26's equipped with wing guns, making a total of 18 -- .50 cal machine guns spitting lead

from one plane. Six A-26's were dispatched, led by our own Capt. McNulty. Also with him from this squadron was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jacobsen. The Gunners accompanying were; S/Sgt's Lagerman, Fuehrer, and Gooch.

The target was a motor transport and vehicle column reported in the Dasburg area. Our planes were to be lead by P-47's, and were to follow them into attack. They took off but had the cards stacked against them. All aircraft failed to attack, as the formation was recalled by the 9<sup>th</sup> Bomb Div due to weather and failure of the escort to rendezvous, although the mission wasn't carried out in action, it marked a beginning in a new phase of action by our Group and bombers. All planes returned safely after a journey of two hours duration.

152

January 23, 1945

The Group flew two strafing missions today, but no one in our squadron took part. We supplied four A-26's for these missions, and two of them are now considered lost. The targets were motorized columns, and our Group hit them pretty hard. Our formations

suffered heavy damage, and combat crews were injured. No planes were lost by enemy action, but some crash-landed at various other landing strips. These two missions flown were GP Missions # 191 and 192.

January 24, 1945

Back to bombing missions again, with GP Missions # 193 being flown late this morning. We had six crews flying this mission, forming the lead flight led by Major Price, with Lt. Hand (B/N) and Gunners Fetko & Sylva. Fifteen A-26's and six A-20's were dispatched loaded with 500 lb. GP's. Three of the A-20's carried "window", to give protection from flak.

The Jerry Communication Center at Schleiden was going to feel the destruction of our bombs. This was for sure, as "Ashin" Hand was aiming the missiles. This highpowered

B/N has eighteen straight "excellents" to his credit, and today made the nineteenth. Weak inaccurate light flak was met at the target but caused no damage what so ever. Visual bombing was employed, and the bombs were dropped by flights from 11,800 and 12,000 feet. The bombs sped thru to their mark, making a pattern straight across the target.

The formation returned safely to the base, unhampered by either flak or fighters. The journey was of three hours duration, and the photographic results proclaimed its success. Of the three flights that dropped their bombs, two were "excellent" in results, and the other was a "no attack". A bombsight malfunction occurred, preventing this flight from bombing. Our flight scored another "excellent". Thanks, "Ashin".

January 25, 1945

GP Mission # 194 got off early in the afternoon today. The mixture of A-26's and A-20's climbed into the blue loaded with 500 lb. GP's. From our squadron came a flight of six led by Capt. McNulty, with Lt. Forma as B/N with Gunners Fuehrer and Lagerman. Lt's Stanley and Parker flew ahead of the formation as "window" ships. Our

crews formed the second flight of the second box.

Another Communications Center at Kall was on the receiving end of the bombardment. The trip over was very uneventful, neither flak nor fighters challenged the formation. The target was clear in the bombardier's sights, and the bombs were dropped with accuracy. The bombs were seen to chase a small German convoy along the road leading to the town. Gunners reported that the enemy vehicles disappeared under a  
153

blanket of smoke after the attack. The formation left the bomb run and headed back to the base, again in complete safety. Landing was made after a flight of 3:45.

The results were of high standard. Clearly marked strike photos gave the Group 3—excellents; 1—superior; 1—P.N.B.; and one unsatisfactory. Upon opening the bomb doors of his plane, McNulty's bombs fell out and the rest of the flight bombed with this. The results were the bombs fell way short of the target.

January 26 thru 28, 1945

Another bad siege of weather where flying of any kind is an impossibility. During periods like these, ground school occupied most of the time of the combat personnel. As for the ground personnel, there is always something to be done on the planes.

The news of the Russians drive is inspiring to all of us, and makes one double his efforts to direct pressure here on the Western Front. Rumors are whispering of our future move up nearer the front lines.

We have two more newly formed B/N Teams now in the squadron. In the near future you will hear of Jacobsen & Harvest, and Chalmers & Eckard. This brings us up to strength of eight B/N Teams in the squadron. They replace the teams of Prentiss & Bursiel, Miracle & Burg who went down Christmas Day.

F/O McCartney's superb bombing has finally paid off dividends. Higher headquarters have approved of his appointment as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. in the Army Air Corps. Now it is Lt. McCartney. It is now Capt. "Bill" Lytle, the excellent B/N who was in our squadron for such a long time. He acts in the capacity of Group Bombardier.

January 29, 1945

The weather has finally lifted, permitting GP mission # 195 to be flown this morning. We were in the fray in full strength today, with twelve crews from this squadron. Leading one flight was the team of Mish & Shaft, with Gunners Roberts & Harmon. Up in the big brackets now, leading the second box was the team of Evans & McCartney. Eleven of our crews completed this mission, with the exception of the twelfth, Lt. Nathanson, who developed some trouble and never took off.

Our bombing has been concentrated on road bridges, and cross roads, these targets have top priority in disrupting Jerry action. Today, it was the road bridge at Nonneweiler. The A-26's took off loaded with 1000 lb. GP's while the A-20's carried 500 lb. GP's. Take off was just before noon.

Anticipating a cover over the target, PFF methods were used, and the mission proceeded unmolested to the target. Three aircraft were used as "window" planes, thus insuring a degree of safety from flak over this target. The bombing was done on PFF lead by boxes from 13,000 feet, and the results were unobserved due to a heavy cloud cover.

154

All aircraft left the bomb run in safety, and returned to the base with no losses, casualties, or damage. The time logged on the flight was a little over three hours. This ended the day's operational flying. The only other flying accomplished was the checking out of the new combat crews in the A-26's.

