

641ST BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)

1943 -- 1945

Activation

The 641st 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 - 10 February 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, September 1945 - Early October 1945

North Carolina

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

(Inactivation)

Commanding Officers

1st Lt. Samuel L. Wolf 21 June 1943 - 3 October 1943

Lt. Colonel (then Capt.) Leo Hawel, Jr. 4 October 1943 - May 1945

(or later)

Assignments

At the time of activation the 641d 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

A-26 (Introduced in November 1944)

Operations

See Group History

Battle Honors

See Group History

Inactivation

The 641st Bombardment Squadron (Light) was inactivated on 24 November 1945, at Westover Army Air Field, Massachusetts.

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:

641ST BOMB SQ (L)

OFFICERS

1ST LT. SAMUEL L. WOLF Commanding Officer

1ST LT. STEWART S. MERRILL 2ND LT. CHARLES V. GARINO

2ND LT. GILBERT L. FARR 2ND LT. CHARLES W. DANIELS

2ND LT. ROBERT W. ADAMS 2ND LT. RICHARD L. GATES

2ND LT. JOHN D. FOOTE 2ND LT. ROBERT A. O'MALLEY

2ND LT. JOE SHERMAN 2ND LT. RICHARD T. DAVIS

2ND LT. RICHARD H. KOLLEN

ENLISTED MEN

1st Sgt. William A. Young, Jr. S/Sgt. Rex C. Kuhens

T/Sgt. Louis W. Burns T. Sgt. Charles P. Evans

S/Sgt. James F. Wright Pfc. Ross E. White

S/Sgt. Edmund P. Puetz Sgt. Louis S. Ferrara

Sgt. Warren H. Markley Sgt. Alvin F. Chudwick

M/Sgt. George O. Emanuel Cpl. William H. Cords

Pfc. Plamer Huntington Pvt. Kenneth C. O'Niel

M/Sgt. Henry F. Hale Cpl. Joe L. Batson

Pvt. John K. Burch Pfc. Harold L. McGuire

M/Sgt. Lemuel J. Allred T/Sgt Charles C. Evans

T/Sgt. George H. Dishon S/Sgt. Elbert H. Nunn

S/Sgt. Oshel R. Thomas Sgt. James M. McDonough

S/Sgt. John A. McFayden Sgt. Henry L. Jones, Jr.

Sgt. Roy M. Bates Cpl. Vincent J. Krachey, Jr.

Pfc. Peter Hundycz Pvt. Joe A. Porter

Sgt. Clettis E. Cochran S/Sgt. Cris P. Pennington

Pvt. Jeung Bockdow Cpl. John Viscotha
S/Sgt. Walter J. Seagle Sgt. Bill Scalf
Sgt. Henry S. Kopec Sgt. Forrest L. Engelhorn
Sgt. Floyd E. DeRoo Sgt. Stephen A. Esmieu
Sgt. Forrest E. Egimann Pfc. William D. Wilder
Sgt. Eldon L. Coffman Sgt. Oscar R. Evetts
Pvt. Arthur F. Badoud Sgt. Jessie Meleanders
Pvt. Frank J. Rogers Pfc. James W. Welch
Pvt. Michael J. Pastor Pfc. Robert S. Conway
Pvt. Earl J. McGraw Pvt. Frank A. Zanti
Pvt. Douglas E. Fountain Pfc. Junior Williams
Cpl. Thaddeus A. Lalasz S/Sgt. Charles E. Salvatore
Cpl. Donald Harper Cpl. Elmer M. Hibbard
Sgt. Steward Ham

2. All O of Hq 409th Bomb Group (L) are atchd to 641st Bomb Sq (L) for adm; and all EM Hq 409th Bomb Group (L) are atchd to 641st 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

1st Lt., Air Corps

Adjutant

DIST: "A"

SQUADRON HISTORY

641ST BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)

409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

PERIOD COVERED FROM 1 OCTOBER TO 30 NOVEMBER 1943

On 2 October 1943 the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) was moved from Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma. The Squadron reached 90% percent strength and began making preparations for it's third phase of training. The Squadron was maintaining and flying ten (10) A-20 type airplanes and one (1) B-25 type airplane.

Captain Leo Hawel, Jr. joined the Squadron of 4 October 1943 succeeding 1st Lt. Samuel L. Wolf. Lt. Wolf was transferred to Headquarters, 409th Bombardment Group (L).

Captain Hawel entered the Army on 26 April, 1941 and began his pilot's training at that time. on 29 April, 1942 he departed for overseas duty. During the next 10 1/2 months he saw action in the European and African Theaters of Operations. During this short period he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Captain Thomas H. Powell, Operations Officer joined the Squadron on 28 October 1943, being transferred from Headquarters 409th Bombardment Group (L). Captain Powell entered the Army on 27 February 1941 and on 1 May 1941 began his pilot training. He served in the African Theater of Operations. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Captain John J. Demaree joined the Squadron of 6 October, 1943 at Intelligence Officer. He had transferred from the 640th Squadron (L). Captain Demaree joined the army of 1 August 1941 and was commissioned on 5 August 1942.

1st Lieutenant James R. Paisley joined the Squadron on 21 November 1943 as Armament Officer. Lt. Paisley joined the army on 1 October 1940 and was commissioned on 7 January 1942.

2nd Lieutenant Robert F. Riley joined the Squadron on 7 October, 1943 as Ordnance Officer. Lt. Riley joined the army on 13 February 1942.

2nd Lieutenant Stanley Hochhauser joined the Squadron on 2 October 1943 as Engineering Officer. Lt. Hochhauser joined the army on 27 November 1942 and was commissioned on 2 April 1943.

As of 30 November 1943, the department heads of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) are as follows:

LEO HAWEL, JR CAPTAIN COMMANDING OFFICER

DON E. LANDO CAPTAIN EXECUTIVE OFFICER

THOMAS H. POWELL CAPTAIN OPERATIONS OFFICER

JOHN J. DEMAREE CAPTAIN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

STEWART S. SHERRIL CAPTAIN FLIGHT SURGEON

HAROLD L. DUNCAN 1ST. LT. SQUADRON ADJUTANT

JAMES R. PAISLEY 1ST. LT. ARMAMENT OFFICER

ROBERT F. RILEY 2ND LT. ORDNANCE OFFICER

STANLEY HOCHHAUSER 2ND LT. ENGINEERING OFFICER

BERNARD J. GECHTER 2ND LT. COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

PETER M. MOFTINOFF 1ST LT. QM, SUPPLY OFFICER

JAMES D. McCONNELL 2ND LT. MESS OFFICER

On 30 November 1943, the squadron strength totaled 39 commissioned personnel and 266 enlisted personnel. These men constitute a very efficient squadron and have been consistently praised for the manner in which the duties of the squadron have been carried out. The men of the squadron are possessed with two outstanding qualities, cooperation and determination. Cooperation in their daily performance of duties and determination in their desire to get there first with the best. These two qualities together with the leadership found in their squadron, will add greatly to the essentials needed to obtain the goal we are seeking.

On Thanksgiving Day, the Squadron was treated to the traditional Turkey Dinner with all the trimmings. The Mess Sergeant and help were highly praised for their efforts and the quality of the meal.

Thanksgiving Day Menu

Roast Young Turkey Giblet Gravy

Cranberry Sauce Sage Dressing

Snow Flake Potatoes Candied Yams

Garden Fresh Peas

Buttered Asparagus Tips

Lettuce and Sliced Tomatoes with Mayonnaise

Sweet Mixed Pickles

Spice Cake Apple Pie

Ice Cream Mixed Candy

Mixed Nuts Assorted Fruits

Hot Rolls Butter

Lemonade Coffee Milk

(the following personnel attended)

641st Bombardment Squadron (L)

409th Bombardment Group (L)

Woodward, Oklahoma

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1943

CAPTAIN LEO HAWEL, JR.

Commanding Officer

CAPTAIN DONN E. LANDO CAPTAIN THOMAS H. POWELL

Executive Officer Operations Officer

SECOND LIEUTENANT HAROLD L. DUNCAN

Squadron Adjutant

FIRST LIEUTENANTS

JOHN J. DEMAREE, Intelligence Officer STEWART S. MERRILL, Surgeon
JAMES S. PAISLEY, Armament Officer

SECOND LIEUTENANTS

ROBERT W. ADAMS, Flt. Comdr. JOHN J. BAUER, Bomb-Nav.
THOMAS A. BECKETT, Pilot ALBERT S. BOWEN, Pilot
WILLIAM D. BRAUCHER, Pilot JAMES J. BREEN, Bomb-Nav.
JAMES W. CAROTHERS, Pilot CHARLES W. DANIELS, Flt. Comdr.
GILBERT L. FARR, Operations JOHN D. FOOT, Pilot
ROBERT N. FRISSELL, Intelligence CHARLES V. GARINO, Pilot
RICHARD L. GATES, Flt. Comdr. BERNARD J. GECHTER, Communications
JOHN C. HIGGINS, Flt. Comdr. WILLIAM H. HINDS, Pilot
STANLEY HOCHHAUSER, Engineering DAVID A. HORNGREN, Pilot
JAMES A. JARROTT, Pilot PETER M. KOFTINOFF, Supply
RICHARD H. KOLLEN, Pilot JOHN E. MAHER, Pilot
JAMES D. McCONNELL, Mess ROBERT A. O'MALLEY, Intelligence
ALFRED L. OPDYCKE, Engineering ROBERT E. OTT, Pilot
CLIFFORD H. PEARSON, Pilot MORRIS RAFALOW, Bomb-Nav.
ROBERT F. RILEY, Ordnance NORMAN F. RUHLE, Operations
LEON R. ROBINSON, Pilot WILBERT L. SAATHOFF, Bomb-Nav.
JOE SHERMAN, Engineer

ENLISTED MEN:

William A. Young

First Sergeant

Lemuel J. Allred Edmund P. Puetz

Line Chief Sergeant Major

MASTER SERGEANTS

George H. Dishon Charles C. Evans Elbert H. Nunn

George O. Emanuel Henry F. Hale Oshel R. Thomas

Thomas E. Wolfel

TECHNICAL SERGEANTS

Roy M. Bates Forrest L. Engelhorn Vincent J. Krachey, Jr.

