

# THE GREEN-NOSED FLYING 8-BALLS A HISTORY OF THE 506 BOMB SQUADRON

NORMAN C. KIEFER

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Belleville, Michigan

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Histories are written or oral accounts of events that have happened in time. Contained herein are the recordings of the things the men of the 506th have done to make history. Each of you have contributed to this effort.

The preparation of this document represents endless hours of correspondence, organizing, typing, and retyping. I think it only fair to first acknowledge the contribution of my wife, Dorothy, in allowing that time to be taken from our lives. Also, she saved all of my letters to her and they are used in this document.

I would be amiss not to recognize the contribution of material, permission to make extracts from his publications, and the beginning-to-end encouragement of Will Lundy.

Others deserving of special recognition are Mark and Rose Morris, and Robert Struble. They volunteered to proof my drafts and make suggestions for improvements. The fellows also contributed diaries and personnel accounts of events.

One only needs to read this history to see the extensive use that I made of the diary of Ray Marner. This diary covered almost the entire time that the Squadron was in existence.

Additional diaries, accounts, photographs, and newspaper articles were obtained from over one hundred individuals. Space does not allow a complete listing of these contributions. Therefore, in fairness to all, I will not try to select. However, I will acknowledge that this work was enriched by the contributions of the many. I thank you for allowing me to use your material.

In part, the microfilm records, furnished by the Historical Research Center, USAF, Maxwell AFB, Alabama, were used to cover events not reported by individuals. Roger A. Freeman's, *Mighty Eighth War Diary*, was used to confirm the spelling of European cities and dates contained in accounts submitted by individuals. Background information, contained in *Ploesti*, by James Dugan and Carroll Stewart, was used in conjunction with individual accounts of 506th personnel who made this raid. To give credence to the author's remembrance of some events in the desert, reference is also made to the Dugan and Stewart article in the January, 1962, *Airpower Historian*, published by The Air Force Historical Foundation.

## FOREWORD

Operations order number 38, dated February 2, 1943, issued by HEADQUARTERS 15TH FERRYING GROUP, CARIBBEAN WING ATC, MORRISON FIELD, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA instructed "the following named personnel" to "proceed in aircraft as indicated from Morrison Field" to England. The personnel and the aircraft listed on those orders belonged to the 506th Bomb Squadron. Upon their arrival in England they joined the other three squadrons of the 44th Bomb Group to wage war against the German war machine.

The 506th Squadron did not actually engage in combat until March 22, 1943. In the following twelve months, all but one of those aircraft were lost, either directly or indirectly to enemy action.

By the end of hostilities 22 men or 29% of the Squadron's original air crews were killed in action. Another 13 or 17% had been taken as prisoners of war. One was shot down, evaded capture and spent about 16 months with the French underground. Seven men or 9% had been removed from combat status for medical reasons. One had been court-martialed for cowardice in the face of the enemy. Some of the remaining 31 men had been wounded in action, but remained on combat status until they completed their tour of combat duty. Five of these aircraft commanders were promoted to be field grade officers. They assumed positions of leadership in the Group, Division or Eighth Air Force. A few of the officers volunteered for a second tour. Two of the enlisted men were given field commissions as 2nd Lt.

Some of the men and these planes were with the Group at Kiel, Germany on May 14, 1943. For our actions on that day, the Group was awarded the first Distinguished Unit Citation given to an Eighth Air Force component. This award is given, "in the name of the President as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction." Once again most of the surviving men and planes were with the Group at Ploesti, Romania, on August 1, 1943, when the Group was awarded its second Distinguished Unit Citation.

What follows is the stories of these men and their successors and how they lived and died. I hope to tell how these airmen and their supporting ground crews forged the 506th into a powerful fighting unit that helped the 44th Bomb Group to write air history.

## THE BEGINNING

The 506th Bomb Squadron was formed on October 8, 1942, at the newly constructed base near Pueblo, Colorado. The original cadre consisted of 19 men. Included were Captain James C. Beam, Commanding Officer; 1st Lt. R. J. Dunham, Squadron Adjutant; 1st Lt. Greene Benton Jr., S-2 Officer; 1st Lt. John Swanson, Operations Officer; 2nd Lt. Gene A Nelson, Mess Officer; 2nd Lt. C. A. Sandoval, Communications Officer; 2nd Lt. James E. Miner, Engineering Officer; 2nd Lt. Albert A. Gill, Asst. Engineering Officer; 2nd Lt. Jerald Lowenthal, Trans. & Supply Officer; 2nd Lt. Ira C. McKee, Armament and Ordnance Officer; S/Sgt. Orr, and 8 other enlisted men.

During the next week 42 enlisted men and eight combat crews moved from Wendover Field to Pueblo. I was a member of one the combat crews. As a note of interest, my flight record shows that all of my October, 1942, flying time was logged as local flights with the 356th Bombardment Squadron around Wendover. About mid-month we moved by train to the new base in Pueblo.

In late October my grandfather died and I was given a three day pass to return to Michigan to attend the funeral. With a three day extension I was able, without my Commanding Officer's permission, to find the time to marry the girl back home.

A Squadron roster for October 27, 1942, shows I was on leave. Other individuals on that roster are highlighted in the Appendix. There were 379 of us.

Immediately after my return to base, the Squadron moved back to Wendover. My records show November flights were out of Wendover with the 506th Bomb Squadron, 306th Bomb Group. Late that month we once again moved back to Pueblo.

This trip was by railroad troop train. Some of the personnel saw the Royal Gorge for the first time. The train stopped in the bottom of the Gorge and the men were allowed to detrain and view the scene when looking up.

It was about this time that Erwin Strohmaier and Dana Tobey were transferred into the Squadron from Photo Training School. They were preceded in the Photo Section by Lt. Harvell and Sgt. Rowell. Joe Pribonic soon followed. However, Pribonic was hospitalized and he was replaced with

Bartus.

Erwin Strohmaier recalls the day he reported for duty:

I was sent to a little office where there were two officers, Lts. Benton and Harvell. Harvell had a folding field desk. I was a real green soldier and did not know how to act, so I saluted the first officer that I saw in the office and told him who I was. It was Harvell.

I soon learned that as a civilian Harvell was a salesman for Agfa photographic materials. Lt. Benton had been an insurance salesman. I told them of my sales background and military training in photography. That broke the ice and we became good friends.

There really wasn't anything for us to do in the photo section at that time. I spent a lot of time visiting Pueblo and talking to the fellows in the orderly room. Occasionally I would try to help them.

One day they were having trouble bringing the Squadron Table of Organization up-to-date. The weather was cold and there was snow on the ground. Orders had been posted that personnel were to report for outdoor training on the erection of pup tents. I didn't like the idea of going to that training session. That is when I volunteered to design a system that would keep the Table of Organization current. However, it would be necessary to miss the pup tent training. They agreed.

I got Dana Tobey to help me and we went to work. We had all the Service Records in an empty room of one of the barracks. We started a card file. (We did get some pup tent training by watching it from our warm second story work room.) It took us several days to complete the card file. After we turned it over to the Orderly Room personnel, it worked just fine.

One day Lt. Harvell came to me and said we should have some photo darkroom equipment and a camera. He was afraid that we would not have a darkroom overseas. I really couldn't understand how a photo section would not have a dark room, but nonetheless, I told him that I would make a contact printer and gather the materials for a darkroom.

When I said it, I had no idea of where I would do the work or get the materials. I did remember seeing a civilian



maintenance shop on the base, but it was off limits for military personnel. When I walked into the shop I saw a man near the door who was having trouble taking something apart. He said that he had been working on it a long time. I told him that if he would let me I would take it apart for him.

While I was quickly keeping my word, I told him of my problem. He promptly told me that I could use the maintenance shop and could have any material that I could find. He also introduced me to the other workers.

In a few days the contact printer was completed with the exception of ground glass, the electric sockets, switches and wire. I took the bus to Pueblo and walked around until I found an electrical store. When I told them what I needed, they donated it. Then, I went to a glass shop and talked them out of a piece of ground glass for the top. That completed our contact printer.

I talked with Lt. Harvell about our need for photo trays and other equipment for the darkroom. He had a scheme for me to go to the supply room on the base for these items. With a song and a dance I got what I needed and a 4x5 camera to boot. Harvell was delighted!

A few days before we were to leave the base, someone started to ask questions about why I was spending so much time away from the base photo lab. They found out about what I had been doing. The Provost Marshall told Harvell to return the stuff or go to the clink. Harvell returned the things.

He then came to me and said that he wanted to take my personal camera along when we went overseas. We had already been told to send cameras home since they were not allowed to go with the troops. Harvell reasoned that he was the Security Officer for the trip and that they would not search his bags. That is how my camera went overseas.

During the months of November and December Norm Kiefer logged 113 hours of flight time. I was also promoted to Corporal.

In December there was an incident that resulted in the Squadron's first decorations for heroism. As I recall, Lt. Frank Slough was flying formation on a practice bombing mission. While breaking formation, after bombs away, one of the B-24's suddenly came up from under and in front of

Slough's ship. When the ships came together, the tail assembly broke off and was lodged on the nose of Slough's aircraft.

Flight Engineer James E. Caillier remembers events aboard Slough's ship on December 23, 1942, as follows:

We had just been flying in formation and dropping "baby blues" (practice bombs). We had been told that this was the way that we would be bombing in combat. I stood between the pilot and the copilot and heard Frank Slough call the other two ships, as we were lead, and tell them we would break formation and fly single file to practice gunnery on the side of the canyon where there was a target. I saw the two wingmen break off as if to trail us. I thought that I had time to go to the back of the ship, as I often did, to check out the fellows and look around. One of the gunners was afraid of flying and sometimes talking seemed to calm him down.

All of a sudden, the aircraft shuddered like it had struck a brick wall. It knocked us all down in the back of the ship. The alarm was ringing and I helped two of the crewmen to their feet. We started for the bomb bay in order to hang from the bomb rack to jump.

While in the bomb bay, I could see the pilot in his seat and the navigator lying in the crawl hole shaking. I went to assist the navigator, but he was incoherent and couldn't jump. I helped him onto the flight deck.

The pilot saw us, but made no comment. I headed for the nose where I found the bombardier trapped with his leg outside the craft. He was almost sitting in a wind tunnel because the ship was cracked like an egg. Otherwise he seemed to be all right.

I went back to the flight deck to tell the pilot what I had found. His only response was, "Didn't you hear the alarm?". I told him that I had. He then told me to sit down and help him with the wheel. The aircraft was shaking badly. The pilot was cool, but was swearing a little about the chicken ---- copilot.

We couldn't see forward because something was wrapped around us. The pilot was talking about cutting up the man in the tail turret. I put my head out the window and looked down to see where we were. It was then that I

realized that we were pushing the tail end of another aircraft.

We started to fishtail so that we could see a little ahead. Each maneuver was very dangerous since we were on full power, but we were just staying airborne. Nevertheless, we had to find the field.

As we approached the field, the pilot really came to life and started barking orders like I'm the copilot. I did everything that he asked and then some. Soon we were on the ground and rolled to a stop about halfway down the runway.

I jumped out of the aircraft with all of my flying gear and ran toward the control tower. A Jeep met me about halfway. I told the officer what had happened. It was the first that they knew that there had been an accident. We had lost our radio in the crash and could not contact the base.

The officer whirled the Jeep around and streaked toward the Operations Building. Soon a whole pack of equipment and people, including a doctor, were headed toward the ship. The doctor went inside the ship with the bombardier while a crew on the outside cut him free.

We were then taken to the Operations Building to recount what had happened. Afterwards, the pilot and I were put aboard another aircraft and ordered to fly for two hours. When we got back, members of our crew, who had bailed out, were waiting for us. All but one was found that day.

The next day, the missing crewman returned. Also, we found that the bombardier had only suffered a broken leg. The only other casualty on our crew was the radio operator who had broken his ankle when he hit the ground.

Two days after the accident, some big shots from Consolidated Aircraft were brought in to examine the ship. They reported that the craft was so badly twisted that it was incapable of flying. They could hardly believe that we had flown it back from the collision.

During this time, I learned why the pilot was cursing the copilot. When the midair collision occurred, he knocked everyone on the flight deck down in order to get out of the ship first. For that he was made a permanent PFC on

kitchen police for the duration plus six months.

What Jimmy Caillier didn't include was that he and Frank Slough were the first 508th members to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross. These decorations were given after these men had become members of the 506th.

The local newspaper, *The Pueblo Chieftain*, reported the incident as follows:

#### BOARD WILL INVESTIGATE FATAL BOMBER ACCIDENT

The missing bomber crewman who had been missing more than 24 hours after he bailed out of a B-24 bomber near Manzanola yesterday in a midair collision was found safe and unhurt today at a farmhouse in the region. He made his way to the house yesterday and spent the night there, being unable to reach a telephone until today.

Four of the airmen who jumped were located within a short time of the accident. Prior to discovery of the fifth man, airplanes from the Pueblo Army base, the La Junta base and the Pueblo civil air patrol had flown repeatedly over the area near the crash, in an effort to locate him. Searchers from the Pueblo base were on the ground all of last night and this morning.

Bodies of the four lieutenants and three sergeants who perished when the bomber crashed near the gunnery range are in a Pueblo mortuary pending funeral arrangements.

The accident occurred at 10:15 a. m. Tuesday when the two bombers were flying near the gunnery range of the Pueblo Air Base, which is west of the bombing range. They were in formation on a routine flight when one ship unexpectedly rose into the path of the other.

The tail of the ill-fated craft was sheared off and the bomber plunged earthward before any of the seven men in it could bail out. It burst into flames upon striking the ground.

Part of the tail of the ship was still on the front of the other bomber when it made its way back to the Pueblo base.

It was about this time that Captain Beam was promoted to

*7 men  
killed  
Dec. 1942*

Major .

There were also some concerns about the state of readiness for some of the gunners and radio operators. You will recall that I was flying as a PFC and Cpl.

After graduation from radio school at Scott Field in July, 1942, I was shipped to Salt Lake City and then to Wendover Field. In late August I was told to report to a Lt. for an interview. The Lt. told me that a new squadron was being formed and that they were in need of assistant radio operators. He then asked if I was interested in flying. When I said yes, the Lt. indicated that the Asst. R/O also handled one of the waist guns. Therefore, I would have to be enrolled in a Gunnery School.

The Gunnery School turned out to be at Wendover. We learned the parts of a gun (rifle) and how to dry or bore sight a gun (rifle). We shot skeet, target practiced with 22 caliber rifles and a few times with 30.06 rifles. Twice we fired 30-caliber machine-guns, from butts, at a moving target. We then moved to big time and learned to tear down a 50-caliber machine gun. That was it! Time ran out! I was not promoted since I had not had the opportunity to participate in aerial target practice. The first time that I fired a 50-caliber air-to-air was in combat!

A report at the time pointed out the lack of training problem. I recall how Mike Davis strutted around like a peacock telling all the world, and particularly all radio operators, how great the engineers were. They were not mentioned in the report.

For many of us this was the first Christmas Holiday spent away from home. Oh yes, there were Christmas packages and the mess hall went all out to provide a real feast. However, it just wasn't the same!

There was a bit of excitement on New Years morning! Everyone wasn't up yet when First Sergeant Orr came charging upstairs shouting "All combat men fall out.". When asked what was up, he indicated that we were going into town and clean up a card game. It soon became apparent that Orr had been in an all night card game that he didn't think was being run on the up-and-up. With "his combat men" he figured that he could get some of his money back. Well, he didn't have enough takers from the combat men so he then went to the ground personnel barracks.

Bob Struble recalls that eight men from the 506th went into town and did clean out the card game. They included Nick Popovich, J.R. Bell and Jack Edwards. Don Pryor (Sgt. in charge of the mess hall) went, but it was not known if he participated.

Mike Davis and Maurice Dobbins also caused quite a stir when they obtained Air Cadet jackets and wore them into town. No, they weren't impersonating officers! Just looking a little better dressed. It was pretty well established that Mike also carried a blackjack into town.

Erwin Strohmaier recalls:

While at Pueblo the officers and enlisted men all ate in the same mess hall. Lt. Stark was the Mess Officer. One day he bought dishes for us to use rather than the conventional mess trays. This lasted just a few days since no one wanted to wash the dishes.

Another time he thought the meat we were getting wasn't good enough so he got a better grade of meat. I'm not certain where he got it.

One day Lt. Stark got a case of ammunition and asked me to go to the butts and shoot with him. I told him that I didn't care to do it as it was too much work to clean the rifle. He said if I would go he would clean the rifle for me. Dana Tobey and I went with him for several days. We never thought of telling the Orderly Room where we were and they were about to list us as being AWOL. We met Lt. Harvell and he asked where we had been and then told us to go tell Sgt. Orr.

The second day that we went shooting, I was going up to the targets with a bucket of paste to patch the targets. When I was about halfway to the targets, Lt. Stark shot a hole in the paste bucket.

During the first few months after the 506th was formed there were a number of individuals who were transferred out of the Squadron. Included were Sergeant Bowden and Corporal Simmons.

Thomas Hobson recalls that the combat crews went to Salina, Kansas, by rail on January 6, 1943.

Included in the Air Echelon orders were Captain Olaf W.

Allison, Flight Surgeon; 1st Lt. James E. Miner Jr., Engineering Officer; and M/Sgt Gordon J. Dunaway, our lead aircraft Crew Chief.

Two soon to be members of the 506th arrived in Salina via a different route. Dave McCash recalls that he was with the 302 Bomb Group, 355 Bomb Squadron at Pueblo in October of 1942.

During this month the 506th was training on the base alongside us. It was at the end of October that we split off and were reassigned to the 330th Group, 457th Squadron. On the first of December, 1942, we were in Topeka, Kansas, when we were reassigned as the 333rd Bomb Group, 469 Squadron. Our crew was still the same, so our flight training progressed with little interruption, except for the weather, which cut our flights to 10 in two months.

On January 21, 1943, we were confined to base to await orders which came through on the 23rd. Three crews were sent to Salina, Kansas. While we were on the taxi strip awaiting our turn, the plane in front of us lost an engine on take off. It circled back, but turned into the dead engine and crashed in front of us. It was a sobering experience and I felt sorry for our pilot who had watched it happen and then had to shrug it off and ferry us to the Smokey Hill Air Base, Salina, Kansas.

While in Salina, the crews underwent additional physical examinations, received shots for overseas travel and were issued additional clothing and equipment that they would need for their overseas assignment. Each crew also received a new aircraft.

Dave McCash found on his arrival in Salina, on January 23rd:

The orders were changed once again. Instead of three crews, they now only wanted a navigator and a copilot. I was picked by a coin toss. Richard Jones was selected as the copilot.

Ray Marner noted in his diary:

Strong and Slough became members of the 506th while we were in Salina. (This must have been the reason for the change in orders for the crews that came with McCash.)

Thomas Hobson remembers that on the evening of January 24, 1943:

When my ship was next in line to take off from Salina, the plane ahead crashed. I do not believe that it was a 506th ship.

The author also remembers waiting on the taxi strip that evening while the emergency equipment was tending to the stricken ship. We took off while it was still burning. I also recall seeing "Shorty" Moran at some later point in time. "Shorty" was not leaving Salina that night. When the plane crashed, he rushed out to the crash site thinking that it was a 506th ship. When he discovered that it was not, he went back to his barracks.

Thomas Hobson also recalls:

*Drawn X*  
On the flight from Salina to De Ridder the 506th aircraft encountered bad weather. Lt. Benjamin E. Angell crashed that night in a swampy area near Lake Charles.

With Lt. Angell were Lts. Edmond M. Haley, Ted Grezlak, and Wallace T. Moore. Also, Sgts. Donald E. Lathrop, Eugene E. Gaster, Jack W. Butterbaugh, and Foster W. Wilson were on the crew.

There was at least one survivor from that crash. On July 7, 1943, in a letter to my wife, I wrote:

One of the fellows that crashed in Lake Charles just walked into the tent. ~~(I don't recall who that was.)~~

*IT WAS GENE GASTER*  
*EUGENE E. GASTER*

Dave McCash and Richard Jones also flew from Salina to De Ridder. They flew with an Operations Officer they did not know. Jones was copilot and McCash was navigator. They had an enlisted Engineer/Crew Chief. At some time in the flight the enlisted man told McCash that:

"The pilot is not really checked out on B-24's". This fact became evident when he landed at Barksdale by dropping the plane in from about 50 feet. We learned the next day that both wing spars were cracked.



## IT'S OFF TO ENGLAND WE GO

### PART ONE-The Air Echelon

Dave McCash recalls:

On January 24th I met Nathaniel "Pappy" Graham and crew. The following day the crew took the plane to San Antonio Air Depot to "check it out". We all had our B-4 bags aboard. It was understood that if something would be found wrong with the plane, we would layover for a few days. Sure enough, when the wing tip tanks were filled for the first time it was discovered that they leaked. During the next two or three days Joe Young, bombardier and Graham visited their homes. The rest of the crew cruised around San Antonio. (Part of the cruising, by the enlisted personnel included a visit with Graham's Mother. She served us with cookies and milk.)

A very irate Lt. Colonel arrived with a brand new aircraft. This was our introduction to the ship that took care of us through a lot of missions.

We took off for De Ridder without delay. With the Colonel in the pilots seat, we climbed to 16,000 feet, even though the pilot was the only one with an oxygen mask. After a woozy trip, but with no real harm, we landed at De Ridder. We dropped off the Lt. Col., picked up our belongings and headed for Morrison AFB, West Palm Beach, Florida. I remember that there was a cold spell while we were there and I thought that I would never get warm again.

While Graham and crew were enjoying the pleasures of San Antonio, Thomas Hobson and his crew made a number of practice navigational flights out over the Gulf.

An Air Transport Command Unit arrived while we were at Morrison Field. It was commanded by a Colonel. It was a new unit that was going to fly the hump (carrying supplies over the mountains that are between Burma and China). The unit had been given home leave, but the men did not all return. Therefore, the Colonel was short of personnel. He decided that since he outranked our Commanding Officer, Major Beam, he would expropriate the personnel that he needed.

I was one of the radio operators selected for reassignment:

On a practice mission with the Air Transport Command our navigator became lost while over the water. We were very late getting back to base. I made up my mind that I would not leave the States the next day with that Unit.

That night I did everything I could to make myself sick (soap under the arm, laxatives, etc.). About midnight I went to the hospital and was declared unfit to fly. The next morning they threw my gear out of the aircraft just before the ship taxied out for takeoff. James Gerber, our tail gunner, was also selected to go with the Air Transport Unit. He left that morning.

Major Beam in the meantime had managed to obtain Operations Order #38 which protected most of his personnel. The Colonel's orders were to report to Burma with a Unit. Major Beam's orders, on the other hand, named specific individuals and aircraft that were to report to England.

However, Major Beam was not able to save two crews. Lt. William C. Lunt and Lt. John S. Powers had already departed Florida.

With Lunt were Lts. Glenn E. Jennings, Abraham D. Feldman, and Sidney Guzick. Also, there were Sgts. Eugene F. Messerly, Joseph H. Lamb, Robert A. Shadle, James H. McIlrath, and Omer W. Gobel.

With Powers were Lts. Desmond N. Fairbairn, Truman H. Elliot, and John F. Fogel. Also, there were Sgts. Nicholas Valko, John T. Moran, Paul Beasley, Harry H. James, and Howard S. Walton.

On February 4, 1943, we departed Morrison Field for Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico. Our approach to the field took us low across a rolling surf and a beautiful beach that lay at the bottom of a steep cliff. As our ship crossed the beach, certain crew members commented that this looked like a good place to spend the war. Nice weather, beautiful scenery, a swimming pool and nurses. Let's stay a while!

Dave McCash recalls:

We stayed there for a week waiting for the C.O., Major Beam, who was delayed by a maintenance problem in Florida. It was a great place to be delayed. The weather was

delightful, our quarters super, and the Club Bar had Planters Punch for 20 cents.

Regardless of Major Beam's problem, most of the crews wanted to stay. After all, our orders read that we were to report to England. They did not say when! Let's go swimming on the beach:

In the swimming party were Dale Maury, Richard Williams, and Lawrence Kallal. We had just nicely made our way down the cliff and entered the shallow warm water when we noticed someone on the top of the cliff waving his arms and shouting. We thought that was rather friendly and waved back. It was about then we realized that the beach did not have much sand. In fact it was rocky and had some sharp objects that were uncomfortable on the feet. Our new found friend was working his way down the cliff and still shouting. When he got close enough that we could hear, he did not sound so friendly. It seems that the beach we had picked to enjoy was off-limits and dangerous. That was the reason they built the swimming pool. We were told in no uncertain terms to use it.

During the week that we stayed at this base, we attempted to become acquainted with its facilities:

One night, a couple of the enlisted personnel found themselves at the bar of the base Enlisted Men's Club. However, they were not alone. Two of the officers had stripped off their bars and were drinking with us.

I don't remember how we got the word, but sometime that evening we learned that by the end of the next week the Club had to get rid of all of its hard liquor. They were selling it cheap. Now keep in mind that there were no taxes on that liquor. Therefore, it was dirt cheap.

Someone got the idea that we ought to take along a few bottles. After all, we did not know what was ahead of us. A few bottles, before the night was over, became a few cases. It happened that all of those cases were Old Crow!

A problem that then faced us was that it was a "cash and carry" transaction. One of the officers didn't think that this was too big a problem. He left us for a few minutes and then returned. He had "obtained" a Jeep which we promptly loaded.

With the appropriating officer at the wheel, we then proceeded to our aircraft. None of us were too concerned that the route he picked was straight down the main runway. This did concern the Military Police! We arrived at the aircraft before the Military Police caught up with us.

Now we were faced with another problem. Each of the aircraft had a guard. Now it so happened that the guard on our aircraft did not speak English. None of us spoke the local language. Thus, at about the the same time the Military Police arrived, our discussions with the aircraft guard had reached the point that he had thrown the bolt on his rifle and had a round in the chamber.

Needless to say it took some tall talking, but we did load the Old Crow onto the aircraft and drove away in the Jeep. However, the route this time was via the more conventional perimeter road.

The next morning we told the remainder of the crew about our new cargo and how we had loaded it in the middle of the night. That was when some one suggested a name for our ship. From then on she was the Old Crow. She didn't get her nose art until we were on base in England. What was the nose art? The label from the bottle.

It was about this time I had some thoughts about what the future held. Was this to be the last place that I would be able to sleep in white sheets and have a pillow case? To make certain that did not happen, one of my last acts at Borinquen Field was to strip my bed and pack the linen in my gear.

On February 11 the Old Crow left this country club after Major Beam arrived in Puerto Rico. It headed for Atkinson Field, Georgetown, British Guyana. The next day we went to Belem, Brazil. Dave McCash remembers:

Up until now I had flown just two or three times with this crew. I was still pretty much an unknown quantity to them. It was on this leg into Belem that I laid most of their doubts about me to rest. About 3 hours out of our destination, I had figured an estimated time of arrival (ETA). However, because most of the previous legs had taken longer than calculated, I arbitrarily added 13 minutes and gave this adjusted ETA to the pilot. When we split the field at Belem exactly on my ETA, my reputation

was made and I felt no need to explain how my calculations were arrived at.

On February 13 we departed Belem for Natal, Brazil. The next day we departed Natal for Bathurst, British West Africa (now known as Gambia). This crossing of the Atlantic was made at night. Numerous storms were encountered and we were tossed around quite a bit. It was later reported that some planes went down at sea. None of them from the 506th. In spite of the wild ride and the inability of the navigator to shoot the stars through the clouds, the Old Crow only missed its designated landfall by 16 miles. Maybe the new navigator will work out okay.

We stayed on this field until February 20, 1943, when we flew to Marrakech, French Morocco. As we approached the field, we were told to circle and wait for a herd of sheep to be cleared off the runways. This gave us our first good look at the wreckage of war.

The hangars and other buildings on the field had been bombed by the American Navy during the landings at Casablanca. Some of the French forces in Morocco had put up a stiff resistance. We later learned that the usable aircraft that were left on the field were never fully gassed up. Our Command did not want to take the chance that the French pilots would fly them over into German held territory.

Our quarters in Marrakech were large stone military buildings that you typically see in movies about the French Foreign Legion. The toilet facilities were a number of depressions and holes in the floor. They flushed into the sewer pipes when you pulled the chain that hung from the ceiling.

The dining hall was a huge building with wooden tables and benches. On the first night, while we were seated and eating, some American military police entered with a large number of German prisoners of war:

They were seated right behind us. Almost immediately, one of them, speaking in excellent English, started to harass us. He told us that he had lived in the United States for a number of years. He had been a taxi driver in New York. As a prisoner, he was now on his way back to the States. Did we have any idea where we were headed? He knew what his future held. Did we? Don't we wish that we could trade places with him? The military police kept telling him to shut up, but it was to no avail. He told them that

he knew his rights. We hurriedly finished our dinner and left before Mike carried out his threat to, "Give him a bust in the mouth."

Because the American Command did not trust the local French personnel, we were required to be armed at all times and were never alone. My partner was Albert (AG) Kerns. When we went into town the next morning, we soon found that the Arab population was also suspect:

While we were walking down a street we were approached by a little boy who asked for chewing gum. He spoke English and was not wearing the Arab robe. As "AG" reached in his pocket for a package of gum we were surrounded by a number of Arab children who obviously did not want us to have anything to do with the little boy. There was an old Arab man who joined the group. He could speak in broken English. He pointed to the little boy and said, "NO! NO! HE JEW!" When we looked to where the old man was pointing, we saw, pinned to the little boy's shirt, a Star of David. I looked at "AG" (Kerns) and he looked to me. We drew our guns and gave the little boy his gum. The crowd quickly disappeared. I have often wondered what happened to the little boy after we were gone.

On February 22, 1943, Old Crow departed Marrakech for St. Evals, England (near Lands End in Western Cornwall). At last we were in an English speaking nation and would no longer be bothered with a language barrier. Little did we realize that these people did not speak the same type of English that we spoke.

The Lands End area of England is a seaside resort. We were told that the nearest town of any size would be Newquay. I don't remember how it happened, but Mike Davis went into Newquay that night. He came back with tales of a town that showed no outside lights, bars that were called Pubs and they served warm beer that was called Bitters.

Mike also told of meeting an English girl that was thrilled that she had met a "yank". The girl had to be home at ten o'clock. She insisted that Mike accompany her and meet her mother. After the introduction, the girl's mother agreed that the girl could be out for one more hour. However, she admonished the girl to remember that, "this dashing Yankee Airman will be gone tomorrow. You must live here. Act accordingly!".

None of us can remember why, but Dave McCash knows that we stayed at St. Eval for five days. While we were there, he:

Went to a local restaurant owned by an Australian lady who loved Americans. She appreciated the presence of our troops in the Pacific area defending her country. It was Sunday and the restaurant was closed. However, she opened up for the "yanks". After ushering us in and seating us, she served a delightful brunch. Later we realized the eggs she served were a pretty scarce item in England at that time. In the not too distant future we would learn about powdered eggs.

This stop was cold and damp. I was wearing heavy clothing and a flight jacket most of the time. However, one day when I walked along the top of an ocean cliff, I saw below a group of English people enjoying themselves in the ocean surf.

Both McCash and I have an uncomfortable memory of this stop. It was here that they were introduced to the three biscuit mattress that was issued by the British military. The three biscuits would not stay together; even when I used my sheet to tuck them in. The biscuits were impossible to master and should be placed in the same torture category as the American issued all wool blanket.

The following 506th ships and crew members arrived in England at this time. Their fate is also indicated:

Cactus, with Lts. Virgil R. Fouts (KIA), Frank Navas (KIA), Joseph L. Brenner (KIA), Willard Michaels, and Robert H. Seaman (KIA)). Also, Sgts. Eldo A. Russell (KIA), Richard K. Nordquist (KIA), Edward W. Lindau (KIA), Jerry W. Wieser (KIA), and Clement C.L. Boulanger.

Ruth Less, with Lts. Frank D. Slough, Richard S. Jones, Henry W. Scott, and Lester Warner. Also, Sgts. James E. Caillier, Dan Kennon (KIA), Elwood W. Harbison, Herman Seigfeld, and Robert A. Griffin.

Earthquake McGoon, with Capt. John W. Swanson (POW); and Lts. Walter I. Bunker, Richard D. Butler, Henry E. Zwicker (KIA), and William P. Newbold (POW). Also, Sgts. Loy L. Neeper, Gerald D. Mason, Alfred M. Klein (Evadee/Returned), Warren K. Kookan, and Kenneth A. Klose (KIA).

Old Crow, with Lts. Nathaniel H. Graham, Harold J. Laudig,

Joseph J. Young and David E. McCash. Also, Sgts. Melvin H. Davis, Frank J. Juskowski, Maurice H. Dobbins (KIA), Norman C. Kiefer, and Albert G. Kerns.

*Baldy And His Brood*, with Lts. William H. Strong, Lyle S. Davenport, Thomas A. Flaherty, and Lloyd G. Fretwell. Also, Sgts. Edgar O. Hamel, Clarence W. Nelson, Lemuel B. Fleming, Vernon D. Haas (Wounded and returned) and Orville W. Kapp.

*Lynn Bari*, with Major James C. Beam; and Lts. William N. Anderson (KIA), Stanley F. Olson (KIA), Charles M. Shaw (KIA) and Ronald S. Allen (POW). Also, Sgts. Walter N. Goodson (POW), Allie T. Herne (POW), George E. Hartney, Oscar Ferkauff (POW), and Edward E. Coldiron (Court-Martialed).

*Wicked Witch* with Lts. James C. McAtee, Douglas B. Myers (POW), Sidney W. Bank (POW), and Richard L. Schiefelbush (POW). Also, Sgts. William J. Mears (KIA), Frederick T. Wolf (KIA), Joseph B. Duncan (KIA), George E. Christensen (KIA), and Stanley W. Glemboski (KIA).

*Mister Five By Five*, with Lts. George Rebich, Thomas B. Hobson (POW), Preston E. Vaden, and Thomas I. Hyde (POW). Also Sgts. Richard H. Williams (KIA), Richard E. Tuttle (POW), Earnest J. Cutshall (POW), Lawrence B. Kallal (KIA), and Dale W. Maury.

## PART TWO-The Ground Echelon

After the air echelon left, Erwin Strohmaier was one of the many ground echelon individuals who were given a furlough. He used his six days in late December visiting his parents, grandmother, and friends in California. However, he was back in time for the party that was thrown at the end of January. He recalls:

Prior to the party we were asked if we wanted a party with girls or liquor. It was decided that girls were wanted. There was a large punch bowl without liquor. The first person that tasted it thought that it was weak. He went out and got a bottle of hard liquor and added it to the punch. As the night wore on, others also made trips to improve the quality of the punch. Eventually, that was one powerful drink and the Squadron had both liquor and



girls.

I did not get to the party until it was nearly over as we were making personal photographs for Harvell. He took them from one of the planes before the air crews left. When I left the party, I took a bag full of sandwiches to eat the next day. When I took them out of the bag they were as dry as toast from the dry air.

About a week after the party, the ground echelon, consisting of 14 officers and 270 enlisted men, entrained for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. They arrived on February 9, 1943. Captain Benton was the acting Commanding Officer.

Erwin J. Strohmaier recalls:

I don't know if it was his idea, but Lt. Stark had large boxes of plywood made to carry our food for the trip to Camp Kilmer. We ate well.

Captain Benton had Dana Tobey, another G.I., and I as peanut butchers on the trip to New Jersey. We set up shop in a mail car where we kept our supplies. We sold candy and cold bottled drinks. We made two trips through the train every day. When we were not working the three of us sat on captain's chairs and looked out the wide open doors. The weather was beautiful.

While in Kilmer, Captain Benton begged us not to run to breakfast on the ice and snow that was on the ground. He said that if anyone fell they would have to stay behind. Some ran and one fellow fell and broke a few ribs. He begged to go with the Squadron and was taped up for the trip on the ship.

The man with the broken ribs was one of the 10 officers and 237 enlisted men that were scheduled to leave the States at this time. The day selected for departure was Charleston Miller's birthday, February 27, 1943. Three officers and 30 enlisted men were left behind as the rear echelon.

Robert S. Struble wrote in his Log:

We left Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, Saturday morning, February 27, 1943. We entrained from there to Jersey City, and then by boat to a New York pier of the Cunard White Star Line. We were actually the next pier to where the burned out Normandie lay half buried in the water from

the Hudson River.

About noon, or a little thereafter, we boarded a boat named the *Chantilly*. The ship once belonged to the French, but the British took possession after it had been torpedoed in late 1940. All the guys pretty well knew where we were going when we boarded, but none knew for sure.

We left the pier about 5 P.M. and anchored just a little past the Statue of Liberty. At 4 o'clock in the morning we moved out to meet our convoy. I don't know what time we met the convoy, heading east, but by the time we arose we were in our position and under way.

Since this ship was run by British seamen, we lived under poor conditions for the whole voyage. Chow was indescribable. Between the stench from the galley and the Indian native crew, one often wondered how we could even taste the food.

The first days out most everyone was seasick. I was one of the fortunate ones who didn't become so. Some were sick the whole voyage and lost 15-to-20 pounds.

Sleeping conditions (hammocks) were very overcrowded. Everyone suffered together in rather good spirits.

The officers, due to English class traditions, lived, ate, and slept under "Waldorf" conditions when compared to the enlisted men. We often compared ourselves like cattle in the hold of the ship.

After four days out, the greasy mutton stew began to taste like steak. All of us bitched. The food improved, but not to any noticeable extent.

The Atlantic in winter is rough with rain squalls and strong winds. We did manage to see some whales and porpoises.

The third day out I was assigned to a gun crew. The gun was a British 12 pound antiaircraft weapon. I was the aimer. The gun crews (6 men to a crew) were on four hours and off 12 hours for the rest of the voyage.

On March 10, Ash Wednesday, at 8:25 P.M. we experienced our first submarine attack. This was later found to be

the only one--Thank God.

Everyone was immediately mustered on deck. It seems there were quite a few subs attacking on all sides of the convoy. Our information reported 60 ships in our convoy.

The first attack sunk three ships to our starboard. Later, around 11 PM, two ships were hit and sunk to our port side and one was hit immediately to our stern. Everyone was frightened of the unknown. It's one hell of a feeling to realize what's happening and one cannot do anything. You just sit there and wait, wait, wait. Two men were locked up in the brig as they became hysterical.

I was on duty from midnight to 4 A.M. that morning. It will be well remembered by me since two more ships were hit during my duty hours. One was a tanker carrying high octane gasoline. When first hit, it burned and became very bright. In fact we could have read a book on deck by the light given off from about 3 miles away. After a minute or so a huge puff of smoke and bellowing fire, with sparks shooting everywhere, shot up into the sky for 5-to-10,000 feet. This was climaxed by a tremendous, shattering explosion.

The official count was never given, but I counted eight ships sunk that night. For two days everyone slept by his boat station. We expected the worst, but no more attacks came.

This morning, March 11th, it was reported that our escort of Canadian and British destroyers, and corvettes had sunk three German subs and damaged a fourth during the night. This was why we escaped further attack. It was encouraging to know we got back at those bastards in some small way.

We remained on the alert for submarines even as we were approaching the port for disembarking. We dropped anchor in the Firth of Clyde, near Glasgow, Scotland on March 20 at 2 P.M. After spending one more night on the ship we went by train to Shipdham in England.

Erwin Strohmaier recalls:

While on the Chantilly, Lt. Stark kept looking for submarines with his binoculars. One day he grabbed me and asked me to look for subs for a few minutes. I expected

him to be gone for a long time, but it was not long before he was back and started looking through the binoculars again.

These same events were covered in Ray Warner's diary as follows:

February 27, 1943--Boarded the ship *Chantilly*, a captured French boat with English officers and a Hindu crew from Calcutta, India. Men in uniform from other countries were on board.

February 28--Pulled out to sea. A lot of fellows got seasick the first two days. I got by okay. This boat sure is a hulk. We're packed in like sardines. The food is the worst I have ever eaten.

March 9--Been on the boat for 10 days. Sure am tired of it. Have had some pretty rough weather so far. Lots of dishes broken. I can now walk on deck no matter how much the boat rocks. Old sea legs. Saw an aircraft carrier.

March 10 and 11--I'll never forget those dates. About 8:30 P.M. we heard an explosion and the muster bell rang. We grabbed our clothes and went on deck in time to see an oil tanker on our starboard side. It was split right in two. Two other ships were sunk at the same time. The torpedo that got the tanker was meant for us. It missed our bow by only 10 yards. That is official.

The Captain then started to rock the boat by zigzagging. I thought sure we'd capsize. The ship will take a 45 degree rock and he was rocking at 42. Two life boats were damaged and cut loose. Everyone was plenty scared and praying for his life.

About midnight we were attacked again by German subs. I think they got two more ships. We stayed on deck all night and just about froze while waiting for a torpedo to hit us.

About 3 A.M. we heard a terrific explosion and a munitions boat was hit. The flames grew larger and larger until they lit up the whole convoy. It was just like day outside. We were all perfect targets so a destroyer shelled the ship so it would explode. I'll never forget that sight. Flames shot thousands of feet in the air and died down quickly. All men lost their lives. What a

beautiful, but still horrifying sight.

English sailors aboard say it was the worst sub attack they've ever seen. They've been on the Atlantic for about 3 years.

Years later Ray recounted that when the first alarm sounded we headed up an open stairway for the deck. The gangway had railings on both sides and our barracks bags were stored below. Nick Popovich was directly ahead of Paul Keefe and myself. As we were going up, a bunch of the Indian crewmen were coming down. We could never figure out why they were heading down when it would appear that you should be topside. There was not room to pass so Nick just dumped them over the side of the gangway. When I think back it seems there must have been half a dozen or so go over the railings. If we hadn't been so scared I am sure we would have laughed. Afterward, Paul and I decided that whenever there was a hint of trouble we would always position ourselves directly behind Nick.

The diary entries continued:

March 12--Seven-to-twelve ships were sunk last night. We got three or four Nazi subs. We now find that if we had been torpedoed we'd have had to jump into the water because the life boats were jammed. Pleasant thoughts. We stayed on deck all of last night huddled up in coats and blankets. No attack.

March 15--Came into the harbor near Glasgow, Scotland. The people are really excited because the Germans reported us as sunk. They must have found the two life boats we cut away.

In a recent letter Ray Warner said:

In the submarine attack of March 10 & 11 the S. S. Chantilly was at the rear of the convoy. There were three ships positioned in front of and three behind. The next morning we were all alone at the rear, as all six ships around us had been sunk. We had fallen well behind the rest of the convoy and spent most of the day of March 11, 1943, trying to catch up. Luckily no more attacks were forthcoming.

Samuel G. Kelly, Captain, USN, Director of Naval History, reports that the convoy started out with 74 ships. The

convoy was subjected to attack by 12 German submarines on March 10 and 11. There were six convoy ships sunk, two badly damaged by internal explosions and two submarines destroyed.

Henry Fetherolf recalls:

The *Chantilly* was a British boat with the top speed of 12 knots per hour. The crew members, except for the officers were from India. The ship's Captain told the Americans not to let the Indians near the life boats as they would abandon ship at the first sign of trouble. Well, when the shooting started, we had to kick hell out of them to keep them from taking the life boats and taking off.

What does Henry remember about the actual attack? "Only I and the laundry man will really know how scared I was."

On the train trip from Scotland to London, the rails were bombed out and the troop train was diverted to a siding for a day and a half. There was no food. While doing some exploring, someone found an emergency supply in one of the cars. They did what comes naturally and then shared it with 1st Lt. John W. Stark, the Squadron Armament Officer. Stark and another 1st Lt. got into a row over the enlisted men stealing the food. Stark gave the other Lt. the prettiest shiner that I have ever seen. When the train reached London the other Lt. tried to get the M.P.'s to arrest Stark. It didn't work! Not one of that car full of enlisted men had seen a thing and thus there were no witnesses.

After having his memory jogged by reading Henry's account, Ray Marner remembered being hungry and finding a supply of C-rations.

Erwin Strohmaier recalls:

The subs attacked us about an hour apart. On the second attack the Captain said we were saved when he saw a torpedo coming and made a sharp turn to the left that kept us from being hit. I was in the front part of the ship, by the cargo hatches, with many others and got soaking wet from a wave that covered us due to this maneuver.

Prior to the attack there was much complaining about the food. We made so much trouble that one day all the NCO's were told to report for a meeting about the food. We said that we had our cooks along and would like to do the

cooking. The English Captain said, "He never heard anything like that before from enlisted men." He continued with, "The next thing we would want would be to run the ship." The next day was when the submarines attacked and everyone was so glad to be alive that there wasn't much bitching about the food.

The train trip to Shipdham was a long one. It was a little before 12 o'clock when we got on the train. We did not get any food until 7:15 when canned rations were passed out. We arrived at Thuxton Station at 4 A.M. in a dense fog. The truck that I was on got lost and we did not arrive at the site until 5:30 A.M. After the bad food we had on the ship, it was nice to get food that we could eat.

he was assigned to the 68th Squadron.

"Doc." was a good man at sending and receiving Morse Code. He preferred to use a "bug" (a two way spring loaded key that moved on a horizontal plane rather than a vertical plane) and would communicate with other bug users at other bases.

There was also a Sgt. named Lafferty that helped "Doc". I don't remember what squadron he was from. Delores Brumagin, a combat radio man from the 67th, could frequently be found in the radio training class room. *(Later combat)*

Gunnery training was also conducted in facilities that were located on the Tech. Site. There was a good deal of time spent with cards and slides in the rapid identification of aircraft silhouettes. You had to be able to tell friend from foe. I was later to wonder why? When we were over the continent there were no friends that were not in your formation. When we were over the channel you shoot at anything that pointed its nose at you.

On the morning of March 1st we were to leave to go to Hethel for some additional training. We were told to take only the things that we would need for a one-week stay. We were very concerned about leaving our personal things (including the cases of Old Crow) since our site was so isolated and there would be no one there that we knew to watch them. The response was, "Don't worry! The base M.P.'s will conduct patrols." So off we went.

The thing that impressed me most about the trip to Hethel was the domination of the training by British personnel. I guess the reasoning was that they had been at war much longer than we and therefore had the expertise.

One bit of training that I recall had to do with ditching. In the lectures we were told how susceptible the B-24 was to break in two. The break seemed to always occur in the bomb bay area when the ship hit the water. Also, the armor plating was likely to tear loose. Can you guess where the gunner's ditching positions were? We were seated on the floor, facing the rear of the ship, with our back supported by the bomb bay wall. A few feet away was the armor plating.

After the lectures we were expected to go to our aircraft and perform practice ditching drills. That meant getting fully dressed (including parachute), sitting in our ditching position, waiting for the alarm bell, jumping out of the



aircraft and climbing into a dinghy that was stretched out on the ground beside the aircraft. 1st Lt. Ronald Allen, who was responsible for overseeing the drills, could not understand the laughing attitude of the enlisted men in the back of the ship.

Another bit of training that always intrigued me was the Geneva Conventions and the Rules of War. If you go down at sea, off the shores of a neutral country, and the current is taking you into shore, what should you do? If you allow the current to carry you, you may be held by the neutral country for the duration of the war. On the other hand, if you splash and help the current to take you in toward shore you are coming in under your own power. Therefore, they are supposed to return you to your own country. There were others like the different handling, by a neutral country, of one who evades capture and one who escaped from capture. Also, the instructions on how to contact and conduct yourself when in the presence of the underground forces. And last, but not least, the rules you were to follow when captured.

We returned to Shipdham on March 11th. That was when we found how efficient our M.P. force was. Our living quarters had been looted. The Old Crow whiskey was gone! Frank Juskowski's watches were gone! Very few things of value remained.

Complaints were quickly handled by, "It must have happened after our patrols left." and "It had to have been outsiders because our boys wouldn't do that to other members of the Group." We gathered up our things and transferred them to our permanent living site.

While we were getting over our losses, we spent a number of days flying around England. These flights were to practice formation flying, flying at high altitude, dropping practice bombs on "The Wash" (a large North Sea bay lying on the eastern English coast) and to generally become acquainted with the English countryside.

Henry Fetherolf had a surprise within a few days after the arrival of the ground personnel at Shipdham:

We were welcomed to the ETO by Lord Haw-Haw on German radio! I thought we were a big secret. However, they knew about us right away.

Ray Marner's diary indicates that the ground echelon arrived

at Shipdham on March 17th. The next day he wrote:

Norwich was bombed last night by enemy bombers. We could hear and see the explosions and fire. Also, the antiaircraft fire.

When the all clear sounded, Henry Fetherolf remembers:

We couldn't find two cooks. We looked everywhere and the Captain said we had to find them or parts of them. One air raid shelter was never used because it had three feet of water in it. That was the last place that we looked. There they were, sitting in the dark, holding hands like two scared kids.

Ray Marner also remembers:

Within the first week of our arrival at Shipdham, I was walking from our barracks to one of the headquarter buildings near the field. A staff car stopped and the driver offered me a ride. Being only 19 years old and not very military, I didn't realize I should have gotten in front with the driver. I piled in the back with the Group Commander, then Col. Johnson. He couldn't have been more friendly or nicer. He wanted a detailed account of our trip over and the submarine attacks, and treated me just super. I will never forget how reassured I felt with this man as our commanding officer.

Our enlisted combat mess was located on the same site as the Group Commander's living quarters. In fact, if there was a line waiting to enter the mess hall, the line formed in front of the C.O.'s quarters.

All available aircraft of the Group, except the 506th, went to Vegesack on March 18, 1943. The raid had been successful in spite of strong enemy opposition. Our gunners had destroyed a number of enemy aircraft. All of our aircraft returned to base even though many were damaged. Getting them all back was a reversal of a trend that had nearly decimated the Group.

A couple of days later I was standing in the chow line when the door of the C.O.'s quarters opened and there stood Col. Johnson. He called the combat men over to him and complimented them on what a good job they had done. He praised the pilots who had flown a tight formation. He then stated that we would continue the newly tried tactic of

ceasing all evasive action in the target area. He said that, "If we are to destroy targets, the bombardiers have to have a flat and steady platform to work from." He said that, "We must destroy targets if we are to justify the losses of men and equipment that we all knew was going to occur." It was his belief that the losses we would incur with this new tactic would not be significantly greater than those incurred with the old. Thus the pioneering had started before the 506th was baptized.

The morning of March 22, 1943, started for me when the Charge Of Quarters shook me and said they were waiting to take me to the briefing room. While I was dressing, he said there was going to be a raid and they wanted me to go. Lt. Michaels was at the Orderly Room with a Jeep and would take me to the Tech. Site. *Ray Marantz*

Lt. Ronald Allen was waiting for me at the Drying Room (a dry heated place where we kept our flying gear in order to minimize freezing problems while flying in the extreme cold of high altitude). He said that Captain Swanson, Squadron Operations Officer, had asked Lt. Anderson, to fly aircraft #068, Lynn Bari. He was to lead the 2nd element on a raid to Wilhelmshaven. They still did not have a hatch gunner and thought that I would like to go. I agreed and they took me to the armament shop to pick up my gun.

In explanation of why I was flying with a crew other than my own, none of the 506th crews had hatch gunners when they left the States. If a crew was to fly combat, they had to borrow a gunner from another 506th crew that was not scheduled to go up.

Lt. Virgil Fouts also took off that morning in aircraft #191, "X" Cactus. Flying with him as hatch gunner was Morrice Dobbins, a waist gunner from my own crew and Kenneth A. Klose, a gunner from the Bunker crew. The third Squadron aircraft, #295, *The Wicked Witch*, was flown by James C. McAtee.

When we were airborne, we formed up with nine other ships from the 44th. The Group then joined five ships from the 93rd Bomb Group (the only other Liberator Unit in England at the time) and headed for Germany.

Once we were over the English Channel, the order was given to test fire the guns. This test firing was not only to assure that all guns were operating, but also to keep them from freezing as we climbed into the cold air of high altitude.

Coldiron, in the tail turret reported that his guns were inoperative. Lt. Anderson decided that he would not abort even though our only tail protection would be from our wing men. However, to the men in the back of the ship this was not our greatest worry. When we left the States, we had been issued back type parachutes. These chutes would not allow room enough for the two waist gunners to operate their guns without brushing against each other. These slight contacts resulted in the parachutes popping open. While test firing the guns, the first chute opened.

In the *Wicked Witch*, McAtee said:

I was having engine trouble as we approached the coast off Germany. Ahead I could see the fighters approaching. Suddenly, my #2 engine gave out and I could no longer hold my position in formation. Knowing that I soon would be alone, I rapidly descended and when near the water dropped my bombs. I then headed back across the North Sea to England. (He reached an English base and spent a week getting the ship repaired).

The fighters were also getting near to the *Lynn Bari*. Oscar Ferkauff, one of Anderson's waist gunners, had agreed to experiment with a new idea on how to keep personnel in the back of the ship from freezing. An electrical outlet had been installed at his gun position. He had been given what looked like a pair of blue long Johns to wear. A wire with a plug on the end ran from the leg. Oscar plugged it in as we climbed to altitude and seemed quite pleased with the warmth it provided.

My combat record indicates that we encountered 35-to-40 enemy aircraft that day. There were Me-110's and Fw-190's. I will always remember the sight of Oscar Ferkauff firing at one Me-110 while stamping his foot in parachute silk because his new electric flying suit has shorted out. Also, the other waist gunner, George Hartney, was wearing a popped chute.

McAtee recalls being told:

Some of the pilots on the mission saw Lt. Virgil Fouts, in *Cactus*, being pursued by fighters. Others reported seeing the ship fall out of formation. It is likely that the ship was hit in the initial fighter attack and the crew bailed out before the formation crossed the coast.

With Lt. Virgil Fouts (KIA) were Lts. Frank Navas (KIA),

Joseph L. Brenner (KIA), and Robert H. Seaman (KIA). Also with him were Sgts. Eldo A. Russell (KIA), Richard K. Nordquist (KIA), Edward W. Lindau (KIA), Jerry H. Wieser (KIA), Kenneth A. Klose (KIA) and Maurice H. Dobbins (KIA).

Charleston Miller remembers:

There were three planes went out, and only one of you came back to the field.

That night the enlisted crew members of the *Old Crow* and *Earthquake* had their first experience of an empty bed. If I remember correctly, Dobbins had married just before we left for overseas. This was a particularly hard time for Mike Davis since he and Dobbins had formed a close relationship.

One last thing I remember about that day had to do with the supply of ammunition that we had available. When we landed at Shipdham, there were very few shells left for any of the guns. If the fight had lasted much longer, we would not have had a means to fight back.

This resulted in a modification being made to our ships. They built a long narrow box that ran head high from each of the waist windows back to the oxygen bottles that were strapped to the walls over the bomb bay. These boxes were for 50-caliber machine gun shells that were belted together in one continuous string. The leading end could be threaded into a gun feed at each waist window. The intent was to increase the length of time that the guns could be fired.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

WILHELMSHAVEN  
HIT THIRD TIME  
BY U.S. PLANES

FORTS, LIBS MEET HEAVY  
FIGHTER OPPOSITION  
3 BOMBERS LOST

American bombers struck their third heavy blow at Wilhelmshaven, Nazi naval base in northwestern Germany, in daylight yesterday.

The formation of Flying Fortresses and Liberators stood off enemy attacks which began as they reached the German

coastline and continued well on the way back home.

Three bombers were lost, Eighth Air Force headquarters announced.

Air gunners reported heavy encounters with Nazi fighters, but there was no official statement of the number shot down, pending checks by intelligence officers.

The bomber force completed its mission without fighter escort.

Previous blows at Wilhelmshaven, where naval shipyards turned out submarines as well as surface vessels, cost seven bombers on Feb. 26 and three bombers on Jan. 27

Attacking yesterday in "excellent weather", the U.S. bombers reported "good results".

There was heavy smoke over the target shortly after the attack began, apparently from fires started by bombs and smoke smudge pots set out by ground defenses. (The newspaper account continued, but mostly was repetitious.)

During the following week a weather front hung over England. One day during that period, we were briefed to go on a raid. Since I was an experienced combat man with one mission behind me I was asked to go with 1st Lt. George Rebich. Once again, it was a last minute rush to get me to the drying room, armament shop, and then to the aircraft, #235, Mr. Five by Five.

As the Jeep pulled into the hard stand I noticed a mechanic standing on a ladder. He was painting the white star, on the side of the ship, a battleship gray. This was to take away from the Germans a highly visible target. Lt. Hobson was standing on the ground near the nose of the ship.

The Jeep pulled around the wing and back toward the tail. I jumped out of the Jeep and had just thrown my A-3 bag and gear into the hatch. Suddenly a runaway 50-caliber machine-gun started to fire above my head. I tried to dig a hole in the concrete hard stand. Then the firing stopped. When I lifted my head, I saw the mechanic, that formerly was on the ladder. He also was on the concrete. He too lifted his head and looked around to see what had happened.

When I looked through the hatch I could see a very shook up Lawrence Kallal. Above his head there was a good sized hole in the top of the aircraft and a large number of electrical wires hanging limply from the ceiling.

About then, people and vehicles from everywhere were converging on the rear compartment of Mr. Five by Five. The mechanic, who was painting, was now headed in the other direction. The gun had fired very close to where he stood on the ladder. I don't think he ever returned to the line.

Kallal kept repeating that all he had done was pull back the charging handle to make certain that the gun was loading properly. It should not have fired.