January 30 & 31, 1945

Continuous rainy weather has abated all flying activities. There hasn't been very much doing lately, rumors are becoming more pronounced. It is more or less established that we will leave this base the early part of next month.

February 1, 1945

Something new occurred one Mission # 196 today that has never happened before. We had twelve crews briefed for the mission, one that was to act as a "window" plane. At start engine time, word came down from headquarters to scrub the second box. This automatically cancelled all of our crews from the mission, except the one "window" plane. This plane, with Lt. Hale, and Gunners Bentzler & Geyer, was the only representative of our squadron on the mission.

The target was the defended village of Schieiden. With a low ceiling forecasted, bombing by PFF was employed. The bombing was done by box lead from the altitudes of 12,500 feet. The bombs were released and fell through the overcast below. The results were unobserved, as no photo coverage was possible due to cloud cover. The formation returned safely three hours later, with no casualties, losses, or battle damage.

February 2, 1945

Today we made up our lack of crews yesterday. In the mid-morning GP Mission # 197 took to the air, with Sq. "A" crews leading the way. Leading the formation in the first box, first flight, was Price & Hand, with Gunners Fetko & ----. Right behind them, leading the second box was McNulty & Forma, with Gunners Fuehrer & Lagerman. The rest of our crews formed the flights led by these B/N Teams. The bomb load this time was 250 lb. GP's.

The enemy Communications Center at Euskirchen, Germany was the recipient of the bomb load. This time it was no "milk run", as intense accurate heavy flak greeted the formation at the target. Two aircraft from other squadrons went down. One of the planes had a wing shot off, and was last seen spinning in about five thousand feet off the ground. The other plane suffered heavy damage, and the crew was forced to bail out. Fortunately, our crews were safe, suffering much flak damage however.

The bombing was done by flight group lead from about 12,500 feet. With the target free from cloud cover; visual observation gave promise to good results. Upon return to the base after a 3:30 journey, photos were printed giving testimony to the

155

results. Needless to say, all the ships were flak damaged, but luckily none of the crews injured.

Results of the mission tabulated from the photos gave the formation 4 – excellent and 2—undetermined. These were "undetermined" because pictures were not taken due to evasive action taken by the aircraft. Both of the flights comprised of our crews brought

back “excellent” results. The laurels go to the B/N’s Lt’s Hand & Forma. Both of these bombardiers have over 50 missions to their credit now.

Our move to the next field is certain now, and we expect to be gone within the next week. Our destination --- ??????????????????????.

February 3, 1945

Mission # 198 today, was the identical set-up as # 196. As in, we had crews alerted from the squadron, but were “scratched” when the second box was cancelled. Our only representative was the “window” aircraft manned by Lt. Harris, with Gunners Hood & Hindisch?.

The storage and repair depot at Berg/Gladbach was “it” for the bombs. With cloud cover anticipation; PFF was used, bombing being done from 13,500 feet. Light flak was met, causing very little damage. All crews returned after a four-hour trip. Results were “uncharacterized” due to the cloud cover.

February 4, 1945

During this stage of time we accomplished our move from A-55 to our present base A-69. The 4<sup>th</sup> of February was spent in packing and getting ready for the echelons of move. The first echelon to move out was the work echelon, which left on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February. The mission of this echelon was to prepare the site for use as much as possible. In the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup> of February the train echelon left. This echelon consisted of most of the squadron personnel. The boys were loaded into vehicles of all kinds and were transported to Melun, where they boarded the train. From the beginning it was rough, as the train consisted of the famed 40 x 8’s. These contrivances are nothing more than small boxcars, cold and very uncomfortable. They hold either forty men or eight horses. This train convoy left at roughly 0800 hours.

The night of the 9<sup>th</sup> of February was silent in getting the truck convoy ready to leave. All trucks were securely packed and made ready for the 110-mile drive. At 2200 hours a briefing was held for personnel of the convoy. Immediately afterwards, the convoy was lined up on the taxi strip ready to go. At 0130 hours on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> the truck convoy pulled out of A-55.

The remaining personnel were on the air convoy, which left at a later date. These men consisted of pilots, Gunners, crew chiefs, and armament personnel. All the time  
156

during our move our Group was considered operational, and missions were pulled while the different echelons were gone.

The first convoy to reach A-69 was the truck convoy. They pulled in at 1000 hours on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February. It was a long dreary drive with light rain making things miserable. All trucks made the trip in good shape, and nothing unusual occurred. From the moment this convoy reached the field, they worked getting things in shape for the train convoy soon to arrive. Many of the men put in over 40 hours with sleep.

At 180 hours on the 10 of February the train convoy arrived on the field. They were a dirty, tired, damp, cold bunch of boys who had spent a miserable twenty-four hours on this boxcar convoy. After grabbing a bite to eat to constitute supper, all personnel were busy erecting tents in the squadron area. That night was spent with no

lights or fires in an area that was absolutely strange. The succeeding days after this were spent in getting sections set up and making living quarters more comfortable.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February the air echelon landed at A-69, bringing the remaining equipment and personnel. This was the last Group of men to arrive, and we were officially established at A-69. To go into detail on all the little events that happened on these echelons would be an enormous job. It is safe to say that there was humor, discomfort, and etc. on all of these moving groups. Everyone arrived safely, and nothing was harmed during the movement. All in all, the move was considered a complete success.

During this time missions were flown on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>(2), and 16<sup>th</sup>. To go into detail on all of these missions would be a large task, so a very brief summary will be made on each of them.

