

642ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)

1943 -- 1945

Activation

The 642nd 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. Joseph J. May 21 June 1943 - 4 October 1943

Lt Colonel (then Maj.) Lewis W. Stocking 4 October 1943 - July 1944

Major Charles W. Gustafson July 1944 - 14 January 1945

Lt. Colonel (then Maj.) Joseph J. May 14 January 1945 - May 1945

(or later)

Assignments

At the time of activation the 642d 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 642d Bombardment Squadron (Light) was inactivated on 24 November 1945, at Westover Army Air Field, Massachusetts.

The 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), was activated on 20 June 1943 at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, by authority of Special Order No. 28 Par 4, Headquarters, 56th Bombardment Training Wing (L), Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma. The men who comprised the original cadre came from the 46th Bombardment Group (L), Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma.

The following Officers and Enlisted men comprised the key personnel of the original cadre of the newly activated squadron:

OFFICERS

1st Lt. Joseph J. May Commanding Officer

1st Lt. Ewing R. Hill Squadron S-2

1st Lt. Robert A. Nason Squadron Surgeon

2nd Lt. James s. Howard 2-Engine Pilot

2nd Lt. Richard K. Bills 2-Engine Pilot

2nd Lt. Gerald A. Autin 2-Engine Pilot

2nd Lt. Rex T. Winn 2-Engine Pilot

2nd Lt. Jackson T. Sewell 2-Engine Pilot

2nd Lt. Ludwig Hammer Engineering Officer

2nd Lt. William A. Coppeak, Jr. Ordnance Officer

2nd Lt. Paul A. Mc Masters Armament Officer

2nd Lt. Henry L. Wishman Supply Officer

2nd Lt. Walter T. Conner 2-Engine Pilot

ENLISTED MEN

F. Sgt. Adriel A. Ritchie First Sergeant

M/Sgt. Roy P. O'Quin Line Chief

Cpl. Edward J. Oestreich Personnel Sgt. Major

M/Sgt. Abner H. Peters Communications Chief

T/Sgt. Ned (NMI) Cates Armament Chief

T/Sgt. Steven E. Spurgus Ordnance Chief

Pvt. William O. Gilbert Intelligence Chief Clerk

S/Sgt. Mack C. Fowler Mess Sergeant

S/Sgt. Charles G. Purcell Transportation NCO

S/Sgt. David E. Smith Supply Sergeant

S/Sgt. Robert Q. Milovich Tech Supply NCO

S/Sgt. Robert J. Trapnell Operations Chief Clerk

HEADQUARTERS

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:

642ND BOMB SQ.(L)

OFFICERS

1ST LT. JOSEPH J. MAY Commanding Officer

1ST LT. ROBERT A. MASON 2ND LT. HENRY L. WICHMAN

2ND LT. JACKSON C. SEWELL 2ND LT. JAMES S. HEYWARD

2ND LT. RICHARD K. BILLS 2ND LT GERALD A. AUTIN

2ND LT REX T. WINN 2ND LT. WALTER T. CONNER

1ST LT. EWING R. HILL 2ND LT. LUDWIG F. HAMMER

2ND LT. WILLIAM A. COPPEAK, JR 2ND LT. PAUL E. MC MASTERS

ENLISTED MEN

1st Sgt. Adriel A. Ritchie S/Sgt. David E. Smith

Sgt. Robert W. Milovich Sgt. Robert J. Trapnell

Pvt. William O. Gilbert Pfc. J. DeWane Sheets

S/Sgt. Dale C. Penfold Cpl. Edward J. Oestreich

T/Sgt. Lonie E. Estep Pfc. Lawrence O. Hensley

T/Sgt. Ned Gates Sgt. John P. Hanley

Pvt. Peter Kostulias Pvt. William D. McKinnon

Pfc. Louis B. Johnson Sgt. Oscar W. Stackpole

T/Sgt. Abner H. Peters Cpl. Robert A. Black

Pfc. William W. Lash M/Sgt. Roy P. O'quin

M/Sgt. Paul C. Wilson T/Sgt. Bernard A. Kraft

S/Sgt. Verne E. Weiger M/Sgt. Kenton W. Rogers

T/Sgt. William P. Barth T/Sgt. Robert W. O'Banion

S/Sgt. Howard W. Parker Cpl. Dean L. Jones

Sgt. James R. Ford Cpl. James R. Gatlin, Jr.

Cpl. James W. Kimmel Cpl. Alvin O. Brown

Cpl. John E. Duke Sgt. Max C. Fowler

Pfc. Leemond H. Scott Cpl. Emerson M. Stauffer

S/Sgt. Charles G. Purcell T/Sgt. Ronald C. Norman

Sgt. Raymond E. Bentley Cpl. Donald D. Parker

Sgt. Raymond G. Paris Sgt. Gordon W. Dupleth

Cpl. George G. Caglase Sgt. William G. Gaier

Sgt. John L. Black Pvt. Harry S. Spangler

Pvt. Albert Benoit Pvt. Lloyd N. Sommerfield

Sgt. Robert A. Hotz Pvt. Nathan Greenberg

Pvt. Robert S. Graham Pvt. John E. Waller

Pvt. Burlin L. Harris Pvt. Francis M. Shuwoy

Sgt. Otto Wallin S/Sgt. Steven E. Spurgus

Cpl. Ernest P. Caruso Pfc. Romie O. Burton

Pfc Charles A. Moring

2. All O of Hq 409th Bomb Group (L) are atchd to 642nd Bomb Sq (L) for adm; and all EM Hq 409th Bomb Group (L) are atchd to 642nd 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"

This squadron has its primary mission the task of training a group of men, proficient in different fields, into a fighting team, qualified and capable of operating as a single unit in battle.

After the cadre was activated on 21 June 1943, the first phase of training began. This consisted of setting up all the various departments, acquiring all the necessary supplies and equipment, and filling in the needed personnel required to make a complete squadron of 38 Officers and 253 Enlisted men. Commencing this phase, flying operations were limited to one day a week, because the equipment required had to be borrowed from the parent group. Our equipment came from the 53rd Bomb Sq. (L), 46 Bomb Gp. (L).

Valuable training was received from the parent group the first eight weeks of our existence. The original cadre also enjoyed leaves and furloughs during this period.

Although the squadron was to be up to 100 % Table of Organization strength by the beginning of the second phase of training, only 80% of the required personnel had been assigned. Half of the second phase, approximately 4 weeks, was devoted to training the personnel of the operational and engineering section of the squadron. This was done at the parent group and all men received at least 4 hours of training a day. While this training was in session, the line was functioning properly. The school schedule was carefully set up to permit half of the squadron to be at work while the other half was in school.

Although this squadron did not participate in any combined missions, the pilots, bombardiers, and gunners were sent on individual training missions. The intelligence section received valuable training in briefing and interrogating these crews before and after missions.

In the later part of this phase, packing boxes and crates were made to facilitate moving to our third phase. Sgt. Robert A. Hotz, is to be complimented on his splendid carpentry work.

The squadron moved to Woodward Army Air Field, Oklahoma on 1 October 1943 to start the third phase of

training.

On December 1st, 1943, the squadron again moved. This time to Pounds Field, Tyler, Texas, where they received more intensive training through maneuvers and

bivouacs.

The move was accomplished partially by train and partially by motor convoy. Squadron was allotted one mess car, one box car and one baggage car to transfer there equipment and supplies which could not be loaded into the trucks. The trucks were loaded and driven onto flat cars for the movement.

On December 12, 1943, the Squadron moved to DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Louisiana, from Pounds Army Air Field, Tyler, Texas.

ADJUTANTS REPORTS

. The Squadron Intelligence Officer was pressed to serve in the capacity of acting Adjutant until sufficient officer personnel were assigned to relieve him. The relief came just four (4) days before the conclusion of the first phase of training when Lt. Donald L. Closson was assigned to the duty of Adjutant.

Officially, the squadron had started out with a cadre of fifty-nine enlisted men from the 45th Bombardment Group (L) and only thirteen (13) officers. The in-flow of necessary personnel was rapid and by the end of the first phase, the totals stood like this: Enlisted Men, two hundred and eight (209), Officers, twenty-five (25).---a fine looking bunch of men to start out with.

Our squadron functioned separate from the "line" and therefore difficulties were few and far between. Those few "disciplinary" cases which arose were easily taken care of.

Our second phase, though only one (1) month long, was entirely too short and bristling with business and duty. The OTU school had begun to operate and training of section personnel was its business and we got it in smart doses, "filing", "forms", "records", and "reports".

The flying personnel of the unit were seriously handicapped by the fact that we only had one (1) B-225 and two (2) A-20G airplanes for training use. Although the enlisted strength remained constant, the officer (pilot) members increased to T/O strength for thirty-five by the ninth (9) of September.

The bright feather-in-our-cap was the way we stood at inspection time,--inspections were frequent during this period and the 642nd Bomb Sq (L) always received a report marked "excellent". Reason: "work and win" was the watchword.

On 2 October 1943 we moved from Will Rogers Field to Woodward Army Air Field. I feel that at this point, we began operating on a basis that had heretofore not been realized. A feeling of independence and the first actual indication of the job that was ahead of us became evident.

Immediately, provision were made to encase records and files in convertible

packing and filing cabinets. This made our records easily accessible and proved very practical. The Orderly Room could be completely set up for operation 20 minutes after the arrival of equipment and files. An example of this is the move to Pounds Field, Tyler, Texas. The Orderly Room was operating fully within 30 minutes time after the arrival of equipment.

Frequent inspections by higher headquarters constituted a continual check on our imperfections. They undoubtedly served to keep us on our toes although it seems that these inspections were a little too frequent and caused some confusion as well as loss of time. Also, there has been conflictions between various inspectors as to the perfection of records in accordance with all existing regulations and memoranda. For instance, there was a variance of opinion on just what information should be on the Form 81. On the Form 20, Enlisted Man's Qualification cards there were several items which inspectors seemed to disagree upon. Two items that I recall at present are the stamping of form 20's for Basic Chemical Warfare and Religious Preference. All of these things have been clarified but at the time they created minor complications

Downward reclassification has also been troublesome. The greatest problem in this connection, has been the non-availability of authorized persons who are responsible for handling such reclassifications. Consequently, downward reclassifications, regardless of their importance to the squadron, were handled through channels which I consider too slow and sometimes an unsatisfactory method.

November 30th found our Organization in good shape administratively and with hard work I am sure we shall meet our goal.

December will probably be known as the "clean-up" month for all sections of this Squadron. In regard to the Personnel Section, all records and administrative functions were brought up to date as completely as possible. An interview of each man in the squadron, in connection with his records, provided a check against all entries and any discrepancies found were immediately corrected.

This section was inspected by the Third Bomber Command, Fifty-Sixth Training Wing and the 409th Bombardment Group, during the month of December, which served as a very helpful factor in aiding us to get our section accurately aimed at our goal, that is having our records,etc, ready for the POM inspection.

The receipt of Alert Orders stimulated the Squadron into high "gear" and, most nights the men could be found working at their jobs, uncomplainingly, to ensure completion of the many duties and jobs. The POM and AIR POM's were followed to condition us in as many respects as were applicable at this date.

The problem of overages and shortages in personnel presented its difficulties during this period. The Base Classification worked with us on these problems, some of which were taken care of by necessary reclassifications of Enlisted Men who were found to be better qualified in other than their present MOS. Also, some overages were taken care of due to the fact that they were physically unqualified for overseas duty. However, this was merely happenstance and there still remains a certain amount of overages and shortages in the Squadron.