Personnel from the armament shop were very interested in what had happened. They took the gun for examination. They determined that when Kallal had finished cleaning his gun the day before, he had reassembled it with the Bell Adapter hand grips positioned in such a way that the trigger was locked in the firing position. Thus, when Kallal pulled the charging handle and a round went into the chamber it immediately fired and pulled a new round into the chamber. Kallal had done the only thing that was possible. He swung the gun inward and pushed down on the butt so that it was firing into the air. He then reached over and twisted the ammunition belt so that the gun jammed.

I don't know if the mission was canceled because of the damage to Mr. Five By Five, or whether the weather closed in, but either way it was canceled. The armament shop later reported that this was the first recorded incident of the gun being assembled this way and they started to look for a cure to assure that it did not happen again.

We kidded Kallal quite a bit after that about having to stay in the Air Force a long time in order to pay the Government back for the B-24 that he had shot up.

On March 25th Ray Warner wrote:

The rear echelon of 30 men just came in. We thought we had it bad. They had five nights of submarine attack. About 32 ships were sunk.

The following events occurred on that crossing of the S. S.

Jean as Nick Garza recorded them at the time:

Day 1, March 8, 1943, 6:15 P.M.--Left Port (New York) this A.M. 9:20. Sea is rough and I feel dizzy. Some of us were appointed as Gunner's Aide to assist navy crewmen in case of enemy attack. Ed. Bobrick and I volunteered to man a 20-mm cannon high above the ship's deck. We had a short drill in preparation. This was to be a daily practice for the real thing. Read a chapter from my prayer book and hit the sack.

Day 2, March 9, 6:09 P.M.-- Today was "rougher" than yesterday. Very cold. Had another attack drill. Cleaned "pillbox" and stood watch over 20-mm cannon. Red and Phil (crewmen) and I spotted aircraft. Still feel sick and very dizzy. Have been able to read a little, but this funny feeling won't go away. K. P. tomorrow; read my prayer book!

Day 3, March 10, 6:28 P.M.--Today was a day of real excitement! Our ship had engine trouble and had to leave the convoy. We were all at battle stations and were given explicit orders on what to do. This was the real thing. There was a 42 minute delay for repairs and there we were all alone. Fortunately, repairs were made by the crew and we were on our way once again, after some trying moments. Three hours later we caught up with our convoy and we were all very happy! I continue to be sea sick, but so are most of the fellows aboard. Boy, what an experience!! What a day!! I sure thought about my family today!

Day 4, March 11, 8:30 P.M.--Today was terrible! Ran into stiff winds and rough seas! The waves whipped over the ship's side with ease. I was sick all over again (and it ain't no fun). No change of clothes and a long beard make me feel worse. I stood my regular watch (for subs, aircraft, etc), as does everyone else, for one hour each. I didn't eat (just couldn't). Read a bit and went to bed at 9:30.

Day 5, March 12, 4:52 P.M.--Weather a bit better. Slept pretty good, but haven't eaten much. Had drill and went to pillbox as standby. Manuel Asquith and I were discussing our girl friends. "Quith" is some swell guy, and we get along so well. No mail since we left port, so perhaps we will have some waiting when we reach England. Mail is a morale booster which we love to get!!



Day 6, March 13, 5:35 P.M.--Weather today was pretty good, but as evening approached, it's been kicking up "rough". "Quith" and I went up on deck and talked for a while about home, family and girl friends. I'm always teasing him about his "Yankee" accent. He's a good friend, as is Lou Wademan. All three of us shot the bull and did a lot of remembering of days past. Word is we still have 8-or-9 days before we reach our destination. I stood watch last night from 10 to 11. It was cold!

Day 7, March 14, 9:57 P.M.--Got up at 4:00 A.M. for my daily watch. It was cold!! Had coffee and sandwich with crew. Waves are rough and the Jean has really been rocking. Most of the day was spent below deck since it was too rough topside. The crew is very good at shooting the bull, and our fellows have joined in very well. We seem to get along very well as our trip continues and friendships become more meaningful. I've gotten to know "Quith" and Wademan (Lou) much better. I call Asquith "my Amigo from Massachusetts". He calls me Pancho Villa, the pride of Mexico. Still have a long way to go.

Day 8, March 15, 7:55 P.M.--Didn't feel good today. Dizzy, upset stomach, plain sick! Had 11 to 12 watch. Weather has been really "rough". We are in our bunks and can hear the waves roaring overhead and the water dripping into our quarters through the ventilators. This has been the "roughest" sea since we left New York. I'm plain sick! The waves are huge! Watch was discontinued due to very bad weather. Hold On! Looking forward to reaching good old terra firma!

Day 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15-March 22, 1:07 P.M.--I had not written a single word for exactly seven days, and for good reason. The last seven days have been ones that I will never forget. Starting with March 16 all was well and quiet until about 8:15 P.M. when we got a General Alarm. We all went on deck to battle stations. It was very cold and everyone was tense! About 9:29 they struck their first blow (German subs), sinking a ship on our starboard bow. It was a most terrifying thing to see. Yet it was only the beginning. About 10:29, or one hour later, another ship went down, again on the starboard side. This one was so close to our ship, I actually thought we had been hit. It went up in flames until we lost sight of it. Two escort destroyers (small corvette type) stayed back to try to help, but I had no idea if anyone was picked up. God I hope that some of them had a

chance to be rescued. You can imagine what we were going through at this time. We could only pray and hope for the best. You certainly can't fight something you can't see and it was all happening so very quickly. At 12:00 midnight, another ship went down. This one on our port side. One of the men reported that the torpedo barely missed our stern, probably because we were zigzagging most of the time. We were quiet for a while, then at 3:00 A.M. three more ships were hit. Before my very eyes I saw them and all I could do was pray. The night seemed to drag and dawn would not come fast enough. We all stood cold and shivering. Just waiting and not able to do much. We could not see because of darkness and the rough seas. Besides my constant prayers, I thought very much about Mother, my family and my many friends back home.

We passed the night and finally, a dreary dawn showed us a gloomy morning. We are too tired to sleep. At 11:15 A.M. we got another General Quarters Alarm (this was the 17th). Two more ships were torpedoed off the port side. One went down. After this, we were on constant alert. We were working watch along with the navy gun crews night and day. The navy crew men have done their part in a very big way. I remember Phil Faulkenberry, Shorty Amerillo and "Red" Calos (all Navy crewmen). We were all under extreme tension, but I'm glad to say at no time did I see anyone show signs of panic. The Captain was cool and calm at all times. He was always shouting words of encouragement to all on board. Lt. Donald Pratt (in charge of the Air Corps personnel on board) was very encouraging also. He told me that morning, "We'll make it Nick, I know we will. This ship is going through. Even if something should happen, we'll make it because we have confidence and faith." Lt. Pratt is a swell guy, a good friend, and has done much to keep up the morale of the men on the ship.

As I write this, we are near port (Happy Days!!) Everyone is Happy! I pray that those left behind were picked up. Someone is responsible for all this, and they will pay. I only hope to see that day! I saw children (two little girls) on the deck of one of the ships sunk. It made me angry mad! How are they to blame? I only hope that I was wrong about what I saw and that it was an illusion. I pray that it was!

All aboard feel much better. Tension is off and everyone seems happy. Seasick days are over and I am so glad. I will be able to eat normally and not feed the fish at all!

I believe the enemy took its toll, in human lives as well as ships on this trip. We shall pay our dues one day, and you can depend on that! We were the lucky ones who made it and must commit ourselves to fight and to defend what is right and just for those who never got the chance. The S. S. Jean came through, thanks to God! God bless this ship and all who sail on her.

March 24, 9:05 P.M.--I write this in my barracks, Shipdham Airdrome, near Norwich. We sighted land on March 22 and came into Liverpool on the 23 March, 1943. Real tough to say good-bye to the crew as we had become real close, like brothers. We met the rest of the Squadron and it was good to see the "Old Gang". They too had a very rough journey! Thank God we are all here. Capt. Benton and Lt. Ned Brisendine said hello and it was good to see them.

And now we are here, by the grace of God! Let us get on with it and do the job we were trained to do. Our best efforts, in unity and harmony, should make for a shorter war and a quicker return home.

On March 26 Ray Warner went to Norwich. He found:

A lot of buildings are even with the ground from bombing. I saw the famous Norwich Cathedral. A beautiful building. It's so black out the last few nights you can hardly see your hand in front of your face. I am getting used to going around in the dark. Almost all English women and men are in uniform. I went to a dance in a nice ballroom.

The entry for March 27 read:

A lot of captured German planes are overhead today, including a Messerschmitt. A P-47 was being tested today on this field. There are a lot of English bombers around too. Lancaster, Halifax, Sterling, etc. We have had a lot of rainy weather lately. It rains for days at a time.

On March 28, the author asked, who said that history does not repeat itself? That morning the Charge Of Quarters was again shaking me. Once again there was to be a raid and once again I was late. This time Lt. Michaels wouldn't take me to the armament shop. He indicated that it was almost taxi time and Captain Anderson was waiting to take off in aircraft #068, *N Lynn Bari*. He said that they had already placed a gun on the ship. No, it wasn't my gun, but he was certain that it had been cleaned and was in good shape. We took off and joined

seven other ships from the 44th. We were on our way to the marshalling yards at Rouen, France.

I wasn't to find out how good Lt. Michael's promise was until we were over the Channel and test firing our guns.

The hatch on a B-24 was on the floor between the tail turret and the waist guns. It actually was an aluminum framed door with plexiglass inserts for visibility. The inserts were set into the door frame and into the edges of the X shaped aluminum gun supports that crossed the door. At the center of the X was a ring receiver for the gun barrel. A clamp snapped over the ring and held the gun in place.

When the order was given to test fire the guns, I removed the gun from its storage rack and inserted the barrel into its ring receiver. I then tightened the clamp in place, made certain that there were no friendly aircraft below us, pulled the charging handle and pulled the trigger with the intent of snapping off one round. Imagine my surprise when the gun came back at me. I sheepishly looked around to see if anyone had observed what had happened. No one had, so I repeated the whole process with the thought that I had stupidly not fastened the clamp into place. Well you guessed it! I wasn't stupid! The gun came back at me again! This time it was me that reported a malfunction. The clamp was broken! Coldiron also reported that his tail turret guns were inoperative. Once again Captain Anderson decided to go on.

We proceeded toward the marshalling yards and encountered no opposition. Those Germans were not foolish enough to be out in this kind of weather. The clouds were too thick. The raiding party was ordered home. We turned and headed back with our bomb loads still aboard. Our rules of war would not allow us to dump them on the occupied territory of our allies' homeland. We were gone four hours on Sortie #64.

Needless to say, I was happy to be back without having to fire my gun at an enemy aircraft. Upon landing I made a visit to the armament shop and left behind some unkind words. Also, I told Lt. Michaels that I never again would fly without my own gun. What's more, if I was going to fly, I expected to attend the briefings.

For March 28th Ray Warner wrote:

Some of our planes went out on a mission. When they came back we looked for ours and found that they were there.

REBIGH 2832  
STRONG 2010

The fellows were all out. Looking up and cheering. No one was hurt.

They were testing some German ships again today. The Heinkel and the Junker 88. That Ju-88 is really a good ship.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

In their daylight blow yesterday the Eighth Air Force heavies ran into strong fighter opposition. The number of enemy planes shot down was not revealed, pending intelligence surveys

#### SOME SOFT, SOME TOUGH

Rouen, which is some 35 miles due south of the channel port of Dieppe, last was hit by American bombers Mar. 12 when Forts and Libs raided without loss. Four days before that, Rouen and Rennes, also a French railway center, were hit at a cost of four bombers.

Although one bomber group completed its mission yesterday without firing a gun, most of the American planes had to fight their way through intense enemy fighter opposition. One swarm of about 30 Luftwaffe fighters followed a bomber group back from the target to within sight of the English coast. (The newspaper article continued with personal accounts by Fortress crews.)

Lt. Michaels believed me when I said that I wanted to attend the briefings.

On the morning of March 31, 1943, I was called to the briefing for a raid on Rotterdam, Holland. This time I was to fly as the hatch gunner with 1st Lt. Slough on aircraft #201, *Baldy and His Brood*. Our target was the shipyards. There was cloud cover and we once again brought our bombs back with us. (L. WAIST GUN)

STRONG'S

My combat record indicates that we encountered enemy aircraft. There was no flak mentioned. I wish there was more room on those records. They should have included that I fired my gun for the first time in combat. Nothing spectacular, just one short burst as one Fw-190 drifted a long way below us. It might also have stated that this time it was my chute that was popped before we got to the target.

G. REBIEH 234 U

The Flint Journal account was as follows:

Flying Fortresses raided shipbuilding and ship repair yards at Rotterdam, Holland, in daylight yesterday. It was the third raid on the vital target, site of the huge Wilton shipyards, major building and repair facility for enemy surface craft.

Intense and very accurate antiaircraft fire was experienced over the target area, but fighter opposition was light, returning pilots reported. One bomber failed to return Eighth Air Force Headquarters announced

Heavy clouds over the target area prevented detailed observation of results. (The article continued with some background data about Rotterdam.)

Soon after this raid, aircraft #068, Lynn Bari, was flown to the Lockheed Aircraft factory in Belfast, Ireland, for modification in its armament system. Ron Allen believes:

It was flown by a makeshift ferry crew. The ship crashed on takeoff for the return flight to Shipdham. The radio operator was killed when the top turret tore loose. The ship was scrapped.

It was early in the month of April that the 506th began flying diversionary missions.

To understand the importance and meaning of the diversions, it is necessary to understand the weakness of our aerial combat forces and the type of defense that the German Air Force was using.

The most notable weakness of our Air Force was the manpower shortage. You will notice that during these early days the 506th never mounted a raid with more than three aircraft. We took eight ships over and had lost two. We could have mounted more, except for a shortage of hatch gunners.

It was during the month of April, that the Air Force began to work on this problem. An active recruiting campaign was directed toward ground personnel, particularly in the armament sections. Recruited personnel were sent off to "quick" gunnery training centers. This is where we got Sgt. John Edwards, who started flying on the Old Crow during the month of May.

**Bob Struble remembers:**

I failed the physical for aerial gunner while in the States because of sinus problems. However, I passed in late April or early May when they asked who wanted to be an aerial gunner. Bob was awarded his wings on May 10, 1943. He then flew as a spare gunner with eleven different crews.

**Oliver Germann recalls:**

I had gone to a ground course in aerial gunnery and volunteered to go on a crew. They did not put me on a crew and I went overseas as a mechanic. When we first got to England they went on a very rough mission. Strong's tail gunner (Orville W. Kapp) refused to fly any more. They came out on the line looking for me to take his place. All of my friends, that I worked with as a mechanic advised me to tell them to go to hell. They said, "You have volunteered twice and they never took you. You don't owe them anything." I would have done except that Strong, the copilot, and radio operator all were married and their wives were expecting babies. I had no extra responsibilities so I decided I had to go and help.

I told Strong that I had no flying training as I had only been up in an airplane on one occasion and needed some experience. He said they would train me. In the meantime there was a maximum effort mission scheduled. The Operations Officer was sick. There was a Warrant Officer doing his job for him. He came up to me and said, "If I schedule you for this mission, will you go?". I went, and we encountered no opposition for several missions in a row. I received my training while on bombing missions.

Other ground personnel who transferred to combat status at this time were Foster Blake, Harry Grannon, Maurice Hall and William McFarland.

Another tactic was to divert flying personnel from other units. For example, Sgt. Mark Morris states:

I arrived at Liverpool, England, on March 31 as a member of the 414th Night Fighter Squadron. Soon after I was training with a Beaufighter pilot at Cranfield. By April 11 I had been routed to a Combat Refresher Course at Bovington. At months end I was a member of the 506th Squadron and about mid-May, was assigned to the Old Crow

crew.

Even if we had enough personnel, we still would be relatively weak. Replacement aircraft and crews were slow in arriving. Lt. Angell's ship and crew had never been replaced. We had lost our first aircraft in combat on March 22. It wasn't replaced until late April when Lt. Horace W. Austin Jr. and crew arrived. With Lt. Austin were Lts. Andrew T. Fabiny, Sheldon Finder, and Paul S. Singer. Also with him were Sgts. Joseph W.D. Jett, Edgar Shaw, Dale B. Lee, Thomas Q. Purcell, Glenn G. Hickerson, and Charles J. Warth.

They were given a brand new B-24 that had been shipped to the field. They named it *Southern Comfort* after a drinking concoction that contained that brand of liquor as its main ingredient.

Joe Warth tells of their arrival in England:

We left the plane that we had flown from the States in Scotland and took the train down to London. We arrived there early in the morning. We were quickly lost in an English railroad station, hungry, without English money and unable to understand the type of English spoken there. We were all armed with Thompson submachine guns and 45-caliber pistols that we had been issued in Bangor, Maine. We found the Bank Of England on Threadneedle Street just outside the railroad station. At least we could get some money.

I have often wondered what the employees and guards thought when promptly at 10 O'clock, when the doors opened, we marched in with our guns. We were able to exchange our money for English money without any trouble. We then found our way to Liverpool Station with its food stalls. We fell in love with English wartime Bangers. This was the first sausage I have ever seen or tasted that was made without a trace of meat. We finally caught our train to Norwich and the war.

Quite a number of years later, James C. McAtee was to reminisce about the day that Lt. Austin joined the Squadron.

It seems that the Group was on stand down and the combat officers decided to hold a "welcome aboard" party for the new incoming officers. They bought some beer and started the party in the officer's quarters.



Lt. Thomas I. Hyde entered the room when the party was well along. He took a seat along one wall and sat staring into space. He said nothing to anyone. Every few minutes his face would twitch. Periodically his whole body would jerk or shake. When someone offered him a beer he slobbered it down. It was obvious that this man had a problem.

Lt. Austin did his best to ignore what he saw, but involuntarily his eyes always returned to look at Hyde. At last he asked McAtee, "What's the matter with him?" McAtee with a solemn attitude replied, "Oh nothing. He's just a little tired of combat. He's still the best navigator we have in the Squadron. He's always all right when he is airborne." Lt. Austin brooded for the rest of the evening. It wasn't until the next day, when he saw a normal Lt. Hyde, that he realized the he had been set up.

In varying degrees, the personnel and equipment problems that were evident in the 506th was typical for the other air units in England.

Maybe the Germans faced the same problems. At least the combat tactics they adopted were those of scarcity, not abundance. The German Air Force assignment at this time was to meet and resist any attacking force that approached the Continent of Europe. To facilitate this assignment with the personnel and equipment available, a grid was laid across the map of Europe. Airfields were constructed within each grid area. Most of these airfields were assigned to an Air Force unit.

It was fully recognized that individual German Air Force units, lying along the route of a given attacking force, could not successfully repel or punish the enemy. Therefore, the tactic was devised to first determine the course of the attacking enemy force and then draw additional defending fighters from adjacent grid fields. These supplementing fighters in turn were replaced at their home grid fields by fighters from further away grids. These fighters then became the reserve force to be drawn from as needed. Thus the German Air Force could maximize their effectiveness on any given raid.

Now our warfare became a game of trying to make the Germans think that we were going one place and have the main force go somewhere else. To the Germans it was a game to see through our feints and concentrate their strength along the route of

the main attack.

At this point in time our fighter aircraft were short-range. They could reach out into the English Channel. In places they could even cross the coast of France and get into some of the lowland countries. They could not go with us to our targets. However, when they went on strafing runs in these coastal areas, they did demand the attention of the German Air Force. Also, many of our attack bombers and even heavies could be used on these coastal diversionary raids that were timed to coincide with or just before the main force crossed into the Continent.

These efforts of our "little brothers" were very helpful to the heavy bombers going into enemy territory. However, the Germans were fully aware of our flying time limitations.

To overcome these limitations, our Air Force was bringing in new equipment. That was the reason for the test flights of the P-47 mentioned in the Ray Warner diary. Also, modifications, such as wing tanks, were being made in our fighter aircraft.

However, for the time being, it was up to us to thwart the German defending force. We either had to flood the sky with heavies or send up a dummy force that was large enough to be a threat.

At that time there were two B-24 groups flying out of England. The 93rd and the 44th Groups were both badly battered. Therefore, it was logical that they should be the diversionary force. We would load up with guns and ammunition and go out into an area that the main force (B-17's) was not going into. Our intent was to draw the German Air Force into our area and away from the B-17 force. When you see an old B-24 with a series of ducks painted on it, you know that you are looking at a ship that went on a diversion for each sitting duck.

It was during this month some political maneuvering made the enlisted men in the rear of the ship feel uneasy.

You will notice in each of the newspaper articles covering our raids, there is a definite lack of information about the number of enemy aircraft shot down. No one believed us! The British people and their military command believed our aircraft losses were too high, our kill reports were exaggerated and we were not hitting our targets. Their

solution was to have us fly night raids with them. They even found sympathetic ears in our own command.

In response to these pressures, we began to fly night practice missions. There were even rumors that dampers were going to be installed on our aircraft so that the German flyers could not see our exhausts.

The enlisted men were concerned. They didn't want to go on raids as a single aircraft flying in a sky that was filled with other single aircraft. The chance of midair collision was high and you could not see to coordinate your firepower against enemy aircraft. They preferred daylight raids in which you could see what was around you and could draw fire support from the other ships in your formation.

It was with these events developing in the background that we took off on the morning of April 4th on a diversion. This time I flew as hatch gunner with 1st Lt. Walter Bunker on aircraft #235, <sup>C</sup> Earthquake McGoon. ~~James C. McAtee~~, flying in aircraft #205. Wicked Witch also went. The other 506th ship was Anderson flying in aircraft #172, ~~Lynn Bari II~~. We joined up with other aircraft from the 44th in what Will Lundy called a "very small 44th formation. I am reasonably certain that we joined with ships from the 93rd. 14 A/C

ANDERSON 2324  
Swanson  
REBICK  
2340

My records show that we went along the French coast. However, Will Lundy's writing and Webb Todd's account in the *History of the 68th* agree that it was the Dutch coast. Regardless, the trip was without event and we returned home after logging five hours on Sortie #66.

Ray Marner's diary did record an event that day.

Pictures of the 44th Bomb Group planes, with the 8-Ball on the nose, were printed in the *Yank* magazine. The Group was not mentioned. A Captain in S-2 wrote a sarcastic letter to the magazine. The 44th is the oldest B-24 group in the world and the most famous.

The next day, April 5th, the Squadron was once again out on a raid. This time the target was Antwerp. Flying that day were Anderson, in aircraft #172, Lynn Bari II, Strong, in aircraft #201, Baldy and His Brood and Rebick in aircraft #068, Mr. Five by Five.

WRONG TARGET! 14 A/C

234 □  
Dave McCash reports:

068 N + CAPT J. SWANSON 235 @  
ABORTED

201 0

My first combat mission was with Lt. Strong's crew to Antwerp. I don't recall why it was with this crew. It must have been that Strong's navigator, Fretwell, had been grounded with a cold that so many of us got in those first few months. It was a great mission to break in with because it was pretty much a piece of cake. Of course, I was so excited about the whole thing that I shot at a Spitfire that was escorting us.

The author's notes indicate that I took off that morning. My flight log shows that I put in three hours flying time. Neither the notes nor the combat record show that I was credited with a raid. We must have aborted. I don't remember. Neither do I remember who I flew with. *SWANSON'S*  
*504 - 3 A/c* ABORTED *235 C*

For that day, Ray Warner's diary states: *Anderson #1-068, Reber 7-234 & STRONG 0-20*  
Our planes went to Antwerp and bombed a shipyard, etc. Very successful. Ferkauff, Goodson and Germann were credited with knocking down Fw-190's.

The Squadron only put up three ships and it appears that they all got back to base.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

USAAF HITS  
AERO WORKS  
IN ANTWERP

Four Bombers Shot Down  
In Heaviest Fighter  
Opposition

Flying Fortresses and Liberators struck at German armament works in Antwerp, Belgium, in daylight yesterday, carrying the newest Allied nonstop air offensive into its 72nd hour.

Four bombers and one of the supporting Allied fighters were lost in what some veteran American airmen said was the most severe opposition yet encountered on U.S. raids from bases in Britain.

It was the second U.S. raid in two days. Sunday, Nazi factories near Paris were hit.

The attack was aimed at the big Erla Aero Engine works

on the edge of Antwerp.

(The article continued with accounts of British raids made on Kiel.)

It was probably around this time that Ollie C. Bowling joined the Squadron.

In the briefing on the morning of April 16th we quickly learned that we were to go into the heavy flak concentrations that surround the German submarine pens at Brest, France. Three 506th ships were to join eight other 44th aircraft on the trip. The author was to fly as hatch gunner for 1st Lt. ~~George Rebach~~ <sup>12 A/C</sup> on aircraft #234, Mr. Five by Five. ~~James C. McAtee~~ <sup>ANDERSON</sup> took aircraft #295, ~~Wicked Witch~~ and Captain ~~Anderson~~ flew aircraft #172, ~~Lynn Bari II~~. ~~BUNKER~~ ~~282~~, ~~ROTTLESS?~~

~~SWANSON 2010~~  
My combat record shows that we encountered heavy accurate flak and some enemy aircraft. I don't remember the aircraft, but I definitely do remember the black, boiling smoke of bursting antiaircraft shells off our wing tips. We were fortunate that they weren't any closer and didn't stay with us. This was sortie #69 and it took us six hours to complete it. I don't believe that the 44th lost any ships that day.

The *Flint Journal* account of this raid was as follows:

#### IMPORTANT BASES

Lorient and Brest serve both the Atlantic and Mediterranean U-boat packs. Friday's raid was the third dual attack delivered in daylight by American heavy bombers on Brest and Lorient. Both submarine nests have been consistent targets for the Americans since early last winter. Brest had been bombed four times previously and Lorient five times by Liberators and Fortresses.

In addition to their normal naval installations, Brest and Lorient have concrete-roofed pens in which submarines are docked for repair and refitting. Lorient has been bombed so desperately that its civilian population has been evacuated. (The article continues with personal accounts of B-17 crews.)

Ray Marner had the following interesting entries during the next few days:

April 16th--"Our planes went out on a mission today and

Swanson 201 01  
Anderson 234 5  
McAtee 295 5  
aborted  
(KIEFER)

two came back without dropping bombs. It is a definite case of sabotage. Everyone has to walk guard duty now by the planes. I'll pull it too."

April 17th--"Nick made combat today." (Note: This appears to refer to Nick Popovich. Thomas Hobson remembers that Nick was a ground crewman at Shipdham. He was in ordnance and an armorer. He volunteered to become an aerial gunner.)

April 20th--"The letter written to Yank magazine by Capt. Crucher was published in the April 18th issue of the magazine".

During the remainder of April, the air crews spent a lot of time in training, both in the air and on the ground. Some of those hours in the air were on night flights.

Personally, Norm Kiefer spent some of that time in London. I left as soon as I could after we returned from Brest. On April 22 I wrote to my wife:

I arrived in London around 2:30 in the morning. We then faced the big job of trying to find a hotel room. We got one at the Charring Cross around 5:00 in the morning. The only reason that the old fellow gave us a room (it had been rented once, but the chap didn't turn up) was the wings that we were wearing. The three of us slept in the one room until morning. We then got our own rooms. They were nice big rooms. You would have paid around \$3 or \$4 a night for them in the States. It was a bachelor place.

The food in London isn't very good. Neither is there any to spare. They serve breakfast from 8:00-to-10:00, lunch from 1:00-to-3:00, tea from 4:00-to-5:00 and dinner from 5:00 until the food is gone. During the tea and dinner hour a string group or piano recital is offered.

They have the big two-story buses. Also, funny, slow moving taxicabs. It is just like you see in the movies. Every now and then you see a car with a big bag on the top of it. It is a natural gas driven taxi.

Frank Juskowski and I were a little disappointed at one place. We walked through Piccadilly Park and came upon a building that was surrounded by a high metal fence with huge gates. There were statues all around and guards on patrol. We couldn't figure out what it was. In a joking

way I said that it was a palace. When we asked a Bobby, he said that it was Buckingham Palace where the royal family lived. It sure was a far cry from looking like all of the pictures of palaces that I had seen.

In a "V" letter on April 23 I wrote:

While we were in London, Williams and I saw a very good picture. It had very few obvious errors. The fellow that was the technical advisor knew what flak looks like and had some very good pictures of planes exploding in the air. The name of the picture is "Air Force."

Williams and I were walking along a back street looking for an eating establishment that had been recommended to us. As we rounded a corner we found our way blocked by a fenced in schoolyard. The young children were on break and playing. When they spied us they came charging to the fence with cries of, "YANKEE RAF! YANKEE RAF!". Then they reverted to the typical children we had seen elsewhere. "Chewing gum mate?".

Other excerpts from my letters that month:

"We had rabbit to eat the other night. One of the fellows caught a big Belgian hare sitting up for a perfect shot."..."They have a fairly large library here and I am taking full advantage of it. I have read two books and am almost through another."..."Do you know what I am eating? Salted peanuts! Yes, I got my rations today. Yes, we have ration cards also. Once a week each man can have 1 carton of cigarettes, 1 package of gum, 1 Tootsie Roll, 2 packages of Life Savers, 2 small boxes of cookies, cough drops and each week something special like peanuts."..."Now if I should tell you someday that I have frozen a cheek, don't scold me. If I should, it will happen while flying and can't be helped. It was 46 degrees below the other day."..."I went for a nice walk out in the country this afternoon. Maury and Mike went with me. The flowers are starting to bloom and the fields are beginning to show signs of spring crops."..."The boys just left to go to the N.A.A.F.I. (a British service organization) to get tea and cakes. We have a thermos bottle for the tea and a sandwich box for the cakes."..."I got paid today. I got 59-pounds, five-shillings, and one-pence. That is about \$237 American."..."We had quite a windstorm the other day. It blew the roof off from one of the buildings. The roof had no more than touched the

ground and we were out there gathering the wood. It will help to solve our heating problem for a while."... "A couple of the boys are starting to shave. The only place we have that we might get hot or warm water is about half-a-mile away. We bring the water to the barracks (hut) and heat it on the little stove. Then we use the outside shell of our helmet to wash and shave."... "We saw a very silly movie tonight. The name of it was 'That Uncertain Feeling'. Where do we hold the movies? They are in the left wing of the airmen's mess hall. Just as fast as the men finish eating, they pick up the benches and carry them to the far end of the hall for the show."... "Lt. Graham and Frank (Juskowski) are both out of the hospital. Frank had his ears lanced and Lt. Graham had the flu and then pneumonia."... "We all had bikes issued to us today. I have been riding all day. Boy, am I ever sore."

It was about this time that Lt. Gordon S. Stevens joined the Squadron as a replacement for Lt. Fouts. With him were Lts. Robert Z. Harris, Anthony Rispoli, and John J. Huber Jr. Also, there were Sgts. Clyde C. Fry, August A. Fritz, Marion S. Paciorek, Elmer R. O'Gara, Larry W. Vincent and Frank L. Rodriguez.

John Huber tells of their arrival:

We arrived in England flying in a B-17.

We then spent six weeks at Bovington for theater orientation and tactics before it was discovered that we were indeed a B-24 crew. We were to be the first group of replacements to the 44th Bomb Group and assigned to the 506th.

Our first plane, AC #787, B, Texan, was selected by Stevens because it was parked closer to the briefing area than others. This selection annoyed Lt. Michaels because he said it was jinxed. We took B up and flight tested her. We did everything except an Immelmann turn and she came up A.O.K. Stevens told Michaels to have Texan painted off the nose and said he would take it.

On the morning of May 1st, the Charge of Quarters made his usual wake up of personnel that were to go on a raid. This time Norm Kiefer was thrilled!

Instead of coming to my bed with a flashlight and shaking me,



he just turned the lights on and said, "Everybody out! You are all going out today." Yes, I was at last to fly with my own crew.

*1 May*  
We were briefed to go on a diversion. I was to fly waist gunner with Lt. Graham on aircraft #283, <sup>787 13</sup> Old Crow. Captain Anderson, took aircraft #172, Lynn Bari II. Lt. McAtee went out that morning flying A/C #295, ~~Wicked Witch~~. In all, five 506th ships were joined with 13 other ships from the 44th's other squadrons. I don't remember who the other 506th crews were. We were to go to the Coast of France (Lizard Point) while the Fortresses went further to the South. We saw nothing, heard nothing, flew our prescribed route and returned home. It was a nice six-hour and 10-minute ride. It did not count as a raid. Nevertheless, Lt. Graham had gotten in some experience.

This was the first combat mission for Ollie Bowling. He flew with the Anderson crew.

Mark Morris entered in his diary on May 2.

First ride on a B-24. The pilot was practicing night touch and go landings.

The nice part of that entry is he did not record any further night practice missions. Neither did I. The High Command had given up on preparing to fly with the RAF.

On May 4th, Lt. Graham once again took the ~~Old Crow~~ <sup>2832</sup> on a diversionary mission. Once again the author flew as a waist gunner. His notes just say "coast", but Will Lundy's writings indicate that it was from Orfordness to North Foreland. Once again nothing happened except that we had a five-hour ride. It did not count as a raid. This was the first time out for Lt. Butler. He flew with Lt. Bunker on Earthquake.

There were some night happenings at the field during the first week of the month. Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

On May 5 our field was bombed at 0130 hrs. Some butterfly antipersonnel bombs were dropped.

For that same date Ray Marner recorded:

At 3 A.M. this morning we had a big bombing raid. I guess you'd call it a blitz. We had two red and two black

warnings. One was pretty bad. The concussions shook the barracks knocking things from the shelves. Lt. Pratt, who was a little way out of Norwich, was knocked into the ditch with his motorcycle from a bomb nearby. Eddie Copain was just outside of Norwich too. A shot down plane crashed a few hundred yards from him. It was burning. Flak and shrapnel were flying all over. It knocked out all the windows in a pub.

Again on May 11 Mark Morris recorded:

Our field was bombed at 2300 hours.

Robert Struble reported:

We had an air raid at our field one night (I believe it was in May, 1943). I was living in the Nissen Hut and He-111's came over and salvoed a load of bombs about 50-to-75 yards from our hut. It knocked me out of bed. I got up finally. Most of the others were in the air raid bunker. Several of us walked down to see the damage. Along the way, we found one of our ground officers in a hay stack hiding and crying.

Henry Fetherolf recalls:

In the early days we had a few air raids. One of our officers became unstrung because of the raids and was given a section 8. He was later sent home.

One incident that Norm Kiefer remembers happened on the night of May 11:

One of the new arrivals to the Squadron had brought from the States a Big Ben alarm clock. He had placed it over his bed on the shelf. He was very proud of it. During the bombing the clock was jarred from the shelf to the floor. The glass was broken and the clock never did work correctly again. The new arrival had some choice words and thoughts about the German Air Force.

I was one of the fellows that was an early arrival in the air raid shelter. As I entered the shelter, I saw Oscar Ferkauff rush out of his hut and grabbed one of the flexible 50-caliber machine guns that were mounted in our living area. He fired into the air and claimed that he hit one of the enemy aircraft. No one else saw the hit.

I believe that on these two nights there were a few German aircraft that split off from the larger force that was hitting Norwich. We could see the explosions and a few seconds later would feel the blast of the bombs dropped on the city. Also, the search lights and tracers from the anti-aircraft guns were highly visible from the base.

During the month of May efforts were made to make the base a little more presentable. One of the efforts involved the planting of grass seed. Here and there signs sprouted with the words "KEEP OFF THE GRASS". One of these signs provided the author with a look at Colonel Johnson and his relationship with the enlisted combat men:

On mornings that we were to fly, our trucks would make round trips to the living sites to pick up crews. They would stop at the mess halls and then continue to the Technical Site. Rather than driving all the way into the site, the trucks would stop to unload at a large tree just off the main road. Here, there was room to circle the tree and return for another trip. The combat crews had a well-defined path that led from the drop off straight to the briefing room.

One morning, when we emerged from the rear of the truck, we found a "KEEP OFF THE GRASS" sign planted in our path. One of the sergeants started to walk around it. He was immediately accosted by a Lieutenant who had passed all courses in how to chew out an enlisted man. Col. Johnson happened to be passing by. He listened for a moment and walked over to the two men. He said, "Lieutenant, this is one of my combat men. You can't scare him.". With that he left. The sign was removed and the combat men continued to prove that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

Another look at Col. Johnson was provided in a combat mission briefing during this month. This time it was an expression of his resolve to pursue the war effort and his frustration with the mud.

The Technical Site during these spring months was a sea of mud. Whenever you stepped off the paved surfaces, you sank into it. You can imagine what happened when a multi-ton B-24 slipped off the surface of a taxi strip or a hard stand. If this happened while the ships were taxiing to take off on a mission, all of the ships in line behind the disabled ship had no place to go. The ships

that were airborne had to be recalled. The Group was removed from the combat ready status. The mission was either scrubbed or the other groups went on without us.

During the briefing it was traditional that the Group Commander would say a few words. This morning his words were brief. He mentioned the rash of these "accidents" that the Group had experienced in recent weeks. He said that they had to stop. He indicated that he was going to design an Iron Cross that he would award to the next pilot that slipped off. That pilot would have the dubious honor of keeping it until the next accident. Then he could pass it on to its new winner.

The subject of decorations was a serious one to Col. Johnson. In these early days, it was not uncommon for an airman not to be around by the time that paper work was completed on these awards. Col. Johnson wanted the men to receive them as soon as possible. More than one man received his decoration during the briefing for a raid. The picture that was sent back to the home town newspapers showed both Colonel Johnson and the recipient in leather flying jackets. Behind them was the briefing map with the raid course plotted on it. The map was blanked out in the newspaper version.

Another thing that I believe that the Colonel changed was the angle at which these ceremonial pictures were taken. At first the emphasis was on the individual making the presentation. Later, it was shifted to the recipient.

The Colonel occasionally used the briefings as a time to announce promotions of officers. I remember he announced the advancement to Captain of, I believe, Kolliner. Kolliner jumped to his feet, threw a salute, and in a loud voice said, "Bucking for Major, Sir!".

During the period May 6th through May 13th I flew five practice missions as radio operator for Lt. Graham. There was a total of eight hours.

On May 10th, Robert Struble moved into combat crew quarters on site 2. He remembers:

I was in a 10-man Nissen hut. As you walked from the Orderly Room we were the furthest to the rear on the right.

The men with me most of the time, since we continued to lose crews, were Mike Davis, Jack Edwards, Harry Grannon, Eugene Clarno, Foster Blake, Willie I. McFarland, Maurice Hall and Eddie Coldiron. Eddie's hair went white after 7 missions. He was sentenced to life in prison for cowardice. Sad story. Eddie could really play the guitar and compose country music.

My room mates were always doing the unexpected. One night I was laying in my sack when Mike Davis started wildly firing his pistol. Close! Another shocker was Jack Edwards. Many the night he would come in half sloshed and throw a handful of 50-caliber shells in the dying fire. No wonder we had no fire tile left in our stove.

Eugene Clarno was regular army. He flew B-18's prior to the war. He was a radio operator. I forget which crew. He could run a "bug" at 45/50 words per minute. Gene got drunk every night at "King Willies" in Shipdham. After going to bed he would wake up to go to the bathroom. When he couldn't find his way out in the dark he would relieve himself wherever he was. We finally started putting a barricade around him so that his night wanderings and other activities would be restricted to his bunk area.

It was about this time that Lt. James A. Bunce arrived as a replacement crew. With him were Lts. Wayne Middleton, James D. Young, and Richard I. Fisher. Among the enlisted men were Sgts. Henry A. Klinge, Steve F. Bugyie, Robert E. Grow, Joseph C. Barnett, Anson G. Daniels, and Thomas E. Davis. They brought aircraft #606, X Timba-a-ah.

## THE FIRST AIR BATTLE

This chapter is titled, "The First Air Battle", in recognition of a change in tactics. In the past, our aircraft went out as single units or with loose coordination between units. On May 14, 1943, all Air Force units in England carried out a coordinated attack. Well over 200 planes went forth in a four hour period to attack four targets. Three of the targets were in the area lying between France and the Lowlands. Their intent was to draw German aircraft out of the Kiel area. The main thrust was to Kiel, Germany, the third most important target on the Air Command list. We lost eleven bombers. We destroyed 67 enemy aircraft.

It was the first American multiple operation which was intended to deliver a rapid succession of attacks that would disperse the enemy strength and confuse their defense system. Its success could be measured in the bombing results. Strike photographs showed IJmuiden fair hits, Antwerp good hits, Courtrai good hits and the Kiel raiders scored excellent hits. Even the German radio acknowledged that the port city of Kiel had suffered great damage.

### The Battle Plan For The Kiel Raid:

Approximately 100 Flying Fortresses, carrying high explosive bombs, were to lead approximately ~~20~~ 20 Liberators, carrying incendiaries, in an un-escorted high altitude attack on the machine shops and support facilities for the submarine pens and shipbuilding installations in Kiel, Germany. 2)

The striking force, after assembly over England, was to drop to wave top level (to avoid German radar) and, while crossing the North Sea, "home in" on radio Kiel. They were to start their climb to bombing altitude just off the Frisian Islands and reach 25,000 feet at the initial point. They were to then turn and start their bombing run on the target to the south. After the strike, they were to turn to the west and start their descent.

### Errors in the Battle Plan:

The plan did not take into consideration the different flying characteristics of the Fortress and the Liberator. At low altitude, a Liberator was much faster than a

Fortress. Thus, the following Liberators had to fly a series of "S" maneuvers in order to maintain position behind the Fortress formation. These maneuvers wasted much precious gasoline. On the other hand, at 25,000 feet the Fortress was much faster than the Liberator.

In addition, the Liberators were carrying clusters of incendiary bombs that would drift off target if released at the same point as the B-17's high explosive bombs. Thus, the B-24's had to continue on their bomb run a few minutes longer than the B-17's.

As a result of these errors, from just before the initial point and in the target area, the Liberators found themselves being left without supporting fire power from the Fortresses. In order to avoid the full blunt of the enemy aircraft attack (approximately 120 individual aircraft made passes at the Liberator formation) the decision was made by the Liberator Commander, Col. Leon W. Johnson, to drop below the flying Fortresses and gain their fire support from above.

On the morning of May 14th the 506th put up six ships which joined with 15 other ships to fly a six hour and 15 minute combat mission to Kiel, Germany. Swanson<sup>295</sup>, Graham<sup>283</sup>, Stevens<sup>283</sup>, Bunker<sup>234</sup>, and Slough<sup>283</sup> reached the target area and dropped their bombs. Strong also took off that morning, but aborted when he encountered engine difficulty.

ANDERSON 172 N  
The Liberators were carrying incendiary bombs for the first time. We had about 25 tons of them.

Approximately 140 enemy aircraft rose to challenge the attacking Fortresses and Liberators. The Liberators destroyed 23 enemy aircraft and probably destroyed another 13. The 44th received a Distinguished Unit Citation for this raid (the first awarded to an Eighth Air Force Unit).

Six Liberators from the 44th failed to return. Captain Swanson of the 506th Squadron was one of those. He was last seen, after bombing the target, surrounded with enemy fighters and struggling to keep control of aircraft #295, J, Wicked Witch.

With John W. Swanson (POW) were Lts. Douglas B. Myers (POW), Richard L. Schiefelbusch (POW), and Sidney W. Banks (POW). Also with him were Sgts. William J. Mears (KIA), Frederick T. Wolf (KIA), George E. Christensen (KIA), Joseph B. Duncan (KIA), and Stanley W. Glemboski (KIA).

In a letter to Will Lundy, Douglas B. Myers, copilot said:

I believe we had flak damage to the inner starboard engine (#2) which resulted in fire and loss of power. We remained in formation, as best we could, to the target and salvoed our load. We were not able to remain in formation after turning west and when alone were attacked by fighters....We took some machine-gun fire in the nose and flight deck areas and cannon hits in the waist area. The controls became unresponsive and we were not able to maintain altitude. Because of the fighter attacks and the enlarging fire, it was determined to abandon our craft.

Sgts. Mears and Wolfe, respectively the top turret gunner and radio operator, were on the flight deck. One of them entered the bomb bay and removed the empty cartridge casings so that he could open the bomb bay doors. Neither of them was wounded at the time that they jumped. I have no other knowledge concerning the gunners in the waist and tail area, but have reasoned that they could have been wounded by cannon fire. I do not know if they were able to or did leave the ship.

In a letter to Will Lundy, Doctor Richard L. Schiefelbusch gave this account of events aboard *Wicked Witch*:

After bombing, the Group swung out over the Baltic in preparation to head back to England. Our plane, of course, was somewhat out of formation. We were hit by fighters that queued up ahead of our bombers and came in at us head-on. Lts. Myers and Swanson told me that one engine was on fire and the instrument panel had also been hit.

"Sid" Banks (bombardier) and I were in the nose of the plane when we heard the order to bail out. We did by going out through the nose door hatch. On the way down I saw two chutes, one on each side of me. The one between me and the coast line was Banks. I never knew who the other one was. I came down in the Baltic about 10 miles from shore. Later I found out that both Myers (copilot) and Swanson (pilot and last one out) came down on land.

I have always assumed that the five who died got out first, but because the plane was over the sea and heading back toward land, those out first had the least chance of being picked up. I estimate that I was picked up about 30 minutes later by a motorized fishing boat. The fishermen



were probably volunteer air/sea rescuers who were informal members of the rescue service along the coast line. I suppose they spotted chutes and came out to find all the survivors they could.

The only crew member I ever saw again (in addition to Myers, Banks and Swanson) was S/Sgt. Stanley W. Glemboski, tail gunner. They must have fished him out of the Baltic. He was simply a body placed in the truck that hauled us to prison from the fishing village. I am sure that there were only five enlisted men on our crew.

14 MAY 1943

That day, Norm Kiefer remembers that he flew with Lt. Graham as radio operator on aircraft #283, Z, Old Crow:

Sgt. Edward E. Coldiron, from Anderson's crew, flew as <sup>with us as</sup> my replacement at waist gun. We had Dale W. Maury, from Rebich's crew, as tail gunner. Finally, there was Sgt. Irvin C. Smith, from Slough's crew, flying as hatch gunner. This was his first combat experience.

My first memory of that day was as we flew at wave top level across the North Sea. I was standing between the pilot and the copilot. In this position I could look forward and along the leading edge of the wings. There spread across the sea was the greatest armada of American aircraft that I had ever seen. We had to be invincible! All of my battle experience up to this point had consisted of much smaller formations.

My next "snapshot" memory was at bombs away. This was the first time that we had carried bundles of stick incendiary bombs. As they left the bomb bay the bundle straps fell loose and each stick dropped free. It looked as if the ships in front had been hit and their bottoms were breaking up and falling through space.

After bombs away, it was my job to go into the bomb bay to be certain that all bombs were gone and that the bomb bay doors were closed. Our bombs were gone, but the doors would not close all the way. At this point, I heard the call, "twelve o'clock high!" I came up out of the bomb bay. As I closed the flight deck door I heard, "Get him Mike, I can't reach him!" Then from the tail came, "Two at six o'clock level!" Then back to the front, "You got him! God! He's going to ram us!"

Suddenly, I found myself plastered to the top of the ship

and couldn't move. "Pappy" Graham had thrown the ship into a steep dive in order to avoid the head-on ram. Just as suddenly I was slammed to the floor as I heard Graham say, "Help me pull it out! Help me!" Then I was hit with something heavy. The supporting latches on the top gun turret seat had torn loose from the force of the pullout and what hit me was Mike Davis, the top gunner. Both Mike and I started to scramble for the lone snap-on parachute which skidded across the floor. I don't remember whether Mike or I won, but by then we were flying level again. It was quite a while before my heart stopped pounding so hard that I thought that it would come right out of my chest.

The right inboard engine<sup>(#3)</sup> was belching smoke and flame. Graham feathered the engine (blades turned so the propeller would not rotate and cause a drag on our air speed) and they hit the fire extinguisher. After the fire was out Graham called for a station check. Each position reported, "Okay.". However, some were not too convincing. I reached for a walk-around oxygen bottle and told "Pappy" that I was going back for a look. As I emerged from the rear bomb bay door, I looked upon a confusion of spent shell casings and equipment including ammunition belts and boxes that had been thrown helter-skelter during the dive and subsequent pullout. Coldiron was sitting on a box holding his side. Kerns and ~~Smith~~ were straightening out ammunition belts and laying ~~them~~ back in the racks. I thought, "If we are attacked now we can't defend ourselves."

I asked Coldiron, "What's the matter?" He said, "I think I have been hit." I took his hand away from his side and saw a large hole in his flying jacket. Putting his hand back, I told him to lie down on the floor and took out my knife. I told Smith to take over Coldiron's gun. I then cut away Coldiron's jacket and shirt. I found a slightly larger than 50-cent piece of metal lying on, but not through his undershirt. I handed it to him saying, "Here is a souvenir." I then went back to the front of the ship to tell "Pappy" what had happened.

Up front there was concern since another engine was acting up. I listened to a few minutes discussion as to whether or not we should prepare to ditch by sending a message to air/sea rescue. It was decided that we wouldn't until the last minute. So far, we seemed to be all right and were not being followed. There was nothing to be gained by giving away our position too soon. I told them that I was

going to the back of the ship again.

This time as I came out of the bomb bay, I saw Coldiron once again sitting on an ammunition box. He was holding his leg. He said, "I've been hit in the leg." Once again I took his hand away and found a piece of metal lodged in his shin bone. Once again, "Smitty, take Coldiron's gun". Smitty said, "It's no good! It's been hit." I said, "I don't care, stand in that window! Don't let them see the gun unmanned."

I then laid Coldiron down, cut away his clothing and sprinkled a package of "sulfa" on the wound. I looked up to see Smitty watching me. "Get on that gun", I said.

As I got up Kerns tapped me and said, "Look at my back. It stings." His flying jacket had a number of small holes. The tail gunner called, "Hey Norm, are you there?". I ran my hand up Kerns' back and showed him "no blood". "Yea Wog (Dale Maury), what you want?" "Send Smitty back here, I think I've been hit." I said, "Okay Smitty, take off".

Maury came limping down from the tail. His flying boot was badly torn. I took off his boot and his shoe was torn. I took off his shoe and his stocking was burned as well as his little toe and the side of his foot. A shell had passed that close, but the skin was not broken. He put his boot back on and he limped back to the tail.

I went back to the front of the ship and stayed there for the rest of the trip. It was uneventful. At Shipdham, I fired a flare as a signal that we had wounded aboard and we went straight in. This was Sortie #79. The only other memory I have of this trip, and I don't know where it falls in the sequence of events, was seeing an isolated B-17 being shot down. It was like watching a movie in the theater.

While in the landing pattern at Shipdham, it was obvious that Ruth-Less had sustained considerable damage, including possible flat tires. Personnel in the control tower were fearful that the plane would crash on landing. The tower already had many ships in distress and with wounded aboard. Rather than risk another crash landing, Lt. Frank D. Slough was ordered to fly his ship to Belfast, Ireland. There he landed without mishap and his ship was repaired.

Jimmy Caillier remembers:

(*Laughs*)

We had 120 holes in our aircraft. The astrodome over the navigator's table was shot out. They replaced it with a flat piece of glass. One night, while we were getting the ship patched up in Ireland, Bob Griffin, our tail gunner, used the thunder mug under the bed and didn't put it back. Herman Seigfeld, got up later in the night and got his foot caught when he stepped out of bed.

The newspaper industry recognized that what happened at Kiel that day was important. The Stars and Stripes carried a headline that read:

#### KIEL RAID "GREATEST AIR BATTLE"

The accompanying article indicated that the headline was a quote from Major General Ira C. Eaker. The article told that the formation was attacked by "droves of enemy fighters; Fw-190's, Me-109's and 110's, even Ju-88's and black painted night fighters." References to the bombing force throughout the article were entirely about B-17's.

In another paper the headline read:

#### Air Crews Tell Of Fierce Fighting

The article referred to the medium bombers that were out that day. It did quote one of our pilots: "The bombing was damned good, commented 2/nd Lt. Frank D. Slough, of Cleveland, Ohio, formerly with the RCAF. We must have blown Kiel off the map." No mention was made that he was in a Liberator.

Another newspaper stated:

#### Went Unescorted

Unescorted heavy bombers carried the U.S. attack to the naval base and shipbuilding yards at Kiel in Germany, itself, where all through the war have been concentrated perhaps the largest number of anti-aircraft emplacements in Axis held territory.

The day's work cost 11 U.S. bombers and four of the escorting fighters. No medium bombers were lost, it was announced." The article continued with generalized information about the battle, but no mention was made

about Liberators.

What we lacked in words, we made up for in a picture. The only published picture of that Kiel raid, that I have seen, was a strike picture taken from a Flying Fort. It has six Liberators circled and the text states; "Six Eighth Air Force Liberators go in for the bombing run over the smoking shipbuilding yards at Kiel, Germany, during the heavy daylight attack May 14. This picture was taken midway through the attack and as the raid developed the entire target area was obscured by smoke." I guess that one picture was worth a thousand words.

No, it was 144

Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

May 14--I was assigned to a crew whose pilot is Lt. Swanson. They made a mission to Kiel, Germany. I was quartered in the ground crews' quarters and was not called by C.Q. Their ship did not return." (This would seem to account for the comment by Schiefelbusch that there were only five enlisted men on our crew. When Mark did not turn up, Swanson must have decided to go without a hatch gunner.) (Years later Mark related that the next time that he went to the Orderly Room to get a pass he was refused. His pass was pulled since he had been shot down.) #295

Captain Swanson flew that day with the crew and ship that was regularly assigned to Lt. McAtee. Norm Kiefer recalls that just a few days before the raid, the radio operator, Frederick Wolf, had received word that he was the father of a newborn boy.

Ray Marner mentioned the raid in his diary.

Kiel was one of the best raids we have ever had. More planes were used than ever before. We sent out 18 planes. 2/ We lost 4 ships, one from the 508th. I worked for Captain Swanson in operations. One of the ships crash landed on the field. Another couldn't land so they all bailed out over the field. Chamberlain was hit by flak and received the Purple Heart. on Banker's crew

The next day, the Old Crow ground crew traced the path of one armor piercing 20-mm cannon shell. It came in through the tail and touched Maury's foot, clipped the oxygen hose of Smitty, pierced the armor plating shield at the waist gun (this was what was lodged in Coldiron's side), and then

shattered Coldiron's machine gun (a piece of it went in Coldiron's leg and other pieces peppered Kern's flying jacket).

My flight record indicates we flew the Old Crow to Langford Lodge to have battle damage repaired on May 17. Lockheed Overseas Aircraft Corporation maintained facilities just outside Belfast, Ireland. There they handle major repair jobs.

Just prior to this flight, the people of Dublin, Ireland, had received quite a scare. The German Air Force had been using the Dublin radio station for navigational purposes for some time. They could pretty well tell where they were over England by tuning in their directional radios to the Dublin station. A few days before the Germans had gotten pretty close to Ireland.

This scare had an immediate effect on us as we flew across the Irish Sea toward Belfast. We were flying with minimum crew and, except for the turrets, no guns. In the distance someone noticed a single engine fighter that seemed to be headed toward us. It approached from the side, then fell back and turned on to our course. That's when we manned the turrets.

The fighter slowly approached us keeping well to the left on the pilots side. At no time did it bring its guns to bear on us. When it was close enough, we saw that it was a Spitfire. Then it was alongside of us and the Spitfire pilot waved. We waved back. He wiggled his wings and peeled off. I guess that we had passed inspection.

We returned to Shipdham the following afternoon.

On May 16th Ray Warner wrote:

All our ships left to go somewhere on a mission that will last a few days. Maybe after a convoy or the invasion. I think they went to Africa. Nick's (Popovich) crew went. Also Rudy and Barber as armorers.

The reference to Nick agrees with Hobson's recollection. They both flew with Lt. Rebich. Lts. Bunker, McAtee and Slough also went. That morning they packed their combat gear and departed for Davidstow Moor in southern England. They were accompanied by 16 other aircraft from the 44th.

ANDERSON - N 172  
 BUNKER - E 232 (672)  
 REBICH - B 787  
 SLOUGH - Y 282  
 STRONG - O 201

On the morning of May 17, they departed England on a course that was ordinarily taken by aircraft flying to North Africa. When they were well beyond the range of the German radar that was situated on the Brest Peninsula, they tuned into Bordeaux radio and turned toward the Bay of Biscay. They were flying very low in order to stay below the radar screen. A few miles off the coast they started to climb. They were almost at Bordeaux when the radio stopped its transmission.

As a result of the surprise, there was no fighter opposition that day. Neither was there any problem with flak. The bombing was near perfect. The targets were the locks controlling the water level at one submarine repair facility and an aircraft factory. The locks were hit and water was observed rushing in. Later it was reported that a number of German submarines had been placed out of operation.

On May 18th Ray Marner reported:

Our planes came back tonight. They were down in southern England and raided Bordeaux, France from there. It was a very successful raid. The whole Group went without losing a plane. All bombs were on the target. It was the longest raid ever pulled by the Air Force and the first raid from the ETO by all B-24 planes. The 93rd Group and our Group participated.

An American newspaper reported the raid as follows:

*Bunk* 200 BUILDINGS DESTROYED

Stockholm, quoting "reliable informants," disclosed that American Fortresses immobilized a number of submarines in their pens at Bordeaux on their last heavy raid by jamming the concrete and steel locks of the pens with high explosives. Several U-Boats were damaged or destroyed, 200 buildings levelled and 200 persons killed.... The remainder of the article dealt with the bombing efforts of the RAF".