6<sup>th</sup> of February – this mission was flown with twelve crews from our squadron participating. Evans & McCartney, Andersen & Babbage led our flights. The target was the motor transport and armored force vehicle area at Berg/Gladbach. The bombs were dropped on PFF, with no photo coverage possible due to clouds. Weather closed in at A-55, and the planes were diverted to A-69 (our present base). Nothing unusual occurred and the formation returned to A-55 the following day. This was Mission # 199.

8<sup>th</sup> of February – this mission # 200 was flown with twelve crews representing our squadron. Price & Hand, Stanley & Blount led our flights. The defended area at Nutterden was the target bombed, this action in accordance with the ground strategy. This time the bombs were dropped on “Gee”, and again no photos were taken to establish the success of the mission. The formation returned after a 3:45 flight with a comparatively quiet time of it.

9<sup>th</sup> of February – today’s mission was # 201. Two regular B/N Teams were used and one broke in. Evans & McCartney, Stanley & Blount were used and Chalmers & Eckard flew their first one as B/N Team. Lt Nathanson was scheduled but aborted with an over-heated engine. The target was the communication center at Kempen. This target was not bombed  
157

at the formation got lost. The bombs were dropped on secondary targets. Because of the formation becoming lost, two of our aircraft were forced to land after running out of fuel. Lt. Cannon, with S/Sgt. Robinson made a crash landing up in Holland, both men were not injured, but the plane was damaged considerably. Lt. Montrose with S/Sgt. Felkel landed at A-69. He had enough fuel left to search out this field, and made a safe landing. He returned to the base the following day. The rest of the formation returned safely to the base.

10<sup>th</sup> February – the motor transport depot at Munstereifel, the target for today. Major Price led our one flight, with Lt. Russell as “spare”. This was Group mission # 202, with the bombing being done on PFF. As a result the results were no photos due to cloud cover. Again the team of Chalmers & Eckard went along getting “acclimatized”. The journey lasted over three hours. It must be remembered that these missions now as of today are being flown with only a “skeleton” ground crew. Both truck and train echelons have departed.



13<sup>th</sup> February –this was the first mission to be flown from A-69. From our squadron came six crews, led by Evans & McCartney. Lt's Kenny, Montrose, Parker, Carver, and Buchanan formed the rest of the flight. The motor transport depot at Iserlohn (area "D") was the target to be bombed. The primary target was not bombed for some reason, and the secondary target was attacked. Bombing was done using "Gee", and the results are not known, due to cloud cover. All planes returned safely to the base after a trip of 2:30 duration.

14<sup>th</sup> February – today was the first time we flew two missions from A-69. In the morning was Group Mission # 204, with six crews flying from our squadron. Andersen & Babbage led the third flight of the second box, while Stanley & Blount acted as deputy box leaders, flying A-1-2. Lt. Chalmers & Lt. Eckard, with Gunners Fortner went along, on what was destined to be their last mission. The target was the prime mover depot at Mechernich. It proved to be a "hot" target, and heavy accurate flak was encountered. The whole formation received flak, and in the case of Chalmers it was the payoff. He was last seen going down in flames. A parachute was seen, which gave hope that someone was able to get out. Who it was remains a question. All of the planes in the formation received flak damage in varying degrees of severity. Lt. Babbage, B/N for Capt. Andersen, had a piece of flak come thru the nose of the plane, missing him narrowly. The fact that he was bent over the bombsight saved him from serious injury, if not death. The formation returned to the base after a three-hour flight. The results on the mission were undetermined at the bombs were dropped on PFF.

In the afternoon was Group Mission # 205. From the squadron came twelve crews comprising the two flights that led the boxes. Price & Forma (Lt. Hand is laid up in the hospital with a broken ankle) led the first box, while Evans & McCartney led the second box.

The Ammunition Dump at Rhinbach was the target, and it was hit heavily. Maybe it was compensation for our loss in the morning that gave us the good show on this target.

158

There was little flak over the target, and hardly any clouds to speak of. As a result, the bombs were dropped with exact precision, and enormous explosions, colored by smoke and fire gave testimony to a successful mission. The formation returned safely to the base after three hours of flying, and pictures developed labeled the bombing "superior". Thus ended the day with the last plane coming in to land at dusk. We lost three of the best men an outfit could have, and will really miss them. Lt. Chalmers was an old hand at the flying racket with over 1500 hours to his credit. His Gunner, S/Sgt. Kim Fortner had been with him a long time, and they were a pair hard to beat. Lt. Eckard was new to the squadron, and for his brief stay, he made a lasting impression. And so the war goes on.

16<sup>th</sup> of February – we flew one mission today, namely Group Mission # 206. we furnished six crews to the loading list, they comprised the second flight of the second box. The Team of Mish & Shaft led this flight. Jacobsen & Harvest, a recently formed B/N Team flew along with them on their "first" mission as a B/N Team.

The Ordnance Depot at Unna was in the bombsights. A cloud cover was anticipated, and PFF bombing was employed. The primary target was not bombed for a

reason unknown, but the bombs were dropped on a secondary assigned target. The results were unknown. No flak harassed the formation, and they returned after a journey of 3:30. Weather closed in up to and including the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. We are well established on the base now, and things are coming back to normal. Soon, March 3<sup>rd</sup> will be here, closing the books for one year of operational flying. A summary will be made of that year's events.

Other events of importance have taken place besides our move and the flying of missions. During our stay here at A-69, the rank of various men has changed. A Gold Leaf more or less matches the red hair of Major McNulty now. He received this news recently, and at present is on a flak leave in England. (At present that is where the "Mrs." is stationed). Lt. Stanley's lonely silver bar was blessed by the stork, and now there are two. Right – it's Captain Stanley now. Gold bars are out of style now for 1<sup>st</sup> Lt's Prucha, Carver, Annin, and Buchanan. There are a lot of smiles and good cheer around at present.