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The above is a brief synopsis of the more important features of the month of December in-as-much as this Section is concerned.

OPERATIONS

Before operations can begin to function in its proper capacity, sufficient personnel must be secured to operate. That is briefly what occurred during the first two phases of our training. Reaching full T/O strength and the completion of all transition flying were the immediate objectives of the first two phases of combat training. Operations clerks and officers were required to attend the OTU school then in effect on the field.

By September 28th, 1943, the following increase in personnel was noted; pilot and bombardier strength was at T/O requirement level; we were only twenty-three gunners short to complete the combat crew personnel roster. So far as the clerical and administrative end of operations was concerned, we were one (1) ground officer and three (3) clerks under the "line".

The training schedules were in operation and the following results were noticed. Of the twelve pilots we had, all had flown the A-20 type airplane, with the only exception being the recently assigned, of which there were only two. One of the above mentioned exceptions to the flying officers was attached to this squadron for flying but he was assigned directly to the 409th Group. Our flight leaders had over one hundred (100) hours, the wing men had almost the same. At the time of this report, there were only (6) pilots with less than ten (10) hours of time in the A-20 type aircraft.

All operations personnel had received full credit for the OTU school training. The available facilities varied considerably during the first two phases of training, depending on the air field at which we were stationed (I.E., Will Rogers Field, or Woodward Army Air Field). Pilot and gunner actual airborne training was limited considerably due to the fact that we had only three (3) airplanes assigned to the squadron during these two phases.

At Woodward Army Air Field, Oklahoma, the squadron started the attitude to make this outfit the best in the Army Air Forces.

Soon after the squadron arrived at Woodward, Capt. May (then Lt. May) was relieved of his command by Major Lewis W. Stocking, a West Point graduate. He received his wings at Kelly Field, Texas, on 21 June 1940. Under his able guidance, the outfit has come far in its goal as a combat squadron. On the 29th of October 1943, Captain Charles W. Gustafson joined the squadron as Operations Officer.

On 3 October 1943, Lt. Holmes while ferrying an A-20 to the new base, experienced trouble with one engine. After ordering his gunners to bail out he crash landed in a field destroying the airplane. No injuries occurred.

Two single engine unscheduled landings also were made during this phase of training.

One of the most important aspects of the training at Woodward was bombing and gunnery for the pilots and

bombardier-navigators. Nearly every other day was spent at Jett, Oklahoma, also known as Great Salt Plains Range. Of twenty-two pilots and bombardier-navigators, twelve qualified.

Training at Woodward was curtailed because of lack of gasoline, bad weather and high winds. Despite these difficulties, the squadron was in fine shape by the time maneuvers and the fourth phase came along. The table of organization had been completed and the squadron was at full strength.

Inspections made by higher echelons proved that the squadron was shaping up into a fine fighting team, worthy of any league or opponent.

The enlisted men enjoyed a fine beer party on the 20th of October 1943. As no officers were present, the men were completely relaxed and made a night of it.

INTELLIGENCE

The Intelligence Section of this squadron was in the formative period during the first two phases of combat training. The team which was to supply the Squadron Commander with his enemy information was being welded into a coordinated and efficient medium for the dissemination of the facts and estimate which were later to be required of us. The personnel of the section consisted of the S-2 and his chief clerk. Without an intelligence minded clerk what great work can be accomplished? Our earlier days routine was mainly the maintenance of well ordered "files" and accurate journalizing the transpiring events related to our duties. Situation maps were maintained and posted daily with information gathered from numerous sources (IE, newspapers, journals, and radio reports).

The high lights of these days were those periods when the squadron had permitted us the employment of the aircraft on missions. The Intelligence Section was responsible for the missions briefing and interrogation, which was done by the Intelligence Officer. Concluding the missions the required forms were prepared and submitted to the Group Intelligence Officer.

The first phase lasted from July 1, 1943 until September 1, 1943, during which period we were stationed at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma. We should have been at full T/O by September but we were not. Our personnel consisted of only Two (2) officers instead of three (3) and only three (3) clerks to do the work which required five (5). However, at the time of this composition, the section only lacks one (1) clerk and no officers.

School days came in the second phase. Our clerks and officers attend two (2) hours a day, five (5) days a week. This schooling consisted of lectures and demonstrations by qualified personnel, on numerous and varied subjects related to the duties and expected demands on the intelligence personnel. After classes, the usual activities of the section were carried on.

By this time we had begun to receive a regular in-flow of classified material which was systematically disseminated to those concerned, - Commander, pilot or gunner. Those reports from combat theaters did wonders at alerting the combat crews and stimulating their interest in the intelligence problems.

The second phase of our combat training terminated with the movement to Woodward Army Air Field, (which confirmed the rumors we had been hearing). That was our first real security problem, --"too much talk in the wind!"

The principal problem encountered by the Intelligence Section during the third phase was that of acquiring and training competent enlisted personnel assigned to the Intelligence Section will have had previous experience in

intelligence work and they are to be trained by the section to which they are assigned. To make this training as effective as possible, however, it is necessary that a full complement of enlisted men be assigned to the section as soon as possible after the squadron is activated. Training at the base should take place as soon as the squadron is brought up to full strength, in order that there be sufficient time for the adequate training of the men. The T/O of the Intelligence Section calls for five enlisted men, classified by MOS as 501's and 502's. Until early in November 1943, , half way through the third phase of training, only three enlisted men were assigned to the section. One of these had a MOS classification of 070, so that he could not and cannot be considered as part of the permanent personnel of the section. Between November 8, 1943 and November 16, 1943, three more men were assigned to the section, bringing it up to full strength.

Despite the handicap mentioned in the preceding paragraph, it is considered that the training of the section personnel is progressing satisfactorily. Training has consisted of instruction and indoctrination in usual and standard intelligence subjects, such as function and operation of Combat Intelligence; reports records and forms; office routine; aircraft identification; briefing; interrogation; counter-intelligence; and the like.

The Intelligence Section has also given training in intelligence subjects to the entire squadron and particular sections thereof (particularly flying personnel) in subjects such as aircraft, naval vessel and armored vehicle identification and military security. In this connection, the section has had the fullest cooperation from the Commanding Officer and the other sections of the squadron, which has greatly facilitated its work.

Personnel of the Intelligence Section at the end of the third phase consisted of the following officers and men:

Captain Robert D. Gordon (assigned, October 1943)

Lieutenant Ewing R. Hill

Lieutenant William Guajardo

Sergeant William O. Gilbert

Sergeant Wallace D. Patton (assigned , November 1943)

Corporal Seymour M. Bag

Corporal Henry m. Hafer (assigned, November 1943)

Corporal Charles J. Mc Colloch

Private Ralph C. Zimmerman (assigned, November 1943)

Lieutenant Jerome Perlmuter, who was assigned to the section at the beginning of the phase, was transferred to Group Headquarters in November 1943. Corporal McColloch was promoted from the grade of Private in October

1943.

SUPPLY SECTION

Without supplies, "Men-of-Battle" are useless. We of supply section realized our duty early and set out to accomplish our mission to the squadron. The personnel of the section consisted of a Supply Officer, Sergeant, and the clerks. The duties were mainly setting up procedure for properly outfitting the squadron through the medium of salvage, exchange and repairs. Days were designated for the specific processes mentioned above. The execution of the same processes were accomplished by cooperation with the base quartermaster. The few difficulties encountered during the first phase necessitated carrying the issuing of supplies and equipment into the second phase. All squadrons were supplied with the requisites of their proper operation. Our first phase terminated on September 1st, 1943.

Completion of the final arrangements for the securing of all necessary equipment and supplies were made by the beginning of the second phase. The section carried on its usual activities after the termination of the OTU schooling. Shortages in field equipment for the enlisted men were made available and issued. These shortages were discovered during the frequent inspections of personal equipment by the officers of the squadron in cooperation with the supply section.

By the beginning of the second phase, the clerical staff of the section had increased two (2) clerks. With all personnel present it was possible to accomplish the daily, weekly and monthly inventories of stock more easily and efficiently.

Definite plans for evacuating were formulated governing the collection of Officers' and EM' salvage and the return of supplies and equipment issued to the various departments for operations and final disposition of the supplies and equipment issued to this organization by the base quartermaster unit.

SUPPLY PERSONNEL

During the month of December 1943, the personnel of the Supply Section consisted of the following:

Lt. Henry L. Wichman - Supply Officer

S/Sgt. D. E. Smith - Supply Sergeant

Sgt. William H. Powell - Clerk

Sgt. Arthur X. Bianchi - Clerk

Sgt. Powell was promoted from the grade of Corporal to Sergeant per Par. #3, SO# 118, HQ 409th Bomb Gp (L), Dated December 23, 1943. In addition to the above named members of the section, Pvt. George Elias is serving as "the Tailor" which was his profession as a civilian. Extra help has been needed during this stage in order to complete the issuance of P.O.M. equipment. Various sections of the squadron have cooperated in the matter by "lending" us a man for a specific period of time in order to assist in the distribution of the numerous items.

Leaves and furloughs were the bright spots in the sections chain of events during the month of December (some extended into January). Every man in the organization was granted an opportunity to go home for a few days. Although this curtailed the sections activity somewhat, we were always able to function effectively without them.

SUPPLY - MOVES

During the month of December we made two moves. The first move was to Pounds Army Airfield, Tyler, Texas. This move was accomplished partially by train and partially by motor convoy. We were allotted one mess car, one box car and one baggage car to transfer our equipment and supplies which could not be loaded into the trucks. The trucks were loaded and driven onto flat cars for the movement.

The second move was to our present station at DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Louisiana. This change of station was executed entirely by motor convoy on December 15th and 16th, 1943. We followed the same procedure in organizing our new supply set-up as was laid out by the group for the other squadrons which had arrived here two (2) weeks earlier from Woodward.

Personnel and some baggage was transferred by plane in the majority of cases thus eliminating the personal baggage problem. Our move was effectively made by motor convoy and the new supply room was ready for business on December 17, 1943. Each new move had taught us another lesson in packing, crating and storing equipment. We learned to use the crates to their maximum advantage as well as all the space in the boxes.

SUPPLY PROCEDURES

While stationed at Pounds Field, Tyler, Texas, we experienced our first operation with a Service Group. All previous supply problems had been handled through sub-depots and the Quartermaster supply organizations. Here at Tyler, we worked with the 44th Service Group, stationed at Barksdale Field, Shreveport, Louisiana. At the time maneuvers were being conducted by the Operations Section and this simulated conditions of supply as they were to be found in actual combat theater. There were no difficulties encountered in the operations. The detachment of the 44th Service Group then stationed at Pounds Field worked harmoniously with us in all matters of requisition and salvage and compliance with "back-orders".

Upon arrival at DeRidder Army Air Base, our sources of supplies reverted to sub-depots and the Quartermaster agencies. There were no difficulties in obtaining shortages and filling requisitions during this period due to the high priority of the unit. The depots were well stocked but the Quartermaster Supply did not stock "non-tariff-sizes" which we required. This was particularly true in the case of shoes, rain coats and underwear. We also had some difficulty in obtaining sufficient quantities of "coveralls". During this entire period we were continually issuing clothing and equipment in preparation for the P.O.M. and other inspections which had to be met.

SUPPLY INSPECTIONS

Inspections of the supply sections were made by the following higher headquarters:

Third Bomber Command - December 27th, 1943

Third Air Force - December 30th, 1943

Favorable reports were received from both. A few minor discrepancies were noted and corrected immediately.