Louis W. Burns Stephen A. Esmieu Warren H. Markley

Clettis E. Cochran Charles P. Evans James H. McDonough

William H. Cords George Horwitz John A. McFadyen

Floyd E. DeRoo Henry L. Jones, Jr. Charles E. Salvatora

STAFF SERGEANTS

Edward P. Barth James H. Johnston George E. Mattingly

Joe L. Batson Patrick P. Kling John J. McGill

Forrest E. Eggimann Rex C. Kuhens Earl C. McGinnis

Oscar R. Evetts Robert L. Lynch Kenneth C. O'Neil

Thomas A. Hall John J. Lyons Cris P. Pennington

Steward Ham Leon W. Marney Robert C. Rader

Walter J. Segale James F. Shea Harold B. Walton

SERGEANTS

Robert A. Adler James E. Dollar John Mikulas

D. L. Alexander James V. Dougherty Benjamin E. Moja

Howard A. Atkinson Herman G. East Roscoe Morton

Cebert C. Austin William T. Edmiston Eugene B. Nelson, Jr.

Arthur F. Badoud George F. Eismann Ira H. Morgan

George A. Bagwell Harry M. Etchey, Jr. Meltin N. Nelson

Andrew F. Bosak William H. Fagan Frank L. Nemeth

Robert R. Bradford Ernest M. Fecker Thomas R. Norris

Grady W. Brown Louis S. Ferrara Frank J. Omann

Robert J. Brown Edmund W. Furtek Arlin D. Pendlelton

George L. Carman Howard A. Gurley Harmon J. Phillips

Neicy E. Clopton Harvey Huro Joe A. Porter
Dempsey H. Clotfelter Palmer Huntington Reynold F. Rigali
Floyd E. Collingwood Lawrence Knee John Rotko
Robly H. Coons John Kuznc Norbert B. Schmidlin
Gordon H. Corbett Thaddeus A. Lainsz Frank A Schroeder
Harry R. Corwin Epifanio Manriquez Roy L. Skidmore
Donald M. Cronk Robert Martinez Charles A. Snell
David E. Daigle Lawrence Mavrotich Russel G. Starr
Homer H. Darst Stephen McDowell Frank Szymonik
Craig J. Davenport Harold L. McGuire Joseph C. Thomas
Harold W. Davis Jessie Meleanders Jerry P. Vaverka
Gene DeBey Andrew H. Meshishnek John Valenti
Dale E. Watt

CORPORALS

Wallace Adams Stephen J. Florentino Robert S. James
Sam H. Adkisson Thomas Fleming Frank Jennings
Geza W. Baeskay Francis P. Flynn Charles Kelley
Paul L. Barry Robert G. Foberg Lawrence B. Kerstien
Richard C. Bauer Charles E. Fryer Walter Koncur
Francis J. Bernosky Henry G. Gauthier Clyde M. Lackey
Hoyle W. Bost Lloyd M. Georgias Curtis M. Lamb
Horace T. Bowen James G. Godek Walter W. Lester
Russell M. Carlson Charles E. Grimes Robert E. Lisby
Michael Cavaliere Don E. Guthrie Carl R. Martin
William Condes John F. Guy James T. McKeon
Grover L. Coppedge William L. Hacker Commodore B. Owens
Martin R. Creahan William H. Hamm Michael J. Pastor
Herbert E. Dietz Roy W. Hanson George V. Powell
Joseph H. DiFlorie Donald Harper Francis C. Rathje
Rosario DiPeri Robert J. Heenan Karl J. Rausch

Charles W. Dover Elmer M. Hibbard Lawrence M. Trask

Fraser J. Doyle Peter M. Hundycz Frank Turco

Edward W. Dziedzic Frank A. Ikirt Adolph Turk

Joseph A. Fazio Lawrence R. Jahn Frank A. Zanti

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

Joseph R. Alexander, Jr. Richard D. Farrington Earl J. McGraw

Matthew J. Aretz John J. Forberger Richard S. McGuigan

Albert M. Belinsky Marquis L. Fraker Mina J. Mina

Archie D. Breeden Allbert J. Gabry Willie W. Mullkey

Louis Brey David H. Gehring Richard J. Noto

Russell E. Brown Michael J. Giammetta John M. Paine

Robert G. Bruzek John A. Grabarz, Jr. Ignatius L. Pizzo

Donald P. Cooper Clarence S. Gunion Donald J. Potrykus

Carroll H. Copsey Lewis D. Hevel Harold P. Ribnik

James M. Cowan Edward Hudson Harry L. Stockstill

Clinton W. Cozart George C. Koehler John S. Totorello

James R. Daedelow Anthony C. LaBella Arthur C. Van Unnik

Frank M. DiGirolamo Henry L. Level Donald D. Wagner

Rosario M. DiMauro Hobert Lewellyn Ferdinand F. Wojnowski

Harry Elias John F. Lindsay Edmund R. Wolf

John A. Zeunik

PRIVATES

Robert S. Conway James W. Harris Edward S. Niepokney

James S. Cook John R. Harter Harry F. Peterson

John T. Cook John M. Herr Joseph R. Poulin

Jarvis C. Ellis Irving C. Hoffman Stig C. Renvall

James R. Ferguson John A. Honack Sevino Ricardi

Seymour Friedman Arthur Horowitz Frank J. Rogers

James E. Gongaware Joseph T. Kalala Bill Scalf

Charles F. Green Clarence W. Lind Orville R. Shoaf, Jr.

Harvey R. Green Fred R. Locey, Jr. Carroll E. Taylor

Roy Grossman, Jr. Carl C. Maynard Clarence J. Thomaschaske

James H. Harrell Claude E. Mills WilliamJ.Varga

John G. Williams Albert W. Wood

641ST SQUADRON MOVES TO DE RIDDER

On 7 December, 1943, this Squadron was moved from WAAF, Woodward, Oklahoma, to De Ridder AAB, De Ridder, Louisiana. The Ground Echelon arrived on 9 December 1943, while the Air Echelon and the Advance Echelon was detained for several days in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma due to inclement weather.

Since the Ground Echelon was the first to arrive there were many problems to be solved in order to resume normal operations as soon as possible. In many cases, the buildings had to be partitioned and other wise rearranged to suit our needs. This was accomplished by the initiative and whole-hearted cooperation of every Officer and Enlisted Man in the Ground Echelon. In the few days prior to the arrival of the Air Echelon, most everyone had become oriented to their new base and when the planes arrived every one was eager to get to work.

The squadron personnel during this period remained very much the same as in the proceeding period. One exception was the transfer of Second Lt. Joe Sharman to the 416th Bomb Group (L), Laurel, Mississippi.

We have been extremely busy during this period putting the finishing touches on our training prior to over-seas movement. We have flown eight Combat Missions during this period in furnishing Air Support to the Ground Forces participating in the Loesville Maneuvers.

Although there have been problems to be solved and numerous small details which require a lot of time and patience, this period of our training has been extremely interesting and profitable to our organization.

February 10, 1944, the 641st Squadron departed DeRidder AAB for Port of Embarkation enroute to their first base in the E. T.O.

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS

On 2 October 1943, this Squadron moved by rail and air to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma.

Captain Leo Hawel, Jr. became our Squadron Commanding Officer, on 4 October 1943.

Training immediately began in accordance with the Training Schedule prepared by the 56th Bombardment Training Wing (L). The first two (2) weeks of flying was held down to a very few hours a day because of an acute shortage of gasoline. This was soon improved and training was carried out successfully.

The 28 October 1943, Captain Thomas H. Powell was transferred to the Squadron and was immediately appointed Operations Officer. Lt Wolf was then transferred to Headquarters as Bombing and Gunnery Officer.

During the months of October and November we were assigned two (2) pilots and our full compliments of Gunners. The gunners were placed in the Engineering and Armament departments for ground training and were later assigned to Pilots as Combat Crews.

The month of November we received two (2) more planes, both A-20G's. This made us a total of ten (10) planes and enabled us to speed up our training.

About 1 November 1943, Group Operations began to schedule Combat Missions for the entire Group. We were scheduled for two (2) bombing missions on Fort Sill and several bombing and strafing missions on truck convoys. These missions were part of our training program and were very successful.

On 11 November 1943, all Operations were suspended and the Squadron spent the day on a march and bivouac, simulating combat conditions.

During the month of November in addition to Transition, Navigation, Formation, Bombing and Gunnery training we carried out Strange Field Landings and Combat Missions in accordance with our Training Schedule.

The four (4) Flight Leaders were promoted from 2nd Lts. to 1st Lts. They were Gates, Adams, Higgins, and Daniels.

1 December 1943, 2nd Lt. Beckett received his promotion to 1st Lt.

Two (2) additional planes were received on 1 December 1943, one an A-20G and the other an RDB-7B.

On 7 December 1943, the Squadron moved from Woodward to DeRidder. The ground echelon arrived by train 9 September 1943. The air echelon, delayed four (4) days at Oklahoma City arrived here on 11 December 1943.

Captain William E. Scarbrough, Jr., was assigned to this Squadron on 14 December 1943 and is taking over the duties as acting Operations Officer, during the absence of Captain Hawel, Commanding Officer. Captain Powell, Operations Officer, is acting as Commanding Officer at present.

28 December 1943, brought two new promotions. 2nd Lts. Garino and Foote, both assistant Flight Leaders were promoted to 1st Lt's.

Here at DeRidder the combat crew training took on a more serious aspect.

Numerous combat lectures were held for all crews, covering such subjects as ditching and dinghy training, security, offensive chemical procedures, etc..

This period also brought the start of Chemical and Smoke missions and Flexible Gunnery or air to air firing by the gunners.

We also went through several three day alerts running simulated combat missions in supporting of the Red Army of the ground forces who were on maneuvers in this area.

For the month of December this Squadron flew 624:10 hours, which still is the top figure for the Group, having 55 hours more than our nearest rival.

This figure is a drop of almost half of the number of hours flown in November. This can be contributed to nothing else but the weather conditions which did not permit us to fly.