Lt. Hand has returned to the squadron once more, hobbling around with a cast of his foot. Soon, he will be ready for action again. A bit too much of celebration might have accounted for his accident. Incidentally he was "hot" with the cards and sent home a \$1000 recently. Nice going, "Achin".

S/Sgt. H. J. Sylva has the fabulous "51" now and is "sweating out that trip back home. He celebrated with spirits donated by "Doc".

A turnabout has taken place recently, and we have ground officers staying with us. Officers and Enlisted men from the infantry, artillery, etc. are here to find out what flying missions are like. They will accompany our crews on missions over Germany.

159

Our squadron site is pretty much in the open. We have more room at this field, although the town situation isn't good. The nearby town of Laon is virtually a shambles, it was once well known for its historic lore. The Pere Marquette Cathedral still stands on a large hill, and is visible from the field. Also it presents a beautiful landmark for enemy aircraft. We have had two alerts, but nothing has resulted from them. Sign off hoping that phase of luck continues.

During these six days, both bombing and strafing missions were flown. We flew the first successful strafing mission, where eighteen guns of A-26's were fully employed. Needless to say, a formation of these strafing A-26's can do tremendous damage. They did!

19<sup>th</sup> of February – today, we flew a bombing mission well into Germany, namely Group # 207. On the loading list from our squadron were twelve crews, two of them B/N Teams. Andersen & Babbage led our one flight in the second box. In the third flight of the second box were six of our crews led by Evans & McCartney. Anticipating poor weather conditions and low ceiling over the target, PFF bombing was employed. The Ordnance Depot at Wiesbaden was the target. The bombs were dropped, but the results remained "undetermined" with no photo coverage due to cloud cover. There was little to no flak, and all crews returned safely to the base after four hours of flight. This was the only operational flight for the day.

20<sup>th</sup> of February – inclement weather prevented any operational flying for today.

21<sup>st</sup> of February – we flew two missions today under a different set-up, half of our Group was briefed for one target and joined half of the 410 Bomb Gp. The other half of our Group was briefed for another target and flew I with the 410<sup>th</sup> remaining half.

Reason – unknown. The mission we are concerned with is Group Mission # 208. The team of Stanley & Blount led our six crews in the first flight of the box. Their target was the communications center at Geldern, Germany. The bombs dropped, but not on the primary target, as a result the results were not obtained. No flak encountered and the formation returned after 2:45. The other half of our Group flew their mission with about the same results as ours.

22<sup>nd</sup> of February – today was the day where we fully italicized the striking power of the A-26 aircraft. Early in the afternoon, our Group took off to bomb and strafe targets in Germany. The strafing was something new, and eagerly anticipated by our crews. This was the first time where the eighteen guns were used on an operational mission. Eleven crews from our squadron took part in the foray, and are talking of it yet. The team of Price & Forma, with F/O Harvest and Gunner Fetko, led the whole show in the A-1-1 position. Flying formation behind them were; Annin & Rivard, Andersen & Babbage & Schafer, Cannon & Brzezinski, Phillips & Miller, and Laseter & Gentry. Leading the second box was Evans & McCartney, with F/O Blount and Gunner Edenburn.

Comprising their flight were; Buchanan & Calabrese, Montrose & Gandy, Prucha & Wilson, and Russell & Geyer.

160

A specific target was assigned to each unit, and the procedure was to bomb and then strafe the area. The target assigned to Major Price's flight were the bridges at Miltenburg. Haze obscured the assigned target, so the secondary target was hit. The results of the bombing remained unknown. Claims made on the strafe job will be stated later. The planes in this flight were undamaged, except for some small arms fire, which was trivial.

The sidings and bridges at Hochost was the target for Capt. Evans and his flight.

They ran into the same difficulty as Major Price's flight, as a result their assigned target was not bombed. They bombed the secondary and then strafed. They too were fortunate in sustaining little damage to their aircraft. The same procedure described here, carried forth for the rest of the elements in the Group.

The following claims were made by the Group; 1 tank train destroyed and left burning; 1 horsedrawn vehicle destroyed; 3 heavy M/T destroyed, 1 R/R station damaged, 5 locomotives damaged, 15 buildings damaged, 1 light M/T damaged, 5 barges damaged, and 15 goods wagons damaged. This illustrates very well the damage that can be done by these planes on a strafing mission. It is a fearsome sight to see formations of planes spitting lead at over 300 mph.

There was no flak over the targets, and only two aircraft were damaged by enemy fire. Neither of these had serious damage. The mission lasted over four hours, and was one that would last in the memory of all for quite awhile. This may be a preview to more missions of the same type. We consider ourselves fortunate in getting away with so little

damage. This was Group Mission # 210. # 211 was flown today also.

23<sup>rd</sup> of February – there were two missions flown yesterday, but we were concerned only with the one flown by our crews. Today's mission was rather tame after yesterday's adventure. In the afternoon, we flew Group Mission # 212, with complete success. On the

loading list from our squadron were two B/N Teams and five crews. Mish & Shaft led the third flight of the second box, while Stanley & Blount were the lead ship, or rather the deputy box leader.

The communications center at Golzheim was attacked with gusto. Thirty-nine aircraft were dispatched, led by a B-26 PFF aircraft. The bombs were dropped by boxes of PFF lead from 13,500 feet, and they fell true to their mark. Photos taken showed the target area covered by bursts, and the mission was labeled as "excellent". There was no flak or enemy interference of any kind, and the formation returned safely to the base after three hours of flight.