The unit had been previously inspected by the organization Commander, Major Stocking and the Supply Officer to ascertain what specific action might be required of us to further service their needs.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
TO
642ND BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)
409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP)L)
DE RIDDER ARMY AIR BASE
DE RIDDER, LOUISIANA

25 DECEMBER 1943

As we draw to the close of our period of growth into a fighting combat team, I sincerely wish to thank and congratulate every man in the hardest working squadron in the Army Air Forces for his part in preparing us for what will be the greatest, the most important year of our lives. May the coming year bring us victory, that every man will again know Christmas in peace. Merry Christmas and A Victorious New Year.

(Signed) Major Lewis W. Stocking

M E N U

STUFFED CELERY GREEN OLIVE

SWEET PICKLES

ROAST YOUNG TURKEY TOMS

SAGE DRESSING CRANBERRY SAUCE

GIBLET GRAVY BUTTERED PEAS

SNOWFLAKES POTATOES CANDIED YAMS

CREAMED CORN

PARKER HOUSE ROLLS

PLUM PUDDING WITH SAUCE SPICE CAKE

APPLE PIE ICE CREAM

FRUIT PUNCH MILK

COFFEE MIXED NUTS

ASSORTED CANDIES

CIGARETTES

DOOR PRIZES

Menu Prepared by:

Mess Sgt Mack C. Fowler.

The following men were in attendance to enjoy the specially prepared traditional Christmas Dinner:

MAJOR

Lewis W. Stocking Rockford, Ill.

CAPTAINS

Robert D. Gordon New York City, N. Y.

Charles W. Gustafson Worcester, Mass.

Joseph J. May Havre, Montana

Robert A. Nason Garrett, Indiana

FIRST LIEUTENANTS

Gerald A. Autin Ponchatoola, Louisiana

Richard K. Bills Brighton, Mass.

Walter T. Conner Lexington, Ky.

William A. Coppeak, Jr. Fort Worth, Texas

William J. Daner Mt Clemens, Michigan

Eugene W. DeChene Elk River, Minn.

William L. Hayden Rocky River, Ohio

James S. Howard Goldsboro, N. C.

Ewing R. Hill Austin, Texas

Warren G. Moses New Orleans, La.

Emanuel P. Peters Columbia, Pa.

William M. Ryan Tilden, Nebraska

Robert L. Rose Chicago, Illinois

Rex T. Winn Detroit, Michigan

SECOND LIEUTENANTS

Edmund A. Clement Durant, Oklahoma

Donald L. Closson Portland, Oregon

William M. Cook Lansing, Michigan

Nehemiah Donskoy Trenton, N. J.

Robert J. Downing Cincinnati, Ohio

Glen W. Gerring So Boardman, Mich.

Charles C. Greer Zanesville, Ohio

William L. Guajardo Shreveport, La.

George W. Hicks, Jr. Chattanooga, Tenn.

William P. Holmes Auburn, N. Y.

Charles A. Hunton, Jr. Blytheville, Ark.

Michael W. McEvilly Brooklyn, N. Y.

John D. Moon Griswold, Iowa

John C. Moore, Jr. Governor's Island, N. Y.

Lewis B. Pratt Sapulpa, Oklahoma

Thomas R. Sammons Benton, Ky.

Earl Wheeler Butte, Montana

Michael A. Walek Butler, Pa.

Henry L. Wichman Farmington, Mo

FLIGHT OFFICER

Kaye G. Morrison Richfield, Vt.

FIRST SERGEANT

Adriel A. Ritchie Bagdad, Ky.

MASTER SERGEANTS

William P. Barth Lyndon, Ky.

Bernard A. Kraft Cleveland, Ohio

Roy P. O'Quin Baton Rouge, La.

Abner H. Peters Kistler, W. Va.

Kenton W. Rogers Chicago, Ill.

Verne E. Weiger Argos, Indiana

Paul C. Wilson Columbus, Ohio

TECH SERGEANTS

Raymond E. Bentley Hatley, Wisconsin

Gordon W. Dukleth Kalispell, Montana

William G. Gaier Springfield, Ohio

John P. Hanley Chicago, Illinois

Ronald C. Norman Fort Worth, Texas

Robert W. Parker Louisville, Ky.

Raymond G. Paris Franklin, Indiana

George S. Plasterer Lancaster, Pa.

Steven E. Spurgus Glouster, Ohio

STAFF SERGEANTS

Robert A. Black Canton, Ohio

Wiley A. Brown Locust Grove, Ga.

Ernest P. Caruso Midland, Pa.

Earl L. Dams Pound, Wisc.

Stephen J. Feher Toledo, Ohio

Mack C. Fowler Wellington, Texas

JamesR. Gatlin Little Rock, Ark.

Robert A. Hotz Fremont, Ohio

Dean L. Jones Cherokee, Okla.

Elmer Lundstrom, Jr. Iona, Michigan

Willaim A. Meldrum Mt Clemens, Mich.

Robert W. Milovich DeKalb, Illinois

Ralph L. Negley Alameda, Calif.

Anthony Nigro Omaha, Nebraska

Charles D. O'Donnell Bonne Terre, Mo.

Edward J. Oestreich Miami, Florida

Donald D. Parker Kenesaw, Nebraska

Charles G. Purcell Baltimore, Maryland

John E. Rublein Marquette, Mich.

David E. Smith Forest Hill, W. Va.

Francis N. Sokolowski Bayside, L.I., N. Y.

Oscar W. Stackpole Lumberport, W. Va.

Robert J. Trapnell Cleveland, Ohio

Arnold M. Wallace Acy, Louisiana

Otto Wallin Escanaba, Michigan

Raymond L. Wilkerson Indianapolis, Ind.

John Yusko Bentleyville, Pa.

SERGEANTS

Robert G. Anderson Glen Ellen, Illinois

Edward T. Ankeny Blue Earth, Minn.

John L. Black Denver, Colorado

Arthur X. Bianchi New Haven, Conn.

Henry M. Bohlsen Clara City, Mich.

Theodore P. Breslauer Chicago, Illinois

Alvin O. Brown Marysville, Calif.

Frank E. Burke Cashion, Okla.

Romie O. Burton Hettick, Illinois

Charles L. Byroad Monon, Indiana

George G. Caglase Fort Worth, Texas

Tom C. Cuccia Cleveland, Ohio

Frank David Gunnison, Colo.

Donald W. Deal Galesburg, Ill.

Roger Dennett Rising Sun, Indiana

Charles M. Detmer Griffin, Georgia

John E. Duke Williamstown, Mass.

Billy G. Eads San Francisco, Calif.

Michael F. Eona Los Angeles, Calif.

Geoffrey, N. Erickson Detroit Lakes, Minn.

Clifford, O. Fast Point Richmond, Calif.

Willie T. Faulk Como, Texas

Joseph J. Fino Milford, Mass.

James R. Ford, Jr. Los Angeles, Calif.

George A. Fry Lawton, Oklahoma

Joseph L. Furlong Akron, Ohio

Aubrey W. Gillespie Atlanta, Georgia

Millard C. Gillespie Hawthorne, Calif.

William O. Gillespie Amarillo, Texas

Roy B. Grimes Lodge Pole, Nebraska

William P. Hancock National City, Calif.

Elmer C. Hanvold Minniapolis, Minn.

John J. Hegwood Chester, So. Car.

Theodore J. Hiller Hubron, Nebraska

William N. Houle San Gabriel, Calif.

Alfred A. James New York City, N. Y.

James W. Kimmel Prague, Oklahoma

George K. Klinge Belmont, Wisconsin

Joseph J. Kubin, Jr. Baltimore, Maryland

Edwin C. Leneave St. Petersburg, Fla.

Willaim D. McKinnon Malden, Mass.

Walter Malthe Hancock, Wisconsin

Clayton, R. Martin Sidney, Miss.

Richard L. Munn Berea, Ohio

Robert A. Needham Ronan, Montana

Wallace D. Patten Alcester, So. Dakota

Joseph T. Perry Runford, Maine

William J. Quillman Sesser, Illinois

Wilbert D. Reed Carrolton, Illinois

Leemond H. Scott DeKalb, Illinois

John Shary Mahaney Plane, Pa.
Francis M. Shuwoy Somerset, Pa.
Emerson M. Stauffer Spencerville, Ohio
Robert E. Summers Chicago, Illinois
William F. Swartz Louisa, Va.
Charles E. Taylor El Dorrado, Arkansas
Robert O. Turner Ridgeville, Indiana
Norman C. Von Oppen Chicago, Ill.
Clifford, C. Wittenbraker Evansville, Indiana
Jack C. Zeider Niles, Michigan

CORPORALS

George E. Apple Elon College, No. Car.
John Q. Adams Lebanon, N. H.
Seymour M. Bag Brooklyn, N. Y.
Alfonse S. Balkas Binghamton, N. Y.
Louis E. Beckel Columbus, Ohio
Albert Benoit Fall River, Mass.
Arthur L. Bogan McAllister, Okla.
Ralph C. Burge Detroit, Mich.
Glen R. Burrill Woodland, Wash.
George H. Burroughs Warren, Pa.
Mark Brklacich Flat Rock, Mich.
Jay K. Brown Santa Clara, Calif.
Michael G. Cavin Sharonville, Ohio
Richard M. Collins Buffalo, N. Y.
Edward C. Commyn Grosse Pointe, Mich.
Clyde D. Conway Brinkman, Okla.
Elof V. Dahl Wichendon, Mass
Lalen A. Davenport Nashville, Tenn.

Kenneth M. Doucey Ottawa, Illinois
Robert L. Elliot Thomaston, Georgia
Karl V. Faddis American Fork, Utah
Allen R. Fahringer Allentown, Pa.
John H. Fanton Reno, Nevada
Donald A. Fogo Spring Green, Wisc.
Julian Gajewski Willock, Pa.
Robert Garcia Montpelier, Vt.
Donald Godshalk Northampton, Pa.
Emmett J. Green Toledo, Ohio
Frank M. Grimsley Moore's Hill, Ind.
Carl T. Gross Fort Madison, Iowa
Stanley H. Guethe New Albany, Ind.
Ralph E. Guild Austin, Minnesota
Henry M. Hafer New York City, N. Y.
Carl S. Hart Frisco, Texas
Lawrence O. Hensley Jefferson City, Mo.
Cecil M. Hindman Edgewood, Texas
Elmer E. Hinson Springfield, Ohio
Harley L. Holtan Washburn, N. Dakota
John C. Hoover Macon, Ga.
Manson F. Hunt Portland, Maine
Raymond C. Jinkins Trenton, Texas
John E. Johnson, Jr. South Carver, Mass.
John Kazanjian Jersey City, N. J.
Walter Kincak Pittsburgh, Pa.
Edward C. Knipper Lansford, Pa.
Walter Kolinek New York City, N. Y.
William W. Lash Los Angeles, Calif.

Morris Liebowitz Meriden, Conn,
Charles J. McColloch Washington, D. C.
Floyd Mc Farland Durant, Oklahoma
Richard H. McKenzie Shelby, Ohio
Samuel Meltzer Brooklyn, N. Y.
Edward A. Micksak Hartford, Conn.
William K. Moncrief Claxton, Ga.
Charles A. Moring Richmond, Ga.
Socrates Moshos Dayton, Ohio
Nels A. Nelson Petalulma, Ca.
William A. Pack Brooklyn, N. Y.
Francis L. Parrish Orange, Calif.
William H. Powell Cincinnati, Ohio
Walter W. Restler Bronx, N. Y.
Samuel Romano Phillipsburg, N. J.
Joseph F. Rudolph Philadelphia, P. A.
Paul E. Runde Teutopolis, Ill.
Edward L. Schwartzreich Mamaroneck, N. Y.
J. Dewane Sheets Chicago, Ill.
Herbert D. Smith Hillsboro, Ohio
Lloyd N. Sommerfield Chicago, Ill.
Gerald Swidler New York City, N. Y.
Roy A. Vanderberg Chicago, ILL..
Roy C. Webster Fitchburg, Mass.
Virgil L. Wolfe Pleasant Green, Mo.

PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

Walter E. Adair Grand Forks, Minn.
Albert G. Anderson Detroit, Michigan
Albert G. Banna Central Fall, R. I.

Edward G. Baron Chicago, Ill.

John R. Bedell Buffalo, N. Y.

Anthony Beltran Los Angeles, Calif.

Henry M. Brown Ravendon, Arkansas

Muriel W. Canatella Baltimore, Md.

Victorin L. Chauvin Union, Louisiana

Owen R. Cobb Collingswood, N. J.

Donal M. Collins Pleasantville, N. J.

Daniel L. Coleman Dayton, Pa.

Armon V. Combs, Jr. Rutledge, Va.

Floyd D. Crider Harrisburg, Pa.

Mathew A. Dalton Mattapoisett, Mass.

Richard W. Deyerle Roanoke, Va.

Mervin R. Dinkey Sedalia, Mo.

Russell N. Dunlap Bellevue, Pa.

Robert B. Fowler Mullins, S. Car.

Robert S. Graham Fort Worth, Texas

John F. Grimes Wilkes Barre, Pa.

Earl E. Hackstadt Lincoln, Neb.

William C. Holliman Blackey, Ky.

Louis B. Johnson Fitzgerald, Ga

Lewis B. Johnson Underwood, Wash.

Roy R. Keith, Jr. Houston, Texas

James T. King Jersey City, N. J.

Edward J. Komorowski Boston, Mass.

Peter Kostulias Astoria, L. I. , N. Y.

Philip A. Lockman, Jr. Hamilton, Ohio

Edward W. Long Philadelphia, Pa.

Angelo F. Longobricco Norwalk, Conn.\
Nicholas J. McGree No. Hollywood, Calif.
Thomas K. McManus Los Angeles, Calif.
William D. Morrow Albany, N. Y.
Nick C Patullo Duluth, Minn.
John D. Payne Santa Maria, Calif.
Joseph S. Pliva Pequabuck, Conn.
Frederick J. Poole Syracuse, N. Y.
Hassell B. Rabb Rutherford, N. Car.
Wilbert M. Rohrer Portland, Oregon
Edward J. Rowles Philadelphia, Pa.
Benjamin J. Sears, Jr. Annapolis, Maryland
Harold Sharfman Brooklyn, N. Y.
William A. Smelko La Mesa, Calif.
Martin S. Smith, Jr. Hammond, Ind.
William M. Stevenson Chicago, Ill.
Robert R. Stoutjesdyk Detroit, Mich.
Casemier Terlecky Philadelphia, Pa.
Perley Theriault Millinocket, Maine
Clayton Tincher Winfield, W. Va.
Roger Van Buskirk Kearney, N. J.
John E. Waller Dallas, Texas
Richard F. Walsh, Jr. Pittston, Pa.
Harold B. Washburn Seattle, Wash.
Dorsey A. Willis Rockville, Conn.

PRIVATES

Patsy Claudio New York City, N. Y.
James J. Crippen, Jr. Council Bluffs, Iowa
George F. Elias Cleveland, Ohio

Thomas J. Golden Wilkes Barre, Pa.
Burlin L. Harris Ponder, Texas
Noah R. Hatfield Eskdale, W. Va.
T. J. Henderson Plano, Texas
James R. Hume Middletown, Ohio
Irving C. Kanter Chicago, Ill.
Fred Lowe LaFrance, W. Va.
Patrick L. McCollum Philadelphia, Pa.
Lawrence W. Mills Acworth, Georgia
Carl B. Pritchard Ventura, Calif.
George F. Lasley Chicago, Ill.
Edward D. Protasiewicz Newark, N. J.
John F. Reeping Washington, D. C.
Ferman H. Smith Davidson, Michigan
Peter S. Shellock Northampton, Pa.
Robert L. Spears Granite City, Ill.
Robert Speakman Liberal, Kansas
John C. Surette Everett, Mass
Arthur G. Taylor Anawalt, W. Va.
Theodore J. Tarasko Bloomfield, N. J.
Joseph G. Towkacz Buffalo, N. Y.
Ralph C. Zimmerman Plainville, Conn.

HEADQUARTERS
409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
DERIDDER ARMY AIR BASE

DeRidder, Louisiana

2 January 1944

SUBJECT: Efficiency Award

TO : Commanding Officers, 640th, 641st, 642nd and 643rd Bomb Sqdn. (L),

DeRidder Army Air Base, DeRidder, Louisiana.

1. In accordance with letter this headquarters, subject as above, dated 8 August 1943, the 642nd Bomb Sq (L) has been awarded the Efficiency Award for the months of November and December, 1943.
2. This award was made after a careful study of all inspection reports for the past two months. In the overall picture of the Group, the 642nd Bomb Sq was the most outstanding.
3. This award will be presented at the Review to be held, Sunday, January 2, 1943 at 1700.

By order of Lieutenant Colonel CRABTREE:

R. M. KINNARD

Captain, A. C.

Adjutant.

642ND IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER 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 England at Station 165 during the month of March.

APRIL - 1944

NARRATIVE

New A-209G airplanes were being assigned to the Squadron rapidly at the beginning of April. By the 8th we had nearly our quota assigned. On April 4th the Squadron received its first A-20J.

Group published, effective April 3rd, a new ground school schedule to be effected by different sections of the Squadron including Armament, Ordnance, Communications, etc. On the 15th an Examination made up by Group was given all pilots by the Operations Officer, covering different characteristics of the airplane and general flying procedure. The results were more than satisfactory.

Group participated in its first Combat Mission on the 13th with this Squadron furnishing its required number of airplanes, gunners and pilots. On April 21st, Lt. Hicks of this Squadron made a forced landing in the Dover Area due to engine trouble that developed while over the target. Lt. Colonel Stocking (then Major) with Lt. Clement as Navigator-Bombardier led the Group in a mission for the first time on April 22nd. On the return of the mission due to hydraulic failure, Lt. Kononik ran off the runway. No personnel injured.

During the course of the month much difficulty was encountered by conflict caused by the numerous schedules for Combat Crew Training. Link-Trainer and the Bomb-Trainers were being used for regular training. Our Navigator-Bombardiers were very much in demand for different phases of training, proving them to be an important part of the Squadron.

By April 30th we had participated in 17 missions. We suffered no personnel losses; neither did we get any "Purple-Hearts" as the boys were calling "wounds and injuries" by that time.

The Squadron had little to do in preparation for missions as a whole. Our Operations, Intelligence, Communications, Ordnance and Armament duties were coordinated through Group. The "Briefings and Interrogations" were Group functions. Engineering had the usual task of keeping our airplanes in "operational-status". Long hours on the line were spent by all personnel involved in maintenance and repairs.

MAY - 1945

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of May:

1. Five (5) complete new air crews were assigned to organization during May 1944.

Lt. C. W. Henderson and crew

Lt. W. W. Allard and crew

Lt. P. E. Bagley

Lt. F. L. Smith

Lt. E. A. Gain, Jr.

2. Total strength of the unit as of 31 May 1944:

Officers: 43 Enlisted Men: 273

3. Wounded in Action:

S/Sgt. W. N. Houle was wounded in action of April 21, 1944. (not previously reported).

S/Sgt. G. K. Klinge was wounded in action on May 7, 1944.

3. Awards and Decorations:

PURPLE HEART

S/Sgt. George K. Klinge S/Sgt. William N. Houle.

AIR MEDALS

Officers 23 Enlisted Men 34

NARRATIVE

May-Days and Great Days,---well, some were great anyhow! Looking back over the grand total of 219 sorties against the enemy isn't bad,--especially to be "looking back at". As a point in the history of "C" Squadron (642nd) it might be well to note that we have not as yet had any losses in personnel, (a couple of Purple Hearts, yes) and:" we add our constant prayer that Gracious Providence continue to safeguard us, as we go out to discharge our duties.

Early May saw the assignment of several new crews to our outfit and they were welcome and warmly greeted. On May 8th Lt's Allard and Henderson and their crews, Sgt's Cochran, Reich, Ramson and Baglio joined; then on May 16th, Lt's Bagley, Gain Jr. and Smith with their gunners Ater, Parker, MacInnes, Host, Helphenstine and Walter came to fly with us. These assignments brought up our reserve strength and enabled a few of those pilots and gunners who had been hard-at-it since April to be relieved occasionally without fear of being "alerted" just as they had come off the Battle-Order. At the rate that we had been flying missions over the "NoBall Country", no wonder we had so many Air Medal Awards for the month of May. The new crews spent their first few days orienting themselves and generally getting acquainted with the field and the type of flying they were to perform.

As for our missions,we were still going strong against the "NoBalls" in north western France. Particularly in the coastal area and in "Pop Corn Valley", (Abbeville, France). These were the "Secret-Weapon" and "Anti-Invasion" bug-a-boos that had been featured in the papers from time to time. Our job was to hit them and keep them from becoming operational against London, or any other of the large cities along the English coast against which they might have been directed. Early in May however, there were other types of targets assigned to our Group and these were Marshaling Yards and Forward Airdromes in the critical area of France. Our role seemed to be planned to break the communications lines and: render useless the forward airfields of the enemy.

Of course flying against the enemy carries its penalties and unfortunately we in "C" Squadron had suffered a few of them. On May 22nd, Lt. "Bert" Wheeler and his crew were initiated into the "Goldfish and Catapillar Club" on the same occasion. They were on the return trip from their bombing of the airdrome at Everus-Faville and were forced to abandon their "Flak" riddled aircraft over the Channel. They all returned safely and; not too disheartened to tell about how they had been rescued by one of H.M.S. "ships" and treated royally to much liquor (to keep them pacified while the ship carried on a running engagement with German "E" boats which had been trying to sink one of the Allied auxiliary aircraft carriers there in the Channel). After a couple of days rest, they were at it again, in their new ship which they properly named "Try-Again".

When it comes to putting out the work and downright perseverance in the performance of duties every one of our Sections and particularly those on the "Line" have earned any commendations which are bestowed on them. Captain William M. Ryan and Lt. Louis B. Pratt and their Engineering Section have kept an excellent percent of our aircraft, "operational". No less deserving has been the Operations Section, under Captain's Gustafson and May, with T/Sgt. Trapnell burning the candle at both ends many a night over the "Final Status Report".

In a lighter vein, there have been a couple of "Parties" for the "Boys" here in site six (6) at Little Walden Airdrome. On May 26th there was a dance for the men of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron which the local English Belles attended (transported by G. I. trucks and "Jeeps"). Later on in the month, another "get-together" in the form of a "Beer-Party" was held for the men. Despite the fact that the beer ran out "a good time was had by all", as the saying goes. The Officers have likewise had several dances in their Club, with many Army Nurses attending from Station Hospital 280--oh boy!!

