

643RD BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (L)

1943 -- 1945

Activation

The 643rd 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

Major (then Captain) Arthur R. Milow, Jr. 21 June 1943 - Late January 1944

Major Carl W. Faust, Jr. Late January 1944 - 20 March 1944

Major Arthur R. Milow, Jr. 20 March 1944 - 24 February 1945

Major Thomas H. Powell 28 February Spring of 1945

Major Herschel S. Harkins May 1945 - 24 November 1945

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Assignments

At the time of activation the 643d 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 643d Bombardment Squadron (Light) was inactivated on 24 November 1945, at Westover Army Air Field, Massachusetts.

The 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L) was activated 12 June 1943 at Will Rogers Field Oklahoma as per General Orders No. 13, Paragraph 1, Headquarters Air Base Command, Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, dated 12 June 1943.

The original cadre of offices and their assignments were as follows

:

Captain Arthur R. Milow Commanding Officer

1st Lt. John A. Marsella Medical Officer

2nd Lt. Hasell W. Barton Ordnance

2nd Lt. William M. Ryan Engineering

2nd Lt. David H. Russell Intelligence

F/O Richard H. Cotter Operations

2nd Lt. Werner E. Tanner Pilot

2nd.Lt. Gordon R. Argyle Pilot

2nd Lt. Roy N. Turnquist Pilot

2nd.Lt. Charles S. Reed Pilot

2nd Lt. Charles A. Thomas Pilot

All of the above named officers remained with the squadron except 2nd Lt. William M. Ryan who was transferred to the 642nd Bomb Squadron.

The non-commissioned department heads were appointed as follows:

1st Sgt. Lorenz J. Fox Orderly Room

M/Sgt. James B. Joiner Engineering

M/Sgt. Frank E. Hix Armament

T/Sgt. Clarence Gaines Ordnance

T/Sgt. Harry J. Broadhurst Communications

S/Sgt. Edgar L. Swiger Intelligence

S/Sgt. Jack P. Hallgren Q. M. Supply

S/Sgt. Elvie R. Adcock Tech Supply

S/Sgt. Robert R. Manning Operations

Sgt. Curtis R. Rulon Mess.

The choice of these enlisted men as heads of their various departments has proved advantageous, as they have been very successful in organizing and maintaining their departments at the desired medium of efficiency and carrying on training for the new and inexperienced enlisted men.

Brief History of the Squadron from Activation through its Second Phase of Training.

The actual birth of the new squadron became complete nine days later 21 June 1943 when Captain Arthur R. Milow assumed command. With Captain Milow came the initial cadre composed of ten officers and fifty-five enlisted men, most of whom had just completed the prescribed course of training at the Army Air Force School of Applied Tactics, Orlando, Florida. The 46th Bombardment Group (L) was the principle source from which this personnel was derived, and more specially, most of them were drawn from the 87th Bombardment Squadron (L).

HEADQUARTER

409TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)

WILL ROGERS FIELD

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

21 June 1943

SPECIAL ORDERS)

:

NUMBER 1)

2. The fol Of's and EM's having been asgd this Hq per par 4, SO #28, Hq 56th Bombardment Tng Wing, Will Rogers Fld, OKla, dtd 20 June 1943, as amended, are asgd to Org and duties as indicated.

643RD BOMB SQ (L)

CAPT. ARTHUR R. MILOW, JR (TEP) Commanding Officer

1ST LT JOHN A MARSELLA (MC) F/O RICHARD H. COTTER (TEP)

2ND LT HASELL F. BARTON (ORD) 2ND LT ROY H. TURNQUIST (TEP)

2ND LT WERNER E. TANNER (TEP) 2ND LT CHARLES S. REED (TEP)

2ND LT GORDON R. ARGYLE (TEP) 2ND LT CHARLES A. THOMAS (TEP)

2ND LT WILLIAM M. RYAN (ENG) 2ND LT DAVID H. RUSSELL (CI)

1st Sgt (525) Lorenz J. Fox S/Sgt (821) Jack I. Hallgren

S/Sgt (826) Elvie R. Adcock S/Sgt (502) Robert R. Manning

S/Sgt (502) Edgar L. Swiger S/Sgt (237) Harold S. Isay

S/Sgt (502) Raymond L. Okrasinski Sgt (275) William E. Haines

Sgt (502) William J. De Bon Sgt (501) Elsa B. Gordon

M/Sgt (663) Frank E. Hix Pfc (911) Charles E. Jones

Cpl (754) Joseph F. Balzer Sgt (754) Frederick P. Koehler

Pvt (754) Edward J. Litawa T/Sgt (542) Harry J. Broadhurst, Jr.

Cpl (888) Harry L. Bruner M/Sgt (752) James B. Joiner

T/Sgt (751) George T. Herschel T/Sgt (751) George S. Newhaus

T/Sgt (751) Charles (NMI) Claybon S/Sgt (750) William T. Hines

S/Sgt (751) Joseph K. Williamson T/Sgt (513) Carl J. Kenner

Sgt (750) Lewis O. Smith Sgt (747) Carl (NMI) Levota

Sgt (747) John E. Shipman Cpl (686) Howard E. Oagley

Pfc (555) George E. Standifer Pfc (555) Paul R. Stolhand
Cpl (256) Joseph F. Tibbs Pvt (256) Francis E. Schoonover
Sgt (824) Curtis R. Rulon Sgt (060) James C. Gregory
Cpl (060) William E. Williams S/Sgt (813) James H. Griffen
T/Sgt (750) Robert A. Gilbert Cpl (747) Earl (NMI) Gregory
Sgt (750) Mose E. Jackson Sgt (747) Victor L. Swoboda
Cpl (747) John M. Carter Pvt (747) James S. Hogan, Jr.
T/Sgt (685) Orval E. Johnson Sgt (932) Nathaniel (NMI) Conley
Pvt (932) Jack W. Bacciocco Pfc (922) Gene P. Tucker
Pvt (932) Gustave (NMI) Buchmann Pvt (521) Doyle S. Hess
Pvt (521) Billy J. Eads Pvt (521) Nolan B. Warren
Sgt (123) John (NMI) Paglio T/Sgt (505) Clarence (NMI) Gaines
Sgt (504) Isaac (NMI) Day Pfc (511) Douglas V. Perryman
Pvt (511) Francis L. Hanson

The first couple of months was spent primarily adding personnel and making assignment changes. Flying officers assumed additional duties and helped to "carry on" until they were replaced by incoming ground officers for the various departments. Flying was limited during this period because of the shortage of aircraft in the squadron. Changes in the squadron duties for officers were frequent as new officers reported for duty and the squadron moved from the formative stage into the training stage.

On August 23, 1943 four bombardier-navigators, the engineering officer and a communications officer reported for duty. On September 8th, a group of six pilots reported for duty, having just completed over one-hundred hours of transition flying of B-25's at Mather Field, California. These pilots were a welcome addition to the squadron.

During the months of July and August, leaves and furloughs were frequent. There were two promotions; 2nd Lt. Thomas won his silver bars and F/O Cotter put on bars as a 2nd Lt.

The month of September was devoted to intensive operational training. A four week course was conducted by the 46th Bomb Group, and practically the entire personnel of the 643rd squadron spent at least four hours a day in school during this time. It was time well spent as subsequent events have proven and will no doubt prove invaluable even more in the future.

During the month of September, the 409th Group was "loaded" with "rank" and it appeared likely for a time that Captain Milow, our well liked C. O. might lose his command. It was at this time that squadron moral, or "esprit de corps" fell to its lowest ebb. When it was known that Captain Milow was going to remain in command, morale soared to its former high standards and has remained there since.

As OTU school neared completion, activity began intensifying with last minute details for the move to the next base, Woodward, Oklahoma.

During this period, no airplanes were available for instrument flying until the squadron left Will Rogers Field. One accident occurred in the squadron and it was not of a serious nature.

During the squadron's stay at Will Rogers Field, its only tactical exercise undertaken, other than routine, a bombing and strafing attack was made on Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. This was flown as a group mission. The number of planes and personnel available were limited. The target was attacked in accordance with Field Order No. 1, Headquarters, 409th Bombardment Group (L), Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma dated 19 July 1943.

It was with a good deal of reluctance that the 643rd said goodbye to Will Rogers Field, and Oklahoma City, but there were new fields to conquer.

The second phase of training ended, September 30, 1943. The squadron boarded a troop train the morning of October 1, 1943 and moved to Woodward, Oklahoma to begin the third and final phase of training.

OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO WOODWARD ARMY AIR FIELD

NAME RANK PRINCIPAL DUTY

Daniels, Jack E. Captain Sq. Executive Officer

Dunning, Phil T, Jr. Captain Sq. Operations Officer

McElroy, Walter D. Captain Sq. Intelligence Officer

Milow, Arthur R., Jr. Captain Sq. Commander

Bowman, Wendell C. 1st Lt. Pilot

Horrom, Howard R. 1st Lt. Asst. Intelligence Officer

Marsella, John J. 1st Lt. Sq. Surgeon

Rush, John M. 1st Lt. Sq. Adjutant

Russell, Norris. M. 1st Lt. Pilot

Thomas, Charles A. 1st Lt. Pilot

Thompson, Dean W. 1st Lt. Sq. Engineering Officer

Argyle, Gordon R. 2nd Lt. Pilot

Barton, Hasell W. 2nd Lt. Sq. Ordnance Officer

Corey, Ralph (NMI) 2nd Lt. Bomb-Nav

Cotter, Richard, H. 2nd Lt. Asst. Operation Officer

Coy, John R. 2nd Lt. Asst. Engineering Officer

Dick, Frederick M. 2nd Lt. Sq. Mess Officer

Dixon, Frederick, J. 2nd Lt. Sq. Armament Officer

Ertler, John T. 2nd Lt. Bomb-Nav.

Friedrichs, Louis G. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Gable, Alpheus T. 2nd Lt. Bomb-Nav.
Magne, Arthur J. 2nd Lt. Sq. Supply Officer
Minninterg, Felix (NMI) 2nd Lt. Asst. Supply Officer
Murphy, Thomas F. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Parker, William B. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Reed, Charles S. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Reid, Wallace G. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Rovente, Frederick O. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Russell, David H. 2nd Lt. Sq. Historian
Asst. Intelligence Officer
Sawyer, Wilbert L. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Smith, Larry W. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Tanner, Werner B 2nd Lt. Pilot
Turner, Arthur G. 2nd Lt. Sq. Communication O.
Turnquist, Roy R. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Walden, Baron S. Jr. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Waltman, John T. 2nd Lt. Pilot
Weiner, Irving B. 2nd Lt. Bomb-Nav.