INTELLIGENCE HISTORY

PERSONNEL

On 2 October 1943, the Squadron arrived in Woodward, Oklahoma to begin the third phase of our training. At that time, 2nd Lt. Robert A. O'Malley was Intelligence Officer with 2nd Lt. William I. Guajardo as assistant Intelligence Officer. They remained in that capacity until 6 October 1943, when 1st Lt. John J. Demaree was assigned to the Squadron as Intelligence Officer. With Lt. John J. Demaree came 2nd Lt. Robert N. Frissell, who was assigned to the section as assistant Intelligence Officer. At this time, Lt. Guajardo was transferred to the 642nd Bombardment Squadron, leaving us with our full complement of three officers. No other officers

were assigned to the section. The enlisted personnel were also up to full strength, with S/Sgt. Harold H. Walton, chief clerk, Sgt. Andrew H. Bosak, clerk, Pfc Robert E. Lisby, clerk, Pfc Harold P. Ribnik, clerk and Pvt Joseph Poulin, clerk

On November 1943, Pvt. Poulin was placed on DS to Teletype school and Sgt. James V. Dougherty joined the section from Florence, South Carolina. On 27 November 1943, Pfc. Harold P. Ribnik was transferred to the Squadron Orderly Room and at the same time this section obtained Sgt. Craig J. Davenport, also from Florence South Carolina. At the present time the section is up to full T/O strength in officers and enlisted men. They are:

1. Captain John J. Demaree, Intelligence Officer
2. 2nd Lt. Robert M. Frissell, Assistant Intelligence Officer
3. 2nd Lt. Robert A. O'Malley, Assistant Intelligence Officer
4. S/Sgt. Harold B. Walton, Chief Clerk
5. Sgt. Andrew M. Bosak, Clerk
6. Sgt. James V. Dougherty, Clerk
7. Sgt. Craig J. Davenport, Clerk
8. Cpl. Robert E. Lisby, Clerk

MISSIONS

During the month of October and November, several missions were planned by the Intelligence section and carried out by the Pilots. Briefing and interrogation played an important role in these missions which were declared to be successful. During the phase of training, Captain Hawel lead a formation of twelve A-20's, each carrying four live 250 pound Demos to their target at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. These crews were briefed at a Group briefing, but were interrogated by individual Intelligence Officers.

COURSES AND LECTURES

On 10 October, plans were formulated by Lt. Demaree for giving lectures in the Renshaw System of Aircraft and Naval Recognition, to be given to all combat crew members. On 20 October, a course in Aircraft recognition was initiated for all ground personnel. Classes were conducted twice each day to facilitate each man's attendance. The course continued for 14 hours and was decidedly a success.

During the months of October and November, lectures were also given to the whole Squadron on Military Security. These lectures have delt mostly with the importance of AR 36tO-5.

FILES

Files were maintained in the office on various phases of Intelligence. A standard system of filing has been published by the III Bomber Command and has been strictly adhered to in this office. Files are maintained on Renshaw courses for

flying as well as ground personnel. Files are also maintained on "Training Intelligence" which provide for lectures for our combat crews.

PROMOTIONS

1st Lt. John J. Demaree was promoted to Captain on 27 November 1943

2nd Lt. Robert A. O'Malley was promoted to 1st Lt. on 25 November, 1943

Pfc. Robert E. Lisby was promoted to Corporal on 23 October 1943

This section was in preparation for the move from Woodward to DeRidder during the first week of December. On December 7, we boarded the train for DeRidder, Louisiana and arrived there on 9 December 1943. Upon arriving, we

discovered that our "Advance Echelon" which was to arrive by plane several days previous was grounded at Oklahoma City because of inclement weather. We were assigned to a building on the hanger line and discovered that it was one large room. Our clerical personnel made the necessary partitions and repairs before the building was suitable for our use.

After the necessary adjustments were made we resumed our routine duties. Situation maps were placed in the Squadron Engineering, Armament, Ordnance and Communications Sections and post each day. A news summary was written each day by this section and posted in each of the sections. At this time a new system of map problems was made up and initiated. In each of the map problems we asked the Combat Crews to locate a town in England and one in either France or Germany. Give the altitude of each town and the distance between the two towns. This problem was recommended by Captain Hawel, our Squadron Commander, because we will undoubtedly encounter such problems in combat. We continued our daily aircraft identification problems.

Combat Crew and ground Personnel did not finish their Renshaw training at Woodward, Oklahoma, so their classes were resumed at this base. Our main difficulty in teaching this, was due to the fact that classrooms were not available near the hanger line. This problem was solved for the combat crew personnel by utilizing the pilots assembly room. We were able to secure a building some distance from the hanger line for the ground personnel's classes.

We were unable to schedule Renshaw classes ahead for any length of time due to the pilots flying schedules. Operations was supplied with more planes than we had at Woodward so the pilots were able to get in more flying time. This problem was solved by teaching the remainder of the flying personnel a course inclement weather. During this time the operating section was especially cooperative and was especially interested in our training program.

This squadron participated in eight combat missions in furnishing air support for the Leesville Maneuvers. The usual briefing and interrogation was carried on in detail by this section Consolidated mission reports were sent to Group Intelligence promptly after each mission and a copy was retained for our files.

Captain Demaree held a special "Question and Answer" session covering AR 380-5 for the combat crews. This was a new approach to an otherwise dreaded duty.

This session was the result of close cooperation and interest between the Operations and Intelligence Sections. 22 Questions were chose as the most pertinent and informative top AR 389-5 and presented in such the same manner as the radio program "Information Please".

cont:

The combat crew personnel are divided into two teams with a "Captain" in charge of each team. Captain Demaree asked the question and Lt. Ruhle, Ass't Operations Officer, acted as an impartial judge to ascertain which team had scored the most points. This session proved to be very interesting as well as educational to the crews.

During this phase many furloughs and leaves were granted to both the Enlisted Men and Officer personnel. This proved to be most active of any phase this section has experienced to date and was especially difficult due to the shortage of personnel. Some sections were so short of personnel that they could hardly operate without borrowing personnel from other sections. This section has loaned one or two clerks to other sections for various periods throughout the month.

The personnel of this section has changed some in that 1st Lt. O'Malley, Assistant Intelligence Officer, was transferred to Group Intelligence. Sgt. Davenport reported to this section for duty upon returning from an emergency furlough.

ENGINEERING

On 2 October 1943, we moved to Woodward Army Air Field, Oklahoma. Our stay for the first few months was covered pretty thoroughly by Lt. Joe Sherman in Chapter one of our Squadron History.

In the Engineering and Tech supply Sections, the parts situation still remained a problem. Cooperation on the part of the Sub-Depot in allowing us to pick up various things by air from Tinker and Will Rogers Fields aided us during our stay at this post, since they were not equipped to meet our particular requirements.

Our men had more than their share of experience in pulling engines at this station. Through no fault of our own we had eighteen at this station. The majority of these engines were pulled because they served their maximum number of hours as specified in the Technical Orders. An engine installed on one of our A-20G's was removed because of supercharger failure. The indication of this failure was clearly shown when at 2200 RPM not more than 27 inches of manifold pressure was obtained. Another engine change maybe described as follows:

On November 7, during one of the routine scheduled flights, the crew chief, T/Sgt. Mc Fayden of our B-25 noticed an oil leak on the left engine. The pilot Lt. Ott on the advice of the crew chief, feathered the propeller. Then on final approach to the field, the pilot tried the bad engine which instantly caused the cylinder head to blow out through the cowling. We hit the feathering button again and proceeded to land. The preceding event was the most serious of the forced landings that occurred at this station. Lt. Adams, one of our Pilot Leaders, described a forced landing he encountered as follows:

On 30 October 1943, while on a routine training flight at approximately 6000 feet high, 50 miles NW of Woodward Army Air Field in A-20G-20, No. 42-36577, 0850 hours, the left engine of the aircraft involved began to cut out and generally detonate. The oil and cylinder head gages showed a rapid rise although the oil pressure remained within the normal operating range with no apparent droppage. The pilot feathered the propeller and a single engine landing was accomplished.

Upon inspection of the magnetic sump plug, filings were present, indicating internal failure.

Spark plugs caused us some grief for a short period of time. The trouble encountered is best described in an Unsatisfactory Report we submitted on this subject and was written as follows:

Installation of reconditioned DM-37 spark plugs from____.A.A.B. have resulted in the breaking of the shell assembly at the top section of the threads which screw into the cylinder when installed. Four failures of this type have occurred in the past several days. In each case the shell assembly break occurred during installation

with approximately 38 inches of torque applied.

We recommend that a closer inspection be given reconditioned spark plugs prior to shipment.

While at Woodward, Oklahoma, M/Sgt. Wilbert M. Munn, flight chief, solved the problem of pre-oiling new engines from which formally took an exceptionally long time. All of the materials used were taken from old airplane parts and when assembled accomplished the same job in about a quarter of the time previously needed to pre-oil an engine. This machine delivers a hundred pounds of oil pressure directly ahead of the engine oil pump and thoroughly pre-oils the new engine prior to initial run-up. Three cheers for Sgt. Munn !!!-- for discovering a time saving device.

Personnel in the Engineering and Tech Supply Section have remained the same with only one exception - - Lt. Joe Sherman was transferred to another group and was replaced by Lt. Stanley Hochhauser, On November 1st, 1943. Lt. Alfred L. Opdycke, our Tech Supply Officer was on detached service, at school for two weeks to acquire the information and knowledge necessary to carry out his additional duties a personnel equipment officer.

Three days before leaving Woodward Army Air Field, we grounded our ships in order to prepare them for movement to our new station. Our planes for the most part had just come out of inspection and were therefore in good mechanical condition. The work on them went smoothly except for the engine in plane number 42-36577, type A-20G-10, previously mentioned. This plane had to be pulled at the last moment because of a supercharger failure. As luck would have it, the decision to change the engine came at about seven o'clock in the evening after all other possible courses to be taken proved to be of no value. Sub-Depot had no other engines available. Fortunately there was a cracked up airplane being repaired in their maintenance section and they allowed us to use that engine. All of our work was completed in time for the scheduled movement.

The ground echelon arrived at DeRidder Army Air Field, DeRidder, Louisiana, on 9 December 1943 approximately a week before the air echelon arrived. The air echelon was supposed to arrive before the ground echelon but was held up at Oklahoma City because of weather conditions. During the delay, there was ample time to set up our Engineering and Tech supply sections and were fully organized and functioning smoothly by the time the air echelon arrived.

The last phase of our training should be a complete success since the Base personnel have been very cooperative from the very start. They had adequate supplies on hand and when any items were not stocked, they made it their business to obtain them for us in the shortest period of time.

During the month of December, the weather was nothing but bad. Rain and overcasts kept our planes on the ground about seventy-five percent of the time. Spark Plugs continued to give us headaches. They have to be changed on the average of three times during a period they normally should be changed only once. Idling of engines longer than necessary and closing up of planes at take-off points were usually the cause of this trouble.

On December 1, 1943, we received two ships. An RDB-7D and an A-20G-15, 42-34275. Both were given acceptance inspections at Woodward, Oklahoma.