There is another side of this story too! It concerns the long periods of "standing by" in the Crews Lounge, way up on the hill, waiting and waiting for the news of the Mission to be posted on the situation map in the briefing room. Several times the "Alerted Crews" had been standing-by from the wee small hours of the morning (better called the night) until very late in the morning; one specific occasion was when the crews had been aroused at 0230 for a briefing at 0330 and take off at 0430 and then---nothing came in until about 1300. Gripping was at its peak that time. Frequently there were "Stand-downs", principally as result of bad weather over the probable target area. These periods were spent in a most leisurely manner by some and, others had plenty of 'catch-up' work to do. There was reams and reams and files and files of paperwork.

Weather, unsuitable for flying, did hamper operations considerably but it was none the less enjoyed. May days were usually bright and beautiful. The sky was filled with patches of fluffy white clouds accentuated against the deep blue of the more distant heaven. The morning breezes were brisk and chilling and left the insufficiently-clad with a "tingling sensation". The nearby farm lands were a pleasing sight with their contrasting colors of "pink clover". Each plot seemed to be edged neatly by hedges of Hawthorne bushes or rows of ash trees. English evenings were a treat for those long days. It was hard to decide when the evening ended and the night began. The sun was bright at 0500 and didn't go down until after 2330.

Off duty hours were spent trying to write letters to the "Home-Folk", provided you could guess what the censor was going to cut-out this time and, of course you couldn't unless you had a "Crystal Ball". Then there was the "wireless" to listen to,--we'll all remember "Calais 1" and Calais 2" programs from Germany and their punk propaganda efforts; occasionally the music was of good variety and composition.

JUNE - 1944

NARRATIVE

June 1944 was ushered-in by a few bright days, and it almost seemed the "Spring" which had for so long pursued us was about to catch-up with Little Walden, Essex Airdrome. Spring didn't catch that month but, "D-Day"--did"!

On the morning of June 6th, 1944, it was quite calmly announced by Group Headquarters that the invasion of the French Coast had begun at approximately 0600 that morning and,--we were alerted for action and support. The "Battle-Order" for the day was headed by both men and aircraft from "Our" Squadron. Lt. Colonel Lewis W. Stocking, 1st Lt. Edmund A. Clements, Jr., S/Sgts. Robert A. Needham and James J.

Crippen, were the "team" in the Lead Ship, 1st Box. It wasn't long after reveille that everyone on the Base knew what "day" it was and were ready and waiting for the first assignment. It came in at 1030 hours. Field Order Number 64-349, was received by this Group, was laid-out and plotted in the Intelligence Situation Room. The Box Leaders were briefed behind securely locked doors. The air was actually tense with cool excitement to use a trite literary expression. The target was again Valognes, France (center of the Cherbourg Peninsula). This would be the Groups forty-ninth mission.

Of the thirty-eight men we sent out against the target, four (4) failed to return. This was our first loss of personnel due to combat operations against the enemy. 1st Lts. Rex T. Winn, Michael A. Walek, S/Sgt John Shary and Sgt. Vernon V. Reich, flying in the Deputy Lead plane of the 1st Box, received a direct hit in the

bombay while over the target area. The aircraft was seen to "break-in-two" and plummet down in flames. Although these men are missing from the roll of our organization, there exists a bare possibility that some of them may still be alive. Several adjacent aircraft members claim to have seen "two" parachutes come out of the plane. At the writing of this, their status is M.I.A.

The remainder of June found the 642nd Bomb Sqd. participating in all twenty-seven (27) of June's missions, of which seven (7) were led our our teams. Our total number of sorties for the month was two hundred and thirty-four (234). Boy, of boy,---what a stack of Air Medals and Oak Leaf Clusters that is

"Rain and Fog are not the airman's friend and,---June was "unfriendly". Bad weather over the continent occasioned many "delays", "recalls" and "stand-downs". Crews were briefed several times on the same target, and once or twice the ships were even airborne before the notice for "recall" was received. After several cases of that sort it was decided to utilize the non-flyable (over the continent) periods to further advance the Ground Training and Combat-Crew Programs for the Pilots, bomb-Navigators and Gunners. Night-Formation, Link, Bomb-Trainer, Practice Bombing, Aircraft Recognition and Ground Observation Training were among the many subjects and activities featured during these periods.

There were flyable days too, and we were out-and-at-"em! Our targets were usually in direct support of the Normandy Bridgehead advances, and consisted of disrupting the communication lines and transportation facilities which the Germans might employ to strengthen their lines of defense. In the early stages of the Bridgehead action, such targets as railroad choke points, marshaling-yards, bridges, road junctions, fuel dumps, ammunition dumps, advance enemy air fields and troop concentrations received high-priority call when weather permitted. Target names such as:

Valognes, France....(cross roads and bridges); Foret de Cerisy, France (Highway cross road) Periers, France, (Railroad Junction); Foret De Conches, (Fuel

, (Fuel Dump); Mezidon, France (Marshaling-yards); La Mare a Canards, France, (NoBall installation).

It was during this period of intensified activity that the Post Theater came into it's own. It helped to take the men's mind off of their other duties. The air crews were returning too late for the 'Liberty run' into Cambridge and Saffron Walden or nearby towns (and gals). The Aero Club under the direction of the Red Cross, held several successful dances and other programs for the enlisted personnel of the Post. The Officers' Club with it's large and spacious lounge, bar (gin, scotch, wine and ale), and ever growing library of pocket edition version of Best Sellers and old stand-bys in American literature continued to be the congregating point of the Officers.

The later part of June again found the Squadron in the middle of preparations for another "Voyage-Overseas",-- this time it would be the "Short-Voyage" (from England to the Continent). Inspections were held for physical-fitness for general service, proper and sufficient clothing and field equipment, pre-requisites for "Field--Conditions" and clarification in appropriate arms. The wearing of the gas-mask was compulsory and strictly adhered to (on Tuesdays).

There were no changes in "key" personnel during the month of June 1944.

Another point of Historical interest: During the month of June our first "Operation-Leaves" were granted. The first two Squadron members to receive theirs were S/Sgt. Henry M. Bohleen and S/Sgt Ray Melton, who spent seven days in Hampshire, England. The next combat crew members to leave were Lts. William W. Cook, Earl Wheeler, Bernard J. Kononik and Melvin Schultz, who took their rest-period in Edinborough, Scotland. S/Sgts. Willie F. Maulk, Willard C. Gillespie, Arnold Wallace, William P Hancock, Jack Carne and Richard M. Thompson selected

Glasglow , Scotland to while away their idle hours.

JULY - 1944

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of July.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 July 1944

Officers: 47 Enlisted Men: 291

2. Promotions:

Promoted to the rank of Captain:

Gerald A. Autin

Richard K. Bills

James S. Heyward

William L. Hayden.

3. Awards and Decorations:

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Richard K. Bills, 1st Lt. George W. Hicks, 1st Lt.

FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO AIR MEDAL

OFFICERS

Chester W. Henderson Francis L. Smith

SECOND OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Walter W. Allard Chester W. Henderson

Glen W. Gerring

ENLISTED MEN

Raymond E. Helphenstine Voris W. Parker

Robert D. Turner Robert E. Host.

THIRD OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Chester W. Henderson Thomas R. Sammons

Walter W. Allard

ENLISTED MEN

Eric V. Ramson Victor S. Baglio

Russell A. Cochran Floyd I. Ater

Voris W. Parker James Walter

FOURTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Gerald A. Autin James S. Heyward

Bernard J. Kononik Michael W. McEvilly

ENLISTED MEN

Noah R. Hatfield Wilbert D. Reed

-

-

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

-

OFFICERS

William M. Cook William P. Holmes

Robert J. Downing Charles C. Greer

John D. Moon George W. Hicks.

Walter T. Conner Richard K. Bills

William J. Daner Gerald A. Autin

Bernard J. Kononik Earl Wheeler, Jr.

ENLISTED MEN

Michael F. Rona George A. Fry
Robert E. Summers Henry M. Bohlson
Richard R. Thompson Noah R. Hatfield
Wilbert D. Reed

SIXTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

-

OFFICERS

Charles W. Gustafson William M. Cook
John D. Moon

ENLISTED MEN

George K. Klinge Millard C. Gillespie
Ray Melton Arnold M. Wallace
William P. Hancock John J. Hegwood
Charles E. Taylor Billy G. Eads
George A. Fry William N. Houle
Roy B. Grimes Carl S. Hart
Hulon B. Newsome, Jr.

SEVENTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

-

OFFICERS

Melvin R. Schultz Louis A. Stiliha

ENLISTED MEN

Willie T. Faulk John M. Krol
John E. Rublein Charles L. Byroad
Billy G. Eads George K. Klinge
William A. Meldrun Millard C. Gillespie

Ray Melton William P. Hancock

John J. Hegwood

EIGHTH OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Melvin R. Schultz

BRONZE STAR TO E.T.O. RIBBON

Under the provisions of paragraph 2L, War Department, General Order No., 75, dated 1943, all personnel of this organization, who were members during the period from March 7th, 1944 and July 19th, 1944, were authorized to wear a "Bronze-Star" in their previously awarded European Theater of Operations Ribbon, effective July 19th, 1944.

NARRATIVE

July saw the completion of our eighty-ninth mission, (on July 31st). During the month the 642nd personnel had participated in all the seventeen missions flown, and of the number, eight were led by our Pilot-Bombardier-Navigator teams.

Poor weather necessitated employing B-26's and crews of the Pathfinder Force. Six of such missions were flown, mostly during the later part of the month. Combat missions, although fewer than previous months, were increasingly difficult due to fog and haze and its appended restrictions in visibility, the instruments had to be right and relied on. "Penetrating the overcast" was an obstacle to be hurdled prior to reaching enemy territory and flak positions.

Not withstanding the impediment of "bad weather", targets were hit and the spirits of the air crews were undaunted. A brief resume' of the enemy positions which knew the force of our 500 pounders is listed below:

Chateau de Forhen NoBall Headquarters.

Fontain le Pin Troops and Equipment

Rennes Fuel dumps and RR Junctions

Foret d' Andanne Fuel Dumps.

Other targets were attacked which constituted enemy held strong points and areas of resistance; railroad junctions and railroad bridges. These missions were well coordinated with the Ground Force action on the continent, and changes in the exact location of the "Bomb line" were carefully briefed upon and noted by those concerned.

During July a misfortune of war occurred which rumor laid at the feet of the A-20 Groups stationed in the E.T.O.. They, us included, were accused of having bombed our own troops. That accusation was retracted by Headquarters, Ninth Bomber Command, in a teletype message directed to all A-20 Groups.

July also saw several changes in key-personnel of the 642nd Squadron. Lt. Colonel Lewis W. Stocking, was relieved of command of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L) and transferred to Headquarters, 409th Bombardment Group (L) where he was appointed Deputy Group Commanding Officer. Major Charles W. Gustafson

was appointed Commanding Officer of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron ("C" Squadron).

Major "Gus" as he known among his men, is an air-battle-wise soldier, having participated in the African Campaign. For him this tour of duty with the A-20's, was a return engagement to the E.T.O.. "Gus" came to the squadron while in training at Woodward, Oklahoma

Other changes in personnel status were the promotion of four Officers to the rank of "Captain, Air Corps". These were:

Gerald A. Autin, Richard K. Bills, James S. Heyward and William L. Hayden.

On July 21, 1944, at U.S.A.A.F. Station 165, Little Walden, Essex, an official Presentation Ceremony and Review was conducted. The following named men of "C" Squadron were presented "Air Medals" for their participation in the required number of aerial sorties against the enemy:

OFFICERS: James S. Heyward, Robert J. Downing, Charles C. Greer, Charles A. Hunton, Bernard J. Kononik, Michael W. McEvilly, John D. Moon and Earl Wheeler, Jr.