13) The Bordeaux raid was such a success that our Air Force Command decided to try a repeat performance. On May 28th, five 506th ships, including Lts. <sup>283</sup>Graham, <sup>433</sup>Rebich, Buncé, McAtee and Bunker<sup>4282</sup> left Shipdham for St. Evals. There they joined 16 other aircraft from the 44th and a number from the 93rd. On the morning of May 29, they again departed on the transport route to Africa. This time they tuned their directional radios in to the La Pallice frequency.

ANDERSON  
w 172

The author recalls while flying at wave top level over the Bay of Biscay, we suddenly approached a fishing boat. Or, was it? It could be a German "Q Boat" that would radio our position and direction. Some of our gunners opened fire and the boat was sunk. Intelligence later claimed that it was a "Q Boat"

The attacking force continued on course and started to climb a few miles off La Pallice. Once again the radio transmissions ceased and we went on in. Light inaccurate flak drifted toward us just before bombs away. This was not the success story of a few days before, but the bombing results were good.

The *Flint Journal* carried banner headlines for this day:

### USAAF BATTERS U-BOAT BASE IN FRANCE

#### LIBS AND FORTS STAGE THEIR BIGGEST RAID

Blows at St. Nazaire, La Pallice, Rennes End  
Heaviest Month for 8th Air Force

The three targets of the record breaking bomber force which took off from Eighth Air Force stations Saturday were the U-boat bases of La Pallice and St. Nazaire, on the Bay of Biscay, and Rennes, communications center through which funnel much of the supplies bound for the submarine bases and yards on the Biscay coast.

Fortresses went to St. Nazaire and Rennes and the Liberators bombed the U-boat yards and slips at La Pallice. Crews reported good visibility and direct hits on all three target areas.

The B-24's found only light flak and virtually no enemy fighters over La Pallice. The Lib.'s were without fighter escort. La Pallice got its last U.S. raid last Nov. 18." The remainder of the article summarized the Eighth Air Force efforts for the month.

When our aircraft returned to St. Evals we found a large contingent of United States paratroopers had arrived during the day. They were standing and watching the aircraft land and the crews climb out of the ships. As I trudged with my gear toward a waiting truck, I heard one of them say, "Boy, they sure look tough." I thought, "I'm not tough. I'm just



tired." Thus ended Sortie #82.

Mark Morris remembers that on this, his first raid:

I discovered during taxiing that there was no way to fasten the ammunition chute to the left waist gun and no way to attach the ammunition belt. Armament had screwed up. A right waist main body had been mounted on a left mount. The previous gun had been damaged at Kiel. Needless to say, I was flabbergasted. I had no training on a B-24, but had installed the gun into the body in the dark. Anyhow, I didn't know prior to then where the ammunition box was mounted. I never was a fast learner, but starting that day I learned more about a caliber-50 than the armament crews. Some "wisenheimer" thought we were just looking for an excuse to abort and there was some broad hints to that effect. Anyway, no choice, but to drag the ammo out of the box and make very short belts to be held up with one hand when needed.

Our aircraft returned to Shipdham on May 30 and once again had not sustained any damage.

Earnest Cutshall doesn't remember which raid it was, but about this time:

We were on a raid and Vaden called on the intercom indicating that he had a problem with his gun. A spring had come out of the gun when he lifted the cover and he didn't know where it came from. He wanted to know what to do. Earnest didn't think that while you are over enemy territory you should be running around wondering what to do. He told him to put the cover back and try firing the gun. Vaden did and then called back to report that the gun worked better that it had before.

The following are extracts from letters that I wrote to my wife during the month of May:

"Dobbins is gone. We only know that he is missing in action."..."Gee it seems funny, but in all the towns around here the places of amusement close around 9:30 in the evening. When you come outside it is still broad daylight. Yes, we go to bed late and are still going to bed with the chickens."..."You will have to pardon the interruption. Our copilot just came in and started to horse around. Gee, there has been one big change in that man. Seven months ago, when he joined the crew, he had

some big ideas about the enlisted men. Now he realizes that he has to depend on us and you couldn't ask for a better fellow."..."I got a letter from a personnel office yesterday. They said that they would give every consideration to my wife in a war production job if she would file an application."..."Another thing, missing in action does not mean for you to give up hope. That is when you can start to hope for the best."..."Do you know where I am as I write this? I am in back of our hut sitting on an old broken bed. The day has been one of the best. Off in the distance I can hear a cuckoo bird and over in a freshly dragged field the gulls are shrieking as they feed. A big yellow bumblebee just buzzed by like a vengeful P-47. The boys in a hut across the way are doing a pretty good job of making good old American music with an accordion and a guitar. Songs that you and I have danced to many times."

In a recent letter, Loy Neeper recalled that Coldiron had a great talent for music. He played the fiddle with the small band at the barracks. He wanted to sell his fiddle to go to town with a few dollars in his pocket. I paid him for it as a means of keeping it available. I left it laying when I returned to the States. Later, he brought a horn of some kind and made some weird sounds for a while. However, before long he was playing it like a pro. (The author remembers that Danny Kennon also had musical talents. Danny played a mandolin.)

## THE PAUSE

Mark Morris noted in his diary on June 1st:

I made a high-level practice mission with Lt. Graham.

All the rest of his notations, until the 28th of the month, referred to low-level practice flights.

Norm Kiefer's flight records show that during that period he logged about 25 hours of low-level flight.

WHAT'S GOING ON? SPECULATION!!! There was lots of it. I remember it was about this time that the RAF was making headlines with a new bombing technique.

Certain targets had proven to be exceptionally difficult to hit with high-level bombing. Typically these were small in nature, heavily defended with antiaircraft guns and in an area that, for political reasons, the Allies did not wish to use saturation bombing.

A good example was a dam in German-occupied territory. It would require pinpoint bombing and the guns could be concentrated tightly around it. Thus it was a poor candidate for both high level and dive bombing. If the dam could be destroyed, the electrical power that flowed into the war production factories around it would cease. That would be a quick means of achieving the shutdown of these factories. To destroy these targets from high level or with dive bombing probably would require months of bombing.

The British solution was a new type of bomb that, when dropped in low-level flight, could be skipped off the water and into the dam. They reasoned that an approach from the lake side of the dam would give them the surface from which to skip the bomb. It would also be the safest since German guns, that could be depressed to fire at low flying aircraft, would be a distance away on shore.

Now if these headlines were to appear at about the time that you were removed from combat operations and ordered to fly around the countryside at low level, what would you think?

Ray Marner wrote on June 3:

The "Eightballs" on our planes were removed and they are

practicing bombing from 50 ft. altitude. It looks as if something is in the wind.

The removal of the "Eightballs" was not universal. The author has a picture of the Old Crow, that was taken in Africa, with the Group insignia still there.

Regardless of what we thought about the low level practice missions, I am certain that the British people had their own thoughts about the "Crazy Yanks". More than one of them was frightened out of their wits when the unexpected sound of our engines suddenly engulfed their villages.

One of the things that we found intriguing about England was the antiquity of some of the occupied homes. In the countryside many of these homes had thatched roofs. Most of the others were tiled. Both of these types of construction are highly susceptible to damage when subjected to the prop-wash generated by a four-engine bomber flying at 50 feet. I am afraid that we significantly increased employment in the roof repair business during the early part of June.

Probably, an even greater economic loss occurred on the farms. I recall being in the top turret one day. I was facing forward so that I could see where we were going. In the distance I could see some cattle. They started to stampede when the roar of the engines were heard. One bull stood his ground and just before the aircraft passed overhead I could see the bull's tail going round and round. I swung the turret to look back at the field. The bull was entangled in a hedgerow that bordered the ditch defining the field. I recall hoping that the bull wasn't injured.

On June 5th Ray Marner noted:

I went to Watton and about 8 P.M. a truck came in to get everyone. An epidemic of ptomaine poisoning started. Over 400 are in the hospital. I got a touch of it, but didn't get too sick. Our men are dropping on the streets in Norwich.

On June the 13, a new crew joined the 506th. Lt. Edward R. Wilson had flown a B-17 from the States to Prestwick, Scotland. He was ordered to leave the ship there and to board a train for Shipdham. With Lt. Wilson were Lts. Edgar W. Roberts, William H. Novak, and John Kellogg Waite. His enlisted personnel were Sgts. Clyde C. Fry, Robert F. Mundell, George T. Duquette, Robert C. Freeland, Perl R.

Rush, and Neil M. Hills.

William Novak recalls:

We were assigned to the 44th on or about the 15th of June. My records show that I flew with George Rebich to Langford Lodge on the 20th for aircraft modification. We didn't have much time to become acquainted with anyone because the Group took off for Africa and left us without an aircraft. I remember Strong and McAtee as two veteran pilots. Gordon Stevens and Dick Larson were known because of State side training and probably joined the Group no more than a month before us.

The first member of our crew was separated when Stevens took C. C. Fry with him to Africa. During the month of July we spent most of our time at Hardwick. That was where we lost the copilot, Roberts. He was replaced with Flight Officer C. R. Horne and Emil Kosch replaced Fry.

We left Shipdham in aircraft #021 on August 11th and rejoined the Group at Benina on the 13th. We had to land at the first airfield we spotted to get directions because the 44th location was not specified when we left England.

Following the Foggia raid, what was left of the crew returned to England via ATC. That marked the end of the Wilson crew for me. I don't recall seeing Horne after that. The others must have been assigned individually to other crews and I lost track of them. I joined Captain James Bunce and his crew.

Robert Mundell recalls:

After we arrived in Shipdham, we flew a couple of search missions over the North Sea looking for flight crews returning from bombing raids. Also, a skeleton crew of four of us picked up freight two or three times. On one of these, we stayed overnight in Belfast.

Our crew was on pass in London in late July when we got the call to go to Benghazi. We flew from Shipdham to Oran and spent the night. I believe we stopped at Gibraltar on the way.

It was about this time that Charleston Miller had a day that he will never forget.

Remember the trailers which we rode back and forth from the airfield to the mess hall? One day an M.P., on a motorcycle, ran up on our transport trailer as it was parked in front of the hospital. I got in the way and my leg was broken. I was sent to a hospital down around London some place. When I got out of the hospital, I was going to be sent to a replacement depot. Somehow, the ground crew got wind of it and they signed a petition that got me back with them.

On June 19th Ray Warner wrote:

RAF planes flew over for hours last night. You could see thousands of vapor trails in the sky as they went over.

To the members of the *Old Crow* crew there was another important event that occurred in June. Medical personnel decided that the back injury that Lt. Graham had sustained over Kiel was not going to heal quickly. This meant that he would be rotated back to the States for treatment. Lt. McAtee, who had lost his crew when Capt. Swanson was shot down, was assigned to the *Old Crow* crew. It was about this time that Charles R. Loftus Jr. joined the *Old Crow* crew as a gunner.

Loftus was probably the last of the group of men who were brought in to fill the hatch and other open gunner positions in the 506th. Others that have not been previously mentioned, were J.R. Bell on Anderson's crew, Lonny L. Ackerman and Oliver R. Germann on Strong's crew, and William D. Middlebrooks on Bunker's crew.

New faces among the officers were Flight Officer Raymond J. LaCombe, copilot and George G. Grimes, navigator on Slough's crew.

Also, there was a decision made to build up the strength of our combat squadrons. Ray Warner wrote in his diary in late May:

We got a new combat crew today to replace one of our lost crews.

He was probably referring to the Lt. Charles A. Whitlock crew. With Whitlock were Lts. William H. Phipps, Robert A. Ricks, and Harold W. Schwab. Among the enlisted men were Sgts. Charlton H. Holtz, Ralph B. Knox, Donald V. Chase, Edwin N. Stewart, Robert W. Bonham, and Hugo Dunajecz. They

brought with them aircraft #370, Heaven Can Wait. 42-40370

As these new crews moved in, there was no increase in living accommodations. First it was more beds in a hut and then double-deck beds. That is when I started looking for a new place to live.

About twenty-or-thirty feet from the combat crew Nissen huts was a latrine. Behind the latrine was a room that was empty. It looked like it was intended to be a drying or storage room. It had electricity and a small stove with the chimney going out through the roof. It had a slate roof and the room was dry, but needed to be cleaned up. On June 15th I wrote to my wife:

"Well we are fully moved into our new domicile. There are three of us in here. They are Mark (Mark Morris), Ag. (Albert G. Kerns) and myself. We have a place to hang our clothes, two one hundred watt light bulbs, a radio and a hot plate to heat water on. We call it our apartment".

Other combat men thought that we had a good idea. In the next few days two similar rooms were occupied.

Robert Struble recalls:

I moved into a clothes drying building. If you remember, they were about 7 feet wide by 14 or 15 feet long. My fellow roommates were Jack Edwards and Wayne Terry (Quartermaster P/X). We had a hot plate and always managed to get plenty of local bread, butter, and eggs. We used cigarettes (obtained by Terry) for barter with the local farmers. I guess we fed egg sandwiches to almost everyone in the 506th.

Another room was taken over by members of Bunker's crew. Their room was along the path that most of the drunks took when the trucks dropped them off after a night on the town. On June 18th I wrote to my wife:

Gee, Kooken is on the warpath again. Yesterday, Kooken and Middlebrooks moved into a building like we are in. Last night when the trucks returned from town, some of the boys started to throw rocks on the slate roof. As a result, there were a couple of holes knocked in it. Kooken took his rifle and started to shoot up the roof of the other barracks. The throwing ceased.

Mark Morris recalls an incident that probably happened at about this time:

You recall that under our parachute harness, we wore a "Mae West" vest (a yellow inflatable life preserver that was to be used if you went down in the water). Also, I carried a rubber dinghy that was issued. It weighed about 20 pounds, was about a foot square and six inches thick. I lugged it aboard and fastened it with a strap to my chute harness. Once, while gathering my equipment from the locker room, a Major commented that no one with one of those small dinghies had ever been picked up out of the cold, rough North Sea. For all I know, that dinghy may still be in the locker room. I never bothered with it again.

- It was about this time that Glenn Hall joined the 506th as a spare gunner. Hall recalls:

My first night was in the Nissen Hut with Anderson's enlisted men. They were drinking beer and kept saying they would like to fly 12 more Kiel missions in a row if they could go home.

I was sent to gunnery school at the Wash when the Group left for the Ploesti mission.

On the morning of June 26, nine 506th aircraft joined with 29 other 44th Bomb Group ships on a secret mission. The 506 contingent consisted of A/C #283, Z, *Old Crow*, McAtee crew; A/C #234, Bar U, *Mr. Five By Five*, Rebich crew; A/C #172, Bar N, *Lynn Bari II*, Anderson crew; A/C #282, Y, *Ruth Less*, Slough crew; A/C #201, Bar O, *Baldy and His Brood*, Strong crew; A/C #778, T, *Southern Comfort*, Austin crew; A/C #370, V Bar, *Heaven Can Wait*, Whitlock crew; A/C #606, X, Bunce crew; and A/C 787, B, Stevens crew. Bunker and his crew remained behind with the intention of joining us at a later point in time.

In his diary Mark Morris wrote:

June 26--"We packed and left for a destination unknown. After two hours flying, we landed at ~~Port Wreath~~, Eng., PORTREATH near Lands End. There was lots of vibration and the nose tire seemed flat. The nose wheel is damaged. (Note, we had our ground crew and all of our gear, except our carbines which we left in room.) We were all called to the front of the plane for landing so weight was all



there. The tire didn't blow."

June 27--"The nose wheel was repaired, but now there is engine trouble, a bad plug in #3. We laid over, but Group the left."

June 28--"We took off alone with the Old Crow. Our destination is unknown. There was flak at Gibraltar. It was a nine-hour flight. We landed at Oran and stayed overnight."

June 29, "We took off for destination unknown. Landed Benghazi, Libya, after six-hour flight."

The Group report on this change of station indicated:

....3. All ground personnel, their equipment and personal effects, were transported by air in combat aircraft of the Group. The afternoon of 26 June, thirty-nine B-24's loaded with their crews and above mentioned ground personnel took off for Portreath, England.

...5. On the morning of 27 June thirty-nine B-24's took off from Portreath. The long trip to Oran was uneventful aside from some slight flak put up from Spanish Morocco. The night was spent in quarters of the old French airdrome at Oran. Takeoff in the morning was somewhat delayed because of difficulty in refueling. The takeoff was finally accomplished by noon. No briefing information for the remainder of the route was available at Oran except weather.

....6. In the late afternoon aircraft landed on Benina Airdrome. This airdrome was an old Italian field approximately 20 miles west of the city of Benghazi. It was currently in use as an operational field by the 98th Bomb Group of the IX Bomber Command.

....7. All personnel were housed in tents and nearly all ground departments were similarly housed. Mess, Headquarters, Briefing Room, Communications, Photographic and many other necessary facilities were made available by sharing the existing facilities of the 98th Group which had its full ground equipment. In addition, some additional personnel were obtained from MP units and from the detached ground echelon of a troop carrier unit and a service squadron.

I recall what it was like to be suddenly thrust into that flat featureless land of red dust and winds. Winds that started not long after sunup and quit just before the moon came into view. The land that was strewn with the debris of the struggles of many armies as they marched back and forth across its surface. It was not a hospitable place

Once our engines were cut, we were quickly greeted by two truck drivers who wanted to know what our Squadron number was. We were then instructed to load with our gear into the back of the trucks.

There did not appear to be any clearly defined roads, and the drivers seemed to just drive across the desert. They stopped at a lone standing tent that we learned was our Squadron Orderly Room. It did not seem to be different from other tents that were scattered near by. However, it did have ground level electric and telephone lines running into it from somewhere out in that desert.

The enlisted men were told to unload their gear and were then directed toward two tents--one for the air crew and the other for our mechanics who would share a tent with other squadron ground personnel. We were also told how fortunate we were. "Yesterday, everyone had to put up his own tent. You will have to put up the tent for the next arrivals".

Before the officers and their truck departed for their tent area, we were all instructed to immediately use the pick and shovel that was at each tent site. "Dig a slit trench in case of enemy air attack." What a way to welcome you to your new home! (Years later, McAtee told how he had written home to his wife and told her about digging a slit trench. In the return mail, his wife informed him that he had misspelled the word. An "h" was supposed to be where he had an "l".)

In the heat of the day, digging was hot work. We were informed that the dull green, wheeled water wagon that was parked not too far away was our sole source of water. "Fill your canteen, but be careful. Water is rationed." What a way to welcome you to your new home!

Where is the latrine? Well, do you see that barrel with the wooden top and the oil can next to it? Of course there is no privacy screen! Who is going to watch you. Oh! I forgot to tell you. They burn those barrels out each morning so be careful, they may be hot. Also, when they are burning stay up wind. It will smell better! What a way to welcome you to

your new home!

The tasks at hand kept us busy until dinner time. We were informed that we would need our aluminum mess gear if we were to eat. Where do you go? See that lone squat building way over there? That's it. Just get in line and soon you will be inside. The line will pass by the serving crew. Then you can try to find a place to sit down. When you have finished, get into the line going out the opposite end of the building that you came in.

That line will take you to the dish washing area. First there are a series of upright barrels for your scraps. Do a good job here since we do not want your garbage in the hot water. The boiling hot water is contained in a series of barrels that have been laid on their sides and cut in two. There are dish mops available at each barrel. Once again, do a good job since we do not want debris in the barrels of scalding rinse water that are next in line.

You will not be here very long before you learn the importance of keeping your mess gear clean. Food poisoning is not funny, and don't forget that there are no privacy screens on that 'John'. What a way to welcome you to your new home!

The ones who had been left in England were also leading a hard life. Bob Struble went for two weeks of gunnery school. He shot skeet, and met a lot of girls. Ray Marner was dancing at Covent Gardens in London.

Ray Marner noted:

The five combat crews that came in on June 19th left for combat training at Hardwick on June 26th. An additional 34 men left on detached service near the town of Newquay in southern England. About 3/4 of our Squadron is now on D.S. However, we got in some planes that were attached to us for a while. They had been on submarine patrol. At the end of the month we received word that Ruth Less went down in Spain. No particulars yet, but we believe they are okay. (This was a rumor, and not true.)

The following are extracts from letters to my wife during the month of June:

"I am sorry that I have gone back to v-mail. They are out of stationery in our P.X."... "Yes there are changes in the

crew, but they won't let me send pictures of more than two men in a group."..."I tore up my bed and hung the blankets outside over the barbed wire fence to air out."..."As we went into the mess hall they gave us each one egg. It seems we are going to get a few eggs per week. Now, that is the combat men. I don't know about the rest."..."Last night one of the boys came home pretty drunk. This morning when he woke up, he jumped up and hollered "My Face!" He then went outside looking. I rolled over and there on the floor were his false teeth. I called to him and told him to come back. He was very embarrassed. He didn't want us to know that he wore them."..."Don't you worry about my being broke. I almost always have between 10 and 20 dollars in my pocket in case we put down somewhere away from home field."..."The boys just came in and said that the island of Pantelleria fell without loss. Maybe not so very much longer. I have said ever since we got here that I would live to see my next birthday. I'll live to see home again."..."It was nice of you to send the box of candy. Thanks! The box that the peanuts were in was crushed a little, but not broken."..."I had Macaroni and Cheese tonight."..."Got up this morning and chopped some wood, swept out our apartment and then tore down my bike. This afternoon I cleaned the parts and put it back together."

## HELLO ITALY

While we were still struggling to become adjusted to our new "desert way of life" we were informed that the joy of flying low level was ended. There were no dams to be bombed from this desert! Instead, all of the talk centered on the upcoming invasion of the continent's soft underbelly. The first step was to be Sicily. While waiting for the invasion to start, we would hit some targets that would hamper the enemy's ability to strike at an invasion fleet lying in the coastal waters.

The first selected target was an airfield at Lecce in Italy. On the morning of July 2nd (Just two and one half days after the *Old Crow* landed at Benina Main) six aircraft from the 506th Squadron departed on a combat mission to destroy aircraft and other facilities in the boot of Italy.

Taking off that morning were A/C #307, V, piloted by Austin; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich; A/C # 606, X, piloted by Bunce; and A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson.

The 506th aircraft joined with 18 other 44th ships and proceeded toward the target. Mark Morris, flying in *Old Crow*, wrote in his diary for that day:

We went on a raid to Lecce, Italy. We had engine trouble and turned back. The superchargers on #1 and #2 engines failed. Shortly before turning back we saw one Mc-202 at approximately 2,000 yards. There was no attack. It was a seven hour flight.

The remainder of the Squadron aircraft proceeded to the target and all returned after scoring excellent bomb hits. A number of parked aircraft were destroyed as well as some hangars. There was light antiaircraft fire and the few enemy fighters did not press home their attacks. However, the Group did claim two enemy aircraft destroyed.

Aboard the *Lynn Bari II*, Anderson's crew reported seeing five parachutes. Shortly thereafter, as they crossed the Italian coast, they saw five radial engine fighters believed to be Italian. None of them approached the *Lynn Bari*. They flew that day with a nine man crew with Major Beam as an observer.

The Bunce crew, aboard *Timba-a-ah*, had two Me-109's approach

them at 8 o'clock, but they made no attack. They also saw one Mc-200 about 1,000 yards away, going down in a tight spin. At 9:30 they saw a B-24 turn over on its back and go down in a tight spin.

The crew of *Mr. Five By Five*, flown by Rebich, also saw the B-24 going down. When it had fallen a few thousand feet the tail came off. As they crossed the coast of Italy they saw five Me-109's. One made an attack from 8 o'clock below. While it was at a considerable distance, Maury fired on it from the tail turret. It was believed that the enemy aircraft was struck. Kallal and Williams saw the fighter start to smoke and then burst into flames. Vincent from Stevens' crew reported he saw the pilot bail out and his chute opened.

Stevens' crew also came under attack. Three Me-109's came in singly at 6 o'clock level. No damage was sustained. There were no claims of enemy aircraft destroyed. The tail guns jammed after about 10 rounds had been fired.

On *Heaven Can Wait*, flown by Austin, they encountered 4 Me-109's after the bombing run. Three attacked from 7 o'clock level. They made three passes. Each time on the break away, one peeled off under and two went over the top. The fourth enemy aircraft made one attack from below at 6 o'clock. The tail turret was inoperative due to a firing solenoid being incorrectly adjusted.

The Group lost two aircraft, one before the target and one ditched in the Mediterranean.

Thomas Hobson knew Robert A. LaFleur who was killed in the ditching. Back in Shipham they had become acquainted while playing volley ball outside the Officers Club. He also knew Thomas R. Cramer who was lost that day while flying as a Command pilot with the 88th Squadron. Hobson knew Cramer because he was the only officer living in the 506th BOQ that wasn't from the 506th. Cramer was a West Point Graduate.

*The Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

YANKS SMASH THREE  
ITALIAN AIRFIELDS

100 Liberators  
Drop 400,000 Pounds  
Of Bombs on Bases

Three American Planes Lost in Raids  
Apparently Aimed at Reducing  
Aerial Defenses Surrounding Taranto

Nearly 100 United States Liberators smashed at three airfields in Southern Italy Friday in the biggest offensive action yet staged by these four-engine craft from the Middle East, dropping more than 400,000 pounds of bombs on the Italian bases at Lecce, Grottaglie and San Pancrazio.

All three raids apparently were aimed at reducing the aerial defenses of the Italian naval base at Taranto--at the inside of the jutting Italian "heel" on the Gulf of Taranto.

Grottaglie lies 10 miles northeast of Taranto, San Pancrazio 28 miles to the east and Lecce 42 miles to the east.

The lethal loads included high explosive, fragmentation and incendiary bombs, a United States communique from the Middle East headquarters announced.

Three American planes were lost in delivering the triple punch, this relatively small figure equaling the entire United States losses for the month of June in this area.

Twelve Axis planes were shot down out of clouds of Italian and German fighters that rose to challenge the Liberators.

At Lecce, bursts of smoke covered the field, indicating hits on dispersed aircraft. Other hits were observed on hangars and runways. Fires were left burning behind the hangars and in the dispersal area. A very large fuel fire was observed in the southeast section.

A couple of days later the 44th lost some men in a noncombat related accident. On July 4th Ray Warner wrote:

We got word from St Evals, England, that two men in the 68th were killed there while crossing a mine field. They were blown to bits when a mine exploded. A man from the 66th isn't expected to live. (Note: Will Lundy records do not show any 44th personnel killed at this time.) *He had wrong month - Aug.*

The softening up process continued on July 5th when the 506th

dispatched six aircraft to the marshalling yards at Messina, Italy. The intent was to destroy the railroad switching and storage facilities. The facilities were critical to supply and other military movements for the defense of Sicily, which lay just across the Straits of Messina

Flying that day were A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson (Note: Anderson led the Group with Lt. Col. James Posey as Command Pilot); A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; and A/C #806, X, piloted by Bunce.

These 508th ships joined with 17 other 44th aircraft and proceeded toward the target. Bunce encountered low fuel pressure in the #1 engine and returned to base.

Mark Morris wrote in his diary for that day:

We raided Messina, Italy. I saw Mt. Etna. There were no fighters. We were gone eight hours.

Mark failed to mention that the flak that day was rather intense. My notes show the guns from both Sicily and Italy were taking cracks at us as we tried to pick our way up the straits between the island and the mainland

Aboard *Baldy and His Brood*, Strong's crew saw 5 Me-109's at a considerable distance. The enemy aircraft broke off the attack when they were fired upon. With Strong that day was our Flight Surgeon, Doctor Allison.

On the *Old Crow*, flown by McAtee, the crew saw six fighters make attacks from 2 o'clock on the lead ships in this formation. They were Me-109's and a Fiat G-50. There were no attacks on the *Old Crow*.

Slough's crew, flying in *Ruth Less*, saw 8 Me-109's. There were no attacks on this ship. However, they did come home with a flak hole in the vertical stabilizer

Stevens' crew saw 4 Me-109's making attacks from 4 and 6 o'clock on other ships in the formation. However, once again this ship was not attacked.

Anderson, in *Lynn Bari II*, did come under attack. About seven Me-109's came up from below at 2 o'clock. They broke off the attack at about 500 yards and peeled off to the rear.



One of our newspapers reported the raid as follows:

### MESSINA GETS ANOTHER FIERCE BATTERING

Attacking in three waves, more than 60 Middle East-based Liberator heavy bombers of the Ninth U.S. Air Force struck at the Sicilian ferry terminal of Messina during daylight on Monday

Nearly 375,000 pounds of high explosives were dropped blanketing the important terminal installations with hits which caused extensive damage.

Bombs landed along the whole length of the railway tracks, and an explosion at the roundhouse was followed by fire. Other large fires were observed at the central railway station, in the engine sheds, in a large warehouse and in the rolling stock maintenance yard at the southwest end of the railway tracks. Hits were scored in the marshalling yards and on railway oil tanks and barracks. One string of bombs fell across the Lazaretto mole.

Defense smoke clouds arising from the target area made pinpointing difficult, but the entire area was exceedingly well covered with bursts, fires and explosions.

Formations of enemy fighters attacked our bombers, three of these being destroyed with one other listed as probably destroyed and five as damaged.

From this operation, all of our aircraft returned.

The following day, July 6th, the 506th returned to the attack by striking against enemy airfields. This time seven ships went to the target at Gerbini Satellite Number Six.

Flying that day were A/C #370, Y, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #787, B, piloted by Stevens; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; A/C #234, U, piloted by Rebich; A/C #201, Bar 0, piloted by Strong and A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce.

These seven 506th ships joined with 21 other ships from the 44th and proceeded toward the target. There was a haze in the area and there was moderate flak that inflicted minor damage. Enemy aircraft caused no problems. All of the 506th ships made it to the target and returned home safely.

Aboard *Southern Comfort*, Austin's aiming point was the west end of field. They believed their bombs struck in the target area. Flak was intense and heavy with both aimed and barrage being used. There was fair accuracy. The greatest concentration of flak was believed to be northeast of target. Flak opened up three minutes before bomb run and lasted for 10 minutes. They observed five enemy aircraft too far away to identify. On the return trip, they attempted to work Benina radio, but results were unsatisfactory. When challenged by the letter N from the ground, they fired a recognition cartridge at 1805 hours and landed.

At the left waist window of *Timba-a-ah*, flown by Bunce, Tommy Davis was bruised by ricocheting flak. The ship returned to base with three flak holes.

The crew of *Heaven Can Wait*, flown by Whitlock, reported 10 enemy aircraft that were too far away to identify. They did see another group shoot down an enemy aircraft.

*Mr. Five By Five*, flown by Rebich, received a number of small flak holes.

The records of Mark Morris show that the *Old Crow* took off that morning, but returned home because of engine trouble.

This was the first combat mission for the Whitlock crew. Donald V. Chase, radio operator, wrote the following about that day.

So there I was, on our first mission, poised in the belly of our ship, *Heaven Can Wait*, waiting for our load of twelve 500-pound bombs to drop. Then I noticed the bombs of our sister ships plummeting earthward. But not ours! Could it be my fault? Did the bomb doors creep in? I pushed the anti-creep lever as hard as I could. No, there was no creepage. There was nothing more I could do in the bomb bay, so I returned to the cabin area and plugged in my headset and tuned into intercom.

"Use the backup release, Whit", Bombardier Harold Schwab said on the intercom. Pilot Charles Whitlock nodded to his copilot, William Phipps. Phipps reached down to the console between the pilot and the copilot seats and grabbed hold of the T-shaped handle and began pulling upward.

I looked back into the bomb bay. The bombs were still

cradled in the racks. Phipps, seated as he was and using his left hand, his arm at an awkward angle, apparently didn't have enough pulling leverage to activate the release handle.

Standing between the pilot and copilot, I tapped Phipps' arm and pointed to myself then to the handle. When he moved his hand away, I squatted, grabbed the handle with both hands and pulled straight up with all my strength.

Immediately, the plane lurched upward as 6,000 pounds of metal left the ship. The bombs, of course landed far from the target area and splintered hundreds of trees.

It took all the next day to track down and repair the bomb release malfunction. We were more or less on stand down till *Heaven Can Wait* was again serviceable. We six enlisted crew members took advantage of the stand down by boarding a supply truck that was making a trip to the nearby city of Benghazi, Libya.

Field Marshall Rommel and his Afrika Korps had only recently been forced out of N. Africa by the Allied Forces and it was still thought necessary to be armed while away from base. Consequently, we roamed the bazaars of Benghazi with 45-caliber pistols holstered at our hips. One of our crewmen, tunnel gunner Ralph Knox of Chicago, appeared to be no more than 17. He was small of frame and sparse of beard. We called him "Billy the Kid" as he swaggered through the fetid smelling bazaar section, his gun hanging low and forward of his hip, the holster slapping his thigh with each step.

A few of the vendors cried out, "Viva Roosevelt, Viva Roosevelt." Prior to our arrival, I'm sure, as battles raged back and forth across the top of Africa for four years, the cries must have changed with the flow of battle: "Viva Mussolini....Viva Churchill....Viva Hitler....Viva Churchill....and now, Viva Roosevelt."

We trucked back to base, almost gladly, leaving the ragtag, alms-seeking children and impoverished merchants to their dismal, war scarred surroundings.

What Chase and most other 44th members did not know was the delicate relations between the British, who were responsible for governing the area, and the local population. Just a few days before, at the request of the British Administrator,

three 44th ships made a low level flight over the city. The intent was to quell the discontent and demonstrations by the local population. Yes, "Viva Roosevelt" was probably a recognition of our low level display of power.

The same day that Whitlock's enlisted men went into Benghazi, Lt. Bunker left Shipdham for an unknown destination. He was carrying with him secret maps and a civilian who once lived in a place called Ploesti. When he arrived at Benina Main a few days later, the 506th once again had its full complement of aircraft and crews.

Also on the 7th, I wrote to my wife:

How would you like to have a few grasshoppers (locust)? We have a million of them here. Everywhere you look it is one creeping mass of them. We also have big spiders, scorpions, lizards, centipedes and thistles to live and sleep with us.

The one day of rest was all that the 506th combat men were to have. On the morning of July 8th six aircraft departed on a mission to Catania, on the eastern coast line of Sicily.

Taking off that morning were A/C #370, V, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #606, Bar X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Austin; A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson and A/C #234, V, piloted by Rebich. They joined 18 other 44th aircraft on the way to the target.

Rebich aborted when a cylinder head was blown on Mr. Five By Five's #1 engine and an oil leak developed in the #4 engine. Austin also aborted when Ruth Less developed many malfunctions.

I recall that the target was a communications center in the middle of the city. The telephone and telegraph buildings were located in a park. Smoke from exploding bombs actually obscured the target area. My combat record reported there was very little flak and a few enemy fighters.

A newspaper account of the raid follows:

Cairo bulletins announced United States Ninth Air force Liberators dumped 250,000 pounds of high explosives on Catania in a two-wave attack Thursday, this following up a flame setting raid upon Axis barracks at that city by RAF

heavy bombers the preceding night.

Many hits were observed in the vicinity of the telephone and telegraph buildings, while other bombs fell in the railroad marshalling yards. The railway tracks were completely covered by bursts. The central railroad station was hit and set afire, as were also the freight depot and a large warehouse. An enormous fire was started among oil storage tanks and the whole industrial area was solidly covered by bursts.

Eight enemy fighters were destroyed in this action and five others were damaged, four probably fatally, it was announced.

(The Italian high command said in a Rome-broadcast communique that 81 persons were killed and 208 injured at Catania, in repeated raids which ruined buildings and started fires in the heart of the city. It declared 26 raiders were shot down over Sicily.)

In a number of places reference is made to a hit that resulted in a huge fire "where railroad lines reach to the breakwater, believed to be oil storage tanks." The newspaper accounts also tell of oil fires. The author's notes refer to "A huge yellow cloud that could be seen for miles after we left the target area. It must have been a sulfur storage area that was hit."

*When Heaven Can Wait* returned, Don Chase found:

Upon landing and parking at our improvised hardstand, two or three ground men--mechanics and armorers--gave us the thumbs-up greeting and hastily removed canteens of water from the bomb bay section. The water, still frozen from its five mile high ride, would soon be savored by the men in the late afternoon desert heat.

Potable water was tanked into base and very little was allowed for personal use. Each man, however did receive an allotment of one can of beer a day. We often carried many canteens of water and several men's hoarded beer, festooned to bomb bay struts, on missions, secure in the knowledge that, back at base, men were prayerfully awaiting our safe return.

There was little variation of food at base: pancakes, spam, powdered milk and eggs, vienna sausages. The worst

of all was a congealed, wax-like, butter substitute called desert butter. Even under a punishing African sun it retained the viscosity of axle grease. Our waist gunner Edwin Stewart, a Californian, dubbed it a medicate for loose bowels.

The night of July 9th Norm Kiefer went to a movie. The theater was sort of an open air affair. A solid screen mounted on a stage-like platform out in the middle of nowhere. A series of benches planted in the ground served as seats for the men who wished to see the out-of-date shows. (This was also the site where religious services were conducted.)

Getting to the theater area was no trick. However, getting back to your tent after dark took real skill. There were few buildings on this base. There were few geographic features. There were no lights.

We knew if we walked a few yards straight out from the theater benches we should find a telephone line lying on the ground. If we followed the telephone line to the left for about a hundred yards, we should come to a Y. If we followed the left hand branch for a few hundred feet more, we should come to our Squadron Orderly tent. If we stood in the doorway of the tent and walked straight ahead, in about fifty feet we should be at our tent. If not, scream for help.

It was about this time that the Old Crow's enlisted men made a modification to their tent. Someone suggested that we needed a front porch. We rummaged around until we found a piece of canvas, some poles and rope. The resulting awning may not have been a porch, but it did provide a means of getting out of the sun.

After the sun was down, we soon learned that we could expect to hear the drone of multi-engine aircraft as a number of British planes headed out on their nightly flights. At first we thought that they were on bombing missions. However, we learned that theirs was a supply assignment. They were dropping food and equipment to Mikhailovich and his Yugoslav resistance forces, the Cetniks.

Occasionally, there was other night activity when high flying German reconnaissance aircraft came over. There were reports that in the past, the Germans had parachuted agents into the mountains which lay behind us.

One night, while we were watching a movie, the sky along the Mediterranean shoreline, some 18 miles away, was suddenly lit up with searchlights and gunfire. Then an alert was sounded. A few minutes later the movie was interrupted with the announcement that an enemy landing party had just been detected off shore. It was not considered a serious threat and the movie would continue. After about 15 minutes, everything was quiet.

The objective of the landing parties and the parachuted agents was to blow up aircraft. In the past, some of these attempts had been reported as successful. To offset these night threats, there were Gurkha guards assigned to each of our aircraft.

There were also rumors that these landing parties had attacked sleeping airmen. This was never proven.

The 506th once again became actively engaged in warfare on July 10th. We were to go back to Catania, which we had visited two days earlier. This day, the 506th aircraft took the long way around. By so doing, we did not fly directly over the invasion armada that was assembled off the coast of Sicily. This was D-Day for Sicily. The flight today took eight hours compared with five hours two days before.

The attacking force consisted of A/C #370, Y, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #606, Bar X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #787, B, piloted by Stevens; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Austin; A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson; and A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong. They joined 22 other 44th aircraft on the way to the target.

McAtee, flying in the *Old Crow*, also went that day. However, he flew with the 67th Squadron. The author recalls, while in the target area, McCash pointed out that the sulfur fires we set two days before was still burning.

This time our specific target was the marshalling yards. We had good hits in clear weather. There were a few not overly ambitious enemy fighters in the area and the flak was light. All of our aircraft returned.

Whitlock's crew, flying in *Heaven Can Wait*, observed what they believed to be sulphur refineries at Catania, that were still burning.

Austin, flying in *Ruth Less*, observed a B-24 with #4 engine

smoking, losing altitude and going south southeast. Antiaircraft fire was aimed from heavy caliber guns, but was light in intensity and inaccurate. We were subject to antiaircraft fire at the bombing point and for two minutes after the target. There were no enemy fighters. They observed a large fire and black smoke at Cape Santa Croce and at Messina.

That day Don Chase wrote:

While en route to the target and over the Mediterranean, all ten of our 50-caliber guns were test fired. Flight engineer Charlton Holtz, a Minnesota lad, manned the top turret. When he test fired, spent shells cascaded out of the turret onto the cabin floor next to my radio position. Occasionally a shell or two would bounce off his leg and land on me. The casings were hot. One landed on my neck and left a burn welt. However, I preferred ducking hot shells to flying in a ship with a malfunctioning turret.

The combat men of the 506th began to think that they were in a rut of every other day missions when on July 12th they were routed out of their beds. This time they were going to Reggio Di Calabria, on the mainland of Italy.

Taking off that morning were A/C #283, Z, piloted by Bunker; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; A/C #606, Bar X, piloted by Austin; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #370, V, piloted by Whitlock; and A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Rebich. They joined 20 other 44th aircraft to make the raid.

Our specific target that day was the marshalling yards. The target area was clear with little opposition offered from enemy ground or air defense. The target area was well covered with bomb bursts and fires were seen in the target area. All of our ships returned.

Colonel Leon W. Johnson and Major Beam flew that morning, as Command Pilot and Observer, with George Rebich. Before reaching the target area, Lynn Bari II lost its #1 engine and they aborted.

Thomas Hobson recalls:

I don't know why we aborted since I was not in my customary seat. Col. Johnson ranked me out of my seat. Naturally, I was upset, but I went along anyway. I rode



in the back as an extra gunner. I damn near froze to death. We aborted as we crossed Italian soil.

Slough, flying in Ruth Less, became concerned about the gasoline fumes that filled the ship. He turned back. However, when the odor disappeared, he resumed the flight and caught up with the formation. He assumed position #4, in element #2 of the 2nd flight and dropped his bombs. It was later determined that the fumes were from the overflow vent.

Aboard *Timba-a-ah*, Austin's crew reported they dropped their bombs in train at 100 foot intervals. They observed big explosions and fires in target area, two big explosions at Messina, fires were still burning at Catania. Also, on the way out, they saw small vessels running south from Giovanni and two large fires burning on northeast tip of Sicily.

Upon his return, Donald Chase:

After we parked our ship one of the ground crew went into the bomb bay to retrieve his cache of beer. He came out of the plane with his prize. Looking grieved and speaking with false sternness, he pointed to several small flak holes in the bomb bay doors and said--as close as I can remember--"Damn it, fella, you got to be more careful; they almost shot my beer." Banter and levity helped relieve the strain of missions, especially when all crewmen returned unharmed.

That day, July 12, I wrote to my wife:

No Mission?

Did I ever wake up quickly this morning. I had a pet in bed with me. The ungrateful cuss bit me. It was a centipede. It hurt for a while, but it is okay now. Incidentally, it didn't live long after I found it.

Thomas Hobson recalls:

The pattern of flying every other day resulted from a decision to keep our aircraft over the Italian mainland every day. Units from the Eighth Air Force went one day and the Ninth Air Force went the next.

The next morning the author received another rude awakening. The pattern of a raid every other day was over. Seven 506th ships were scheduled to go to the Crotona Airdrome on the bottom of the boot in Italy.

Taking off that July 13th morning were A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Anderson; A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #370, Y, piloted by Rebich; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; and A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough.

Our ships joined 22 other 44th ships. The weather was clear and there was no enemy opposition. Bomb coverage was good and oil fires were seen in the target area. All of our aircraft returned to base.

That day Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

July 13--We started to Crotone, Italy, but turned back with a broken oil line in #3 engine and an oil leak in #2. We were gone nine hours.

The poor performance record of the *Old Crow* was indicative of the maintenance problems that all of our aircraft were experiencing. The rate of abortions were high. The blowing sand was clogging the engines. I remember how upset McAtee was when they returned that day. Striking his fist into the palm of his other hand he said, "BY GOLLY WE'VE GOT TO GET THIS SHIP FIXED! NEXT TIME WE GO REGARDLESS OF THE PROBLEMS!"

It was about this time I wrote to my wife:

Gee, did Father ever have a hard time saying Mass this morning. The wind just about blew him and everyone else away. We came home last night and found our tent had blown down. We were glad that the moon was bright.

To relieve the boredom of living in the desert, it was about this time that the crew of the *Old Crow* created a little excitement of their own.

Some of the Group personnel had taken to wandering in the desert on the days that they were not scheduled to fly. They would take their rifles with them. If they happened to find an unexploded bomb, it was standard procedure to stand back and fire at it until it exploded.

As a variation on this entertainment:

The *Old Crow* enlisted men decided to build their own bomb. The bomb casing was an oxygen bottle removed from a wrecked German Ju-88 dive bomber. The Germans used a high

compression oxygen system on these aircraft. The oxygen bottle was about the size of and looked like the inside tubing of a thermos bottle. The neck of the bottle was a good deal smaller than a thermos bottle and it was made of heavy metal.

The ignition system of the bomb was provided by tearing apart a German 88-mm antiaircraft shell. The gun powder of this ordnance was long spaghetti like strands. A couple inserted into the bottle would insure rapid ignition all the way to the bottom.

The explosive force was obtained by tearing apart German 20-mm cannon shells. The gun power in this weapon was standard black gun powder. It flowed into the neck of the bottle readily and could be firmly packed.

After these assembly operations had been carried out, it was necessary to seal the neck of the bottle. A little water, when mixed with the red soil, provided a mud seal that quickly dried in the desert heat.

Now that the bomb was built, it was only logical to see if it worked. Where could we explode it. It was too hot to walk out into the desert. Why not put it into that slit trench over there? Why not?

The fuse, consisting of the 88-mm powder, ran from the slit trench back to the front of our tent. At each joint, a little black powder was spread to ensure uninterrupted ignition. When it was ignited, the powder quickly burned and disappeared into the slit trench.

Then nothing! Minutes passed. Davis and Edwards were about to go over to the trench when there was a sudden explosion. Dirt flew and the side of the slit trench disappeared.

We were all surprised at the force of the explosion. In spite of the use of wet mud, it really worked! There were others who were also surprised! No one knew what we were doing. Fellows came running from all directions! One of them was Major Beam. He wanted to know what had happened. I think that it was Edwards that replied, "Oh nothing. We just built a little bomb." Major Beam replied, "The next time you do that go out into the desert! Way out in the desert! You may want to risk injury or your life, but I don't want you hurting anyone else."

Mike Davis didn't quickly forget that experimental toy. One of the 20-mm shells that he tore apart was a percussion shell. They had an aluminum cap that had to be removed in order to render the shell inoperative. He had unscrewed the cap and had it away from the shell casing and explosive projectile when the cap exploded in his hand. The explosive force was sufficient to drive many pieces of aluminum into his hand. Doctor Allison removed as many splinters as possible, but was not able to get them all. On the next few raids, this was extremely painful for Mike as he handled the top turret.

Mike had his first opportunity to experience this pain on July 15 when eight 506th ships went to Airdrome Number One at Foggia.

Taking off that morning were A/C #370, Y, piloted by Whitlock; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich; A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #787, E, piloted by Anderson; and A/C #606, X, piloted by Bunce.

On the way to the target the 506th ships joined 21 other 44th ships. Weather was clear in the target area.

Anderson, flying in E, aborted when a fire developed after blowing a cylinder head.

Mr. Five By Five, flown by Rebich, was attacked by 2 enemy aircraft that made four passes from 6 o'clock level. The ship sustained no damage.

Mark Morris recorded in his diary:

Today it was Foggia, Italy. We saw 12 fighters and the flak was not bad.

I (Kiefer) recall in the briefings for this raid:

They stressed that a number of dummy runways had been built in the area. Our bombardier, Joe Young, came out of the target area cussing. He had aimed at what he was certain was a dummy runway. He was pretty down in the dumps all the way home. When the strike photos were read and interpreted, the intelligence people complimented Joe for spotting a new runway that they didn't know existed. It was loaded with aircraft. Joe didn't tell them that it

was an accident.

Donald Chase wrote:

The flak, somewhat heavier on this mission, was inaccurate. Aimed flak, as it suggests, is fired at a particular target, usually a lead group or squadron A/C. Barrage flak, however is not targeted on a selected plane. Rather, it is a boxed pattern of antiaircraft fire into which, the enemy hopes, the B-24's will fly.

At our base were several British-manned antiaircraft units, one fairly close to our tent area. Theirs was a boring task. For the two months of our stay no enemy aircraft came within range of their low to intermediate range of fire. Instead, only stripped down, extreme-altitude German photo reconnaissance aircraft penetrated the desert air space.

Occasionally, one or two of us would visit the two-man antiaircraft units, exchanging small talk and cigarettes and flicking ever-present locust off our clothes.

The base was devoid of mosquitos in this parched area, but we used netting to keep the five and six inch long locusts from our canvas cots. One of the crewmen, waist gunner Hugo Dunajecz of New York City, got so irritated with the invasive locusts that he fired his 45-caliber pistol at one, scaring the hell out of the rest of us and punching a half-inch hole in our tent.

Desist or move out, we told him. From then on, Hugo shot at crashed German and Italian fighters and light bombers that lay broken on the desert, the losers of earlier shoot outs.

Hugo was not the only one that tried to shoot at the locusts. Butler relates how:

Newbolt lay on his cot one day and took aim at some locust that were clustered at the very peak of the tent, where all the ropes come together. When he shot, it was not certain if he hit any locusts, but he hit the ropes and the tent came crashing down.

Steve Bugyie was one our desert hunters.

I would take my 30.06 Springfield rifle and go up in the

rocks hunting. I didn't kill anything, but snakes and rats. The foxes were too smart for Klinge and I.

Late one evening the officers dropped by our tent. They used to kid me about my shooting. Bunce said, "Buggy, I just saw a couple of jumping rats outside your tent." I said "No problem". I took my rifle and shot off both their heads. When I came back into the tent, holding the rats by their tails, there was no more kidding."

Earnest Cutshall also went out in the desert to hone his shooting skills:

On one of these trips I saw nothing to shoot at and so I picked a rock as a target. The dust hadn't settled before I saw an Arab running for his dear life with his long robe streaming behind him. When I aimed the Arab was not in view. After the shot, he was quickly in view. I never went out shooting again.

On the morning of July 17, the 506th went hunting for the marshalling yards adjacent to the Breta Armament factories at Naples, Italy.

Taking off that morning were A/C #201, X, piloted by Strong; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Stevens; A/C #172, N, piloted by Anderson (Major Beam was aboard as Command Pilot); A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich; A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; and A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee.

On the way to Naples, the 506th joined 22 other ships from the 44th. Weather in the target area was clear with few clouds.

Austin's crew, flying in *Southern Comfort*, reported that after they salvoed their bombs, there was considerable fire and smoke in the target area. Flak was intense and heavy, both aimed and barrage, for a period of five minutes after the run. However it was inaccurate. Approximately 15 fighters were seen (Me-109's, Fw-190's and Ju-88's). There were about 20 attacks on our aircraft. They were all from 5 or 6 o'clock, level. They broke away in a split "S". A few three-plane formation attacks were made. One Me-210 came in between 5 and 6 o'clock and was caught in cross fire between the tail guns of this aircraft and Y. It started down in smoke. The top turret of this aircraft is believed to have damaged one Ju-88.

This was probably the day that Dale Lee recalls:

The #1 cylinder on our #2 engine was hit. Our instruments were reading okay and we still had plenty of power. However we were losing oil like crazy. Needless to say, there was concern on the flight deck. Austin feathered the #2 engine and we flew back on the remaining three. This caused us to arrive back to our base late.

This was one time that the combat tactics adopted by our crew did not work. You see, most German fighters would attack from above and behind. As a matter of practice, Lt. Austin would carry 2 degree flaps on our ship. When the fighters came in, Glen Hickerson (tail gunner) would yell, "Move!". Austin would then pull the flaps up. The plane would drop about 20 feet and the fighters 20-mm's would burst above us.

In my position I could not see the fighters because they flew by so fast. I would listen for Hickerson's guns to quit firing. Half a second after his guns stopped firing, I would fire mine. That way I knew when the fighters would appear flying through and underneath. We got a lot of hits using this teamwork.

Aboard the *Old Crow*, McAtee's crew spotted 15-to-20 enemy aircraft. There were Ju-88's, Me-109's, Fw-190's and Me-110's. As we were leaving the target area, one Me-110 approached us from 12 o'clock high. It was fired on by the top turret gunner, Mike Davis. The enemy aircraft was observed to burst into flames and head down.

While leaving the target area there was a terrific explosion. We guessed at the time that a store of naval torpedoes had been struck.

*Earthquake McGoon*, piloted by Bunker, also came under attack at about this time. Six enemy aircraft made individual almost simultaneous passes at the ship. Three came in at the nose, two from 3 o'clock and one from 7 o'clock. They were all level or slightly above. Clem Boulanger, in the tail turret, fired on the Me-110 coming in at 7 o'clock. The enemy fighter broke away at 500 yards with its left engine smoking. Another ship saw it go into a dive with both engines smoking. Meanwhile, in the nose, Navigator Newbolt fired at one Me-110 approaching from dead ahead. At about 200 yards the enemy aircraft burst into flames and went into a steep dive.

Enemy fighters were also picking on Baldy and His Brood, flown by Strong. There were eight or nine attacks on this aircraft. Top turret gunner, Edgar Hamel, fired on an enemy aircraft attacking from 3 o'clock and saw him peel underneath. Lonny Ackerman, at the right waist position, watched the enemy fighter go down and strike the water. The left waist gunner, Vernon Haas, picked up an enemy aircraft coming in at 8 o'clock. It broke off at about 500 yards and went down spinning. Not to be left out of it, Oliver Germann in the tail turret, zeroed in on one Me-110 that broke off at 500 yards and headed down toward the water.

Aboard Ruth Less, flown by Stevens, they were also taking a beating. Right waist gunner Frank Rodriguez was hit in the head and knocked down. However, he quickly got up and was glad that he was wearing a helmet. He was not injured. The loop antenna did not fare so well. There were other hits in the fuselage and a large hole in the horizontal stabilizer.

Anderson, flying in Lynn Bari II, had to jettison his bombs at Cape Stillo because of bomb bay door failure.

Mark Morris wrote that day:

July 17--We went to Naples and encountered nine fighters. There was lots of flak. We made two runs. I wonder why?

Ron Allen answered that question a number of years later:

As usual Anderson was leading the 506th formation. After we dropped our bombs we were supposed to take a compass heading that would take us out to sea. I gave Anderson a heading of 270 degrees. I intended that he would turn to the left and take up the heading. He repeated the heading and I said "Right". I intended to indicate that he had repeated the heading correctly. Instead, he thought that I wanted him to turn to the right. He turned to the right. As we made the turn I knew that a mistake had been made. If we continued on this turn we would go back over Naples. I immediately called him and once again gave him the 270 degree heading. Once again he repeated it and I said "Right". He didn't change the turn. On the third try I realized what was happening and substituted "Correct". By then it was too late and we were over the city once again. We later defined the terms we would use in the future.

On one of those passes over Naples Lawrence Kallal, on Mr.



*Five by Five*, had a close call. Thomas Hobson relates:

Lawrence was flying one of the waist guns. He was wearing one of the British chest parachutes. The buckle was a quick release type for use over water. The buckle was two or three inches in diameter and about an inch thick. That is the point that all of the parachute straps fasten. When fastened, the buckle is in the front at about the belt line.

Suddenly, something hit Kallal and completely turned him around. He thought that he had been hit. However, there was no wound and no blood. Then he saw his parachute buckle. A 20-mm German cannon armor piercing projectile had entered the buckle at the side and underneath the face of the buckle. It made a clean hole and came out the other side. Aside from being a little sore, Kallal was all right. There was no wound.

That was not the only hit we took that day. The props looked like a honeycomb. One rudder was shot off. Maury took two direct hits on the glass protecting the tail gunner. There were other hits all over the plane, but no one was hurt and we made it back home. Technicians came from Washington to look at the plane. The ship was repaired and made ready to fly once again.

Radio operator, Richard Tuttle, remembers:

We were straggling when I looked out of that little window into the #3 engine prop. There were tracers going through it. That was the first and only time that I believed I had to control the ship. I yelled "MOVE!" into the intercom just as my radio transmitter took a 20 MM cannon shell. I gave that shell to George Rebich.

Earnest Cutshall recalls the hits on the tail turret:

The tail suddenly kicked to the right. I looked back and saw tail gunner Dale Maury rolling down the catwalk toward me. When he stopped rolling he got up and looked at me. Since he was all right I sort of grinned at him. He put on a chute and went back to the tail turret.

Richard Williams was one of the crewmen on *Mr. Five By Five*. On the morning after the Naples raid, July 18th, "Little Willy" and I went for a walk in the desert:

We took our rifles and went out to get away from it all. We walked for quite a distance and didn't really find anything to shoot at. We were a little ways apart when "Willy" called for me to come see what he had found.

When I went over to him, he was holding in his hand a little red aluminum can that was slightly larger than a Gerber baby food bottle. It had a screw on cap that had the word BRETA inscribed in raised letters across the top.

He said, "I wonder what it is?" I replied, "I don't know, but I don't like the looks of it." Williams then asked if he should take the cap off and see what was inside. I said, "You Breta not. Don't forget where we were yesterday."

Williams then said, "You're making me nervous. What should I do with it?" I replied, "I don't know about you, but if it were me I would throw it as far away as possible. If you do, throw it like a hand grenade, overhand. Throw it toward that hill."

When he threw it and it struck the hill there was a loud explosion and a cloud of dust. We hadn't really recovered from the noise when some British soldiers came running down the side of the hill. Their antiaircraft gun was located at the bottom of the other side of that hill.

Needless to say, they were unhappy gunners. They told us that what Williams found was the charge that was used in antipersonnel bombs and in booby traps. They verified that if Williams had tried to unscrew the cap that we both probably would be dead. We went back to camp without picking anything else from the desert floor.