We had three engine changes and are forecasting eight during the month of December. The forced landing was encountered by our Squadron Commanding Officer, Captain Hawel. According to our formal landing report the pilots statement was as follows:

"Before take-off, I ran both engines to 25 inches of mercury, with no loss of RPM and all instruments and temperatures were OK. The right hand engine began cutting out approximately half way down the runway with RPM falling off and catching again intermittently. Realizing my speed and progress down the runway precluding all possibilities of stopping, I decided to try to make it around the field for a landing. Raising the landing gear, gave the plane just sufficient speed to maintain flight with full throttle and low pitch on the left hand engine.

The speed varied about 140 to 145 MPH. Full left trim failed to have much effect on the lateral stability resulting in a very strong drag to the right. Attempting to trim up the ship and break up the formation which began forming on me, I pushed the feathering button for the right engine, but apparently held it too long and it unfeathered again and windmilled on final approach. Again I feathered the right engine, this time taking effect. Normal landing on one engine was made. This is ship number AF-348, RDB-7D".

A description of the trouble was described in the Commanding Officer's report.

A One Hundred hour inspection was completed on AF-348 RDB-7 on 3 November 1943 and found to be mechanically in good condition. Inspection following the single engine landing revealed metal particles on the magnetic plug.

During the month of December about forty percent of our engineering and tech supply personnel received four hours of instruction on the operation of our section. Never-the-less in spite of the interruption the personnel kept up there standard of work by putting in longer hours. Third Bomber Command made inspection on 1 December and 22 December, 1943. The discrepancies noted were not bad and having corrected those small items, they were ready for POM team inspections in January.

ARMAMENT HISTORY

This squadron arrived at Woodward, Oklahoma on the 7th of October 1943 and the Armament Department started operations on the 9th of October 1943. The following training program went into effect.

Bombing and Gunnery, using the Jett Bombing and Gunnery range every fourth day. Armament and Ordnance personnel worked together in loading ships with bombs and machine gun ammunition and in handling malfunctions. On the outstanding day at the Jett range, 236 100 lb. Practice bombs were dropped and 13,000 round of ammunition were fired. Each fourth week a mixed crew of armament and ordnance personnel were sent to Jett for seven (7) days to maintain the range.

A continuous training schedule was planned and carried out in which every armament man was trained at every job pertaining to armament.

Armament training for all Ordnance men.

Small arm firing. The carbine, the 45 caliber automatic pistol, and the 45 caliber Thompson submachine gun were used. Approximately 95 percent of all personnel qualified with their principal weapon.

Skeet range every fourth day. The Skeet range was used for the training of pilots and gunners.

Renshaw classes were held in which all members of this department attended.

Chemical warfare lectures were held every week over a period of time in which all members of this department attended.. The instructors consisted of one of the personnel of the armament department.

In the middle part of our training there were two men chosen to go to Tampa, Florida, and one to base for turret instructions.

All men in the armament department went on a one day bivouac with the squadron.

Physical programs were carried out to the fullest extent.

ORDNANCE HISTORY

The Ordnance Section arrived at Woodward, Oklahoma, with the rest of the squadron on 3 October 1943 after an uneventful train trip from Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma. T/Sgt. Salvatora made the trip by truck convoy thereby gaining a jump on the rest of the Squadron. 2nd Lt. Robert F. Riley joined the section on 8 October 1943, filling the vacancy left by Lt. Richard F. Davies.

Individual weapons were supplied the squadron early in the month and small arms training began in earnest. Four (4) heavy barrel 50 caliber defense guns were acquired but lack of shooting butts prevented actual firing training with this weapon.

During our stay at Woodward, the Armament/Ordnance Sections spent two weeks at Jett, Oklahoma, where loading of bombs and ammunition was an all day job. Actual experience gained proved very valuable.

The "Big Day" of our three months at Woodward Army Air Field occurred when, for the first time, we handled live bombs and fuses. Forty-eight 250 pound demos were loaded in short order. After the first few times the crews handled them like veterans.

Every fourth day was reserved for section training. The first being occupied with bombing and gunnery, the second, skeet shooting, and the third with small arms training.

In the later part of our training, we had our first mission in which 250 lb. demolition bombs were used. Thirteen (13) aircraft took part in this mission.

Q. M. SUPPLY HISTORY

On 2 October 1943, we loaded the organization equipment into box cars and trucks and moved by rail and motor convoy to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma. Most of the squadron personnel were moved by rail. This was our first move and as we did not have most of our squadron equipment, there were no difficulties.

At Woodward, Oklahoma, we received most of the squadron T/E property. Here we started packing and crating for overseas shipment. There were a few difficulties encountered in loading our equipment when we were ready to leave. It was found that the best system is to organize your packing and loading teams into sections, each with a definite assignment. In other words, use a production line. By doing this, every detail may be taken care of.

Pvt. Renvall was transferred from the Supply Department of this organization. Pvts. Conway, Scalf and Green were confined to the guard-house.

On 6 December 1943, we began the task of loading the organization again, this time, taking our vehicles with us on flat cars. While loading this time, the following difficulty was encountered: loading started late in the evening during a rain storm. The following day, with trucks borrowed from the base squadron, we loaded the squadron equipment and baggage. On 7 December 1943, at 1500 hours, the Officers and Enlisted Men were loaded on to the train and the Squadron departed for it's next station.

SQUADRON SUPPLY HISTORY

The night before we were to arrive at DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Oklahoma, we telegraphed ahead to arrange for transportation upon our arrival so we could start unloading immediately.

After unloading and unpacking our equipment we were informed that the Group had received it's Warning

Orders.

The Base S-4 conducted a showdown inspection on our equipment in accordance with P. O. M. and shortage lists were submitted to the different supply agencies.

The Third Air Force and the Third Bomber Command inspected us and a few discrepancies were found. Namely, our files were not up to date and form 33's were not made up. All of the above noted discrepancies were corrected.

We started packing the minimum essential shipment that we were to take

overseas. The equipment was first coated with oil then wrapped in grease-proof paper, then crated in water-proof boxes.

It was our aim to give every man in the section a furlough before going over-seas. In so doing we were left with insufficient number of clerks who were familiar with the Technical details of supply. However, by working a little harder, we were able to achieve the high standard of work consistent with this Squadron.

HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION SECTION

At the end of the year the Communication Department stands at essentially full strength and as a whole, trained to the degree required for us to start the job we are in the army for. Our formal schooling ended a few months ago and since then our training has been actually working with the equipment in a way that duplicates as close as possible its combat use. We have been participating in radio nets and teletype nets conducting field wiring problems, and improving our maintenance of aircraft radio equipment. Also we have familiarized bombardiers, pilots, and gunners with aspects of their jobs which pertain to radio such as code and blinker training, the emergency dingy radio, IFF and the 522. One of the problems we have is to get ready to maintain the VHF Command Set and IFF equipment which no one in the section has had more than meager experience with and which will be used in combat.

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641ST 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.

The squadron arrived in March, 1944 at Little Walden, Essex County, England (Station 165), a nearly completed new Air Field. The month was used in organizing the facilities to accommodate personnel and operations.

APRIL - 1944

NARRATIVE

The usual training continued and an increasing amount of flying time was logged as the squadron accumulated its quota of planes. After a great deal of hard work and dry runs, the group ran its first mission 13 April, 1944. During the month, our squadron participated in 17 missions, flying a total of 124 sorties against the enemy. Our missions were against coastal defenses, marshaling yards and anti-invasion weapons.

The first two missions were led by Col. Preston P. Pender, Group Commander, with 1st Lt. James J. Breen, of our squadron as lead Bombardier-Navigator. These missions were not successful but the group had received its "Baptism of Fire".

On 22 April, 1944, the 8th mission for the Group was the Lois D'Esquerdes naval installation. It was this mission that was to take its toll of casualties from our squadron. Major Hawel, our Squadron Commander, was leading the second box with Lt. Breen as his Bombardier-Navigator, S/Sgt. Earl C. McGinnis and Sgt. Robly H. Coons as the gunners. Enemy action took place as they were coming out from the target. Their ship received a direct hit by heavy flak.

They started a shallow dive immediately and although seriously injured by flak, Major Hawel, with his right arm hanging limp at his side, maintained complete control of the plane and began nursing it across the Channel. Suddenly, without warning, the bomb bay doors of the plane fell open, the flaps came down and the one good engine faltered, causing the ship to lose altitude fast forcing Major Hawel to ditch. Because of

the open bomb bay doors, the plane took on water rapidly and immediately began to sink.

Although seriously injured, the crew managed to escape the sinking aircraft and inflated their "Mae Wests". Major Hawel's "Mae West" gave off a hissing noise as inflation was taking place with air going out as fast as it was going in rendering it useless. Just at that instance another "Mae West" came floating by. The Major grabbed it, worked his way into it and inflated it. In about an hour, a British Air-Sea Rescue launch picked them up. Unfortunately Lt. Breen and S/Sgt. McGinnis died before the rescue. Sgt. Coons died shortly afterwards in a hospital. Major Hawel was also interned in the hospital for treatment.

The loss of Lt. James J. Breen was greatly felt by all of the Officers in the Squadron. His quiet manner, his congenial disposition and his dependability was recognized and appreciated by all who knew him. S/Sgt. Earl C. McGinnis served in the European Theater of Operations and North Africa in 1942. He was one of Major Hawel's original gunners and had flown a total of 25 missions before returning to the E. T. O. this year. Sgt. Robly Coons was loved by his companions for his quiet spoken and sincere manners and his devotion to duty.

During the month of April, the following 2nd Lieutenants were promoted to 1st Lieutenants:

James J. Breen

John J. Bauer

Morris Rafalow

Wilbert L. Saathoff

Albert S. Bowen, Jr.

John E. Maher

Clifford M. Pearson

Leon R. Robinson

MAY - 1944

During the month of May, the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) flew a total of 278 combat sorties. Although none of our personnel were lost, some of our airplanes returned on single engines and were pretty well damaged by flak. The Squadron's most successful mission was flown on the date of 29 May with Lt. Gilbert Farr and Lt. Morris Rafalow leading the second box of Mission No. 45. In this mission the bombing of an airdrome at Achiet gave the second box a rating of Excellent.

Our most serious accident occurred on 11 May when shortly after taking off on Mission No. 29, Lt. John Foote's plane developed engine trouble and caught fire. He was forced to crash land the airplane at Nuthampstead Air Field which resulted in injuries to himself, S/Sgt. Robert Lynch and S/Sgt. Jerry Vaverka, members of the crew. Shortly after the crash the bombs exploded, completely destroying the airplane. After a short period of confinement in the hospital Lt. Foote and his crew returned to duty.