During the month of July we took over 5 planes belonging to the 87th Bombardment Squadron (L), 45th Bombardment Group (L), one day a week for flying. The majority of the time there would be only one or two planes in commission out of the 5 that we were to fly. Since the majority of our pilots were already checked out in the A-20 type airplane, this lack of planes reduced the flying training we should have been able to obtain. The days we were not flying were spent in drawing equipment, building files and getting ready to properly function as an organization.

The first part of August we moved to the flying line, and on 3 August 1943 we received our first airplane, A-20G, 42-54282. The next day, 4 August, F/O Cotter departed for Los Angeles, California, in our only plane to make a training film.

The next two weeks we received two new A-20G's, 423-86574 and 42-86576. Second Lt. Gordon R. Argyle was appointed Assistant Operations Officer and was sent to Unit Oxygen Officer's School at Randolph Field, Texas. Second Lt. Roy H. Turnquist was also appointed Assistant Operations Officer and took charge of operations in the absence of F/O Cotter. During F.O Cotter's absence he was promoted to Second Lieutenant.

We had a very successful month of operations during August, everything was running smoothly.

2 September 1943, Second Lt. Frederick O. Rovente had an accident when landing in A-20G, 42-86576. Lt Rovente was not injured but the airplane was damaged beyond repair. The loss of the plane was a blow to the squadron morale which until then had been very high.

During the month of September the squadron was divided into equal sections to attend OTU school. One section would attend school while the other flew, alternating every 14 hours. Upon completing OTU school orders came that we were to move to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma, to continue our training.

On October 1, 1943, the Squadron moved to Woodward Army Air Field, Woodward, Oklahoma. A few days passed by before our training program once more got under way. Much time was spent in getting things set up to operate. Very little flying was done due to the lack of gasoline and parts.

Schedules were drawn up by Group Headquarters for various phases of training. This included night flying every other night, link trainer every other day and bombing and gunnery every fourth day. Parades and reviews were again held every Tuesday, and technical inspectors began making the rounds, including inspectors from Headquarters III Bomber Command.

During October the few pilots who were not already checked out in an A-20 were checked out. Many hours were spent flying transition, formation, navigation and instruments. On 25 October, Captain Milow and Lieutenant Russell went cross country in B-25 C 41-12606 to Omaha, Nebraska. Three of our A-20's went on a cross country to Abilene, Texas and on to Barksdale Field, Louisiana. They were grounded due to weather as was Captain Milow and Lt. Russell were in Omaha, Nebraska.

By October 31, 1943, our squadron had completed one of its most successful months of training. 1045:45 hours were flown with an average of 5.9 airplanes in commission.

For the month of October 1943, our squadron won the efficiency award given by the 409th Group Headquarters. This award was given during a group review, for the most outstanding performance of all the squadrons in the Group for the month of October.

On November 5, 1943 an accident occurred to airplane A-20 C 41-19632 while taxiing back to the line after night flying. The plane's right wheel struck an unlighted hole in the macadam along the right side of the runway. The plane was damaged to the extent that it was turned over to the 419th Service Group for repairs. This is only the second accident we have had; the first occurred while the squadron was at Will Rogers Field.

Throughout the entire month of November, much time was spent at the Jet, Oklahoma bombing and gunnery range.

Although the social life of the individual members of the squadron was definitely limited during this place of training because of our location-for the squadron as a whole it was on the upswing. In November the squadron Officers had a beer and skating party at the local skating rink. A few days later the enlisted men had a beer party and dance in Woodward. The first social event for the month was Thanksgiving dinner given in the squadron mess hall. All officers, enlisted men, wives and/or girl friends were invited and a fine meal was enjoyed by all.

During November the squadron once more passed the 1000 hour mark for flying time.

The 30th of November found the squadron prepared to move to Tyler, Texas for its maneuver phase of training.

November 25, 1943, Thanksgiving Day. The following men enjoyed the traditional Thanksgiving dinner:

OFFICERS

Captain Arthur Milow, Jr. Captain Phil T. Dunning, Jr.
Captain Walter D. McElroy 1st Lt. George Blakely
1st Lt. Wendell C. Bowman 1st Lt. Howard R. Horrom
1st Lt. Charles S. Kopacz 1st Lt. John J. Marsella
1st Lt. Norris M. Russell 1st Lt. Charles A. Thomas
1st Lt. Dean W. Thompson 2nd Lt. Gordon R. Argyle
2nd Lt. Hasell W. Barton 2nd Lt. Roy L. Brown
2nd Lt. William R. Cargill 2nd Lt. Ralph Corey
2nd Lt. Richard H. Cotter 2nd Lt. John R. Day
2nd Lt. Frederick M. Dick 2nd Lt. Frederick J. Dixon
2nd Lt. John T. Ertler 2nd Lt. Louis G. Friedrichs
2nd Lt. Alpheus T. Gable 2nd Lt. Arthur J. Mangne
2nd Lt. Felix Mininberg 2nd Lt. Thomas F. Murphy
2nd Lt. William B. Parker 2nd Lt. Charles S. Reed
2nd Lt. Wallace G. Reid 2nd Lt. Frederick O. Rovente
2nd Lt. David H. Russell 2nd Lt. Wilbert L. Sawyer
2nd Lt. Larry W. Smith 2nd Lt. Werner E. Tanner
2nd Lt. Wellington D. Taylor, Jr. 2nd Lt. Arthur C. Turner
2nd Lt. Roy H. Turnquist 2nd Lt. Baron S. Walden, Jr.
2nd Lt. John T. Waltman 2nd Lt. Irving B. Weiner

ENLISTED MEN

FIRST SERGEANT

Fox, Lorenz J

MASTER SERGEANTS

Broadhurst, Harry J. Jr. Johnson, Orval E.

Herschel, George T Joiner, James B.

Hix, Frank E. Kenner, Carl J.

Neuhaus, George S.

TECHNICAL SERGEANTS

Adcock, Elvie R. Hines, William T.
Bias, Thomas O. Koehler, Frederick P.
Claybon, Charles Leahy, Thomas J.
Gaines, Clarence Manning, Robert R.
Gilbert, Robert A. Okrasinski, Raymond L.
Griffin, James H. Rulon, Curtis R.
Hallgren, Jack I. Williamson, Joseph

STAFF SERGEANTS

Alexander, Fletcher. H. LeVota, Carl
Balzer, Joseph F. Lewellyn, Linn L.
Bonin, LeRoy, A Lovett, David H.
Bruner, Harry, L. Mueller, William O.
Carl, Richard, H. Ortner, Ernest R.
Cooper, Donald S. Pardo, Vincent
DeBon, William J. Ramona, John C.
Faulkner, King H. Rosenthal, Burton
Gordon, Elza, B. Shipman, John E.
Gregory, Earl Smith, Lewis O.
Grimsley, Albert F. Swiger, Edgar, L.
Jackson, Mose, E. Swoboda, Victor L.

SERGEANTS

Arnold, William K. Hamilton, Monroe J.
Ball, Paul M. Hanson, Francis L.
Billet, Claude L. Headley, Richard K.
Brahe, Harold LT. Howell, Joe T.
Carter, John M. Lancia, Remus J.
Conley, Nathaniel LaTorre, Joseph C.
Dirickson, Louis Lawrence, Max
Duncan, Donald D. Litgawa, Edward J.

Evans, Lewellyn Lott, Marvin A.
Feinstein, Irving Love, Ryland N. Jr.
Fleming, Warren G. Marshall, Robert J.
Frame, William Martinez, Louis L.
Goad, William E. McGovern, James G.
Golden, Raymond, H. McKernan, Thomas V.
Green, Wallace F. Meadows, James A. Jr.
Gregory, James C. Mitchell, Guy G.
Morrow, Donald F. Schaub, Philip, J.
Neaton, Edward M. Schoetker, Lawrence R.
Nelson, Lowell, H. Scoma, Salvatore C.
Nolan, Kenneth C. Smith, George W.
Oagley, Howard E. Smith, Willard W.
Oakes, David G. Stearns, Josiah A.
Oglesbee, William, H. Sgtoelker, Larry J.
Ogilvie, David W. Tenore, Thomas P.
O'Neal, William J. Tertocha, Alvin H.
Onderdonk, Adrian C. Trisket, Richard P.
Parks, Charles, B. Tucker, Gene P.
Pearson, Melvin D. Ujroda, Stanley
Perryman, Douglas V. Vogel, Marshall C.
Pierson, William W. Williams, William E.
Reese, Donald F. Woodward, Jess A.
Satterfield, James D. York, James W.

CORPORALS

Astarita, William P. Mattei, Angelo A.
Bacciocco, Jack N. Morris, Arlie J.
Besch, Frederick M. Mulcahy, Edmund G.
Braun, Joseph F. Norris, Harry A.

Buchmann, Gustav G. Norden, Ulrich
Burgner, Henry O'Brien, Murnen P.
Cahill, Ralph J. Jr. Parrey, Ernest T.
Carney, James A. Pidcock, Samuel W.
Clark, William L., Jr. Quinlan, James L.
Cochrane, Maurice C. Radford, Elmer E.
Cohen, Abe M. Raziano, John
Coltart, Robert E. Roberts, Albert E.
Corbit, Earl L. Rubenfeld, Harry
Cox, James W. Sattler, Kenneth G.
Deavers, Frank H. Schabinger, Emil F. Jr.
Denning, Thomas L. Schoonover, Francis E.
Dibelka, Donald M. Schwenkel, Ward C.
Douglas, Chester Shoemaker, Donald L.
Edde, Billy J. Sikora, Edward V.
Fagunes, Herman J. Skipton, Freeman L.
Ferrare, Alfred A. Smith, Paul
Fischer, Harold A. Smiga, Joseph
Foglesong, Harry W. Soomers, Frank S.
Gambaro, Ambrose L. Standifer, George E.
Goldberg, Chester, K. Stone, Lawrence D.
Griffey, Danny D. Stolhand, Paul R.
Grimm, Clinton J. Tyo, Edsel G.
Grubbs, Floyd D. Walker, Bernard E.
Haloway, Charles F. Weigert, Richard E.
Hartshorn, Martin H. White, Ross E.
Hibbard, Lloyd C. Wilson, Howard E.
Hogan, James S. Jr. Wingler, Thomas F.
Kerley, Ellis R. Wooten, Maurice L.

Leopard, Robert J. Jr. Wright, Joseph E.

Luke, Robert H. Zona, Hugh E.

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

Armstrong, Charles W. Hrabovsky, Paul W.

Askew, Thomas R. Hutzen, Carl E.

Baluha, Joseph A. Jacobusky, Jack

Beer, Ralph D. Johnson, Glenn W.

Bonari, Peter Kais, Alex

Brown, George W. Levulis, Albert A.

Chirst, Charles H. Mangano, Salvatore P.

