

## **640TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)**

**1943 -- 1945**

### Activation

The 640th Bombardment Squadron (Light) was activated at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on 1 June 1943. Personnel for the new organization were derived largely from the 87th Bombardment Squadron (Light).

### Station List

Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma 1 June 1943 1 October 1943

(Activation)

Woodward Army Air Field, Oklahoma 1 October 1943 - 8 December 1943

DeRidder Army Air Base, Louisiana 9 December 1943 - 12 December 1944

Camp Shanks, New York 13 December 1943 - 26 February 1944

Leaving Camp Shanks on 26 February, the unit boarded ship and sailed from the New York Port of Embarkation on the following day. Arriving in Liverpool, England, on 5 March, the Squadron disembarked on the 6th and proceeded at once to its new station in southeastern England.

Little Walden (Essex), England March 1944 - September 1944

Bretigny (Seine-et-Oise), France September 1944 - February 1945

Laon/Couvron (Aisne), France February 1945 - June 1945

"Camp New York" Staging Area June 1945 - July 1945

(near Reims), France

### Return to United States

At the end of July, the squadron was transferred to the vicinity of Antwerp, Belgium, and within a short time sailed for home. Arriving in the United States in August, its members were given furloughs before reporting to their new station in September.

Seymour Johnson Army Air Field North Carolina September 1945 - Early October 1945

Westover Army Air Field, Massachusetts October 1945 - 24 November 1945

(Inactivation)

640th Bomb Gp - cont.

### Commanding Officers

Captain Albert W. Roby, Jr. 21 June 1943 - 14 December 1943

Major Allison Maxwell 14 December 1943 - Spring of 1944

Captain Leslie B. Huff Spring of 1944 - 20 June 1944

Major Albert W. Roby, Jr. 20 June 1944 - 20 April 1945

Captain Charles F. Williamson 22 April 1945 - Unknown

### Assignments

At the time of activation the 640th Squadron was assigned to the 409th Bombardment Group (Light). In the course of World War II, the Group served under the following organizations:

The Third Air Force Activation - 10 February 1944

The Ninth Air Force 7 March 1944 - End of war

IX Bomber Command (arrival overseas)

### Types of Aircraft Used

A-20 (Havoc)

A-26 (Invader) Introduced November 1944

### Operations

See Group history

### Battle Honors

See Group History

### Inactivation

The 640th Bombardment Squadron was inactivated on 24 November 1945, at Westover Army Air Field, Massachusetts.

640TH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON

409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

DERIDDER ARMY AIR BASE

FIRST THREE PHASES OF ADJUTANT'S HISTORY

June 12, 1943 to December 1, 1943

The 640th Bombardment Squadron activated at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, dated June 12, 1943.

H E A D Q U A R T E R S

409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

WILL ROGERS FIELD

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma,

21 June 1943.

SPECIAL ORDERS )

:

NUMBER 1 )

1. The fol O's and EM having been asgd this Hq per par 4, SO #28, Hq 56th Bombardment trng Wing, Will Rogers Fld, Okla., dtd 20 June 1943, as amended, are

asgd to Org and duties as indicated:

640TH BOMB SQ.(L)

Captain Albert W. Roby Commanding Officer

1st Lt. Ward B. Warren Surgeon

2nd Lt. George W. Ray Combat Intelligence

2nd Lt. Lester W. Wind Communications

2nd Lt. Herbert S. Sale Ordnance

2nd Lt. Ivan E. Clower Engineering

2nd Lt. William G. Burggraf Pilot

2nd Lt. Edward J. Brandl Pilot

2nd Lt. Warren L. Decker Pilot

2nd Lt. Albert L. Fox Pilot

2nd Lt. Herbert A. Moss Pilot

2nd Lt. Robert E. Page Pilot

2nd Lt, Kenneth G. McGuire Pilot

Enlisted Men

S/Sgt. Charles W. Pyles Sgt. Clarence L. Franz

S/Sgt. Donald F. Strughold S/Sgt. Milton Efros

S/Sgt. Russell N. Tucker Pvt. Weldon B. Johnson

S/Sgt. David T. Williams Pvt. Walter R. Bergamini

Sgt. Earl D. Nolan Pfc. Oliver J. Pekarek

S/Sgt. Harry W. Huff S/Sgt. James L. Clingan  
Pfc. Clifford R. Wilks Pvt. Thomas T. Wiggins  
Pfc. Clyde S. Starks T/Sgt. Edwin A. Matson  
Cpl. Leroy C. Carter Cpl. William C. Harper  
Pfc. Amos S. Bollinger M/Sgt. Nicholas H. Toth  
T/Sgt. Wilson D. Dean T/Sgt. Theodore W. Anderson  
T/Sgt. Olen E. Stephens T/Sgt. Howard G. Kidder  
M/Sgt. Joseph M. Vickers Sgt. Glenn R. Kahl  
T/Sgt. David W. Smith Sgt. Leroy B. Fahrner  
Sgt. J. B. Kee Cpl. Joseph A. Sotsky  
Cpl. Raymond V. Kredlo Pfc. Elmer L. Craig  
Pvt. Harold J. Donato Pfc. Richard L. Dietz  
S/Sgt. Jack N. Pusey Cpl. Tarrance Hill  
Pfc Vincent A. Riolo Sgt. Green Daniels  
Pvt. Joseph H. Critz Cpl. Charles P. Coy  
Pvt Arnold C. Terrill Pvt.. John G. Williams  
Pvt. John E. Arnold Cpl. Samuel R. Evans  
Pvt. Mervin R. Dinkey Pvt. John Green, Jr.  
Pvt. Leo J. Jaskulka Pvt. Gabriel E. Maldonado  
Cpl. Raymond P. Lavole Pfc. Dale B. Wong  
Pfc. William M. Jablonski Pfc. John W. Deditius

2. All O of Hq 409th Bomb Group (L) are atchd to 640th Bomb Sq (L) for adm; and all EM Hq 409th Bomb Group (L) are atchd to 640th Bomb Sq (L) for qtrs, rat, and adm.

3. CAPT. LOUIS F. MARR, JR. (COMM) Hq 409th Bomb Gr (L) is aptd GROUP CRYPTOGRAPHIC & SECURITY O (add dy).

By order of Lieutenant Colonel PENDER:

ROY W. YEARWOOD

Major, Air Corps

Executive

OFFICIAL:

R. M. KINNARD, Adjutant

1st Lt., Air Corps

Staff Sergeant Charles W. Pyles was appointed First Sergeant on June 25, 1943 and placed in charge as First Sergeant over 51 men who were transferred from Headquarters, 56th Bombardment Training Wing under orders of June 20, 1943. The 46th and 415th Bombardment Groups were other sources supplying personnel.

Drawing supplies, fumigating mattresses, and GI'ing the barracks, with Master Sergeants down to Privates pitching in, was the first order of work. The first man to hit the sign out book was Corporal A. Sotsky, out at 1800 and back at 2344.

Payrolls were entrusted to Pfc Oliver J. Pekarek. Success crowned his efforts and he did it with a minimum of coaching. One man wasn't paid.

A grave difficulty was the lack of any set of Army regulations or Memorandums, no matter when dated. Besides dreams, requests were made to the Base of Wing constantly about the time reports had to be in. Regulations finally came in, help was added and someone caught First Sergeant Pyles smiling about the smooth way we were catching on. Bang !! July 10th, and a batch of gunners transferred to Salt Lake City, Utah. Partial payments had to be made and getting Form 337, Individuals pay vouchers, was a job for Houdini. We've never seen a field with a sufficient supply, but the War isn't over. Fortunately we got some and took care of our men. The Replacement Wing at Salt Lake City criticized some of the Squadrons for sending men out without paying them, but left us unscathed.