The Squadron continued its routine ground training and training flights throughout the month. Bombing practice was continued by crews and bombardier-pilot teams who will fly combat missions together.

During this month our Squadron received orders to prepare for a possible future overseas movement, and plans were made for the movement of our personnel and equipment. The movement of our Squadron equipment creates a difficult task of constructing crates, boxes and the packing and labeling of the boxes. All personnel were given definite instructions for marking their personal equipment. An inspection was held to make certain that these instructions had been properly executed.

On the last day of the month, officers and enlisted men of the squadron donated generously to a fund which was presented to four year old Tony Everitt, whose mother was killed on May 27th while trying to rescue the crew of a Group plane which had crashed near her home.

JUNE - 1944

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of June, 1944

1. Twenty-one (21) new members were assigned to the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) during the month of June.

2nd Lt. Gordon G. Cordsen 2nd Lt. Joseph P. Woodward

2nd Lt. Lyall J. Turnbull 2nd Lt. Norman E. Zuber

Sgt. Francis R. Smith Sgt. William F. Hagedorn

Sgt. Burton Hawley Sgt. Tommy J. Williams

Sgt. Arthur E. Hoelting Sgt. William C. Haley

2nd Lt. John K. Bonnell 2nd Lt. Henry M. Simon

Sgt. Richard W. Morrison Sgt. Lawrence E. Rowland

Sgt. Clarence E. Henry, Jr. Sgt. Henry L. Westrook

S/Sgt. Charles H. Osborne Cpl. Elton F. Sheehan

Pfc. Thomas A. Devlin, Jr. Pfc. Charles J. Grimes

Pvt. Michael A. Alukonis

2. Strength of the Unit as of 30 June 1944:

Officers: 48 Enlisted Men: 286

3. Killed in Action:

1st Lt. Joseph R. Armistead S/Sgt. John R. Donnelly

S/Sgt. Elbert H. Holiday S/Sgt. Arlin D. Pendleton

4. Wounded in Action:

1st Lt. Thomas A. Beckett

S/Sgt. Cecil L. Edgmon

5. Awards and Decorations:

PURPLE HEART

OFFICERS

Major Leo Hawel, Jr. 1st Lt. John D. Foote

1st Lt. Thomas A. Beckett

ENLISTED MEN

S/Sgt. Robert I. Lynch S/Sgt. Jerry F. Vaverka

S/Sgt. Reynold F. Rigall, Jr. S/Sgt. Cecil L. Edgmon

S/Sgt. Gordon R. Corbett

AIR MEDAL

OFFICERS

Joseph R. Armistead William W. Deane

Elvin F. Howard Stephen J. Troth

ENLISTED MEN

George J. Deep John M. Dearth

Fidel O. DeLuna Albert H. Holiday

Joseph J. Bennett John K. Donnelly

James C. Jones William K. Kendall

Arlie E. Murray

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FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

John J. Bowen Kenneth E. Hubbard Wilbert L. Saathoff

ENLISTED MEN

Donald W. Hanks Arlin D. Pendleton

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SECOND OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

John J. Bauer John C. Higgins

Richard H. Kollen Robert E. Ott

Wilbert L. Saathoff

ENLISTED MEN

Donald W. Hanks Eugene B. Nelson

Arlin D. Pendleton Frank Szymonik

Jerry F. Vaverka

THIRD OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Robert W. Adams Albert D. Bowen

William D. Braucher Ray M. Cuberly

Charles W. Daniels Gilbert L. Farr Charles V. Garino Richard L. Gates

John C. Higgins David A. Horngren Clifford H. Pearson Leon R. Robinson

Robert E. Ott

ENLISTED MEN

Gordon R. Corbett Harry R. Corwin

Robert L. Lynch Eugene B. Nelson, Jr.

Benjamin E. Moja Andrew J. Meshishnek

James C. Odom Frank Szymonik

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FOURTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Robert W. Adams Albert D. Bowen

William D. Braucher Ray M. Cuberly

Charles W. Daniels Gilbert L. Farr

Charles V. Garino Richard L. Gates

William N. Hinds John E. Maher Clifford h. Pearson Leon R. Robinson

ENLISTED MEN

Cebert C. Austin D. L. Alexander

Neicy E. Clopton Gordon R. Corbett

Harry R. Corwin Richard J. Dixon

Cecil L. Edgmon Howard A. Gurley

Gladden H. Heat John Kuzne

Robert L. Lynch Robert Martinez

Andrew J. Meshishnek Benjamin E. Moja

Stephen McDowell Roscoe Morton

James C. Odom John K. Showman

Thomas R. Norris Dale E. Watt

William E. Wilkerson Thomas J. Williams.

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Thomas H. Powell

ENLISTED MEN

Harold W. Davis Richard J. Dixon

Howard A. Gurley Gladden H. Heath

John Kuzne George E. Matting Epifanio Manriquez Robert Martinez

Andrew J. Meshishnek Roscoe Morton

Stephen McDowell Thomas R. Norris

John K. Showman Dale E. Watt

William E. Wilkerson Thomas J. Williams

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SIXTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

ENLISTED MEN

Harold W. Davis Epifanio Manriquez

Robert Martinez Howard A. Gurley

George E. Mattingly

NARRATIVE

We started the month of June with 45 missions behind us. During the month, we added 27 more to give us a total of 72 missions for the first ten weeks of our operations.

By far the biggest event of the month was D-Day, 6 June 1944. The morning of the sixth we were notified that the landings on the Normandy Peninsula had begun and that our first job in direct support of the ground troops was to knock out a road junction at Valogne. Our targets since D-Day have generally been planned to aid the ground troops by cutting the enemy's supplies of both men and material.. During the month we struck at road junctions, marshaling yards, ammunition and fuel dumps. Occasionally we hit at the old faithful Noball targets. We also bombed a few enemy strong points of resistance as well as gun emplacements.

During the month, we flew a total of 268 sorties and turned in 790 hours and 30 minutes combat flying time. On top of the combat time, 245 hours and 35 minutes of training time was logged. We didn't stand short in that department either.

On June 11th, our Squadron suffered it's greatest mishap. Shortly after take-off on our 55th mission, Lt. Thomas A. Beckett's plane and Lt. Joseph R. Armistead's plane collided in mid-air. Lt. Armistead's plane headed straight for the ground out of control. He, together with his crewmen S/Sgt. Elbert H. Holiday and Sgt. John R. Donnelly, were killed. Meanwhile S/Sgt. Arlin D. Pendleton, of Lt. Beckett's crew, bailed out of his plane too close to the ground and was also killed. Lt. Beckett stayed with his plane and although it was badly damaged and had a full bomb load, he managed, by superior skill, excellent judgment, and a cool head, to make a successful crash landing. Lt. Beckett and his other gunner, S/Sgt. Cecil L. Edgmon, were both seriously injured. S/Sgt Edgmon was awarded the Soldier's Medal for service over and beyond the call of duty in aiding Lt. Beckett away from the plane.

Our C. O., Major Leo Hawel, Jr., was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received the previous month. Other Purple Heart awards wee awarded to Lt's Thomas A. Beckett, John D. Foote, S/Sgt's Robert L. Lynch, Reynold F. Rigali, Jr., Cecil L. Edgmon, Gordon R. Corbett and Sgt. Jerry F. Vaverka.

Thirteen Air Medals, 5 First Oak Leaf Clusters, 10 Second Oak Leaf Clusters, 21 Third Oak Leaf Clusters, 34 Fourth Oak Leaf Clusters, 17 Silver Oak Leaf Clusters and 6 Sixth Oak Leaf Clusters were awarded to Officers and Enlisted Men of our squadron.

During the month, we were reinforced by five (5) crews and two (2) bombardiers.

Our first 10 weeks of operations have been plenty rough. Every man in our squadron worked long and hard. Maintenance of planes has been excellent. We are justifiably proud of our records and we are confident that we will not only keep it up, but improve. The long awaited landing brought the end almost in sight. We may be home for Christmas yet.

JULY - 1944

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of July.

1. Eight (8) new members were assigned to the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) during the month of July:

S/Sgt. Gene D. Wright Sgt. John D. Kelso

Sgt. James E. Eubanks Sgt. Anthony Medici

Pvt. Clayton A. McMahon 2nd Lt. James F. Goodmen

2nd Lt. George T. Brady 2nd Lt. Robert P. Briffett

2. Strength of the Unit as of 31 July 1944.

Officers: 45 Enlisted Men: 290

3. Killed in Action:

2nd Lt. Robert P. Briffett

S/Sgt. George E. Mattingly

S/Sgt. Stephen McDowell

4. Wounded in Action:

1st Lt. John J. Bauer

5. Awards and Decorations:

PURPLE HEART

1st Lt. John J. Bauer

NARRATIVE

The 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) participated in seventeen (17) more missions during the month of July, 1944, bringing the total to 89 combat missions flown against the enemy. The targets for the month consisted of fuel dumps, bridges, rail and road junctions, and enemy strong-points. A few missions were in direct support of our ground troops on the Normandy front.

The month started out with four older members of the organization receiving notice of their promotions to captain. They are: Bob Adams, Chuck Daniels, Dick Gates and Johnny Higgins. They have all proven themselves to be excellent flight leaders and have plenty of missions behind them.

On July 5th, Captain's Gates and Higgins made successful forced landings on the southern coast of England. Captain Gates had crossed the channel on single engine and was looking for a place to "set her down" when his remaining engine cut out. 1st. Lt. John J. Bauer, the Bombardier-Navigator, had been seriously injured by flak and could not get out of the ship. Capt. Gates located a landing strip and executed a perfect "dead stick" landing. Immediately upon landing, S/Sgt. Thomas R. Norris ran for an ambulance and S/Sgt. Gladden H. Heath gave Lt. Bauer first aid treatment. Later, it was learned that the first aid rendered by Sgt. Heath had saved Lt. Bauer's life. Sgt. Heath was later rewarded for his excellent work by a written commendation from the Group Commander, Lt. Col. T. R. Ford.

On the same date, 2nd Lt. William W. Deane and crew made a forced landing in France. No injuries were obtained.

Major Leo Hawel, our squadron Commanding Officer, was returned to flying status again, making transition, navigational, and practice bombing flights.

Capt. Jay Hatton, bombardier-navigator, was sent home after completing sixty-two (62) combat missions, most of which had been flown with a B-26 Group.

Lt's Morris N. Rafalow and Wilbert L. Saathoff were transferred into B-26 Groups. They were two of the oldest bombardier-navigators of the squadron.