(Capt. Gerald A. Autin and 1st Lt. George W. Hicks were absent on leave, but were subsequently presented with their medals).

ENLISTED MEN: Donald W. Deal, William P. Hancock, Charles E. Taylor, Wilbert D. Reed, William L. Dolnar and Joseph T. F. Perry.

AUGUST - 1944

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of August 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 August 1944

2. Awards and Decorations:

AIR MEDALS

OFFICERS ENLISTED MEN

William Wahl Robert W. Meriwether

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

ENLISTED MEN

Richard S. Blair

-

-

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

-

ENLISTED MEN

Wayne Humphries

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

ENLISTED MEN

Robert E. Host

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Thomas R. Sammons Walter W. Allard

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS ENLISTED MEN

Kaye G. Morrison Victor S. Baglio

James S. Heyward Eric V. Romson

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS ENLISTED MEN

Walter T. Conner Richard R. Thompson

William J. Daner Henry M. Bohlsen

Charles C. Greer Michael R. Bona

George W. Hicks, Jr. Jack Carne

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

ENLISTED MEN

Roger Dennett William N. Houle

Roy E. Grimes Carl S. Hart

Hulon B. Newsome, Jr. Charles E. Taylor

-

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

-

ENLISTED MEN

Charles L. Byroad William A. Meldrum

Ray Melton John M. Krol

George K. Klinge Millard C. Gillespie

Arnold M. Wallace

9th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

ENLISTED MEN

Willie T. Faulk William P. Hancock

BRONZE STAR TO E.T.O. RIBBON

Under the provision of par 21, War Department G. O. #75, dated 1`943, all personnel of this organization, who participated in the "Western Front Offensive", were authorized to wear a bronze star in their ETO ribbon, effective July 19, 1944.

NARRATIVE

Despite the time and energy involved in preparing an Air Force unit for movement, combat operations continued. August 9, 1944 saw the completion of 100 missions against the enemy. This was a source of great pride to the entire organization, because it had been accomplished in less than four (4) months from the date of our 1st mission (April 13, 1944). Although the mission was not a success, it represented the conscientious effort of the entire unit to carry the war to the enemy as often as possible.

During the month of August, twenty-five missions were flown. They were close support for ground troops operating in the recently expanded Brest sector. Typical targets were railroad bridges, road-net choke points and cross-roads, gun emplacements, ammunition-dumps and troop concentrations. Such target names as: La Puisaye, Nantes-Gassicourt, Foret D" Andaine, St. Malo and Brest will be remembered.

There were few changes in Squadron personnel during this period. Replacement pilots and bombardiers arrived, thus permitting the release of some of the combat crews

SEPTEMBER - 1944

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of September, 1944.

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

Officers: 51 Enlisted Men: 296

2. Change of Station:

The 642nd 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

OFFICERS ENLISTED MEN

Lloyd R. Paulson Dwight W. Van Name

William Hilderbrand Harold E. Nelson

Roy F. Davis, Jr.

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Robert W. Straus

ENLISTED MEN

Anthony P. Massei Sheldon C. Schettig

Thomas F. Bridges Kenneth R. Dvorak

John H. Herbrand Winfred F. Norwood

Samuel E. Marin Warren W. Harvey

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

ENLISTED MEN

Richard S. Blair Anthony P. Massei

Sheldon C. Schettig Thomas F. Bridges

John H. Herbrand Warren W. Harvey

Winfred R. Norwood Samuel E. Martin

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICER

Edward A. Gain, Jr.

ENLISTED MEN

Raymond E. Helphenstine Richard S. Blair

Sheldon C. Schettig William D. MacInnes

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Edmund A. Clement

ENLISTED MEN

James Walter Voris W. Parker

Floyd I. Ater

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Kaye G. Morrison James S. Heyward

Gerald A. Autin Richard K. Bills

ENLISTED MEN

Wilbert D. Reed Noah R. Harfield

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Willaim M. Cook William P. Holmes

John D. Moon Robert J. Downing

George W. Hicks, Jr. Charles W. Gustafson

ENLISTED MEN

George A. Fry

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Louis A. Stiliha

ENLISTED MEN

Hulon B. Newsome, Jr. John E. Rublein

Charles M. Detmer John J. Hegwood

9th OAK LEAVE CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Melvin R. Schultz

-

ENLISTED MEN

John M. Krol George k. Klinge

Charles L. Byroad John E. Rublein

William A. Meldrum Millard C. Gillespie

Ray Melton John J. Hefwood

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS

Chester W. Henderson Walter W. Allard

Michael W. McEvilly

NARRATIVE

September in England ! During the dreary month of September "C" Squadron completed ten missions, two of which were localities in Germany proper.

On September 8th, 1944 the Warning Orders for movement to France were received by the organization. By the 12th, the Advance Echelon, consisting of two thirds of the Squadron personnel, had departed by convoy. The remaining personnel were restricted to the confines of Station 165. Station life was quite simply reduced to attending movies and playing ball.

Several minor difficulties arose in the matter of continuing combat operations. Squadron gunners were required to execute Military Police duties to continue station security. Both pilots and gunners were required to service their aircraft for missions.

On Sept. 21st, the Air Lift Echelon departed and by September 30th, the entire unit was established at the Bretigny Airdrome in France,--14 miles south of Paris!

In France! It was a considerable change in many ways from our location in England. Full-Field conditions; tents, candles, wood-chopping, plenty of mud and no laundry or baths.

One of the major problems of our first week in France was the difference in languages. Everyone had his "Blue book" out trying to exchange greetings with the multitude of French-visitors who came out to see "les Americans". It became a problem to keep them out of our restricted and dispersal area. Eventually French Gendarmes were employed to keep the "visitors" out.

On September 29th, the Group flew its first mission into Germany. The target was a marshaling yard at Bitburg. Thus began the operations of "C" Squadron from its new base in France.

OCTOBER - 1944

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of October 1944.

1. War Department, Table of Organization and Equipment, Number 1-137, for Bombardment Squadrons, Light, dated 25 May 1944, augmented by General Order 161, Headquarters Ninth Air Force, 1944, was effective in the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L) on 1 October 1944.

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

Officers: 56 Enlisted Men: 306

3. Deaths:

Sgt. Robert E. Burton, died of diphtheria

4. Wounded in Action:

S/Sgt Ray Melton 1st Lt. William P. Holmes

1st Lt. Charles A. Hunton, Jr. Sgt. Carl S. Hart

5. Awards and Decorations:

PURPLE HEART

1st Lt. William P. Holmes 1st Lt. Charles A. Hunton, Jr.

S/Sgt. Ray Melton S/Sgt. Carl S. Hart

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-

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AIR MEDAL

Sgt. James T. Odom Pvt. Dan H. Langferd

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. William Wahl S/Sgt. Robert W. Merriwether

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt Eric V. Ramson

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Walter T. Conner 1st Lt. William J. Daner

1st Lt. Kaye G. Morrison Capt. Gerald A. Autin

1st Lt. Charles C. Greer 1st Lt. Charles A. Hunton, Jr.

1st Lt. Bernard J. Kononik 1st Lt. Earl Wheeler

S/Sgt. Henry M. Bohlsen S/Sgt. Richard R. Thompson

S/Sgt. Robert E. Summers S/Sgt. Michael F. Eona

S/Sgt. Noah R. Hatfield S/Sgt. Jack Carne

S/Sgt. Wilbert D. Reed S/Sgt. Victor S. Baglio

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Major Charles W. Gustafson 1st Lt. George W. Hicks, Jr.

1st Lt. John B. Moon 1st Lt. Bernard J. Kononik

1st Lt. William P. Holmes 1st Lt. William M. Cook

1st Lt. Walter T. Conner S/Sgt. William N. Houle

S/Sgt. George A. Fry S/Sgt. Roger Dennett

S/Sgt. Billy G. Eads S/Sgt. Michael F. Eona

S/Sgt. Roy B. Grimes S/Sgt. Carl S. Hart

9th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Charles M. Detmer S/Sgt. Roy B. Grimes

S/Sgt. Hulon B. Newsome, Jr.

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Major Joseph J. May 1st Lt. John C. Moore, Jr.

2nd SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Charles M. Detmar S/Sgt. Willie T. Faulk

S/Sgt. William A. Meldrum S/Sgt. William P. Hancock

NARRATIVE

I. Personnel:

October saw several change changes in the personnel roster of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L). These changes consisted of replacement air crews, promotions, and transfers. In addition to those changes, War Department T/O 1-137, dated 25 May 1944, was effective in all units of the 409th Bombardment Group (L) on 1 October 1944. The replacement personnel consisted in the addition of six (6) Officers and ten (10) Enlisted men to the squadron rolls. All were flying personnel. One unusual loss occurred in the unit on 17 October 1944, when Sgt. Robert E. Burton, died of Diphtheria. Sgt. Burton was Lt. Richmond L. Scott's gunner.

The following promotions for flying officers were effective in October: 1st Lt. John C. Moore, Jr. promoted to

Captain, 2nd Lt's. Kaye G. Morrison, Walter W. Allard, Chester Henderson, and Francis L. Smith promoted to 1st Lt. On October 15th, 1st Lt. Edmund A. Clements, Jr. was transferred to Headquarters, 409th Bombardment Group (L) and assigned duties as Assistant Group Bombardier-Navigator. On the 24th Of October, Captain William J. Daner was transferred to Group Headquarters Section and assigned duties in Group Operations.

II Combat Operations:

Of the twenty-eight Field Order received during the month of October, only 9 combat missions were actually completed. A brief resume' of target names include: Duren (barracks-area), Heudson (RR bridge); there were ten (10) briefing on this later target. Weather prevented the execution of that mission as it did the majority of the others assigned to us during October. Continuing the list, those target names appear: Trier M/Y, Camp di Bitche (troop replacement center), Venlo (RR bridge), and Euskerchen (RR bridge). Although only nine missions were "run" in October,--they were rough!

The following incidents occurred during the October missions which were subject for "Recommendations".

LT. HOLMES:

On his fifty-first (51) mission, 8 October 1944, Lt. Holmes was a member of a formation which attacked an enemy strong-point at Julich, Germany. Just before reaching the target he was hit in the right shoulder by a burst of flak. A moment later another burst damaged his main hydraulic lines causing a drop in pressure. Although painfully injured and bleeding freely, Lt. Holmes continued on. The formation did not drop on the first pass so a second bomb run was made. Although weakened by the loss of blood, Lt. Holmes dropped his bombs on the target, remained in formation, and safely landed his aircraft without the use of brakes.

LT. HUNTON:

On 12 October 1944, Lt. Hunton leading the second flight of the second box in an attack upon an enemy troop concentration at Camp de Bitche. About fifteen (15) minutes before reaching the target, interphone trouble developed. Lt. Hunton discovered he could transmit but not receive so he established blinker communication with the rest of the crew. Approaching the target area an accurate burst of heavy flak struck his aircraft, knocking out both engines and severing the aileron control cables. To lighten the load he jettisoned his bombs in an open field. He immediately headed for friendly territory. Using the interphone and blinker communication, Lt. Hunton informed his bombardier and gunners of the necessity of bailing out within the next few minutes. He ordered the bombardier to bail out, then the tunnel and turret gunners. Using blinker communication the other crew members acknowledged receipt of Lt. Hunton's orders. After the others had bailed out, Lt. Hunton abandoned his aircraft. None of the crews were injured.