24<sup>th</sup> of February – our bombing today, continues to be in co-ordination with the Cologne bound U.S. Armies. We had twelve crews on the loading list for Group Mission # 213, with the two B/N Teams of Evans & McCartney, and Andersen & Babbage. Take off was in the early part of the afternoon; with the "Invaders" carrying loads of 250 lb. GP's.

161

The communication center at Vierson was the target, and it was encased in low clouds as anticipated. The bombs were released from the altitudes of 11,500 feet and 12,500 feet employing "Gee" bombing technique. The results were of course "undetermined", as no photos were taken due to cloud cover. Weak inaccurate heavy flak, to heavy accurate flak greeted the formation, and although the flak damaged eleven of the planes, none were lost. The formation headed for home, and landed safely back at the base after three hours of flight. This was the only operational flying for the day.

February 25, 1945

Good flying weather made it possible to fly two missions today. In the morning was Group Mission # 214, with seven crews from this squadron participating. The two B/N Teams of Stanley & Blount, Mish & Shaft occupied the loading list, along with five other crews of ours. It was the "first", for Lt. Tank and F/O Gunkel. Although not at the stick, they flew along with Lt's Jacobsen and McCready, to see how things are done. Both had stories to tell with all the enthusiasm of a first mission.

Still giving aid to the ground forces drive for Cologne, the bombers blasted the communications center of the Germans at Karpen. Flak greeted the formation over the target, and one plane was seen hit, and spin to earth. No chutes were seen to blossom from the aircraft. Box I bombed visually with weather conditions very favorable, and as a result, scored "excellent". Box II did not receive the message to bomb visually, and as a result bombed with PFF equipment, scoring a ---?. Right aircraft of the formation were hit by flak, but none of them seriously damaged. With the exception of the aircraft that went down, all returned safely to the base after a flight of three hours duration.

Hardly had the planes returned to the hardstands, when the call came for the next alerted crews to report to the briefing room. Just as the last plane had been check and

refueled,

the crews were already at the hardstands. Weather gave the impression that this mission wouldn't get off, as a low ceiling moved in. A little after 1400 hours, Group Mission # 215 took to the air. Leading the first box, backed by five of our crews, was Major Price, with Lt's Forma & McCartney, and Gunner Fetko. Capt. Andersen ably led the second box, with the B/N Babbage & Shaft, and Gunner Schafer. This time Lt. Evert's experienced his "first", riding along with Lt. Kenny. Not unlike Tank & Gunkel, he too had stories to tell upon returning.

Striking ahead of the Ninth and First Armies, the Group bombarded the communication center of Norvenich. As a cover over the target had been expected, PFF bombing technique was used, and the boxes bombed from 13,600 feet. Results were of course "undetermined", and the planes returned at dusk, free of damage. The trip lasted 2:30. So ended the day.

February 26, 1945

For the fourth straight day, we bombed ahead of the Ninth and First Armies, hitting at communication centers. Today was Group Mission # 216, with take off early in 162

the afternoon. Evans & McCartney, Mish & Shaft flew from our squadron, along with five other crews. Lt. Cannon flew "window" for the mission.

At Sindorf, the communication center of the enemy was bombed, again using "Gee" due to a cloud over the target. 1000 lb. GP's were released by the formation from 11,500 and 12,500 feet, with the results being "undetermined". There wasn't even one burst of flak to cause any disturbance, and the mission was labeled a "milk-run" by all who flew. All planes returned to the base with no losses, damage, or casualties, after a 3:30 flight.

Many of the boys are nearing the 65 missions mark. Major McNulty has 63 to his credit, not counting the 11/2 missions given for each time they fly as box leader. 1st Lt. Kreh has 63 also. Lt. Forma has 64 1/2, and is sweating out the last one. 1st Lt. Mish is climbing rapidly with 56 at present. High gunner is S/Sgt. Fetko with 44, and Gunners Schafer & Lagerman pushing him with 41 each. With summer coming, these boys will be chalking them up fast.

February 27, 1945

Inclement weather prevented any flying today. Most of the day was spent by the ground crews in tinkering with their planes. In Operations, the end of the month is drawing near, which means a deluge of work.

February 28, 1945

The mission today was briefed early, but didn't take off till early in the afternoon. A hefty haze clings to the ground during the morning, and doesn't usually clear till noon. On the loading list for Gp Mission # 217, were twelve crews, including the three B/N Teams of Stanley & Blount Jacobsen & Harvest, and Andersen & Babbage. The ordnance depot at Unna, Germany was the target. The planes were loaded with 500 lb. GP's, and they were dropped through the clouds at 12,500 feet, with the bombing being accomplished with "PFF" and "Gee".

The results of the bombing were again “undetermined”, with a heavy cloud cover preventing the taking of any pictures. The formation returned safely to the base after four hours of flight. Flak was nil, thusly no damages, casualties, or losses.

This was # 1 for 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. –eimet, although not at the stick, he rode with Lt. Parker and learned the feeling of a mission.

March 1, 1945

The mission today went down in the books as Group Mission # 218. We had eight crews on the mission, of which two were B/N Teams, and one flew in a “window”  
163

capacity. Evans & McCartney flew as Deputy Leaders, while Mish & Shaft led our flight of six. Take-off was late in the morning, with an over cast covering the field. Take-offs are late due to a ground haze that exists every morning.

The ordnance depot at Giessen, Germany was the target to be bombed. This target lies east of the Rhine and is of great value to the enemy. The trip over was a “milk-run” and the target was reached without difficulty of any kind. As anticipated, a cloud cover blanketed the area, and the bombing was accomplished with the aids of PFF and Gee. A mixture of 1000 lb. & 500 lb. bombs hurtled down thru the clouds from an altitude of 12,000 feet. The formation left the bomb run and returned safely, free from flak or fighters after a flight of three hours. Again the results were “undetermined”, with the cloud cover preventing the taking of pictures.