On July 31st, Captain Robert E. Adams' plane, while penetrating a thick overcast, ran into prop wash and went out of control. His bombardier-navigator, 1st Lt. Robert P. Briffett, and two gunners, S/Sgt's George E. Mattingly and Stephen Mc Dowell, were ordered to bail out but were unable to get free of the plane and were killed in the crash. Capt., Adams was thrown free of the ship at 600 ft. He was able to open his chute in time and received only slight bruises upon landing.

During the month, our squadron flew 473 individual sorties for a total of 537 hours and 40 minutes combat flying time. To this can be added 429 hours and 30 minutes training time flown.

AUGUST - 1944

History of the 641st Bombardment (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of August 1944.

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

Officers: 50 Enlisted Men: 296

2. Awards and Decorations:

AIR MEDAL

Sgt. Tommy J. Williams Sgt. Lawrence E. Henry

2nd Lt. Henry L. Simon

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Lyall J. Turnbull 2nd Lt. Norman E. Zuber

Sgt. William F. Hagedorn Sgt. Burton Hawley

2nd Lt. Joseph B. Woodward Sgt. Arthur E. Hoelting

Sgt. William C. Haley Sgt. Francis R. Smith

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Elvin F. Howard Sgt. Donald W. Hanks

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. John D. Foote 2nd Lt. Kenneth E. Hubbard

S/Sgt. George J. Deep Sgt. Donald W. Hanks

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Robert W. Adams Capt. John C. Higgins

1st Lt. Leon R. Robinson S/Sgt. Richard J. Dixon

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. William N. Hinds, Jr. 1st Lt. David A. Horngren

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Gordon G. Cordsen S/Sgt. Robert Martinez

Sgt. Thomas J. Williams S/Sgt. John Kuzne

Sgt. Roscoe Morton S/Sgt. Howard A. Gurley

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert E. Ott S/Sgt. Frank Szymonik

S/Sgt. Harry R. Corwin

The personnel of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) authorized to wear Bronze Star for battle credit for participation in the "Air Offensive" of Europe per Letter, Hq., ETOUSA, subj: Battle Participation Awards, dated 19 July 1944.

The personnel of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) authorized to wear Bronze Star on ETO ribbon per Letter, ETOUSA, dtd 12 August 1944, Subj: "Announced Battles and Campaigns within the European Theater of Operations." for the campaign "Western Europe."

NARRATIVE

During the month of August, the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) participated in 26 more missions to bring the total to 115 missions flown by the squadron over enemy territory. Most of our targets were tactical in nature

and consisted of marshaling yards, bridges, railroad junctions and strong-points.

On the sixth of the month, two of our planes were forced down in friendly territory in France. None of the men were injured and they were flown back to the base two days later. The crew members were: 1st Lt. Leon R. Robinson; S/Sgt. Dempsey H. Clotfelter; S/Sgt. Benjamin E. Moja; 1st Lt. John K. Bonnell; Sgt. Lawrence E. Rowland and Sgt. Richard W. Morrison.

The squadron made one of its longest flights on the eleventh of August. The entire formation landed in Southern England, gassed, flew to their target in Southern France, and returned home the same way. A similar mission was flown on the 25th of the month.

On the 9th of August, our squadron and Group flew its one hundredth mission, thereby becoming the first bombardment group in the European Theater of Operations to fly one hundred missions in less than four months of combat operations.

On the 11th of August, Major Leo Hawel, Jr., our commanding officer, flew his first combat mission since his crash in April.

Mission # 35, 27 August 1944 as reported by S/Sgt. A. Meshishnek, gunner with Lt. Braucher.

"Our target was a troop concentration at Rouen (France). We encountered heavy flak but no fighters. Lt. Braucher shut down right engine, due to low oil pressure before we reached I. P. He started it again as we reached target. Once we dropped our load and headed for home, he had to shut it down again. We had to leave the formation and go it alone. We were quite concerned being out there alone. We encountered no fighters, but were easy prey for Anti-Aircraft fire, but made it OK. Braucher made a good one engine landing at our base in England".

We flew 26 missions during the month of August; 696 individual sorties; a total of 810:40 combat hours and 394.35 training hours.

SEPTEMBER - 1944

History of the 641st 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: 292

2. Change of Station:

The 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), was moved from AAF Station 165, Little Walden, Essex, England to AAF Station A-48, Bretigny, Seine Oise, France, during the month of September, as follows:

Advance Party of 14 Officers and 147 Enlisted Men departed Station 165 to motor convoy and rail on 12 September 1944 and arrived Station A-48 on 16 September, 1944.

Second Party of 11 Officers and 103 Enlisted Men departed AAF Station 165 on 18

September 1944 by C-47 aircraft transport and arrived Station A-48 of 18 September 1944.

Third Party of 32 Officers and 126 Enlisted Men departed AAF Station 165 on 22 September 1944 by C-47 aircraft transport and arrived Station A-48 on 22 September 1944.

Rear Echelon of 3 Officers and 25 Enlisted Men departed AAF Station 165 By motor convoy on 26 September 1944 and arrived Station A-48 on 30 September 1944.

3. Awards and Decorations:

AIR MEDAL

2nd Lt. Raymond L. Cole 2nd Lt. James F. Goodman

2nd Lt. George L. Brady S/Sgt. Gene D. Wright

Sgt. William P. Stineman

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. John K. Bonnell Sgt. Richard W. Morrison

Sgt. Lawrence E. Rowland Sgt. Henry L. Westbrook

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Norman E. Zuber 2nd Lt. Joseph B. Woodward

Sgt. William C. Haley Sgt. Francis R. Smith

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Norman E. Zuber Sgt. Arlie E. Murray

Sgt. William C. Haley Sgt. Francis R. Smith

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Richard h. Kallen S/Sgt. Joseph J. Bennett

S/Sgt. James C. Jones S/Sgt. Dempsey H. Clotfelter

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Captain Richard L. Gates 1st Lt. Albert S. Bowen, Jr.

S/Sgt. Frank Szymonik S/Sgt. Cecil L. Edgmon

S/Sgt. Jerry F. Vaverka

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. John E. Maher 1st Lt. Ray M. Cuberly

1st Lt. William D. Braucher 1st Lt. Leon R. Robinson

Captain Charles W. Daniels S/Sgt. Gordon E. Corbett

S/Sgt. Robert L. Lynch S/Sgt. Thomas R. Norris

S/Sgt. Benjamin E. Moja

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8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Charles V. Garino 1st Lt. Clifford H. Pearson

S/Sgt. D. L. Alexander S/Sgt. Robert L. Lynch

S/Sgt. Ceibert C. Austin S/Sgt. Gladden H. Heath

S/Sgt. William E. Wilkerson S/Sgt. Dale E. Watt

Cpl. Russell G. Starr

9th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Gordon G. Cordsen S/Sgt. Epifanio Manriquez

S/Sgt. Harold W. Davis S/Sgt. Robert Martiniz

S/Sgt. William E. Wilkerson S/Sgt. Ceibert C. Austin

S/Sgt. D. L. Alexander Sgt. Roscoe Morton

Sgt. Thomas J. Williams Cpl. Russell G. Starr

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. John D. Foote S/Sgt. Jerry Vaverka

S/Sgt. Reynold Rigali Sgt. Donald W. Hanks

Sgt. Charles R. Robinson Sgt. Ralph Roach

NARRATIVE

The month of September began much the same as any other month with a smooth running training and operational program. During this month, we added another 12 combat missions to our credit to bring the total up to 126 combat missions.

During the month, the Group and squadron was moved to a new station at Bretigny, Seine Oise, France. We were

alerted on the 9th and the Advanced echelon departed Station 165 on 12 September 1944. The Air echelon departed on the 18th, while the rear echelon, with the exception of 3 officers and 25 enlisted men who were left behind to move the motor convoy across, was flown to the new base in C-47's. The rear motor convoy departed Station 165 on the 26th. By September 30, 1944, the entire squadron had arrived at the new base in France and were again ready for operations against the enemy

We flew our first mission against Germany proper from Station 165, England. The target was in the Metz area and although we were unsuccessful on the 12th, the operations were successfully completed on the 13th against the same target.

Our first mission into Germany from Station A-48, Bretigny, France took off on the 28th.

During the month, we flew 12 missions against the enemy. We compiled 113 aircraft sorties, making a total of 357 sorties. Total training time for this month was 210:55 hours, most of which was formation flying and pilot-bombardier training.

OCTOBER - 1944

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of October, 1944.

1. Strength as of 31 October 1944:

57 Officers 301 Enlisted Men Total: 358

2. AWARDS TO UNIT MEMBERS:

PURPLE HEART

S/Sgt. Gladden H. Heath

AIR MEDAL

Sgt. Charles D. East Sgt. John D. Kelso

Sgt. Anthony Medici

1ST O. L. C.

2nd. Lt. Henry M. Simon S/Sgt. Tommy J. Williams

Sgt. Clarence E. Henry

6TH O. L. C.

S/Sgt. Andrew J. Meshishnek Sgt. Ralph V. Roach

Sgt. Charles R. Robinson Sgt. William K. Kendell

7TH O. L. C.

Capt. Richard L. Gates 1st Lt. Albert S. Bowen

Capt. John C. Higgins S/Sgt. Cecil D. Edgmon

S/Sgt. Richard J. Dixon

8TH O. L. C.

Capt. Charles W. Daniels 1st Lt. Charles V. Garino

1st. Lt. Davis A. Horngren 1st Lt. Ray M. Cuberly

1st. Lt. William D. Braucher 1st. Lt. John E. Maher

S/Sgt. Richard J. Dixon S/Sgt. Thomas R. Norris

S/Sgt. John K. Showman

9TH O. L. C

1st Lt. Charles V. Garino S/Sgt. Dale E. Watt

1ST SILVER O. L. C.

1st Lt. Richard H. Kollen 2nd Lt. Kenneth E. Hubbard

2nd Lt. William W. Deane S/Sgt. Fidel O. De Luna

S/Sgt. George J. Deep Sgt. James C. Jones

Sgt. William K. Kendall Sgt. John M. Dearth

2ND SILVER O. L. C.

S/Sgt. Harold W. Davis S/Sgt. Roscoe Morton

S/Sgt. Epifanio Manriquez

During the month of October, the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) participated in nine (9) combat missions making a total of 136 missions in 6 1/2 months of operations. Weather was the main factor in keeping the Group and Squadron grounded for most of the entire month.

This month, our combat crews were strengthened by the addition of two pilots, one bombardier and four crews of gunners.