Copeland, Joseph, F. Miller, Walter W.

Correia, Edward E. Mulkern, James E.

Deitz, Benjamin Pasternak, James B.

DeSilva, Fred A. Pesaturo, Alfred V.

Doctor, Emery W. Pissano, Anthony H.

Duell, Clarence W. Rains, Paul C.

Evans, Clarence E. Raymond, Robert A.

Eyer, Harry A. Rizzo, Carmelo J.

Fairchild, Randle, J. Rodgers, Edward M.

Farrington, Elmer B. Rondino, Frank Jr.

Fowler, Wilton L. Ruggles, Arlie D.

Frierson, Archie M. Russell, Paul E.

Funt, Walde W. Trisch, Harold W.

Giguere, Louis A. Truesdale, William B.

Gladney, John W. Varone, Alfred F.

West, Arthur C.

PRIVATEES

Aiuello, Frank Pummil, Joe A. Jr.

Blake, Allen D. Quarteralla, Nicholas J.

Brockmeier, Francis E. Quinlan, John J. Jr.
Broyles, Robert L. Robbins, Isham D.
Day, Isaac Rodriques, Crispen G.
Durham, William O. Sanders, Larence H.
Garcia, Manuel Sadders, Donald R.
Geller, Murray Shields, Wayne C.
Greco, Bernard J. Smith, Dale L.
Hall, Lovel D. Smith, Jessie C.
King, Domer W. Smothers, Walter H.
Knauer, John L. Steward, Edward E.
Lafontaine, Emilien A. Taylor, James W.
McMahon, Clayton A. Thorpe, Frederick G. Jr.
Nowak, Johnnie J. Tibbs, Joseph, F.
Phillips, Bruce Warren, Nolan B.

Wise, Marvin G.

December 2, 1943, the squadron moved temporarily to Pounds Army Air Field, Tyler, Texas. This move was for the purpose of participating in the II Tactical Air Division maneuvers.

At this time the squadron consisted of the following Officers and Enlisted Men:

CAPT. ARTHUR R. MILOW, JR CAPT. PHIL T. DUNNING, JR
CAPT. WALTER D MC ELROY 1ST LT. WENDELL C. BOWMAN
1ST LT HOWARD R. HORROM 1ST LT. SAMUEL K. JACOBS
1ST LT JOHN M RUSH 1ST LT. DEAN W. THOMPSON
1ST LT GEORGE M. BLAKELY, JR 1ST LT. JOHN J. MARSELLA
1ST LT CHARLES A. THOMAS 2ND LT FREDERICK J. DIXON
2ND LT LUDWIG F. HAMMER 2ND LT WILLIAM B. JONES
2ND LT ARTHUR J. MANGNE 2ND LT LOUIS G. FRIEDRICHS
2ND LT ALPHEUS T. GABLE 2ND LT WILLIAM B. PARKER
2ND LT CHARLES S. REED 2ND LT DAVID H. RUSSELL
2ND LT ARTHUR G. TURNER 2ND LT ROY H. TURNQUIST

2ND LT BARON S. WALDEN, JR 2ND LT JOHN T. WALTMAN

2ND LT GORDON R. ARGYLE 2ND LT HASELL W. BARTON

2ND LT JOHN R. DAY 2ND LT FREDERICK M. DICK

2ND LT ROY L. BROWN 2ND LT WILLIAM R. CARGILL

2ND LT RALPH COREY 2ND LT RICHARD H. COTTER

2ND LT JOHN T. ERTLER 2ND LT THOMAS F. MURPHY

2ND LT WALLACE G. REID 2ND LT FREDERICK O. ROVENTE

2ND LT WILBERT L. SAWYER 2ND LT LARRY W. SMITH

2ND LT WELLINGTON D. TAYLOR 2ND LT IRVING B. WEINER

W/O.RAMON T. YSURSA

ENLISTED MEN

1ST/SGT. LORENZ J. FOX M/SGT GEORGE HERSCHEL

M/SGT FRANK E. HIX M/SGT ISAAC W. HOPPER

M/SGT ORVAL E. JOHNSON M/SGT JAMES B. JOINER

M/SGT GEORGE S. NEUHAUS M/SGT HARRY J. BROADHURST

T/SGT FREDRICK P. KOEHLER T/SGT ELVIE R. ADCOCK

T/SGT THOMAS O. BIAS T/SGT CHARLES CLAYBON

T/SGT CLARENCE GAINES T/SGT JAMES H. GRIFFIN

T/SGT WILLIAM T. HINES T/SGT ROBERT R. MANNING

T/SGT ROBERT A. GILBERT T/SGT JACK I. HALLGREN

T/SGT THOMAS J. LEAHY T/SGT RAYMOND OKRASINSKI

T/SGT CURTIS R. RULON T/SGT JOSEPH WILLIAMSON

S/SGT FLETCHER H. ALEXANDER S/SGT ELZA B. GORDON

S/SGT JOSEPH P. BALZER S/SGT LE ROY A. BONIN

S/SGT HARRY L. BRUNER S/SGT RICHARD H. CARLE

S/SGT OSHER HARVEY S/SGT WILLIAM J. DE BON

S/SGT ALBERT F. GRIMSLEY S/SGT MOSE E. JACKSON

S/SGT JOHN C. ROMANO S/SGT JOHN E. SHIPMAN

S/SGT LEWIS O. SMITH S/SGT VICTOR L. SWOBODA

S/SGT DONALD S. COOPER S/SGT KING H. FAULKNER
S/SGT EARL GREGORY S/SGT CARL LEVOTA
S/SGT LINN L. LEWELLYN S/SGT DAVID H. LOVETT
S/SGT WILLIAM O. MUELLER S/SGT ERNEST R. ORTNER
S/SGT VINCENT PARDO, JR. S/SGT BURTON ROSENTHAL
S/SGT EDGAR L. WIGER SGT WILLIAM K. ARNOLD
SGT CLAUDE BILLET SGT DONALD D. DUNCAN
SGT RAYMOND H. GOLDEN SGT JOE T. HOWELL
SGT LOUIS I MARTINIZ SGT JAMES C. MC GOVERN
SGT EDWARD M. NEATON SGT KENNETH C. NOLAN
SGT DAVID W. OGILVIE SGT WILLIAM H. OGLESBEE
SGT WILLIAM J. O'NEAL SGT WILLARD W. SMITH
SGT JOSIAH A. STEARNS SGT LARRY J. STOELKER
SGT MARSHALL C. VOGEL SGT JAMES W. YORK
SGT MARVIN A LOTT SGT MELVIN D. PEARSON
SGT JESS A. WOODWARD SGT PAUL M. BALL
SGT WILLARD K. ARNOLD SGT JOHN M CARTER
SGT LOUIS DIRICKSON SGT LEWELLYN E. EVANS
SGT IRVING FEINSTEIN SGT WARREN G.. FLEMING
SGT WILLIAM FRAME SGT WILLIAM E. GOAD
SGT WALLACE F. GREEN SGT JAMES C. GREGORY
SGT MONROE J. HAMILTON SGT FRANCIS L HANSON
SGT RICHARD K. HEADLEY SGT REMUS J. LANCIA
SGT JOSEPH C. LA TORRE SGT MAX LAWRENCE
SGT EDWARD J. LITAWA SGT RYLAND N. LOVE
SGT ROBERT J. MARSHALL SGT THOMAS V. MC KERNAN
SGT JAMES A MEADOWS, JR. SGT GUY S. MITCHELL
SGT DONALD F. MORROW SGT LOWELL H. NELSON
SGT HOWARD E. OAGLEY SGT DAVID G. OAKES

SGT ADRIAN C. ONDERDONK SGT CHARLES B. PARKS
SGT DOUGLAS V. PERRYMAN SGT WILLIAM W. PIERSON
SGT DONALD R. REESE SGT ARNOLD E. ROMSA
SGT JAMES D. SATTERFIELD SGT LAWRENCE SCHOETTKER
SGT SALVATORE C. SCOMA SGT GEORGE W. SMITH
SGT THOMAS P. TENORE SGT ALVIN H. TERTOCHA
SGT RICHARD P. TRISKET SGT GENE P. TUCKER
SGT STANLEY URODA CPL FREDERICK M BESCH
CPL WILLIAM P ASTARITA CPL JACK N. BACCIOCCO
CPL JOSEPH F. BRAUN CPL GUSTAV G. BUCHMANN
CPL HENRY BURGNER CPL RALPH J. CAHILL, JR
CPL JAMES A. CARNEY CPL WILLIAM L. CLARK, JR
CPL MAURICE C. COCHRANE CPL ABE. COHEN
CPL ROBERT E. COLTART CPL EARL L. CORBIT
CPL FRANK H. DEAVERS CPL ARLIE J. MORRIS
CPL GEORGE E. STANDIFER CPL HARRY RUBENFIELD
CPL THOMAS L. DENNING CPL ANGELO A. MATTEI
CPL JAMES W. COX CPL DONALD M. DIBELKA
CPL CHESTER DOUGLAS CPL BILLY J. EDDE
CPL HERMAN J. FAGUNES CPL ALFRED A. FERRARE
CPL STERLING T. FETCH CPL HAROLD A. FISCHER
CPL HARRY W. FOGLESONG CPL AMBROSE L GAMBARO
CPL CHESTER K. GOLDBERG CPL DANNY D. GRIFFEY
CPL CLINTON J. GRIMM CPL FLOYD D. GRUBBS
CPL CHARLES F. HALLOWAY CPL MARTIN H. HARTSHORN
CPL LLOYD C. HIBBARD CPL JAMES S. HOGAN, JR
CPL ELLIS R. KERLEY CPL ROBERT J. LEEPARD, JR
CPL ROBERT H. LUKE CPL EDMUND G. MULCAHY
CPL HARRY A. NORRIS CPL ULRICH NORDEN