Activities stepped up in the Squadron and was reflected in our work by the constant addition of personnel. On September 28th, we had 55 Officers and 217 enlisted men. Adding to the Squadron's labors, but not unhappily, was the work of getting out furloughs, leaves and promotions.

Building cases for reports and file and readying for the move from Will Rogers Field, occupied us during the last part of September.

By the first of October, we were moved to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma. Here we acquired our first of many coats of dust and settled down to operating more efficiently. The emphasis was placed on shifting men to jobs they could do best, helped get us closer to fighting trim. the ragged edges were smoothed by inspections. That's the idea anyway. Sometimes conflicts between inspectors left us more ragged, but in general we profited by having our work checked.

Reclassification was another source of trouble to us. No station has a speedy, efficient method of doing the job.

As men and jobs jelled, the molding into a hard hitting effective unit was hampered by the impending transfer of our Adjutant to Flying Cadet status. Good flying and good luck to 2nd Lt. Viskovich who was scheduled to report to San Antonio, Texas on November 29th, 1943.

During our stay at Woodward Army Air Field we lost one crew when they crashed into a hillside of the Canadian River. The crew members were Lt. Clark, S/Sgt Leroy Farney and Sgt. Robison Sherrod. Sgt. Sherrod was a member of the Communication Dept. of our squadron.

Our file of excuses and gripes is ready to be left behind as the smell of salt air becomes more real. When we land on foreign soil, we'll be ready.

## OPERATIONS SECTION

Upon the Cadre's return from AAFSAT in the later part of June, 1943, the squadron was activated, and 2nd Lt. Herbert A. Moss was appointed Operations Officer. The enlisted personnel in the Operations Office consisted of S/Sgt. Milton Efros, Chief Clerk.

We were assigned our squadron area on the main base where an Operations Office was set up and an attempt was made to obtain the necessary publications. Obtaining the required publications proved to a rather difficult task, due to a lack of cooperation on the part of Group Headquarters.

On June 28, 1943, PFC Robert L. Slaughter was assigned to the Operations Section as a clerk.

During the month of July we took over five airplanes belonging to the 50th Bombardment Squadron (L), 46th Bombardment Group (L), one day a week for flying. The majority of the time most of the five air[lanes were out of commission. Since the majority of our pilots were not yet checked out in the A-20 type airplane, this lack of planes greatly hampered our progress. The days we were not flying were spend drawing equipment, building files and getting ready to properly function as an organization.

On the first part of August we moved to the flying line, and on the 4th of August, 1943 we received our first airplane, A-20G 42-53899, and on the 5th of August, 1943 we were assigned A-20G 42-86575.

Within the next two weeks we were assigned two more airplanes, A-20G 42-86579 and A-20G, 41-3391. Second Lieutenant Jack S. Sargent was appointed Asst. Operations Officer.

The months of August and September offered very favorable flying weather and consequently our pilots were able to acquire considerable flying time in the A020 Type airplane.

During the month of September the Squadron was divided into two equal sections to attend OTU School, which was conducted at Will Rogers Field. One section attended the school, while the other continued operations, alternating every twenty-four hours. Upon completion of OTU School, we receive orders to the effect that the organization would move to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma, to continue operations. Transfer date: on or about October 1, 1943.

On October 1, 1943 the Squadron moved to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma, according to schedule. The first few days at WAAF involved much work for the section in getting set for immediate operations.

October 5, 1943, Lt. Leslie B. Huff was appointed Operations Officer, and 2nd Lt. Herbert A. Moss and 2nd Lt. Raymond W. Polson were appointed Assistant Operations Officers.

During the first few weeks of October our flying training was practically at a standstill, due to shortage of gasoline. Once the gasoline situation was licked, the entire squadron bore down and went through an intensive program of training

The section was assigned only one typewriter, which proved to be insufficient for the amount of work to be turned out. This handicap forced Operations Clerks to work after hours so as to insure the required reports going out on schedule.

All during the month of November we were kept busy constructing crates and packing boxes in anticipation of our contemplated move. We were advised of the move, but in regard to the date and destination, these remained secret; until finally on 23 November, 1943 we received Official word. Our destination was to be DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Louisiana, and the approximate date: December 1, 1943. On November 24th, Lt. Huff was promoted to Captain and 2nd Lt. Moss was promoted to First Lieutenant.

On December 8, 1943 we departed Woodward Army Air Field for DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Louisiana, arriving on December 10, 1943. The experience gained in our previous moves aided us no end in getting set up, and by December 12th, we were already to resume operations. We then embarked on our "polishing up" phase.

The following officers and enlisted men made the move to DeRidder.

## OFFICERS

Capt. Albert W. Roby, Commanding

Capt. Lester F. Nielsen, Executive

2nd Lt. Alex R. Viskovich, Adjutant

2nd Lt. Ray F. Nusbaum, Mess Officer

Capt. Ward, Warren B. 2nd Lt. Irwin, Donald K.

1st Lt. Davis, David G. 2nd Lt. Janulewicz, Phillip F.

1st Lt. Huff, Leslie P. 2nd Lt. Klein, Erving

1st Lt. McCoy, Aquilla P. 2nd Lt. Lever, Ben R. Jr.

1st Lt. McWilliams, Jack 2nd Lt. Levin, Leonard L.

1st Lt Norton, Leland F. 2nd Lt. MacKinnon, Alexander D

1st Lt. Ray. George W. 2nd Lt. Malvern, Donald

2nd Lt. Bauer, Edmond T. 2nd Lt. McCready, John P.

2nd Lt. Bershatsky, Sidney 2nd Lt. Moss, Herbert A.

2nd Lt. Bonnett, Edmond W. 2nd Lt. Page, Robert T.

2nd Lt. Brady, Gerald M. 2nd Lt. Penta, Anthony J.

2nd Lt. Burgraff, William G. A.S. 2nd Lt. Polson, Raymond W.

2nd Lt. Clower, Ivan E. 2nd Lt. Sale, Herbert S.

2nd Lt. Davis, John M. 2nd Lt. Sargent, Jack S.

2nd Lt. Courtney, Eric 2nd Lt. Schrader, Eugene W.

2nd Lt. Decker, Warren L. 2nd Lt. Shafer, James A.

2nd Lt. Downing, Harold S. 2nd Lt. Starezewski, Philip R.

2nd Lt. Dunstan, Albert J. 2nd Lt. Stoughton, Robert C.

2nd Lt. Fox, Albert E. 2nd Lt. Wind, Lester W.

## ENLISTED MEN

1st SERGEANT CHARLES W. PYLES

M/SERGEANTS

Theodore Anderson Edwin A. Matson

Wilson D. Dean Howard G. Kidder

Olen E. Stephen Nicholas F. Toth

T/SERGEANTS

David W. Smith Carl A. Carter, Jr

Henry L. Henninger James A. Clingan

Glenn R. Kahl J. B. Kee

Frederick W. Lux Edward J. O'Connor

Donald F. Strughold

S/SERGEANTS

Jack N. Pusey William C. Harper

Russell N. Tucker Aaron P. Carl

Joseph H. Chritz John J. Cotter, Jr.

Samuel R. Evans Milton Efros

Archie D. Graves Harry A. Kastner, Jr.