On the 8th of the month, Lt. Hinds had an engine failure shortly after takeoff and made a single engine landing back at the base. On the 13th, Lt. Hinds had a tire blow out on take-off, causing the plane to crash into an ambulance. Pvt. De Mauro, the driver of the ambulance, was seriously injured.

During the month, we logged 322.20 hours of combat time which includes 84 sorties for the pilots, 17 for bombardiers and 170 for the gunners.

NOVEMBER - 1944

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of November 1944.

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

Officers: 60 Enlisted Men: 310

NARRATIVE

During the month of November very poor flying weather permitted the Group to fly only twelve (12) combat missions. Most of the targets were close support targets against bridges, defended villages, railroad marshaling yards and supply dumps in Germany. On the 4th of the month we had two missions in the air at the same time.

Our squadron started converting to the new A-26 medium bomber on the 16th of the month. The squadron was restricted to the base for one week during which time the combat crews and ground crews attended school for the purpose of studying the new plane. Pilots began checking out in the new ship on the 19th.

On November 19th, Captain Martin was hit in the eye by flak and was forced to land at airfield A-93. The injury was not too serious, however, and he and crew returned to the base a few days later.

While returning from a late mission on the 25th, Lt. Robert L. Wheeler ordered his gunners, Sgt. Ballter and Cpl. Shevlin to bail out. Both gunners landed safely. Lt. Wheeler then landed safely at the 416th airfield.

On the 25th, twelve pilots and eight gunners flew to England in A-20's to ferry A-26's back. They were weathered in till the 9th. Shortly after takeoff, Lt. Kenneth E. Hubbard and Lt. Norman E. Zuber crashed in mid-air, killing both the pilots and Cpl. Guy, a crew chief.

S/Sgt's Epifanio Manriques and Harold W. Davis completed their 65th missions on the 11th of November. On the 30th, Lt. Robert E. Ott and S/Sgt Edgmon left for a medical center and from there will be transferred back to the States. On the same date, S/Sgt. Manriquez and S/Sgt. Davis left for a replacement center and from there will be sent to the States.

During the month, we flew 1,165:35 individual combat hours, 285 individual combat sorties. Our aircraft flew 401.44 combat hours and 230.50 training hours.

DECEMBER - 1944

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of December.

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

Officers: 51 Enlisted Men: 286

2. Awards and Decorations:

BRONZE STAR MEDAL

T/Sgt. Clettis O. Cochran T/Sgt. Floyd E. DeRoo

T/Sgt. John J. Lyons T/Sgt. John J. McGill

Sgt. Richard C. Bauer T/Sgt. Forrest B. Engelhorn

T/Sgt. Patrick P. Kling T/Sgt. John A. McFayden

T/Sgt. Frank J. Omann T/Sgt. Stephen A. Esmieu

T/Sgt. Henry B. Jones T/Sgt. Warren F. Markley

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ONE BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. John C. Higgins 1st Lt. John D. Foote

1st Lt. Richard H. Kollen 1st Lt. Charles V. Garino

S/Sgt. Jerry F. Vaverka S/Sgt. Frank Szymonik

S/Sgt. Cebert C. Austin S/Sgt. Gladden H. Heath

S/Sgt. William E. Wilkerson S/Sgt. Thomas J. Williams

S/Sgt. John K. Showman S/Sgt. Roscoe Morton

2nd BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. William W. Deane S/Sgt. Fidel O. De Luna

S/Sgt. Joseph J. Bennett S/Sgt. James C. Jones

S/Sgt. William K. Kendall

NARRATIVE

The 641st Bombardment Squadron began the month by continuing the program of converting to the A-26 "Invader". The plane presented many new problems. It's larger bomb load, more powerful engines, greater firepower together with the new supply and maintenance problems caused the men of the Squadron many hours of hard work. An excellent job was done by all sections. On the 15th we flew our first mission in the A-26. It was a successful mission. Bombs were dropped on the P.T. and all planes returned safely with no battle damage.

Due to very poor weather, only five combat missions were flown during the month. The targets were mainly against communications in Germany. The A-26 stood up to the highest expectations and the combat crews liked it better with every mission.

During the month eighteen crew members were sent back to the States. Lt. Pearson was the first pilot in the Squadron to finish the required 65 missions. 16 gunners finished their missions and left for the States. They were: Harold W. Davis, Roscoe Morton, Epifanio Manriquez, Cebert C. Austin, Robert Martinez, William E. Wilkerson, D. L. Alexander, Howard A. Curley, Dale E. Watt, Russell G. Starr, Gordon R. Corbett, Richard J. Dixon, John Duzne, Thomas R. Norris, Thomas J. Williams, Harry R. Corwin, Gladden H. Heath, Benjamin E. Moja and John K. Showman.

S/Sgt. Robert L. Lynch was sent back to the States to be a gunnery instructor.

Christmas Day was as much like any other day with one exception - we flew a mission. Target was Munstereifel, Germany, a round trip of 540 miles. Maximum effort was ordered for the Group. Our Squadron furnished seven crews and planes. Weak to moderate flak was encountered and some battle damage was received. All planes returned to the base safely.

Christmas Day was marked by a real Christmas dinner cooked by the Squadron Mess section. The meal consisted of Turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, creamed corn and just about everything else necessary for a Christmas dinner. It was eaten out of the same G. I. Mess Kits, but it tasted mighty good. The "Wheels", consisting of the Master and Tech Sgt., served as K. P.s for the gala occasion.

On the 31st, Major Hawel, Capt. Adams and four gunners; Sgt. Dillard, Sgt. Medice, Sgt. East and Cpl. Kerpec left for one week to the front lines. Capt. Scarbrough took over as Commanding Officer and Capt. Farr as Operations Officer.

Six new crews were added to the Squadron during the month. We flew five missions making a total of 153 combat missions. The five missions included 151 Individual combat sorties, 941:15 individual combat hours and 178.50 aircraft hours. We logged an addition 342:00 training hours.

JANUARY - 1945

History of 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of January 1945.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 January 1945.

Officers: 61 Enlisted Men: 303

2. Promotions.

The following men have been promoted from the rank of Corporal to the rank of Sergeant:

Berle E. Bashor Francis J. McCloskey

Ennis T. Bulsher Glenn A. Vaughan

Richard J. Humrich Ralph P. Bismore

James A. Johnson Marvin F. Himel

Harold S. McClain Louis M. Rainey

Paul D. Phillips David F. Smith

William F. Stineman Gene D. Wright

Ellis P. Cook James C. Burton

Arthur E. Hoelting Eugene Patty

Albert F. Jenik Wayne H. Ritchie

Edward L. Kerpec Walter J. Throckmorton

3. Losses in Action:

1st Lt. Henry M. Simon 2nd Lt. Robert S. Mercer

S/Sgt. Henry L. Westbrook Cpl. Kenneth R. Seay

Cpl. James Barrett Cpl. James J. Stygles

4. Awards and Decorations.

AIR MEDALS

2nd Lt. Earl W. Maples 2nd Lt. Robert S. Mercer

Sgt. Kenneth L. Apperson Cpl. Ralph P. Bismore

Cpl. Ellis P. Cook

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Eugene F. Brooks Cpl. Harold E. McClain

S/Sgt. Henry M. Smiley Cpl. Ennis T. Fulcher

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Pvt. William F. Stineman

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Frank H. Donnelley 2nd Lt. Norman E. Zuber

2nd Lt. John K. Bonnell S/Sgt. Gene D. Wright

Sgt. Lawrence W. Rowland Sgt. Richard W. Morrison

Pvt. Clarence E. Henry

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Henry M. Simon Capt. Frank H. Donnelley

Sgt. Henry L. Westbrook

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Phillip J. Wallen Major Leo Hawel, Jr.

Capt. Frank H. Donnelley

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. John D. Foote S/Sgt. Andrew J. Meshishnek

S/Sgt. Reynold F. Rigali S/Sgt. Ralph V. Roach

S/Sgt. William K. Kendall S/Sgt. John M. Dearth

9th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st. Lt. Leon R. Robinson S/Sgt. Frank Szymonik

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. John C. Higgins, Jr. 1st Lt. Albert S. Bowen

1st Lt. Leon R. Robinson

11th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. John Kuzne

NARRATIVE

Weather kept our Group and Squadron grounded most of the month of January. After 33 briefings we did manage to fly 14 combat missions. The targets were generally against enemy communications and consisted of railroad and road bridges, road junctions, etc. We also attacked key spots behind the now shrinking German "Bulge".

On 22nd of January, Lt.'s Wood and Simon, with their crews, took off with four other planes to participate in what was to be our first low-level attack. Due to low clouds. they were unable to identify the target and did not get on the deck to attack. The target was to be a large concentration of enemy vehicles on a seven-mile stretch of road between Dasburg and Arzfeld, Germany. The Germans had been forced up against the Drum river with the bridges knocked out between them and their only escape route. Our new A-26, with it's terrific forward firing power, should be able to do great damage to a target like this.

On the 23rd of January, the flight took off again. Their briefing and training had been very inadequate and it was known that the enemy would put up considerable flak opposition in defense of this target. The flight was led into the target area by a fighter plane. Four of the six ships did not return to friendly territory, the other two being badly shot up, one making an emergency landing in Luxembourg and one crash landed just barely in friendly territory. Lt. Henry M. Simon and crew, S/Sgt. Henry L. Westbrook and Cpl. Arhur W. Barrett and Lt. Kenneth D. Wood and crew, Cpl. Kenneth R. Seay and Cpl. James J. Stygles, are listed as "missing in action". These are the first crews to be lost in actual combat

Capt. Charles V. Garino and Lt. John E. Maher finished their tour of 65 missions and were transferred to the States. F/O Sidney Goldberg, bombardier-navigator, and Sgt. John W. Souther, gunner, were assigned to the Squadron.

Because of the great German counter-attack in the Luxembourg area, we were restricted to the base most of the month. Some combat crews were given rest leaves in England and seemed to encounter difficulty in returning after their allotted 2 weeks. Paris was the main "pass" city and everyone seemed to enjoy the time spent there

Capt. W. E. Scarbrough, operations officer, and Capt. R. W. Adams, ass't. operations officer, made a trip to the front lines. Lt. William N. Hinds was appointed as acting operations officer during their absence.

During the month we flew 14 combat missions, dispatching 108 aircraft for a total of 395:40 aircraft hours. 309 individual sorties were flown amounting to 1,139 combat hours. 185.40 non-operational hours were flown.