March 2, 1945

The mission flown today was very near identical to yesterday’s mission, with exception of target and date. We had twelve crews on the loading list, comprising the lead flights of each box. Price & Forma flew Deputy Lead with five of our crews behind them, while Andersen & Babbage with the other five crews were the lead flight of the second box. On this mission, heading the first box was the team of Evans & McCartney. They composed the thirteenth crew on the list. Take-off was in the late morning, and the planes were loaded with 500 lb. “Fraggs”.

The motor transportation depot at Iserlohn, German was the target assigned to the bombers. Two words, namely – “milk-run” described the mission. The target was reached with no flak enroute, and the bombing was carried out by boxes on PFF lead from the altitudes of 13,00 and 13,500 feet. Due to cloud cover, no photo coverage was possible, and the results remained “undetermined”. The formation returned to the base with no losses, damage, or casualties, after a journey of 3:30 duration. This ended Group Mission # 219.

Tomorrow should be a day of celebration, as it announces the end of one year of operations. A year that has been full of both sadness and joy.

March 3, 1945

A year ago today, we sent out our first crews, as green as could be. Today, we sent out eight crews, with a record of 220 missions to the squadron experience behind them, a smooth, experienced, well trained machine. This was Group Mission # 220. The B/N Teams were; Stanley & Blount with Gunner Windish, and Mish & Shaft with Gunner Roberts. Lt. McCready flew “window” with Gunners Profita & Lemonds; and on

the rest of the loading list were; Lt. Blevins with Gunner Van Galder, Lt. Parkhurst with Gunner Jordan, Lt. Colquitt with Gunner Hood, Lt. Drum with Gunner Schwartzkopf, and Lt. Zeimet with Gunner Fay. None of the original bunch remains except for Lt. Hand and Major Price.

164

The ordnance depot at Giessen, Germany was the target, the same target we had a few days ago. It was the same old story; with a cloud cover present, and the bombing being done through the clouds. Again, the results remained "undetermined". Flak was nil, and the mission returned safely.

Information is being compiled on the first year of operations, and it will be presented when ready. Probably the biggest change during this first year was the switch from A-20's to A-26's. Also the year brought about a complete turnover of flying personnel. Lt. Forma transferring over to the 671<sup>st</sup> with 65 missions left an opening hard to fill. He was classed as one of the best B/N's the Group has had. Lt. Hand, when his ankle heals, will finish up and return to the States.

March 4, 1945

In the early afternoon, Group Mission #221 took to the blue, after being delayed all morning. We were represented by one flight led by Andersen & Babbage. Major Price, with Lt. Shaft and Gunner Fetko & Roberts flew "window". This gives the Major 59 missions, not counting the ones flown as box leader, which gives credit for 11/2. Every day "Jug" patiently snatches the red line leading to the goal.

The target was the Marshalling Yards at Lenkerbeck, Germany. This target, northwest of Dortmund, was reported jammed with enemy military traffic and was considered a ripe morsel. From here on, it was the same old story, with a cloud cover over the target and PFF bombing employed. Results again were "unknown", and the only thing to do was do wait for weather reconnaissance planes to report the damages. The formation made the journey free from hazard of flak, and logged 4:00 for the trip.

A party was thrown in Laon, recently, by the pilots of the squadron. Noted the next day was the usual pale faces, scratches, and quiet in general. Yes, the party was a success. Lt. Hand put on a pretty good dance, with only one good leg.

March 5, 1945

Two missions today kept everyone at a hot pace. In the morning was Gp Mission # 222, with Evans & McCartney, Mish & Shaft, and five other crews from our squadron. Forty-one aircraft took to the air, loaded with 500 lb. GP's. All of this bombing was done to prevent enemy supplies reaching the German Troops for the defense of the Ruhr Valley.

The Marshalling Yards at Marburg, Germany was bombed thru the clouds, using PFF. The bombs were dropped with results "undetermined", and the formation returned safely after 3:30 of flight. Immediately, the planes were loaded and re-fueled for the next mission. As if by magic, the briefed crews were at the planes as the last one was done. In the early afternoon, Mission # 223 took off. Andersen & Babbage, Stanley & Blount, led our two flights. The Marshalling Yards at Bingen, Germany was bombed with

165

500 lb. GP's. The bombing was done on PFF lead from the altitude of 12,500 feet, with the results "undetermined", the usual cloud cover prevailing. Flak was nil, and the formation returned safely after three hours of flying. The last plane landed in the darkness. The squadron logged over 65 hours for the day.

March 6, 1945

Today ushered in Group Mission # 224, a mission very similar to the preceding ones. We had seven crews on the loading list, plus a "window" ship flown by Lt. Kreh. The B/N Teams included Evans & McCartney, and Mish & Shaft who flew as Deputy Box Leader. Captain Evans led our crews in the third flight of the second box.

The bombing was done against German attempts to mass troops and equipment for the defense of the Ruhr Valley. The planes were loaded with 500 lb. GP's and take off was in the early afternoon. The Marshalling Yard at Opladen, Germany was the target, and the crews were briefed to find a cloud cover over the target. The briefing was correct and the bombing was done by PFF. Thusly, 218 bombs hurtled thru the clouds, dropped from the altitude of 12,400 feet. The results were "undetermined" and all planes returned safely to the base, with flak being nil. The journey last almost four hours. This ended the day's operational flying.