Earl D. Nolan Willard D. Phillips

Paul W. Ryker Fred H. Strickland

Peter J. Uquccini Edward D. Zak

Mike Negri Joseph J. Shilalie

SERGEANTS

Guy E. Turner Cecil C. Abraham

Willis S. Anderson Andrew M. Andrese

Gus G. Berger Billy D. Berry

Byron L. Black Melbern Borst

Rufus A. Brewer, Jr. Gus E. Bubenzer

Earl L. Cantrell Norwood W. Case

Pete Chlysta Ben F. Courtright



Wayne P. Cooper Grayden Curtin  
Andrew J. Ozajko Roy F. Davis, Jr.  
Martin T. Devaney Richard L. Dietz  
James H. Dixon Roscoe E. Dunlap  
Paul J. Dunne Paul Duran  
Joseph S. Fortney Raymond S. Foster  
Benjamin L. Hansen Joseph L. Hardcastle  
John A. Heath Tarrance Hill  
Joseph F. Hamilton William M. Jaelonski  
Einar W. Johnson Weldon B. Johnson  
John H. Jones John J. Kahaffa  
Andrew Kaskaneas Harley C Keaton  
Edward P. Kilburg Willaim R. Kuzelka  
Forrest E. Lurnuck James R. Macniel  
Woodrow W. Mahoney Charles E. Manchester  
Vernon L. Mondl Frank Morgan  
Jesse F. Morris Jack D. Muros  
Raymond D. Pait Oliver J. Pekarek  
Harold J. Powell Curtis W. Reeve  
George J. Rielen John R. Slack  
Robert L. Slaughter Lester C. Smith  
Chester E. Sokit Victor J. Spennato  
Julian H. Tate Edward J. Thompson  
Robert C. Vicks Clifford R. Wilkes  
John R. Davidson George O. Beheba  
Lester A. Deaner Alvah J. Denton  
F. M. Drinkard John M. Genser  
Lee Hancock William T. Perkins  
Dozier T. Laird Lowell F. Pritchard

Curtis L. Scheerer Richard E. Walters

## CORPORALS

Canio Abate William P. Astarita

Roy C Anderson William R. Anthony

Vincent F Arch John E. Arnold

Roy A. Barnes Proletario Barone

Leo A. Bercher Walter R. Bergamini

Raymond W. Brammer Elmer L. Craig

Frank S. Curia George L. Daley

Maurice I. D'Armond Harold L. Dean

John W. Deditius William J. Dempsey, Jr.

Riley C. Denney Donald E. Doherty

Harold J. Donato George W. Ellis

Julius L. Eulenfeld Adolph A. Finkle

Douglas E. Fountain Hal Frazier

Leonard G. Fushek Pasquale M. W. Geremia

Jerome Goldhaber William C Gescheider

Raye L. Gruelle Edward R. Johnson

Eldridge D. Johnston Robert L. Jones

Maurice O. King Harry E. Kinker

Charles V. Lange William G. McCarthy

Salvatore O. Mondello William E. Nordhoff

Bernard Nussenfeld Leo M. Pinetti

Robert B. Pfeil Arthur P. Poirier

Patrick J. Reynolds Arthur M. Ricley

Max Schneier Frank R. Seaman, Jr.

Frederick J. Smith Joseph A. Sotsky

Purless L. Stoker Harold Swanson

Jesse B. Thaxton William D. Thompson, Jr.

James W. Tingen William C. Urwin

James L. Webster Irving Weiner

Thomas T. Wiggins Ed Wilkerson

Dale B. Wong Selwyn Pachter

Guy S. McFeeters, Jr.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

William L. Barnett Oscar Becker

Henry R. Behnke John A. Behrendt

Dallas Bennett Gregory Berkstresser

Willie R. Black Glynn A. Boecker

Amos S. Bollinger John P. Bowles

Joe A. Buck John E. Burgess

Truman R. Cavanaugh Robert L. Chapman

Frontis E. Cochran Herman L. Davidson

Royal H. Deakin Bernard Blum

Roland W. Decker Howard I. Deichert

Clyde E. Dotson Marshall D. Fillian

Martin P. Boyle Wilfred F. Flory

William L. Forstot David Glover, Jr.

Alvin J. Greenbaum David J. Gresh

Roy D. Hall Clarence V. Hodge

Sigmund J. Horvath Raymond W. Hufnagle

Louis E. Hurd Donald E. Immel

James T Jones Thomas D. Jones

Charles L. Lainhart Henry C. Leshner

Sam J. Levinson Fritz E. Loeschner

Frank A. Maicrano Samuel Markovich

Joseph Matyi Gabriel E. Maldonado

W. McCauley Edward P. Merriam

Gaetano D. Metildi Mariano Milazzo

Harry J. Moore Leonard M. Olson

Harry R. Pemberton George Rafey

Ted J. Richter Wendell P. Smith

Vincent J. Sprowl Edward R. St. John

Stephen E. Whitten Roscoe J. C. Trainor, Jr.

Harvey C. Whittington

#### PRIVATES

Joseph M. Belich Robert R. Baldwin

Green Daniels Walter S. Derr

Clarence L. Franz Cecil M. Gay

Vern J. Gray Adam S. Halerz

Arthur L. Hamilton Fred Holley

Leo J. Jaskulka Owen N. Humphrey

Marvin P. Lightfoot Jess W. Newton

Harold D. Perry Forrest H. Keiper

Andrew C. Ross George J. Schuesler

Walker S. Smith Cuthbert M. Truex, Jr.

Andrew D. Vigliotti Carl J. Worrell

February 10, 1944, the 640th Squadron joined the other Squadrons and departed DeRidder, Louisiana for the Port of Embarkation - Camp Shanks, New York.

#### 640TH IN THE EUROPEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

A complete history of the Squadrons total activities (air and ground) is not possible. What is presented here in some cases is only a partial part of a document that has been gleaned from Air Force Historical Division film that has been permitted to fade rendering much of it illegible.

Along with the other Squadrons of the 409th Bombardment Group (L), the 640th arrived at there new base in the European Theater of Operations, Little Walden, Essex county, England (Station 165), in March 1944.

The squadron participated with the rest of the Group in preparing the new Airfield for the Combat Operations they will be part of.

APRIL - 1944

NARRATIVE

Things finally got under way during the month of April. On the thirteenth of the month we participated in our first combat mission. Before the month was over the squadron had contributed it's quota of seventeen missions carried out by this group.

During this period we acquired several new planes and crews. We haven't lost any planes in our first operational month but unfortunately and in circumstances not yet completely understood, the names of two of our gunners have been added to the list of those "missing in action". They are S/Sgt. Patrick C. Cahill and S/Sgt Lionel G. Barbin, gunners for 2nd Lt. Paul G. Benson. It was on a mission over France on the thirtieth of April that Lt. Benson's ship was thrown out of the formation by the concussion of Flak bursts and his plane began to lose altitude. It was then that the two gunners bailed out. The opening of their parachutes were observed by other crews. Lt. Benson recovered his position in the formation, returned to the base and safely landed his plane. He did not know that his gunners were gone.

On those days when weather or other factors keep the planes on the ground, crew members attend ground school. This is true too for those who remain on the ground during days when we are operational. Lectures, Recognition Classes and Link-Trainer fill most of the ground training schedules.

Air Medals were awarded the following:

Lt. Col. ALLISON MAXWELL CAPT. LELAND F. NORTON

1ST. LT. EDMUND T. BAUER 1ST LT. GERALD M. BRADY

1ST LT. WILLIAM R. CARGILL 1ST LT. HERBERT A. MOSS

1ST LT. JAMES W. CAROTHERS 1ST LT. RICHARD H. COTTER

1ST LT. ERIC COURTNEY 1ST LT. ALBERT J. DUNSTAN

1ST LT. JOSEPH P. KELLEY 1ST LT. KENNETH G. MC GUIRE, JR.