The next day, July 19th, the 506th airmen went out again to support the invasion of Sicily. This time they flew to Rome, Italy.

Rome was a transportation hub for all of Italy. The Italian Government claimed it was an open city that would not be used for purposes of war. In order to preserve the country's art and architectural treasures, the Government also called on the Allies not to bomb the city. They felt somewhat secure with the knowledge that any aerial attack would run the risk of having errant bombs strike in the Vatican, an independent religious center for the world's Roman Catholics.

The Allied commanders, on the other hand, knew from aerial

photography and logic that the railroads were being used to transport German men and equipment down to the battle front in Sicily.

When the decision was made to stop this flow, the 44th was selected to make the risky strike on the marshalling yards at Littorio. Briefings that morning were very detailed. The crews were admonished to be certain of their targets. Bring home the bombs if you are at all in doubt! Don't bomb the Vatican! Don't hit any churches! Many of the crewmen in the back of the ships were given leaflets to drop on the city. These leaflets explained why we were bombing and appealed to the Italians to abandon the war.

Because of the international, political, religious and propaganda implications of this raid, it was decided that the President of the United States would announce the bombing as soon as possible after the bombs struck the ground. To enable this immediate announcement, Allie T. Hearne, radio operator on the *Lynn Bari II*, and Norm Kiefer, radio operator on the *Old Crow*, were designated to send strike messages over separate monitored frequencies. The messages were coded to convey the message that all bombs were on target or that some had gone astray.

After the regular briefing that morning, all combat men of the Catholic faith were requested to report to the theater area. The Catholic chaplain was there and addressed the group. His message was that this was war and the raid that day was necessary to save lives of our ground forces. Any crewman that did not feel right about making the mission would be excused.

Taking off that morning of July 19 were A/C #806, X, piloted by Bunce; A/C #787, E, piloted by Stevens; A/C #235, Bar C, piloted by Bunker; A/C #283, Z, piloted by McAtee; A/C #282, Y, piloted by Slough; A/C #201, Bar O, piloted by Strong; A/C #172, Bar N, piloted by Anderson (Major Beam was aboard as Command Pilot); A/C #778, T, piloted by Austin; and A/C #234, Bar U, piloted by Rebich.

On the way to Rome these nine ships joined 21 other 44th aircraft. Just before arriving in the vicinity of Palermo, Sicily, Ruth Less developed a problem with gas leaks and the #3 engine was cutting out. Slough decided to return to base. He selected a target of opportunity about 10 miles east of Palermo and dropped his bombs.

Austin's crew, aboard *Southern Comfort*, found the weather was clear in the target area. Bombing results were excellent. All bombs were observed to be in the target area, which was well covered. Large explosions and flames were seen. Prior to bombing, there was a large column of smoke in the marshalling yards. Heavy caliber antiaircraft guns put up intense, aimed, but inaccurate opposition. We were subjected to antiaircraft fire for 30 seconds before and three minutes after the bombing run. Enemy aircraft consisted of 5-to-8 Me-202's, colored black. They made one attack from three directions, a little below and breaking away at 6 o'clock. This aircraft claimed one enemy aircraft damaged by right wing gunner T. Q. Purcell and bombardier, P. S. Singer. They observed five ships heading south just below the mouth of the Tiber River. About 15 miles out over water, just after the fighters left, they saw a parachute at about 5 o'clock and about 3,000 feet below. More than 10 seaplanes were sighted on Lake Braccianoo. There were plenty of ships heading for Sicily.

Aboard the *Old Crow*, everybody was craning their necks as we banked and swung out of the target area. The big question was did any bombs go astray? With great relief we decided that the bombing was perfect. I sent my message back to the Allied Command monitoring station.

Shortly after that, the *Old Crow* came under attack from six Me-109's that came in singly at 8 o'clock level. They made three passes and seemed to be using all explosive shells. They all broke away above. The *Old Crow* sustained no damage.

Neither did *Timba-a-ah* have any damage when 4-to-6 Me-202's made one pass from 11 o'clock below and broke away at 1 o'clock down.

Before we were back to base, a successful attack was announced to the world. We were all happy that we had played a role in this history making event and that all of our ships returned to base.

Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

July 19--We went to the Rome marshalling yards. This was an "Open City"? Where did the flak and fighters come from?

Back in England, Ray Warner wrote:

Rome was raided and we know our planes took part. There was a piece in the paper about Allie T. Hearne on the raid.

Donald Chase wrote:

Airmen of Catholic faith were given the choice of flying this mission or remaining at base. The Littorio rail yards were approximate to Vatican City. An errant bomb conceivably could inflict damage to the home of the Pope. Therefore, stringent bomb drop precautions were invoked. Fortunately, the bombing was effected as planned. We heard that not one Catholic in our Group declined to fly the mission.

But the Catholic's decision to fly the Rome mission was not unexpected. All combat flying seemed to be voluntary. From the beginning, each man received specialized training to prepare him for combat. Even the gunners, for the most part, attended four weeks of gunnery school prior to assignment to a stateside combat training group. And whenever possible, airmen trained together as a ten-man unit for three months before entering combat. Somewhere along the line of progression, in school or training, each man had the opportunity to fail a course, feign a disabling ailment, or perform so inefficiently as to render himself unsuited for flying combat. Of course, some did. Those who did fly combat, however, did so with a self-determination, an unspoken pride in contributing to the effectiveness of the ten-man unit that each B-24 carried. I'm sure men of the 44th were not unique in this respect, but it did make a unit of cohesion that was not equalled in civilian life.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

AMERICANS BOMB ROME  
MILITARY TARGETS HIT  
BY U.S. BOMBERS  
IN DARING DAYLIGHT RAID

Drop Leaflets Beforehand to Discount  
Expected Axis Clamor That Religious  
Shrines Were Being Desecrated

Striking home a grim ultimatum for surrender, American bombers smashed military targets in Rome by daylight today

in a daring, significant raid.

An all-American force of Flying Fortresses, Liberators, Mitchells and Marauders carried out the war's first bombing of Rome, concentrating on targets in the Eternal City. Liberators bombed the Littorio railway freight yards.

The carefully-instructed bombardiers rained explosives upon railway yards that had poured German troops to Sicily. Leaflets were dropped beforehand to discount anticipated Axis clamor that religious shrines in the Eternal City were being desecrated.

All the crews were carefully instructed to avoid historical and religious points by means of large aerial photographs on which such places as Vatican City, St John Lateran and others were outlined in red with the legend nearby: "Must on no account be damaged".

The raid meant war in earnest to Italians, who long have regarded Rome as a bomb refuge, and backed up the Allied demand of last week that Italians quit this war.

The Allied Command disclosed the raid within 15 minutes after the bombs tumbled from the planes--an unprecedented step taken to forestall Axis propaganda by presenting first a full explanation of necessity of the attack and its targets.

The article continued with commentary about the raid.

Another newspaper reported:

#### Three Planes Lost In Rome Raid; Crew of One Rescued.

Only three planes, one crew of which was rescued, were lost in the raid on Rome in which 272 heavy bombers and 249 medium bombers dropped 1,101 tons of bombs, the War Department revealed today.

The department described it as the heaviest daylight bombing attack of the war to date and reported photographs revealed "extremely successful results with excellent concentrations in the target areas."

Details of the Rome raid were included in a War Department review of the air war over Sicily and Italy in

July during which American and British air forces, collaborating with ground and naval forces, "cleared the Sicilian sky of the enemy's planes, blasted his airfields to the point of uselessness and pulverized his lines of communication." The article continued with a review of what had happened during July.

Of interest to the 44th were the newspaper comments on the rail yards at Littorio. They were "rendered unserviceable with at least 50 percent blocked or destroyed.

Mark Morris believes that it was on this raid that:

Jack Edwards suddenly realized, after we had gotten to altitude, that he had not used our convenient barrels on the African desert before take off. He came up to my position and dumped a spare ammunition box that I had. He then used it to relieve himself. Then he threw it all out the left waist window. Frank Slough was on our left wing, but quite a way below and behind. He used evasive action to keep from getting his windshield hit. When we landed Slough complained about that unauthorized attack.

The airmen of the 44th were surprised to learn upon their arrival back in Africa that they were no longer on combat operations status. Rumor has it that we will start flying at low level once again.

On July 22 I had thoughts of how lucky the 506th Squadron had been. We had been flying combat for four months. We had engaged in 20 officially recognized operations against the enemy. We had lost only two crews. This was a record that no other squadron could match.

Back in England, Ray Marner wrote on July 28th:

About 4 A.M. a Halifax cracked up on our field. The tail gunner was already dead from flak. The rest are only slightly injured.

Norm Kiefer remembers a couple of interesting experiences that occurred about this time:

One morning the breakfast line seemed to be moving slowly. One of our best known Sergeants was near the door of the mess shed. With him was another Sergeant from the other Group that shared the field with us, three Military Police enlisted men and an Officer. One of the two Sergeants

spoke to each man as he entered the mess shed. The police personnel just stood back and watched. When it was my turn, our Sergeant simply said, "Hi Norm." I then went on in. The rumor over breakfast that morning was that they were looking for an enemy agent.

On another occasion we were returning to our tent from a movie. As we walked along the telephone line, there was a lot of chatter. Suddenly, out of the darkness a voice called out and asked instructions for getting to Group Headquarters. Since it was commonplace to become lost after dark, we did not hesitate to render assistance. Afterward, Edwards became concerned because he believed that the voice in the dark had an accent. A German accent! Besides, who would want to go to Group at this hour of the night? When we arrived at our Squadron Orderly Room, Edwards called the Military Police Detachment and reported the incident. The next day we inquired about what happened. The Police indicated that there had been someone in the vicinity of Headquarters, but he had escaped in the darkness.

These incidents may seem to have been based on figments of imagination and rumor. However, James Dugan and Carrol Stewart writing in the *AIR POWER HISTORIAN*, published by The Air Force Historical Foundation, may provide a hint of what was happening. They indicated that a number of months after we had left Africa, three German radio operators who had been left behind by Rommel, were apprehended in the area. They were wearing parts of American uniforms, eating C-rations and smoking Lucky Strike cigarettes.

It was about this time that Lt. Richard A. Larson arrived. With him were Lts. C. S. Satterlund, A. H. Green and Robert E. Gutnecht. Also with him were Sgts. C. H. Hockensmith, A. C. Woods, Hosea E. Denley, Robert A. Orr, Gerald E. Porter, and Charles H. Dugan.

The following are excerpts from letters to my wife during the month:

"We went swimming in the great Italian lake last night."... "The mail plane came in night before last. I had 33 letters. About 10 of them were mailed last January to Morrison Field in Florida."... "I just tore up my Income Tax blank and threw it to the winds."... "You ought to see my writing table (Bomb fin cases piled on top of each



other). "...Do you remember seeing pictures of camel caravans? Right now I can see one going over a hill."... "The boys are practicing tying each other up."... "What do you think of the paper that I am writing on? It is all I have this morning. I am writing when my mind should be on something else. There is still a little time." (Note: the date of this letter was July 17. That morning we raided Naples. It was written on the plane and handed to a ground crewman as we started to taxi.)... "Did I ever tell you how the jackals wake us up at night with their yelping?"... "Mornings when we wake up the ground inside the tent is covered with all kinds of tracks."... "You folks at home aren't the only ones that are fixing up the house. We went to chow the other day and found that the walls and ceiling had been white washed."... "Dog gone that wind! I just got an eye full of sand."... "I have a little pet. No, I can't tell you what he looks like. You see I have never seen him. He comes around at night while I am asleep. In the morning when I put on my shoes I find them filled with nuts that he has stolen from one of the other tents. There are also stones and twigs in my shoes. He has been chewing on my stockings. Mark has also been having the same problem."... "Look at page 21 of the June 21st issue of *Life Magazine*. The *Old Crow* is in the last flight of three planes, the one closest to the middle right hand side of the page." (This was the picture of 8 Liberators flying over Kiel on May 14, 1943.)... "Ag picked up a slip of paper with the words to a song called *Coming In On A Wing And A Prayer*. I wonder what the music is like?"... "Mail call was a pretty important event last night. From one tent came a yell 'It's a boy.' From another tent came 'No, It's a girl'."... "Gee! I wish that I would stop dreaming. I have had more dreams in the last month than ever before in my life. Sometimes they are good and other times not so good." (Note: This letter was dated July 29th. By then we knew we were headed to the Rumanian oil fields.)

## TWELVE DAYS TO GO!

Early in those twelve days we didn't really know the reason for our removal from combat status. Sicily was now secured. Was our job down here completed and it was time to return to our home base in England? The abortion rate was high. Would we do some maintenance work and then return to combat in preparation for the invasion of Italy? Regardless of what the future held, the present reality was that we were restricted to base. What's more, the command structure seemed to be more vigilant about who was around the facility.

The maintenance rumor was a good possibility. Almost immediately after we were placed on stand down, the engines on the Old Crow were declared unfit for future use.

In the desert conditions, with limited equipment and engine mechanics, an engine change was a major undertaking. The manpower shortage was overcome by "volunteering" the combat crews to assist. Crew chiefs found themselves directing Lts., stupid radio operators, and gunners. The combat engineers and assistant engineers were just a little bit less stupid. Nonetheless, they got the job done and the aircraft once again started to fly.

While working on the engines, McAtee took off his shirt. By going shirtless, he may have been trying to avoid washing his shirt. On this base there were either very good or very poor laundry facilities. It all depended on how you looked at it.

Local natives could not be trusted to return your clothing. Thus, they could not fill the role that the farm wives played in England.

Water was in short supply. Aviation gasoline was not. Therefore, if you didn't mind the odor and you didn't immediately try to wear the clothing, gasoline would cut body and other oils. It would also do a fair job of cleaning the red desert dust out of the cloth.

While we were working on the engines, gasoline also served another function. The locust were everywhere. Some relief from their crawling could be found by throwing pails of gasoline around the area. Those that were touched by the petroleum did not survive.

Speaking of gasoline, it was about this time that each of our

aircraft had bomb bay gasoline tanks installed. In addition, there were modifications made in the wing tanks so that our total gas load could be increased to 3,100 gallons. This was about 14 hours of flying time.

The early rumors proved to be correct. When we did start to fly it was at low level. What's more, the Norden bomb sight, that we used at high level, was removed from the *Old Crow*. A cheap bomb sight that was used on A-26's was placed in our ship at the bombardier's position. Joe Young started to attend classes on how to use it.

Many of the ships, when not flying, were receiving further modifications. Twin 50-caliber guns were installed in some ships at both the waist windows and in the nose.

Some of the crews started to make modifications to the ships on their own. A few of the officers and enlisted men of *Earthquake* made a couple of visits into the desert. They were looking for German aircraft. When they found one that had armor plating, they removed it and took it back for installation on their ship.

One afternoon we were briefed on security. I don't know how we could breach security! We were eighteen miles from nowhere, no telephones, we couldn't go to town, and they weren't even allowing the Arab man who brought us eggs to wander around the base. Maybe it was the locusts that they were worried about.

At first individual aircraft flew alone. This time the flying was lower than we were flying in England. This time there were no buildings, power lines or trees to avoid. Only an occasional Arab tent forced us to pull up. This time, in the afternoon, the hot desert floor created atmospheric conditions that resulted in a constant pounding as we raced across it. All of the other B-24 groups, that were clustered nearby, were also flying close to the ground across the desert.

Then there was a change and groups of aircraft started to fly together. There were five in our flight. Flying with us were aircraft from the 68th Squadron. We charged across the desert in line abreast. The officers seemed to know something that we didn't know. They were looking for something on the desert floor, but couldn't find it. They tried again in the afternoon without success.

One morning they found their target and practice bombs were dropped. Eventually, there were five groups flying in the formation (44th, 93rd and 389th from the Eighth Air Force and the 98th and 376th from the Ninth Air Force).

On one of these training missions, Colonel Johnson was flying with Slough. Suddenly the #4 engine quit. Just as suddenly, the wing on that side dropped and seemed to drag forever on the desert floor. In reality it was only a matter of seconds and Slough had it under control once again. Johnson has never forgotten that day.

It was about this time that we were told to report for a briefing. We thought for certain that this was it. Tomorrow we go! After the briefing, we were glad that it wasn't tomorrow! From then on, we only flew in the morning. Afternoons and evenings were spent in meetings.

The briefed raid had been in development for a long time. What we didn't know then was that it had been briefly mentioned and agreed to by our heads of state at the Casablanca Conference in early 1943. The Rumanian oil fields at Ploesti would be bombed. These fields provided one third of the oil needs of the German military and almost all of the high octane gasoline for the Russian front.

We were told that if we destroyed the oil refineries the German aircraft and tanks would grind to a halt. The Russians would be able to then make advances into the Balkans. Also, within a few weeks, American troops would be making landings on the Italian mainland at Salerno. With reduced enemy firepower the lives of thousands of American infantrymen would be saved.

One night we were told that it would take ground troops several months with very heavy losses to accomplish what we were going to do in one day. The target was so important that if we lost all of the attacking force, but destroyed the refineries, it would be worth it. Fifty percent losses were expected. This one raid could shorten the war by as much as six months.

During the briefings, it became obvious that the proposed raid had been in the planning stage for a long time. The briefings were the most complete that I had ever heard of. There were models on sand tables. One moving picture simulated an approach on the city of Ploesti and our targets as it would look to a pilot flying at ground level.

I remember one slide in particular. It was looking down on the Creditul Minier oil refinery at Brazi, our assigned target. There were chimneys and storage tanks. The picture was taken at a low altitude from an aircraft. The aircraft was flying in formation with other military aircraft. I marveled at what good intelligence we had.

For his part, Mark Morris believes:

For the Ploesti raid, August 1, 1943, we had the most thorough briefings that I can recall. In the course of this, the ever present, but seldom mentioned dangers of any air raid were emphasized. Other briefings were often broken at some point and enlisted men and officers were given separate briefings covering only those specifics needed to do their job. This mission was approached differently. I was impressed with the amount of information given to all as a team. The briefing included an offer that anyone not wishing to go could make it known and be relieved of going. During the briefing conducted a day before the mission, additional hazards of this low-level attack were emphasized. All was presented in a manner which left no doubt of the importance placed on the success of this raid.

Also explained and of interest at the time to me at least, was possible actions for evasion if forced down. There seemed to be an undertone of the possibility of reprisals to crewmen due to the nature of this deep penetration bombing. Occupied Rumania's real allegiance was vague. Further realization of the low level aspect, and concern for loss of men, was prompted by the decision to dispense with carrying hatch gunners on this mission.

In the intelligence briefings, we were told that there would be some Rumanian antiaircraft guns in the area. However, they might not be manned since the attack would fall on a Sunday. This day is considered as a holiday by the Rumanians.

Mark Morris also remembers that the intelligence officers:

Informed us in the event we were forced down and if we were able to make our way to the border, we could join up with the Yugoslavian forces of Tito or Mikhallovich. Although these were rival factions, either would take us and later try to get us to the coast for eventual pickup by small craft. We were briefed on where and when to meet

and given escape kits containing, among other things, silk maps of the area.

The author recalls Mikhailovich was to move into an oxbow loop of the Danube river. He would hold that loop for one week. If we were able to reach that area, we were to approach farmers or peasants working in the fields either alone or in groups of not more than two. We were to say to them, "Anglic Zabit, Mikhailovich, Cetniks". This is roughly, "I am an English Officer. Take me to Mikhailovich and his Cetniks" We were not to display or let it be known that we were carrying a gold British Sovereign with our escape kit. This coin was worth one-pound sterling.

During one of the briefings we were told that if an aircraft was able to make it to the target they were expected to go. However, if the aircraft was unable to make it to the target it was acceptable to abort.

At the same time, the crewmen were told that those persons with 15 or more missions who did not wish to go, should drop into Colonel Johnson's tent and he would excuse them. If there were others who were exceedingly apprehensive, especially pilots, they too would be excused. There would be no entry made in the records. The Colonel did not have any takers.

The final practice flight involved all five groups flying in column formation. When the simulated Initial Point was reached they turned and charged across the desert floor on a simulated Ploesti constructed out of wood and canvas. Each ship in the formation had a specific building or portion of a building into which they were to slam their bombs. Today, in addition to the practice bombs, some of the ships carried 500-lb. bombs. The simulated Ploesti went up in a shower of dust.

That night Norm Kiefer and many others wrote their letters of "good-bye" to their wives and Mothers. I had never done this before. For the first time, I did not expect to return. My letter was left with Charley Loftus to be sent when it was established that I was down. Charley would not be going to Ploesti. At ground level you do not need a hatch gunner.

Mark Morris undoubtedly also did some last minute writing that night. He also did some thinking about how this mission would be different from the high-altitude raids we were used to flying. This time he would not have to put up with heavy

clothes and long periods on oxygen:

On this mission I would be relieved of such restrictions and distractions. To divert thoughts of less pleasant circumstances, I planned my wardrobe. Flight crewman's pride and joy were flight jackets, officially A-2 jackets, made of soft horsehide leather. Mine was one size too small as that was all they had when mine was issued. I would wear it for this low level ride. My light flying suit, normally worn under the heavy gear, would instead be worn overall. I would, in fact, wear my best suntan uniform, I would be slightly out of uniform, however; no tie. I reasoned also that a steel helmet might look nice in view of the expected ground fire. I decided to wear my leather Natal (Brazil) boots, only 1/2 size too small, which I inherited from a less fortunate crewman. I spit polished them. If we did go down I would walk out and join the Cetniks for a while.

Donald Chase wrote about this period as follows:

All ten crewmen of *Heaven Can Wait* willingly readied for the assault. But orders called for a crew of only nine, not the usual ten. The tunnel gun position was to be unmanned because of weight restrictions for the 2,500-mile flight and because our low attack altitude and 200-mile per-hour ground speed would cancel the effectiveness of a single, belly fired, hand held 50-caliber gun.

The four mid and rear section gunners drew straws to determine which would remain on the desert on P-day. Young gunner Ralph Knox drew the "unlucky" straw. He complained and cursed and, feeling abandoned, withdrew from the rest of the crew, not to speak until just before takeoff, when, woefully he wished us luck. Ralph was dejected by this fracture in the brotherhood of battle.

There wasn't much reason to stash aboard beer or extra water for the Ploesti run; we wouldn't fly high enough to chill it. But one of the ground men fastened a canteen in the already crammed bomb bay. "Just for luck, okay?" He punctuated his words with the universal, jabbing thumbs up salute.

The feeling of dejection that Ralph Knox felt was shared by Charley Loftus and others that were selected to stay behind. Some volunteered to be on standby. They would fill in for any gunner that might be ill or otherwise could not go.

The code name adopted for this operation was *TIDAL WAVE*. The keys to the success of the mission are surprise and speed. Surprise the Germans! Don't let them know your intent until you are in the target area! Speed into the target area! Speedily select the buildings you are to simultaneously strike! Speed in getting out!

The general plan calls for the five groups to assemble in column formation. The battle column is to be led by the 376th, the *Liberandos*. Their lead and deputy lead crews have had longer and more detailed briefings than any of the rest.

The *Liberandos* will be followed in order of flight by the 93rd, the *Traveling Circus*; the 98th, the *Pyramiders*; the 44th, the *Flying Eightballs*; and the 389th, the *Sky Scorpions*. Each of these planes will have a specific building or portion of a building that they must hit. Each of these planes will carry 3,000 pounds of bombs (either six 500-pound or three 1,000-pound). The men in the back of most of these ships will have two boxes of incendiary bombs to throw out the windows on to the refineries below.

The battle formation will leave the African Coast and fly almost due north across the Mediterranean until they reach the island of Corfu. Corfu lies just off the coast of Europe where the borders of Greece and Albania join. Intelligence believes that the German radar defense is weakest at this point.

At Corfu the formation will turn on to a northeasterly course and climb to 15,000 feet. They will pass over the Pindus Mountains in Greece and Albania, The Balkan Mountains in Yugoslavia and at the tip of Bulgaria. They will follow the contour of the declining mountain range with the Danube River flowing through its foothills. Here, they should be about 3,000 foot above the ground. On the other side of the Danube lay the plains of Rumania.

They will still have one and a half hours before they reach their first checkpoint, the little town of Pitesti. At Pitesti they should be at about 1,500 feet.

It is here that the 389th Group will leave the formation and start toward their target at Campina, a few miles north of Ploesti. The main attacking force is to continue on course to the second checkpoint at the town of Targoviste. From there it will be but a short distance to the initial point at Floresti, just twelve miles north of Ploesti. Floresti will



be identified by the ridge of mountains that lay behind it. The mountains will have a sprinkling of oil derricks. The oil derricks will range down to the plain and on to Ploesti. There will be a railroad track running from Floresti to Ploesti. The formation will be continuing to lose altitude.

376  
93

After the three leading groups pass Floresti, all aircraft will make a 90 degree turn to the right and descend to tree top level. This will place them in a frontal formation skimming across the ground. The 98th will be on the left hand side of the railroad. Further to their left will be the 93rd and beyond them, the 376th. The 44th will be on the right hand side of the railroad.

At this point, <sup>18</sup>~~21~~ ships of the 44th, now flying furthest to the right in the formation, will take up a course of 137 degrees and head for their target, code name Blue. It is the Creditul Minier refinery at Brazi. This is five miles south of Ploesti on the road to Bucharest. All other attacking aircraft will be going into the town of Ploesti.

The remaining sixteen 44th ships will continue down the railroad tracks to their target, code name White Five. This is the Colombia Aquila complex. The 98th will go to their target, code name White Four on the other side of the railroad tracks. This is the largest target, the Astro Romana refinery. The 93rd will go in a straight line to code name White Two, Standard Petrol Block, and code name White Three, Unirea Sperantza. Simultaneously the 376th will be dropping their bombs on code name White One, the Romana Americana complex.

After dropping their bombs, all aircraft will make a right turn away from the target areas and retrace their course up over the mountains and down to Corfu. Then across the Mediterranean to their African bases.

Ten ships from the 506th will make the trip to Ploesti. They will join nine ships from the 68th Squadron and one ship from the 67th Squadron to make up one of the two 44th formations. Lt. Shelby L. Irby, from the 66th Squadron, will fill in at the back of our formation as a spare. The attacking formation will be led by Col. Posey. Their target will be the Creditul Minier refinery at Brazi, the Blue target.

The attacking formation will be four flights of five aircraft. Each flight will appear from above as a loose letter M.

Taking off that morning will be A/C #172, Bar N, Lynn Bari II, Piloted by Anderson; A/C #778, T, Southern Comfort, piloted by Austin; A/C #234, Bar U, Mr. Five By Five, piloted by Beam; A/C #235, Bar C, Earthquake McGoon, piloted by Bunker; A/C #606, X, Timb-A-A-Ah, piloted by Larson; A/C #283, Z, Old Crow, piloted by McAtee; A/C #282, Bar Y, Ruth Less, piloted by Slough; A/C 013, D, Trouble, piloted by Stevens; A/C #201, Bar O, Baldy and His Brood, piloted by Strong and A/C #370, V, Heaven Can Wait, piloted by Whitlock.

The following ships from the 88th Squadron will fly with the 506th: A/C #225, T, Flak Alley, flown by Alexander; A/C #813, V, Victory Ship, flown by Diehl; A/C #211, U, Wing and a Prayer, flown by Holmes; A/C #995, C, flown by Houston; A/C #788, D, Avenger, flown by W. D. Hughes; A/C #071, C, Margaret Ann, flown by Jansen; A/C #731, N, Hag Mag, The Mothball Queen, flown by Martin; A/C #699, P, Lemon Drop flown by Phillips; and A/C #373, Z, Natchez Belle flown by Shannon. Finally, A/C #371, Q, G. I. Gal, will be flown by Reinhart of the 67th Squadron.

This formation will be led by Colonel Posey. He will fly with Diehl on Victory Ship. They will be the left hand point of the letter M. On his left wing and forming the left hand leg of the letter M will be Alexander. On his right wing and forming the middle point of the letter M will be Shannon. On Shannon's right wing and flying the right hand point of the letter M will be Holmes. On Holmes right wing and forming the right leg of the letter M will be Houston. In the second flight from left to right will be Hughes, Phillips, Jansen, Bunker and Martin. In the third flight will be Larson, Anderson, Stevens, Strong and Austin. In the fourth flight will be Reinhart, Beam, Whitlock, McAtee and Slough.

Individual targets for the right most eight ships (Diel, Alexander, Phillips, Hughes, Anderson, Larson, Beam and Reinhart) will be in the Dubbs Plant. That target area is 180 foot wide.

Individual targets for the left most four ships (Houston, Martin, Austin, and Slough) will be the Pipe Still facility. Their target area is 180 foot wide.

The middle eight ships (Holmes, Shannon, Bunker, Jansen, Strong, Stevens, McAtee and Whitlock) will be a mixture of the cracking plant at Pipe still and the boiler and power house that services the entire area. The boiler house/power house target is 120 foot wide.

Early in the morning of that last day, many of the personnel, including combat, came down with dysentery. However, the members of the *Old Crow* were not among them.

## WE STRIKE FOR OIL!

For the members of the Old Crow crew, the morning of August 1, 1943, started somewhere between 3:00 and 3:30 A.M. (local time) when the charge of quarters called us. After a breakfast of powdered eggs, bacon, prunes, and oatmeal we went to the briefing room. The briefing was simple and short. Everything had been said that could be said except, "Make certain that you each take your water canteens. There is one big canteen on each ship along with K rations. Good Luck!"

Mark Morris recalls that morning:

The morning of the flight we were given a final early briefing and we walked out to our aircraft, the Old Crow. Bombs were still being prepared. Our crew in the rear section, (right waist gunner, A.G. Kerns; tail gunner, Jack Edwards; and I) wiped the red sand of the desert off our guns, mounted our caliber 50's, and checked the ammunition. To pass time, we assisted the ordnance men by packing small incendiary bombs atop the bombs in the bomb bay and discussed the presence of the huge fuel tanks also mounted in the bomb bays. A.G. and I were given boxes of incendiaries to carry. We were instructed to manually throw these out upon hearing bombardier Joe Young's announcement "bombs away"! Thank God he didn't indicate whether they should be thrown one at a time, and I didn't ask. Our entire crew of officers called us aside and we gathered under the wing of the Old Crow. McAtee and McCash handed A.G. (Kerns) and I each a 1st Lt. bar and briefly explained that if we had a big problem, we could claim that rank. Only I know how much that gesture meant to me at that point in time. Maybe I wouldn't walk out. We linked hands chaining to pull the props through, cleared the cylinders and climbed aboard.

The chaplains made their rounds of the aircraft or gathered small groups together in some convenient spot. They also gathered last minute letters that had not been left in the hands of other personnel.

Gunners silently rechecked their weapons while other crew members made certain that they had everything that was needed to complete their assignment for the day.

All too soon it was time to start the engines and taxi into assigned takeoff positions.

The Old Crow immediately had a problem. Mark Morris recalls:

As we taxied out our nose wheel tire went flat. It was promptly repaired on the spot.

Earnest Cutshall reports that there was also a problem on Mr. Five By Five:

George Rebich, the pilot became ill. Major Beam moved into the pilot seat and Lt. Michaels climbed into the copilot's.

Each ship, as it taxied into take off position, turned its tail slightly down wind so as to avoid the billowing dust.

Mark Morris relates:

As we took off we could see smoke rising from a B-24 that had crashed. It was over where the 98th ships were taking off. Thoughts of sabotage crossed our minds."

John Huber remembers:

We carried full wing tanks plus two 480-gallon bomb bay tanks and six 500-pound general purpose bombs with special delay action fuses. I was never told what delay our bombs had, but it could have been 45 second or it could have been one-hour fuses. The object was to discourage a bomb crew from disarming the bomb. If you attempted to take out the fuse, it would go off.

The first 506th ship lifted off at approximately 4:40 A.M. (local time). The last was in the air and forming up by 5:00 A.M. (local time). It took nearly an hour for all the groups to get into position. We then turned to the north and started across the Mediterranean.

As we flew over water the formation started to loosen up. Late in the morning we saw the first rocky islands of the chain that lies off the coast of Greece. The island of Corfu was still ahead.

Not long after that, an aircraft left one of the formations ahead. It crashed in the water. Another aircraft followed it down and was circling below. Little did we know the importance of this mishap. The crashed ship was the lead ship. The circling ship was the deputy lead. These were the men who had received all the special briefings on the target

and how to get to it. Because of radio silence word was not sent out to the other ships in the formation. (Recent information seems to indicate that the ship that went down at Corfu may not have been the lead ship. Compton, the Group Commander of the *Liberandos*, contends that the lead ship was in place when they started into the mountains, but never came out.) All we knew was that one of our ships had sent a distress signal to Malta. The formation droned on toward Corfu and the range of mountains that loomed off to the right.

We crossed the southern tip of Corfu and turned inland. Soon after the turn a B-24 left the formation well ahead and turned back. It passed below us with two engines feathered on the port side.

John Huber remembers:

The day was clear. We assembled much as usual except that on the trip across the Mediterranean the formation was below 10,000 feet and loose until we came close to the coast. Then it tightened up. One B-24 pulled off from the group ahead and flew parallel for a short time and then exploded leaving not a single trace of the plane.

When the coast line fell behind us, we started the slow climb to 15,000 foot that would allow us to clear the mountains. Well ahead appeared another obstacle that we would have to cross. It appeared to be a solid wall of cumulus clouds. By now the formation was well spread. The two lead groups were far ahead and approaching the bank of clouds. The lead group found a hole and took advantage of it. The second group followed.

On approaching the cloud bank the three trailing groups found there was no way through. The clouds were solid. We banked off and started to look for another way. Now there were only two groups in our formation. We were still following the pink colored aircraft of the *Pyramiders*. The *Sky Scorpions* behind us were lost from sight. All of the months of planning were shattered. A simultaneous strike by five groups could not be accomplished with the attacking force so badly spread over the Balkan Peninsula.

Then another bit of hard luck! Above us appeared a fighter. It was a biplane that had no intent of coming within range of our guns. It quickly left the scene. However, all chance of a surprise was now gone. Because we were committed to radio

silence the rest of the formations could not be alerted.

Then the opening we had been looking for appeared. The formation moved into the opening. The *Pyramiders* down close to the mountain tops and the *Eightballs* about 3,000 feet higher. The 70 ships of the two groups followed the contour of the mountain range upward and then back down. During the descent the *Sky Scorpions* appeared behind and very high. When we reached the muddy Danube River, in the foothills of the mountain range, we circled once while the *Pyramiders'* Group Commander verified that the Group behind him was the *Eightballs*. During the turn we tightened our formations and allowed the *Sky Scorpions* to catch up. We were now at 3,000 feet. One hundred miles away across the plains was Pitesti, our first check point and Ploesti was still 60 miles further on.

Some ships reported that while we were making the circle over the Danube some single engine aircraft were in the vicinity. However, they made no attempt to come close to us.

Things were not going well aboard *Heaven Can Wait*. Donald Chase wrote:

We aborted some 125 miles short of the oil complex, near Craiova, Rumania. Fuel transfer problems and, as proved later, oiling difficulties caused us to shut down number one engine and feather the propeller. We were "tail end Charley", eating everyone's prop wash. We kept lagging farther behind. When number four engine lost power we fell further back. We had no choice. Navigator Robert Ricks, from Richmond, Va., gave Whitlock a course heading to the nearest friendly landing field, Cyprus, some five flying hours distant.

Flying southbound, we recrossed the Danube River at a point where people were wading and swimming. We didn't want to hurt them so we dumped our bombs farther down river. Then we overflowed Bulgaria into the Aegean Sea and skirted west of Turkey. Twenty minutes from the Cyprus coast number four engine quit entirely. We were running out of altitude.

When we reached 500 feet and were still going down, Whitlock turned and asked if I was set up for a distress call. "Yes Sir." I knuckled out repeated SOS morse signals, giving our code and holding the transmitter key down for 15-to-20 seconds so Air/Sea/Rescue could home in

on us. Meanwhile, the crew threw out clothing, radio tuning units, ammunition, and canteens to lighten our load so we could make landfall. The coast loomed and, luckily, we were lined up to land on the east/west runway. No turning; just straight in. I fired red flares to ward off pattern aircraft. It was a good landing.

It was about this time that a lone fighter made a halfhearted pass at Ruth Less, flown by Slough.

The trailing three groups raced toward Pitesti. Unknown to them, the two leading groups had reached this first check point on time. They proceeded toward the second checkpoint where they made a decisive error. Thinking that it was the Initial Point, Floresti, they turned and started their drop to tree top level. This course would take them to Bucharest and near what later proved to be the most heavily defended area around Ploesti. At this point the other three groups were coming into Pitesti.

Now the fully alerted German Air Force was airborne and assembling over Floresti. This was the final briefed American checkpoint and their turning point toward Ploesti.

The Flying Circus <sup>(93)</sup> continued following the Liberandos <sup>376</sup> until they were about half way to Bucharest. At that point, the Flying Circus Commander could see, off to his left, the smoke and haze of the oil refineries at Ploesti. He turned to attack their assigned target. He headed for Ploesti. He was approaching the city from the west. He had been briefed to approach it from the north. Elements of his formation passed on each side of the target that was assigned to the 506th. They did not bomb, but continued on toward their assigned targets.

The trailing three groups were approaching the second check point when over the radio the words, "Wrong turn! Wrong turn", were heard. It was here that the Sky Scorpions <sup>389</sup> were briefed to proceed up a valley on the way to the Red target.

<sup>Continued on</sup> Once again an error was made! Because of clouds on the mountains, their navigators could not see a monastery high on the mountain side. It was the key to which valley the Sky Scorpions would follow. (Note: It was also the key that was probably missing and may have contributed to the leading two groups turning toward Bucharest rather than continuing on to Floresti. The missing key resulted in both forces turning too soon.) Then the Sky Scorpions discovered their mistake,



98 skipped over a ridge and were on their way to the Red target.  
The Pyramiders and Eightballs continued on to the Initial  
Point at Floresti. Jt

The Flying Circus<sup>27</sup> was under heavy ground fire as it passed  
over the outskirts of Ploesti.

The German Air Force, looking at the widely dispersed  
American formations and not knowing what the true target was,  
ordered all aircraft into the air. They also ordered the  
fighters to leave their stations over Floresti and attack the  
Flying Circus in the streets of Ploesti.

As the Liberandos drew near to Bucharest, they realized their  
mistake and General Ent ordered the formation to turn east  
across the railroad tracks and then north, back toward  
Ploesti. They were coming up to the city from the south.  
The briefed approach was from the north.

Now the Flying Circus was under fire as it flew through the  
streets of Ploesti.

General Ent could see the beating that the Circus was taking.  
His aircraft also were subjected to withering ground fire.  
He ordered his formation to look for targets of opportunity.  
In the process his formation eased further east to escape the  
ground fire.

At about that time the Circus bombs rained down on White 4  
and 5, the assigned targets of the Flying Eight Balls and the  
Pyramiders.

These two trailing groups were now on the turn at Floresti.  
Off to the south they could see the city of Ploesti. It  
seemed to be enveloped in a dark cloud bank. Or was it  
smoke? The force under Posey started to ease off to the  
right toward Brazi, their assigned Blue target. The other  
two forces continued south; one on each side of the railroad  
tracks. S/E

By now Liberandos had passed the eastern suburbs of Ploesti  
and turned west on the north side of town. The remnants of  
the Flying Circus were over the eastern suburbs of Ploesti  
and were turning north and west for the briefed return to  
Africa.

There was a railroad freight train proceeding down the tracks  
which the Eightballs and Pyramiders were following toward

Ploesti. Suddenly the boxcar sides fell away. Antiaircraft guns mounted on the flatcars started firing level and point blank at the two formations on either side of the tracks. Aircraft of the 506th were further away from the train and were probably out of range of the lighter guns, but some of the pilots were still apprehensive. All bomb bay doors were now coming open. The cloud bank over Ploesti became clearer. It was smoke and there were flames.

John Huber recalls:

On the run to the target area there was a B-24 lying on its side and an airman was standing on the ground waving us on with his A-2 leather flying jacket. I could have sworn it was Lt. Young, but then it was a blur because of the speed of closure and I could have been wrong.

I opened the bomb bay doors, unlocked the racks, turned on the camera that took pictures of what was happening behind us and turned on the bomb sight. As we approached our power house target, with its 120 foot stack, the plane was at an altitude of 150 feet. I hit the toggle that released bombs as close in trail as 25 feet. We put four out of six bombs right in the power house.

Aboard the *Old Crow* Norm Kiefer had just gone down into the bomb bay. He had to assure that the bomb bay doors did not creep shut and that all the bomb racks released their loads when the bombardier tripped them. These functions had to operate correctly today. A malfunction could slow down our withdrawal from the target area. Speed was the key to survival.

Down there, you couldn't see very much. We were close to the ground. Everything was a blur. I could hear and feel the ships guns firing. Once or twice I thought that I saw a tracer below us.

Dave McCash, up in the nose compartment of the *Old Crow*, could see much more. For the time being his job as navigator was over. McAtee and Laudig, in the pilot compartment, could now see the smoke stacks of our assigned target. Dave remembers:

Near the Initial Point there was a bellied in B-24. On the right was a building that looked like a 10x10 shed. Suddenly its sides collapsed outward as we neared it. Pointing at us was a multi-barrelled gun. It looked

lethal, but did not fire. There was no operator on its seat. Thirty-yards away, running towards the gun was a uniformed soldier. All guns on the right side of our plane, and I suppose our wingman's, opened up and dirt spurted all around him. He hit the ground with a plop that seemed to also raise a dust cloud. Was he hit or just being sensible?

Seconds later, off the left wing, we were looking down into a circular sandbagged revetment with a very large antiaircraft gun in its center. There was no one near the gun, but huddled back against the sandbags was the gun crew making themselves as inconspicuous as possible. I think that we just flew by them without firing. After all, we were the last flight in the formation and they could do us no more harm.

Dale Lee saw:

A German Sgt. had three rows of troops lined up in formation. I just wanted to even the score for them having wiped out so many of my good buddies. In my anger and frustration I aimed my 50-cal. gun and mowed right down their lines. At the time it seemed so justifiable and right.

At some point on this run, Reinhart, from the 67th Squadron, brought "G.I. Gal" over to the left wing position off from McAtee. This position had been vacant since Whitlock in *Heaven Can Wait* aborted.

Back in the waist of the *Old Crow*, Mark Morris remembers:

We were roaring along at a hundred feet or less above the ground. Many people waved. I saw dogs, and I swear even some chickens running. In one picnic group the women even waved aprons. At some point I lifted the box of incendiaries and balanced it precariously on the ledge of the waist window. Suddenly there was a lot of flak and a surprising amount of tracer fire. At one point a group of civilians were in an area between two gun emplacements that were concealed in grain shocks. Suddenly some of them fell as our gunners swung from firing at one gun emplacement to another.

Dale Lee recalls:

Another picture that comes to mind was the old lady that

stood right out in the middle of all this commotion. She was calmly pumping water into a bucket.

In contrast with this sight was the scene near the end of our run. There, in a corn field, were a number of high two-wheeled carts pulled by a team of oxen. Those poor oxen went berserk from all the noise and ran. The excited farmers were in hot pursuit trying to bring them under control.

**John Huber remembers:**

When we descended to the low level bomb run, we saw that the Germans were ready for us. Hidden in some of the corn shocks were 20-mm flexible machine guns. We shot at anything that moved. We also shot at some 88-mm guns that were firing from platforms that required the gun to be aimed below the horizontal. (So much for the intelligence that said they couldn't do it.)

**Steve Bugyle, aboard Timb-A-Ah, reports:**

We brought along a dog named Eightball. When the guns began to fire, Eightball curled up under the pilots seat and stayed there for the rest of the mission."

Ahead in *Earthquake* they were under fire as they approached the distillation plant. Butler relates:

We took some hits in the hydraulic system and the #3 engine. Bunker, the pilot, called for me to feather the propeller on #3. In the excitement I feathered the #4 engine on the same side. About that same time we hit a balloon barrage cable which tightened and then broke. Our wing dropped. Aircraft were rushing past us like we were standing still. I quickly rectified my mistake and Bunker righted the ship.

Neeper in the top turret of *Earthquake* tells how their left wing shot up in the air when both engines quit and they hit the cable.

Someone on *Earthquake* saw a flak gun that was mounted near three buildings which bore the international sign of nonbelligerence, a huge Red Cross.

Allen in the nose of *Lynn Bari II* saw shocks of grain fall apart with guns firing at them. He swung his twin

guns and started to fire back.

Stevens, in Trouble, saw many guns concealed in haystacks, wood patches and growing crops as they plunged toward the target. Just northwest of the target they drew heavy flak from guns in pill boxes. Also, there were light flak guns placed on the top of water towers.

About 3/4 of a mile before the target, Strong, in Baldy and His Brood flew over what looked like a house, but it had a flak gun in it.

About 1/2 a mile from the target, the crew of Mr. Five By Five, flown by Beam saw a B-24 with what they believe was a letter "C" on its tail. It had nosed into the ground, but did not appear to be otherwise damaged.

Lynn Bari II flown by Anderson was sustaining considerable flak and machine gun damage as they approached the target.

To Mark Morris aboard the Old Crow:

It seemed that bombs were already exploding and billowing smoke was visible at numerous spots on the ground. I recall mentally comparing it for a brief second to a fireworks display which I had witnessed as a child at Soldier's Field, in Chicago, one 4th of July.

Far to our left, the two attacking forces that were flying parallel to the railroad tracks were bearing down on their targets at Ploesti. Ahead loomed a wall of flame and smoke coming from exploding bombs, airplanes and oil tanks. Colonel Johnson, could see that his target had already been hit. Suddenly a terrific explosion sucked smoke skyward. There lay a refinery that had not been hit. They had missed the cracking plant. This is the most vital spot that must be destroyed. Before the flames could again close, Johnson and his Eightballs zeroed in on the critical plant. They didn't all make it before the flames returned, but their bombs were on the target. Wildly crisscrossing from the left were ships of the 93rd and the 378th. Only skillful flying avoided further losses as the two converging flights wove their way away from the target.

Back on the Old Crow Mark Morris found:

We were literally bouncing along. It was all I could do to stay upright firing the caliber-50 with my left hand

and balancing the box of incendiaries with my right. I knew I was being very inaccurate. I was just raking the area in the general direction of the incoming fire. At one point we raised up over some stacks and immediately dropped to ground level again.

I was becoming very apprehensive about holding on to those incendiaries. They were at chest level and there was an awful lot of junk coming at me. I recall thinking "Oh God! isn't Joe Young ever going to say bombs away?" I never did hear it, but after what seemed an eternity, I sensed the ship lighten and give a big lurch.

Just before the bombs dropped, McAtee:

Was flying as tightly as possible on the tail of Baldy and His Brood, piloted by Strong. He saw Strong's bombs leave the bomb bay and strike an oil storage tank before skipping into the powerhouse which was protected by a low block wall. As the Old Crow skimmed across the storage tank, the top peeled off like a sardine can. Edwards, the tail gunner, saw the tank explode in flame just after we cleared it.

Hickerson, flying the tail guns in Southern Comfort saw that tank exploding. He also called out the oil tanks that were hit by the incendiaries that were thrown out by Dale Lee.

Dale Lee recalls:

About this time there was a big concussion from a large gun. Purcell was knocked on his butt as he stood at his right waist window. The remaining incendiaries in his box spilled all over the floor. We both made a mad scramble to pick them up and toss them out in a hurry.

Down in the bomb bay, of Old Crow Norm Kiefer:

Was holding on for dear life and wondering if those bombs would ever go out. When they did, I quickly closed the doors and scrambled on to the flight deck. It seemed a much safer place to be. I plugged in my headset and heard Joe Young say, "It looks like a rat race! Let's get the hell out of here!". Just then I saw ahead and off to the left a B-24 pull straight up into the sky. It hung there a moment and two chutes came out. Then it nosed over and plunged earthward. As we passed it telescoped into the ground. All that was left was flame and smoke. (Will

Lundy's records show that this was Lt. G. W. Winger of the 66th Squadron.)

Almost everyone in the formation saw this ship crash. Mark Morris remembers:

Another vivid memory was of a ship at our 9 o'clock position climbing vertically. It hung for a second as it stalled. Then the tail skidded down. Just at the apex of the climb I saw at least 2 parachutes appear from the bottom hatch. The ship was at an altitude no greater than 800-to-1,000 feet at the most. I was mindful that the pilot or copilot had certainly given the rest of the crew the chance to survive at great sacrifice. There is no way they could bail out of the bottom hatch unless they were pre-positioned and ready when the climb was initiated. I doubted if the chutes got fully open, but I was too busy watching the fighters and we were moving too fast to witness their fate" (Will Lundy's records show that waist gunners Cicon and Traudt survived. Both men landed relatively unhurt. One crawled into a haystack and fell asleep.)

Dale Lee, on Southern Comfort states:

I saw two parachutists slump in their harnesses when they were struck by gun fire. I also saw B-24's flying on a quartering course to our line of flight.

Back in the waist of the Old Crow, Mark Morris:

Saw that our left wing man was in real trouble. He had been snuggled up very close. His aircraft suddenly rolled to almost 45 degrees and I was sure that the then vertical wing tip was digging into the ground. It veered behind us and disappeared. I subconsciously noted the large identification letter on the vertical stabilizer, which I think was "Q". The roll was so sudden that my thought at the time was that he may have gotten caught in our prop wash. I took a quick look over my shoulder and saw that A.G. (Kerns) was rid of his box. I just released my grip on mine. I had already edged it as far out the window as I dared. (Note: Reinhart flying in "Q" lost part of a wing to cannon fire. Immediately after the target the fighters picked him up. Although badly damaged, Reinhart tried to gain altitude. He managed to reach 3,500 foot. Eighty miles from the target the crew jumped. Only the copilot did not survive.)

Just then another battery of flak guns came into view. "Oh Boy", I thought, "a chance to get even." I saw the gunners huddled and cut loose again with both hands on the 50. I raked the position as we raced over and started to turn out of the target area.

It was about this time that the IFF (Identification, Friend or Foe) radio equipment blew up on the *Old Crow*.

In the target area, waist gunner Lonny Ackerman, on *Baldy and His Brood*, saw a railroad train. He aimed for the locomotive and blew it up.

Aboard *Mr. Five By Five*, right waist gunner, Earnest Cutshall blew up an oil storage tank near the cooling tower in the northeast corner of the plant. Earnest remembers:

My bullets were hitting the tank about half way down the tank. Gasoline was pouring out in a number of places. Suddenly they were on fire. Then the top half of the tank went straight up in the air to an extreme height. Burning gasoline was spread in all directions.

Back on *Old Crow*, McAtee could see the fighters ahead as he made a flat skidding turn out of the target area. In that first fighter attack Houston was hit and fell out of formation on fire.

Aboard *Mr. Five By Five* the crew observed a B-24 with its #1 engine burning. It seemed to just barely clear some trees and then was lost from sight. (Note: This was probably Houston of the 68th Squadron. There were no survivors.)

In the waist of the *Old Crow*, Mark Morris:

Saw the first of the Fw-190 fighters. One attacking fighter just dove into the ground. At some point we flew over a B-24 that rested at the end of a long furrow on the ground. I think it had a "W" on the tail. I was surprised to see crew members standing on the wing and waving."

The crew of *Mr. Five By Five* also saw the B-24 with the tail identification of "W" that belly landed and the crew were standing around the plane. (Note: There was no ship from the 44th that carried the call letter "W" that day.)

Steve Bugyie also remembers seeing that ship. He screamed



into the slip stream, "DESTROY THAT SHIP! DESTROY THAT SHIP!

The top turret gunner on the *Old Crow*, Mike Davis, started to shout:

"Mac go back and land! Mr. Five By Five belly landed back there." Jack Edwards, the tail gunner chimed in with, "Yea, go back! They are on the wing. We can land and get them."

McAtee considered it for a moment and then told them to, "Shut up!". Ahead he saw more fighters.

Slough, flying in *Ruth Less*, was the last 506th ship off from the target. He reported that there were many explosions. Smoke and growing fires were rising from the target area. Once he completed his flat turn, he really turned on the gas. He went by other aircraft like they were standing still. (Years later Jansen asked him how he did it. Slough indicated that he was drawing 53 inches of manifold pressure.

In the waist of the *Old Crow*, Mark Morris noted:

A couple of fighters were eyeing us and I them. At one point two of them were parallel to us a thousand yards or more out. They seemed confused and flew erratically. I awaited their turn in. When they did turn, they slid rapidly to the rear. I let off a few bursts just to let it be known that we were aware. Then Edwards' tail guns became very busy. I also realized that Mike Davis in the top turret was firing at something overhead.

Up in the front of the *Old Crow*, McAtee saw Davis in the top turret shooting at a fighter which no one could identify. McAtee believes that Mike shot that aircraft down. We later guessed it must have been a Bulgarian or Rumanian aircraft. In the tail, Edwards shot down an Me-109 that attacked from 12 o'clock high. Edwards got him as he flattened out his dive and tried to turn away.

Mr. Five By Five, which had not been shot down, was also under fire. Fighters made six passes at the ship. On one pass, an Me-110 attacking from 6 o'clock, was caught in the cross fire of the tail and top turrets. It is believed that Williams in the top turret was the one that sent the ship into the ground.

The gunners on *Ruth Less* were also getting a workout. The

enemy aircraft seemed to be working in pairs. Caillier, at the left waist gun, nailed a Me-109. The crash of this ship was observed by Harbison and Siegfelt. Harbison, in the top turret, caught another Me-109 as it passed over and set it afire. The crash was observed by Grimes and Griffin.

The fighters were swarming around the *Lynn Bari II* because of the flak damage which the ship had sustained. McMennamin, on the tail guns, saw a Me-109 coming in at 7 o'clock above. He fired his guns and the enemy aircraft went down on the opposite side. Hearne saw it crash. A Me-109 was making a partial circle over the ship in a clockwise direction when Goodson, in the top turret, fired at it. He started to fire when the enemy aircraft was at about 7 o'clock. The fighter continued on its circular course and crashed at about 2 o'clock. In the nose of the ship, bombardier Scott picked up a Me-109 coming in at 1 o'clock. It turned and swept the length of our aircraft. Scott fired as it passed. The crippled fighter crashed in the rear.

Aboard *Timb-A-A-Ab*, the pilot Larson was getting his first look at enemy fighters. He had never flown combat before. He had never even flown low level before. He was told to follow the plane ahead. His top turret gunner, Klingler destroyed a Me-109 as it approached from 7 o'clock. It was seen to crash at 5 o'clock. Also, Steve Bugyie, flying on the tail guns, caught a Me-110 coming in from 6 o'clock. The crash of this enemy fighter was confirmed by the waist gunner on *Baldy and His Brood* 7

On *Southern Comfort* Hickerson shot at three attacking Me-109's. Dale Lee saw two fighters crash. He recalls:

During the flight our right wing was very low to the ground. The pilots had the control wheel against the stops and the wing just stayed down. We must have been caught in another aircraft's slip stream. Fabiny reached over and got just a little bit more power out of the #4 engine. The wing quivered and came up ever so slowly.

In spite of all the fighters that were swarming around the retreating aircraft, there was only one 506th ship that did not come under attack. Strong's crew did not get off one round at enemy fighters from their newly installed twin 50-caliber nose and waist guns.

Aboard the *Old Crow* Mark Morris was worried:

At the low altitude and resultant higher temperatures, guns overheated very quickly. I hoped the barrels would hold out. I got a pretty decent burst then at a single fighter which I thought was a Reg. 2000.

The sky was full of debris. Aircraft, including other B-24's, were going in many different directions. At one point I saw another B-24 approaching at 90 degrees and could see little puffs of smoke spurting from its gun positions. At times I couldn't tell who was firing at what and was concerned about spraying another B-24. The fighters were on our backs about 10 minutes, but it seemed like hours. Well that was a busy time. In all, I saw six B-24's that were on the ground.

After the fighter attacks broke off, the flight out seemed very quiet.

John Huber recalls:

After we passed over the target, the plane dropped down to where we were climbing slightly to clear farm fences. Our top and tail turrets did the job of keeping the fighters off our top side and the waist gunners were equally busy and equally successful in protecting us from the fighters. Once we got out of the area I do not recall anything special.

Steve Bugyie remembers that a few months later:

After being shot down at Wiener Neustadt on October 1, 1943, I was being transported by train from Vienna to Stalag Luft. I had two infantry guards. I had not let them know that I understood and could speak German. The train was crowded. A German Captain came into the compartment that we were occupying and took a seat. The Captain had been in command of one of the gun emplacements at Ploesti on August 1st. The Captain was telling the guards about the battle. The thing that he stressed the most was the noise. Noise of fighters and bombers. Noise of guns firing and bombs exploding. Noise of oil burning and tanks blowing up. I had some private wishes that the Captain had been closer to some of those explosions.

The withdrawing aircraft were now winging over the plains that they had crossed just a few hours before. This time they were in greater disarray than when they had gone in. There were fewer of them. Some of them now carried obvious

battle damage and could not maintain full power. Here and there aircraft that were damaged tried to keep together. In other cases, aircraft that were capable of flying cut back their power so as not to leave a comrade alone. The crew of Baldy and His Brood saw one of the damaged ships wave and head for Turkey.

The Old Crow picked up some wing mates while flying back to the Danube River. Mark Morris recalls:

I realized that we had been steadily gaining altitude and as we approached the mountains of Greece we saw some flak come up. Not really close enough to be of any great concern, but we sure didn't need that. Navigator McCash informed McAtee of the best course home. Mike Davis, flight engineer, apparently now out of the top turret, reported fuel conditions and transfer settings. We were still climbing. My adrenaline had subsided and I began to realize that although dressed fit to kill, I was very, very cold. My teeth were chattering. Great planning. My disdained heavy clothing was still on the ground at Libya.