Many of the combat personnel are nearing the goal line. Major Price has 61 missions; Major McNulty has 69 missions; Lt. Mish has 61 missions, Lt. Kenny has 49 missions; and Lt. Kreh has 64 missions. In the Gunners field are; S/Sgt. Fetko with 47 missions; S/Sgt. Euga with 45 missions; and S/Sgt. Schafer with 45 missions. The Gunner's goal is 51, which isn't so very far away for these boys.

Major McNulty is still in England and having a wonderful time with the "Mrs."

"Buck" Buchanan is enjoying the wonders and thrills of the French Riviera. "Up at the front" are Lt's Colquitt and Carver. "Achin" Hand is Asst. Opps. Officer now.

March 7, 1945

Crews were briefed for a mission today, but bad weather forced all aircraft to remain on the ground. The whole day was spent in "sweating it out". S/Sgt. K.G. Lagerman hit the jackpot in being chosen to go back to the States as a Gunnery Instructor. He has 43 missions on this record, and will leave in a week. "Buck" Buchanan back from the Riviera telling fascinating tales. "Frank" Tank is known to be on the look out for lingerie for the "Mrs."

March 8, 1945

Keeping pace with the ground activities, all Bomb Groups are operating at maximum whenever weather permits. Today we had Group Mission # 225, a mission flown in close co-ordination with the Troops that are extending the bridgehead across the Rhine. Air activity will be increased as this drive continues.

166

Early in the morning, Group Mission # 226 took to the air. Andersen & Babbage were flying as Deputy Box Leader, while Mish & Shaft led our six crews in the second flight of the second box. Major Price with F/O Blount flew "window". The bombs we loaded were 500 lb. GP's.

The Marshalling Yard at Butzbach, Germany was "it". Again clouds were



predicted over the target and PFF was used. Bombs were released from 13,500 feet and fell thru the clouds with “undetermined” results. The mission was flown free from flak, and outside of enemy fighters being recognized, the mission was quiet. Time logged 3:00. Shortly had the planes returned to the hardstands, when they were loaded and refueled for the coming mission. As the last refueling truck left, the crews were already at the planes, preparing for take-off. Thus, in the early afternoon, Mission # 227 was airborne. The bomb load was the same 500 lb. GP’s.

We had twelve crews, plus a “window” crew on this mission. Leading the first box, with Brig. Gen. Backus (CO, 97<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing) along, was Evans & McCartney & Babbage (lead bombers rate two B/N’s; one acts as navigator.) Right behind them and leading the second box were Stanley & Blount & Shaft. Jacobsen & Harvest flew the “window” ship on this mission.

A different type target was assigned this time. The Ammunition Filling Plant at Wulfen, Germany, located deep in the flak-infested Ruhr Valley, was assigned to our Group. Visibility over the target was briefed as 10/10ths and PFF and Gee were elected to be used. The visibility was as predicted, and the bombing was done by boxes from 12,000 and 13,000 feet. The results on Box I were “undetermined”, but Box II rated “good” as a break in the clouds enabled the crews to see briefly where the bombs landed. Weak, inaccurate heavy flak was encountered, but did little damage to the bombers. Severe flak was expected as the Ruhr Valley has always been heavily defended. The operational hours logged for the day exceeded sixty.

March 10, 1945

Group Mission # 226 was reached and passed today. It was a very ordinary mission, and very similar to the ones in the past ten days. We had nine crews on the loading list, two which were “window” crews. Andersen & Babbage led our flight of six planes, while Mish & Shaft flew as Deputy Leader. Major Price and Lt. Lackner flew the “window”.

The Marshalling Yard at Niederscheld was the target. The strategy is to disrupt the transportation facilities for the Jerries. It was a “milk run” with the bombing being done by boxes on PFF lead. The 500 lb. GP’s were dropped thru the clouds from 12,800 feet with “undetermined” results. All planes returned safely after a flight of 3:30 duration. This was the only mission for the day.

167

March 11, 1945

We scored “two” for the books today, a day that kept everyone very busy. The first mission took off early in the morning with the planes being loaded with 500 lb. GP’s. We had twelve crews including the two B/N Teams. Capt. Evans & Lt. McCartney led the third flight of the first box, while Capt. Stanley led the rest of our crews in the second flight of the first box. F/O Blount was doing the bombing for him. This was Gp Mission # 229.

The target was an enemy airfield at Lippe, Germany, located northwest of Giessen. Enemy planes from these fields located here were reported to be harassing our troops at the Rhine River bridgehead. The orders were to destroy the field. The target was

reached without interference, and it was the same old story. A heavy ground haze and clouds hid the target, and the bombs were dropped with the aid of PFF. The bombs hurtled thru the clouds from the altitude of 13,000 feet. After leaving the bomb run, the formation made the trip back safely, and landed after four hours of flight. The results were given the usual classification – “undetermined”. Cover prevented the taking of photos.

Very little time was wasted in preparing for the next mission. Before the formation returned, crews were already briefing. We briefed seven crews and one “window” crew for this mission # 230. Andersen & Babbage were to be Deputy Box Leader, while Mish & Shaft led our crews in the third flight of the second box. Major Price flew “window”. Take-off was in mid-afternoon.

The target was the same ammunition filling station at Wulfen, previously bombed by us on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March. This target lies about sixteen miles east of Wesel. The bombing was carried out under the usual conditions, as the bombing was done with the aid of instruments (PFF). Thusly, 192 x 500 lb. GP’s fell thru the clouds from 12,500 and 15,500 feet, the bombing being done by boxes. Our Group did not encounter flak, but the two other Groups that bombed before us received light flak. Our formation returned safely after a four-hour hop. The results again were n not known. The squadron logged over 76 hours of flying for the day. Many of our crews are nearing the finish mark, the end of a long trail.