CPL MURNEN P. O'BRIEN CPL ERNEST T. PARREY
CPL SAMUEL W. PIDCOCK CPL JAMES L. QUINLAN
CPL JOHN RAZIANO CPL ALBERT E. ROBERTS
CPL KENNETH G. SATTLER CPL EMIL F. SCHABINGER
CPL FRANCIS E. SCHOONOVER CPL WARD C. SCHWENKEL
CPL DONALD L. SHOEMAKER CPL EDWARD V. SIKORA
CPL FREEMAN L. SKIPTON CPL CLAYTON A. SMITH
CPL PAUL SMITH CPL JOSEPH SMIGA
CPL FRANK S. SOMMERS CPL LAWRENCE D. STONE
CPL PAUL R. STOLHAND CPL EDSEL G. TYO
CPL BERNARD E. WALKER CPL RICHARD E. WEIGERT
CPL ROSS E. WHITE CPL HOWARD E. WILSON
CPL THOMAS F. WINGLER CPL MAURICE L. WOOTEN
CPL HUGH E. ZONA CPL BERNARD B BERNSTEIN
CPL HOWARD R. WASWO PFC WELDO W. FUNT
PFC CHARLES W. ARMSTRONG PFC THOMAS R. ASKEW
PFC JOSEPH A. PALUHA PFC RALPH D. BEHR
PFC PETER BONARI PFC GEORGE W. BROWN
PFC JOHN W. CECIL PFC CHARLES H. CHRIST
PFC JOSEPH F. COPELAND PFC BENJAMIN DEITZ
PFC FRED A DESILVA PFC EMERY W. DOCTOR
PFC CLARENCE W. DUELL PFC CLARENCE E. EVANS
PFC HARRY A. EYER PFC RANDLE J. FAIRCHILD
PFC ELMER B. FARRINGTON PFC WILTON L. FOWLER
PFC ARCHIE M. FRIERSON PFC LOUIS A. GIGUERE
PFC JOHN W. GLADNEY PFC PAUL W. HRABOVSKY
PVC JACK JACOBUSKY PFC GLENN W. JOHNSON
PFC ALEX KAIS PFC SALVATORE MANGA
PFC WALTER W. MILLER PFC JAMES E. MULKERN

PFC JAMES B. PASTERNAK PFC ALFRED V. PESATURO
PFC ANTHONY H. PISSANO PFC PAUL C. RAINS
PVC ROBERT A. RAYMOND PFC CARMELO J. RIZZO
PVC EDWARD M. RODGERS PFC FRANK RONDINO, JR
PVC ARLIE D. RUGGLES PFC PAUL E. RUSSELL
PVC HAROLD W. TRISCH PFC WILLIAM B. TRUESDALE
PVC ALFRED F. VARONE PFC JAMES L. WALE
PFC ARTHUR C. WEST PVT FRANK AIELLO
PVT ALLEN D. BLAKE PVT FRANCIS BROCKMEIER
PVT ROBERT L. BROYLES PVT JOSEPH I. CIKOTA
PVT ISAAC DAY PVT WILLIAM O. DURHAM
PVT MANUEL GARCIA PVT MURRAY GELLER
PVT BERNARD J. GRECO PVT LOVEL D. HALL
PVT DOMER W. KING PVT EMILIEEN A LAFONTAINE
PVT CLAYTON A. MCMAHON PVT JOHNNIE J. NOVAK
PVT BRUCE PHILLIPS PVT JOE A PUMILL, JR
PVT JOHN J. QUINLAN, JR PVT ISHAM D. ROBBINS
PVT CRISPIN G RODRIQUES PVT LARENCE H. SANDERS
PVT DONALD R. SHADDERS PVT WAYNE C. SHIELDS
PVT RALPH E. SHOEMAKER PVT DALE L. SMITH
PVT JESSIE C. SMITH PVT WALTER H. SMOTHERS
PVT EDWARD E. STEWARD PVT JAMES W. TAYLOR
PVT FREDERICK THORPE, JR. PVT JOSEPH F. TIBBS
PVT NOLAN B. WARREN PVT MARVIN G. WISE
PVT COLE A. MURRELL PVT STANLEY MINKOWSKI
PVT NICHOLAS QUARTERALLA

December 15, 1943, the squadron moved from Tyler, Texas to DeRidder Army Air Base, Louisiana.

At DeRidder, considerable emphasis was placed on the importance of teamwork. Accomplishments were made under very primitive conditions. The gunners received their final check outs on targets towed by B-26s on the gunnery range south of Lake Charles.

The mounting tension of passing months rose to the heights for the 409th at DAAB. We were going over. Everybody on the base knew it. M. P's. are liberal, beer parties were given, and at one, the about face party, the officers served the enlisted men. Then came the day, February 10th and at intervals, long trains pulled out of the base bearing our officers and men northward to Camp Shanks and New York, our P. O. E..

Here we were marched at all hours of the day and night, we spent two weeks of final preparation. Boat drill, training files, security lectures, and clothing checks occupies our days. But, the nights were truly ours as fifty percent of the personnel were given 132 hour passes to the Big Town each night. What each man did is his own to tell, knowing it was his last fling at a good time in the states in the city where "everything is to be had". Each night long lines formed at the camp to be whisked off in great buses and trains to the wonders and excitement of America's greatest city, which most of us were to see fore the firs time. Each morning the same men trekked back to camp hoping for one more pass.

Then on the 25th of February, we were alerted. No passes were issued that night. On the 26th we received notice that we were moving out. At 7 o'clock we rushed out with full equipment, lugging heavy shuffle bags and as usual, sweated it out for an hour. Talking and singing took up time and a short talk was given by the Chaplain. We snapped into position as the command "Attention" was given by Coll. Blake and moved quickly and with little noise to the train which awaited us. Silently we boarded it and were seated, three men to a set, very efficiently and with no confusion. Slowly the train began to move, and gradually increased it's speed. We were on our way.

After about a half hours run, spent watching the lights go flickering past, we filed off the train and onto the ferry. Every eye watched as the ferry silently slipped away from its moorings. Soon we docked, picked up our heavy duffel bags, adjusted field packs and moved off into what seemed a great warehouse.

A band thrashed out the Beer Barrel Polka as we trudged by with duffel bags scraping the ground. We saw the Red Cross around us with coffee and the inevitable doughnuts. This then was it.

INTELLIGENCE

The Intelligence Section of this squadron began functioning along with the activation of the squadron on June 21, 1943.

INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL

On June 21, 1943, 2nd Lt. David H. Russell was appointed Squadron Intelligence Officer as per Squadron Order Number 1, dated June 21, 1943. At that time, Staff Sergeant Edgar L. Swiger was made section head and these two men

composed the Intelligence Section until the first week in August when Pfc. Robert J. Leepard Jr. was assigned. By the 31st of August, the Intelligence Section had its full complement of enlisted men, they were:

S/Sgt. Edgar L. Swiger Section Head

Pfc. Robert J. Leepard, Jr. Clerk

Pfc. Ralph D. beer Clerk

Pfc. Alfred F. Varone Clerk

No other officers were assigned to the section until the first week in September when Lt. Burton Epstein was assigned as assistant S-2: however, in less than a week he was reassigned to Group Intelligence. On September

20, 1943, Captain Walter D. McElroy was assigned to the section as S-2. Thus on September 26, 1943, the Intelligence Section was up to full strength as allowable under the T/O.

COMBAT INTELLIGENCE

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In this field, regular and routine combat intelligence activities were pursued in so far as the degree of squadron organization, extent of pilot training and circumstances would permit. Situation maps were kept by theater and of the world as a whole. An aircraft identification contest was conducted for pilots and gunners. Lt. Russell attended Renshaw School and was certified as a qualified Renshaw instructor. During the month of August, the section plotted eleven standard flights (pilotage, dead reckoning, and radio beam). These courses were flown by the pilots, who derived the headings themselves and had them checked by intelligence. On completion of the flight the pilots were interrogated on specific things observed during the flight. Objective folders were maintained on the various localities covered by these flights. During this period much time was spent in training intelligence personnel in combat intelligence activities.

Per letter, Headquarters, 409th Bombardment Group (L), dated August 28, 1943, Subject - Field Exercise Problem - this section on September 4, 1943, submitted to Group Headquarters a field exercise problem complete with overlays, "blown up" maps and intelligence analysis to be used at some future date, for demonstration and training purposes for the squadrons of this group.

INTELLIGENCE - MISSIONS FLOWN

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To date, only two missions have been flown. They occurred on July 19 and July 26, 1943. Both flown as Group missions--the number of airplanes and personnel available being limited.

Camp Chaffee, Arkansas was attacked in accordance with Field Order No. 1, Headquarters 409th Bombardment Group (L), Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma, dated July

19, 1943. All four squadron intelligence officers worked with one another and with Group Intelligence in preparing the intelligence phase of these flights. Lt. Russell of this squadron interrogated the flying personnel on their return from the second mission.

BASE INTELLIGENCE

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The provisions of TM 30-205 have been complied with consistently. The Squadron has periodically either been given a talk or shown a training film on Safe Guarding Military information in compliance with AR 389-5 and other pertinent directives.

PHOTO INTELLIGENCE

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This phase of intelligence is handled at Group, the squadron having neither a photo interpretation officer or any photographs for working purposes.

PUBLIC RELATIONS - INTELLIGENCE

Files are made on every individual in the squadron, and from this file information of a personal nature (i.e. civilian data, military accomplishments, etc.) may be procured for publicity purposes.

Among the enlisted men a reporter has been appointed whose duty it is to observe and gather all items of interest for publication in the Will Rogers Field Weekly Newspaper. From time to time feature articles are run and photographs submitted to this paper. All promotions are submitted for publication.

MISCELLANEOUS - INTELLIGENCE

Voluminous files are maintained covering numerous angles of the various phases of intelligence. Every Saturday morning in the Group Air Intelligence Room the war events of the past week are summarized orally for the benefit of the officers of the 409th Bombardment Group and others. Lt. Russell reports on the Russian Theater for the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L). Due to the current emphasis laid on pilot training, and the period of organization which the squadron has been undergoing, intelligence activities have been subordinated somewhat to the more important activity of flying.

OPERATIONS

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Upon the cadre's return from AAFSAT, the squadron was activate and F/O Richard H. Cotter was appointed Operations Officer. The enlisted personnel in the operations Office consisted of S/Sgt Robert T. Manning, Chief Clerk.

During the last part of June, 1943, the squadron moved from North Area to the Main Base where an Operations Office was set up and an attempt made to obtain the necessary publications with which to operate. Obtaining the required publications proved to be quite a task due to lack of cooperation on the part of Group Headquarters.

On 29 June 1943, Pvt. Claude L. Billet was assigned to the Operations Office as a clerk.

SUPPLY

The most immediate problem of Squadron Supply upon activation was the obtaining and distribution of Stationary and Office Supplies and Equipment so the other departments of the organization could start to function. In general one of the major problems of Supply at any time and particularly immediately before and after any move, is that we just about have to be finished before any other department can even start to operate. We are almost never given any sort of "head start" - in fact, Supply seems to be very nearly the last department to learn of any proposed operation.

The second problem we were up against was the fact that no one seemingly could make up his mind as to whether we should start getting our Organizational Equipment on Shipping Ticket or Memorandum Receipt. Ironing out

that problem held us back for several days. Generally speaking there has been a great deal of indecision evidenced with regard to problems having a really quite obvious and simple solution.