Descending then over the coast we had a serene ride across the Mediterranean. We began assessing damage. Everyone was all right and everything seemed to be in working order. Occasional queries concerning the possible fate of our wing mates prompted bursts of chatter.

A few days before the mission I had purchased a wrist watch in Benghazi. Somewhere, yet a few hours out over the Mediterranean, I looked at the time. The hands on my new watch were stopped at 02:10. I reasoned that must show the exact time that I had dropped the incendiaries and went to work seriously with the caliber-50. That action had blown the main spring, but it was worth it! I turned to A.G. Kerns, pointing to my watch and yelled in his ear to explain. After second thoughts I removed it, caught A.G.'s attention again by feigning a toss. He nodded and I just tossed it into the sea, a gesture of elation at survival and freedom from care at the moment. Damn thing couldn't have been fixed in Africa.

All kept a searching eye on the calm water a couple of thousand feet below for less fortunate ships that may have made it that far at least. None were sighted. As we neared home base at Benina, Norm Kiefer, our radio operator, reported that the I.F.F. apparently wasn't working. At that point I added yet another small prayer.

"Please put us down safely"!"

The crew of *Baldy and His Brood* did observe what looked like a parachute on the water and a large oil patch.

Larson put *Timb-A-A-Ah* down on the dusty strip at Benghazi. When he climbed out of the ship he turned to some of the experienced members of the crew and asked, "Are they all like this?" Regardless of what the future held, his first mission had been rough!

John Huber recalls:

Our pilot, Stevens, hardly ever spoke a word on the flight. He flew the whole mission without much help. I felt sorry for R. A. Harris, the copilot. Everybody had something to do or a gun to shoot, except for Harris. That was no Fox Movietone news feature he was watching! Maybe he saw us hit the tree sapling that we brought back in our #4 engine cowling. He left the crew after we got back to base.

Dale Lee remembers:

After our return to base, the first thing that three different crew members (Fabiny, Jett and myself) did was to go out and examine that wing that had come so close to the ground. We had not previously voiced our anxiety. However, we now just stood and looked at each other and then the wing to see if the paint was rubbed off.

Colonel Johnson met us at the Interrogation Shack. He shook my hand and said, "One of these is enough in anyone's life time."

As the 506th ships straggled in the author once again thought how lucky the Squadron had been. We had put up ten ships. Only one had not made it back to Benghazi. Operations reported that the missing ship had successfully landed at Cyprus. Norm silently expressed his thanks for that luck.

Many years later, Norm Kiefer's sister, Theresa, told how her mother, during the night of July 31, roused the family from bed. She told them to get their rosaries because Norman needs help. The August 1st evening radio news broadcast told of the Liberators going to Ploesti.

The Group had not been so fortunate. Seven of our ships were

*Book*  
down in the target area. Two ditched on the way back. One crew was not rescued. Three of our ships were in Malta. Two were interned in Turkey. Only 22 had returned to Benina. Of those 22, nine were from the 506th. One squadron had two planes return to Benghazi out of the nine they had sent.

In the attacking force of five groups, the losses were just as bad. In the morning 179 aircraft taxied out for takeoff. That night there were only 88 ships that returned. Eight ships were interned in Turkey. Twenty-three ships were at bases in Cyprus, Malta and Sicily. Of the ships that landed at friendly bases, 53 had battle damage. In some cases, the damage was so great that the ships were scrapped. In all, the groups lost 53 aircraft.

Among the personnel, the losses were proportional. In the morning 1,620 men climbed into aircraft. The official report shows that by nightfall, 446 men were dead and 54 were known to be wounded. This does not include the wounded in prisoner of war camps. Another 79 of our airmen were interned in Turkey. Some men that returned would never fly combat again because of combat fatigue. A small portion had now completed their combat tour and would be rotated. The five groups were no longer a fighting force. The Ninth Air Force days were numbered.

Was it worth it? The 506th could answer yes. All of their ships and crews were accounted for. They had destroyed their target. In fact, unlike the White targets, the refineries at Brazi never were repaired or rebuilt. The source of high grade oil that maintained the German fighting force on the Russian front was gone. The following newspaper article relates how the Russians did start to move into the Balkans:

#### NAZIS MAP DNIEPER RETREAT; PLOESTI RAID HELPED DEFEATS

The Russian drive to smash the German supply lines in the Donetz Basin gained speed yesterday, as the German war machine, handicapped by the destruction of their Ploesti oil supply in the American Liberator long-range bombing attack, was reported mapping a retreat to the Dnieper River.

Newspaper accounts of this raid were numerous. The *Flint Journal* printed:

#### NAZI-RULED OIL FIELDS

IN RUMANIA HARD HIT  
BY AMERICAN BOMBERS

175 Liberators Fly 2,400-Mile Round  
Trip in "Biggest Low Level  
Mass Raid in History"

An armada of 175 Liberator bombers of the United States Ninth Air Force flew a 2,400-mile round trip Sunday to dump 300 tons of explosives in a low-level attack on the Ploesti oil field in Rumania, one of the chief sources of the Axis fuel supply.

Announcement of the raid, described as the "biggest low-level mass raid in history," was made by Maj. Gen Lewis H. Brereton, Commander of the Ninth Air Force.

Fliers' reports indicated serious damage to the Astro Romani refineries where large fires were seen. The Astro Romani is the largest group of refineries in Europe.

Rumania's newest refinery, the Creditul Minier, which is the source of 100-octane aviation fuel, was well covered with hits returning pilots said. ✓

A communique issued by the Middle East Air Command today said "20 of the Liberators have been shot down over the target area and a number have not returned to base.

At least 51 enemy planes including Messerschmitt 109's and 110's and Focke-Wulf 190's were claimed destroyed, the bulletin added. It described enemy opposition over the target area and on the return journey as heavy.

(The German High Command in its Monday communique asserted 36 four-engine bombers were shot down. It said 125 planes participated, but that only 60 to 70 were able to make "a coherent attack" on the oil district).

The big bombers using special sights swept in at smoke stack height to drop their cargoes on seven huge refineries and other installations, with the result the oil field was reported left a mass of fire.

Brig. Gen. Victor H. Strahm, Chief of staff to Gen Brereton, praised the 2,000 specially trained airmen who took part in the attack and predicted the raid would "materially affect the course of the war."

The Germans had spent considerable time in an attempt to camouflage the field and antiaircraft positions were hidden in bushes, tree tops and haystacks the pilots said.

Another newspaper account stated:

#### KING HAILS PLOESTI RAID

The White House released a message which King George of Great Britain sent to President Roosevelt on the Ninth U.S. Air Force's raid on the Rumanian oil fields at Ploesti.

King George wrote, "I have learned with the deepest admiration of the memorable and inspiring achievement of the Ninth U.S. Air Force in attacks upon Rumanian oil refineries. Bombing this heavily defended center of Axis production after one of the longest operational flights of the war called for endurance and courage of the highest order, as well as for practical skill of navigation and brilliant organization on the part of those who planned the attack. The gallantry with which the crews pressed home their attacks at very low level is beyond praise, and their devotion to duty despite heavy losses has stirred the hearts of all who fight with us in the cause of freedom.

General H. H. Arnold wrote:

#### TO OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 201st COMBAT WING OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE:

I have listened with greatest interest to the stirring accounts brought back to me of the details of the attack on the Rumanian oil refineries by heavy bombers of the Eighth and Ninth U.S. Air Forces. The destruction of these oil wells will be far reaching in its effect upon the German ability to carry on their operations. In fact, it might well be the "straw that broke the camel's back" and cause the dislocation of the German war effort. The dogged determination to reach and destroy each of those vital installations, and an utter disregard for personal safety, characterized the action of officers and men of your striking force and evokes my profound admiration.

The heroic accomplishments of the combat crews, and the splendid efforts of the members of the ground echelons who made the mission possible, are all deserving of the



highest praise.

You were assigned the tremendous task of destroying in one day a target that could have been reached by surface forces only after many months of combat involving great losses both of men and material; and you carried your attack home in spite of the strongest kind of opposition built up by the Axis forces. Some of your comrades fell in the attack--others are now held as prisoners of war. Those of you who returned to fight again must realize, as I do, that those who gave their lives did so that others might live. The officers and men of the U.S. Army Air Forces all over the world take pride in your achievement.

The 44th Bomb Group received its second Unit Citation for their actions at Ploesti.

Every man that went to Ploesti received a decoration for that day. In the 506th two Distinguished Service Crosses, two Silver Stars and 77 Distinguished Flying Crosses were awarded.

A few months later the following newspaper article was published:

#### TWO RAID LEADERS WIN HIGHEST HONOR

Award of the Congressional Medal of Honor to Colonels John Rodger ("Killer") Kane and Leon William Johnson for "conspicuous gallantry in action and intrepidity at the risk of their lives" was announced by Maj. Gen Lewis H. Brereton.

The awards, which are the nation's highest, were for leadership in the mass low-level attack by Liberators of the Ninth Air Force on Nazi-operated oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania. This is believed to be the first time two congressional medals have been given for a single aerial action.

Brig. Gen Uzal Girard Ent, commanding the Ninth Bomber Command, was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal, second highest decoration.

Decoration ceremonies for all three will be held later.

The citations for Colonel's Johnson and Kane related that their elements had become separated from the leading

portion because of bad weather. When their groups reached the target they found that other elements had mistakenly attacked their area.

Despite intensive antiaircraft fire, enemy fighter planes and the great danger of exploding delayed action bombs from the previous element, the two leaders each decided to go in for the target. Both succeeded in doing heavy damage to the important refinery because of their courage, and flying ability, the citation relates.

The citation for Gen. Ent details his outstanding work in planning and executing attacks on enemy targets, "as best exemplified by the successful raid on Rome on July 19, 1943, and the devastating attack against the oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania on August 1, 1943.

At a later date, announcement was made of the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumously, to three other Ploesti raiders.

General Brereton, upon his retirement wrote his memoirs. He dedicated this work to the Ploesti Raiders because he did not believe that he ever asked his men to accomplish a more difficult mission.

General Huston stated that Alfred Speer, who headed up the German war production effort, was reported to have said after the war that the August 1st attack destroyed one quarter of the German oil supply. He also said that although they didn't realize it at the time, this day was the beginning of the end. There was now no place in Germany or it's allied countries that was safe from American bombers.

Dale Lee was told by General Doolittle that his raid on Tokyo was nothing compared to the Ploesti raid.

The leadership of then Colonel Johnson is clearly displayed by the story that was told many years later when a number of Ploesti raiders were gathered together. The story relates to a meeting that occurred not long after the 44th had been badly hurt on its first Distinguished Unit Citation raid on Kiel on May 14, 1943. In the meeting were a number of pilots and Col. Johnson. The subject of discussion was a new low-level bomb sight. This was the first hint that a low-level raid was under consideration. Murmurs and apprehensive comments filled the room. Col. Johnson rose and indicated that "If the Air Force asks us to make a low level

raid, Gentlemen, we will go. You will not go alone. I will be in the lead aircraft." The room quieted and Col. Johnson sat down. The rest of the story is written in history.

Aug 1943

## WE LICK OUR WOUNDS

Back in England Ray Marner wrote on August 2nd:

The Rumanian oil fields were raided by Libs. Our planes were among them. They were practicing low-level bombing here some time ago for this operation.

Then on August 4th he wrote:

I found out today that we lost two planes in the oil fields raid. I don't know which ones though.

Edward R. Wilson and his crew must have looked on these days of August with feelings of triumph. After joining the 506th in mid-June, they found that there were not enough aircraft to go around. They were left behind when the Group left for Africa. Wilson made a pest of himself until he got a ship and permission to rejoin the Group. He arrived in Benghazi around the 5th of August.

Most of the 506th aircraft suffered some damage on the Ploesti raid. The Old Crow was once again extremely lucky. There were only a couple of holes. The fortunes of war had taken a wing man and a ship slightly ahead and to the right. Other ships around Old Crow had received greater damage. It didn't take long to repair any of the 506th ships that were in Africa. Other ships in the Group took a good deal longer.

While the repair work was being carried out, some Group ships returned from the emergency landing fields they had used on the way home. In some cases only the crews returned.

On Cyprus, Don Chase reported:

Our fuel transfer and oil problems were remedied by engineer Holtz and RAF personnel in two days. But then pilot Whitlock came down with an intestinal disorder and we couldn't leave.

British infantrymen befriended we five sergeants and provided lorry transportation to their mountain rest camp. There we met scores of Gurkha soldiers. Born in the foothills of the Himalayas and fighting for the Crown, they, with their sword-like KuKri knives--preferring them to guns--had created panic among German Afrika Korpsmen, beheading rather than shooting, as they stealthily

penetrated the Axis battle lines. They were barrel chested, short, somber and visually impressive as combatants.

Each morning the Gurkhas would serve us tea before we got out of our cots. Naturally, as they served, we thanked them for the extra service. After two or three mornings they returned our signs of respect with tight smiles and, retreating, bowed to us. We were glad they were fighting with the Allies.

Whitlock regained his strength and our week long hiatus ended as we flew over the British encampment at low altitude and rocked our wings in salute to our kind hosts who had been at war for nearly four years. Just before we left Cyprus the U.K. troops presented us with a ceremonial Kukri. Somehow I became custodian of the curved ten-inch blade set in a beautifully wooden engraved, silver banded handle.

We landed at Devasoir Air Base in Egypt. For two days we toured Cairo, checking back at our hotel late in the morning and again in the afternoon awaiting word from Group HQ as to our disposition. Orders received, we boarded a C-47 and flew back to our Libyan base, never to see our ship, *Heaven Can Wait*, again.

One day Mike Davis, of the *Old Crow* crew, went to Benghazi to spend the afternoon. When he returned he was more than slightly inebriated. He staggered through the tent entrance with a long roll under his arm. He had purchased a large grass-woven mat. He informed us that he was sick and tired of the desert sand floor of our tent. From now on, when he got up in the morning, his bare feet would land on the mat, not the sand. He proceeded to spread the mat out. It was about six feet long and about four feet wide. He slipped one edge of the six feet side under the cot legs and rolled the remainder out. He then sat on the cot, took off his shoes and gloried in the feel of the mat, which he had and we did not.

The mat was not the only purchase that Mike had made in town. He also brought two bottles of wine back with him. He opened one bottle and proceeded to see to it that he would have a good hangover in the morning.

At one point in the evening Mike let out a scream and jumped up. He ran away from his bed saying that a snake had just

gone across his foot. While babbling, he grabbed a machete and started looking for the snake. He held his arms out to show us how long it was.

Someone ventured the thought that the snake was a figment of Mike's drunken imagination. We tried to calm him and get him to lie down and go to sleep. Mike would have no part of that. He moved his cot outside, then his clothes and lastly his grass mat. All the while he held the machete, ready to swing. There was no snake! We helped him reassemble his gear and got him into bed. After a while he fell into a drunken slumber.

In the morning, A.G. Kerns got up and looked with envy at Mike who was still snoring. That grass mat did look pretty good. A.G. reached under his bed for his helmet so that he could go outside to wash his face. His helmet seemed very heavy. Then he looked and curled up in the helmet was a snake. The two of them parted company very quickly. A.G. said that as it went slithering under the tent wall that it was about three feet long. That is just about what Mike had said the night before!

On August 11th the rumors and guessing regarding Ploesti were put to rest for the ground personnel that remained behind in England. Ray Warner wrote:

General Hodges was here with some Colonel who told about the boys in Africa. They completed 10 raids in 17 days and also the Rumanian oil fields raid. The 44th had two targets. They completely demolished one and 80% of the other. Our planes were outstanding in the raid. They went 1,100 miles and bombed from 50 feet. After they left here they went to Africa and 48 hours later they were on their first raid. The planes are supposed to return very soon. He didn't say what we lost. The raid on the oil fields is the most important mission ever performed in the war.

After the Ploesti raid we spent a lot of time on the ground. There were no local practice missions. All the efforts were concentrated in getting the aircraft back into flying condition. The ground crews did all of the work. However, they did not seem to be in a big hurry to remove the bomb bay gasoline tanks from the ships.

We found out why on the morning of August 13th when Mike was told to put his feet on the grass mat at 3:00 A.M. There was

a mission and it was to be a long one. The bomb bay gas tanks had been filled. We were going to Wiener Neustadt in Austria. That is close to Vienna. The target was the Air Frame Works.

Taking off that morning were A/C #282, Y, Ruth Less, flown by Austin (The remainder of the crew ordinarily flew with Slough.); A/C #283, Z, Old Crow, flown by McAtee; A/C #013, Bar D, Trouble, flown by Larson; A/C #606, X, Timba-A-Ah, flown by Bunce; A/C #201, Bar O, Baldy and His Brood, flown by Strong; A/C 778, Bar B, flown by Stevens; and A/C #172, Bar N, Lynn Bari II, flown by Anderson.

Along the way, our seven ships joined with 19 other 44th ships on a longer trip than was the Ploesti raid. Norm Kiefer:

Believes that our course was across the Mediterranean and the southern boot of Italy; up the Adriatic and into northern Yugoslavia, thence into Austria. I think that it was this mission that a Tito underground unit was to take control of an airfield at Trieste (a seaport between Italy and Yugoslavia) and hold it long enough for any aircraft in trouble to land.

The abortion rate for the Group was high, but all of the 506th ships made it to the target. In the target area there was some cloud cover. Antiaircraft fire was slight from heavy guns, but inaccurate.

Aboard Ruth Less, the crew observed seven Me-109's in the target area. There was one pass made by a single enemy aircraft with no claims and no damage to the ship. The crew observed their bombs hit the first of three large buildings. The second building was on fire.

The Lynn Bari II, flown by Anderson, came under numerous attacks while in the target area. However, they made no claims and there was no damage. They also saw fighters while over Italy on the way back.

Fighters in the target area and over Italy were observed by the Stevens, Bunce, Larson and Strong crews. However, none of them came under attack.

Aboard the Old Crow there were problems. The #3 and #4 engines were not acting properly and we were experiencing difficulty in keeping up with the formation. The enemy

fighters picked this aircraft for special attention. About five Me-109's made 12-to-15 attacks, coming in from the nose, tail and sides.

One enemy aircraft came in from 7 O'clock. The tail turret gunner, Jack Edwards, fired and saw tracers enter the fighter which went down smoking. The top turret gunner, Mike Davis, observed this aircraft disappear in the clouds in flames.

The author remembers:

I had just come up from the bomb bay when the fighters started to come in. I was standing between the two pieces of armor plating that protects the backs of the pilot and copilot. The fighters were approaching us from different directions. Suddenly, there was a noise right behind my head. I turned to see a part of the top of the ship had disappeared just aft of the top turret. Since he was still firing, Davis seemed to be all right. I turned back to the front and McAtee was looking at me. I winked and he returned to the more important job of keeping up with the formation.

This task was accomplished only at the expense of high gas and oil consumption. While we were over Italy the decision was made that we would not be able to make it back to Africa. McCash plotted a course to Palermo in Sicily. In the briefing that morning we had been told that they believed that this airfield was under Allied control. We were about to find out. We left the formation and set a new course.

The rest of the 506th ships proceeded to Tunis as briefed in the morning.

Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

The Me-109 plant at Wiener Neustadt, Austria, was the target. Attacking Me-109 G's came in very close. Our ~~was~~ radio out and two engines were smoking so we landed at Palermo, Sicily. Engine #3 quit on touchdown. We were out of gas. It was a very short runway. The approach was surrounded by mountains. I was called to stand behind "Mac", and call out the airspeed for landing. Mike Davis was trying to get the last drop of gas and Norm Kiefer was working on radio which had been hit by gun fire. Good job landing.



Dave McCash recalls:

The first time that we went into Palermo we weren't certain that our side was in control of the field.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

When we stopped rolling we were almost in the yard of a church which sat at the very end of a runway. This was a fighter field that was never intended to accept large bombers.

The size of the aircraft attracted a lot of attention. There was an army tank unit occupying the field. The tank men flocked around the ship that evening. They wanted to know how much the craft weighed. They compared its weight with that of a tank and marveled at how it could get off the ground.

One of the tank men turned out to be my former barracks-mate at Scott Field Radio School. Somehow, he had been transferred from the Air Force into the Army Tank Corps.

This tank unit was a part of Patton's army. We were dressed in light sun tan uniforms. They were wearing the heavy winter uniform that we wore up in England. They told me that Patton insisted that this was the uniform of the day, even when they were in Africa. His only concession was that they did not have to wear a tie.

My former barracks-mate was working the base radio. He gave me the frequency and call name that they were using. He didn't know how long they would be there, but didn't think a change would be made when they left. The information was of no use to us since our radio was out and there were no spares or repair facilities on the field.

Neither was there any repair facilities for the *Old Crow's* engines. We were able to get some aircraft gasoline and a new supply of oil. We would have to fly it back as it was. While looking the ship over, it was determined that the shell that hit the top of the craft had also punctured the life raft that was stored there.

The local military personnel seemed to want us to get out of there as quickly as possible. They believed our ship

was an attractive target for the German Air Force.

I believe that the enlisted men slept that night in the *Old Crow*.

**Dave McCash remembers:**

There was an outside mess line and some of us slept that night in the airport control building on stretchers laid out in the lobby.

In the morning McAtee went to check the weather and file a flight report. He discovered that there was another B-24 down in Sicily. Lt. Lehnhausen had crashed landed A/C #211 somewhere on the island. No one could tell him where, but the report indicated that the crew was all right. It was decided not to wait for them.

He also found another bit of news. A small group of Army Nurses (I believe that it was three) wanted to get from Sicily back to Africa. We were their most immediate prospect of making the trip. McAtee agreed.

**Mark Morris wrote:**

Aug. 14--When we left Palermo, McAtee placed the tail of the ship almost in the church yard. All personnel were up on the flight deck. We headed down hill and down wind. Mountains were on both sides and Palermo Bay could be seen through the pass ahead of us. McAtee rode the brakes and revved up the engines in order to achieve maximum take off speed. The tail went up in the air and nose down. McCash's chute went out the nose wheel door as the ship vibrated on take off.

**Norm Kiefer remembers one other thing about that flight back to Benina Main:**

While we were over water, one of the nurses felt the call of nature and asked one of the men in the waist where the rest room was. This caused quite a chuckle and the nurse was aghast when the relief tube was pointed out to her. She felt somewhat better when told that there was another one up in the nose of the ship. This area would be more private when the two men up there moved back to the waist.

We were happy to learn upon our return that the Group had only lost one aircraft. McAtee told them that Lehnhausen had

crashed landed in Sicily, but the crew was safe. Thus we had not lost any crews. The luck of the 506th was still holding. We had now been on 22 raids and only lost two crews.

McAtee reported to intelligence that the landing field at Palermo is west of the city. It has a north/south runway that is 3,000 feet long. In the future, it will be expanded to 4,000 feet. Aircraft landing there should approach from the north because of an obstruction at the south end. It is a good dirt strip. He also gave them the frequency and call that we had received from the tank men.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

#### YANKEES BOMB AUSTRIAN PLANE PLANT

#### HEAVY RAID HITS 30 MILES FROM VIENNA

#### Big Force of U.S. Liberators Assaults Wiener Neustadt

American Liberator bombers, striking deep into Hitler's hitherto almost unreachable Southeastern European war industries, Friday, attacked Wiener Neustadt, 30 miles south of Vienna in former Austria, a Middle East communique disclosed today.

It was the first time since September, 1942, when Russian planes bombed Vienna, that Allied bombs had fallen on Austria.

An important aircraft production factory and assembly plant was the target for more than a third of a million pounds of high explosives, said a United States headquarters bulletin, and "scores of bursts were seen among some 400 fighter aircraft" on the ground.

The bulletin said direct hits were scored upon factory buildings and large columns of smoke were seen rising throughout the target area.

The raiding force was officially described as large and the enemy defenses as weak.

The announcement from Cairo did not reveal the base from which the heavy assault was made, but the long-range planes could have dealt the blows from Cap Bon, 800 miles from Wiener Neustadt, or from airfields of Cirenaica, 1,100 miles away.

A Swiss radio report said Friday that an American four-engine bomber had landed in Swiss territory and the crew members had been interned after they set fire to their plane. The radio report did not indicate, however, whether the plane was a straggler from the Austrian raid.

Another account was as follows:

#### STRATEGIC AIR FORCE

And now in flaming letters is written the name Wiener Neustadt across a darkening Nazi sky. Wiener Neustadt, near Vienna, is in the center of Hitler's European fortress. He had imagined that the aircraft factories there were beyond the range of Allied bombers, which had played hell with his plants to the north.

But the amazing Liberators of the Ninth U.S. Air Force gave the unsuspecting Nazi a smack in the rear and proved once more that the so-called European fortress is just a maze of overripe targets.

Though first honors naturally go to the pilots and crews of the Libs, every soldier in this area who wears the Air Corps patch on his sleeve can claim a share in the Ninth's recent exploits. All the way up the ladder, from grease monkey to commanding general, morale is perked up by realization that the Ninth is doing more than flying tactical missions. It is operating as a strategic air force and getting results that have an important bearing on the whole course of the war.

This was proved last spring at Cape Bon, when the famous 57th brought a drastic change in German plans for evacuating Tunisia; again in the raid last month on Rome, with its swift sequel of Fascist collapse; over Ploesti in a dramatic stab at Germany's oil supply; and now at Wiener Neustadt, which showed that no part of the Nazi domain is beyond bombing range.

While wondering what the Ninth will think up next, we just want to say we're mighty proud of the job that it has done already.

Another brief article related:

----for instance, as recently as June 17th the official German News Agency announced: "German enterprises are dispersed all over the Reich. They are placed in areas out of the reach of Allied bombs." That was the official German opinion in June, but by August 15th, Hitler's own journal, the Volkischer Beobachter, stated that "Bombs on Vienna's doorstep proved that any town in the Reich may become a threatened and endangered town since every one of them lies within reach of enemy aircraft."

**Robert Mundell remembers:**

We arrived at Benina Main late in the day Saturday, August 14th. The men we found there weren't the ones we remembered from Shipdham. The Ploesti raid had shaken them all up and they didn't act the same. I remember seeing a pilot, I think his name was Larson, walking in the distance. I thought, "That's too fast for him." But it was him and he was walking a lot faster than he used to.

**Marion Paciorek reports:**

It was about this time that Stevens and his crew were scheduled to take their aircraft, #787, B up for an engine check. On take off, while traveling at 90 miles an hour, they blew a tire and totaled the ship. None of the crew was injured.

**John Huber recalls:**

It was a vulcanized tire failure which we experienced while taking off at 100 miles per hour with a maximum load of four 2,000 pound bombs. Just after the crack up, Colonel Johnson kept me from slugging the Lt. Col who was responsible for maintenance. Everybody from the ground crew to the crew chief and pilot had asked for a new tire that was available. Each time the request was refused.

It was also about this time that two 506th crews and ships were transferred out of the Squadron. Bunker and Earthquake McGoon were transferred to the 67th. Rebich and Mister Five by Five were transferred to the 66th. These moves reflect the dire straits of the Group. There had been so many losses that most of the Group's experienced combat personnel were assigned to the 506th. Our loss ratio was smaller than the other squadrons. The transfers provided leadership in the other squadrons.

Back in England, Ray Marner wrote:

August 13--Captain Eddie Rickenbacker was here a while back. I didn't get to see him.

August 14--As I was sorting the mail today I ran across a letter for Capt. Clark Gable. He's in the 508th B.S., 351st Group. The letter was mixed into ours.

August 15--I saw in the paper that our planes raided a Luftwaffe factory in Austria, from Africa. They destroyed about 400 Me-109's. We lost no planes.

It was also August 15th when Nick Garza transferred into the 506th Ordnance Section. He recalls:

Lt. Ned H. Brisendine was an Ordnance Officer. With him were Sgts. Nick Barone, Louis F. Neillen and Carl A. Lund. He also recalls that Joseph Bortus was in Photography. The Ordnance Section was responsible for loading bombs. The two Nicks (Barone and Garza) fused the planes that carried time-delayed bombs. Graza also checked returning planes to assure that all bombs were gone.

Ray Whitby reports:

Lt. Maynor's crew was shipped overseas on August 1st. After a couple of weeks of schooling in London they were shipped to Benghazi and joined the 506th on August 15th. It is assumed that with Lt. William M. Maynor were Lts. John E. Gunnell, and Arnold L. Gray. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James L. Corrigan, Ray Whitby, Walter J. Scanlon, Glenn C. Stoffel, Joseph M. Coonelly, and Joel Parker Jr.

It was about this time the Air Force decided that there is just so much excitement that you can have before you have to take a break. The best place to do this was not Cairo, but further to the east in Tel Aviv.

Anderson and his crew were the first to arrive in Tel Aviv. Ron Allen remembers:

I was able to contact my brother in Cairo and arrange for a get together. The night of his brother's arrival, they joined a party composed of Ron's fellow officers who had found an accommodating drinking establishment. Ron remembers that "one more round" was ordered, but no one

could get it down. It is reported that a number of them got skunk drunk. It is also reported that, later that night in the hotel, at least one of them ended up in a bath tub with his head in the "John" burping.

When it came time to return to Benghazi, the crew of Lynn Bari II experienced some difficulties. Bunker was flying as copilot. It had been a long time since he had flown that position. He forgot that you are suppose to put down the flaps. Anderson let up on the brakes and pushed the power controls forward. The plane lurched down the runway. Bunker was reading off the airspeed, but the ship did not seem to be gaining any lift. At the end of the runway was a big round tube. Ron Allen in the nose of the ship started to holler "Jump it Andy, jump it!" It is a good thing that he shouted. It may have helped to clear the tube. After they were airborne they discovered that they would have to go back and do it all over again. Goodson had forgotten to fasten down the gas tank caps. The second take off was smoother than the first.

Robert Mundell and his crew mates got in a little recreation on August 15th. Mundell relates:

We went swimming in the Mediterranean on Sunday afternoon. When we returned we checked the bulletin board, and four members of our crew were listed for a mission to Foggia on Monday, August 16th. Our pilot, Ed Wilson, would be copilot; John Waite the bombardier; Emil Kosch a waist gunner and I was to be the radio operator. We were to fly with the Charles Whitlock crew.

Anderson and crew were back from Tel Aviv in time for the raid on Foggia. However, on this raid Anderson's copilot would fly combat with his own crew. Olsen had been promoted to first pilot status. In all, the 506th would put up six aircraft. Also, that morning Bunker and Rebich were flying their first missions as lead crews in their newly assigned squadrons.

Flying that morning with the 506th were A/C #283, Z, flown by Stevens; A/C #172, Bar N, flown by Anderson; A/C #013, Bar D, flown by Olsen; A/C #606, X, flown by Whitlock; A/C #778, T, flown by Austin; and A/C #201, Bar O, flown by Strong. Bunker, flying in A/C 235, C, aborted.

On the way to the target they joined with 19 other 44th aircraft to bomb the dispersal areas at the north end of the

*MICHAELS  
REPLACES  
OLSEN*

fighter field. The target area was clear of clouds. The flak was moderately heavy, aimed and accurate. There were swarms of fighters that rose to challenge the attack.

Aboard the *Old Crow*, Stevens' crew fought off about 10 attacks that came mostly from high and at the rear. Vincent the tail gunner destroyed one Me-109 coming in at 6 o'clock. The fighter was at about 50 yards when it dove away with flames coming from under the engine cowling. Denley, the top turret gunner of *Trouble*, saw this ship go down. In the waist of the ship, Rodriguez, at the right window, nailed one Me-109 attacking from 4 o'clock. When the aircraft broke off the attack it had flame and smoke in the engine area. OGara, the hatch gunner, saw this ship heading downward toward the ground. At the other waist gun, Fritz caught another Me-109 as it was attacking friendly aircraft in another formation. He fired when the fighter was in the 8 o'clock position and the left wing fell off. This was observed by a number of aircraft in the formation. Fry in the top turret, fired at one Me-109 approaching from 5 o'clock. He saw tracers enter the enemy ship and then the aircraft was lost from sight. He believed that he damaged it.

John Huber recalls:

Larry Vincent, our tail gunner, was shot out of his turret, but got back in and continued to keep enemy aircraft off our tail. He had to move the turret and guns by using hand cranks and all firing of the guns was controlled by his feet.

Things were going a little better aboard *Lynn Bari II*, flown by Anderson. They only sustained three attacks from 6, 7 and 8 o'clock below. Ferkauff probably destroyed one Me-109 which he set afire as it passed by.

Olson, flying in *Trouble*, got his first look at fighters from the pilot's seat. They attacked about four times from the rear. Denley, the top turret gunner fired on one Me-109 as it passed over from the rear. The ship took considerable flak damage. The top turret was damaged by shell fire. The left waist gunner, Orr, was slightly wounded by a 20-mm shell.

*Baldy and His Brood*, flown by Strong, was having a hard time. Attacking singly and in pairs the fighters came after them about 20 times. Germann first shot down one Me-109 which attacked from 6 o'clock. It went into a spin and burst into



flames. I believe that he was wounded in this encounter. Shortly thereafter, he was still at his station when another fighter approached. Again he fired and the enemy aircraft went down in flames. These actions were confirmed by Hamel. Haas at the left waist gun caught another Me-109 breaking off from an attack on the rear. It burst into flames and dove out of sight. Ackerman verified that this happened just before he and Haas were wounded. Ackerman took over a waist gun and Haas went to the tail to take Germann from the turret. After climbing into the turret, Haas saw the Me-109 that Ackerman caught coming in at 3 o'clock. At 200 yards it broke off in flames and dove past the tail. By now Bill Strong's ship had hits in the #2 engine, the oxygen system, the tail turret, the radio compass, numerous holes in the wings and fuselage, and the control cables were shredded.

YES

Bill Strong recalls:

We saw our wing man on the left go down and we knew that we were next. I still think the fighters just ran out of ammunition.

Things were even worse aboard Timb-A-A-ah. These events are best described in materials developed by Will Lundy. In them S/Sgt Ralph B. Knox relates:

We had only six of the regular crew with us as the other four men were very sick (from dysentery). The flak started the minute we hit the coast and followed us all the way into the target, which was 25-to-30 miles inland. There was plenty of flak and it was well aimed. In fact, it was bursting right outside of our waist windows. We hit the target at 1315 hours and got our bombs away without much trouble.

We were away from the target about 5-to-10 minutes when it happened. The group flying off to our left was hit by about 20-to-30 fighters and a few seconds later we were jumped by about the same number and all hell broke loose. We were flying "Tail end Charley" and caught everything they had to throw at us. Their first pass didn't cause any damage and I don't think that we got any of them. The second time it was different! A 20-mm shell came in and set my ammunition cans on fire and nicked me in a couple of places, but not badly. I got the burning cans out before they exploded. One of our waist gunners had been hit also, but he managed to stick to his guns.

In the meantime, I had seen the plane flying on our left wing catch fire and then go out of control. I saw six chutes come out of this plane, but things got so hot again that I didn't have time to watch it any longer. The fighters were coming in on their third pass and it proved disastrous for us. Two more 20-mm shells came into the back and blew up. Many flying flak fragments got me behind the right knee and above the left ankle and that laid me out over the hatch door. This burst also killed the already wounded waist gunner (Dunajecz).

The other waist gunner (Kosch) didn't look wounded as far as I could see, but he did seem to be having a problem. I finally got to my feet and got Kosch to the waist window and practically threw him out of the ship. I watched him until he disappeared from sight, but I didn't see him open his chute. Unfortunately, he did not survive.

I took one long last look around and saw that the tail gunner was slumped over his guns and his turret was swung completely around to the side. I couldn't have gotten back to him if I tried. The waist gunner was dead, the two left engines were on fire, the area over the wing and above the bomb bay was a mass of flames, and there was not a single gun on the ship firing, so I figured it was time that I left. It was quite a struggle to get out of the window as my legs were practically paralyzed by then and it took all of the strength in my arms to pull myself up, over and out.

I estimate that we were about 18,000 feet when I jumped. I delayed my opening of the chute until I could almost see the leaves on the trees below. When I pulled the cord on my chute it came loose so easily that I thought that maybe the line had been shot through and it wasn't going to open. But in a few seconds I felt a gentle tug and when I looked up, I was very relieved to see that the white umbrella was opening as it should.

It was only about 30 seconds between the time that my chute opened and the time that I hit the ground. Luckily, I came down through some tree branches, which broke my fall and I didn't hit the ground very hard. It was only a matter of a few seconds until I had my chute off and had destroyed all papers that I had in my possession. I couldn't walk, so I crawled and rolled down the mountain until I reached the bottom. I started crawling again up the next hill a few feet at a time. It was quite a job

and I quickly tired. When I was about half way up the hill I spotted a chute on the side of another hill and I called over there. I found out that my navigator, Robert Ricks, and bombardier, John Waite, were there. They weren't hurt, but had been captured by Italian soldiers. It wasn't very long after that that I was picked up and carried to a farm house where I met our other two men, Sgt. Mundell and Lt. Whitlock.

When they finally got me to the hospital they pulled out most of the shell fragments without any anesthetic, which was really rough to take. Then they put me to bed without any food, and I was very hungry.

Robert Mundell recalls that fateful day:

We took off early Monday morning. The crew chief seemed to sense that I was a little nervous. He assured me that it would be a "milk run".

It was a long flight and as we neared the target, "Airdrome at Foggia", the flak was heavy. Thinking the tough part was over, we made our run and were headed back. Whitlock even asked me to see if I could find some music on the radio. About that time a voice over the intercom announced they had spotted some German fighters.

A wave of them came in and raked us pretty good, but we were still flying and I thought they might leave. That was not to be. There was only one burst from our tail gunner, Bonham. Evidently he was killed early in the fight. That left the rear end a good target.

They came in again, plenty of them, and shot up the plane badly. There were bullets whistling by all over the place. I stood directly behind the pilots during the fight and Whitlock later told me that he didn't know why I wasn't hit. He said he could feel bullets hitting the back of his armor plating.

A big fire had broken out in the bomb bay. I emptied a fire extinguisher on it, but it didn't make a dent on the fire.

The engineer, Stewart, came down from his turret and was standing there. We didn't say anything to each other, but I noticed that he had opened the top hatch. I stepped up behind the pilot and he said it was time to get out

because he was losing control.

I started out the top hatch, but was having a hard time getting out. Whitlock gave me a shove and out I went. I hit something and ended up with a skinned knee. I really don't know if I went down behind the wing and in front of the tail or straight back above the tail and between the two vertical stabilizers. Whitlock later told me that he came out right behind me and didn't have any trouble. He dropped down right behind the wing.

The bombardier, Waite and the navigator Ricks got out through the door in the nose. I don't know what happened to Stewart and Wilson, but they never got out. There was no way to go out through the bomb bay; it was a roaring inferno.

I don't remember pulling the rip cord, but my chute opened right away. I remember that it took a long time to get down (we had jumped at 18,000 feet) and I had a front seat to an air battle for quite a while. At one point I saw a German fighter heading my way, and remember the stories we had heard about some of our men getting strafed in their chutes. Talk about a sitting duck! There's probably not a more helpless feeling in the world. However, as the enemy aircraft drew closer, he banked his wings and went on by.

I hit the ground pretty hard, but wasn't hurt. I had landed next to some trees on a small farm. A farmer and a bunch of kids came running up and started examining my parachute. They looked thrilled with it and started jabbering in Italian and pointing to a donkey under a shed. I thought they might want to make a trade and I could get on the donkey to get the hell out of there.

About then an Italian policeman came up and put a pistol to the back of my head. Another farmer leveled a shotgun at me from about 30 feet away. The trade was off!! They marched me down the road a short distance to where they had captured Whitlock. He was surrounded by a bunch of people that were giving him a hard time.

They then marched both of us down the road. In about a quarter of a mile we went past the wreckage of a German fighter. The pilot must have bailed out OK. At least I didn't see anyone in the plane.

It was another quarter of a mile when we saw the body of Emil Kosch, one of the waist gunners. It appeared that he was still wearing his unopened chute.

Our B-24 was about 200 yards away, still burning. The tail gunner was still in his turret. Some of our captors took a morbid delight in taunting us and pointing to his badly charred remains. One of the policemen spoke good English and asked us a couple of questions about the plane. We acted like we didn't know the answers and he didn't persist.

They then marched us to a barn, took us inside, and closed the doors. They got into a pretty heated discussion and a large crowd had gathered outside. I didn't know what to think; Whitlock thought they were going to hang us.

Before long an Italian army truck showed up to take us into the nearby town of Potenza. A little later they brought in Ricks, Waite, and some others. Ricks had talked to Knox, who was injured. Knox had told him that Kosch, Dunajecz and Bonham had all been killed. We had lost five of our ten member crew.

They put me in a small dungeon by myself that night. I tried to sleep on a concrete slab about a foot off the floor, but it had a slope to it. I could hardly stay on it, much less sleep. There was a hole in the center of the floor full of excrement and there were brown finger marks all over the walls. Fortunately, we stayed only one night.

The next day they put us on some trucks and took us to Bari, where we met the other downed airmen from the same raid. There were about thirty of us. The living conditions were decent and we ate the same as the Italians did; macaroni and bread. They interrogated us and kept us there eight-or-nine days.

On Thursday, August 26, we were taken down to the train station and split up. The enlisted men were put on a train to Sulmona and I never knew where the officers were sent. Lt. Ricks came over and shook hands and said good-by.

Events on the flight deck of *Timb-A-A-Ah* were recorded by Will Lundy as described in a letter to Knox from Whitlock.

After we caught fire I sent the copilot (Edward Wilson) back with Stewart (engineer) to try to put it out. As you probably know, the intercom and alarm systems burned out immediately as well as the controls. Since the bomb bay doors would not open, the copilot jumped into the bomb bay on to one door. Although he succeeded in knocking a door off, he was burned to death and his chute did not open. Stewart went back to his turret and kept right on shooting. Then the fire got so bad I couldn't see a thing in the cockpit. The radio man, Mundell, left by the top hatch, and then I could see enough to find that the flames were coming through the radio compartment and up into the top turret. Stewart stayed with his guns and was burned to death. After that, I also got out by the top hatch, as the plane had no controls and was going down fast.

I want to apologize to you and the others that are living for our formation that was too erratic to allow good marksmanship for the gunners. However, I do know that you boys shot down several enemy fighters.

On *Timb-A-A-Ah* were Lts. Charles A. Whitlock Jr. (POW), Edward R. Wilson (KIA), Robert A. Ricks (POW), and John K. Waite (POW). The enlisted men were Sgts. Edwin M. Stewart (KIA), Robert F. Mundell (POW/escapee/returned), Ralph B. Knox (POW escapee/returned), Emil M. Kosch (KIA), Hugo Dunajecz Jr. (KIA), and Robert W. Bonham (KIA).

The aircraft that Knox saw on fire off to his right was *Southern Comfort*. Joe Warth, flying as hatch gunner, gave the following description:

The enemy flak guns were well aimed and accurate and several B-24D's suffered minor damage. Light scattered clouds over the target area afforded no protection at all and upwards of fifty enemy aircraft, using the unlimited visibility to good advantage, tore into the *Flying Eightballs*. *Southern Comfort* took an uncountable number of direct hits from the German fighters, which came at us from every direction. I know that we shot down at least three of them when we heard the bailout klaxon sound; three of our engines were shut off and on fire and the bomb bay was a blazing inferno. In the rear of the aircraft we were completely cut off from the rest of the crew. I made it to the camera hatch, turning round to see the door to the bomb bay vaporize in the flames. The four of us in the rear wasted no time in getting out, S/Sgts. Lee and Purcell going out of their waist windows.

I was sure the parachute would not open so I tried to knock myself out so that when I hit the ground I would be unconscious. But after what seemed minutes my chute filled. First the drone, then the main chute. When I was on my way down I looked about and saw that the sky for many miles around was a mass of burning and still fighting aircraft and a patch of white parachutes. Some aircraft were on fire while others were pressing home their attacks. Others tried to fight them off.

*Southern Comfort* was a mass of flame as she spun down, crashing into an Italian hillside. There was a final blast of flame and noise as if she had but one desire left, to return to the earth as the ore from which she came.

I hit the ground and rolled over. There was only a nick on my leg. I rolled up my parachute and tried to walk away. I got down a hillside and was met by two German motorcyclists who had seen me land. They were on the scene within about two minutes. They searched me and although I couldn't understand German, I knew what a machine gun pointing at me meant. I held up my hands while my money and other articles were taken from me. They took me down the hillside. I was more scared now than when I had bailed out of my airplane. I was put on a motorbike behind one of the Germans in front who did the driving. The other sat at the back with his machine gun in my ribs. We drove down the hill and met up with some more Germans and their American prisoners from the raid. All ten men aboard *Southern Comfort* bailed out, but Lts. Singer, the navigator, and Finder, the bombardier, never reached the ground alive. Both their bodies were later found by the Germans who reported that their parachutes were bullet ridden and had failed to work properly.

About half a dozen of us were taken to a small holding area surrounded by a mix of German and Italian soldiers. We sat there a long time before being loaded into a heavily-guarded truck and taken to a small compound about twenty miles away. We were given a brief interrogation from a German who had lived in St. Louis for a time. He spoke English fluently.

That night we met our radio operator, S/Sgt. Ray Whitby, in jail. He had only arrived at Benghazi the day before, on Sunday the 15th of August. Our regular radio operator, Edgar L. Shaw, had taken sick on the way to the plane and

Whitby had replaced him. Next day we were moved to Bari, a coastal town on the "heel" of Italy, for more thorough interrogation at Gestapo headquarters. Despite our unwillingness to talk they produced details of our Group and knew everything about us.

Austin and our copilot Fabiny, were sent away to an officers camp. Hickerson, the tail gunner, Jett, the top turret gunner, Lee, Purcell and I were sent north to Sulmona, an old prison camp at Aquilla ("Valley of the Eagle") which had been used during the First World War to hold German prisoners. It was next to a concentration camp used by Mussolini for housing political prisoners. We were the only Americans at Sulmona, but there were 3,000 British troops, some of whom had been captured in the North African desert. We were given complete British uniforms and food rations and met the Senior British Officer of the camp. An Australian named "Blackjack" ran the camp and had a private army to do it. Our guards issued orders through him.

**Ray Whitby recalls:**

The morning after I arrived in Africa and was assigned to the 506th, I was put on Austin's crew for the trip to Foggia. I was very glad to be on this crew as they had 13 or 14 missions including the trip to Rumania. To me they were old hands. I was told by the engineer, Joe Jett, that I should have brought along a book to read because this one would be a "milk run".

We arrived at our target about 11 o'clock and soon after we dropped our bombs. Then all hell broke loose! We were hit in a gas tank by one of the many fighters that descended on us. There was a hole in the wing. The bomb bay looked like a blast furnace.

I heard Austin on the intercom telling us to bail out. I don't think that the men in the tail section heard that order as their intercom was burned out. Tail gunner Glen Hickerson was the last man to jump.

While I was coming down two Me-109's came straight at me and I thought it was the end for me. However, when they got real close they turned a little and went on by. Then I was concerned that they would dump my chute.

When I hit the ground there were some rocks that screwed



up my right leg and back. I was taken to a hospital in Potenza. George Temple, another man from the 44th, was there. About a week later they took us to Bari and later to Sulmona.

Dale Lee recalls:

The Foggia mission was as successful a mission as you could want. It was well-planned. There were three groups that participated in the raid that day. The airfield was divided into three areas. The first attacking group struck the first area. The second group picked up where the first left off and we had the last third of the field all to ourselves. Mission accomplished!

On our way out we could see flashes of the Ack-Ack guns and just knew that a "beast" was on its way.

Approximately 15-minutes after releasing our bombs our Group was covered by 50-to-150 fighters from "Goering's Pet Squadron". We had a bomb hang-up and I was frantically trying to pry it loose. About that time our ship gave a big shudder. I then managed to release the bomb by disconnecting the whole damned shackle. The bomb bay doors would then close.

When I got back to my station I looked out of my window. I saw a hole about three feet wide in the top side of the wing in the outboard #1 engine area. It looked like a giant blow torch. I marvelled then as I do now that the wing did not fold. The fire was following the transfer hose into the airplane. It was one big inferno.

The left rudder was completely shot off. Holes appeared everywhere in the fuselage. The skin of the ship looked like a newspaper with holes poked through with a pencil.

One thing puzzled me. On the curvature over my head there was a split that was approximately half an inch wide and about a foot and a half long. I could see that the stringer was split also. At some point the thought crossed my mind, "Now how can they shoot like that"?

My clothes were burning, our communications system was gone, we didn't know what was happening in the front of the ship, but I knew it was time to do something. I poked Joe Warth and pointed to Hickerson in the tail. I bailed out the left waist window.

Still limping slightly from wounds which hospitalized him for five months in Malta and North Africa, Germann received the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross and cluster and Air Medal and three clusters from Col. Frederick R. Dent Jr., his group commander, and Brig. Gen. Leon W. Johnson, combat wing chief.

Never before have we presented one man with so many decorations at one time," said Gen. Johnson, Ploesti raider who recently was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Germann, B-24 tail gunner with 17 missions to his credit, including raids on Ploesti and Rome, also was to have received the Purple Heart, but he was given that award before he left Africa to rejoin his group in Britain.

He will be going back to the States soon along with a fellow crew member, S/Sgt. Lonnie L. Ackerman, of Fox, Ark., who was wounded at the same time and wears all of the decorations awarded Germann except one cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The Silver Star citation said that Germann, despite a bullet wound below his knee, shot down two enemy aircraft while operating from the Middle East Theater and "only after his turret was put out of commission did he ask for help."

The other awards were for "extraordinary achievement in the attack on Ploesti, for courage, coolness and skill in action against the enemy and for the destruction of enemy aircraft."

The other crew member that was wounded, Dale Haas, recently wrote:

We sustained over 200 holes in our plane. Strong left us in the hospital in Malta. I was in the hospital in Malta for a month and then taken to Benghazi. From Benghazi I was shipped back to hospitals in the States. In all, I spent about a year in hospitals. (Note: he made no mention of decorations which he received.)

Bill Strong was to remember:

This Foggia raid as the one on which he was more scared

*Air Medal w/ 3 OLC  
Silver Star  
Purple Heart  
Unit Citation w/ OLC  
ETO RIBBON w/ 4 OLC*

than he was at Ploesti.

The bitterness and frustration which a combat man experiences over the loss of his crewmates is well expressed in the writings of Donald Chase:

Only six of our crew flew the Foggia mission. Copilot Phipps, bombardier Schwab, engineer Holtz and I were grounded by respiratory and ear infections.

We four waited for our six fellow crewmen and our four replacements to return in a ship named *Timb-A-A-Ah*. Long after the last ships returned and the sun had set, we two enlisted men, as did the two officers, mournfully trekked back to our tent area. It was a night of anguish. Eight of our Group's A/C, including *Timb-A-A-Ah*, failed to return.

If I had been older, instead of 22, perhaps I might not have searched for symbolic reason which governs fateful events. But regardless, I picked up the Gurkha Kukri, walked into the desert and threw the knife across the sand into the darkness. It had brought only bad luck. More than half my crew were gone, probably dead. I cried.

Norm remembers thinking how unfair it was to send these inexperienced crews into combat. They should have had more seasoning before so many went out together.

On August 17th Mark Morris wrote:

We visited Tel Aviv, Palestine. We took the *Old Crow*, but this time we were passengers. There was no need to man the guns. We had some of our ground crew along.

When we arrived, there was a mix-up between McAtee and the control tower. We landed downwind. I was in the nose and we used absolutely every foot of runway. The brakes were smoking when we stopped. Our ground crew chief, Jackson, stayed temporarily at the field with *Old Crow* to examine and repair the brakes, if needed.

Norm Kiefer remembers that along the way we flew over the Nile River, the Suez Canal and the Pyramids in Egypt.

Palestine was a strange country of marked contrasts. The new, as exemplified by Tel Aviv, existed along side of ancient ways and equipment that went back into time long ago.

That first night in Tel Aviv Kerns and I stayed together. This was my first experience with Vodka and I learned the way that it can "sneak" up on you. We learned of a feud that was breaking out in fights all over town. A large contingent of paratroopers were on leave and some naval craft were in port. Paratroopers and sailors were really mixing it up.

It all started on the morning of the invasion of Sicily. That morning we had flown out of our way to avoid crossing the invasion fleet that stood just off shore. The paratroopers aircraft were briefed to fly across the fleet. Everyone knew that they were coming.

Just before the arrival of the paratrooper's aircraft, enemy aircraft came out to attack the fleet. When the paratroopers went across, some of the navy gunners were still a little nervous and opened fire. A large number of paratroopers were lost at sea that morning. The paratroopers were looking for every navy man that they could find in order to pay them back.

We didn't want to get in the middle of anything so we went back to the hotel early. Besides, Vodka was taking its effect.

That night McAtee and some of the other officers found an eating establishment near the beach. They were told that the house specialty was steak. They had not seen steak for some time, so they ordered it. It was good! The waiter was concerned when they ordered a second round. They ate it. When they ordered the third round they were refused. The establishment manager just did not understand how long it had been since they had tasted meat of this type. The diet had been Vienna Sausage for a long time.

**Mark Morris remembers that first night:**

I went with Jack Edwards and Charley Loftus for the night club scene. We drank quite a lot of Vodka. Loftus got very ill as we returned to the hotel. He was in such bad shape that the MPs became interested. We told them that Charley had apparently been slipped a bad drink. They wanted to know where and more details. We could not be very cooperative on that score of course. Anyway, an ambulance was called, but it was very slow coming. The Irish in Jack answered the Vodka and he became an obnoxious pugilistic drunk. He gave the M.P.'s trouble and finally started a brawl. The M.P.'s weren't too mad

after the first go-around and offered to release us advising Jack and I to leave. About then the ambulance arrived. A discussion as to whether Charley needed hospitalization caused Jack to become abusive again. The M.P.'s had enough of our shenanigans and more had arrived. It looked as if the three of us were in for it. They dragged Jack out swinging, loaded Charley in the ambulance, and I headed for another exit and got away. Apparently Jack even got into it at the jail later.

In the morning McAtee was knocking on the hotel doors of the enlisted men. He wanted them to go with him to the local M.P. lock up. Edwards and Loftus were in trouble. All of the crew officers had signed up for a day trip to the Holy Land.

Mark told McAtee what had happened. We also explained that we had paid to go on the bus excursion that was leaving early.

McAtee told us later that when he arrived at the lockup he:

Asked the Captain on duty what he could do and the Captain said nothing. These two guys had hurt some of his men. They were going to pay. After all there was enough trouble in town with the sailors and paratroopers.

McAtee tried to explain that his crew members had probably gotten out-of-line, but it had been a long time since they had been to town and besides they were still a little shook up from the Ploesti raid. The Captain stood up and asked, "These guys were at Ploesti?" McAtee said "Yes". The Captain ordered the turnkey to release Edwards and find out if Loftus could leave the hospital. He told McAtee "Get them the hell out of here and keep them out of trouble".

Mark Morris remembers:

Later, much later, when Charley discovered what had happened, he complained about the episode. He told Jack and I, "No matter what! Don't ever again cause me to be sent to get my stomach pumped!" He said the hospital doctor, after the pumping, told them; "Nothing wrong with this guy, he is just drunk. Get him to hell out of here!"

There were six of our crew members signed up for the bus trip through the Holy Land. They included Joe Young, Harold

Laudig, Dave McCash, Mark Morris, Albert Kerns and myself. First we headed for Jerusalem. There we visited the Dome of the Rock, The Mt. of Olives, Mt. Calvary, The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Walling Wall and other religious sites. Then we went to Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity. It was a very awe-inspiring all-day trip.

Back in England, Ray Marner wrote:

August 18--Major Moore, C.O. of the 67th, was here today from Africa. I don't think the 506th lost a single ship. The 67th lost about 8. Some of the men are going back to the States. We had a black air raid last night with lots of enemy planes flying over. I don't know where they bombed.

There are indications that our aircraft participated in a second raid on Foggia on August 19th. However, it is not clear how many aircraft went nor who the pilots and crews were. For the Group, it is indicated that ten of the 44th ships took off that morning.

Will Lundy's records show that there were five aircraft from the 66th (including Rebich) and five from the 68th. Three aircraft, including Rebich, aborted and one landed in Malta. The six attacking aircraft went to the marshalling yards and an overpass which were hit with good results. There was little enemy opposition from ground guns or enemy aircraft. There were no losses.

On August 21st, our 506th aircraft once again were out. However, technically there were only two ships from the Squadron.

Taking off that morning were A/C #013, Bar D, flown by Olson and A/C # 283, Z, flown by Slough. They were joined by A/C #764, M, Helen Be Happy (a 66th ship) flown by Rebich and A/C #788, D, Avenger, flown by R. J. Lehnhausen.

With Lehnhausen were Lts. R. E. Hamlyn, R. C. Peterson, and C. E. Hulpian. Also with him were Sgts. W. G. Morton (During his career, Morton shot down many enemy aircraft and later received a Field Commission.), H. D. Cole, R. H. Wright, E. M. Semons, A. J. Terwey, and J. Merrigan.

These aircraft joined with six other 44th ships to attack the railroad station at Canello, Italy. Slough, flying in the Old Crow, aborted and landed in Malta. The attacking force

believed that they had hits in the target area. The uncertainty was due to the intense fighter attacks that were carried out just before and during the bomb run.