LT. KONONIK:

On 8 October 1944, the target was a well defended enemy strong-point at Julich, Germany. Approaching the target area the formation in which Lt. Kononik was flying encountered intense heavy anti-aircraft fire. It was necessary to make two (2) passes at the target. While starting the bomb run for the second time an accurate

burst struck the left engine of Lt. Kononik's aircraft, causing oil to stream out of the engine and the oil pressure to drop to zero. Another burst almost demolished the horizontal stabilizer. With unusual coolness he feathered the left engine and continued on to bomb the target. The damage control surfaces caused the aircraft to vibrate violently. Because of the loss in power, Lt. Kononik's aircraft was losing speed and altitude. Unable to maintain his place in formation, he dropped out and headed for the nearest allied emergency landing field when he accomplished a perfect single engine landing.

LT. DANER:

On 8 October 1944, Lt. Daner acted as deputy flight leader in a A-20 aircraft formation which attacked an enemy strong-point at Julich, Germany. Approaching the target the formation encountered intense accurate heavy anti-aircraft fire damaging his left engine and impaired his radio and interphone communication. Lt. Daner discovered that he could talk but not receive over his interphone. As he was losing airspeed and could not keep up with the formation, the engine sputtered and quit. He could not feather the propeller causing the losing of altitude to accelerate. He jettisoned his bombs and instructed his gunners to bail out. As he could not receive over the interphone he had no way of knowing whether the gunners had left the aircraft. Lt. Daner remained in his aircraft until the last possible moment so as to give the gunners sufficient time to abandon the aircraft. At an altitude of approximately 900 feet, he parachuted to safety. The gunners also reached the ground uninjured. Lt. Daner's coolness and excellent judgment in averting a disaster is worthy of the highest praise.

NOVEMBER - 1944

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of November 1944.

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

Officers: 58 Enlisted Men: 310

2. Wounded in Action:

S/Sgt. Floyd I. Ater

3. Awards and Decorations:

SILVER STAR

1st Lt. William P. Holmes

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Capt. Charles A. Hunton, Jr. 1st Lt. Bernard J. Kononik

PURPLE HEART

S/Sgt. Floyd I. Ater

BRONZE STAR

T/Sgt. Gordon W. Dukleth T/Sgt. Dean L. Jones

T/Sgt. Elmer Lundstrum, Jr. T/Sgt. Jack C. Zeider

T/Sgt. Raymond G. Paris T/Sgt. Ronald C. Norman

S/Sgt. Stanley M. Guethe T/Sgt. Raymond E. Bentley

NARRATIVE

I. PERSONNEL:

During the month of November 1944, the following changes in personnel occurred:

Capt. Robert D. Gordon, Squadron Intelligence Officer, was transferred to the Headquarters, 409th Bombardment Group (L) staff, to serve in the capacity of Group Intelligence Officer. Captain Gordon has served "C" Squadron since Woodward, Oklahoma (October, 1943). The vacancy for a Squadron Intelligence Officer was filled by 1st. Lt. William L. Guajardo, (Ass't I.O. since Will Rogers Field, August, 1943). On November 20, 1944, 1st Lt. John W. Hansel, Jr, joined the squadron. Lt. Hansel had been stationed at Ninth Bombardment division Headquarters at Reims, France. ("Being much nearer to Paris is much nicer, " he says. We are only 45 minutes away by train!!).

Other increases in squadron strength consisted of four (4) pilots, and eight (8) enlisted men being added to our unit.

"C" Squadron felt its second touch of "Combat-Losses in Personnel," on the 19th of November. While participating in the second mission of the day, 1st Lt. Walter T. Conner, Sgt. Dwight T. Van Name and Sgt Harold E. Nelson, all veterans of many many missions, were caught in "intense flak" barrage over the target, Baal, Germany. The entire crew failed to return to base. To date no conclusive evidence, or statements have been received to refute their status of "Missing-in-action". Lt. Conner had fifty six missions; S/Sgt.. Van Name, sixteen; and Sgt Nelson, who had fourteen missions with the "heavies" and seventeen with the A-20's.

The first combat crew members to be released from this squadron were: S/Sgts Charles M. Detmer, Willie T. Faulk, William P. Hancock and John E. Rublein. All of them, after having completed 65 or more sorties over enemy territory. All had been awarded the Air Medal and appropriate number of Oak Leaf Clusters. Their return to the Zone of the Interior, United States, was a result of a change in policy by Headquarters, Ninth Air Force, for "Light Bombardment Units".

II. Operations:

Twelve missions for the month of November, 1944. Weather was a serious impediment to our combat operations during the entire period. Principle targets were; railroad bridges, road junctions, strong-points, depots and supply points. Targets, by name, which will be remembered by the crews are; Trier, Hambourg, Sinzig, Durweis, Baal and Merken, all in Germany proper. Pathfinder Forces were employed several times against targets where the line of our forward troops permitted.

On November 21st, "C" Squadron began its A-26 Transition Training which lasted for five (5) days. During this training period both ground and air crews attended classes under the supervision of the A-26 Mobile Training Units. This change in type of operational aircraft to be employed by this organization was a pleasant one. Among the first to complete their conversion in the A-26's were, Capt. Bills, Lt's Cook, Moon, Allard, Downing and Morrison, all of whom flew their first flight on the 23rd of November, 1944.---accompanied by an A-26 Check-pilot from the Mobile Training Unit. After all the "boys" had checked-out in the "new ship", they were sold on it and its capabilities.

Few serious difficulties were encountered during the transition period. Ground crews were delighted with the design of the new aircraft, which gave them more "elbow-room" to make the more routine repairs,

inspections,etc. Only one (1) gunner is required per crew now. The single gunner has control of both upper and lower guns,--its all done by mirrors too!.

At the completion of the transition training, a TWO day stand down was declared by the 97th Wing for the entire 409th Bombardment Group. During that two day period every one relaxed a bit. The latter days of the month were employed ferrying the A-20's back to England and exchanging them for our new ships. By November 30th, the squadron had acquired six A-26's and the rest were on the way over. At the writing of this, "C" Squadron has not as yet received its full quota of operational A-26's, ----the "boys" are still over in the United Kingdom trying to get back with them, -- weather as usual!

III General:

The priority for delivery, placed by the Post Office on Christmas packages is beginning to show results. Our mail orderly is returning from the A. P. O. with many, many bags full of mail as well as the anxiously awaited packages.

The "cigarette shortage" touched us to the effect of not receiving but two packages per week for a couple of weeks in November. American cigarettes are selling at fantastic prices on the French "Marche Noire", 120 Francs' per pack (\$2.80).

The "inflation of the Franc" is now being felt by the men in this area. For a change, the prices of merchandise are extremely high, even for the "rich Americans".

"Thanksgiving Dinner" was had by everyone in our recently improved Mess Area. The menu was excellent, and was only surpassed by the excellence of the food, its preparation by our kitchen staff. There was plenty of turkey for all, - even "after dinner mints" (well, we had candy though").

DECEMBER - 1944

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of December 1944

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

Officers: 62 Enlisted Men: 297

2 .Awards and Decorations:

AIR MEDAL

OFFICERS

Edward C. Parni Lyle N. Procknow

ENLISTED MEN

Earl B. Smith Edward R. R. Calhoun

Clarence E. Allen James C. Hewitt

Leland G. Tucker

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1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICER: ENLISTED MEN:

Lloyd R. Paulson Roy F. Davis, Jr.

2nd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS: ENLISTED MEN:

William Wahl Robert W. Meriwether

Lloyd R. Paulson Roy F. Davis, Jr.

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS:

Robert W. Straus William Wahl

Lloyd R. Paulson William H. Hildebrand

ENLISTED MEN:

Wayne Humphries Anthony P. Massei

Winfred F. Norwood, Jr. John H. Herbrand

Warren H. Harvey Robert W. Meriwether

Roy F. Davis, Jr. James J. Crippen, Jr.

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

OFFICERS:

Glen W. Gerring Edward A. Cain, Jr.

Robert W. Straus William Wahl

Lloyd R. Paulson

ENLISTED MEN:

Theodore J. Hiller James J. Crippen, Jr.

Russell A. Cochran Robert E. Host

William D. MacInnes Richard S. Blair

Sheldon C. Schettig Warren W. Harvey

Samuel E. Martin Robert W. Meriwether

Wayne Humphries

NARRATIVE

I. Operations:

By 11 December 1944, "C" Squadron was "operational" with twelve (12) A-26's for which our "ole faithful's", the A-20's, had been exchanged in the U. K. Mission number 148 was scheduled, briefed, - but not flown, "weathered -in-again".

By "New Years Eve", we had completed only five (5) missions, although twenty two (22) "briefings" had been added to the score. Throughout the entire month of December, clouds, low-fog, rain and heavy haze layers continued to be a serious impediment to our "Combat Effectiveness". However, when local conditions permitted, there was "beaucoup" training for combat crew personnel.

All targets were part of the "Interdiction Plan", for isolating the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest sector which had begun on 17-18 December 1944.

II. Personnel:

During the month of December, fourteen (14) more "veteran gunners" were returned under orders to the Zone of Interior, - the United States.

Those returned were:

Jack Carne S/Sgt

Roger Dennett S/Sgt.

Billy G. Eads S/Sgt.

Michael F. Eona S/Sgt.

William N. Hould S/Sgt.

Hulon B. Newsome, Jr. S/Sgt.

Charles E. Taylor S/Sgt.

Richard R. Thompson S/Sgt.

Arnold M. Wallace S/Sgt.

Henry M. Bohlsen S/Sgt.

Millard C. Gillespie S/Sgt.

Robert E. Summers S/Sgt.

Noah R. Hatfield Pvt.

Wilbert D. Reed Pvt.

Promoted from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lieutenant;

Lloyd R. Paulson

Maurice W. Small

III. General:

Special commendations for excellent service rendered in connection with the "Holiday Season Abroad" go to:

S/Sgt. Robert A. Hotz S/Sgt. Max E. Fowler

The men of "C" Squadron are most grateful and appreciative for the "Mess Hall", which under the able and excellent supervision of S/Sgt. Hotz was completed for the Christmas Dinner christening. The new mess hall is a completely enclosed wooden structure capable of seating all squadron personnel.

S/Sgt. Fowler is our "Mess Sgt.", need I say more? Both Christmas and New Years Dinners were a treat for any "gourmet", at home or abroad, (and readers remember "We are in France"!!). Finis, jus qu'a la prochaine.

JANUARY - 1945

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of January 1945.

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

Officers: 60 Enlisted Men: 289

2. Awards and Decorations.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

S/Sgt. Richard R. Thompson Capt. John C. Moore, Jr.

1st. Lt. Michael W. McEvilly

SOLDIERS MEDAL

Sgt. Owen R. Cobb

2nd SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. George W. Hicks, Jr. Pvt. Noah R. Hatfield

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert W. Straus S/Sgt. George C. Rule

S/Sgt. John C. Cole S/Sgt. Raymond E. Helphenstine

S/Sgt. John H. Herbrand S/Sgt. Anthony R. Massio

S/Sgt. Robert W. Meriwether

NARRATIVE

Although the majority of the History records for the Squadron are missing for the month of January, there does exist some records of personnel changes.

On 14 January, 1945, Major Charles W. Gustafson, our Commanding Officer, was transferred to the Zone of Interior. "Gus" as he was frequently called by all who knew him well, had completed 34 sorties of his second tour of foreign service in the E. T. O. His first tour was served during the African Campaign. During that time he was credited with 25 sorties against the enemy.