A third problem and one which is just starting to work itself out, here in the third phase of training, was the lack of any trained, semi-trained, or even untrained personnel suitable for Supply. Clerks of any kind have been the most noticeable shortage and slowest to be filled of all classifications of enlisted men. We have recently had to start training two engineering and operations clerks to work in squadron supply. Throughout the first two phases of training supply personnel has in general consisted of one supply sergeant and all the quantities of men he could acquire. However, these men knew nothing of supply, and because of having other

duties could not stay around long enough to learn anything. Unfortunately these men were of very little use except when a few strong backs were needed. Supply should have had the first consideration in the filling of shortages of personnel for Supply has to be the first department to go into operation. Until Supply is functioning properly, you might just as well forget the rest of the organization.

Outfitting of the individual man has suffered due to the fact that there has not been available the trained personnel to thoroughly check the Form 32's and the results of various show-down inspections. Added to this has been the difficulty encountered in obtaining various items of clothing and equipment from the Supply Services.

The most problems encountered are one which is inexcusable, has been the trouble caused by inspectors from the various higher authorities. Too much time has been wasted setting up the Supply for inspections when that time and energy could have been devoted to accomplishing something necessary. It is suggested that the inspectors come and stick around awhile and watch a Squadron Supply in operation instead of keeping me when I should be down at the Quartermaster Property Office straightening up something. Why don't the inspectors go along with me to the Quartermaster and get a bit of my side of what goes on: that good can be accomplished by inspecting a "set-up" supply room. The main thing accomplished is the interference with the operation of the supply.

Of greater importance has been the fact that each "higher authority" has had his own agenda (Mostly bad - seldom very good) as to the interpretation of various functions, generally with regard to book work. Many changes have been requested to be made at once requiring that essential projects be postponed or dropped altogether. The most notable example of this sort of interference was the Third Bomber Command's request that we change over our entire Property Book from the Third Air Support Command's card file system to the AAF Form 115. That made over property book never got into use and although the Form No. 115 is unquestionably much better (the card file system was very poor) the fact that all our equipment was held on M/R coupled with the fact that we were due to leave the field within two weeks made all that hard and I mean hard work serve no useful purpose. That property book of some 1500 sheets is now useless and the fact that it would be useless should have been known to everyone concerned as it was to all of us in the various Squadron Supplies. If we were able to get this organization completely outfitted in spite of "Higher Authority" it will be a miracle. However, miracles seem to have been performed before so perhaps we can pull one out of the bag.

643RD 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 at their new base in England during the month of March, 1944. The new 'home' was Little Walden, Essex County (Station 165). The new Airfield was not quite finished upon arrival. Several weeks were used to set up the necessary facilities for personnel and operations. Aircraft delivery was a bit slow due to the necessity to modify them for the European Theater of Operations.

APRIL - 1944

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron, 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month ending 30 April 1944:

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

Officers: 36 Enlisted Men: 263

2. Killed in Action:

Captain Carl H. Harrison

Sergeant Marshall C. Vogel

Corporal Joe T. Howell

3. Wounded in Action:

Lieutenant Charles A. Thomas.

NARRATIVE

After many "dry runs" and days of planning, training and learning, the organization made its first mission April 13th, 1944. Because of inability to recognize the target no bombs were dropped. The second mission was also a failure because the bomb release did not operate on either the lead ship or the right wing ship. These first two missions were led by the Group Commander, Colonel Preston P. Pender.

The first really successful mission was led by Lt. Colonel Crabtree, with 1st Lt. John T. Ertler of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L) acting as Bombardier. The target was a No-Ball installation in France. Another No-Ball was smashed the same day with Lt. Ertler again acting as Bombardier.

After these raids, both on April 19, the Commanding General of the IX Bomber Command sent Colonel Pender a telegram complimenting him on an excellent performance.

Lt. Perlmuter, 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), eager public relations man took Lt. Ertler to London several days after this raid and a record was made for rebroadcast to the states. This broadcast brought Lt. Ertler a shower of well deserved commendations.

Tragedy struck the organization on April 25th when Captain Carl N. Harrison, Sergeant Marshall C. Vogel, and Corporal Joe T. Howell were killed. These three men were returning from France through heavy overcast. It is believed that Captain Harrison pulled up sharply to avoid collision with another plane and that the ship he was piloting stalled out and went into a spin. Major Arthur R. Milow, Jr. 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L) Commander, who was leading the 2nd box saw the ship spin in just before it hit the ground. Because of 8/10 clouds over the target bombs had not been dropped. When Captain Harrison's airplane crashed, the undropped bombs exploded and all three men were killed instantly.

The loss of Captain Harrison was felt very keenly by every member of the squadron. He was an excellent pilot and had been doing a superior job as operations officer. This crash and the loss of these men resulted in an even greater desire by all to devote every ounce of energy to keeping the squadron airplanes in the finest condition

possible. In the afternoon after Captain Harrison's fatal flight (April 25th) Lt. Colonel Maxwell led the Group over a Coastal gun emplacement where an excellent bomb record was made. Every bomb fell in the target area. However the final triumph for the month was made on Sunday morning April 30th. Leading a new type 3 box formation, Major Arthur R. Milow, Jr. with 1st Lt. John T. Ertler as Bombardier led the Group to a No-Ball target in France and really demolished it. An excellent rating was obtained and because of clever evasive action flak damage was negligible.

Lt. Charles A. Thomas suffered a slight wound when a piece of heavy flak entered his cockpit, grazed his arm and severed his throat mike cord.

During the month of April, 18 Enlisted men and 1 Officer were sent to "Mobile Striking Force School." This school was conducted on the Base and began April 24th. These men were put through infantry drill, road marches, field problems and classes in aircraft recognition.

MAY - 1944

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of May 1944:

1. Strength of Unit as of 31 May 1944:

Officers - 40 Enlisted Men - 271

2. Killed in Action:

Dunbar, Roger D. Captain

Merrill, Norman W. 1st Lt.

3. Missing in Action:

Argyle, Gordon R. 1st Lt.

Corey, Ralph 1st Lt.

Peck, Clarence 2nd Lt.

Oglesbee, William H S/Sgt

Dirickson, Louis S/Sgt

Bugg, Jason S/Sgt

Ianson, Leonard G. S/Sgt

4. Wounded:

Mattei, Angelo A. S/Sgt/

5. Decorations and awards for members of 643rd Squadron:

RANK NAME AWARD DATE OF AWARD

Major Milow, Arthur R. Jr. Air Medal 6 May 44

Captain Dunbar, Roger 1st OLC 27 May 44

Captain Harrison, Carl N. Air Medal 10 May 44

1st Lt. Brown, Roy L. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt. Davis, John M. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Friedrichs, Louis G. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Murphy, Thomas F. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Reed, Charles S. Air Medal 9 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt. Rovente, Frederick O. Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Sawyer, Wilbert Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Smith, Larry, W. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Tanner, Werner E Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Taylor, Wellington D. Jr Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Thomas, Charles S. Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Turnquist, Roy H. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Walden, Baron S. Jr. Air Medal 23 May 44

1st Lt Waltman, John T. Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

1st Lt Corey, Ralph Air Medal 18 May 44

1st Lt Gable, Alpheus T. Air Medal 23 May 44

1st Lt Merrill, Norman W. Air Medal 23 May 44

1st 1st Lt Ertler, John T. Air Medal 18 May 44

Lt Broweleit, Milton F. Air Medal 23 May 44

1st Lt Peck, Clarence P. Jr. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Barrett, William J Air Medal 23 May 44

S Sgt Bugg, Jason Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Dirickson, Louis W. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Duncan, Donald D Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Evans, Lewellyn E. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Feinstein, Irving Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Golden, Raymond H Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Grimsley, Albert F. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Ianson, Leonard Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Lancia, Remus J Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Lott, Marvin A. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Macaulay, Donald B. Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Martinez, Louis L Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Mattei, Angelo A. Air Medal 5 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt McGovern, James C. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Meadows, James A. Jr Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Morrow, Donald F. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Neaton, Edward M. Air Medal 18 May 44

S Sgt Nelson, Lowell, H. Jr Air Medal 10 May 44

S Sgt Nolan, Kenneth C. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Ogilvie, David W. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Oglesbee, William H. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Onderdonk, Adrian C. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt O'Neal, William H. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

3rd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Pierson, William W. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Romas, Arnold, E. Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Schoettker, Lawrence F. Air Medal 18 May 44

S Sgt Sebest, Arthur G. Air Medal 23 May 44

S Sgt Smith, Willard W. Air Medal 10 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Stearns, Josiah A. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Uroda, Stanley Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

S Sgt Walgren, Harold O. Air Medal 18 May 44

S Sgt York, James W. Air Medal 6 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

Sgt Cikota, Joseph Air Medal 5 May 44

1st OLC 27 May 44

2nd OLC 27 May 44

Sgt Vogel, Marshall C Air Medal 5 May 44

Cpl Howell, Joe T. Air Medal 10 May 44

NARRATIVE

The month of May was an active one for the 409th Group as forty-five (45) combat missions were flown and of this number, fifteen (15) missions had a 643rd pilot and bombardier-navigator leading one of the boxes or the entire formation. 643rd squadron personnel, of course, participated in nearly every mission to fly a total of 257 sorties for the month.

One of our oldest pilots, flight leader, 1st Lt. Gordon R. Argyle has been carried as "Missing in Action" since his plane burst into flames over France as a result of enemy flak on May 9, 1944. 1st Lt. Ralph Corey, bombardier-navigator, and Sergeants Oglesbee and Dirickson, gunners were with him and are also missing. This mission was against a NoBall installation located near "Bonnières" France. Argyle made two passes at this target and it was on the second run that his plane was hit. It is felt that Lt. Argyle showed singular devotion to duty in his determination to hit the target.

On May 22nd Lt. Peck and his gunners, Sergeants Bugg and Ianson ran into heavy flak fire over France and they have been carried as "Missing in Action" since that date. Peck when last seen apparently still had control over his plane.

The most tragic occurrence of the month was on May 27th when as the group was taking off for the second mission of the day, the lead aircraft, piloted by our Operations officer, Captain Roger D. Dunbar, was hit by a P-51 aircraft and as a result

both planes crashed a short distance from the field. The bombardier of this plane was 1st Lt. Norman W. Merrill, the tunnel gunner was 1st Lt. William B. Jones (Group Photo Officer) formerly attached to our squadron, and the turret gunner and only survivor was S/Sgt Angelo Mattei. Several bystanders were killed by the resulting explosion, among them the widowed mother of a four year old boy. This Mrs. Everitt attempted to rescue some of the occupants of the plane and in appreciation of her heroism, approximately three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) was donated by group personnel for the care and education of the orphaned child.

Throughout the month routine training programs were maintained.

The ground and administrative sections were kept busy packing and in general making preparations for overseas movement.

When the end of the month rolled around the 643rd Squadron felt that it had made an important contribution to the current air offensive on Europe.