1ST LT. JACK S. SARGENT 2ND LT. PAUL G. BENSON

2ND LT. PRESTON B. HANSON 2ND.LT. ROBERT T. TAUGNER

S/Sgt Andrew M. Andrese S/Sgt Mario J. Angeloro

S/Sgt Gus E. Bubenzer S/Sgt Earl L. Cantrell

S/Sgt John T. Davison S/Sgt Lester A. Deaner

S/Sgt B. M. Drinkard S/Sgt Roscoe E. Dunlap

S/Sgt Paul Duran S/Sgt Paul C. Ferrant

S/Sgt Raymond S. Foster S/Sgt John M. Genser

S/Sgt Joseph F. Hamilton S/Sgt Lee Hancock

S/Sgt Benjamin L. Hansen S/Sgt Roger R. Kidd

S/Sgt Dozier T. Laird S/Sgt Vernon L. Mondl

S/Sgt William T. Perkins S/Sgt Lowell F. Pritchard

S/Sgt Curtis W. Reeve S/Sgt Thomas L. Richardson

S/Sgt Paul W. Ryker S/Sgt Curtis L. Scheerer

S/Sgt Joseph J. Shilalie S/Sgt Fred H. Strickland

S/Sgt Julian H. Tate S/Sgt Edward J. Thompson

S/Sgt Robert C. Vicks S/Sgt Richard E. Walters

S/Sgt George G. Beheba

#### MAY - 1944

History of the 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of May 1944:

##### 1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 May 1944:

Officers: 41 Enlisted Men: 266

##### 2. Missing in Action:

Captain Leland F. Norton 1st Lt. Robert T. Taugner

2nd Lt. Raymond L. Gregg S/Sgt. Paul Duran

S/Sgt. Gus E. Bubenzer S/Sgt. Julian M. Tate

S/Sgt. Fred M. Strickland Pvt. Archie D. Graves

Sgt. Budde W. Teare

##### 3. Wounded in Action:

Captain Leslie B. Huff 1st Lt. Ben R. Lever, Jr.

##### 4. Awards and Decorations:

#### PURPLE HEART

T/Sgt. Dosler T. Laird

#### NARRATIVE

It was the 27th of May, 1944, the target a marshaling-yard in France. The 640th Bombardment Squadron (L) was leading the group on this mission. The formation was twenty seven miles from their target and all was going well when suddenly "all hell broke loose". The heavy flack caught first the plane of Lt. Raymond L. Gregg. The plane dropped spinning, narrowly missing the other ships. Eyes following the descent saw it spin into the ground. There it burst into flames. No parachutes were observed leaving the falling plane. Sgt. Budde W. Teare and Pvt. Archie D. Graves were the gunners who flew with Lieutenant Gregg on this mission.

Within two minutes of the foregoing two more planes were struck by flak. These were lead and deputy lead ships of the first box. In one, the deputy plane were Captain Leland F. Norton, pilot, 1st Lt. Robert T. Taugner, Bombardier-Navigator, and S/Sgt. Paul Duran and S/Sgt. Julian H. Tate, gunners. Their ship began a steep glide immediately after being hit. Observers saw Captain Norton slumped over the wheel. At about 5,000 feet one of

the wings broke off and the ship went into a spin. This is the last anyone saw of this plane. No parachutes were seen leaving this ship.

Captain Leslie B. Huff, pilot, 1st Lt. Ben R. Lever, Bombardier-Navigator and S/Sgt. Gus E. Bubenzer and S/Sgt Fred H. Strickland were the crew members of the third ship that was hit. This was the lead ship of the formation. When one engine was knocked out, Captain Huff turned his plane around and headed for home. He was rapidly losing altitude. When still about five minutes from the French coast, Captain Huff realizing they must soon go down, gave his crew the signal to abandon ship. The gunners bailed out but the Bombardier-Navigator couldn't get out. His "Gee" equipment hindered him so that he couldn't leave the stricken ship. Captain Huff held the plane under control until Lt. Lever worked himself loose. They were now over the channel and the plane was on fire. Lt. Lever bailed out, now it was Captain Huff's turn. He removed his flak suit, crawled to the catwalk of the blazing ship and jumped over the side. In so doing the right side of his body struck the plane. He tried to pull the ripcord with his right hand but it was impossible. He reached for the ripcord with his left hand, pulled it, and the chute opened. Air sea rescue brought Captain Huff and Lt. Lever out of the channel and back to England. (S/Sgt. Strickland landed in France and was taken prisoner. S/Sgt. Bubenzer also landed in France and was hidden by the French and eventually returned to Allies hands).

#### JUNE - 1944

History of the 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of June 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 30 June 1944;

Officers: 48 Enlisted Men: 279

3. Killed in Action:

1st Lt. Paul G. Benson

4. Missing in Action:

S/Sgt. Earl D. Bennett

5. Awards and Decorations:

#### PURPLE HEART

Capt. Leslie B. Huff 1st Lt. Ben R. Lever

S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant S/Sgt. Joseph J. Shilalie

S/Sgt. Richard E. Walters

#### DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Capt. Leslie B. Huff

### AIR MEDALS

1st Lt. Vernon E. Samuelson 2nd Lt. Charles J. Lewis

2nd Lt. James O. Vinall S/Sgt. Gerald J. Witty

S/Sgt. Marvin G. Buetsch S/Sgt. Marlin Coon

S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley S/Sgt. Alma T. Henshaw

S/Sgt. William L. Hicks S/Sgt. Logan A. Young

### 1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Bernard H. Bonnett 1st Lt. James A. Jarrott

2nd Lt. Leonard L. Leavin 2nd Lt. Eugene H. Salzman

2nd Lt. Charles J. Lewis 2nd Lt. James O. Binall

S/Sgt. Earl D. Bennett S/Sgt. Marvin Buetsch

S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley S/Sgt. Alma T. Henshaw

S/Sgt. William L. Hicks S/Sgt. Logan A. Young

### 2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. David G. Davis 1st Lt. Eric Courtney

1st Lt. Kenneth G. McGuire 1st Lt. Albert J. Dunstan

1st Lt. Joseph P. Kelley 1st Lt. Bernard H. Bonnett

2nd Lt. Eugene H. Salzman S/Sgt. Marvin G. Buetsch

S/Sgt. Marlin Coon S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley

S/Sgt. Lester A. Deaner

### 3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Kenneth G. McGuire 1st Lt. Richard H. Cotter

1st Lt. Albert J. Dunstan 1st Lt. Joseph P. Kelley

1st Lt. Jack Sargent 1st Lt. Bernard H. Bonnett

1st Lt. Preston B. Hanson 1st Lt. Edmund T. Bauer

S/Sgt. Vernon L. Mondl S/Sgt. William T. G. Perkins

S/Sgt. Mike Negri S/Sgt. Andrew M. Andrese

S/Sgt. Earl L. Cantrell S/Sgt. Raymond S. Foster

S/Sgt. Robert C. Vicks S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant



S/Sgt. Dozier T. Laird S/Sgt. Richard E. Walters

S/Sgt. Thomas L. Richardson S/Sgt. Edward J. Thompson

S/Sgt. George G. Beheba S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley

S/Sgt. Marlin Coon S/Sgt. Lester A. Deaner

S/Sgt. Vernon L. Mondl S/Sgt. Joseph F. Hamilton

S/Sgt. Curtis W. Reeve S/Sgt. Benjamin L. Hansen

#### 4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Richard H. Cotter 1st Lt. Preston B. Hanson

S/Sgt. Mario J. Angeloro

#### SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Andrew M. Andrese S/Sgt. Earl L. Cantrell

S/Sgt. Raymond S. Foster S/Sgt. Paul W. Ryker

S/Sgt. Mario J. Angeloro S/Sgt. Roger R. Kidd

S/Sgt. Dozier T. Laird S/Sgt. Richard E. Walters

S/Sgt. John T. Davison S/Sgt. Joseph F. Hamilton

S/Sgt. Edward J. Thompson

#### NARRATIVE

Major Albert W. Roby, Jr. replaced Captain Leslie B. Huff as Squadron Commander on the twentieth. Captain Huff has not yet fully recovered from injuries received when bailing out over the channel.