Olson, flying in Trouble, picked up flak that was heavy and aimed from near Naples until about one minute after the bomb run. They were subjected to two attacks from fighters coming in at 5 and 7 o'clock below. Dugan, flying the tail turret, fired on one Me-109. He saw the enemy aircraft explode in midair. This was confirmed by Hockensmith and Denly. The crew saw one Me-109 go down in flames at 1220, another explode about 200 foot below the formation and also saw one crash into the mountains and burn. They saw a pink B-24 (from one of the African groups) go down over the target. It was in a steep dive, but appeared to be under control. A second B-24 left the formation over the coast of Sicily, apparently with the intent of landing.

Lehnhausen, in addition to heavy normal attacks by enemy aircraft, was bombed by fighters flying above the 506th formation. A number of these fighters dropped bombs. They were estimated to be 100-pound bombs. The timed explosions were accurate with regard to altitude.

Lehnhausen's gunners accounted for three enemy aircraft. Morton, in the top turret, fired at one Me-109 that went down burning in a slow flat spin. Two minutes later, he caught another Me-109 coming in from 4 o'clock and watched it make a sharp wing over and dive to the ground in a spin. Merrigan, the tail gunner, destroyed one Me-109 which attacked from 7 o'clock. This aircraft came to about 200 yards before going down in a steep dive flaming. This kill was witnessed by Morton.

The Group did not lose any aircraft on this raid. However, their ability to continue to operate effectively was now in doubt. In spite of outstanding efforts of ground personnel, maintenance problems were eroding our ability to consistently place aircraft in the air. The decision was made to return to England.

From a combat loss point of view, the effect of this African excursion is well expressed by Donald Chase:

Without loss, the 44th flew another two missions after losing 60 percent of the strike planes in just two raids, Ploesti and Foggia. Late in the month, 44th personnel returned to our base in Shipdham, England. Only 22 A/C

made the trip back, whereas 41, plus four replacements, had come to Africa two months earlier.

Costly (about \$300,000 each) as the loss of our 22 bombers may have been, more importantly and personally grievous was the loss of more than 200 airmen. Several of those "airmen" were ground crew fellows who volunteered to fly as gunners when attrition slashed the number of available regular gunners.

I returned to England in mid-September after being hospitalized with sand fly fever in Marrakech, Morocco, for two weeks. I never saw Holtz, Schwab or Phipps again.

Ray Marner's diary indicated on:

Aug. 23--I went to a dance in town tonight. The air raid siren blew while I was dancing. The all clear came a short time later. We found out next morning that they were bombing our field.

Aug. 24--We found they were dropping antipersonnel bombs (butterfly bombs) and they were exploding all day. (Note: Will Lundy's records show that two 68th men were killed on this date when their auto ran over a land mine at Shipdham.) *NO ONE KILLED*

Aug. 25--The bombs are still being exploded today. You can hear them all over. One civilian was hit on the perimeter, but was not killed. Our planes are coming in tomorrow. They couldn't come before because of the bombs.

*Wrong  
Ray  
Lundy  
and  
sub  
patrol  
to base*

Mark Morris wrote in his diary:

Aug. 26--Benghazi to Marrakech, Morocco, 10 hours.

That morning Norm Kiefer found that the Gurkha soldiers assigned to guard our ships had a deep love for knives. For the flight through South America and Africa we were each issued a jungle emergency kit in case of a crash landing. In the kit was a machete. I always kept that knife, and another one that I got in Brazil, in the wall lining over the radio operator's position. I know that they were in place the day before we left. However, after we were airborne, on the way to Marrakech, I noticed that my knives were missing. Today, they are probably somewhere in India.

Mark's diary continued with:



Aug. 27--We are back home again in beautiful England. There is good food in the mess & I love those Norwich trips & chips.

On that same day, Ray Warner wrote:

Aug. 27--The bombs are still being exploded on the field. The planes just came in. They were in French Morocco last night. Majors Beam and Anderson had engine trouble and were forced down in Portugal. I don't know what will happen now. The boys are black and covered with sand. They are plenty glad to be back. Rebich's crew and aircraft have been transferred to the 66th. Nick is on Rebich's crew. They haven't come in yet. Other transfers were Slough's crew and aircraft and Bunker's crew and aircraft to the 67th.

They pulled 12 raids down there. We lost two ships on the last raid. Lts. Austin and Whitlock's crews. Kosch went down. Most were new men and I didn't know them well. F/O Wilson went down on another ship. Lt. Young and Spivey were lost on the Ploesti raid. (Note: The only Spivey, that is listed by Lundy, was Joseph B. who was lost on the Ploesti raid. He was flying with the 66th. There is no Lt. Young listed.) Germann, Haas and Ackerman were all shot up and are in the hospital at Malta. A lot of men are coming back by transport later.

Upon our return, some of us did not waste any time starting to enjoy the pleasures of England. *Down in Cranston* *lost 27 Aug* *HAAF with 389TH BG* *Woolfe* Mark Morris wrote:

Aug. 29, 30--Pass to London. A.G.(Kerns), Kief and I.

Aug. 31--Back to base.

That same day Ray Warner wrote:

Majors Beam and Anderson got back. They made Gibraltar and didn't have to land in Lisbon. The whole crew got back. Rebich's crew got back. It sure was good to see Nick again. They certainly did see the action and country.

It was also on the 29th, after a three day train ride, that Robert Mundell arrived at the prison camp at Sulmona. Mundell recalls:

They gave each of us a piece of bread and a piece of

cheese before we left, but I ate mine right away and didn't eat again until we arrived. We got some oatmeal from the Red Cross at the prison and we built a fire in the yard to cook it. Dennis Slattery (Slats) ruined it by pouring in too much salt, but I was so hungry I ate it anyway.

In the prison camp we played softball with the English prisoners almost every day and beat them pretty badly. They didn't know much about playing, but they were good sports. Tom Purcell (from Austin's crew) was our best player. We also watched a play or two that the English put on.

We were fed mostly spaghetti and bread. Generally, we were treated pretty well. There was an Australian named Pat that called us out for roll call every morning and was more or less in charge of us Americans. A little Italian Captain was in charge of the prison and Pat said that he was a good man.

On August 30th Lt. Charles R. Conner was assigned to the 506th. With him were Lts. Waino W. Hannuksela, Chester B. Hanson, and Edward J. Ackerman. The enlisted personnel included Sgts. James H. Bales, Chester W. Yurick, Ralph E. Strait, Aubrey J. Maloy, James L. Wilson, and George N. De Wald.

James H. Clements reports:

Upon arriving in the U. K. we were assigned to the 93rd B.G.. Within a few days we (all fourteen replacement crews) received orders for TEMPORARY DUTY in North Africa. Of course we didn't know why. At that time my bombardier was in the hospital. As no replacement was available, our orders were held up. Some of the other crews got to Ploesti; how many and who made the mission, I don't know. When my bombardier got out of the hospital we proceeded by Air Transport Command to North Africa. When we got to Tripoli we were dumped. By that time the Ploesti raid was over. We had a hard time getting back to the U.K., late in August.

Wade Huggins recalls:

After we got to Africa, our ship was taken away from us. When the Group left to go back to England, we had to hitchhike by caravan from Tripoli to Marrakech. We then

caught a flight back to England sometime in September.

With Lt. Clements were Lts. Richard Boykin, and Joseph Bumbicka. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James Bolger, Carl Shook, Marion Tiemeier, Claud Horner, Elmer Hagner, and Wade Huggins.

The following are extracts from Norm Kiefer's letters to his wife in August:

"I just ate a Babe Ruth candy bar. It had a slight taste of gasoline, but so what. It came from you."..."Do you remember the song titled *My Pretty Little Red Haired Girl*? I now substitute Arab Girl for Red Haired! Ouch! Why did you hit me? You ought to see your competition. Not quite like the movies."..."Early in the year, I was in the harem room of a Sultan's palace. Now why that look? The gal part of the harem was up in the mountains with the Sultan"..."We signed up to go swimming this afternoon. I hope that we can go. I am badly in need of a bath, after the way the wind and dust blew yesterday. We have to use special soap that will do its job in salt water."..."Laudig got his telegram! The crew now has a baby girl!"..."I was in a place that we could get some wine yesterday. It isn't as good as the wine that we got in North Morocco, but it didn't cost as much. We got one liter for 20 lire, Italian money." (Note: I had just gotten back from Sicily. Where was the censor?)..."We went to Tel Aviv. The first thing we did was take a nice hot shower. This was my first real bath since we left England."..."We found an ice cream parlor. I ate \$5.00 worth of ice cream, malted milks, sundaes and banana splits. The waitress thought we were crazy."..."How do you like my American Red Cross paper. I am sitting in the Washington Club in London. We had to stand up all the way down here."..."No kidding, this island is really a fortress now. From the number of wings that are running around, I should say a Flying Fortress."

HELLO AGAIN

Ray Warner's first few entries for the month were:

Sept. 1--More men are coming back from Africa. Rudy and Brad are back. Howard Haaf went down in Lisbon with a ship from the 389th. He has been interned there. (Note: Howard Haaf, was a ground crewman from the 68th. He had been on loan to the 389th Group. The 389th aircraft on which he was a passenger for the return from Benghazi, went down over the English Channel as it was approaching England. His body was never recovered. It is not known if they were attacked by German aircraft.) YES

Sept. 3--General Arnold was in Hethel to talk to the men who went to Africa.

Colonel Johnson has assumed command of the 202nd Provisional Combat Wing. It's composed of the 44th and 389th. Lt. Colonel Posey is now Group Commander.

On that same day, Joe Warth was celebrating his birthday in a prisoner of war camp in Italy. Joe remembers:

The camp at Sulmona was well organized. We lived in long huts, sleeping on the floor on paillasses. We were fed one bowl of macaroni and 100-grammes of bread each day. Fortunately, we had as much fresh water as we could drink. We also received Red Cross parcels from England, Australia, and New Zealand. I celebrated my 21st birthday in Aquilla on September 3rd, 1943, with rice wine. It was potent and a little bit went to the head!

Ray Warner's diary continued:

Sept. 4--We got in two new combat crews. They just came from the States. We've been pretty lucky so far losing only four planes and 42 men.

Capt. Benton got a card from Capt. Swanson who is a prisoner of war. Bank, Schiefelbush and Myers are prisoners also.

It is unknown who the new arrivals were.

On that same day (Sept 4th) Mark Morris wrote:

We practiced gunnery for two hours. over the Wash. Our copilot, Laudig, made first pilot and is assigned to another crew. We will miss him a lot. Lt. Graham left for home today.

Ray Marner's Sept. 5th account continues with:

Nick (Popovich) gave me a billfold that he got in Marrakech, Africa. He didn't get to go to Tel Aviv, Palestine, but did land in Malta once. Jack Edwards landed in Sicily once while returning from a raid.

Mark Morris wrote on September 6th:

This was a long day. We made a trip to Holland and two trips to France at high altitude. They were cold, miserable trips.

The trip to Holland that Mark recorded was a diversionary mission over the North Sea in an effort to support B-17's that were hitting Stuttgart and other targets of opportunity. It is known that McAtee, flying in Old Crow, went on the diversion and perhaps Bunce. Laudig was also along, accompanied by Ron Allen. The Group put up 18 aircraft, but only 15 flew the mission.

The following day, September 7th, the Old Crow was out again. This time the briefed target was the Bergen/Alkmaar Airfield near Leeuwarden, Holland. The 506th put up four ships. McAtee went, but it is unknown who else went. The 44th joined their new wing mates, the 392nd, on this attack. However, both the primary and secondary targets were covered with clouds. Along the coast of Holland a convoy of naval craft was spotted about 10 miles off the Island of Texel. The two groups dropped their bombs and bracketed the convoy.

Waino Hannuksela's records show that he was on this raid. It is not known who he went with. OLSON?

The Flint Journal reported the action as follows:

#### LIBERATORS ATTACK CONVOY

Liberators, joining the offensive, surprised an enemy convoy off the Dutch coast and bombed it through a medium hail of antiaircraft fire. The article continued with accounts of light and medium bombers striking targets in France.

823  
DAVENPORT  
STRONG 013  
OLSON 857  
MCATEE 283

The next day, September 8th, Ray Warner wrote:

I barely caught the train from London to Norwich. While we were in London we bought a bunch of records and were talking to the owner of the shop. He spent 15 years in the States getting ideas for songs. He wrote "Red Sails in the Sunset", "South of The Border", "Harbor Lights", "Dinner For One Please James", "A Pair of Silver Wings", and others.

Our planes couldn't find their target today and bombed a convoy off the Dutch Coast. When we got to Attleboro, there was an air raid. They dropped a few bombs. Three planes were shot down. When we stopped at Cambridge, they brought the news, on the train, of Italy's surrender.

On September 9th Mark Morris wrote:

The Group split for two missions today. Ours was in the afternoon. It was scrubbed after reaching altitude. Two hours! God, I am tired!

McAtee's crew was not credited with a raid for that day.

In a recent letter Steve Bugyle asked:

Do you remember the two missions we pulled in one day over France? While I was in prison camp I met the enlisted men from the B-24 that we shot down. They were not from the 44th. Also I met one of the officers at a meeting 40 years later.

Steve probably went in the morning to the Abbeville/Drucat Airdrome in France. The 44th put up 19 aircraft that morning with 17 of them bombing the target. Heavy flak was encountered on the bomb run. Our Group bombing pattern was not good, but the 392nd had good results. The aircraft encountered difficulty on takeoff and in assembly that morning because of low-lying clouds.

John Huber was credited with the Abbeville raid. It is assumed that he was with Stevens.

Records maintained by William Novak show that he was also credited with a mission on this day. He believes that he was with Bunce.

Ray Warner wrote on September 9th:

Our planes went out early this morning to Abbeville Field, France. There was no opposition at all. This was the target the 44th first bombed one year ago. Then, two squadrons turned back and another was wiped out. The planes went out again this afternoon, but were called back. Every plane on the island was supposed to go on two missions today. 3,000 planes were in the air. They were thick all day long.

Mr. Five By Five cracked up when they landed this morning. None of the crew were hurt. The nose wheel collapsed. Mr. Five By Five's crew are all in the hospital. They are just shook up. Their ship won't fly again. They have a brand new one, Mr. Five By Five II. (Note: This former 506th crew, Rebich/Hobson, and ship were flying with the 66th when this occurred.)

It was about this time that Jack Edwards of the Old Crow crew got an idea that he thought would produce more enemy fighters shot down from his tail turret. Henry Fetherolf tells about it:

I looked after the turrets and guns on every ship that the 506th had. Jack Edwards was an Armament man and signed up for combat. He was a tail gunner. One day he came to me with a wonderful idea. I was to take all the tracer bullets out of his left gun and replace them with armor piercing incendiaries. I didn't think much of this, but he talked me into it. He said the Germans would think his left gun was not working and come in on that side and he would run up a score. Well I had the job almost done and who but McAtee stuck his head into the back hatch door. He gave me "Glory Amen" and a few other things to think about and then I spent the rest of the night putting the tracers back. On another occasion we spent a whole day taking the bottoms out of bottles so Edwards could drop them over Germany. He said they would scream and scare hell out of anybody who heard them.

The Squadron engaged in combat once again on September 15th. This morning their target is the Airdrome at Chartres in France. It is not known how many of our aircraft went. The Group was scheduled to put 22 aircraft in the air. However, assembly problems in bad weather resulted in only 12 ships continuing to the target area. There, heavy clouds precluded bombing. Chartres was found and bombed with success. There was moderate flak. The three fighters that rose to meet the bombers were shot down by gunners from the 389th.

William Novak was aboard one of the twelve 44th ships that made it to the target. It is believed that he was with Bunce.

Ollie Bowling also received operations credit for this raid. He was with Larson. This was Sortie #103 and they were gone seven hours. There was moderate flak and three enemy aircraft were observed.

Ray Marner wrote on September 15th:

Our planes went out on a mission and hit an airfield. Two of our planes were forced down on other fields, but got back later.

It was about this time that Don Chase reported:

I returned to England in mid-September after being hospitalized with sand fly fever in Marrakech, Morocco, for two weeks.

For the next three months I flew an occasional weather reconnaissance flight. I also made several rail trips to various RAF and AAF airfields throughout Southern England to help return damaged or fuel-starved B-24's back to Shipham. They had earlier failed to make base following a mission.

New crews arrived frequently. In fact we now had more crews than planes. It was not unusual for two different crews to alternate flying missions using the same Liberator. Sometime in late October I transferred from the 506th Squadron into the 67th.

In mid-November, to my surprise, Ralph Knox limped into my Nissen hut. He had spent many weeks in hospitals recovering from shrapnel wounds. He related the grim facts of the August Foggia mission. Of the four replacement crew members flying that day, two were killed and two were prisoners. Knox was in an Italian hospital when advancing American troops secured the area. Shortly after visiting me, Knox returned to the States for further medical attention.

Perhaps I could have avoided further combat. Squadron Operations certainly didn't pressure me to fly. I was in a non-assigned state of limbo. Maybe it was guilt or pride or shame. Whatever, I decided to, or try to,



complete my tour of combat, 25 missions. But not, if I could help it, with an inexperienced crew.

My opportunity came toward mid-December when, on his 15th mission, the radio man of Lt. James Hill's crew fell, or was blown, from the foot-wide bomb bay catwalk during the bomb run and parachuted into France. This crew had survived the 90 percent Group loss suffered by the 44th in just 3 missions--Ploesti, Foggia, and Wiener Neustadt (another 30 percent loss mission)--and had several E/A credited to their gunners. Fortunately, I flew the next ten missions with Lt. Hill and his battle-experienced crew.

On September 15th Mark Morris wrote:

My furlough is signed. A.G. (Kerns) and Kief left for London. I plan on going to Scotland tomorrow.

Norm Kiefer recalls that trip to London:

We caught the early morning train from Norwich and arrived in London at about 8:30 A. M. It was about 9:00 when we went to the Red Cross Club on Piccadilly Circus. Before we left the base we had been told to go to the Club at least twice a day to see if there were any messages for us.

Sure enough, there, chalked on the Message Board were our names. There was an immediate unspoken agreement between A.G. and I. No Way!!! We Just Got Here! We Are Going To Have At Least One Day!! As we turned to leave, A.G. said, "I'll bet it's Africa again".

We started to look for a place that we could get a drink and in the afternoon we went to a movie. Then it was a few more drinks before we went back to the Red Cross Club. The message was, "Report back to base immediately." The girl at the desk said "There have been quite a few fellows that were told to go back. Something must be up." I think that it was the 11 o'clock night train that we took back to Norwich. There was a truck that was meeting every incoming train.

On the 15th of September, Lt. Frank L. Albert and crew joined the Squadron. With Lt. Albert were Lts. Meredyth F. McGeary, Edmund H. Donnelly, and Paul E. Castellotti. The enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. Beuford K. Walker, James K.

Warvel, Lloyd J. Brady, David F. Andello, Carl C. Bolick, and Edward G. Monteleone.

On the 16th of September Mark Morris wrote:

Our furloughs are cancelled. The Adjutant gave me pass to Norwich to locate our crew. I staggered back at 1300 hours. I had found none of my crew, but did bring in Bell (J. R. Bell) and "Chippie" (Francis Chipman). They were two days overdue on their pass. I warned Loftus to come in or call McAtee.

On Sept. 18th he wrote:

The last of our crew came in at 5 this morning. We flew a B-24H to Port Morgan. It was a three hours flight. We were lost in fog for a 1/2 hour. Then it was Port Morgan to Marrakech on a C-54 transport. Lt. Laudig had taken *Old Crow* to wherever we were going. (Note: I now remember how upset I was that Laudig took our ship. I was afraid that we would not get it back.) Then we rode a C-47 transport for five hours to Oran, then five more hours to Tunis. Then we rode a truck to our final destination. We slept outside overnight, no quarters. Yep, it smells like Africa. (Note: I remember that Ag Kerns flew down as flight engineer for Colonel Johnson. When we arrived Ag shared with us the "goodies" that he had acquired from the survival boxes aboard the Colonel's ship.)

Entries in Ray Marner's diary also helped to close this chapter:

Sept. 16th--"Well the planes took off again. Probably they went back to Africa or to Sicily. We may follow later. Frank Adams got to go".

Sept. 17th--"Nick left today too. I hated to see him go. We were having fun. No news yet on where they went or for how long."

Mark was right. This did smell like Africa, but it was not a duplication of Libya. Here there was sand, but not the red dust kind. Here there was occasional winds, but not every day. Here there were toilet facilities, but they did not involve an open and exposed barrel. Most importantly, here we did not hear talk of practicing at low level.

It was about this time that James H. Clements arrived in

Tunis. However, just like on his trip to Africa in August, he sat around and did not get to go into combat.

The Group hadn't even gotten settled when on Sept. 21st they were assigned lead position on a raid to Leghorn in Italy. There were some abortions. The 93rd and 389th Groups also sent ships. The target was successfully attacked. There was some flak, but no 44th aircraft sustained damage.

William Novak made this mission with Bunce and Ron Allen was with Anderson.

For the Old Crow crew, the first few days were spent in housekeeping. Mark Morris wrote:

On the morning of Sept. 20th we pitched our tent. Then on Sept. 22nd, we went to Tunis and upon our return had to move our tent once again. Tent moves reminds me of the old field artillery "chinese drill". Ugh!

Edwards and Loftus also went into Tunis that day. When the evening truck returned, Edwards was aboard, but Loftus was not. Edwards was more than a little high. Upon questioning, Edwards said that he and Loftus had been drinking and quarreled. The last that he saw Loftus was in town. Loftus was sitting on the steps of some building somewhere in town.

When Loftus did not return on the morning truck from Tunis, McAtee was upset and concerned. Loftus came in on the evening truck. McAtee told him that he would have to load bombs for a couple of missions and that he could not go with us on the next mission.

Charley's punishment might seem rather childish. After all, not being able to go on a combat mission, to some people, might seem to be more of a gift than a punishment. Those people do not understand the bond formed on combat crews. Look at it this way. For a number of hours you have to wait to see if your fellow crew members will come back. If they come back, will they be all together? All the time you are thinking, "If something happens it will be my fault. If I was there maybe things would go right".

What was the reason that Loftus did not return? Well, he had a pretty wild story! He said that he tried to catch the truck back to base the day that he and Edwards quarreled. However, the truck was disappearing down the street when he got to the loading point. He was very concerned because

Tunis was off limits after dark. He sat down and tried to figure out what he should do. He fell asleep.

He was rudely awakened by some violent shaking. A Captain stood over him. The Captain wanted to know what he was doing there. Loftus told him about missing the truck. The Captain asked him if he wanted a ride out to the airfield. Naturally, Loftus agreed. He got into a Jeep and went back to sleep.

Once again he was shaken. The Captain pointed to a road and told Loftus that it would take him to the field. Loftus started walking.

It seemed to Loftus that he had walked a long way. He couldn't tell for sure. It was pitch black out, but the stars were out. Just enough light to see the road. He grew tired of walking. When he found an army tank, he crawled into it and went back to sleep.

When he woke up it was daylight. Outside he could see some mountains and he was in a battlefield. There were destroyed tanks and other equipment all around him. Then he knew that something was definitely wrong. He was a long way from where he wanted to be.

The road that he had been walking seemed to go downhill in one direction and uphill in the other. He reasoned that downhill was the direction that he should go. It was late in the afternoon that he came to a Y in the road. It seemed to him that this was where the Captain had left him off. There was a truck coming down the road. He hailed it. Yes, it was going to the base. He climbed aboard.

Norm Kiefer recalls later in the month, when we heard that we would be returning to England, a number of us decided that we ought to have some souvenirs to take back. We had heard of some battlefields in the vicinity. It was claimed that it was possible to pick up German and Italian knives and guns. We requisitioned a light truck and started to follow our directions for getting to the battlefield.

Charley Loftus was with us. Suddenly, Charley started to claim that this was the road that he had been on the night that he missed the truck from Tunis. We all said, "Yes Charley", without really believing him. It wasn't long and he advised the driver to slow down because of a sharp turn that was not protected by a guard rail. We came to the turn.

He then told us when to expect a burned out half-track. We came to it. From then on we forgot the directions and let him take us to the tank that he had slept in. He got us there! He had really been here before!

Before we left on that souvenir hunt we were warned to be careful of booby traps. The retreating German troops frequently left explosive charges that were set to go off when doors were opened to tool storage areas on tanks and 88-mm guns. These storage areas were favorite areas for keeping Luger pistols. Lugers were prize souvenirs.

On September 22, Ray Warner, back in England, wrote:

The Canadian Air Force was flying over this evening before dark. This was the first time that I'd seen their formation. They fly a spread formation much different than our close formation. You can see Lancasters for miles and miles. Probably headed for Berlin.

At least part of Charley's punishment was shared by all of the crew on the night that Charley returned, September 23rd.

Mark Morris wrote on September 24th:

I helped load bombs last night. I also helped haul them to Pisa today and unload them. There was little flak and no fighters. We had 10 hours combat time.

This was Mission #105A. Once again the 44th, 93rd and 389th Groups joined forces to successfully bomb the enemy. The target was the marshalling yards and warehouses at Pisa. All of our ships returned to base.

Slough led the Squadron in A/C #201, with Anderson as Command Pilot. With Slough was Flight Officer R. J. LaCombe, and Lts. Grimes, and Shaw. Also aboard were Sgts. Harbison, Seigfeld, Kennon, I. C, Smith, Caillier, and Griffin.

McAtee flew A/C #283. With McAtee were Lts. Hannuksela, McCash, and Young. Also aboard were Sgts. M. H. Davis, Kerns, Kiefer, G. C. Stoffel, Morris, and Edwards

Bunce flew A/C #370. With Bunce were Lts. Middleton, Gray, and Fisher. Also aboard were Sgts. Klingle, T. E. Davis, Grow, Barnett, Bugyie, and A. G. Daniels.

Larson flew A/C #013. With Larson was Flight Officer

25 Sept

18 A/C DISPATCHED, RECALLED  
BUT SORTIE CREDIT GIVEN TO ALL

Satterlund, and Lts. A. H. Green, and H. W. Schwab. Also aboard were Sgts. Denley, Holtz, E. L. Shaw Jr., Porter, Dugan, and R. A. Orr.

Davenport flew A/C #833. With Davenport were Lts. Conner, Rispoli, and Hanson. Also aboard were Sgts. Bales, Strait, Yurick, Maloy, J. L. Wilson, and De Wald.

It appears that Olson also went in A/C #857. However it is not known if he was given credit for the mission. With Olson was Flight Officer E. W. Robert, and Lts. R. S. Allen, and H. W. Scott. Also aboard were Sgts. Goodson, Ferkauff, Hearne, R. C. Freeland, Hartney, McMenamin, and J. R. Bell.

YES  
YES

The author remembers that we all craned our necks trying, without success to see the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Back in England, Ray Warner wrote on September 29th:

It is rumored that our planes will return next week. A few of our planes that were left here have been going on diversions. McKee made Captain. I sure was glad to see him get it.

During the month of September Norm Kiefer mentioned the following in letters to his wife:

"We started to rove the dial of our radio and picked up a recording of the actual announcement of the surrender of Italy as it was made in North Africa. We then picked up the German news and they played up everything that sounded good, but said nothing about Italy."..."We had a little excitement this morning when a fighter shot down a barrage balloon that had broken loose during the night. It went down in flames."..."We used to have a nice quiet little room. Now we usually have four or more fellows listening to the news and music on the radio. Sometimes we can't even lie on our own beds."..."I got into a blackjack game last night and won a pound. That balances the pound that I lost the night before. There is a poker game going on in one of the barracks with a 10-pound ante"..."By now you know that my furlough blew up. Dog-gone these flies. They are the worst yet. Everything else is either the same or a little better."..."Yesterday I took off everything but my shorts. Soaked a towel in water. Lay down on my cot with the towel over me and in real desert comfort, went to sleep."..."Beyond the field is another range of hills. In some places this range is studded with

the ancient ruins of another civilization."..."We got a swell water jug. It is earthenware and keeps the water cool. We got it while on pass in Tunis."..."I went to mass last night. You see, Father Lamb isn't with us anymore and so a priest has to come over here to say mass. He can't make it in the morning, so we have mass at 6:30. Father Lamb is now a Major and has gone to another post."

On October 1st, back in England, <sup>SABRINA</sup> Lt. Raymond C. Houghtby arrived flying A/C #42-7647. (George Ramsey recalls that the last three digits of the aircraft that they flew from Lincoln, Nebraska, was 172. His combat record shows that he flew most of his combat missions in this aircraft.) (Web Todd records indicate that aircraft #42-7647 was flown to England by Houghtby. This A/C was salvaged at Shipdham on 11/11/44. His records also show that A/C #42-29172 was assigned to Houghtby.)

With Houghtby were Lts. Patrick W. Gallagher, George K. Ramsey, and William C.K. Brown. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Wayne M. Warren, Frank P. Phillips, Ladislao C. Castro, Norman L. Dye, Thomas L. Cannon Jr., and James W. Lewis.

It was also about this time that Duffy and crew arrived. With Lt. William Duffy were Lts. John M. McCaslin Jr., Jim Callaway, and Sherman Dowsett. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Harold Vickers, William D. Scott, Victor J. Chopp, John H. Stewart, William E. Drumel, and Richard Hershey.

On the same orders were Lts. David E. Sayler, Howard B. McCormick, Allen N. Williams Jr., and Gerald G. Gille. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Beuford P. Fletcher, Raymond G. Moffett, Warren K. Rohrer, Garnell W. Myers, George W. Reed, and Raymond T. Murray Jr.

These men brought with them the newest model B-24. The Group also began to receive these ships to replace combat and other losses. This model had a turret in the nose and a turret in the belly. There were also radar modifications. These ships, because of the added armament, were slower than the model D that we had flown so far. This required some changes to our previous approach to formation flying when the two types of ships were in the same formation. The comfort level also went down. The front turret allowed air to circulate freely through the ship. We now had a wind tunnel.

Mark Morris commented on October 1st.

Helluva Wiener Roast. Loaded 4,000 pounds of bombs for trip to Wiener Neustadt again.

On that morning the 44th dispatched 26 ships to destroy aircraft factories. One aircraft aborted. The weather was bad, the flak intense and accurate and the fighters persistent. It is known that A/C #283, Z, flown by McAtee and A/C #857, X, flown by Olson, went. Bombing results were poor because of weather, flak and the large number of fighters in the area. The Group shot down 50 enemy aircraft. Seven of our aircraft were shot down in the target area.

Mark Morris recalls:

When I was about 15 years old I lied about my age to see the then adult movie, Ecstasy. Somewhere through the years I had been informed that it was filmed in the area of Wiener Neustadt, Austria. True or not, I was again reminded of that bit of trivia when we were briefed on the raid to be made there. That is not all that was familiar about the name. The Old Crow had been there before.

The briefing information for expected defenses was that fighters weren't expected to present much of a problem. It was mentioned in passing that there was an advanced fighter pilot training base there.

We had a new crew member. Our previous copilot now had a ship of his very own. We were introduced to his replacement, Lt. Waino Hannuksela. Otherwise, we boarded Old Crow with the same crew that she had hauled to and from Ploesti. This time the reduced crew of nine was due to our hatch gunner, Charley Loftus, being hospitalized with sand fly fever.

We faced an approximate 12-hour flight which was extending our fuel limit. The overland part was all at high altitude. We had four 1,000-pound bombs. During the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, everything was routine. We crossed the European coast, climbed over the mountains in clear weather and remained at high altitude. As we neared the target area we began to receive flak. Our Group seemed to be in excellent formation, but for one exception. I noted a lone B-24 about 1,000 yards out at the 9 o'clock position. It wore the desert camouflage of the group we had been stationed near in Benghazi. I stopped scanning and tried to examine it closely. Something else was peculiar about that ship. I could

STRONG 6-201  
DAVENPORT U 853  
LAARSEN - R 013  
HOBSON - A 877

FIVE



hardly believe it! The waist window hatch covers were in place and closed. Mighty comfortable huh! About then the flak, which had been well below us, increased in intensity as well as accuracy. Bursts were at our exact altitude. I caught on fast. I called McAtee on the intercom to report the presence of the alien B-24. I had no doubt that its occupants were supplying a lot of good information to the flak gunners below.

After getting the flak gunners zeroed in, the intruder peeled off and I lost sight of it. The flak was so accurate that it had simply blown the formation apart. In addition to the evasive action being taken by McAtee, we were literally being bounced by concussions.

Kiefer had not yet gone down into the bomb bay when McAtee decided that for survival's sake he had to take evasive action. He was not alone. Every ship in the formation started to rise and fall, but not in unison. They were seesawing up and down. At any one point in time, you were beside someone that was going in the opposite direction.

Mark continues:

Fighters immediately appeared, well before the target, and they were all over us. They were eager to the extent of flying right through their own flak. Unbelievable! When we hit the initial point and bombardier Young took over for the straight and level bomb run, we were sitting ducks. I and all other gunners were firing a lot of rounds. There must have been 30 fighters interested in just us. They would climb above the flak, stabilize to pick a target and then come diving down on us.

Sometime shortly after bomb release, I was suddenly pinned to the ceiling. At the time my thoughts were that the ship or someone at the controls had been badly hit. I was on my side against the ceiling. There was my parachute lying alongside me, also pinned to the ceiling. I reached it and just got a good grasp on it when bang! I hit the floor. I was on my knees. I hit so hard that even with the heavy clothing, I dented the catwalk.

In the bomb bay, the author made a command decision during the violent evasive action. The bomb bay is no place for me! I was standing between McAtee and Hannuksela when a fighter commenced a 12 o'clock high attack. He came in close. McAtee threw the ship into a violent dive in order to avoid a

head on collision.

My thought was, "Here we go again! This is Kiel revisited". This time I was better prepared. I had put on my chute during the evasive action and I was standing where I could see the dive start. I hung on to the armor plating as tightly as I could. Nonetheless, I too was quickly lodged on the ceiling and then slammed to the floor.

Back in the waist, Mark Morris:

Quickly scrambled up and took a quick look around. Kerns, right waist gunner, was also getting up. Jack Edwards, in the tail turret, seemed okay and was pawing furiously at his guns. Surprise, we were still in the air and in a more or less normal flying attitude.

I turned my attention once more to fighting. Big Problem! My gun was jammed! I got it cleared, but our ammunition was all over the floor. Kerns and I broke some of the ammunition into short belts of approximately 20 rounds per belt. They didn't feed well and caught on the waist ledge during each short burst. I couldn't see any other B-24 even near. Not a nice feeling for a bomber crewman. We were all alone after the dive. Any ships still flying had apparently been spread all over the sky. More fighters appeared, but no guns seemed to be firing from our ship. Apparently all positions had the same problem of scrambled ammunition. I knew that must be corrected if we were to have any chance of survival.

Kerns was rummaging around on the floor for ammunition. At least we waist gunners could get at our ammunition. The other positions had a greater problem. The ammunition storage for each waist window was a box fabricated from wood. It was about 30 inches long, 24 inches high and just wide enough for the caliber-50 round to lie in. The ammunition was routed through a metal chute attached between this box and the side of the gun. The box was permanently mounted on the side of the ship about a foot from the waist window and just overhead. There was barely room to get one's head between the curved ceiling and the box. I pushed most of the hanging ammunition back into position. Then I placed my foot on the ledge of the waist window and heaved myself up. There I hung, precariously balanced, one foot practically out the window of a maneuvering B-24, hanging on for dear life, out of breath and half in panic, with oxygen hoses, communication cords,

and other stuff interfering. Chinning myself on the box, I reached in, feeling for the double-link end. We had been taught that the ammunition would not feed unless the double-link end was fed first. I turned all the ammunition over at least three times while searching for the double-link end. After being tossed off the ledge more than once and still not finding it, I was no longer only half in panic.

Remembering what the back of the ship looked like after the dive at Kiel, I (Kiefer) told McAtee that I was going to check the bomb bay and then go to the back of the ship. The bomb bay was clear of bombs and the doors were fully closed.

When I opened the rear bomb bay door I saw Kerns still laying ammunition into the head high wooden box. The individual ammunition boxes were thrown all over. Mark was doing something to his gun. The tail guns coughed a couple of times and then stopped. I don't think that the fellows were at all aware that I was there. Seeing that there were no injuries, I returned to the flight deck.

Mark was still having trouble:

After another unsuccessful try, I decided enough of the technicalities. Instead, I just grabbed a single-link end, fed it down the chute anyway and charged the gun. I had to open the cover and physically place a starting round in the gun to get it charged, but when I pulled the trigger it worked.

Just in time! Three more Me-109's had queued up. They sat just above us at 9 o'clock high and 500 yards out. I called Mike Davis, top turret for help. Hearing no response I called again with greater urgency. Still no response and no gunfire. I began berating "Mike get those fighters, Mike can't you see them, Shoot him Mike shoot!". As I took a quick glance around to Kerns I noticed one of my communications cords hung on the ammunition box. I grabbed and reconnected it. As I did so, I heard Joe Young saying, "Whoever that is screaming into the mike, knock it off.". Now I knew which cord that was. I had a mike, but no earphone. Sorry!

The last three Me-109's that had queued up pulled slightly ahead of our left wing tip, turned in and began raking us. I resumed praying and firing, long bursts of both. They came diving in nose to tail, one right behind the other.

They were so close that they were no more than 50 yards out when they went under and disappeared from my sight. Their formation was so tight that at one point all three were in my ring sight.

I recall accepting the fact that we were going down and it was just a matter of going down fighting. I promised that if God would just get us out, I would make no claims of taking a life. Well maybe I am reneging a little. Forgive me! Not those pilot's lives maybe, but I'm sure I knocked hell out of those three Me-109's.

Luckily that was the last of the direct attacks on *Old Crow*. We had been under attack for a long time. The entire attack force (later estimated to be 100) must have been about out of ammunition, if not fuel, having attacked before, during, and long after the target.

As I again looked rearward, I became aware that a good portion of the left vertical stabilizer was completely gone. I had been so busy that I will never know just when that happened.

Up on the flight deck McAtee knew when it happened. Control of the aircraft became extremely difficult. He decided to try adjusting the trim tabs. It worked! Maybe we will make it!

Mark Morris continued:

Either flak or fighters had knocked off part of our tail. As things began to get quiet, we went about the task of assessing damage. Again all of the crew was okay. *Old Crow*, however showed signs of wear. In addition to the missing tail feathers, she had a lot of holes and she had taken up smoking. I believe that the gunners on our ship accounted for four enemy aircraft shot down (not including the three that I did not claim).

Olson, flying in X, was under heavy attack. Approximately 125-to-150 enemy aircraft made vicious attacks on the 506th formation. X was hit individually by five Me-109's with nose and passing attacks, very close. Olson dropped his bombs and peeled off to the right and was still pursued by the five fighters. Writing to Will Lundy, Steve Bugyie, ball turret gunner, relates:

I did not normally belong to Olson's crew. I was flying

as a spare gunner for that day only. I was the regular assistant engineer with Bunce.

I think that I may have been the last one alive to depart the airplane and possibly the first to hit the ground. I delayed pulling my rip cord until the last minute and this, according to Vic McMenamin, tail gunner, may have saved my life. Vic was adjusting his harness when I came out of the ball turret. He accidentally dropped my chest pack chute down into the ball turret. I had to crawl back into the turret to retrieve it. Victor claims that he pulled his rip cord right away and saw the ship blow to pieces.

Due to the flames from the burning bomb bay tank, we do not know who left the plane last. Lt. Olson may have stayed with the airplane too long as no one ever saw or heard of him again. Bell and Ferkauff, the waist gunners, were already gone.

It may be that reports of only eight chutes accounts for my being reported as missing in action. After I got to the ground, my face felt like I had a bad sunburn. The fires were so intense that there was molten aluminum stuck to my face. The molten metal and exploding aircraft may account for the many holes that I had observed in my parachute.

Up in the nose of the ship, Ron Allen could see the fire in the bomb bay, and was preparing to go out through the nose wheel doors. He snapped on his chest harness chute and moved toward the doors:

Suddenly I was stopped. I had forgotten to disconnect my communications and oxygen equipment. I quickly disconnected them and jumped. The fires singed my wrists, jacket and hair. As I drifted down, I looked up to see my parachute was full of holes. I didn't know if I had pulled the rip cord too soon. The chute may have struck the ball turret guns as I went by. There was also the possibility that the turret gunner may have put a few holes in the chute since he was still in the turret and firing.

On the flight deck, Goodson and Hearne were both burned by the fires that were raging in the bomb bay when they jumped. Goodson also had quite a chunk of skin torn loose when he hit the catwalk in the bomb bay.

Flying with Stanley F. Olson (KIA) were Lts. Edgar W. Roberts (POW), Ronald S. Allen Jr. (POW), and Chester B. Hanson (POW). Enlisted personnel included Walter N. Goodson (POW), Allie T. Hearne (POW), J. R. Bell (POW), Oscar Ferkauff (POW), Steve F. Bugyie (POW), and Victor A. McMenamin (POW).

Norm Kliefer remembers there were a lot of planes, both bombers and fighters, that were burning in the target area. I don't remember ever before seeing so many burning airplanes.

At this same time, Ron Allen and Steve Bugyie were drifting to the ground in their parachutes. Ron reports:

I jumped at 11:45 when our aircraft was at 16,500 feet (we should have been at 22,000 over the target). It was 12:00 noon when I reached the ground. I was hungry, tired and disgusted. I had an escape kit, but it was not intended to be used in this area. It had Francs in it rather than money that was appropriate to this area. I had an apple that I had obtained the night before. That was all I had to eat for three days except for berries that I could scrounge. On that third day, I was in a thinly-wooded area. As I was lying down trying to figure out what to do to get across a road, I suddenly heard a stick pop behind me. When I turned to look, I saw an Austrian army doctor. I later learned that he was on leave from the Russian front.

The doctor was with his family visiting a farm. The doctor could speak English just as well as I could. He sat down and we visited a while. At one point, the doctor said, "Well, the war is going to be over in about 18 months." He then went back to rejoin the others. He didn't attempt to capture me. He told his wife about me and they discussed what to do. He brought me something to eat. He then told me that they had decided, for their own protection, to turn me in. We went to the farm house and they gave me some warmed milk. Having been brought up on a dairy farm, warm milk just did not appeal to me.

One of the farm girls said something and the doctor broke out laughing. He slapped me on the shoulder and said, "Do you know what she said?" I replied, "I have no idea." The doctor then told me, "The girl thinks you are good looking". There I was, unshaven and my clothing was filthy. What did she see?

The farmer sent a boy that was about 12 years old for the local constabulary. They put me in the local jail and all the kids from around that town hooted at me. I don't know whether or not they were making fun of me.

**Steve reports:**

When I came down, I landed in quite a large pine tree. In order to get down, I had to climb on the shroud lines and broke the top of the tree off. When I hit the ground I am certain that I was unconscious for a short period of time. When I woke up I hid in some evergreens. It was fairly late in the afternoon when I heard the whistles of the Germans who were out searching for me. I took off in a westerly direction heading for Switzerland. It was then that I made the rule that I would only travel at night.

When I stopped, I found a haystack and went to sleep in it. I was startled awake when I heard a blast from an 88-mm antiaircraft gun. There apparently was a German encampment near there. It was daylight, but I went back to sleep and slept most of the day. When I tried to look out of the stack I couldn't see anything. It was mostly an open field in front of me.

As soon as the sun went down I took off again. I was loose for three nights and four days. By walking and trotting, from sundown to sunup, I was able to make 190 kilometers (about 120 miles). The next to last night I was loose I couldn't find any cover so I slept in a small hay field behind a tavern. It was around noon time when I heard some rustling in the grass next to me. When I looked I saw a Water Spaniel smelling me. About fifty yards away was a German hunter, an old fellow with a shotgun. I just lay there and the hunter walked on. When night fell I took off again.

I was weak from dysentery as well as the lack of food and water. It was on the fourth day when I approached some people. I was hoping that I could get some help. I spoke to them in German. After a brief conversation, they spoke to one of the people in Hungarian, or some other language. I thought they were sending for food. Instead, they went to bring the Home Guard. The next thing I knew, I was surrounded. I was taken back to Wiener Neustadt.

On the following day, Lt. Matson, a pilot from the 389th, and I were transported to Dulag Luft. During

interrogation the Germans could hardly believe that I had gotten 120 miles away from Wiener Neustadt after being shot down.

Back on the *Old Crow*, which was struggling to remain airborne while retreating from Wiener Neustadt, McCash decided that the nearest landing field that we could make was Palermo. Back to Sicily once again! That was where we landed the last time we visited Wiener Neustadt. When we began to relax, we kidded McCash about wanting to go back to pick up the parachute he lost on our last visit. The author began to rack his brain. What was that frequency and call name for Palermo?

Mark Morris remembers:

We knew the approach for the field wasn't easy. The last time we ran out of gas. This time we had to make it with part of the tail missing. The last time McAtee and Laudig had taken us in banking to the right through the pass around the mountain and onto the short 2,000-foot fighter runway. It was a new approach for Hannuksela, but for the rest of us it was *deja vu*.

We were low on fuel, but this time we made it without the engines coughing. McAtee put it down safely and taxied to a stop. There were already four other damaged B-24's sitting on the field. They took us for debriefing in the operations room. I mentioned my close in shots, but remembering my fervent promise, I didn't pursue a claim.

Kerns, Kiefer and I spent the night in the ship. The rest of the crew disappeared. I slept fitfully in the back on the dented catwalk, reliving the whole nightmare over and over. This was probably the worst night of my life. That hard floor, and the dreams.

When we were there before we had been fed at the outdoor mess arrangement that served the troops occupying the airfield. They had no spare mess kits. We ate out of the large gallon cans that their rations came in. They heated the food for us and did all they could to make us feel welcome. As a joke I had packed a mess kit with other belongings in my B-4 bag in the aircraft. I bantered that only I would have one if needed. It served well now!

In the morning of the second day in Palermo, Hannuksela came out to the field to check on how we were doing.



After a while he left. We then went to eat. Afterward, we meandered across the field toward our aircraft. While swinging my mess kit in the air to dry it, I dropped my fork. Just then the wind suddenly came whistling across the field. As I stooped to retrieve my fork a large sheet of corrugated metal came flying right over my back. As I straightened, the wind noise grew to a sound like an approaching locomotive.

The three of us broke into a run for the remaining 200 yards or so and climbed into Old Crow. We were in the midst of a tornado. Kerns started the auxiliary power "put-put" and then closed the hatches. We clambered into the cockpit, I, into the pilot seat and Kief, into the copilot seat. We held the foot brakes on and actually flew the Old Crow holding her on the ground. She never lifted. The other B-24's and even a huge British Walrus were blown off the fields. The worst part of the wind only lasted about five minutes.

As it cleared we looked around us. A lot of the fighters of the black 99th Fighter Group, stationed there, had flipped over on their backs. A high stucco wall separated the field from a road and many of the aircraft that had performed a ballet past us now rested either against or halfway through the wall. One B-24 had gone into the wall backwards and rested nose down. The tail turret had ridden up over the wall. There 20 feet above the ground was the intact vertical stabilizer which later was to be reassigned to the Old Crow.

That night the three of us slept on the cement floor of one of the empty buildings that the ground troops offered. I did not feel like spending another night inside the aircraft. Next day, Lt. Hannuksela came out to the field. He talked to us a bit and then left. Repair of our damaged aircraft was progressing, but I knew we would be there at least another day. I dragged Kief and Kerns to downtown Palermo.

We asked for a place to sleep at the Red Cross, but there was no room. They suggested that I talk to a Colonel that had headquarters in the same building. I reported to him and made the same request. He called for a command car and had us taken to an infantry battalion that was occupying a hotel apartment complex.

The author remembers that when we went in, there was a

Sergeant at a desk in the lobby. When we told him our problem, he said he could take care of us. We followed him to an upstairs apartment. A young woman answered his knock and he started to talk to her in Italian. She started to cry and called back into the room. Little children and an old lady came to the door crying. We asked the Sergeant what was going on. He explained that he had just told them that they would have to leave so that we could have a place to sleep. The three of us objected strenuously and told him that it would only be for a night or two. Don't you have anything else?

**Mark Morris continues**

Along the hallway we had seen some clean vacant beds. We were told that they belonged to hospitalized members who wouldn't be back right away. It was agreed that we would use them.

The infantrymen welcomed us and someone gave us a bottle of "vino". After supper we sat on the curb outside, swapped stories with the infantrymen and retired early. Before we called it a night, we played with the little Italian children that lived in the apartment that they were going to give us.

The next morning we made it to breakfast with our new-found friends. Then we hitchhiked back to the airfield.

The repairs to the *Old Crow's* tail were completed and she was refueled. During the morning all of the crew appeared except Jack, the tail gunner.

When Mike Davis arrived his arms were full of bottles of "vino". He quickly took the wine up into the ship. Then periodically he found a reason to go into the nose. Occasionally McCash would go with him.

McAtee was very disturbed that Edwards had not turned up. He kept saying, "He better get here soon. I'll go without him!" Every once in a while he would hit his fist into the palm of the other hand and repeat, "I'll go without him."

**Mark Morris continues with how McAtee carried out his threat:**

Engine run up went OK. The weather was checked, McCash plotted the course for Tunis and flight clearance was

secured. Down the short runway, up, up and away. Old Crow was a bird again. Over the Mediterranean Sea she labored along for the few hours to Tunis.

About midway across the Sea, McAtee had not heard anything from the men in the nose of the ship and Mike Davis was off the flight deck the biggest share of the time. McAtee called McCash on the intercom and asked for a course verification. Over the intercom came a slurred response "Whoosh navigating?".

Upon landing Mark recalls:

I was surprised to discover that our Group, the 44th, had left for England. We were to follow. First though, there had to be some repairs.

Charley Loftus, now out of the hospital, sat alone in our tent in the middle of a large expanse of desert. As we approached he came rushing out, stopped short, looked perplexed, but could not quite voice his question. We hurriedly assured him that Jack was okay. Just off on a spree somewhere in Sicily.

Many years later, Henry Fetherolf was to write:

You made an emergency landing while you were in Tunis and Edwards turned up missing when it was time to come back. A short while later he showed up in a sailor suit and with a big bag of wine.

After we got back Charley told us about Olson being shot down. That wasn't the only bad news that he had. Hobson (POW) went down while flying with the 66th. Original 506th crewmen that were with him were Hyde (POW), Cutshall (POW), Tuttle (POW), Williams (KIA), and Kallal (KIA). Also with him was Popovich (POW), an original 506th ground man that had volunteered to fly.

In addition, in the 67th we lost Newbold (POW) and Zwicker (KIA). Also, one of our original aircraft, *Earthquake McGoon*, was buried in the mud on the beachhead at Salerno, Italy. The 506th had taken a beating at Wiener Neustadt!

Dave McCash recalls:

The October 1st run to Wiener Neustadt as the most frightening operation that we flew. Going up the Adriatic

Sea it all seemed so peaceful with the sun shining and danger so far away. Then that unmarked B-24, that flew along at our altitude off to the right at 3 o'clock, kept us company almost to the target area. I'm sure it was radioing all the altitude and air speed information to the German gunners below. The 44th was low group and "tail end Charlie", as I recall, and the 506th was low squadron in the low group. We were only about 16,000 feet. Since the ground at the target is about at 4,000 feet, we were only 12,000 feet above those nasty 88-mm antiaircraft guns. That's no altitude to be at when people with guns are mad at you. Seeing our wingmen on fire and flames coming from the bomb bay tanks was a sight I'll never forget. The chutes coming out, some of them on fire.

The rumor around the base indicated that intelligence tried to explain the large number of enemy aircraft at Wiener Neustadt and the large number of burning aircraft in the target area. They contended that the German Air Force ordered inexperienced students into the air that day. This was the reason that they were into the flak and all over. It also explained why one or two would singly attack and then they would be followed by formations of two or three. The single attacks were by the instructors who were showing their students how to do it. Thus, lots of enemy fighters, where the morning briefing said that we should have no trouble.

The planes the Germans were given to fly were directly off the assembly line, but before armor plating had been installed over the gas tanks. Thus, they were as easy to set afire as we were with our bomb bay tanks. Lots of burning aircraft.

It is likely that Lt. Parker arrived at about this time. With Richard A. Parker were Lts. David R. Simons, Edward L. Rutherford, and John E. Coffee. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Harry D. Willey, David L. Lieck, Ivan G. Nyhoff, Joseph T. Covone, Mack Hardwick Jr., and Claude Sorrow.

While these events were occurring in Africa, the replacement crews made a diversionary flight into the North Sea on October 2nd. The number of 506th ships that participated is not known nor is it known who went. *2 A/C JOHNSON & JOHNSON*

Also on October 2nd Lt. Henry S. Borkowski and crew arrived. With Lt. Borkowski were Lts. Paul E. Blow, Henry C. Mikolajczyk, and Walter Lockett. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Dale Graef, Henry D. Williams, James D. Redus, Donal J.

Smith, Wade R. Lemon, and Trinidad Gutierrez.

The Borkowski crew brought with them aircraft #41-29 153, Z, Greenwich. The ship was named after the pilot's home town. (Note: Operations Order #170, furnished by James Redus, indicates that this crew brought in A/C #42-63 965. Redus recalls that upon arrival in the Squadron, A/C #965 was taken for modification and the crew was given A/C #153. Most of the crew missions were flown on A/C #153.) As with other new crews, the Borkowski crew spent about a month training while their ship was being modified.

During the next couple of days Ray Marner wrote:

October 3--"Captain Slough's crew came in today and brought nothing but bad news. They were based in Tunis this time and pulled two raids over Italy. Then on Oct. 1st they pulled a raid on Wiener Neustadt near Vienna, Austria.

"The Group lost a lot of planes. Some say 10, others 18. Our squadron lost Lt. Olson's crew, including Captain Allen, and Sgts. Ferkauff, Hearne, Bell, Goodson, and McMenamin. Popovich went down on Hobson's ship. Cutshall, Tuttle, Williams, Kallal and Hyde are gone. I can hardly believe it. Captain McAtee's crew is the only original crew left in the outfit. We still have Slough and Strong who joined us in Salina, Kansas."

7 ACTUALLY  
"HOSTS"  
MANY  
OTHERS  
C/L

October 4--"Major Beam and Anderson came back with Captain Strong today. They brought news that Butler's crew landed in Sicily and is okay. Still nothing about Nick. The 66th and 67th are practically wiped out again. We sent a couple of planes out on a diversion today and lost one ship. Everything is going wrong. It was Lt. Johnston's crew which has only been with us a couple of weeks. The Group lost 2 planes altogether. They shot the wing off one Me-109 and it crashed head-on into Johnston's ship. There was no chance for survival. It sure is tough. One ship came back all shot up and had a couple of wounded men. (Will Lundy's writings indicate that these men were from the 67th Squadron)"

67th Sq.  
With Lt. Frederick V. Johnston (KIA) were Lts. John Dudrich (KIA), George N. Larson (KIA), and Adrian E. Fredericks (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Donald Green (KIA), Eugene E. Andris (KIA), Philip D. Idlet (KIA), David Pest (KIA), Emerson D. Short (KIA), and Eugene H. Funkhouser

(KIA).

Mark Morris continues the story of the Old Crow crew by telling what happened on October 7th:

During inspection, the aircraft engineers at Tunis, discovered that Old Crow was damaged beyond repair. They found it difficult to believe that she could even have brought us home, let alone survive the stress of two landings and a take off. For one thing the left main wing spar was partially severed by a 20-mm cannon shell that had gone in, remained, and smoldered. That did however, explain one of the large holes we had noticed there.

We scrapped Old Crow. We got Bar U out of bone pile. By parts selection, Bar U was fixed to take us home to England.

Charles Norris was one of the ground crewmen that was left behind to ride back to England on the Old Crow. He recalls:

The Old Crow was in bad condition. It couldn't fly any more. We went to the bone yard and selected the ship that was in the best condition. We then took parts from three other ships and patched up our selected ship.

When it came time to leave, I didn't have a parachute. McAtee tried to convince me that I didn't need one. I told him that I was not climbing into that beat up imitation of an airplane without a chute. After a search, we found one and I agreed to go.

Mark Morris recalls when McAtee test hopped this aircraft.

Jack Edwards and I rode along in the back and got covered with gold dye marker from a capsule that had been broken during the previous flight. The stuff was almost impossible to get off. Finally had to go to the beach at Tunis for a swim. We had to walk and hitchhike rides on trucks. Of course knowing Jack was the world's best hitch hiker, I wasn't worried.

When we were away from our home base for extended periods of time, many of the administrative functions were carried out within the crew.

The censorship of the enlisted personnel mail for example. The pilot usually assigned this distasteful task to one of

the crew officers. Since they didn't like to do it, they often wouldn't look at the letter contents. This allowed us to get away with murder. For example, after the second Wiener Neustadt raid and our unplanned stopover in Palermo, the author wrote:

"We have been off on a little unexpected tour for the last few days."... "I was very surprised to see how contented the people in one of the occupied countries are. They are working for and with the troops that are stationed there."... "The Red Cross has a very nice building. As yet there isn't very much in the way of entertainment, but some day it should be okay."... "We didn't have any blankets or mess gear. First we went to the Red Cross. They didn't have any room for us. We then got in touch with one of the Yankee outfits and explained our situation. They sent a command car and took us to a hotel."... "A whole outfit had their quarters here. Those men didn't have very much, but they couldn't be good enough or do enough for us. They were eating very good food. The surprising thing was that there were also civilians living in the same hotel."... "There were two of the cutest little girls living in the hotel. One was three and she could jabber for minutes on end. We didn't know what she was saying, but we pretended like we knew."... "Oh yes, before I forget it, the mosquitos were bad in Sicily."