JUNE - 1944

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bomb Group (L), as of June 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 30 June 1944

Officers: 42 Enlisted Men: 282

2. Missing in Action:

1st Lt. Baron S. Walden, Jr

3. Wounded in Action:

2nd Lt. Marvin C. Thornton

NARRATIVE

While May was slightly more active a month for us than June, from the operational standpoint, it was certainly not as interesting and exciting to the flying personnel, as from the advent of "D" Day they had more of the feeling of direct participation and contribution in bringing the war to a successful conclusion. With the exception of an occasional rocket or noball site the majority of our targets were of the tactical ground support type--fuel dumps, railway installations and facilities, strong points and area bombing were among the most frequent types,

and our squadron flew 230 sorties over France and the beachhead during the month. This total represents 27 missions flown by the group and 16 of these had 643rd Teams leading one of the boxes and as a matter of fact, Major Milow and Lt. Ertler led 6 missions themselves.

June was far from being the sunny month it is purported to be and many hours of ground training were "logged" excluding the 170 hours of air training time flown when weather conditions permitted flying over England but not over the continent.

Several successful dances were held during the month for both officers and

enlisted men and that combined with the every improving post theater and USO shows and the new Aero club definitely put social life on the upswing--for those who had time for participation. One long anticipated event took place during the month--the granting of seven day operational leaves, and Scotland seemed to be the favorite place to relax during this period.

Once again, during the latter part of the month, the squadron began preparations for a move. Several inspections were held and officers sent their foot lockers home, or otherwise disposed of them.

The most unexpected loss occurred to the squadron in the death of 1st Lt. Jerome Perlmutter on June 13, 1944. Lt. Perlmutter had been serving as group public relations officer since our arrival in the ETO and it was felt by all that he was doing a magnificent job. Lt. Perlmutter dropped dead of a heart ailment while on official business in London.

On June 1, 1944, Lt. Baron S. Walden and crew were forced to bail out of their aircraft over the channel and although both gunners were subsequently rescued, Lt. Walden is still carried as Missing In Action.

As the month of June drew to a close with a definite second front having been established the morale of the organization was found to be quite high with the feeling prevalent that the beginning of the end was underway.

JULY - 1944 - OFFICIAL OPERATION RECORDS MISSING

AUGUST - 1944

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of August 1944.

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

Officers: 48 Enlisted Men: 303

2. Awards and Decorations:

AIR MEDAL

2nd Lt. Gerald J. Garrels 2nd Lt. George D. Johnson

S/Sgt. James R. Cavett S/Sgt. John R. Hawley

Sgt. Junior C. Peck Sgt. Robert L. Barrett

Cpl. Jacob Kersch, Jr.

SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Roy L. Brown Sgt. James W. York

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Carl M. Spivey

6th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Fred O. Rovente 1st Lt. Wilbert L. Sawyer

S/Sgt. Donald B. Macaulay

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. William W. Pierson S/Sgt. Marvin A. Lott

S/Sgt. James A Meadows, Jr. S/Sgt. Josiah A. Stearns

S/Sgt. Raymond H. Golden S/Sgt. Adrian C. Onderdonk

S/Sgt. David W. Ogilvie S/Sgt. Edward M. Neaten

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Capt. Charles S. Reed 1st Lt. Larry W. Smith

S/Sgt. Irving Feinstein S/Sgt. Llewellyn E. Evans

S/Sgt. Albert F. Grimsley S/Sgt. Donald D. Duncan

S/Sgt. Arnold E. Romsa Sgt. Joseph I. Cikota

S/Sgt. William J. O'Neal

NARRATIVE

Operationally speaking, August was a fairly active month, and the 643rd was kept busy participating in the current missions, and as in previous months, squadron personnel played an important role in the more successful missions.

The ground echelon was kept on its toes preparing for the long anticipated and postponed move to the "far shore"; however, squadron social activities were not in the least hampered, but maintained their usual high level , there being several parties for both enlisted men and officers.

The end of the month found the squadron having suffered no battle casualties and morale in general quite high. The organization was, as usual, eagerly awaiting the anticipated "September " move.

SEPTEMBER - 1944

NARRATIVE

The historical high light for the month of September was completion of mission number 100 in less than 4 months which constituted a record for A-20's in the ETO. September's high light proved to be the movement of the entire Group to France.

Restricted on September 8th, Squadron "D" began final preparations for movement. The Advance Echelon moved out Tuesday morning, 12 September 44, via train and motor convoy, followed on the 22nd by the Rear Echelon via C 47 transports. Advance Echelon arrived on the 17th after 6 days of strenuous but interesting travel through France. Rear Echelon arrived in great comfort after a 2 1/2 hour scenic flight from Station 165, England to Bretigny, France. Motor convoy of the Rear Echelon arrived at midnight September 30th with much needed supplies and equipment.

Officers and EM occupied the same area for quarters consisting of pup tents for sleeping. Before the end of the month, Major Milow managed to pick a plum for officers quarters; a chateau in Vert le Grand in excellent condition and formerly occupied by 6 German officers. The entire officer personnel moved into the chateau while large tents were set up for EM personnel in the original site.

In all there were 12 missions completed during September, 8 of them while still in England. The last mission from England was mission number 123 On September 19th. First mission from France was on September 28th though successive targets were assigned daily from September 24th but scrubbed each time due to inclement weather. Bad weather resulted in the extremely small number of 12 missions being flown during the month.

General impression of France to date is that its more like home and the people cordial and friendly.

OCTOBER - 1944

NARRATIVE

Inclement weather experienced throughout the month of October has provided little of operational interest: In opposition to such negative thinking, Captain Roy H. Turnquist, flight leader, proved the exception by turning in a spectacular performance with his flight on the 134th mission, the 13th of October, 1944. The target was an important railroad bridge at Benlo, Holland, located near the Western border of Germany. Bad weather was encountered over the target with broken cloud formations making the target difficult to pick up. Remaining after all other flights of the formation had turned off the target for home, Captain Turnquist led his flight on four (4) successive passes before dropping with flak bursting around them on each pass. Results were Good to Excellent. Flying with Turnquist were F/O Martin P. Korzeniowski, bombardier; S/Sgts. Joseph I. Cikota and Stanley Urode. Colonel T. R. Ford, Group C.O., extended his personal congratulations to the crew for an outstanding job beyond the call of duty.

Training flights and ground classes kept flying personnel busy in spite of the few operational missions flown for the month.

New officer personnel joining the organization during the month were as follows: Pilots and Bombardiers; 1st Lt. Benton, Wm. V., 2nd Lt. Connick, Arden D., Gross, John W. Jr., Tobin, LaVerne J., Murphy, Edward J.: Communication Officer, 2nd Lt. Engler, Allen R. and 1st Lt. Miller, Harry A, Adjutant. In addition to new officers, 8 gunners joined the organization in October.

Captain Jack E. Daniels, acting Squadron Executive Officer, was relieved and transferred to Group on 17 October, 1944. Captain Stephen M. Fisher, was assigned the duties of Squadron Executive Officer and 1st Lt. Harry A. Miller assigned as Adjutant. M/Sgt. Fox, L.I. was relieved as 1st Sergeant and transferred to Group. M/Sgt. Hopper, I. W. assumed the duties of 1st Sergeant 11 October 1944.

Slack time during the month was taken advantage of by general improvement of living facilities in the Squadron

area. All squadron tents now boast floors, stoves and

electric lights. An enclosed shower room has been completed with hot running water. Walks throughout the tent area have been laid with German steel runway matting and a one lane highway is in the process of completion leading from the area to the hard surfaced road near the perimeter track. The monthly inspection report commented on general improvement in both administration and physical condition of the entire Squadron set-up with a rating of Very Satisfactory. A rating of Excellent will be the goal for the Month of November.

The first social event since arriving in France was a dance for all Officers given by Group at Bretigny sur Orge theater. The influence of champagne was felt throughout the evening and the Mayor of the City questions the advisability of using the theater for parties in the future.

The coming month promises to be another month of inactivity from an operational standpoint due to continued bad weather. Such periods of inactivity creates an impression of general impatience among flying personnel particularly and the matter of morale as a factor requiring special attention. Several of our older pilots are now sweating out their 65th mission after which they will be considered for release and home. Since there is no definite policy at this time on what constitutes a tour of duty in this theater with the IX Air Force, the immediate future for these men remain in doubt.

NOVEMBER - 1944

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of November 1944.

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

Officers: 56 Enlisted Men: 321

2. Killed in Action:

1st Lt. William V. Benton

Cpl. Marvin D. Riggs

Cpl. P.A. Iannasso

3. Awards and Decoration:

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Captain Charles S. Reed Captain Charles A. Thomas

1st Lt. Wilbert L. Sawyer 1st Lt. Larry W. Smith

NARRATIVE

Conversion from A-20 type A/C to the A-26 was the highlights of events for November. All missions flown were in A-20's with A-326 activity restricted to checking out of all personnel and practice formation flying. Comments from pilots on the new A/C are most favorable.

Out of 31 assigned targets received during the month of November on 12 completed missions were flown. The balance of 19 assignments were scrubs due, principally, to generally inclement weather.

Outstanding news of historical interest for the period was completion of 65 missions by Capts. Charles S. Reed

and Larry W. Smith, who were the first to complete their tour of duty in the 409th Group. Both officers received their clearances and orders for home along with the following gunners: S/Sgt. William J. O'Neil; S/Sgt. Arnold Romsa; and S/Sgt. James G. McGovern. They departed the station the morning of 25 November, 1944. Since their departure the following officers have completed their 65th mission: Capt. Roy Turnquist, 1st Lt. John I. Waltman and 1st Lt. Wellington D. Taylor, Jr.. Turnquist and Waltman departed for home on 6 December 1944. It is interesting to note that the first 5 officers to complete a tour of duty with the 409th were from the 643rd Squadron. Capt. Smith was actually the first to complete his 65th mission which was an attack on Durwiss, Germany, a fortified village, on 18 November and was the 142nd mission completed by the 409th Bomb Group.

1st Lt. William V. Benton and his crew, Cpl. Marvin D. Riggs and Cpl. P. A. Iannasso, were lost as a result of bad weather when returning from an attack on an ordnance depot at Landau, Germany, 25 November 1944. Crash was at Moissy, France.

In line of active operation in the air, training schedules were stepped up on the ground in all phases and maintained throughout the month.

DECEMBER - 1944

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of December 1944.

1. Strength of the Unit as of 31 December 1944

Officers: 61 Enlisted Men: 299

2. Awards and Decorations:

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

1st Lt. Thomas F. Murphy 1st Lt. Wellington D. Taylor

NARRATIVE

Strictly an A-26 outfit now with the exception of A-20 J's being used as lead ships, the 643rd Engineering Section has proven its efficiency in maintenance of our new A/C equal to the high standards achieved with the A-20. The "Bugs" always present in new equipment are being rapidly overcome as discovered. While there have been few operational missions completed during the month, the period has provided operational personnel with invaluable experience and knowledge for

application to future and more intense activity.