On the twenty-second day of this month, 1st Lt. Paul G. Benson was killed in action. The Group was on a mission to France. Shortly after forming up and while still over England Lt. Benson's right engine failed. He made a "180" and returned to the field to land. On his final approach he overshot the edge of the runway, gave the ship the gun and started around to try another landing. Instead he crash landed a few miles from the field and in so doing was killed. His turret and turret gunners, S/Sgts. George S. Helland and Alma T. Henshaw escaped the crushed ship.

Our training program has certainly been stepped up during this month. The Pilots are getting in lots of night formation flying. During the day, Pilot and Bombardier teams are continually flying practice bombing missions.

They'd much rather be dropping them on "Jerry" but still appreciate the need for "Dry Runs".

#### JULY - 1944

History of 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of July 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31st of August 1944.

Officers: 49 Enlisted Men: 304

2. Death (Non-Battle).

2nd Lt. Carl E. Turner

3. Awards and Decorations:

#### AIR MEDAL

S/Sgt. Kenneth W. Allard S/Sgt. James W. Gresham

S/Sgt. Arlie L. Winn 1st Lt. Robert O. Liedtke

#### 2ND OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Logan A. Young S/Sgt. Llyman J. Saunders

S/Sgt. William E. Hudson

#### 3RD OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Fred E. Schramm

#### 4TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Charles J. Lewis S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley

S/Sgt. John M. Hobschied S/Sgt. J. B. Koone

#### SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant

#### SIXTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Gerald M. Brady Capt. Kenneth G. McGuire

S/Sgt. Vernon L. Mondl S/Sgt. Curtis L. Scheerer

1st Lt. Bernard H. Bonnett

#### 7TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Preston B. Hanson S/Sgt. William T. Perkins

Pvt. Dozier T. Laird

#### 8TH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Earl L. Cantrell S/Sgt. Joseph J. Shilalie

#### NARRATIVE

It was on the 30th day of July that 2nd Lt. William A. Watson and his crew, S/Sgt Alfred B. Webb and S/Sgt George S. Hellend, were killed in action. They had been on a mission over France. The formation was landing now it was Lt. Watson's turn. Wheels down, he proceeded along the base leg when suddenly a formation of B-26's

loomed forth in his path of flight. Lt. Watson quickly swerved his plane to avoid a collision. His ship climbed, stalled and then dove for the ground. The pilot fought to straighten her out but not having sufficient altitude he just didn't make it.

We acquired several new combat personnel during this month. One pilot; two bombardiers and fourteen gunners. A few of the gunners have had previous combat duty with the 8th Air Force.

Training for combat crews has intensified. Weather permitting, crew members are practicing bombing and navigation on those days when their names do not appear on the battle order. The link trainer and varied program of intelligence lectures, films and demonstrations provides the bulk of ground training.

#### AUGUST - 1944

With one exception, August has been a rather uneventful month. On the 5th day of the month, 2nd Lt. Carl E. Turner was killed in an airplane accident near Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England. Eye-witness reports seem to indicate that the pilot had possibly attempted to evade a friendly fighter which was simulating passes at his aircraft. Further, that a possible abrupt maneuver resulted in loss of control, causing the plane to crash.

We have acquired several new combat crew members this month. They of course are getting a little more than the normal share of training. Intelligence has been stressing the important part observations made on a mission have in a large scaled picture. The gunners are responding and observations are now more detailed and informative.

During this month the following pilots and gunners have passed their fiftieth mission mark: Lt. Eric Courtney, pilot of "Skunk Works", Lt. Preston B. Hanson, Pilot of "Jolly Roger"; S/Sgt. Joseph Shilalie, Benjamin Hansen, Joseph S. Hamilton, William T. Perkins, Roger R. Kidd, Mario J. Angeloro, Paul W. Ryker, Earl L. Cantrell, Andrew M. Andrese and John T. Davison.

#### SEPTEMBER -1944

History of 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of September 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 30 September 1944.

Officers: 54 Enlisted Men: 302

2. Date of Departure from AAF Station 165. 12 September 1944

Date of Arrival at AAF Station A-48: 18 September 1944

5. Awards and Decoration

#### BRONZE STAR MEDAL

T/Sgt. Willard D. Phillips Sgt. James W. Tingen

#### AIR MEDAL

2nd Lt. Eugene Gottesman 2nd Lt. Louis J. Vander Loop

2nd Lt. Robert Vander Roest Sgt. James E. Tinsley

Sgt. Roland A. McDougall Sgt. Philip Bruno

Sgt. William W. Robertson Sgt. Robert H. Ward

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Major Albert W. Roby, Jr.

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Jeff P. Sellers 2nd Lt. Leon Cohen

S/Sgt. Loyal E. Tubbs S/Sgt. Felix Samudio

S/Sgt. Isaac Pannell

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Leon Cohen S/Sgt. George E. Compton

S/Sgt. Logan A. Young S/Sgt. Felix Samudio

S/Sgt. Loyal E. Tubbs S/Sgt. Isaac Pannell

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. James H. Koch S/Sgt. Alma T. Henshaw

S/Sgt. William L. Hicks S/Sgt. George F. Compton

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Richard H. Cotter Capt. Jack S. Sargent

S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant S/Sgt. George G. Beheba

S/Sgt. Marlin Coon S/Sgt. Robert C. Vicks

Maj. David G. Davis Capt. Herbert K. Moss

1st Lt. Warren L. Decker 1st Lt. James H. Koch

S/Sgt. J. B. Koonce S/Sgt. John M. Hobscheid

1st Lt. Charles J. Lewis

SIXTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Richard H. Cotter Capt. Jack S. Sargent

S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant S/Sgt. George G. Beheba

S/Sgt. Marlin Coon S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley

S/Sgt. Robert C. Vicks

#### SEVENTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Eric Courtney Capt. Kenneth G. McGuire

1st Lt. Joseph P. Kelley S/Sgt. Richard E. Walters

S/Sgt. Lee Hancock S/Sgt. John M. Genser

S/Sgt. Curtis W. Reeve S/Sgt. Lowell F. Pritchard

1st Lt. Bernard H. Bonnett S/Sgt. Lester A. Deaner

#### EIGHTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Bernard H. Bonnett S/Sgt. Mario J. Angeloro

S/Sgt. Roger R. Kidd S/Sgt. Paul W. Ryker

S/Sgt. Joseph F. Hamilton

#### NINTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Andrew M. Andrese S/Sgt. Joseph J. Shilalie

S/Sgt. Paul W. Ryker 1st. Lt. Raymond W. Olshak

#### NARRATIVE

September was "the" month for most of our men. Rumor had it that we were to ship across the channel and into France. Our unit was divided into three echelons, the advance, the flying, and the rear echelon.

Rumor and fact soon became one. The move and everything connected with it proceeded smoothly and according to plan. There is some verbal contest between the advance and rear echelons as to which had undergone the greatest hardships. The flight echelon of course did not enter into the argument. However, all agree that the trip was worthwhile.