The Mark Morris diary continued:

Oct. 8--"Marrakech an eight-hours ride."

On that same day, Ray Marner, in Edinburgh, Scotland, wrote:

The 506th Squadron is one year old today. We went to a pretty classy bar (County Bar) and had a good time. All the boys were there. Harby (Harbison), Fred, Griff (Griffin), Herb, Dan (Kennon), Paul (These were probably members of Slough's crew), and etc. All together there were about a dozen of us up here.

On October 9 the 506th made a raid on Gdynia. No other information is available for the squadron. It is not known the number of aircraft nor who went. *1 A/c W-962 E.T. JOHNSON*

Likewise, on October 10 there was a North Sea diversion. The intent of the mission was to clear the way for the B-17's that were to go to Munster. The 44th put up 19 aircraft.

*5 A/c WITH ONE ABORT*

*TOTAL SEVEN A/C*

Several enemy aircraft were sighted.

Ollie Bowling's Flight Record shows that he was on this diversion while flying with Lt. E.T. Johnson of the 67th Squadron. It was a five-hour flight for which they received operations time. <sup>506</sup> A/C 5-522

Nothing more is known regarding the 506th participants in this raid.

Ollie Bowling's records also show that he engaged in a nearly four-hour operational mission on October 13th while flying with Harold Laudig. This mission was recalled because of weather conditions. It is not known which other 506th crews were out that day.

Mark Morris wrote:

Oct. 10--Marrakech to England, eight hours flying in lots of fog. We landed at Port Morgan at 2200 hours in fog.

Oct. 11--Our pilot called in for weather and found there is a storm front. We are still grounded.

Oct 12--Port Morgan to home, Norwich.

Oct 16--Rumor: we are going to rest camp.

Norm Kiefer went to the Flight Surgeon, "Doc." Allison, and asking him if there was anything to the rumor. His answer seemed to say that we would be going. Norm then asked "Why? There isn't anything wrong with us." Captain Allison replied, "A number of people think that your crew has gone through a lot of rough moments during the last few months and it's time to take a break."

Charles Norris reports:

While we were in Africa, both in Benghazi and Tunis, we became accustomed to being close to the aircraft. It was much more convenient than in England. In England the Tech. Site was quite a distance from our living quarters. It was too far to walk at all hours of the day and night. You had to depend on transportation by truck.

Now that we are back in England, Charles Higbee and I started to look for a place to call home on the Tech Site. We found a bomb shelter that was out on the field. It was



never used. It was dry and looked as if it had possibilities.

We rigged a barrel stove with a chimney that extended through the air vent. We got some beds and other furniture and set up housekeeping.

One day, I thought that I ought to let someone in on our little secret hideaway. I took Capt. McAtee to see what we had done. I then asked him if it was okay. He said in effect that it was, but don't go around telling everybody.

On October 18 another North Sea diversion was flown. <sup>Yes</sup> This was a feint intended to protect the B-17's which were going to Duren, Germany. BILL STARKS, 110 W-962 LED THE 4TH Oct 10<sup>th</sup>

Ollie Bowling's records show that he was on this six-hour mission with James Bunce on A/C #153. Since 10-to-15 enemy aircraft were encountered, they were given credit for a combat mission.

On the same day, October 18, the Mark Morris diary reveals:

55,500? We flew to Blenheim to weigh our new ship. It weighed 5,500 pounds. I got a good look at some Mosquitoes (British aircraft). We buzzed a B-17 field on the way home. We were gone two hours and 300 miles.

Ray Marner recorded:

A bunch more of the boys came back from Africa. Maury came in and said that at least five chutes came out of Nick's ship. Maybe there is a chance yet. Frank Adams is back.

On October 20 there was a French Coast diversion flown by the 506th.

Ollie Bowling was on this two-hour flight with James Bunce. They received only operations time.

Nothing more is known about our squadron's involvement.

On October 21st Mark Morris wrote:

Our mission was scrubbed after takeoff. We flew out over the channel alone for three hours!

On October 22 Ray Warner wrote:

Knox, Jett, Hickerson and some others went 200 miles over mountains on foot when they escaped from prison camp in Italy.

Ray Whitby remembers:

We were in prison for about a month and a half. Late one afternoon we broke a hole in the prison wall and headed south. There were six men in our group. They included Joe Jett, Dale Lee, Tom Purcell, Zimmerman, an Englishman, and myself.

We walked only at night and slept in the daytime. We stayed in the mountains away from the main roads. It was cold in October, so I traded my light coveralls to the Englishman for his wool uniform. I still have that uniform.

Our diet was mainly fresh figs and after a few days, we learned never to zip up your pants or buckle your belt. If you did, there was a good chance you would smell bad the next day.

After 30 days of walking at night and watching for Germans during the day, we got through the lines at a little village west of Foggia. We had a problem convincing the Canadians that we were American P.O.W's. Later we were sent back to England and to the States by Christmas.

Dale Lee has a photo of the hole in the prison wall. He took it many years later on a visit to Italy. He remembers:

The opportunity to escape, which we had been looking for, came on the day that some important Nazi officers arrived at the Camp. There was a big commotion at the gate and everybody in the prison command seemed very excited. The Italian guards left their guard towers to see what the excitement was all about.

One of our British buddies had worked in the power house and he knew that the electric power to the high tension wires, that surrounded the camp, was turned off during the day.

In a section of the cement wall was a small area that contained brick blocks. We decided that this area would

be the best place for us to break through with our crude tools.

After breaking through the wall, we had to contend with the uncharged high tension wires and the barbed-wire entanglement that lay beyond. From then on it was run like hell.

When we could run no more, we slid down off the slope of a steep mountain road. During that slide, we caught brush, trees or whatever we could to slow our progress. Whenever, we could get a good hold, we straddled the object and leaned back against the bank in a sitting position and rested. Some of us even were able to get a little sleep in this position.

Military patrols were out looking for us all night. We could hear them on the road which was about 50 feet above us. It always bothered me that we were not able to go further that first night. However, many years later, to my surprise, I discovered that we spent that night 18 Km from the Camp. We had also gone 4,000 feet higher in the mountains.

Our plan was to head for the high mountains and thus avoid being in populated areas. We decided that each day we would observe the area we were in and then make our plans to move at night. The North Star was our point of reference for navigation. Our destination was the boot of Italy. It was the most likely for the Allied invasion and our escape. We ate what we could find in farmer's gardens.

Occasionally we were able to bargain. One night Joe Jett traded his jacket for a "hunk" of cheese. It tasted so good. We were satisfied with the trade, until morning. That is when we found the worms. Big Fat Worms! However, we were hungry enough that we weren't about to throw away the cheese. Every time that a worm appeared we eliminated the rascal with the flick of the finger.

I had a lot of bad sores on my legs. These were infected and would rupture and become reinfected. They were very painful. Joe Jett believed that garlic was a good "blood purifier" and convinced me to try it. The next garden that we found I looked for garlic. I ate three big ones, the whole thing. Usually we walked in single file and I was the lead man. However, after my "garlic feast" the

fellows changed the order of procession so that I was in the rear. I seemed to have developed an odor.

One night we stopped at a farm house. It was very well kept and looked quite prosperous. "Mama" was cooking spaghetti and it smelled so good. Suddenly I realized that "Papa" wasn't around and I didn't know when he had left. I was immediately suspicious. I told the other fellows that I was getting "the hell out of there". It was hard to leave since we were so hungry, but leave we did. After we were further up the mountain and hid, we saw "Papa" return with a number of German soldiers.

This was just one of our close calls. There was the time that we came to a railroad crossing. We had been skirting this track for two or three days. All during this time there were no trains that passed us. We decided to cross the track. Just as we started, we were surprised to hear a quick "tweet-tweet" whistle followed by a train that barreled around the corner. We flattened ourselves to the train bed bank.

Suddenly the train stopped about 50 feet in front of us and we thought that we had been spotted. The railroad cars were loaded with German soldiers. We felt better when the Germans stayed aboard and two civilians got off. The train departed. When all was quiet again, we made a quick crossing.

Sometimes we misjudged suitable hiding places. There was the time that we spotted an olive grove that looked great. It also looked great to the camouflaged German motorized troops that were encamped there. Needless to say, we beat a hasty and silent retreat.

On occasion there was humor in our efforts to avoid capture. One night we came to a high railroad bridge. We debated whether we would walk under the bridge or retrace our steps and walk around it. The latter choice would mean an additional 10-to-15 miles of walking. We watched the bridge for a day and did not see any guards. That was when we made the decision to walk under it.

We were all tense and more than one of us wondered if we would hear the shot that would kill us. As we got close to the bridge one of the fellows called a halt while he relieved himself. That is when the real Joe Jett was revealed. Joe was such a gentleman. Being cold, hungry,

tired, walking in the dark and afraid of being shot, Joe lost his "cool". He said, "Well wet your pants! You've been wet for a week".

We spent about five days in some brush on a steep hillside. Artillery shells occasionally passed over our heads. They were coming from two directions. We didn't know who was firing on whom. We did know that we were hungry and that there was a small village on the hill above us. We decided to risk coming out of hiding and trying to get something to eat.

There was a high wall that surrounded the village and it led into the middle of town. With our backs flat against the wall we worked our way into the village until we were directly under the bell tower of a church. It was a dark night and the village appeared to be deserted. There were no lights and no people. There wasn't even a stray dog or cat. It was too quiet for us! We went back to our hiding place.

There we felt trapped as well as hungry. We were so unnerved and "jumpy" that a leaf falling to the ground sounded extremely loud.

The next afternoon there was a ruckus in the village above us. Suddenly three German soldiers came running from the village directly toward our hiding place. They were very excited and were carrying parts of a machine gun as well as their side arms. About 100 yards away, they stopped and set up the machine gun. There was a quick discussion among them and then they again disassembled the gun and moved further down the valley. We had the feeling they were running away from something.

We decided to return to the village and investigate. There we learned that the three Germans had their machine gun set up the night before in the church bell tower that we had been under. No wonder it had been so quiet.

Soon afterward a Jeep manned by two Canadian soldiers arrived in the village. They were with the British Eighth Army. We approached them and had a chat. A Most Welcome Chat! They told us to pile in and they would take us to their camp.

On the way to their camp we had to climb a steep slope with the road consisting of six inches of greasy mud. We

were hanging on real good. The four-wheel drive Jeep crept slowly upward with wheels spinning and throwing mud behind us. None of this was made easy by the Germans that were lobbing shells at us. They never did get our range and the shells fell short.

Through all of this I was thinking, "My gosh, I bail out of a burning plane, escape from a prison camp, walk 200 miles through enemy territory. I have been cold and hungry for days. I have been eaten by fleas. Now I am close to the safety of Allied lines and I am going to get it while going up my last hill."

After we reached their camp there was food and coffee--real coffee--HOT COFFEE! It was WONDERFUL! We were so happy to be back with friendly troops. There was a lot of camaraderie with our new-found, friends.

Would you believe it, we were not the big event in their day. Their big hit was out there on the road. They knew something was coming so they lined their guns on the road. At the appropriate time they fired and guess what they got. They blew the guts out of a donkey. They laughed like hell about that.

A Canadian Lt. was the driver of the Jeep that had brought us in. He insisted that he would take us to a dry bed with sheets before nightfall. It must have been at least a two hour drive. It rained all the time we were in that open Jeep. I have always respected Canadians as the result of his kindness. He took us to a place that was like a Red Cross setup. We even had a cot to sleep on and it was dry. PURE LUXURY!

The next day we were taken to the nearest American camp. It was the 47th Fighter Group. They were flying P-40's. We tried to convince them to go and blast the olive grove where we had encountered the German motorized unit. They really didn't believe us. While we were there, one of the pilots happened to have one of his bombs hang up. On his way back to base he swung over the olive grove and got rid of his bomb. He stirred up a hornet's nest. After that, the 47th Group went back in force and had a "heyday".

Arrangements were made to transport us from the 47th Group in an army truck. The Commanding Officer wanted us to guard some German prisoners of war on our way back. We didn't think much of that idea. When the C.O. persisted,

I said, "Hell Yes! Give us some guns, but I doubt any of those S.O.B.'s will make it all the way." Other plans were then made. We didn't do guard duty.

We spent several days with the 101st Air-borne. They had Italian prisoners of war working in their mess hall. One day I went back for a second helping. One of the P.O.W.'s refused to serve me. I blew up! I grabbed him around the neck and we went round and round. Pots and pans were strewn all over the place. The Air-borne troops stood by watching and cheering me on. GREAT GUYS, in the 101st.

We got a flight from there to Africa. We landed close to Tunis. We had a difficult time convincing anyone of our identity or our story. We were the first escapees! They feared that we were spies. We kept bugging a Major, trying to convince him.

Finally he became irritated with us. He said, "You guys claim to have been on the Ploesti raid. I happen to have a list of the decorations that were given that day. Now I've got you!" We told him to dig it out and look. When he found our names on the list his attitude changed and our story was accepted.

When word got around that we had been on the raid, but were in prison camp when the decorations were passed out, the decision was made to give us our medals then and there.

At that time, General Doolittle was at the 12th Air Force Headquarters. His schedule was arranged so that he would have five minutes to personally make the presentation. The five minutes stretched into nearly an hour as we told our story. We asked him about his raid on Tokyo. He replied, "That was nothing compared to your raid on Ploesti". He continually came back to this subject. He was very friendly and easy to talk to. I consider him to be one of the greatest men I have known.

General Doolittle wrote our return orders to England and the States. They were marked SECRET and signed by him.

After we got to England we went to a mess hall to eat. Some Sgt. read us the riot act and refused to serve us unless we had mess kits. He sent us to the Supply Sgt. who was even more obnoxious. The Supply Room had the usual half-door with the counter-like top. Joe Jett was

the first to approach the door. The Supply Sgt. proceeded to give us "hell" for losing our mess kits. After a few minutes of his vile and berating lecture, Joe Jett leaped across the half-door. He grabbed that Sgt. by the neck and forced him back into the corner. He started to beat the Sgt.'s head against the wall with these words, "You God Damned S.O.B. When I bailed out of that damned burning plane the last thing I thought about was my mess gear". Joe Jett then became a gentleman once again and dropped "Sgt Bad Mouth" to the floor. We got our mess kits.

We returned to the 8th Air Force Headquarters in London for interrogation. Afterward, we were sent to a number of military camps to speak to the troops about our experiences, particularly about our time behind enemy lines. Then it was back to the 44th in Shipdham before being shipped back home to the States.

In retrospect I am so thankful for the many outstanding people that I was commanded by, that I flew with, that I walked across Italy with, and some of those that I encountered along the way. Last, but not least, my family and friends that nurtured me through some trying moments after I returned home.

**Joe Warth tells about his escape:**

We knew we would be moved to Germany when the Allies invaded Southern Italy so everyone was thinking of one thing: escape. It was debated for days. In the mass of confusion a lucky chance came up. One morning our Italian guards, hearing that the British Army was coming, left the gates open and scurried around. Planes had flown over the camp the day before. There was no way to identify the camp. In the confusion a few of us managed to escape. We spent a day or two together and then decided that it would be better to split up into smaller groups. That way it would be easier to live off the land and to avoid detection.

I took off with Barry Shillito, a British commando. None of us "Yanks" had been trained in escape and evasion procedures and I could think of no one better equipped for survival than the commando. (All six of my crew got out of Aquilla [the prison camp], but curiously, only about ten British got out.)



Shillito and I roamed around on our "lone" for several days. Then, by chance we ran into some Italian partisans who surprisingly, were pleased to see us. They took us in and took good care of us. They had been given orders to aid any Allied fliers that they happened to meet. The leader had been one of Al Capone's mobsters and had lived in Chicago until he was deported. He was willing to do anything to help an American get away to further his cause to return to America after the war. He took us down the mountains to Castillini Sul Berferno (Castle by the River Perferno).

By this time I was pretty sick with malaria, yellow jaundice and dysentery. My commando friend knew it was time to get some rest because I was down to under 100-pounds. I could not walk a hundred yards without having to stop. Arrangements were made by the leader for me to be taken to an Italian home. I must have passed out and was out of it for a day and a night. This upset the family I was with. They were afraid to get a doctor for me since the Germans would be promptly notified.

I must have survived with their attention since I awoke and found that I was in a bed with beautiful white sheets and pillows. It was a small room and there were several Italian women watching me. They were crying and seemed very upset as they were certain that I was dying. I too wasn't certain that I wasn't dead and in heaven.

When we all realized that I was alive, the women screamed, "He's alive not morte". One of them went to the door to let in several young girls who carried baskets of flowers and bottles of wine. That is when I knew that I was in heaven. I stayed with them several days. Eventually I was able to get out of bed and roam around the house. I am certain that I could have received no finer care anywhere. I shall always remember my Italian family.

During my recuperation period I joined in the daily household activities. I learned how to prepare pasta, dry tomatoes and to use scraps of food to feed a family and the passerby in their lives.

I stayed for more than a week and the rest restored my health. The Germans came to the house every morning at 8 o'clock and issued their demands for food rations. The Germans did not bring their own food in from Germany--they got it from the land they lived on. Every afternoon at

about 5 o'clock a German truck would call to pick up the food.

Several people in the village knew I was staying at the house. My British friend had left several days earlier. One of the Italians, who was evidently a Fascist, decided it was time to report me to the authorities.

The Germans returned late one night and started a house-to-house search. Word spread within moments of the Germans arrival at one end of the town. One of the girls in the family I was staying with guided me out the other end of town. We went down the mountain to a small farm several miles away. It was a heavily-wooded area. I was pointed in the right direction and proceeded alone for about four days.

Years later I was told by the villagers that the German troops returned from their search for me and reported that I had been captured and executed as a spy and secret agent. After all those years, when I returned to that village, the local people were astounded to find me alive. They had a special festival for us to commemorate the occasion.

After being left alone, I finally reached a little valley. On one side the Germans were shelling the British on the other, and vice versa. I stayed in the bottom of the valley and waited for the shelling to stop. At the end of the battle I went up, to what I hoped was the British side.

I entered a small village at the same time as a British patrol. They were engaged in a house-to-house battle with the Germans. The Germans held the higher buildings which they were using for observation posts. In a nearby church steeple was a German machine gun crew. I saw it disappear in one blast.

This ragged American approached the advancing "Desert Rat" patrol from the British 8th Army as it was engaged in a life and death struggle. I was carrying a couple of raw eggs for my defense. Nevertheless, the Canadians were a very welcome sight to a 21 year-old kid from Kentucky.

The British patrol was surprised to see me, but luckily they were able to see that I was on their side. They shuffled me back down the street to a safer location while

they took the village. The next morning I told my story to the British Commander and their Intelligence.

From then on I was okay. I went home via Sicily and North Africa, where I was admitted into a hospital for eight days. Early in November, when I was fit to travel again, I was dispatched to the West coast of Africa where I boarded an aircraft for London. I was met by M16 (British intelligence) and underwent heavy interrogation for two days. They checked my story repeatedly because at this stage in the war very few prisoners of war had gotten back to England. The 44th Bomb Group at Shipdham was contacted to verify that I was a bona fide airman. Colonel Leon Johnson sent a driver to London to pick me up. I stayed at Shipdham for one day and then returned to London for transportation back to the USA. I was home by Christmas, arriving in Miami on the night of December 25th.

Robert Mundell was another escapee, but he did not go at the same time as the members of the Austin crew:

We were in the prison camp about three weeks when the Italians surrendered. The gate was open and there were no guards around. We fled into the hills. I spent the first night with "Slats". (I had forgiven him for ruining the oatmeal.)

The next day we decided it was safe to walk back down to the prison. There was no sign of any guards and a lot of Italian civilians were coming in and looting food from the Red Cross building. I picked up a few things, including a mess kit and a can of pudding. I spent most of the day beating the can against some rocks to get it open.

The Italian mayor of the town below the prison had said that we could all stay around until we were rescued if we wanted, but "Slats" and I decided to take our chances elsewhere.

During our time in prison, "Slats" had talked with an Englishman named Duffy. He had been a Commando or something and "Slats" had a lot of confidence in him being able to get us out of there. Duffy and four other Englishmen invited us and another American (I can't remember his name, but he was from Kentucky) to team up with them. We did and the eight of us took off.

The English had been in prison for a while and had mess

kits, matches, cigarettes and other supplies. We traveled mostly at night and ate potatoes which we dug up from the fields. Once in a while we would find some tomatoes. Sometimes we begged some bread (and occasionally figs) from the local people.

The terrain was pretty mountainous and there was a lot of brush. It seemed like every step was uphill. The English were in better shape than we were and kept up a pretty good pace. At one point I was about to ask if we could slow down a little, but "Slats" beat me to it.

One day we ran into another group of former prisoners digging potatoes in a field. I remember Tom Purcell was in the group. It was the only time we saw any of the other Americans from the prison.

One of the Italians said he could get shoes for all of us if we went into town with him. He was acting a little funny. When we got into town a lot of the local people were giving us dirty looks. We decided that he was trying to turn us in to the Germans so we took off.

The eight of us were together about two weeks when something happened that split us up.

We were all sleeping in a shack near a train station when a bunch of kids hit the door in the middle of the night screaming, "Tedesco!" It turned out that a German troop train had pulled into the station. Everyone ran like hell and the group got separated. I ended up with an Englishman named Jesse Goldspink.

Jesse had been a prisoner for more than a year and could speak a little Italian. He had been shot through the mouth fighting the Italians in North Africa and wasn't too fond to them.

We continued as before, traveling mostly at night and eating potatoes, bread and occasionally figs or tomatoes at homes we came to. At one of the farms we did some work in the field in exchange for board and room that night.

At one point Jesse decided that it would be better if we got rid of the army clothes we were wearing and got some Italian clothes. One of the farmers gave us some clothes; black pants and gray shirts. My pants were about six inches too short. I got an old woman to sew on some more

to the legs. I don't know who we fooled. I was 8'2" and 195-lbs. with black hair. Jesse was 5'6" and 145-lbs. with red hair. I wore a hat and he didn't. We looked more like Mutt and Jeff than a couple of Italians.

One family was really good to us and we ended up staying with them for about five days. They fed us well and we even had sausage one time. It was the only meat we got during this time. We didn't have any way of repaying them for their kindness so we gave them our overcoats when we left.

We were crossing a river one day and Jesse lost his shoes. He was pretty upset about it since it was now October and winter was coming on. An Italian farmer made him some wooden slabs. From then on he walked with a "clomp, clomp" sound.

Since I didn't speak any Italian, Jesse would always be the one to ask for food. I thought that I was depending on him too much and wasn't pulling my share of the load. One evening I told Jesse I would go ask for food. I knocked on a farmhouse door and asked an elderly woman for some bread. She looked at me and let out a blood-curdling scream that could be heard for miles. I looked around and saw Jesse already in full flight. I quickly caught up with him and we ran for what seemed like miles. We decided that Jesse would do the begging after that.

Jesse had a wife and three kids at home in Hull, Yorkshire. He told me about another guy in Hull. He and Jesse hated each other and they swore to each other that when they got back from the war they were going to have it out. Jesse wasn't very big, but he was tough as nails and I knew he'd do pretty well in a fight.

We encountered Italian soldiers or Englishmen (that had been in prison at Sulmona) almost every day. They were usually traveling in pairs. They would tell us that the Germans were bumping off everyone they caught. I don't know if this was true. From our various hiding places we could see Germans on the road every day. Also, we would hear shots being fired at numerous times, sometimes pretty close by. However, with the mountainous terrain and all the brush around there, it was hard to know what they were shooting or where it was coming from.

We came within a few miles of a town named Casacalenda

that was being shelled every night. A woman told Jesse that it was held by the Germans and being shelled by the English. About three days later we were told that the Germans had pulled out the night before and the English had taken over. The town was located on top of a high hill and there was no way we could tell who held the town.

We started walking up the road toward the town when a couple of Englishmen came running up. They told us the area was thick with Germans and that they were bumping everybody off. Jesse decided that we would go on in. I thought about it and decided to stick with Jesse. After all, I had come this far with him.

It was great to see that the English army was sure enough there. They were in the process of setting up their machine gun nests, communications, etc. I believe that it was October 16. We found the kitchen area right away and we each grabbed a large handful of bacon that they were cooking. We wolfed it down like a couple of dogs. God, it tasted good!

We rode an English truck down to Bari and were there for two or three days. I said good-bye to Jesse and caught a ride on a C-47 to Naples to rejoin the American Forces. It was great to see the Stars and Stripes flying in the breeze and to know that you were going to be useful again.

From Naples I flew to Tunis where I spent a couple of days before leaving for London with a stop at Gibraltar.

While in London I received the Air Medal from General Ira Eaker. Then I went back to Shipdham and opened a bottle of Scotch that I had picked up in Gibraltar. Everybody gathered around and the bottle didn't last long. It was great to see those guys again.

I hung around a couple of days, but they were flying missions and I wasn't. I felt a little funny about that so I went back to London before heading back to the States.

Horace Austin also escaped:

He was in a different part of the prison camp. After his enlisted personnel had escaped, Austin and other prisoners from the Sulmona camp were marched to a railhead. There they were loaded on a train that would take them to prison

camps in Germany. Austin left the train about ten kilometers from Bologna. It took him eighteen days to work his way down the boot of Italy to about four kilometers south of Palata where he was picked up by the British Eighth Army.

On October 22nd Ray Warner mentioned, "We have 17 crews now and about 520 men."

Then on October 23rd he wrote:

Joel Parker (Maynor crew) just came back from Africa. The Air Transport Command ship he was on cracked up in Algiers. The rest of the crew are still down there."

In the December 1988 issue of *The Fighting 44th Logbook* one of Maynor's crewmen, Arnold L. Gray, tells of his early days with the 506th and the return of the crew to England-- two times.

Hardly had we arrived in England, in early August, and began our orientation training, than we received orders to report to the 44th BG which was temporarily based in North Africa. Heavy losses had been sustained by the Group on a low-level attack on the Ploesti, Romania, oil fields and replacement crews were urgently needed.

So, it was on to Prestwick, Scotland, by rail and then to our destination via Air Transport Command. This time it was bucket seats and extremely uncomfortable. Three days later, on 13 August, we arrived at Benina, Libya, a nondescript airstrip in the desert surrounded by tents set up as living quarters. Oppressive heat and blowing sand seemed to prevail twenty-four hours a day.

Hardly had we settled in and been regaled by the tales of adventure and the perils of combat flying, when the outfit was ordered to return to Great Britain. The main contingent left on 25 August, but those of us without transportation were left behind.

Although our wait was to be only a week, it seemed like ages considering the unbearable living conditions. Our principal duty was to "police" the area daily. What could be more absurd than the sight of trained bomber crews scouring the desert to pick up litter.

We left Benina on Sept 1st. Once more it was by ATC

(C-47) on to Marrakech, by way of Tunis and Algiers. Then to Preswick, Scotland on a C-54.

After an overnight rail trip, we arrived at Shipdham on 8 Sept. At last we had reached what we believed and hoped was to be our permanent base for the duration of our stay in combat.

However, the changing complexion of the war in the area that we had recently departed dictated otherwise. The Allied invasion of Southern Italy had bogged down. Air power again was needed to assist, so the 44th BG was ordered back to North Africa.

This time our crew had its own B-24. We left Shipdham on 18 Sept and flew all night, arriving at Marrakech the next day, then proceeding to Tunisia. Our base here was located at Ounda #1, fifteen miles South of Tunis. It was the desert all over again, with life in a tent community.

Within two weeks, the American and British ground troops, with the help of our air power, improved and consolidated their foothold in Italy. So on 2 October, the 44th BG under new orders, left Tunisia to return to Shipdham. Because our B-24 had been rendered inoperative upon return from the Wiener Neustadt mission, our crew was left behind. Once again we were to become passengers.

One week later, a C-47 arrived, picked us up for our return, but our troubles were just beginning. A defective engine forced us to land near a British artillery camp near the town of Bougie, between Tunis and Algiers on the North African Mediterranean coast.

Although the aircraft's engine was temporarily repaired, it had to be returned to Cairo, leaving us stranded. Our British hosts were most gracious in taking care of our needs, but the town had little to offer, and time was hanging heavy on our hands, boredom set in once again.

After five days, we managed to secure space on a British lorry bound for Algiers. Our hopes, which rose dramatically with our arrival there, were quickly dashed upon a visit to the Mediterranean Air Transport Service office. We learned that there was a huge backlog of passengers awaiting air travel to Marrakech and that we would have an indefinite wait.



Daily visits to the office and incessant pleading proved fruitless, and our resignation deepened. The only relief afforded us was the several movie theaters and activities at the Red Cross Club. At this point, I became quite firmly convinced that we were doomed to spend the duration of the war here.

But finally, on Sunday, 24 Oct., our persistence paid off and we left Algiers, flying to Preswick by way of Marrakech, and then back to Shipdham by rail. We arrived there most thankfully, on 27 Oct.

At that point in time, although we had been a part of the 44th for seventy-five days, we had spent forty-two of those days in transit or waiting for transportation between bases.

These frustrations of waiting proved to be helpful when we were shot down and became prisoners of war.

On October 23rd Mark Morris showed in his diary that we went on a two-hour practice mission.

It was about this time that Charleston Miller was transferred:

He and a number of the other ground men were transferred to another airfield to help form a new group. The group did not last long. On two raids we lost about 20 planes. They then broke the group up. I finally was sent to a night-flying outfit as ground crew at Tring, just north of London. I came home in July of 1945, on the ship that I crewed. I was a mechanic. *went*

Then on October the 28th Mark entered:

Truck to Norwich. Destination unknown. Train to Chorley. Crew split. Enlisted men station wagoned to Bucklands Manor rest home.

In letters to his wife, Norm Kiefer described the rest home experience:

I am in a rest home. It is a large hotel. Not large in comparison with those at home, but it is big for over here. Do you remember the manors that you see in movies? That is what it is like.

The first thing that we did after we arrived was to check out a bike. The next was to get civilian clothing. Yes, you are reading correctly. I have a pair of dark blue trousers, a blue and white print shirt, a light blue crew shirt, a red wool sweater and a pair of tennis shoes. How would you like to see me now? This is the first time in two years that I have been out of uniform.

The only thing that is required of us is that we dress for supper.

I am going horseback riding in the morning. It will be the first time that I have ever tried riding. Soooo Looook Out! Anything can happen. Probably I will be like you on a bike.

-----In later letters I said:

I am okay except for being a little sore.

Do you know that they are going to have to give us a seven-day pass when we leave here? Why? Well it is going to take that long to rest and recuperate.

Yesterday morning was taken up playing ping-pong and tennis. My game of ping-pong is improving right along as I practice. The tennis was terrible. Of course it has been a long time since I tried my hand at it. Then too, they have dirt courts over here, not the cement ones that we have.

In the afternoon I sat in front of the large fireplace and read a couple of magazines. Then I put on my uniform and went into town to get a haircut.

The evening was spent seeing the movie titled *Berlin Correspondent*. After that there was a dance. It was one of those rare occasions that there were just as many girls as there were boys. It must have been planned.

Although no supporting records can be found, Ollie Bowling's Flight Record indicates that he was on a seven hours operational flight with Gordon Stevens on October 30th. OK

Other letters that Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife during the month of October contained the following:

"How is the sugar ration at home? Do you have a little

Could be  
Oct 21

left over? Now I don't want you folks to go without, but if you have some, I would like some home made fudge."..."We spent the biggest part of the day cleaning out our room. A lot of the boys put their things in it, for safekeeping, while we were gone. We can lock our door."..."This morning we cleaned the soot from the chimney. After that we fixed the stove so that we have a better draft. Now all we have to do is start to practice swiping coal again."..."Gee! It is on nights like this that I miss "Willie". (This was Richard Williams who was shot down at Wiener Neustadt)..."You asked if I could get milk. I haven't seen real milk since I left the States."..."Are your stockings still as hard to get as they used to be? You "Gals" back there ought to see the silk clothing we wear."

It was some time in late October or early November that Gail Larsen arrived.

## BACK HOME AGAIN

Elmer Hagner recalls:

We were housed in one of the Quonset Huts at the lower end of the base. There was a wire fence nearby with a large set of gates. We at times went through these gates to a little nearby neighborhood "Pub". I can't recall the name. We used to play many games of darts there.

From our quarters we had a long walk to the mess hall near the airfield. When we were scheduled to fly we went to mess by truck.

We spent short leaves in Norwich, where we went by truck, arriving around 7 P.M. and having to catch the return truck by 10 P.M., pub closing time.

Ray Warner noted on November 1st, "Mundell (from Whitlock crew) is back. He escaped from prison camp."

*LED BY STRONG*

Will Lundy reports for November 3rd the shipyards at Wilhelmshaven, Germany, were the objective of the first mission of the month. Thirty aircraft took off from our base to participate in the first mission to utilize the new H2X radar by PFF (Pathfinder) aircraft. Only 22 of our Group's planes dropped bombs through clouds on smoke markers from planes ahead. This technique does not allow the bombing results to be observed. Our fighter cover was excellent. Therefore, enemy aircraft only made weak attacks. There was moderate inaccurate flak at the target and no aircraft were lost.

*Yes my*

*to* Stevens probably made this mission accompanied by John Huber. Also, records maintained by Robert Struble show that he was on this raid. Dale Graef reports that this was the first mission for the Borkowski crew. Ollie Bowling was with Harold Laudig on A/C #509. The combat record of James Redus shows that this was Sortie 121 and that they encountered flak and five enemy fighters. They were flying in A/C #153, L, and were gone for seven hours. The Elmer Hagner diary indicates that he was on this mission, but not who he was with.

Glenn Hall recalls:

When the crew that Harold Laudig went overseas with began

to break up, Laudig still had nine missions to go. His new crew was made up of Bachrach, navigator; Warren E. (Blackie) Morrison, bombardier; William A. Wallace radio operator; Melvin P. Petersen, left waist; Maurice G. Hall, right waist; Danny Wozniak ball turret, and Ollie Bowling, tail guns. I don't recall the names of the remaining crew members.

After two missions with Harold Laudig we went to the rest home. Since I did not drink beer, Wallace kept saying, "Next to Hall, I'll be the most sober one there. "Duke" and "Blackie" took that as a challenge and kept Wallace between them on the train to London. Their overcoats hid the fifth of whiskey each had. They got enough into Wallace that when we pulled into Victoria Station he was very drunk. He made the transfer to Euston Station okay and then became very sick.

Ray Marner wrote in his diary for November 3rd:

Our planes went over Wilhelmshaven today. We lost no planes.

Major Beam was transferred to Group Headquarters and was made Group Air Executive Officer. Major Anderson is our Commanding Officer and Captain Strong is the Operations Officer. Larson's crew and Captain Scott were transferred to the 482nd Bomb Group.

31 Oct 43  
1 Nov

There was a big raid on Ipswich tonight. We could see everything. They hit a London train.

A couple R.A.F. planes cracked up returning from a raid. One crashed in Dereham. They brought a lot of injured people over here. Quite a few more were killed. (Note: According to an article published by Eric Smith in the Norfolk Fair in November, 1982, one of the ships referenced here was a Lancaster flown by Flight Lt. William Reid. His ship was badly damaged on a raid on Dusseldorf before crash landing. He later received the highest British decoration, The Victoria Cross.)

On that same day, November 3rd, Mark Morris noted, "we returned from the rest home. Also, there was an air raid with a three-hour alert at our base."

Ray Marner indicated on November 4th, "Jett, Lee, Whitby, and Hickerson (from the Austin crew) are back. They all escaped

from prison camp in Italy. They really had a rough time of it."

Will Lundy reported our return to combat on November 5th, when the second mission of the month was against the railroad junction at Munster, Germany. This junction supplies the nerve center for the flow of traffic through the Ruhr Valley, both by canal and rail. The mission was briefed to be Pathfinder-type, but clear weather permitted visual bombing to be used. The results of the attack were fair to good. A cross wind made the aiming of incendiaries difficult. The flak in this area lived up to its reputation. It ranged from heavy, accurate, and intense, to moderately inaccurate. Generally, it was predictor controlled. A few enemy aircraft were seen, but no attacks were made on the 44th. Of the 33 planes dispatched, 26 hit the target and all returned safely. Some had heavy battle damage.

Aircraft #535, U Peepsight, flown by Lt. R. A. Parker of the 506th, was severely hit, but landed successfully with nine out of ten men receiving wounds. Lundy's works reveal:

Lt. Parker took off at 1015 hours flying number nine position in the second squadron led by Lt. Richard D. Butler. The Group Leader was Shelby L. Irby, with Lt. Colonel Dexter L. Hodge as Command Pilot.

Approaching the IP at 1340 hours, the formation was engaged by approximately twenty enemy aircraft, but despite continuous attacks a good bomb run was made and the target was bombed at 1352. Attacks were resumed as the formation made the turn away from the flak-covered target area and Peepsight received direct hits at about 1432 hours. They were then about halfway back to the coast from the target. Hits were sustained in the right wing, #4 engine, right and left waist positions, as well as the top and tail turrets. Control cables and the instrument panel were damaged and the oxygen system knocked out.

The ship had to fall out of formation and drop to a lower altitude because of the wounded and lack of oxygen. The wounded were Lts. D. R. Simons and E. L. Rutherford. Also, Sgts. D. L. Lieck, Covone, Hardwick, and Sorrow. Lt. Parker, was slightly wounded, but not so seriously that he could not bring the battered bomber back to the base and land it with a flat tire.

Lt. Parker said that the tail gunner, Sgt. Sorrow, was hit in the buttocks by a bullet, but hardly noticed the pain due to the uncomfortable position in the small turret. The radio man, Lieck, took a round through his left elbow while he was resting the arm on the back of my seat, just a few inches from my head.

Simons kicked his seat back to clear the controls from debris and I was cut on the neck from flying glass. I thought my throat had been cut. I told myself, "What the hell do I do now?". I had too many wounded to consider bailing them out, so I just stuck with it.

Two P-38's picked us up and escorted us back across the Channel. Our right main gear tire was flat so we ran off the runway and wound up stuck in the mud. My C. O. gave me hell for that. I was very tired, but didn't have time to get scared.

Two men with the most serious wounds were taken to a hospital near London for treatment. While there, they were visited by the Queen of England, who honored them with a medal.

Copilot Lt. Simons said, I got my Purple Heart the hard way. The exploding 20-mm shell hit part of the radio equipment and sent a shower of metal shards into the back of my head. The medics never got all of them out so I still get an occasional piece coming to the surface. When I was hit, I thought it was fatal so I immediately pushed my seat back so that I wouldn't fall against the wheel and interfere with Lt. Parker's control of the ship

The shells also knocked all of our oxygen system out, so we were in a bad way at that altitude. The engineer realized this and was coming to our aid with a walk-around bottle when he was hit by another shell from the next attacking aircraft. He was knocked to the floor of the flight deck and the bottle was set on fire. He bravely picked up the bottle and threw it into the bomb bay, no doubt saving all our lives. Broken pieces of plexiglass and shrapnel had showered us all. Both our waist gunners were wounded as well. Photos of Peepsight show one hole in front of the waist window on the left and two on the right behind the right waist window, one of them huge.

The combat record of James Redus indicates that the Henry Borkowski crew was on this raid. They encountered intense

flak and 20-to-25 enemy fighters. This was Sortie 124 which lasted seven hours. They were in A/C #153, L.

Ollie Bowling's records show that he was with Harold Laudig on A/C #965, B.

It is believed that Gordon Stevens flew this mission. Also, John Huber and Robert Struble were there.

Ray Marner wrote on this day:

Our planes went out again today. We didn't lose any ships, but some were badly damaged. A few men were injured. One ship made a crash landing. Three or four ships dropped flares (indicating that they had wounded aboard). One of our crews was shot up and they are in the hospital.

The next day, November the 6<sup>th</sup>, <sup>EMDEN</sup> Ray Marner noted, "we were supposed to make two raids today, but weather didn't permit."

On November 8th Mark Morris wrote:

We were on a two-hour practice flight. I had a big treat, I rode in the navigator position. For a change I could see where we were going.

Then on November the 11th he wrote:

We practiced bombing for four hours. I hung out of the bomb bay with a camera to record the hits, from 12,000 ft. It is not too cold with a heavy suit and no electric heated clothing.

The author in a letter to the girls in the office where his wife worked described what a practice flight is like:

The copilot just called and told us that we were at oxygen level. We put on our masks.

Very few, if any of you, have ever seen one of these constant-flow oxygen masks. It is made of flexible green rubber. The upper part covers your face from the bridge of your nose to the tip of the jaw bone. The eyes and outer cheeks are left exposed. The lower portion of the mask is a rubber bag that expands and contracts as you breath.



By now it is beginning to get cold. I climb into my electric suit and fur-lined boots. The effort leaves me breathless. This electric suit would remind you of a suit of men's long underwear. The only difference being that it is covered with zippers and is blue in color.

The silence is periodically broken by the copilot as he calls out the altitude. Each time we set up our flow of oxygen.

Now the mask has begun to sweat and the liquid runs down your face. We place waste cloth in the bottom of the mask to catch the liquid. If it is allowed to run into the neck it will freeze and cut off your life supporting supply of oxygen.

I just turned and saw the pilot take his hand from the throttle. A cloud of moisture rose from his glove. He is sweating. They always do.

The boys in the back are pretty cold by now. They are swinging their arms and stamping their feet. I can't see for sure, but there should be frost on the fur of their helmets and eyebrows. It gets cold back there. I know, that's where I used to fly.

If this were a combat mission, those boys wouldn't be cold much longer. There would be a call of fighters coming in or flak off one of the wings. Then they would be warm. You sweat when you are over "Jerryland".

That cracking and plugged up feeling that you have in your ears means just one thing. We are losing altitude at a fair rate of speed.

Soon your mask will come off and you will feel good for a while. Then a very tired feeling will overtake you.

On November the 12th Ray Warner told of Major Beam becoming a Lt. Colonel.

On that same day Mark Morris was roused out at 1:30. However, the mission was scrubbed at 3:00 A.M.

Will Lundy indicated on November 13th, the Group put up ~~33~~<sup>43</sup> aircraft, but 13 of them were forced to abort for various reasons--among them the bad weather and intense cold. The target was the port city of Bremen, Germany. This city was

important not only because of the port and its supporting rail facilities, but also as a storage and manufacturing center. Bombs were dropped on pathfinder flares and the results were unobserved. Flak over the target was minimal, but swarms of enemy fighters rose to defend the city.

On return from this raid, A/C #647, flown by W. H. Hart circled the field and then crashed in some trees near the base. With Lt. Hart were Lts. E. B. Knight, J. J. Horey, and R. M. Courtaway. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. J. F. Stambaugh, W. Procyszyn, Russell E. Overly, R. E. Strait, C. C. Hurst (KIA), and G. E. Olsen (KIA).

*Σ 153* → Records maintained by James Redus reveal that the Henry Borkowski crew was on this mission. This was Sortie #127 on which flak and 50-to-75 enemy fighters were encountered. This eight-hour trip was flown in A/C #153.

*LEAD A-878* McAtee went that day, flying in A/C #965, *Q* S. It is also believed that Slough went. Others making this trip were Hannuksela and Robert Struble.

The combat record of Patrick Gallagher shows that he made this mission flying in A/C #172, *T*. The pilot was probably Richard Parker. *YES*

*V-509* → Ollie Bowling's flight records show that he was with Harold Laudig on this day. They were given operation time, but not credit for a mission. Perhaps they were one of our ships that came home early since they were credited with only five hours.

*Davenport, Johnson, Bunch, Duffy, Stevens, Clements Slough?*  
Otherwise, it is not known how many 508th ships went nor who went.

Mark Morris wrote about this raid:

Today, between early morning breakfast and 2:30 PM, we took incendiaries to Bremen, Germany. We saw about 200 fighters as we crossed Holland, but we had no problem because of our very first fighter escort. They were a wee bit late, but we loved them; P-38's and P-47's. I saw one B-24, one B-17 & one Me-109 go down. There were two chutes from the B-24. My face is frozen from ear to under chin. I'm grounded.

Norm Kiefer remembers what Mark meant by "a wee bit late". As Mark said we had good coverage on the way in. We were

elated! Then, just before the target, our cover leader ("Little Brother") called and told us ("Big Brother") that they were running short on fuel and would have to break off. However, we didn't need to worry because that was his relief milling around ahead in the target area. Well the milling aircraft did not turn out to be ours. They were German! They made one head-on pass through the formation before our relief fighter escort joined us. The Germans got two 44th aircraft (not 506th) and damaged others.

I saw the Me-109 that was shot down. The German was flying low and counter to the bomber stream. Two P-47's peeled out from our cover formation and pursued the enemy aircraft from behind. I could see the flashes as the P-47's fired. Smoke began to come from the tail of the Me-109. Then a parachute blossomed and the German plane nosed toward the ground.

Mark Morris remembers that it was about this time that Jack Edwards got into a bit of trouble while wandering around the ship:

Once at altitude, Jack went forward for some unknown reason. As we got pretty deep over enemy territory, I called Young (bombardier) and asked if Jack was still there. He answered that he had left a long time ago. We had been on oxygen for quite a while. I removed my mask and went into the bomb bay. There was Jack. He was blue and disoriented. I dragged him to the nearest oxygen, my gun position. I then went back to the tail guns and stayed there until Jack recovered. Maybe Ag (Albert Kerns) told you about this. If he didn't, no one but Ag, Jack and I knew.

It was about this time that we were being subjected to more frequent attack by German aircraft firing rockets. We had first seen a rocket when we went to Kiel in May. However, that was a single ship that Mike Davis reported seeing something being fired at the formation. He didn't know what it was. It seemed to have the tail on fire. It missed the formation.

Now the missile firing aircraft are a part of the German defenses. They stand off, out of gun range, and fire their missiles at the formations as a whole.

The German aircraft that Norm saw shot down on this day, was probably one of these missile bearing ships that had dispatched its load and was returning to load up again.

The Flint Journal reported the raid as follows:

GREAT GERMAN PORT  
OF BREMEN IS BOMBED  
BY AMERICAN PLANES

43 of 100 Enemy Interceptors Shot Down  
As Yanks Use New Technique  
Of Bombing City Through the Clouds

Flying Fortresses and Liberator bombers, protected by Thunderbolt and Lightning fighters, fought below zero temperatures Saturday to batter the vital port and communications center of Bremen.

Railway yards, canals, highways, bridges and the German's best port since the destruction of Hamburg were blasted by the American heavy bombers which also took a toll of 33 Nazi interceptors. The accompanying Thunderbolts and Lightnings accounted for 10 more enemy aircraft for a total of 43.

In swamping the heavily defended port--using a new technique of bombing through the clouds--15 of the big bombers and nine American fighters were reported missing.

The Germans sent at least 100 fighters to meet the attack. The size of the attacking American force in the 800-mile round trip was not officially disclosed.

One pilot of a supporting Lightning fighter, which helped cover the American heavies, said the Germans sent up everything from single-engine Me-109's to Ju-88 fighter bombers shooting rocket shells.

The returning crewmen said vision was obscured during most of the journey and the results were impossible to determine.

Saturday's attack was the third recent American raid in which the Germans reported the heavy planes were bombing through the clouds. This indicated they were now operating in weather which formerly kept them grounded. This development was predicted early in September by Allied aerial chieftains in order to multiply the scope of the Force's operations.

McAtee recalls:

Slough was flying lead and we were deputy lead. The weather was bad and we had a hard time finding the Group. When we got back to England Frank Slough called for us to take over the lead. He then took off for home. He always did this when he led.

That day I think that we had 16 ships abort. Posey lost his command over this and Dent took over. He was rough! We had become pretty lax as a Group in Africa and this carried over when we got back to England. With Dent there, you had better have a good reason to abort.

Also, on November the 13th Ray Warner wrote:

We went out over Bremen today and everything went wrong. The mission was unsuccessful and the 44th lost a few ships. One of ours circled around the field and then cracked up a few miles away. A kid named Olsen was killed and also Cliff Hurst. I knew Hurst very well. Ralph Strait isn't expected to live through the night. Two others will probably die. They asked all men with blood type AB to report to the hospital. Hamel and Fleming (Strong crew) completed their 25th mission. They will go home soon. (Note: These were the first completions of combat tours by enlisted men who had come across with the Squadron.)

Lt.  
Hurst

I saw Lt. Simons (Parker crew) today and the whole back of his head is shaved. He's got a whole lot of little holes in his head from a flak burst. That happened on a mission a week or so ago.

On November 14th Mark Morris went on Sick Call:

They worked on my face and applied new bandages. I will remain grounded. I asked Jack, "Do you think I will lose face?" (with the other combat men).

The author remembers Mark coming back to the room that day. His face was covered with some gook that they claimed would help. On top of that was cotton and some bandages.

At some time in his career Mark Morris wrote the following:

On the Liberators there were two side hatches, right and left, located aft of the bomb bay. We always removed the hatch covers and left them on the ground. This in preference to an alternative provision of opening and

latching them open in a position over our heads. In that position they could become projectiles in the rear section during violent evasive action or uncontrolled flight. Other than a slight deflector, there was no protection from the prop blast and subfreezing air movement at cruising speed of 180-to-220 MPH. I had to remain near the opening in order to maintain adequate surveillance of the sky above, below, and level, from at least wing tip to vertical stabilizer. Other areas: Not my job!

Protection from the elements consisted of a bulky fleece-lined heavy flying suit including boots and a helmet. I had a face covering, self-made from a chamois which I had begged, sent from home. Even in level flight movement was very difficult. It was restricted by the bulky clothing and further confined by an electric cord connected for communication. A second cord ran to a heated suit. It seldom worked and blistered a hand or foot each time before failure.

Additionally, an oxygen hose was connected from the bulkhead manifold regulator to my face mask. (Later model B-24's had demand flow regulators.) Standard procedure for staying alive required constant crunching, by hand, of ice that formed in the oxygen bag which hung below my chin. If this deicing ritual was neglected for many minutes the chunks became too large to permit the flow of oxygen.

Ray Marner reported on November 15:

I guess the rest of the guys on Hart's crew will live. Some are still in a bad way.

A mission was scheduled for Oslo, Norway, on November 16th. All but two of the 44th's 36 aircraft returned before crossing the English Coast. The two aircraft crossed the North Sea and hit targets of opportunity at Rjukan, Norway, with good results on a hydro-nitrate plant.

Harold Laudig must have been flying one of the ships that turned back. The Ollie Bowling records show that he and Laudig received four hours operations time on this day.

Two days later, on Nov. 18th, the Group was dispatched to hit the Motor Works at Kjeller Airfield near Oslo, Norway. Our Group had great difficulty in bad weather while assembling in the predawn takeoff. Over 98% of the bombs dropped within

2,000 foot of the aiming point. Many of our planes made more than one run over the target to assure accuracy of drop.

Lt. Bob Johnson of the 506th made a solo bombing run on the airdrome at 5000 feet. The low approach and the direction caused a dispersal of the fishing fleet that was in the harbor.

Another ship making two runs on the target was flown by James Clements. They were flying A/C #642, N, at 11,700 feet when they salvoed their bombs with the leader and hit the larger hangar on the field. On the way home, the formation came under attack from Fw-190's and Ju-88's. The Clements' crew saw one B-24 with two engines on fire disappear into the clouds. They also saw one smoking Ju-88 on its way down. Substitute crew members on this flight were F/O Gail W. Larsen; and Sgts. J. L. Wilson, C. D. Horner and G. M. Dewald. Elmer Hagner was with Clements.

The attack mentioned above was by fighters coming from out of the sun. We lost five aircraft. None of these were from the 506th.

It is believed that Albert, flying in A/C #962, W, *Princ Ass*, accompanied by his regular crew including James Warvel; Bunce in A/C #965, accompanied by William Novak; and Middleton went on this raid.

The George Ramsey and Patrick Gallagher records reveal that they were with Houghtby on this Sortie, #129, and it lasted 10 hours. They were met with slight flak and 20-to-25 enemy aircraft. Gallagher recalls:

We just barely made it back to land because of fuel shortage. We put down at the first place that we could find, a British base. We stayed all night, refueled in the morning, and then returned to Shipdham.

Robert Struble reports:

I was left waist gunner with Middleton. Our #2 engine was shot out when we came under attack by three Ju-88's. As a result of loss of power, we lagged far behind the formation. I shot down one of those enemy aircraft, but the kill was unconfirmed.

This was the first mission for Lt. James H. Clements. He recalls:

My ship was one of the only three ships that returned to Shipdham flying in formation.

On November 18th Ray Marner wrote:

Lonnie Ackerman came back from Africa. He still has a piece of steel in his leg. Haas and Germann are going to the States. Neither will walk for some time. Lonnie has the Purple Heart, Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster and a Silver Star. He's some boy.

We went out on a raid over Norway today. One ship landed in Sweden. The Group lost some ships, but our Squadron didn't. Five ships of the 506th landed elsewhere in England. One of the 67th ships had only one wheel left when it landed at Shipdham. Seven men bailed out over the field. A pretty sight. The pilot made a crash landing because one man was injured. A beautiful landing. She skidded across the field backward, but no one was hurt.

A newspaper account of the landing of the 67th ship read as follows:

Five hundred airmen and ground crew members at a Liberator station watched in awed silence as the crew of an unbelievably damaged Lib returning from Kjeller, Norway, bailed out near the airdrome and the pilot and copilot landed the plane on one wheel.

The crowd cheered as the battered plane, with damaged controls, hit the runway at 150 miles an hour, roared along on one wheel till a wing touched the ground, then swung around and skidded backwards 300 yards off the runway. Inside were 2/Lt. Rockford C. Griffiths, 23, of Tulsa, Okla., pilot; 2/Lt. Lawrence W. Grono, of Minneapolis, copilot, and the ball-turret gunner, who was wounded and unable to bail out with the rest.

Twice on the homeward flight, the ship fought off Fw-190's and Ju-88's which raked the bomber with cannon and machine-gun fire, knocking out two engines, destroying the hydraulic system and reducing the plane to a virtual junk heap.

On November 22 Mark Morris reported:

Colonel Johnson was presented with the Congressional Medal



of Honor by Gen. Devers. Other Generals in attendance were Edwards and Eaker. Our crew & other survivors got to stand in front ranks. I should show up in pictures, with the patch on my face. We didn't have to march home after the ceremony like in the Artillery.

In a letter to his wife Norm Kiefer described this ceremony:

Today I had a ringside seat to an event that very few people see. Colonel Johnson received his Congressional Medal of Honor today.

This morning we spent getting our uniforms ready. After lunch we dressed and fell into formation facing the front of the control tower.

On the left were the massed ground forces. On the right were the Staff Officers. In back of us were the combat fliers. We, the raiders, were about eight steps ahead of the other combat men. In front of us the Squadron Commanders and in front of them was the Colonel. The raiders were at extended ranks. This was to allow for inspection of the ranks.

In the background to one side was our <sup>Coast</sup> ~~oldest~~ ship <sup>"V-Victory"</sup> (~~Lemon~~ ~~Prop~~). All of its distinguishing insignia were masked over. Beyond the ship was the band and further yet was the Honor Guard.

The press and newsreel companies were very well represented.

When the Generals and their parties left their cars, the band played ruffles. While the Generals inspected the Honor Guard the band played "The General's March".

The parties then took their places in front, to the left of the Colonel, and facing the center of the square.

Salutes were exchanged and then General Devers stepped to the microphone and reviewed the things that happened on the raid.

He stated that he considered all combat men as heroes, but these men deserved all the honors. He compared the raid with other great battles that our forces have taken part in, both in this war and earlier ones. Among them was Wake Island. In all of the air battles of this war, this

one stood out like a sore thumb.

He then went back to his position and salutes were again exchanged. The Colonel was then called front and center.

The citation was then read and the Medal was fastened around his neck. The cameras were all now working fast and furiously.

The reviewing party of Generals then inspected the raiders. They stopped frequently to talk with individuals.

Now if you should see the newsreel pictures of this, the fellow in the rear rank, end nearest to the camera, that is me.

After the inspection, they gave the photographers time to once again take pictures. The inspecting parties then went over to look at the ship and then marched away.

Sgt. Fred Lillard, of the 68th Squadron, recently recalled that the Colonel talked with enlisted ground personnel soon afterward.

The Colonel stated that the higher in rank you are the easier it is to get a decoration. They believed that they needed to give this decoration and as the Commanding Officer I received it. You all did your job and I hold it for you.

Ray Marner reported that we were supposed to go to Berlin today, (November 23rd), but the mission was scrubbed.

On that same day, Mark Morris wrote

I went to see Capt. Allison (Squadron Flight Surgeon). There is talk of a Berlin raid. If my crew goes, I go. Doc. said okay if I keep wrapped up. I spent the afternoon in Capt. McAtee's room eating his Christmas goodies. He is grounded.

Mark noted that he had a good Thanksgiving meal on November 25th. There was no flying.

Norm Kiefer has the combat mess menu from that meal. On the cover is an etching of "Sad Sack" holding his mess gear and cup out to be served. Facing him is a well filled out

individual wearing a cook's hat. The cook has his arms folded on his chest. In front of him is a large turkey with a knife stuck in it.

The day after this feast, Will Lundy, reported that for the second time this month, on November 26th, Bremen was the point that the 44th bombed. This time the industrial area was the target with a good pattern of hits being made. However, accurate photo interpretation was difficult due to the effective smoke screen and the intermittent clouds in the area.

One aircraft was lost on this mission due to a collision caused by prop wash. *Mr. Five By Five*, (an original ship from the 506th, flown by Lt. A. Trolese of the 86th), had its tail cut off by another aircraft. Six parachutes were seen, but there were no survivors.