Major Gustafson's return to the Zone of Interior left a vacancy in the "Wheel Seat" of "C" Squadron. Major Joseph J. May, then Operations Officer, assumed command of 15 January, 1945. Major May, or "Joe" as he is called, had been the original 642nd Bomb Sqdn. Commanding Officer, when the 409th Group was activated at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, 21 June 1943. Major May is an excellent Officer and soldier, a man of keen military merit, and excellent quality of leadership and integrity.

During the month of January, the following officers were promoted to the grade indicated below:

From 1st Lt. to Capt. Emanuel P. Peters

(Principle duty, Squadron Communication Officer)

From 2nd Lt. to 1st. Lt. William H. Hilderbrand

(Twin Engine Pilot)

Lyle N. Procknow

(Bombardier)

Squadron suffered major losses.

On the low-level mission of 23 January 1944, the following men were listed as "missing in action":

Captain Richard Bills, Captain Mark Robb, Lt. Michael McEvilly and Sgt. William K. Jones, S/Sgt. Clarence Allen, S/Sgt. Millard A Pressman, Jr..

FEBRUARY - 1945

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of February 1945.

1. Strength as of 28 February 1945

Officers: 53 Enlisted Men: 280

2. Moves: 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) Reconnaissance Echelon departed from AAF Station A-48, Bretigny, (Seine-et-Oise) France, 4th February 1945; arrived at AAF Station A-70, Couvron, Aisne, France of 4 February, 1945.

Advanced Echelon departed A-48, 9 February 1945; arrived at A-70, 10 February 1945, traveling by rail and motor convoy.

Air Echelon and Air Motor Convoy departed A-48, 12 February and arrived A-70, 12 February 1945.

Air Rail Echelon departed A-48, 14 February, 1945, arrived by rail 15 February 1945 at Gared duj Crepy - Couvron

Rear Echelon Motor Convoy departed A-48, 15 February 1945; arrived A-70, 15 February 1945

3. Losses:

2 February 1945

Captain Charles A. Hunton, Jr, 2nd Lt. Lyle Procknow, S/Sgt. James R. Odom and Sgt. Warren Harvey were reported "missing in action" in vicinity of southwest of Briel, Germany as a result of heavy flak. One chute was seen.

16 February 1945

2nd Lt. Richmond L. Scott, 2nd Lt. William Wahl, S/Sgt. Ralph W. Cox, Sgt. Gerald T. Corie, Sgt. William R. Price and Sgt. Henry G. Muldrow were reported as "missing in action" in the vicinity of Unna, Germany as a result of heavy flak.

25 February 1945

S/Sgt. Roy Davis, Jr. was seriously wounded while participating in mission over Gravenbreich marshaling yard, Germany. He died 27 February 1945 at the 242nd General Hospital, Soissons, France, as the result of his wounds.

4. Awards:

BRONZE STAR

T/Sgt. George E. Apple T/Sgt. William G. Gaier

T/Sgt. Cecil M. Hindman T/Sgt. Howard Parker

S/Sgt. Clifford C. Wittenbraker S/Sgt. Ernest P. Caruso

Pfc. Walter E. Adair

PURPLE HEART

1st Lt. Thomas R. Sammons 1st Lt. Ronald T. Beeper

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AIR MEDAL

2nd Lt. William A. Schultes Sgt. Hoyt McCurry, Jr.

Sgt. William G. Pasternak Cpl. Thomas J. Gaffuri

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Sgt. Millard A. Pressman, Jr. Sgt. Henry G. Muldrow

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Edward C. Farini Cpl. Leland G. Tucker

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

2nd Lt. Francis L. Smith Sgt. Floyd I. Ater

S/Sgt. Winfred J. Norwood, Jr.

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Walter James

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Pvt. Noah R. Hatfield Capt. John C. Moore, Jr.

1st Lt. Michael McEvilly S/Sgt. Russell A. Cochran

11th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert J. Downing

(There were additional awards but were not legible on the Micro film.)

(The Narrative of the Month of February was not legible on the Micro film.)

MARCH - 1945

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of March, 1945.

1. Strength as of 31 March, 1945.

Officers: 60 Enlisted Men: 306

2. Losses in Action:

Cotton, Donald J. 2nd Lt.

Hadfield, Lynn W. 2nd Lt.

Hamilton, Vernon L Sgt.

Kalausich, John Sgt.

Lord, Loring E. S/Sgt.

Nord, Don E. S/Sgt.

3. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

MAJOR: CHARLES W. GUSTAFSON

MAJOR: JOSEPH J. MAY

OPERATIONS:

During the month of March this organization participated in forty-two (42) missions, dropping a total of five hundred forty seven and one quarter (547 1/4) tons of bombs on enemy installations, principally rail communication installations. The over-all average results for all visual sightings for this period was from good to excellent. The Circular-Error average for the entire 409th Group was five hundred twenty (520) feet. (Note: C. E. is computed for the entire group since all operations are executed by the group as a Unit.).

Tragedy struck on the 21st with the loss of the crew of Lt. Joe Cotton, pilot, Lt. Lynn W. Hadfield, Sgt. Vernon L. Hamilton and Sgt. John Kalausich. The crew was being broken in as a lead crew on this mission. Joe May and Tom Sammons were flying deputy lead to be sure the inexperienced crew didn't get into trouble. It was pre-arranged that should the B/N have a problem he would wave his handkerchief and we would take over the lead. They seemed to be doing fine, but just before the I.P. he waved his handkerchief and May and Sammons took over the lead and Cotton took the deputy lead slot. Just after turning at the I. P. and opening the bomb bay doors, a shell went through Cotton's plane, severing the wing. No one was seen leaving the plane.

PERSONNEL:

The following promotions of Officer personnel were effective in March:

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1st Lt. to Captain

William P. Holmes William M. Cook

-

Returned to Zone of Interior

Capt. William M. Cook Capt. James S. Heyward

Capt. William P. Holmes Capt. John C. Moore

Capt. Earl Wheeler, Jr. 1st Lt. George W. Hicks

1st. Lt. Bernard J. Kononik 1st Lt. Kaye C. Morrison

S/Sgt. George A. Fry

GENERAL:

On the 16th of March 1945, this squadron was subjected to a Technical Inspection by the Ninth Bombardment Division (M).

The Enlisted mens' club, "Rumor Exchange" was officially opened early in the month. Champagne, wine and beer was served and has continued to flow over the bar every night since except on those rare occasions when P. C. Wilson, who is the official buyer, trader, barterer and hauler, was delayed for reasons unknown, in getting back from Belgium, which is the source of supply.

Those instrumental in organizing, and who were selected as the club committee are M/Sgt. P. C. Wilson, M/Sgt. Bernard A. Kraft, T/Sgt. John Hanly, S/Sgt. Cole and Sgt. Reed.

The men responsible for the building of the club house and have shouldered more than their share in operating it are: M/Sgt. Bernard Kraft, S/Sgt. Bob Hotz, M/Sgt Ken Rogers and T/Sgt Dahl.

The best name suggested for the club, which was submitted by Cpl. Chauvin, took a bottle of champagne as the prize. The club got under way thru the donations of the men throughout the squadron. It is now out of the red, having paid off its stockholders, and is now operating as a going concern.

The financial wizard, Cpl. Ralph C. Burge, is doing a swell job in the capacity of secretary and treasure.

APRIL - 1945

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of April 1945.

1. Strength of the Units as of 30 April 1945:

Officers: 56 Enlisted Men: 292

2. Missing in Action:

Missing in Action over target area of Zerbst, Germany, 16 April 1945:

F/O John F. Bell, Jr.

S/Sgt. Milton S. Stewart

3. Wounded in Action:

S/Sgt. Fred Woods

S/Sgt. Richard S. Blair

4. Awards and Decorations:

Fourth (4th) Bronze Star to Eastern, African, Mediterranean, European Ribbon. (Auth: Ltr. European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, Subject: Campaigns, dated 14 April 1945.)

5. We flew 25 missions with a total of 3,946:35 hours of individual combat time: 1,116:50 hours of aircraft combat time. We also flew 549.25 hours of training time.

April 30th found us completing our two hundred and fifty-fifth (255) operation missions over enemy territory. Many of those missions completed during April were "long-hauls". Several were to localities in the "Southern Redoubt", Southern Germany.

16 April 1945 on a mission to Zerbst, Germany, F/O John F. Bell, Jr., with gunner S/Sgt. Milton S. Stewart received a direct hit while in the target area. It was reported that the plane was seen to crash and no parachutes were observed.

In spite of several minor difficulties, such as targets being "over-run by Allied Ground Forces"; and, bad weather at our base A-70, several crews were able to complete their "tour of duty". During April four (4) Officers and ten (10) gunners were ordered to the Zone of the Interior, upon completing their tour.

During April several crews of ground personnel were ordered to visit the "fighting-front". Many souvenirs were brought back, among which were memories of life as it actually was at the Infantry, Artillery, and Reconnaissance outfits outposts "up-front".

On 25 April 1945, Madame Edna Ferber, renown writer, visited our Squadron area and was escorted by our commanding officer, Major Joseph J. May.

MAY - 1945

History of the 642nd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of May 1945.

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

Officers: 71 Enlisted Men : 283

2. Awards and Decorations:

SILVER STAR

Sgt. Charles E. Kelley

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Captain Richard K. Bills

1st Lt. Lyle N. Procknow

Only two (2) missions were flown this month: Stod Ammunition Dump, Czechoslovakia.

The front was rapidly moving in all directions toward the U.S. - British - Russian line of demarcation. Our unit was prohibited from operating east of the aforementioned "line" for fear of bombing the "approaching" Russian army" or interfering with the "Red" Air Force.

The entire station was kept in a state of tenseness, that "D-Day" was near. All ears were glued to the radios and eyes were eagerly awaiting the news headlines on Stars and Stripes.

Finally it came, on 8 May 1945, V-Day in Europe was announced. The entire station was granted forty-eight (48) hour passes. Almost everyone spent part of the "pass" in Paris, where *Gay Paree* was gayest and wildest since her day of liberation.

It was reported that S/Sgt. Milton S. Stewart, who was shot down with F/O John F. Bell, April 16, 1945, was in the hospital in England being treated for injuries received when he hit the tail section of the disabled plane as he bailed out.

Visiting the squadron were three liberated P O W's. They were: Lt. William (Jack) T. Conner, Lt. Richmond L. Scott and F/O John F. Bell.

May 12 closed the door on any future "points" toward an early discharge from the service.

All squadron personnel were transported to St. Quentin, France, to see the required showing of "Two Down and One to Go". It left the Air Force personnel with a low, low feeling about "going-home-soon".

The remainder of May was consumed with activities and processes necessary to "Redeployment" in this Theater of Operations. Some of those are:

- a. "Point Evaluation" and appropriate action.
- b. Thorough inspection, repair and replacement of operational equipment.
- c. Personnel record checks.
- d. Supply record checks.
- e. Operational training activities and Orientation Procedures.
- f. Physical examinations.

g. Disposal of non-T/O equipment.

The following flying personnel were promoted during the later part of May 1945:

2nd Lt. to 1st Lt: Jack French Donald A. Smith

James P. Hogan Robert L. Hazen

The period following D-Day, produced many rumors of the unit movement; at least four destinations were widely spread. The rumor that received widest acclaim was: "We are going to fly directly back to the United States and receive at least thirty-day (30\) leaves or furloughs prior to any future move to the C.B.I.

As the month of May comes to a close, the 642nd will no longer act as a separate unit but will merge with the other squadrons into the parent organization, the 409th Bombardment Group (L).