Once established in France, everyone pitched in for all his worth, so that we might sooner become operational. On the 29th our planes joined those of the other squadrons of the Group in their first combat mission flown from the new French base.

There is still much work to be done, and the men are really doing it. Every day finds our unit improved in both operational and physical aspect. Morale is high.

#### OCTOBER - 1944

History of 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of October.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 October 1944:

Officers: 59 Enlisted Men: 307

2. Killed in Action:

1st Lt. Warren L. Decker

S/Sgt. Paul W. Ryker

3. Awards and Decoration:

AIR MEDAL

2nd Lt. Leon E. Evans 2nd Lt. Loring Cox, Jr.

2nd Lt. Jerome D. Harding Sgt. Jack W. Bradley

Sgt. Martin J. Dale Cpl. Jesse E. Kirby

Cpl. Claude Brocksmith Cpl. Lawrence H. Schmieding

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Kenneth W. Allard S/Sgt. James W. Gresham

1st. Lt. Robert O. Liedtke S/Sgt. Arlie L. Winn

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6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Herbert A. Moss 1st Lt. Edmund T. Bauer

1st Lt. Warren L. Decker S/Sgt. J. B. Koonce

S/Sgt. John H. Hobscheid

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Gerald M. Brady S/Sgt. Robert C. Vicks

1st Lt. Richard H. Cotter S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant

S/Sgt. Vernon L. Mondl Capt. Jack S. Sargent

S/Sgt. George G. Beheba S/Sgt. B. M. Drinkard

S/Sgt. Thomas L. Richardson 1st Lt. James A. Jarrott

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Eric Courtney 1st Lt. Preston B. Hanson

S/Sgt. Raymond S. Foster S/Sgt. Paul C. Ferrant

S/Sgt. Lee Hancock S/Sgt. William T. Perkins

Cpl. Dozier T. Laird S/Sgt. Richard E. Walters

1st Lt. James W. Carothers Pvt. Curtis W. Reeve

S/Sgt. Edward J. Thompson

#### 9th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Benjamin L. Hansen 1st Lt. Eric Courtney

1st Lt. Preston B. Hanson S/Sgt. Joseph F. Hamilton

S/Sgt. William T. Perkins 1st Lt. James W. Carothers

Pvt. John T. Davison

#### 2nd SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Andrew M. Andrese S/Sgt. Earl L. Cantrell

#### NARRATIVE

This month several new combat crew members joined the squadron. The routine for their training indoctrination is well organized and in a surprisingly short time they have begun to feel and have been accepted as "old hands".

Many of our squadron now have passed their fiftieth mission mark. They are as follows; 1st Lt. James W. Carothers, pilot; S/Sgts. Joseph J. Shilalie, Andrew M. Andrese, Earl L. Cantrell, Benjamin L. Hansen, Roger R. Kidd and Pvt. John T. Davison.

The above mentioned S/Sgt. Earl L. Cantrell was a member of 1st Lt. Warren L. Decker's crew as was S/Sgt. Paul W. Ryker, who also completed sixty missions. First Lt. Warren L. Decker and S/Sgt. Paul W. Ryker were killed in action eight miles west of Station A-72, seven miles west of St. Quentin, France, southeast of Perrone, France on the 20th Day of October 1944, when their plane crashed in bad weather. S/Sgt. Earl L. Cantrell bailed out successfully but broke his leg in landing and is now in the hospital.

Intelligence has again assumed the lead in ground training for combat personnel. A new War Room was completed this month. When not flying, combat crew members gather in this room to hear lectures on gunnery, medical emergency aid, maps, combat tactics, aircraft recognition and other necessary subjects. Here too, they assemble for daily lectures and discussions on the progress of the war in all theaters.

#### NOVEMBER - 1944

History of 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of November 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 30 November 1944:

Officers: 57 Enlisted Men: 308

2. Awards and Decorations:

#### BRONZE STAR MEDAL

M/Sgt. Howard O. Kidder

#### DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Capt. Bernard H. Bonnett 1st Richard M. Cotter

### NARRATIVE

Undoubtedly one of the most significant changes in the history of our organization is the transition this month from the A-20 type aircraft to the new A-26.

Throughout this month combat crews and maintenance personnel have been feverishly busy learning and applying knowledge of the new aircraft. All sections have encountered difficulties of one kind or another. This is especially true of ordnance and communications. These sections have been more visibly affected by the labor and technical difficulties involved.

Until now only those combat crews who have less than fifty-five missions are being checked-out in the new plane. The majority of these (those with whom I have conversed about the new aircraft) prefer the A-20 for one reason or another. The transition instructors claim that this feeling is natural until one becomes familiar with the new plane.

Two combat crew members returned to the "States" this month, they are Captain Gerald M. Brady, Pilot, who has completed fifty-one missions and S/Sgt. Andrew M. Andrese, gunner, who has completed sixty-five missions.

### DECEMBER - 1944

History of the 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of December 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 December 1944.

Officers: 61 Enlisted Men: 297

2. Awards and Decorations:

### AIR MEDALS

2nd Lt. Marshall D. De Bisschop 2nd Lt. Charles G. Kelley

2nd Lt. Ernest O. Langenor 2nd Lt. William C. Mercer

2nd Lt. Gene B. Murphy 2nd Lt. Richard G. Strombom

Sgt. Stanley Clark

### 1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Louis J. Vander Loop 2nd Lt. Robert Vander Roest

2nd Lt. Loring Cox, Jr. 2nd Lt. Jerome D. Harding

Sgt. James E. Tinsley Sgt. Jack W. Bradely



S/Sgt. Martin J. Dale S/Sgt. George J. Egenolf

Sgt. Lawrence H. Schmieding Sgt. Jesse E. Kirby

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Louis J. Vander Loop S/Sgt. Paul D. LeFleur

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Louis J. Vander Loop S/Sgt. Roland A. McDougall

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Charles F. Williamson Major David G. Davis

Capt. Kenneth G. McGuire S/Sgt. Isaac N. Parnell

S/Sgt. Felix Samudio S/Sgt. Marvin Buetsch

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt Robert W. Farley

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Kenneth G. McGuire 1st Lt. James A. Jarrott

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Jeff P. Sellers S/Sgt. Marvin G. Buetsch

S/Sgt. Alma T. Henshaw

(Note: The NARRATIVE for the month of December is missing.)

JANUARY - 1945

During the month of January the Squadron flew fourteen combat missions. In this month the Armament Section loaded 357,700 pounds of bombs that were actually expended over enemy territory. About twice that many were loaded and unloaded because of changing bomb loads and unloading for transition flying. All of the bomb loading was done at night and most of the time under adverse weather and poor lighting conditions. This month, wing guns were installed on several aircraft. It took thirty-six hours of continuous labor by the entire section to accomplish this task. No one resented the added labor as the men are anxious to add to the disaster of the enemy. during the month none of the armorers committed an error which resulted in bombs not being released over the target.

On the 23rd of this month, Lt. Rocholl was a member of a low level element attacking a vehicle and troop concentration between Dasburg and Arzfeld, Germany. Prior to dropping his bombs and preparing to strafe, his plane was hit heavily by LFF shells severely damaging his left wing and aileron. By skillfully applying power to left engine and full right rudder, he gained directional stability and was able to drop his bombs across the road

intersection about a mile east of Dasburg. Because of condition of his plane he limped to Luxembourg, landing at A-97 without harm to any crew member.

On the twenty-fourth day of this month while on a mission over Germany, the aircraft of 2nd Lt. Richard G. Strombom received a direct flak burst in the aft section of the pilots compartment. The plane was seen aflame and diving earthward. One chute was observed. With Lt. Strombom were his gunners Sgt. Edward H. Gladding and Sgt. Arthur E. Bartasavich.