March 12, 1945

We are really starting to produce now; with another two missions today. The strategy for today’s bombing was to destroy all transportation lines leading into battle areas, namely German railway lines. Thus, our two missions were devoted to that cause. Fair weather gave promise to a successful day.

Group Mission # 231 took off a little after 0900 leaded with 500 lb. GP’s. From our squadron came twelve crews and a window plane. Capt. Evans led one of our flights with Lt. McCartney as B/N and Lt. Babbage as Navigator. Leading the other flights of 168

ours was Capt. Stanley, with F/O Blount as bombardier, and Lt. Shaft as Navigator. Major Price flew the “window” plane.

The Marshalling Yard at Lorch, Germany was the target attacked. The same old procedure ensued with the bombing being done thru clouds using PFF aids. The bombs were released from over 15,000 feet by boxes. The results were again “undetermined” and the formation returned safely to the base after logging 2:30. No flak prevailed anywhere along the mission.

In the afternoon, it was the same story repeated only with different crews and different target. This time we had nine crews participating, two of them B/N Teams. Andersen & Babbage led our flight of six, while Mish & Shaft were Deputy Box Leaders. This time Lt’s Drum and Vars flew “window”. “Doc” Nowry flew his first mission on this hop. “Doc” is the squadron medical Officer.

A well know target was hit this time. The Marshalling Yard at Posen, Germany was under the bombsight. Like the first mission, clouds obscured the target and the

bombing was done by PFF. Little flak was noticed, probably due to the 10/10<sup>th</sup>'s cover over the target. The bombs fell from an altitude of 12,500 feet and disappeared into the clouds below, giving an "undetermined" to the results of the mission. There was very little flak damage, and the formation returned without trouble. This was Mission # 232, the last one for the day. The last plane landed in the dusk. A detailed account of squadron happenings will be given at a later date. With two missions being flown a day, there isn't much time for anything else.

March 13, 1945

The pressure is now on with two missions being flown today. The strategy is still to tie up enemy transportation and continue to hit airfields when possible. Both of these phases were covered by our Group today.

In the morning around 0930, Group Mission # 233 took to the air loaded with 100 lb. and 500 lb. bombs. From our squadron came thirteen crews, including the one "window" plane. Stanley & Blount led our five crews in the second flight of the first box. Right behind them in the third flight of the first box were Jacobsen & Harvest, leading our other five crews in flight. Price & Hand flew the "window" plane. This was # 65 for the Major and he was "eager".

The Luftwaffe's jet fighter airfield at Rheine, thirty miles west of Canabruck, was the target for our Group. From here on, it was the same old story. Cloud cover over the target prevailed, and PFF bombing was relied upon. The bomb lead was dropped by boxes on PFF lead from about 9,000 feet, and the results were of course "undetermined". Week to moderated flak caused minor damage to our formation, and all bombers returned to the base after a 3:30 flight.

169

Very little time elapsed from the return of the first mission, to the take-off of the second mission. Mission # 234 took to the blue loaded with 1,000 lb. GP's. In Deputy Box Leader position was the team of Andersen & Babbage. Leading the six bombers from our squadron were Mish & Shaft. This too was # 65 for Lt. Mish and he was sure "sweating it out".

The Marshalling Yard at Neihem/Huston felt the destruction of the bombs. This time we had a little better luck, as the bombs were dropped visually. The formation arrived just when there was a little break in the clouds, and the bombs were dropped thru this hole. Results were "undetermined" as the clouds covered over after the bomb release. The formation returned to land in the dark after a 3:30 flight. There was a lot of celebrating done last night, needless to say.

March 14, 1945

Weather permitted flying on one mission today. All during the morning up till noon, a heavy ground fog hung on the field, and didn't clear till the sun was high in the sky. In cases like this, a mission is briefed and then delayed till the weather permits flying. Thus, in the mid-afternoon, Group Mission # 235 took off.

We furnished six crews to the loading list with Evans – McCartney – Shaft leading the flight, and first box also. Flying with them as observer was Col. Aylesworth. The weather was perfect and gave good promise to visual bombing. The target was a

Railway Bridge at Nieder/Marsberg about sixty miles east of Dortmund. The object of the attack was to disrupt transportation over this important double-track rail span. The target was reached and bombed under near ideal bombing conditions. As a result, 100 x 1000 lb. GP's hurtled to the earth with "excellent" results. Visual observation plus photos showed that the tracks on both sides of the bridge were torn up, rendering the bridge unserviceable for a good while. The formation returned to the base after four hours elapse with no flak damage what so ever.

SQUADRON NEWS – both Major Price and Lt. Mish celebrated their tour completion in good style. Reports from the scene gave understanding to the headaches that showed up the next morning. S/Sgt. E.L. Scafer has "50" now, with S/Sgt. Euga having "49". S/Sgt. Fetko finished with "51" a few days ago and is "sweating out" the states.

We have four men from the front line living with us for a week again. They have been flying missions with us and learning the operations of a bomber group.

Lt. Colquitt, Gunners Gandy and ----, returned from the front laden down with all kinds of "souvenirs". Included were; rifles, pistols, motorbikes, clothing, etc. "Buck" Buchanan had some damn hard luck the other day. While going to Reims on a pass he was injured seriously. The jeep he was riding in was sideswiped by another,  
170

and he suffered a compound fracture of his right ankle. He is in the Riems Hospital now having had an operation on it. It may impair his flying ability it's rumored.

Major McNulty is back from his week's pass after a month's elapse. A new B/N Team has sprung up – namely Wright & Myrold. Both are considered very good in their field.