FEBRUARY - 1945

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of February.

1. Strength as of 28 February 1945:

Officers 54 Enlisted Men 299

2. Change of Station:

From Bretigny Airfield (A-48) to Laon/Couvron Airfield (A-70).

Echelons for moves:

1. Reconnaissance: 1 Officer, 10 Enlisted men departed A-48

4 February 1945.

2. Advanced Motor: 2 Officers, 14 Enlisted men departed A-48, 9 February 1945.

3. Advanced Rail: 11 Officers, 104 Enlisted men departed A-48,

9 February 1945.

4. Air Echelon (Rail): 2 Officers, 32 Enlisted men departed A-48,

12 February 1945.

5. Special Purpose: 2 Officers, 12 Enlisted men departed A-48,

12 February 1945

6. Air Flight: 29 Officers, 38 Enlisted men departed A-48, 13 February 1945.

7. Rear Motor: 2 Officers, 25 enlisted men departed A-48, 15 February 1945.

8. Rear Rail: 3 Officers, 47 Enlisted men departed A-48, 14 February 1945, and arrived A-70 at 1730, 15 February 1945, completing the

move.

3. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

AIR MEDAL

Capt. Dorsey L. Martin 1st Lt. Carl Dollmann, Jr.

Capt. John H. Strand, Jr. 2nd Lt. Wendell B. Bossart

1st Lt. Elwin F. Howard 2nd Lt. Earl W. Maple

2nd Lt. Frank J. Tassche S/Sgt. Joseph J. Bennett

S/Sgt. Ralph D. Tobias Sgt. Dallas T. Burkett

Sgt. Kenneth F. Apperson Cpl. Ralph S. Bismore

Cpl. Ellis P. Cook Cpl. Louis M. Rainey

Cpl. Francis J. McCloskey Cpl. Paul D. Phillips

Cpl. William F. Stineman Pvt. Clarence E. Henry

Cpl. David F. Smith Cpl. James C. Burton

Cpl. Richard J. Humrick

PURPLE HEART

Captain Dorsey L. Martin

BRONZE STAR RIBBON

T/Sgt. Vincent J. Krachey, Jr. T/Sgt. James M. McDonough

During the month of February our Squadron participated in 22 combat missions: 7 of which were flown from Bretigny Army Air Field (A-48) and the remainder from our new base at Couvron (A-70). Targets included bridges, defended villages, supply depots and communications centers. We also ran one low level strafing mission. 181 individual sorties, totaling 614:50 combat hours, were flown and an additional 174:50 hours training time was logged.

Six pilots (Captains Higgins, Daniels, and Lt's Hinds, Braucher, Robinson and Horngren) finished their required number of 65 missions to complete their tours in this theater of operations. Captain Higgins and Lt. Horngren left the Squadron for the States. Capt. Garino, who finished his tour in January, also left for the States.

The move from A-48 to A-70 was accomplished very successfully with the loss of only one operational day. The move was divided into eight echelons; reconnaissance, advanced motor, advanced rail, special purpose vehicles, air echelon (by rail), air flight, and rear motor and rear rail. The reconnaissance echelon departed on the 4th of February. The rail (rear) departed on the 14th of February and arrived at 1730, 15th February, completing the move. The air flight echelon departed at 0900, 13th of February, and arrived at 1030, 13 February. The next day, 14th February, they participated in two combat missions. The move in general will make a lot of good conversation when we get back home. For instance, the 1918 soldiers can't tell the rail echelons a thing about riding in "40 and 8's" or about the mud and rain they had to contend with.

Our new station is a much bombed German airfield in the center of a much bombed area. Practically all the buildings on the field, as well as in the small surrounding towns, have been destroyed or damaged by allied bombings. Both runways have been hit several times but one has been patched up and is in serviceable condition. Water has a very high priority and as yet a shower is indeed a great luxury. With characteristic industry, the Squadron personnel are correcting the deficiencies of the new field and we hope to soon have at least as good a set-up as we had at Bretigny. We will, however, always miss Paris.

MARCH - 1945

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of March, 1945

1. Strength as of 31 March 1945

Officers: 66 Enlisted Men: 313

2. AWARDS TO UNIT MEMBERS

PURPLE HEART

S/Sgt. Andrew J. Meshishnek Sgt. James A. Johnson

1st Lt. Raymond M. Cole S/Sgt. Roosevelt L. Guthrie

During the month of March we flew another 43 combat missions to push the total to 230 missions participated in by the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) during the first 12 months of combat flying. Missions were greatly intensified to support the bridgeheads across the Rhine river. Our targets consisted of marshaling yards, road junctions and bridges, ordnance depots, ammunition dumps and landing strips.

On the morning mission of March 5th, Sgt. Forster and Sgt. Basher, thinking something was wrong with the ship, bailed out. They received a few bruises and scratches but returned to the base safely, losing only one mission.

On the 11th of March, shortly after take-off, Lt. Robert T. Mercer's aircraft caught fire. Lt. Mercer and both gunners, Sgt. Kenneth T. Apperson and Sgt. Ralph P. Bismore bailed out. It is believed that Lt. Mercer and Sgt. Bismore hit the ship while clearing it and both were killed. Sgt. Apperson parachuted to safety and received only minor bruises.

On the 18th of the month, Captain Gilbert L. Farr completed his required 65 missions and was immediately transferred to Group Headquarters as Assistant Operations Officer and Group Training Officer.

While crossing the bomb line east of the Remagen bridgehead, March 19th, Major Leo Hawel's aircraft received

a direct hit causing severe damage. Major Hawel and Lt. Raymond M. Cole, bombardier, received minor wounds. S/Sgt. Truett O. Diliard, turret gunner, received serious wounds on the lower and upper parts of his legs. S/Sgt. Eugene M. Nelson, Jr., was uninjured and was able to render first aid to Sgt. Diliard.

3946:15 hours of individual combat time was logged; 1366:50 hours of combat aircraft hours. The squadron also flew 308:25 aircraft hours of aircraft training hours.

APRIL - 1945

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of April.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 30 April 1945

2. MISSING IN ACTION:

Capt. Dewitt C. Flint and Sgt. Edward L. Kerpec missing in action. Cause: A/C received a direct hit by heavy flak fire while on bomb run on Wittenburg, M/Y, 20 April 1945. A/C was seen to crash. No chutes observed.

During the month of April, we flew 25 combat missions bringing our total number flown in the ETO to 255. Due to the rapid advancement made by the ground forces, our target area decreased and the number of targets we could attack was definitely limited. The last few days of the month, the Stod Ammunition Dump in Czechoslovakia was about the only target within our range. The target was assigned to us for 9 consecutive days, but due to very poor weather, we were able to attack it only two times. This target proved to be the last target of the war (in the ETO) for the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L) and 409th Bombardment Group (L). During the month, we also attacked Ordnance Depots, Airfields and Transportation and Communication facilities.

The 20th of April, was the bad day of the month for our squadron. Captain De Witt C. Flint, pilot, and Sgt. Edward L. Kerpec, gunner, were shot down by heavy flak fire over the afternoon target (Wittenburg M/Y). The aircraft was seen to crash and no chutes were observed. On the morning mission, Lt. Robert S. Stevenson, Pilot could not lower the main landing gear of his aircraft and was forced to belly land. The landing was very successful and nobody was hurt. The aircraft was said to be "repairable".

The squadron mess hall was completed and operational. It was a large, portable wooden building, well adapted for use as a mess hall. The orderly room and C. O.'s office were incorporated in one corner of this building. Another building has been added to the area - a beer hall. Beer was brought in from Brussels and furniture (including a piano) was "donated" by the Germans. The buildings have already proven to be well worth the time and effort expended to construct them.

MAY - 1945

History of the 641st Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of May.

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

Officers: 67 Enlisted Men: 296

2. AWARDS TO UNIT MEMBERS:

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

1st Lt. Stanley R. Sebring 1st Lt. Richard H. Kollen

Captain Gilbert L. Farr

SOLDIER'S MEDAL

S/Sgt. Eugene B. Nelson, Jr.

PURPLE HEART

Sgt. Edward I. Kerpec

A L'ORDRE DU CORPS D'ARMEE

Lt. Col. Leo Hawel, Jr.

NARRATIVE

During the month of May, the Squadron participated in two combat missions before the war with Germany was officially declared over. On the 8th and 9th of May, all operations ceased in celebration of the end of the European phase of the war. Realizing that one powerful enemy still had to be defeated before the war could really be called finished, the celebration was restrained and consisted mostly of small expeditions into the local villages combined with plenty of sack time.

In true army tradition, on the 11th of May an intense training program was inaugurated. Instrument flying and low level formation flying was emphasized. Aircraft recognition and lectures on C.B.I. warfare keep the combat crews busy during their non-flying hours.

Our Commanding Officer, Leo Hawel, Jr., was promoted from Major to Lt. Colonel. Other promotions included Captain Donn E. Lando, Squadron Executive, to Major. Lt's Norman F. Ruhle, Squadron Adjutant, and Bernard J. Gechter, Squadron Communications Officer, to Captain.

Lt. Colonel Hawel was honored with the L'ORFDRE DU CORPS D'ARMEE under secret orders. Captain Tommy Farr, Lt's Richard H. Kollen and Stanley R. Sebring received the Distinguished Flying Cross. Sgt. Edward I. Kerpec received the Purple Heart and S/Sgt. Eugene B. Nelson, Jr., received the Soldier's Medal.

The later part of the month was spent not only in training but in preparation for a move. Rumors covered every possibility, good or bad, but generally indicated that we would go to the C.B.I. through the States. This we all hoped for and believed. The move was supposed to take place on the 27th of May but was indefinitely delayed.

The "point system" of release from the army went into effect on the 12th of May, and shortly after S/Sgt. John J. McGill, having collected a total of 127 points, was relieved from his assignment to the squadron and started for the United States. S/Sgt. Joseph D. Allain was sent to the United States on the army rotation plan.

Captain William E. Scarbrough, Jr. returned to the States after completing 64 missions. Captain Scarbrough had been our Squadron Operations Officer throughout our tour in the E.T.O. Captain Wallen was made Operations

Officer with Lt. Dollman as assistant.

The Squadron participated in a total of 257 combat missions in the E.T.O. before the completion of the war. During the month, we flew 2 missions totaling 183:50 combat hours and 80:40 aircraft hours. 1410:15 training hours were flown.

As the month of May comes to a close, the 641st will no longer act as a separate unit but will merge with the other squadrons into the parent organization, the 409th Bombardment Group (L).