The number of flying personnel in the squadron, the rotating battle order and frequent poor weather, have greatly curtailed the number of missions a pilot can fly each month. Considering all training and odd jobs that occur within the squadron, there are still many idle hours for flying personnel. The majority hardly relish this condition, a few, however, must be constantly busy to obtain peace of mind. One of these is 1st Lt. William Cargill, pilot, with 36 missions. Two months ago he requested of the Commanding Officer, permission to operate the squadron mess in addition to his flying duty. Permission was granted. During the past few days Officers and Enlisted Men have been interrogated as to the merits of the messing provisions and as to the quality and quantity of the food received. With the exception of a few, some of whom are chronic complainants, it was felt that "our chow section is on the ball". All of which speaks well for Lt. Cargill's efforts.

Squadron communications, under the supervision of Captain Lester Wind, has installed a very good public address system. Tannoys are located wherever a large number of men work or congregate. Whether at work on the line during the day or night or at evening rest in their tent area, the men are able to hear their favorite radio programs and recordings. Literally speaking, they "whistle while they work". The squadron did have a very good assortment of recordings but constant usage has almost worn them out. Communications has urged squadron members to send home for more to keep the music playing.

The following named gunners having completed 51 or more missions, left for home this month.

S/Sgt John T. Davison S/Sgt. Joseph F. Hamilton

S/Sgt. Benjamin L. Hansen S/Sgt. Rogue R. Kidd

S/Sgt. William T. Perkins S/Sgt. Joseph J. Shilalie

S/Sgt. Michael Tomasini S/Sgt. Mario J. Angeloro

S/Sgt. George J. Beheba S/Sgt. Ray Brewer

S/Sgt. Lester A. Deaner S/Sgt. Raymond S. Foster

S/Sgt. Lee Hancock S/Sgt. Dozier T. Laird

S/Sgt. Curtis W. Reeve S/Sgt. Edward J. Thompson

S/Sgt. Paul C. Farrant S/Sgt. Robert C. Vicks

S/Sgt. Richard E. Walters

## FEBRUARY - 1945

History of the 640th Bomb Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of February 1945.

### 1. Strength of Unit as of 28 February 1945

Officers - 57 Enlisted Men - 285

2. Change of Location.

Date of Departure from Station A-48: 12 February 1945

Date of Arrival at Station A-70 12 February 1945

3. Missing In Action:

2nd Lt. William C. Mercer, Jr. 2nd Lt. Gene B. Murphy

S/Sgt. Lyman J. Saunders Sgt. Thomas P. Harrison

Sgt. Richard R. Fox Sgt. Clifford G. Baker

4. Awards to and decorations of members of this Unit:

PURPLE HEART BRONZE STAR MEDAL

2nd Lt.. Alvin R. Weiss S/Sgt George W. Ellis

Sgt. Emory A. Smith

Pfc Vincent E. Matregrano

AIR MEDAL 2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Willard H. George 2nd Lt. Jerome D. Harding

Sgt. Wayne S. Miller Sgt. Jesse E. Kirby

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER 4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Stanley Clark S/Sgt. Logan A. Young

Sgt. Richard R. Fox 1st Lt. William M. Taylor

Sgt. Clifford G. Baker S/Sgt. Robert H. Ward

Sgt. Arthur E. Bartasavich

Sgt. Edward M. Gladding

This month has been unusual in that our Squadron moved from Station A-48 to Station A-70. For most this meant many hours of detailed planning and hard work, for all it entailed scurrying about to ensure that nothing usable at our new base would be left behind. Ours would be no novel experience in "setting-up" under unfavorable conditions. The value of newly reestablished sections often depends upon the ability of the personnel of that section to ferret out and then utilize make-shift materiel. This move was not an exception.

The rail section of our advanced echelon had a somewhat distasteful ride in a "forty and eight" the well known and oft referred to French box car of World War I vintage. The journey began at 2000 hours on the 10th and lasted approximately twenty hours. There were thirty men plus their baggage in each car. The night air was truly cold. Several of the "passengers" jokingly said that they didn't mind the ride because they now had a "damper"

whenever their dad's or uncle's opened up about their method of travel during World War I.

The flight echelon arrived on the 12th. On the 13th we flew our first mission from A-70. In just a few days the personnel of the advanced echelon had created from a shambles an organized "set-up" capable of carrying on in it's task - the bombardment of the enemy.

The rear echelon arrived on the 10th. The latter half of the month has been spent in smoothing all the wrinkles. A majority of the men like the physical arrangements of this base better than those of Station A-48. However, they wistfully speak of the increased distance between our new base and Paris.

On the 16th of the month 2nd Lt. William P. Mercer, Jr., S/Sgt. Lyman J. Saunders and Sgt. Richard R. Fox were shot down by intense enemy flak fire northwest of Unna, Germany. One chute was seen emerging from the ship.

2nd Lt. Gene B. Murphy, Sgt. Thomas P. Harrison, and Sgt. Clifford G. Baker were shot down by enemy flak fire 5 miles northwest of Halle, Germany on the 21st. No chutes were observed leaving the ship. Lieutenants Mercer and Murphy were 'buddies'.

### MARCH - 1945

History of the 640th Bombardment Squadron(L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of March 1945.

1. Strength of Unit as of 31 March 1945;

Officers 63 Enlisted Men 296

2. Awards to and decorations of member of the Unit:

#### AIR MEDALS

2nd Lt. Charles L. Sheehan Sgt. Edmund T. Pellegrini

#### 1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. William H. Rochell 2nd Lt. Richard G. Strombom

2nd Lt. Ernest O. Lange, Jr. 2nd Lt. Thomas B. Smith

#### 2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Allan M. Showler 2nd. Lt. Marshall G. De Bisschop

Sgt. Joseph E. Mc Kenna Sgt. Ben Silverstein

Sgt. Herzl Granevitz Sgt. Bernard Kiviat

#### THIRD OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Eugene Gottsman S/Sgt. Nathan Winer

#### FOURTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Bernard J. Cross S/Sgt. Kenneth W. Allard

S/Sgt. James W. Gresham

#### SIXTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Phillip Bruno

#### SEVENTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st. Lt. Jeff P. Sellers S/Sgt. Bernard J. Cross S/Sgt. Isaac N. Pannell S/Sgt. Arlie E. Winn S/Sgt. Roland A. McDougall S/Sgt. Robert H. Ward S/Sgt Philip Bruno

#### EIGHTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Charles J. Lewis 1st. Lt. James H. Koch S/Sgt. Marvin G. Buetsch S/Sgt. William L. Hicks S/Sgt. Fred E. Schramm

#### NINTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Richard H. Cotter Capt. John M. Davis 1st Lt. James A. Jarrott S/Sgt. John M. Genser S/Sgt. John M. Hobscheid S/Sgt. Lowell F. Pritchard S/Sgt. B. M. Drinkard

#### 12th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Eric Courtney, Jr. Capt. Kenneth G. McGuire, Jr.

Capt. James W. Carothers 1st Lt. James A. Jarrott

S/Sgt. B. M. Drinkard S/Sgt. Curtis L. Scheerer

#### SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert O. Liedtke S/Sgt. Felix Samudio

S/Sgt. William E. Hudson S/Sgt. Arlie E. Winn

S/Sgt. Robert H. Ward S/Sgt. Roland A. McDougall

#### 2nd SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Jack S. Sargent 1st Lt. Edmund T. Bauer

S/Sgt. Robert W. Farley S/Sgt. John M. Genser

S/Sgt. Curtis L. Scheerer S/Sgt. Lowell F. Pritchard

S/Sgt. Marlin Coon S/Sgt. John M. Hobscheid

S/Sgt. J. B. Koonce S/Sgt. Fred E. Schramm

#### NARRATIVE

The squadron has flown forty-one combat missions this month. There were no casualties, however, several crews did have what they refer to as "a close call".