The first mission for December was not flown until the 15th due to inclement weather. Since then 4 missions have been completed. Total assignments received during December was 23 with 5 completions. Two scrubs were due to "no escort" and the balance attributed to poor weather.

1st Lt. Wellington D. Taylor, who completed his 65th mission in November, was finally cleared and left for home on 12 December 1944. Taylor is the 5th Officer to complete his tour and leave for home. Gunners who have completed in November or December not mentioned previously and who have left are:

S/Sgt. Barrett, William J. S/Sgt. Cikota, Joseph I.

S/Sgt. Grimsley, Albert F. S/Sgt. Feinstein, Irving

S/Sgt. Martinez, Louis L. S/Sgt. Meadows, James A.

S/Sgt. Morrow, Donald F. S/Sgt. Neaton, Edward M.

S/Sgt. Onderdonk, Adrian C. S/Sgt. Pierson, William W.

S/Sgt. Urode, Stanley S/Sgt. Duncan, Donald D.

S/Sgt. Evans, Lewellyn E. S/Sgt. Golden, Raymond H.

S/Sgt. Lott, Marvin A. S/Sgt. Macaulay, Donald B.

S/Sgt. Smith, Willard W. S/Sgt. Sebest, Arthur G.

S/Sgt. Lancia, Remus J. Pvt. Ogilvie, David W.

S/Sgts. Stearns, Josiah A., and Nolan, Kenneth C. are on orders but are now on leave in England.

Social events for the month included an officer's party at Bretigny and a Christmas party at the new mess hall, given by our Squadron officers for the E.M. At the E.M. party many fine speeches were made, none of which were heard. A late supper, Buffet style, was served along with champagne, wine and beer.

Squadron D boasts 2 basketball teams of championship caliber. The E.M. team has won both games played to date and the Officer's team has won its first 4 games. Our Squadron is well represented on the Group football team, ie.; Pvts. Emery W. Doctor, Paul W. Hrabovsky and Jack N. Baccicco.

Christmas and New Year plans, socially speaking, were canceled abruptly by the German offensive which necessitated restriction of all personnel to the base. 24 hour duty with leaves and passes canceled with exception of operational leaves to England. Rough! The German Luftwaffe has penetrated to our area on several nights to disturb our sleep but nothing more serious has resulted to date.

The last 10 days of December favored us with clear, cold weather with

exception of ground haze and some fog. French mud was converted to a frozen surface providing great relief. It is hoped this weather may continue and our war effort can be proportionately increased during January.

JANUARY - 1945

Plans for Christmas and New Years were abruptly canceled by one and all when the entire theater was placed in close restriction at the outbreak of the German, Ardennes, offensive. Liberty runs to Paris were discontinued and social life with our many French friends was curtailed until the German threat was eliminated. Restrictions were lifted 15 January with the resumption of Liberty runs to Paris and passes and a return to ETO wartime normalcy.

January heralded a month of snow and bitterly cold weather, entirely unsuited to flying; however, 14 missions were flown out of 33 Assignments received. 2 of the 14 missions were low level bombing and strafing attacks on German motor convoys retreating from the Ardennes near Vianden. These were our first strafing assignments. On the second low level, on 23 Jan. 1945, mission #168, near Arnfeld, Germany, Lt. Connick, Arden D., made continuous attacks, after dropping his fragmentation bombs, he dropped to deck level destroying 5 trucks, damaging 2 and shooting of flak positions and a fortified church and building. During the attack, intense light flak was experienced with heavy damage to his A/C resulting. The last pass on the church steeple from which fire was being received was made on a level with the ground floor of the structure on a single engine and upon passing the church the A/C was put in a steep banking turn around the steeple. With but one engine and it on

fire in addition to damaging hits throughout the A/C, Lt. Connick turned West for home still flying on the deck. The one engine still burning, Connick was forced to crash land on a hillside covered with snow near Bastogne at 180 MPH. The A/C was demolished. Lt. Connick received a broken nose and facial injuries. Both gunners Cpl. Clark, James R. and Cpl. Steele, Marshall B. were uninjured. This is probably the most spectacular attack on the enemy made by anyone in this Squadron or Group. A great credit is deserved by Lt. Connick and his crew for pressing the attack far beyond the line of duty. Of 6 A/C dispatched on this mission none returned. 2 crews returned OK but entire crews of 4 A/C are considered lost. 5 of the 6 A/C and crews were from other Squadrons.

Capt. Wendell C. Bowman left for CME on 29 Jan. where, upon examination, was found to have a severe sinus infection and is on his way home for an operation requiring 3 months hospitalization. Officers and EM completing their tour of duty during January are Capt. Charles A. Thomas, Lt. Frederick Rovente. Lt. Rovente left for home on the 29th of January.

Most of the older flying personnel are nearing the completion of their tour and they are doing a lot of sweating while the entire Squadron sweats it out with them in anticipation of bidding them all bon voyage for home soon.

FEBRUARY - 1945

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L), for the month of February 1945

1. a. Major Arthur R. Milow, C. O., relieved of command upon completion of tour of duty.
- b. Major Thomas H. Powell, assumed command of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron on 28 February, 1945

2. Strength of unit as of 28 February 1945:

Officers: 57 Enlisted men: 292

3. Moved from Bretigny Air Base to Laon/Couvron Air Base.

a. Advance echelon departed 9 February '45, arrived 10 February '45.

b. Air echelon departed 12 February '45, arrived 12 February '45.

c. Rear echelon departed 24 February '45, arrived 15 February '45.

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

BRONZE STAR MEDAL

M/Sgt. William T. Hines T/Sgt. Mose E. Jackson

T/Sgt. David H. Lovett T/Sgt. Victor L. Swoboda

Sgt. Robert H. Luke

AIR MEDALS

2nd Lt. Robert B. Jackson 2nd Lt. Alexander R. Chambers

Cpl Martin D. Heering Cpl James M. Jordan

1st OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Cpl. Howard E. Tyler

3rd OAK LEAF CLUSTER

-

Sgt. Glenn E. Earls Cpl. James R. Clark

S/Sgt. Bernard J. Hendin

4th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

S/Sgt. Bernard J. Hendin

7th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert E. Thomas

8th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert E. Thomas

9th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Robert E. Thomas 2nd Lt. Thurman Smith

11th OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt. Frederick O. Rovente

2nd SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

1st Lt Robert E. Thomas

PURPLE HEART

S/Sgt. Robert T. Harris Cpl. James R. Clark

Cpl. Marshall Steele, Jr.

February has been a history making month high lighted with a change of C.O., a new home, and almost a mission a day for the period.

Major Arthur R. Milow was Squadron Commander of the 643rd since activation in June 1943 to 24 February 1945 with exception of approximately 2 months when Major Carl Faust served as Squadron Commander, who was lost in action shortly after reaching England. Major Milow leaves the 643rd with an enviable record of achievement as a pilot and as a leader of men. His individual pilot-bombardier team record in combat is highest in the 9th Bomb. Division. He is the first Squadron C. O. in the 409th B.G. to complete a tour of duty. The morale of the men under him has consistently been the best in the 409th Bomb. Group. The 643rd Squadron admits a great loss with the Major's departure but all personnel are happy knowing he will soon be home and will give their utmost to carry on in a manner complimentary to him.

Major Thomas E. Powell assumed command of the 643rd Squadron 28 February 1945. The Squadron is fortunate

in the selection of Major Powell as its new C. O.

A move had been anticipated for several weeks but everyone hoped for an indefinite delay for it was generally agreed the comforts and facilities of A-48 would not be duplicated at any field we might occupy further north. The inevitable arrived with the departure of Lt. Mangne and 20 EM for A-70 (Laon-Couvron) followed by the Advance Echelon on 9 February '45, the Air Echelon 12 February '45, and the Rear Echelon on 14 February '45. Fortunately the weather eased and the move was aided

considerably in this respect. Both the Advance and Rear Echelons traveled by 40 & 8's and the discomforts of World War I became a reality for the 643rd.

Couvron Airfield had been well developed by the Germans but had been heavily bombed and strafed during their occupancy. The area is literally inter-laced with 500 lb bomb craters including the village of Couvron where no less than 60% of the structures are demolished.

The 643rd was fortunate in getting an excellent Squadron Area site adjacent to one of several large hangars on the field. The hangar now serves as an excellent mess hall which has been partitioned into an EM mess, kitchen and Officer's mess. The hangar also serves as the premier theater of the Base. Food here has been excellent and the 643rd mess is considered the best in the Group.

All EM are quartered in squad tents with wood floors. Some Officers, including the Executive Officer and the Adjutant are billeted in squad tents. Flying Officer personnel are billeted in two small and badly battered cottages in the village of Couvron, a let down from the chateau occupied at Verte le Grand. Bathing and laundry facilities continue to be a problem, however and excellent shower room is all but completed. It is located by the concrete runway in front of the mess hall. Construction has been the basic theme for all personnel in addition to the regular duties of fighting a war. In spite of hard work and long hours, morale is at a high level

February introduced a great change operationally compared to our daily scrub days experienced in Dec. and Jan. for we flew 23 missions out of 29 assignments received. With the advent of daily missions being completed, our original flying personnel are rapidly finishing their tours. The following Officers have completed their tour during February and have left for home or awaiting orders.

MARCH - 1945

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of March.