The first of these occurred to 1st Lt. Jeff P. Sellers, pilot, and his crew, 2nd Lt. Alvin R. Weiss, bombardier-navigator, S/Sgts.' Isaac M. Pannell and Loyal E. Tubbs, gunners, when while on a mission over German, they received a direct hit in one engine. Lt. Sellers salvo'd his bombs over enemy territory and flew back behind our own lines on a single engine. Because he was unable to hold altitude, he ordered his crew to bail-out and when

they had so done, bailed himself out of the aircraft. When landing, S/Sgt. Pannell suffered a fractured leg. Hewas immediately taken to a nearby hospital. The other crew members all landed safely and returned to the squadron.

On the 17th of this month while trying to take off on a mission, the left tire of 1st Lt. Allen W. Showler's ship blew out. The plane carried on past the edge of the runway wheels down and was badly damaged. Lt. Showler and his gunners S/Sgt's Ben Silverstein and Joseph E. McKenna were not injured.

While on a mission on the 30th, an engine of 1st Lt. Jerome D. Harding's ship went out. Lt. Harding feathered the prop and went on to bomb the target. While enroute back to the base the engine caught on fire. Lt. Harding ordered his Sgt. Gunner Jesse E. Kirby to bail out while over Belgium and then crash landed his ship on Belgian soil. Lt. Harding and Sgt. Kirby have returned safely to base.

The following completed their tour of duty this month: Major David G. Davis, Capt. John Davis, 1st Lt. Edmund G. Bauer, 1st Lt. James H. Koch, 1st. Lt. Charles D. Lewis, S/Sgts.' Paul B. LeFleur, Bernard L. Cross, Cleo C. Smith, Fred E. Schramm, John F. Genser, Lowel F. Pritchard, John M. Hicks, John M. Hobsheid. J. B. Koonce, Marlin Koon, Robert B. Farley, Phillip Bruno and Marvin G. Duetsch.

Several Officers and Enlisted men were given furloughs and rest leaves to England and the Riviera. Quite a few visited the front lines. All thoroughly enjoyed themselves and returned with tales that excite the imagination and keep the barracks, mess building and work areas continually humming.

#### APRIL - 1945

#### NARRATIVE

On the 20th of the month, Major Albert W. Roby, Jr., who has been our Commanding Officer since the 20th of June 1944, left our organization to return to the States. Captain Charles F. Williamson, who has been our Squadron Operations Officer, assumed command on the 22nd.

Captain John M. Davis. a regular army officer, having completed a tour has gone home on a 30 day leave.

Captain Herbert A. Moss, 1st Lt. James H. Koch, and S/Sgts.' Phillip Bruno, Marvin G. Buetsch, Marlin Coon, Robert W. Farley, John W. Hobscheid, J. B. Koonce, Cleo C. Smith and Robert B. Wilson have completed their tours and returned to the States.

A few more visited the front, England and the Riviera this month. England seems to be the most popular, possibly because of the extra time spent in traveling to and fro. The most harrowing experiences however, belong to those who visit the front.

It is surprising o note how little interest is being displayed in the progress of the major league ball teams. A year ago this month, baseball talk was quite prevalent, now one rarely hears it being mentioned.

Tension and speculation seem to be the keynoting highlights in an otherwise routine month of operations. The rapidly changing front lines, newspaper editorial comments and the daily broadcasted radio announcements have just about convinced all but the super-pessimistic that the war in Europe will soon end.

Having been convinced that the war with Germany can't last but a short while the question now uppermost in the minds and speech of the majority is "what will we do, where will we go when the war in Europe comes to an end?"

## MAY - 1945

History of 640th Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of May 1945.

### 1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 May 1945:

Officers: 67 Enlisted Men: 296

### 2. Awards to and Decorations of Members of this Unit:

#### DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

1st Lt. Charles J. Lewis

#### PURPLE HEART

S/Sgt. James E. Tinsley

#### NARRATIVE

The squadron had a total of two-hundred and fifty-seven missions when V-E Day was officially proclaimed by General Eisenhower on the eighth day of May, nineteen-hundred and forty-five.

Due to "fini la guerre" early in the month, the squadron had only flown two missions giving 1st Lt. George D. Johnson the lead with sixty-four missions and 1st Lt. Gerald C. Garrels a close second with sixty-three missions.

Some of the few men that celebrated VE Day on the high seas were from this squadron on their way home after completing the prescribed tour of duty: 1st Lts. Charles J. Lewis, Leon Cohen, S/Sgts. Kenneth W. Allard, James W. Bradley, Claude C. Brocksmith, Francis R. Garfield, James W. Gresham, Alma T. Henshaw, William T. Hudson, J. C. Peck, Felix Samudio, James E. Tinsley, Loyal H. Tubbs, Hubert H. Ward, Logan A. Young, R. A. McDougal and George F. Compton.

In the Squadron Intelligence Section, Captain Robert A. O'Malley and 1st Lt. Erving Klein were transferred into the old 643rd Squadron which is now a part of the 391st Bombardment Group. They were replaced by Captain George M. Blakely, Jr., formerly with the 643rd Squadron and 1st Lt. Arthur W. Hirschmann, Jr., formerly with 9th Air Division.

Two men were released from the squadron due to being over age. Sgt. Thomas T. Wiggins of the Communications Section and Sgt. William Kuzelka of the Engineering Section.

Everyone has added up his points trying to get over the eighty-five mark. Since there is still a debate as to whether we will receive three battle stars instead of the one for the battle of Germany, we are still sweating it out.

In keeping with the Squadron policy, the following men were promoted: to 1st Lt., Charles E. Ingersoll, Martin Korzeniewski; to 2nd Lt., John T. Gill, Eugene L. Kuehl, Richard L. Lucier and Urban B. Vandever.

Three men received those lucky leaves to the sunny spot of France, the Riviera: 1st L. William R. Cargill, S/Sgt. John W. Souther and St. Bernard Kiviat.

The Squadron has instigated an intensive training program concentrating on the war in the Pacific. The Intelligence Section has set up a program with Captain Blakely lecturing and 1st Lt. Hirschmann giving a refresher course on Japanese Aircraft. Squadron Operations have been getting the maximum of hours in the blue each day and the new flying crews have been flying simulated missions over the old "pop corn valley" and

milk run areas.

On the night of our fifteenth month overseas the squadron was saddened with the news of the death of T/Sgt. Harold L. Dean resulting from the accidental discharge of an anti-personnel bomb. The entire Six-Fortieth will miss his jovial manner and the men of the Communications Section who worked with him and knew him best will miss a good worker.

On the lighter side, everyone, including the censorship officers were happy with the news of the lifting of the censorship regulations. For the first time in almost two years, the enlisted men were sealing their own envelopes and could write a letter without having the feeling that someone was looking over his shoulder. Even so, there were reports that letters were being mailed without being sealed.

There is much debating and speculating as to the disposition of the hardest hitting light outfit in the ETO. Perhaps opinion is somewhat biased and also some wishful thinking enters into the opinion that we will see the Statue of Liberty before entering the Pacific Campaign.

The Squadron is in readiness for the POM inspection that will be held soon and perhaps then we will know the answer to all of our questions.

As the month of May comes to a close, the 640th will no longer act as a separate unit but will merge with the other squadrons into the parent organization, the 409th Bombardment Group (L).