1. Strength of Unit as of 31 March 1945.

Officers: 64 Enlisted Men: 276

2. Operation change.

During the month of March the 643rd Squadron was taken off visual operations for training and conversion to PFF operations designated as "SHORAN". Generally speaking all pilots and bombardiers nearing completion of their tour were transferred to other squadrons and the newer pilots and bombardiers of these respective squadrons transferred into the 643rd. Resulting transfer of Officer personnel were as follows:

FROM TO

1st Lt. Melvin T. Middlebrooks 640th 643rd

1st Lt. C. O. Reeves 640th 643rd

1st Lt. Loring Cox, Jr. 640th 643rd
2nd Lt. Norbert A. Wuthrich 640th 643rd
2nd Lt. Bruce M. White, Jr. 640th 643rd
F/O Irving Spiro 640th 643rd
2nd Lt. George L. Brady 641st 643rd
2nd Lt. Oscar L. Fowler 641st 643rd
F/O Sidney Goldberg 641st 643rd
F/O Sheldon V. Mulacek 641st 643rd
F/O Eugene H. Buckholtz 642nd 643rd
1st Lt. Thomas Kirkpatrick 643rd 641st
1st Lt. Gerald J. Garrels 643rd 640th
1st Lt. Marvin C. Thornton 643rd 642nd
1st Lt. Robert J. Carey 643rd 642nd
1st Lt. Aultman L. Sherrell 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. Charles B. Cavanaugh 643rd 640th
1st Lt. David L. Proffitt 643rd 641st
1st Lt. Wallace W. Bentley 643rd 642nd
1st Lt. George D. Johnson 643rd 640th
1st Lt. Paul L. Norton 643rd 640th
1st Lt. Charles W. Pugh 643rd 642nd
1st Lt. LaVerne Tobin 643rd 642nd
2nd Lt Joseph E. Paquin 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. Olin B. Oliphant 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. Herbert L. Ross 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. William H. Clopton 643rd 640th
2nd Lt. Lynn G. Sleight 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. William Y. Spears 643rd 642nd
2nd Lt. Joseph H. Cheshure 643rd 641st
F/O John F. Bell, Jr. 643rd 642nd

1st Lt. Jack P. Hoppes 643rd 640th
1st Lt. Robert K. Magliano 643rd 641st
1st Lt. Sam A. Spina 643rd 642nd
2nd Lt. Alexander R. Chambers, Jr. 643rd 640th
2nd Lt. Lawrence F. Roebel 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. Martin P. Korzeniowski 643rd 640th
2nd Lt. Stephen J. Mueller 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. Emil J. Zisek 643rd 641st
2nd Lt. Eugene F. Brooks 641st 643rd
F/O William H. Oliver 641st 643rd

Having been assigned this Group from 134th Reinforcement Rn prt pst 10 SO 85 HQ 134rd Reinforcement BN dtd 26 March 1945 the following named Of are asgd to the 643rd Bomb Sq. (L).

2nd Lt. Ralph P. Marcotte F/O Robert M. Haverly
2nd Lt. Paul E. Maschari F/O Theodore J. Heulmann
2nd Lt. Thomas M. McGinley F/O John S. Laurie
2nd Lt. John F. Mitchell F/O Morris Meyerkopf
F/O Wallace W. Forsythe F/O Pernard L. Kilbride
F/O Douglas L. Heath F/O Maurice B. Garlow
2nd Lt. Thomas H. Garlow

Officers and EM completing 65 missions during the period were:

1st Lt. Robert Brown
1st Lt. Milton F. Broweleit
Capt. Werner E. Tanner
Capt. Wilbert L. Sawyer
S/Sgt. Lowell H. Nelson, Jr.
S/Sgt. Lantz E. Malone
Sgt. Bernard Hendin
Pvt. Wilson P. Blouin

The following officers departed this station for home during March:

1st Lt. Robert Brown

1st Lt. Milton F. Broweleit

Capt. Werner E. Tanner

Capt. Wilbert L. Sawyer

APRIL-1945

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of April 1945.

1. Strength of Unit as of 30 April 1945:

Officers: 84 Enlisted Men 279

2. Missing in Action

F/O Robert M. Haverly

1st Lt. Roy L. Brown

2nd Lt. Robert H. Armstrong

S/Sgt. James M. York

3. Assigned to 643rd.

Pvt. James L. Ridgell Sgt. Joseph R. Fulong

Cpl. Michael P. Ribaud S/Sgt. Myron H. Williams

2nd Lt. Charles R. Mc Intosh 2nd Lt. Francis E. Marsceill

2nd Lt. John L. S. Patch 2nd Lt. Jerome Gewirtz

2nd Lt. Harold L. Guernsey 2nd Lt. Sidney Machtiger

1st Lt. Daniel B. Deeb T/Sgt. Harold P. Williams

S/Sgt. Robert L. Hershberg S/Sgt. Kenneth E. St. John

S/Sgt. Milton Rothenberg Cpl. Walter M. Banks

F/O Irving Spiro S/Sgt John A. Heath

Sgt. William L. Hacker Sgt. Robert D. Edwards

2nd Lt. Alvin R. Weiss

Relieved from assigned:

Capt. George M. Blakely, Jr. 1st Lt. Loring Cox

S/Sgt. Leroy A. Bonin Pvt. Ellis R. Kerley

Pvt. John Curivan Pvt. Joe A. Pummill, Jr.

Relieved from assigned and left for States:

S/Sgt. Lowell H. Nelson, Jr. Sgt. Wilson P. Blouin

NARRATIVE

During the month of April the training and conversion this Squadron has undertaken, that being from visual bombardment to pathfinder operations with the SHORAN Method of bombing, were put into operation with three successful missions flown, leading various groups and attacking targets with SHORAN. The first actual mission flown was on the 31st of March. In its embryonic stage in this theater, and with this organization there are some adjustments to be made, in that of technical difficulties encountered to date, those of signals from ground stations: and of more training.

The ebb of new personnel into the Squadron continues, ranging from men direct from the States and also from organizations within the Group.

On the Eighteenth of April while attacking the Nordlingsen marshaling yard, the Squadron lost two the mainstays, the timber of the organization, a pilot -Bombardier team, Lt. Roy L. Brown and Lt. Robert H. Armstrong, and not forget to mention the losses of Staff Sergeant James W. York, gunner, a veteran of 63 combat missions in the ETO and F/O Robert M. Haverly, Navigator.

From tent city to "Boomtown" would be the apt descriptions of the progress

made in the Squadron area, a parking lot and a crew's ready room were among the latest additions.

Flying personnel again enjoyed the leaves to England and to Southern France (Cannes), plus the 48 hour pass privilege to Paris. Ground personnel were granted 7 day leaves to England and 48 hour passes. Two recent returnees from Southern France, Major Powell and Captain Germain, both bore the appearance of "two boiled lobsters", with reference to being "Shangri-La".

Many horror stories were related by recent visitors to the Third Army front in connection with the Air Liaison program. Lt. Mrootin with 65th Infantry Division; Capts. Marsella and Thompson, Lt. Barton and M/Sgt. Hicks with the 87th Infantry Division. Tales related consisted of a visit to the Buchenwald concentration camp, observing the various equipment and means with which the enemy conducted their atrocities. A hair-raising incident was revealed when the air crew set out in an M-20 Armored vehicle as part of a task force, going beyond our lines for a distance of 4 miles, encountering enemy resistance at this point, consisting of fire from panzer fausts and small arms. Continuing on to a nearby town to question civilians the party was ambushed by the enemy. Capt. Thompson was in "Purple Heart Corner" manning the top turret gun was nicked in the right side inflicting a flesh wound. He was awarded the Purple Heart for this brave action. Following this, the crew withdrew 50 yards and salvoed many rounds - setting the town afire. They then returned to our lines with a liberated Russian and two captured civilians who were held for questioning. Thus the air crew distinguished themselves in the eyes of the Doughfeet.

MAY - 1945

Note:

During the month of May, the 643rd Squadron that was a part of the 409th Bombardment Group from the very beginning was transferred to the 574th Bombardment Squadron, 391st Bombardment Group and moved physically from A-70. The original 574th Bombardment Squadron of 391st Bombardment Group transferred into the 409th Bombardment Group, becoming the "new" 643rd Bombardment Squadron. The history of the 643rd

Bombardment Squadron for the month of May is that of the "new" 643rd.

History of the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L), 409th Bombardment Group (L) for the month of May 1945.

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

Officers: 69 Enlisted Men: 269

2. Awards and Decorations:

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Major HERSCHEL S. HARKINS

NARRATIVE

There were no mission flown by the 575th Bombardment Squadron during the month of May.

During the first week most of our time was spent in improving the area. Tents were made home-like with windows, glass doors and many comforts. The NCO Club

was re-opened and kegs of ice cold beer served. Our CO, Major Harkins, made arrangements in Holland for the squadron mess to receive ice cream twice a week. Everything was being done to make the squadron comfortable and happy. All of the efforts were very successful for morale was superior with all officers and enlisted men. Many cars and motor bikes were brought into the squadron for general use and liberty runs to Brussels started. Appreciation was shown by the inspection report which showed all departments had made vast improvements and there was no sign of letting up.

May 8th the Group received a teletype from General Eisenhower's Headquarters giving the news that the official VE Day would be May 9th. The news was greeted with mixed feelings. Some of the men were speechless, others ran around like Banshees and hoarded Scotch was brought out and passed around and an air of merriment was the keynote of the day. Had the squadron known what was in store, not even VE Day would have helped.

On the evening of the 9th, the Group assembled and our Group CO gave an inspiring talk, the names of missing in action and men killed in action were given by each squadron CO. The Catholic and Protestant Chaplains spoke and a silent prayer offered for both those living and dead and a speedy end to the Pacific conflict. A two day holiday was declared and men took off for various towns in the vicinity.

The squadron ended its tour in the European War with 294 missions and 2149 sorties. A total of thirty-three aircraft were lost.

Our bad news came on the evening of May 16th. A squadron meeting was called at 2100 hours and the Group CO informed us we were leaving for the 409th Bombardment Group, swapping with a squadron which was "SHORAN" and apparently needed in the 391st Bombardment Group. We were told to leave everything but personal effects and were leaving Y-29 at 0600 hours the morning of the 18th, giving members of the squadron one full day to wind up all business. Laundry was out in various directions, shoes being repaired -- all in all things seemed to be in one hell of a mess.

The motor convoy left early in the morning and the air echelon the afternoon. By 2100 hours the night of the 18th, all member of the squadron arrived at the new base, discovered they had lost their identity and became the 643rd Bombardment Squadron (L). Losing our identity was the biggest blow. When the men arrived they found nothing -- tents had been taken down, wires cut and mud added to the dreary sight. Morale dropped.

After a day of work, things began to take shape. There were no ablution facilities, only five latrine holes (one wondered!) and weather was terrible. More

morale breakers were to come later. In another area on the base was a Red Cross Club, but because we were not members of the 43rd Repair, our men were not permitted to use the club. No explanation given. To add to our misery, a notice was posted on the squadron bulletin board to the effect that we were not to attend the first show as it was much too crowded, but that was not the crowning piece -- many times the men of this squadron walked to another section of the base for the second show which was never shown. Again no explanation was given.

On the brighter side, the enlisted men had a stag party which helped matters somewhat. A few days later the Officers held a dance. From all reports both parties were successful and from the hang-overs, everything pointed to a big time of merriment by all members of our squadron. Our CO is doing everything possible to lend a helping hand and his famous smile can be found in every section at some time during the day.

A good part of the latter days of the month were spent in getting shots, inspections of one sort or another and giving supply a bad time.

A few inter-squadron baseball games were played. Everyone worked and played more closely together than ever before because of the apparent Measles sign on the squadron.

As the month of May comes to a close, the 643rd will no longer act as a separate unit but will merge with the other squadrons into the parent organization, the 409th Bombardment Group (L).