Several cases of flak injuries were reported upon return from this raid. One man from the 88th Squadron died of suffocation when his oxygen mask froze. There were many cases of frostbite due to the intense cold.

The combat record of James Redus indicates that he was in combat on this day. This was Sortie #132 which lasted eight hours. James was with Henry Borkowski on this trip flying in A/C #509. They encountered flak and six-to-nine enemy aircraft.

James Clements flew this mission in A/C #642, N. Gail W. Larsen flew as his copilot. The left waist gunner, Claud Horner, experienced frostbite on his face. Ten enemy aircraft attacked the formation to the left from twelve o'clock high and then pulled into the clouds. Stragglers also came under attack. Their bombs were dropped on the leader's green parachute marker. Bombing results were unobserved because of cloud cover. Elmer Hagner was with Clements.

Bob Struble reports that he flew left waist gun for Wayne Middleton:

We came under heavy fighter attack by Fw-190's. The hydraulic lines were punctured and a fire developed. All available fire extinguishers were expended in putting out the fire. The holes in the hydraulic lines were plugged with 50-Cal. shells in order to maintain pressure to the rudders.

William Novak's records indicate that he was along and likely he was with James Bunce.

It is not known what other aircraft or personnel from the 506th was on this mission.

Ray Marner wrote on November 26th:

Our planes went to Bremen again today. I don't believe the Group lost a plane. One man was shot and frozen. One ship cracked up on the field. No one was hurt. There was lots of flak, but no fighter opposition. (Ray's entry for that day was slightly in error since the Group did lose *Mr. Five By Five.*)

Mark Morris wrote the same day:

There was a Bremen raid, but not us. Capt. McAtee is grounded. One B-24 crash landed on our field. There were lots of shot up ships that made good landings without hydraulics, etc. We are a lead crew now. Word is we will only make about one out of four flights.

It was about this time that the Lt. Clement R. Haulman crew arrived. With Lt. Haulman were Lts. Joseph Kodaj, Harry Putnam, and Joseph Ebler. Their enlisted personnel were Sgts. Walter Dunlop, Myron Smith, Glenn John, James Tolle, Dale Scarborough and Albert Truono.

Haulman recalls:

On the trip over from the States our aircraft experienced mechanical difficulties. We spent most of the month of October in Iceland, waiting for engine parts.

On October 24th it was decided that we should return to the States. There followed two aborted engine run ups. On our third attempt, I started down the runway and reached takeoff speed of 130 mph. At that point there was a runaway prop on the #2 engine. I decided to ground loop with #3 and #4 engines since there was no runway left. I injured the vertebra in my lower back, but did not complain.

Later in the day we took off and headed for Belfast, Ireland. Just before landing I was instructed to proceed to Prestwick. On the 25th of October we were shipped to an anti-sub base at Kettering. It appears that this move

was a result of the fact that the 44th, at that point in time, had more than sufficient crews for the aircraft on hand.

During the next 30 days I flew anti-sub patrols with the Navy in spite of the pain in my back. Then late in November we were ordered to the 506th Squadron at Shipdham.

The "Flak Alley" area of Solingen was the target on November 30th according to Will Lundy. It was important because of the manufacturing of aircraft parts and special steels. This target is located in the heart of the Ruhr Valley. Assembling the Group, over England was difficult due to the heavy and high clouds. Our Group, alone, formed and crossed the Dutch Coast where slight, inaccurate flak was encountered. Failing to find any B-17 formations or their pathfinder, on which the 44th was to drop its bombs, we were forced to turn back and make landfall. The weather was very cold, resulting in many men being minor frostbite victims. The Group put up 28 planes, but were credited with no sorties.

James Clements was on this flight. He was in A/C #842, N. Once again Gail Larsen was his copilot. Substitute enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. Richard Clarno, Robert Rosengren, and Anson G. Daniels. Clements recalls:

When the formation broke up we were flying on instruments. Suddenly the clouds opened up and below was a town (Wermelskirchen) with a rail intersection. The bombardier wanted to hit it, but we let it go.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he was on this raid on A/C #172, T, flown by Houghtby. Patrick Gallagher was the copilot. The notation indicated that it was Sortie #133 and that it was abandoned over enemy territory. Flying time was five hours.

The combat record of James Redus shows he flew this day with Henry Borkowski.

William Novak and Ollie Bowling were with James Bunce. They abandoned the mission over enemy territory.- They must have nearly reached the target since they logged five hours operational time.

Mark Morris remembers an incident that occurred about this

time:

I am certain that once we went in for a fairly deep penetration of Germany and the weather trapped our Group. The mission was scrubbed. We were able to climb above most of the bad weather with our early D model B-24. It was an extremely rough ride. However, a couple of the later model ships were heavier and couldn't get enough altitude. They had to fly straight through the thunderheads. I am certain that their ride was even rougher.

Ralph Golubock recalls that it was during the month of November that Lt. John Money and crew arrived. With Lt. Money were Lts. Ralph Golubock, Robert Baumann, and Harold J. Wheatly. The enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. Andrew C. Graff, Robert Schneidwend, Herbert S. Hill, Wallace E. Kirschner, Donald L. Young, and Eugene W. Roop.

Ralph continues to tell:

I didn't fly any missions with Money. Soon after our arrival, I was made a replacement copilot. The ship that we brought overseas was named *The Missouri Mauler*. That was in recognition that all of the officers were from Missouri. However, as with many other crews, this ship was taken from us and was never assigned to the 44th.

Excerpts from Norm Kiefer's letters to his wife during the month of November included:

"I stopped at the Red Cross Club this morning and sweated out a line for waffles and syrup. The waffles were good, but I don't know if they were worth the wait."..."The English have a day that they call Remembrance Day. It is Nov. 11 and they sell "Buddy Poppies" the same as we do at home. They have already been here to collect from us."..."Do you want to know how cold it was this morning? I jumped out of bed at nine and built a fire. It was two hours before the stove got warm enough to give up any of its heat."..."Mike fell off his bike and they had to take four stitches in his head. He said that from now on he is going to fly as much as he can. It is much safer up there than it is on the ground."..."I got up very very early this morning, against my wishes. Then we found that we could go back to bed. Instead we went to breakfast. Afterward, I sat real close to the stove and read while Mark (Mark Morris) and Ag.(Albert Kerns) climbed back into

bed to get warm. They didn't intend to go back to sleep."...Lt. Laudig was here when I received the two-pound package of cheese from Thelma. He said, "Good, now we can have toasted cheese sandwiches." I agreed, but told him that he had to furnish the bread. The next night he turned up with the bread. We didn't have any heat, so we all went over to his room. Imagine our surprise when we opened the box and found home made chocolate fudge. The fudge was good as well as fresh. We still had our cheese sandwiches with the cheese coming from "K Rations."... "I went up to the sewing room, in the drying building, to have a new oxygen mask fitted to my face. While I was waiting, I heard a tiny "meow"! When I looked there were two little kittens that could both fit into the palm of your hand. Someone had dropped them off and never came back."

It was about this time that the Group began to make mysterious raids on the French Coast. For some reason, we were going to locations with low populations, no industry, few railroads and generally open countryside. The specific targets were what appeared to be ramps that faced toward England. At first it didn't make any sense.

However, this changed when the British newspapers began to tell of attacks by German buzz bombs. These bombs were launched from the ramps we were bombing. They faced in the general direction of London with no specific target in mind. The ramjet engines of these vehicles had a distinct droning sound. When the craft ran out of fuel the engine stopped and the deadly bomb dropped on what ever was below it.

Will Lundy reports that we started the month with another attempt to bomb Solingen, Germany, after being unsuccessful yesterday. The main objective was the aero-casting works. The Group dispatched 18 planes. The target was bombed on PFF (pathfinder flares) because of the bad weather. Therefore, the results were unobserved. Considering the location of the target, very little flak was encountered and the enemy fighter attacks were very weak, due to the best fighter protection to date. The 67th lost one ship, apparently as a result of running out of gasoline.

William Novak recalls this day:

This was my seventh mission. I was with Lyle Davenport. We were leading the 2nd Air Division with Major Anderson as the Command Pilot and Joe Young the bombardier. I was

more frightened by the responsibility than I was of the enemy. Fortunately for me, my navigational skills were not fully tested because the target was fully obscured by clouds. We were forced to bomb on pathfinder flares.

James Clements was on this raid flying in A/C #642, N. Gail Larsen was the copilot. Substitute gunners on this mission were Carl Bolick and Ollie Bowling. They dropped their bombs on the leader with unobserved results on the industrial area below. Flying in the opposite direction and in the distance they saw two enemy aircraft go down after attacking a formation in the rear. One exploded just after the target.

It also appears that Houghtby was along. The George Ramsey and Patrick Gallagher combat records show that they were there on A/C #172, T. They encountered intense flak and six-to-eight enemy fighters. This was Sortie #134 and took seven hours to complete

1 DEC  
James Redus was flying with Henry Borkowski on A/C #153, L.

The Clement Haulman crew also took off to make this mission. However, they experienced engine trouble and dropped their bombs in the Pas de Calais area.

In a letter to his wife on December 2, 1943, the author wrote:

I had quite an experience today. Just before dinner they told Mike Davis, Jack Edwards and I to report to the Intelligence Library at one thirty. A Sgt. Morton, from the 68th Squadron I believe, was already there.

A little while after we got there, Major Benton came in with a war correspondent (Collier's Magazine). He asked us a lot of questions and for our combat stories. Then he took pictures.

He said that "the people back in the States thought of us as knights freeing the world; sort of Sir Galahads". Edwards asked him if anybody told the folks back there how scared we were? He didn't answer.

The interview did not exactly go as the correspondent had intended. His speech about "knights in shining armor" was intended as a reprimand because we did not have any stories for him to write about. He wanted to write about heroes. We told him that the heroes were all on the other side of the



English Channel. His timing was bad. We had lost too many friends in the last few months.

On December 3rd Ray Marner wrote:

An RAF plane crashed here last night after returning from Berlin. The crew is in the Aero Club now. They sure are a calm bunch.

On December 5th Will Lundy indicate that after an early morning briefing, the Group sent 26 aircraft to attack the Cognac-Chateaubernard Airfield in France. However, this mission had to be abandoned due to very dense and high cloud conditions. No fighters were encountered, but intense accurate heavy flak was experienced over the French coast on the return.

According to the combat record of James Redus, the Henry Borkowski crew made this raid. This was Sortie #135 and it lasted seven hours. They were flying in A/C #153, L, and they encountered heavy flak.

It is believed that Stevens, accompanied by John Huber; and Middleton, accompanied by Struble, went.

Records maintained by Clement Haulman show that he was on this mission.

Colonel Dent became Group Commander on December 5th according to Ray Marner:

Posey is going to the States. Dent came to us as Group Commander, from Wing. We were hoping Beam would get it. Captain Strong is now Group Assistant Operations Officer. That makes McAtee Squadron Operations Officer. Our planes went out today, but they couldn't find the target.

Then on December 8th Ray Marner noted: "Major Anderson received the Distinguished Service Cross for the Ploesti raid".

The Group dispatched 26 aircraft to Emden, Germany on December the 11th according to Will Lundy. This was a vital boat and rail center. The bombing run was to have been visual. However, the target was well covered by a dense smoke screen. In addition, the bombing run was made into the sun. There were poor bombing results. Flak over the target area was moderate and accurate. Otherwise, the flak defenses

were negligible. Fierce enemy aircraft attacks were experienced in spite of very fine fighter support. Forty-to-seventy fighters made the attacks. The Group gunners had claims of 14 enemy ships destroyed. The 67th lost one ship. The 506th sent seven crews on this raid. James Clements was one of them. It is also believed that Houghtby, and Stevens, accompanied by John Huber, went.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he was in A/C #522, L (possibly S), Southern Comfort, with Houghtby that day. They were engaged with moderate, accurate flak, and 50-to-75 enemy aircraft. This was Sortie #136 and it took six hours.

Another 506th participant was Henry Borkowski according to the combat record of James Redus. Borkowski was flying in A/C #153, L.

On this December 11th Ray Warner wrote:

We went out over Emden, Germany, today. The 67th lost a ship. Captain Shaw, Lt. Grimes, and Dan Kennon were on it. I can hardly believe Danny went down. It was Shaw's 25th mission. Sieg, Harby, Griff and Jim (all members of Slough's crew) are pretty broken up about Dan. (Grimes, Shaw and Kennon usually flew with Slough.)

Mark Morris also mentioned the attack on Emden, Germany. The 67th lost one ship. Rumor has it that another ship dropped on them. *Yes*

For December 13th, Will Lundy noted that the 44th dispatched 24 aircraft for a return to Kiel, Germany, to attack their ship building and submarine building center. Nearly six months earlier our Group attacked this port with heavy losses. Fortunately, the exact opposite occurred this time. Flak and enemy aircraft were meager when compared to any recent mission that we have flown. The results of the attack were unobserved due to cloud cover. For the first time, the newly arrived 445th BG flew with the 2nd Bomb Division.

The combat record of James Redus shows that the Henry Borkowski crew made this raid. This was Sortie #138 which lasted eight hours. They were flying in A/C #153 and they encountered moderate flak with about five enemy aircraft in the area.

Information furnished by John Huber indicates that he was on this attack against Kiel. It is assumed that he was flying

with Stevens.

Robert Struble was flying as tail gunner with Michaels on this raid. They had a bit of a scare when the ship was caught in prop wash and fell 10,000 feet before control was recovered. They were able to catch up with the formation.

Ollie Bowling's combat record indicates that he was on Sortie #138 with the Frank Albert crew flying in A/C #630, P.

Two days later, December 16th, Will Lundy indicated we returned to Germany. This time we hit Bremen with 22 aircraft. For the first time three combat wings made up the Second Air Division. The 446 BG flew its first mission. As with prior December missions, the winter weather definitely was present. Intense, accurate barrage-type flak was encountered over the target. Meager flak occurred along the route. Very little enemy aircraft activity was experienced with most planes returning safely, despite battle damage. Two of the Group's aircraft made crash landings (66th and 68th).

It is believed that Gordon Stevens, accompanied by John Huber; James Clements; and Frank Albert were on this raid. (Note: On December 18th, records kept by James Warvel show that he was on a mission aboard *Princ Ass*. However, there is no indication that the Group flew in combat on this date. Therefore, I have assumed that it was on the 16th that he was out and he was with Albert.)

Records maintained by Ollie Bowling show that he was with Harold Laudig on the 16th flying A/C #509. This was Sortie 141 and it lasted seven hours. They encountered intense flak and enemy aircraft.

The Patrick Gallagher Combat Record shows that he made this flight on A/C #522, S, *Southern Comfort*. The pilot was Johnson.

Ray Marner wrote on Dec. 16th, "Our planes went over Bremen again today. We lost no planes".

The next day (December 17th) Mark Morris wrote:

I not only celebrated my birthday, but I also received my first Christmas gift of the year. It came via the Supply Sgt. I got one quart of gin.

Colonel Beam was transferred to Bomber Command on December 19th according to Ray Marner.

On that same day, Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

At dinner one of the movie men asked me to come back to the mess hall for one of the scenes.

Did I tell you that they are making a movie here? The name of it is *Libs*. It is to be a fifteen minute reel that shows how we live and what we do.

No, there aren't any stars with the exception of the "G.I. Joes" that I live with. Jack Edwards has a prominent part in it.

The scene that was taken today was eating breakfast before a briefing. All of it was taken in our combat mess. We had pancakes and eggs.

The only part that I take is that I am already eating when Jack comes in and I motion to him to sit down across from me. That is it.

A few days later, after dinner, they shot more scenes for the movie. These were taken inside the ship. I was tuning my transmitter and the top turret gunner (Sgt. Morton of the 68th) was climbing into his position. It was about one minute in all.

Later in the week, they shot pictures of us loading onto the trucks with all our gear prior to going to the planes. Yes, I am in it again.

It was back to Bremen again on December 20th according to Will Lundy. The 44th dispatched 28 aircraft. Several of them aborted due to bad weather and mechanical problems. The effective force was 19 ships. The bomb run was visual and the results were good. Again, the enemy threw up plenty of flak and eight of the Group's aircraft received battle damage. Estimates of 50-to-75 enemy aircraft made attacks on our formation by taking advantage of the condensation trails that our planes were leaving behind. One aircraft, #42-7630, Bar P, flown by Lt. Maynor, did not return.

In his publication, *44th Bomb Group, Roll of Honor and Casualties* Will Lundy wrote:

P 630

Lt. Maynor told me, I don't remember the call letters or the name of our ship as we were a replacement crew and flew several planes. On our 11th mission we went to Bremen, and were hit by fighters as we approached the target. We were knocked out of formation and lost an engine, but continued on to the target, through flak, and bombed. After leaving the target, the fighters again picked us up and shot the plane up rather badly, firing point-blank at us. We had only three guns left firing at them.

We lost altitude to 9,000 feet and flew out over the North Sea at Wilhelmshaven, still losing altitude. We were nearly out of gas and the plane was becoming unmanageable. The German fighters did not follow us out over the North Sea. I had a decision to make---to ditch or to turn back to Germany. If we ditched, it was almost certain death, so I decided our best choice was to return to the coast and bail out. This we did. I was the last one out and just barely made it due to the centrifugal force of the spin.

I only know about those of my crew who survived. I was with Gray and Gunnell in the POW camp.

Lt. Gunnell said that the two men who were MIA, Aho and Stoffel, must have perished in the North Sea after bailing out.

In an article in the December 1988 issue of the *The Fighting 44th Logbook* Arnold L. Gray reported:

Just after dropping our bombs we were struck simultaneously by flak and by enemy aircraft projectiles. Both waist gunners, Glen Stoffel and Joe Coonelly were badly wounded. Two engines were knocked out and we began losing altitude at about 1,000 feet per minute.

As we approached the North Sea coast, I attempted to learn without success from the pilot, Bill Maynor, whether he wanted to ditch or should we prepare to bail out.

Bill apparently decided that we should bail out as the alarm bell sounded in a series of short rings (prepare to leave the ship). I immediately summoned Augustus Aho, the nose gunner, who was in the front of the ship with me. We hooked on our chutes and opened the nose wheel doors awaiting the final bail out signal which never occurred.

When I looked down and saw the water below, I decided to jump and Aho followed me. I learned later that the rest of the crew left the ship after the "prepare" signal. Mike Liss, our radio operator, and I landed in the water and we were picked up by a German Air/Sea/Rescue boat.

As for Aho, the last I saw of him, he was parachuting behind me. I do not know what happened to him. Apparently, he was unable to survive the landing in the water. I do not have any information on Stoffel other than the fact that he was badly wounded.

With Lt. William M. Maynor (POW) were Lts. John E. Gunnell (POW), and Arnold J. Gray (POW). Enlisted personnel were Sgts. James L. Corrigan (POW), Michael J. Liss (POW), Walter J. Scanlon (POW), Joseph M. Coonelly (POW), Joel Parker Jr (POW), Augustus Aho (KIA), and Glenn C. Stoffel (KIA).

Sgt. Aho was a former ground man in the 506th. He is credited with painting many of the nose art pictures on the 506th aircraft--and possibly others.

Mark Morris recalls that Aho "painted my name and the "Flying 8-Ball" on my jacket. I don't remember what his Squadron job was".

Bob Struble believes that he remembers Aho as coming from the 506th Armament Section.

The combat record of James Redus shows that Henry Borkowski was on this raid. It was Sortie #142 and it lasted six hours. They were flying in A/C #509. They came under fire from antiaircraft guns and encountered enemy aircraft.

Another 506th crew that made this raid was Albert, A/C #522, S, Southern Comfort. James Warvel and Edmund Donnelly were with him. There is a possibility that Middleton, accompanied by Robert Struble; and Bunce, accompanied by William Novak, went.

During the next couple of days Ray Marner wrote:

December 20th--"We raided Bremen today. We lost one ship. That is the first in two months. Lt. Maynor's crew is gone.

December 21st--"Captain Butler cracked up today near Wendling, and the ship burned. No one was killed. Nick

MISS EMMA LOU II

DEC 22, 1943

Garza was aboard. (Note: Forest Clark was also aboard this ship) Captain Adams transferred in as Executive Officer."

Late in December, the back problem of Clement Haulman had not improved and he was checked into the base hospital at Shipdham. He was subsequently shipped back to the States by hospital ship.

Ray Marner recorded on December 22:

We hit Munster today. The 66th lost 2 planes. (Will Lundy's works confirm that two 66th ships were lost.) Captain Davenport (Strong crew) finished his missions. (Note: The author believes that Davenport was the first of the officers, that went to England with the 506th, to complete a tour.)

This time it was 22 aircraft of the 44th taking off to attack Munster's important railway and waterway center, as well as the garrison facilities. Bombing was carried out using PFF so the results were unobserved. Flak was moderate, but quite accurate barrage-type that caused the loss of two 66th ships.

It is believed that Stevens, accompanied by John Huber, was on this mission.

Both Patrick Gallagher's and George Ramsey's combat records indicates that they were on A/C #172, T, that day. Ray Houghtby was the pilot. There was moderate flak and enemy aircraft. This was Sortie #143 and it lasted six hours.

The combat record of James Redus shows he was there. James was with Henry Borkowski flying in A/C #153.

The 44th dispatched two flights of 12 aircraft each to hit two rocket emplacements along the French coast on December 24th, according to Will Lundy. The specific targets were Compagen-Les-Resden and Raye-Sur-Authie. There was no flak or enemy aircraft encountered. The results were good on one and very good on the other.

Since this area is generally known as Pas de Calais, the combat records frequently has this reference. It is believed that Gordon Stevens, accompanied by John Huber; Frank Albert, A/C #535, U, Peepsight, and Houghtby were on this mission. Perhaps, Middleton, accompanied by Robert Struble, and Bunce, accompanied by William Novak, were there.

James Clements was in the lead elements of the first box on this raid. He was flying A/C #642, N. Once again Gail Larsen was the copilot. They hit the second of the two targets. Their bombs would not release electronically and had to be salvoed. They observed that the group ahead had plastered the target and that some of our bombs overshot the target.

The combat records of both George Ramsey and Patrick Gallagher indicate that they were on A/C #172, T. Ray Houghtby was the pilot. They encountered enemy aircraft. This was Sortie #145 and lasted five hours.

The James Redus combat record shows that Henry Borkowski crew went on this raid. They were flying in A/C #153, L. Dale Graef remembers that while on this raid, flying with Borkowski, he developed an ear infection that grounded him for about a month.

Information furnished by James Warvel indicates that he was with Frank Albert on this raid.

Harold Laudig accompanied by Ollie Bowling was also there flying in A/C #509.

For December 24th Ray Marner shows: "Our planes went out over northern France today. There were no losses".

On Christmas Day, Mark Morris noted, "We had a good Christmas dinner in the mess hall. I finished my gin. Kief., Tommy Davis & I rode our bicycles to Dereham. It was a warm day."

Norm Kiefer has a copy of the menu for that Christmas Day. The cover shows "Sad Sack" lying in bed dreaming. His dream is of Santa Claus standing behind a well laid out Christmas dinner table with a roasted bird, pies and other goodies. On each side of Santa are Harem Girls. In front of the table, looking on, are two smiling G.I.s in dress uniform. The caption reads: ALL YOUR FAVORITE DISHES TO THE MEN OF THE 44TH.

The inside cover reveals the wish: A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VICTORIOUS 1944.

On the back was a message from Colonel Fred R. Dent, our Group Commander. It read: WE ARE APPROACHING THE END OF ANOTHER YEAR. FOR SOME OF YOU IT IS THE SECOND CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM YOUR HOMES AND LOVED ONES. OUR SUCCESS IN THE LAST



YEAR WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE WHOLEHEARTED COOPERATION OF ALL MEMBERS OF THIS COMMAND. I WISH TO EXTEND THE SEASON'S GREETINGS AND EXPRESS MY GRATEFUL APPRECIATION FOR THIS COOPERATION. LET US ENTER THIS NEW YEAR WITH RENEWED SPIRIT AND DETERMINATION.

In a letter to his wife, Norm Kiefer described how he spent that Christmas Eve:

Usually it is terribly crowded at Midnight Mass so I decided to go in the morning. Around ten I climbed into bed. Albert Kerns had already hit the hay and was reading. Mark had gone into town. Well, around eleven o'clock, Harold Laudig came in. From there on this will read like the hands of a clock. Eleven-thirty ushered in Capt. McAtee. At or around twelve Mike Davis made his appearance. By twelve-thirty they were insisting that Ag. and I get up. We did. Mark made his appearance near the stroke of one. He had stopped off at Midnight Mass on the way home. The last arrival at our gathering was a new fellow to you. "Chippy" (Francis Chipman). He crossed the threshold around two-fifteen. The tide started to ebb near three. McAtee and Laudig were the first to go. Three-thirty saw us back in our little beds again. I had just rolled over and gone to sleep when our lovely little alarm clock announced that it was time to get up to go to church. Around ten-thirty we once more had the congestion in our room that we had the previous night.

On Christmas day, Ray Marner worked all day. "However, I had a good turkey dinner. They had some parties in the Aero Club".

The next day Mark Morris was sent as a, "handcuffed volunteer to a party at the RAF Service Corps (personnel responsible for base maintenance). I had a great time after I got there".

The author also went to that party. In the letter to his wife he said:

I suppose that you want to know what we did at the party last night. It turned out to be an English invitation instead of a Canadian. We went to the Sgt's. Mess and played the following games: darts, ping-pong, and shove half-penny. Of course the British boys won in the first and last games mentioned. They should since they are their games. Our boys held their own at ping-pong and

"Chug-A-Lug". Then of course there was a lot of talking and beer. We got home at around eleven thirty.

Mark Morris told of, "a raid on Ludwigshafen, Germany, on December 30th. We carried 100-pound incendiaries. There were 20 enemy fighters. We had flak nearly all the way back across France. I saw one B-17 break in two. We had no losses. Our #3 engine was hit, but it ran OK. There was great escort service, (P-47, Spitfire then P-51). Cold as Hell."

Will Lundy reported the Group was assigned the vast Chemical Works of I.G. Farben-industrie at Ludwigshafen, Germany. Weather caused problems during assembly. There was not much enemy opposition from either ground or air. Bombs were dropped on PFF flares. Our ships dropped "Window" aluminum foil in strips (chaff) to counteract the enemy radar that was used to direct ground antiaircraft fire. Enemy aircraft attacked our formation after bombs away. The 66th lost one aircraft.

It is believed that the following 506th members went that day: Harold Laudig, A/C #965, ~~QX~~, accompanied by Mark Morris and Norm Kiefer; James Clements and possibly Wayne Middleton; James Bunce, accompanied by William Novak; and William Duffy accompanied by Ralph Golubock.

McAtee's records show he went, but there is no indication of who he was with. He probably was flying as Command Pilot. It may have been with Middleton. If so, Robert Struble was probably at one of the guns on that ship since his records show that he made this mission.

Waino Hannuksela's records indicate he went, but it is unknown who he was with.

The author's combat record reveals we encountered moderate flak and 15-to-20 enemy fighters. I have a strike photo showing bombs dropping into a solid ~~at~~ cloud cover. A note on the back indicates that we will no longer have to depend on visual bombing. This is my second mission on which we used radar to drop the bombs.

Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes went out today and four planes were lost, but <sup>ONE</sup> none from the 506th. The target was Ludwigshafen. Captain Fretwell (Strong crew) finished his missions.

(Note: Fretwell was the second of the officers, that came to England with the Squadron, to finish a tour of duty.)

Will Lundy reported the last mission for the year was to St. Jean D'Angely Airdrome, France. The bombs were dropped visually with "bull's eye" accuracy. Moderate enemy air opposition was encountered, and some flak. The Group suffered no losses. A letter of congratulations on the success of this mission was received from General Hodges. This message also had a penciled in note expressing General Johnson's satisfaction with the Group's performance. 31 Dec

James Clements was flying the number two position in the second box on this mission. He was in A/C #642 N. His target was the northwest side of the field. They dropped using their bomb sight. They observed that there was an excellent bomb pattern and excellent results. Also, that E, salvoed its bombs just after the initial point. There were nine-to-fifteen Fw-190's attacking from three to nine o'clock, both level and below. When the fighter escort appeared they chased off the attacking ships. There was one Me-109 that came through the formation attacking ships on our left. They observed five Fw-189's covering a convoy at Rochefort. He recalls:

I saw a little Jeep like vehicle scouting around on the ground. It went into a hangar just before the hangar blew up.

The combat record of James Redus indicates that this was Sortie #147 and it lasted nine and a half hours. James was with Henry Borkowski flying in A/C #153. The notation indicates that they encountered flak and enemy aircraft.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he was on A/C #172, T, with Ray Houghtby and Patrick Gallagher. They also encountered flak and enemy aircraft. This was Sortie #147 and lasted nine hours.

It is believed that the following other 508th personnel participated in this raid: Harold Laudig, A/C #965, Q, accompanied by Mark Morris and Norm Kiefer; and Frank Albert, A/C #522, S, Southern Comfort, accompanied by James Warvel and Ollie Bowling. In addition, James Bunce may have been along. The Waino Hannuksela and Robert Struble records show that they went on this raid, but it is unknown who they were with. Y 509

Mark Morris reported:

St. Jean De Angeles today. The fighters hit us at Brest and then more at the target. They were not too eager when our escort joined us. We carried 100-pound incendiary bombs. We were three hours on oxygen.

Ray Marner spent New Year's eve on the field. He noted: "Our planes went deep into France today. There were no losses in the Group.

The *Flint Journal* reported these last two raids as follows:

#### TARGETS IN FRANCE BOMBED

3,000 Planes  
Attack Enemy  
In 24 Hours

Paris Suburbs Raided;  
RAF Planes Strike  
In Western Germany

American heavy bombers supported by American and RAF fighters smashed at targets in France, today, it was announced, and the Paris radio said bombs rained on Paris suburbs.

Exact nature of objectives of the daylight assault were not announced by American headquarters as the year end aerial offensive--which had sent more than 3,000 planes thundering against enemy targets in the previous 24 hours--raged on to a climactic finish.

Later announcement that American Marauders and RAF medium, light and fighter/bombers escorted by swarms of fighters were slamming at the French coast indicated the great formations hammering the so-called "rocket gun coast" and other French targets might equal Thursday's record assault.

Today's attacks were in the wake of an assault on an objective--which was not announced, but which may have been the chemical and poison gas works of the Germans at Ludwigshafen deep in Southwestern Germany--Thursday by the greatest fleet of U. S. bombers and fighters, perhaps 1,500 strong, ever sent against the Reich. Twenty-two bombers and 12 fighters were lost in the operation.

Targets of an estimated 500 U. S. medium bombers and RAF and allied medium bombers and fighter/bombers Thursday -- announced by the officials only as "military objectives in Northern France" -- possibly were the "rocket-gun" emplacements of the Nazis in the Pas de Calais area.

Later, the Berlin radio confirmed reports that Ludwigshafen and Mannheim, her twin industrial city across the Rhine River, were the targets of Thursday's American assault.

Berlin's report, which termed the operation a "terror attack," claimed 39 aircraft were shot down.

Fortresses and Liberators with fighting escorts shot down 23 planes in their daylight forays Thursday.

Some escorting fighters flew the entire 1,100 mile, 8 1/2 hour round trip, establishing a record penetration of Germany for them.

Returning crewmen said the "Sky was black with Fortresses and Liberators," and an Army announcement termed the huge formations a "task force". A new navigational instrument helped bombardiers strike targets they could not see.

Some flights of bombers met stiff German fighter opposition and heavy antiaircraft fire, with at least one formation attacked by fighters using rockets.

It was the eighth heavy raid of December for the American Air Force, and its first mission since appointment of Maj. Gen. James H. Doolittle as new commander.

In a year end review, the RAF declared Thursday night that Germany had been struck with 134,400 long tons of bombs this year, nearly four times the weight dropped in 1942. (That was the end of the article.)

McAtee recalls that it was about this time that they were planning a big raid that was intended to destroy German aircraft plants. We were to lead the Eighth Air Force. However, the raid was postponed until we had better fighter protection. Dexter Hodges was to have flown with us.

Dave McCash also remembers this proposed raid:

There were a few of us briefed for a "big one". It was set up that we should cross the Kiel Peninsula, continue east to the Polish border where we would turn south and then west toward Berlin. Coming from the east we would surprise the Luftwaffe and drop our bombs without opposition.

SURE WE WOULD! Of course, after all this flying only a few of us would have enough fuel to make it back to Shipdham. The rest being scattered over Northern Europe or in the North Sea. All of the latter presumes that there were any of us not shot down over Berlin.

Those of us who were briefed were taken off combat status until the weather was suitable to schedule the mission. I'm thankful that the weather was lousy for weeks. I was convinced that it was another suicide mission.

After about three weeks of sitting around stewing, I could stand it no more. I told McAtee not to schedule me for two days and took off for London with a razor and a clean pair of shorts in my pockets. This was my one and only experience of being AWOL. I came back two days later relaxed and able to cope. Now understand, I still was not happy about the prospects and was thankful when the mission was scrubbed.

During the month of December Norm Kiefer made the following comments in letters to his wife:

"After the movie last night we pedaled over to an Anglo-American Club and had some "chips". Then we went to a Pub and played darts and had a couple of beers. On the way home, Bob Grow broke a link in his bicycle chain. Between us, we pulled and pushed him almost all the way home, without too much walking."..."Yes there is an "Old Crow II."..."The picture is of Eightball, our mascot, when he was a pup. He was picked up in Ireland and since then has seen more of the world than most sailors. He sat between the pilot and copilot on one of the most daring and dangerous missions that we have made. Now he is a pretty big pooch and a dog around camp since his master was listed as missing in action."..."It is now Captain Young."..."A couple of ground officers stopped at our hut to look at some of our souvenirs that we have hanging on the walls. It was the first enemy things that they had seen."..."I took some tobacco and cigarettes down to the laundry lady and her husband for Christmas."..."After

Christmas dinner, Kerns and I stopped in at the hospital to see Neeper. He is one of the old boys that was hurt the other day."... "I talked with a W.A.C. today for the first time. The ship that she was on blew out a tire. While they were changing the tire she came over and watched the camera men."

It was about this time that Alexander Januszyk transferred into the 506th armament shop from the 66th.

JAN 44

## THE BUILD UP TO BIG RAIDS

A first of the year summary of recent raids appeared in a January 1, 1944, *The Flint Journal*:

### ALLIED BOMBERS BLAST SIX FRENCH TARGETS

#### PRE-INVASION ASSAULT HITS PARIS SHOPS

#### Ball Bearing Plants, Air Depots, Fields Heavily Attacked

Heavy formations of American Flying Fortresses and Liberators Friday rained tons of high explosive bombs on six major targets in France, from Paris to the Bay of Biscay, during a day in which huge fleets of allied warplanes blasted a pre-invasion path of destruction across the occupied country.

The big, four-engine B-17's and B-24's attacked ball bearing plants and aircraft engine plants near Paris, airfield repair depots and the Chateau Bernard airfield at Cognac, 60 miles north of Bordeaux, on France's west coast.

Delivering the major blow of a great New Year's eve climax to 12 months of record breaking aerial assaults against Europe, the American heavy bombers, escorted by swarms of U.S. fighters, left great plumes of flame and smoke circling 5,000 to 10,000 feet in the sky over Paris plants and winged 410 miles from London to blast the Cognac airfield, about 25 miles from the Atlantic.

The big bombers, making their 10th raid of the month of December, attacked Chateau Bernard airfield for the first time, and in the day's operations struck heavy blows at isolated pinpoint targets important to the German aerial defense of France.

Possibly new record shattering Allied aerial armadas carried forward a mighty 36-hour long nonstop pounding of Northern France, shuttling to and from Britain almost without a break during the day, hammering the invasion



coast and other military objectives.

While U. S. heavy bombers blasted Cognac and Paris, 200 miles from London, where the Paris radio said there were more than 200 civilian casualties, British coastal observers said, the strength of Friday's air fleets was even more impressive than Thursday, possibly even than on Christmas eve when more than 3,000 planes hammered the French invasion coast.

All day, streets in coastal towns were crowded with gaping watchers.

American and RAF medium bombers, officially described as a "large force", which blasted Northern France, carried out their attacks without the loss of a single plane. "Bombing results were good," air authorities said.

It was also learned RAF and Allied fighters escorting the U. S. bombers, shot down four enemy planes for the loss of one.

Observers believed the great swarms of Allied aircraft pounding the French coast constituted first elements of a long softening up process opening the way for invasion, but cautioned against any interpretation that an invasion was imminent.

American fliers returning from the heavy bomber raid said they left a black and white smoke pall visible for 50 miles, and encountered heavy flak over the target.

They met some enemy fighters, but said most of them refused combat due to the strength of the bombers' escorting fighters.

The mighty assaults on France followed 24 hours, ending Thursday evening, in which more than 3,000 Allied planes blasted Berlin, Southwest Germany and France.

Then, during the first three hours of daylight Friday, a big force of Allied medium bombers struck at Northern France. No sooner had they returned than another great force roared out toward the French coast.

The heavy bombers followed and in early afternoon the day's aerial activity reached a peak with great new formations of mediums, tightly guarded by flocks of



Kolliner. On January 1, 1944, Major Anderson was Commanding Officer of the 506th. Kolliner did not assume command until January 14th.

2. The order was signed by Lt. Doughten, Adjutant. On January 1, 1944, Captain John W. Rodgers was Adjutant of the 506th (Note: Rodgers was promoted to Capt. on this date.). Lt. Doughten did not leave his post as Ass't Engineering Officer, to assume the Adjutant post, until January 19, 1944.

It appears that the document was prepared on January 19th or after.

This episode started on May 14, 1943, when the 506th went to Kiel, Germany. On this raid Coldiron was wounded while flying with Lt. Graham on the Old Crow.

By the time that Coldiron was released by the medics, he had been replaced on Anderson's crew and the 44th Group had been removed from combat status. He was not included with the combat personnel that made the two trips to Africa.

After the second trip to Africa, Coldiron was scheduled to go on some combat missions. However, whenever this occurred, he was always sick and could not go.

Coldiron was offered to be reduced in grade and removed from combat status. Each time, Coldiron refused and said, "I'm a combat man and will go up the next time". However, the combat mission was never flown. It was during this time that Mark Morris recalls the rumor that "Coldiron permitted his name to be placed on combat status several times, just to draw flight pay". The January 1, 1944, Squadron Order formalized Coldiron's status as a combat man and gave him until January 21st to make a final decision. In reality, this period was probably 3 days.

Informally, Coldiron was told that if he persisted in claiming combat status and did not fly combat, he would be ordered to go. Refusal would result in court-martial. The story was continued on January 26th.

Mark Morris noted a raid on Kiel, Germany, on January 4th by saying, "My chance to get even." (Note: Mark was probably referring to the losses we had suffered on May 14, 1943.) "It was seven hours of cold--45 degrees. There was light flak and only a few fighters. We had P-38's and P-51's for

escort. We had no problems. But, I am so tired."

The combat records of both Mark Morris and the author reveal that they went on this mission with Lt. Laudig. They were on A/C #42-63 965, Q. This was Sortie #149 and it lasted seven hours. The notation mentioned flak. (Note: McAtee's crew had begun to break up at this point. It is not known who the other crew members were that flew with Laudig that day, but it is known that McCash did not go with them.) PURDY, DUFFY  
CLEMENTS, BORKOWSKI, SAHLER

The Group put up ~~18~~<sup>10</sup> aircraft and led the Wing on this raid. Eight ships from the 506th participated. Ninety-eight 500-pound bombs were dropped on PFF markers with unobserved results. There were some indications that the strikes were north and east of the city. It was extremely cold and several crew members suffered facial and hand frostbite.

James Redus, who was flying with Borkowski, recalls:

We developed an engine problem on the return trip and could not keep up with the Group. Our gas was running low and night was coming on. Borkowski and Mikolajczyk (the navigator) decided we might have to ditch. They had me send an SOS. Air/Sea/Rescue was requested and given information as to our possible ditching area. It sure was heart warming to see them below as we came into the area.

We were fortunate to make it to the closest land base, Woodhall. When we landed we had very little gas left.

I was wearing only a heated suit under my fleece lined clothing. I must have been a sight after I removed the heavy clothing. I had to go to the mess hall dressed in my blue electric suit with dangling electric cord.

Waino Hannuksela was on this mission. Also, the records maintained by William Novak show that he went, perhaps with ~~Bunee~~.?

A newspaper account tells of an incident that occurred as the Squadron taxied out for this mission:

After the last Kiel raid, operations at a Liberator base got to figuring they ought to handicap Norman E. Purdy's B-24, Q, on future takeoffs. Purdy and his crew were taxiing for takeoff when the No. 4 propeller hit a parked truck and was badly damaged. Q sat idle while the other B-24's took off. Then the ground crew went to work.

T/Sgt. Alfred Peyrounat, of Concord, Cal., ground crew chief, and S/Sgt. Jack Brown, of Eustace, Tex., prop specialist, led mechanics onto the ship and in exactly 30 minutes Q had a new No. 4 prop and was racing down the runway. It caught the other Libs and bombed Kiel.

In spite of Norm Purdy's efforts, the Group had to return to Kiel on the next day, January 5th. Four of our ships took off with the Group. Two of them dropped twenty-four 500-pound bombs on Kiel, Germany. One aircraft jettisoned its bombs into the North Sea. One aircraft brought its bombs back. Bombing was visual and results were fair. Two attacks were made by enemy aircraft in the target area.

James Clements remembers:

I was flying the number four position in the lead box. We were on the bomb run when one of our engines was shot out. In order to keep up I was pulling 63 inches on the remaining three engines. Even then we were lagging. After bombs away Sayler came back to fly formation with me. He stayed with me until I landed at Krimington.

William Novak also was at Kiel on this date, probably with Bunce. Q 965

After an overnight stay, Lt. Borkowski and crew returned to base. /10

On January 6th Ray Marner noted "Don Orr was broke in rank and transferred. Rowell is the new 1st Sgt."

John J. Huber, bombardier on the Gordon Stevens crew, remembers the recalled mission of January 7th:

We were fortunate enough to be the <sup>DEPUTY-</sup> lead plane for the 44th, and the 44th was the lead group of the 2nd Division which was leading the 8th Air Force. We crossed the English Channel on a 45 degree angle. It only took nine minutes. Rispoli was the navigator and he came up with a time and distance answer to a ground speed of 330 miles per hour. This translated into a winds aloft of 165 miles per hour. To continue to the target at Ludwigshafen would mean we could not make it back to England. General Johnson ordered a recall and we fired a red flare. One division of B-17's did not see the flare and their lead navigator must have been off in space. As a result, they fished B-17's out of the channel most of the night. W 967

LOST 5-B-17's only  
1 D-24 lost

Six ships from the Squadron took off with the Group on this Ludwigshafen, Germany, raid. One ship returned early because the pilot was unable to find the formation. The mission was abandoned over Holland. Five ships received credit for a sortie.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel indicates that Lt. Albert and crew were on this mission flying in A/C #41-29 153, Z, Greenwich. Ollie Bowling was flying their tail guns. This was Sortie #151 and it lasted five hours. They were over enemy territory when they turned back.

Lt. William Doughton went to Krimington to oversee the battle damage repair of Lt. Clements' ship. They returned on January 8th

Also, on this day Norm Kiefer mentioned in a letter to his wife:

This morning I forced myself to write a letter to "Willies" (Richard Williams) folks. By the time I got through, I had six pages.

In explanation of this comment, in early December of 1943, a new Catholic Chaplain was assigned to the 44th. Father Harshaw was a Marion priest. Prior to his military career he was a professor of mathematics in a midwest college. After his arrival, Father Harshaw attempted to become acquainted with as many of the 44th personnel as he could. During the month of December Norm told his wife about a couple of long talks with Father Harshaw.

Late in December I was invited to a meeting with a couple of chaplains and their administrative assistants. They indicated that they were faced with the problem of receiving letters from relatives of 44th personnel who had been shot down, but no one on the chaplain staff knew the individual. They believed that the reply would be more meaningful if it was written by someone who knew the missing airman. They wanted me to help by answering some of those letters. They stated that I could write without concern about censorship. They would approve the letter without reading it. Thus the letter to "Willies" mother.

It never entered my head that the letter would lead to a number of exchanges. It soon became apparent that "Willies" mother was adopting me. I decided that since I was still flying combat that there was a good chance that she would

have to go through the pain once again. I stopped writing.

This was the beginning of a period of despondency for me. One day I heard Norm Purdy, say, "I will be glad when McAtee's crew finishes their tours. Maybe then we will be able to fly with our own crew and get back to fighting the war." This resulted in a definite feeling of not being wanted.

The statement by Purdy was probably warranted. Up to this point, the 506th had only four combat men that had completed their tour, two enlisted and two officers. They were all from Strong's crew (not a crew that was with the Squadron when it formed in the States). The original officers, that had survived, were being promoted. In their new positions they could not fly as frequently. Their crews were broken up. Among the original enlisted men, only Mike Davis, Frank Juskowski, George Hartney and myself remained. All the other original combat men were either casualties or had been transferred. It was probably common knowledge that McAtee was selecting the missions and the crews for these men. He was trying to get someone, who had started out with the Squadron, to finish.

On the wall in our hut, I had scrawled the names of men and ships of the 506th with the dates and places that they had gone down. There was also a notation regarding Coldiron. This faced me each morning when I got up and once again when I retired.

Now I would frequently look at my limbs in the morning when I dressed and wonder if they or even I would be there by evening. I frequently mentally said, "Lord, I am going to try to stay alive today. However, if that is not what you want, your will be done".

I had given up forming close friendships after "Willie" was shot down. You just get hurt! Now the rule was, be friendly with everyone and a friend to none.

In another letter to my wife, on January 10th, I wrote:

At three o'clock we did a remarkable thing. Now sit down before I tell you. We drilled! That is the first time in over a year. With the new order that is out, I guess that we will be doing it once a week.

Behind this drill session was a small rebellion.

As I remember it, a new Squadron Executive Officer was assigned to the 506th. He was fresh from Officer's Training School back in the States. This was his first assignment. He quickly decided that the Squadron personnel were not as military as he had been taught they should be. He was going to do something about it.

His first move was to post a notice that all personnel, except combat personnel scheduled to fly, would turn out for close order drill at 7:00 A.M.

The following morning he had the C.Q. go to the barracks and rouse all personnel. In most of the combat barracks there was a lot of grumbling. However, in one barracks, when the lights were turned on by the C.Q., one of the combat men reached for a 45-caliber pistol. He leveled it at the C.Q. and said "Turn out the God Damned lights."

Believing that discretion is the better part of valor, the C.Q. turned out the lights and went back to report to the Executive Officer. He in turn went to the barracks and was also greeted with the pistol and "Turn out the God Damned lights".

When the Executive Officer returned to the Orderly Room Captain McAtee was there. McAtee was listening to one of the ground men that had just been called out for drill after working all night on his aircraft. When he heard what had happened in the combat barracks McAtee told the Executive Officer, "If you want to drill, go ahead, but stay away from my combat men. They will kill you."

A face saving compromise was worked out and towards the end of February, I was able to write to my wife:

You go right ahead and laugh about our drilling that one day. Please don't split your sides because we haven't done it since then.

About this time there was a rumor that better food (the type that would not cause gas pains at high altitude) would be issued to the combat crews.

On the 11th of January, Ray Warner stated:

Our planes went out today and bombed a secondary target. I think a lot of American bombers were lost around Berlin. Things were screwed up. A lot of B-17's landed here. We



lost no planes.

In the morning, eight 506th aircraft took off with the Group to attack Brunswick, Germany. Two of our aircraft returned early. As the Group crossed into enemy territory, a recall was issued. The 44th, just before turning back, spotted an opening in the clouds and decided to bomb a target of opportunity. Meppen, Germany, was that target and it was bombed with an excellent bomb pattern being laid upon the factory and railroad area. The 506th specifically hit the locks in the Dortmund Ems canal north of the city of Meppen. Results were excellent. Slight, inaccurate flak was encountered, but enemy aircraft did not attack. Lt. D'Angelico was the Lead Bombardier of the second section and Lt. R. A. Johnson was Lead Pilot of the section dropping on this target.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel indicates that Albert and his crew were on this raid flying in A/C #153, Z, ✓ Greenwich.

Also, James Clements was along. Once again he was in A/C 642, N, and had his regular crew along. They dropped electronically on the leader with very good results. There was a cameraman aboard their ship, but it is not known who it was. They saw four unidentified enemy aircraft.

The *Flint Journal* reported the raid as follows:

GREATEST BOMB ASSAULT PASSES 72 HRS.

BRUNSWICK BATTERED  
AFTER RECORD RAID ON  
FRANKFURT SATURDAY

Over 800 U.S. Heavies in 1,800-Ton Smash,  
First of 2 Giant Attacks; Berlin Is  
Hit Second Straight Night

American bombers yesterday struck their second major blow in two days at Germany's war industry and carried the Allies heaviest air offensive of the war into its 72nd hour.

Brunswick, 120 miles west of Berlin, was sledge hammered by a force of Fortresses and Liberators almost as great as the record fleet of more than 800 heavy U.S. bombers which in daylight Saturday dumped a record 1,800 tons of high

explosives and incendiaries onto Frankfurt, in the southwestern Reich.

The two American attacks, bringing the USAAF's total for the month to ten, were coupled with two successive RAF raids on Berlin, stretching the Nazis' overworked defenses toward the breaking point. The great assaults by the heavies were supplemented by endless relays of Allied medium, light and fighter/bomber assaults on other targets in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The second major force of American bombers to strike the Reich in two days, yesterday pushed deep into central Germany to bomb the already battered aircraft manufacturing center of Brunswick.

The attack, covered all the way to the target and back by relays of American fighters, came before the Nazi defenses recovered from the biggest daylight raid in history--Saturday's assault by more than 800 Fortresses and Liberators on the railway and manufacturing city of Frankfurt in southwest Germany.

Bombing through clouds, yesterday's force flew in an overcast haze, through which German fighters slashed in desperate efforts to halt the serial armada. Almost as many planes were in the attacking force, it was estimated, as in Saturday's 1,800-ton assault, which included more than 700 fighters.

At a late hour last night USAAF headquarters had not announced the losses.

German radio said at least 53 planes were shot down, 41 of them four-engine bombers. "Despite bad weather conditions," the German News Agency said, "the German Air Force has been able to inflict another smashing blow at the American bombers which attacked southwest German territory."

The report on the Brunswick attack referred, for the first time in a communique, to the new administrative setup of the USAAF in the ETO--The U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe--official name for the heavy bombers whose task probably will continue to be the disruption of Germany's war manufacturing and transport machine behind

the invasion walls.

Yesterday's raid, like Saturday's, involved a round trip of about 900 miles. It was the second U.S. blow at Brunswick, which first was hit by the Americans in the widespread attacks of Jan. 11, when 60 bombers were lost in successful attacks on aircraft factories throughout central Germany. (That was the end of the article.)

Patrick Gallagher's flight records indicate that he flew in combat as copilot on this date. There is no indication of who he was with. However, his combat record does not have an entry for January 11th. This was probably the day that:

We took off with 2,000-pound bombs and just off the runway the #3 engine ran away. When it happened we were climbing to turn to the left. The engine would not feather. By reducing the throttle on the disabled engine we were able to gain enough altitude to turn. We landed at the first field we saw. When we got down, they found the reduction gear in the engine had broken and knocked a piece of the engine out. After the ship was repaired, we returned to Shipdham.

For January 13th Ray Marner indicated, "A plane from the 68th crashed on the field today killing 10 men. It blew up and made quite a mess." (Will Lundy mentioned this incident in his writings.)

The following day, January 14th, the 506th went to bomb the military installations at Escalles-Sur-Buchy, France. Nine of our aircraft flew as a section leading the 67th Squadron. One of our ships returned early with mechanical failure. The bomb load was ninety-six 500-pound general purpose bombs. Bombs were dropped with excellent results. Capt. McAtee was the command pilot. About 15-to-20 enemy aircraft were encountered, but they only made a single pass. There was slight, inaccurate flak.

George Ramsey's combat record indicates that he made this raid on A/C V-#509 with Houghtby and Patrick Gallagher. Our formation encountered enemy aircraft. This was Sortie #154 and it lasted five hours.

The combat record of James Redus shows that he was on this mission flying with Henry Borkowski in A/C #153, ~~A-2~~ 2<sup>ND</sup> Sect

Jack Warvel reports that Albert and crew made the raid flying

In A/C #41-29 172, T. Also, John Huber was there, probably with Stevens.

Ground personnel made an outstanding contribution toward the war effort even before the ships were airborne. Ordnance was alerted at 0930 hours to load nine ships. Armament assisted ordnance in loading three ships as well as installing guns in all aircraft in ample time for takeoff. A Letter Of High Praise was received from Colonel Dent, Group Commander, for this fine work.

Also on this day, January 14th, Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes went out at noon today to Southern France. The 66th lost one plane. (Will Lundy reports that it was a ship from the 67th.) *in 4<sup>th</sup> SECTION*

We got a new C.O. today; Captain Kolliner. Major Anderson went to Group Headquarters. Capt. Kolliner has 30 missions and came over when the Group first came over. They're loading again tonight. Maybe this is it. (Note: Ray was probably referring to the expected raid by our Group on Berlin.)

James Redus vividly recalls when Kolliner assumed command:

Kolliner ordered all the enlisted men to fall in at the orderly room and proceeded to tell them that there was a lack of discipline in the Squadron. He stated that we would shape up or ship out. He followed that with the information that he would whip any one who didn't shape up. You don't dispute a Major; besides, he was a fine physical specimen who could more than likely back up his word.

There should have been another letter from our commander on the next day's activities by our ground forces. It actually started on January 14th when at 2130 hours the alert went out to load seven ships with 40 M47A1 bombs. The job was to have been completed by 0200 hours on the 15th of January. At 0230 hours they were called back to the line to change to 40 fragmentation bombs per ship. The mission was scrubbed at 0500 hours.

Mark Morris wrote in his diary for this day, January 15th, "I met Harry Grannon on the way to a leave in Scotland. We had a great time".

Lt. Lowenthal and Lt. Ellison were transferred to the 44th Bomb Group Headquarters on January 16th. Many years later, Lowenthal related that he requested this move because of all the politics that was taking place in the Squadron.

This unrest was also reflected among the combat personnel. Lt. Wulff was reclassified from pilot to copilot (Wulff was assigned to a newly arrived Bolin crew. The enlisted personnel were originally with Charles R. Conner who was indefinitely grounded.) *again had crew in May 44*

*From Co. 44*

McAtee recalls:

One of the first things that Kolliner did after assuming command of the Squadron was to review personnel assignments. He noted that Michaels had held the position of Assistant Operations Officer for a long time, but that he was not flying regularly and had few combat missions. Kolliner directed that Michaels had to fly combat and he gave him a crew. *Wulff?*

Capt. Robert L. Cardenas arrived on January 17th

*14th - last mission*

There was an entry in the microfilm history that on January 18th Capt. Fretwell, (From Strong's crew); and Lt. Rispoli, (navigator on Stevens crew), both completed their tours of duty. (I can find no evidence that the 44th participated in combat on this date. Ray Warner reported Fretwell's completion on December 30, 1943.)

The next day, January 19th, Capt. John W. Rodgers transferred to the 50th Station Complement. 1st Lt. William Doughton was relieved of his assignment as Assistant Engineering Officer and was assigned as Squadron Adjutant.

On January 21st James Clements was back in combat. He recalls:

The 44th was the only group in the Wing to attack this target as preceding formations abandoned the mission due to 8/10th cumulus. There was moderate accurate flak. We were a section following the 67th Squadron. Over France we became separated. I led a our section of nine aircraft to the airfield at St. Jean D'Angely, France. Due to towering type cumulus cloud cover and difficulty in maneuvering at the I.P., it was necessary to make four bomb runs before a successful alignment and sighting was possible. The bombs blanketed the assigned MP, obtaining

excellent results.

(2) James Clements was flying in A/C #642, N. His copilot was Lt. Orville L. Wulff. As usual, Boykin was the navigator and Bumbicka was the bombardier. Lt. John J. Huber flew as his nose turret gunner (the eleventh man aboard). They were carrying one hundred and eight 500-pound general purpose bombs. The bomb sight was used and bombs were released electronically with excellent results.

T-177 George Ramsey's combat record shows that he went on this raid with Houghtby and Patrick Gallagher. The notation shows enemy aircraft and flak were encountered. This was Sortie #159 and lasted five hours.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel shows that Albert and crew, including Edmund Donnelly, went out this day on A/C #153, Z, Greenwich.

Also, William Novak went on this mission, perhaps with Bunce.

This was the second raid for Ralph Golubock.

John Huber and Marion Paclorek recall that this was the 25th mission for Capt. Stevens and he flew as Command Pilot in the deputy lead aircraft of another section. Huber said:

After Stevens completed his combat tour he asked to be transferred to Fighter Command. There followed a short transition training period and Stevens was assigned to P-47'S. He went with Col. Zempke's bunch, but didn't come back. He wasn't over 25 years of age.

Ray Marner wrote for January 21st:

Planes went over France today. The Group lost six ships. The 506th didn't lose any. Major Anderson went down. It was his 25th mission. (Note: Will Lundy reported the loss of five ships from the 44th.)

CRASH LANDING  
IN COOKES A/C  
KIA / FLAK

A newspaper article told of the loss of Anderson:

We met little opposition. We had cloud cover anyway. We were trying to bomb through clouds and made five runs, but we could not make sure, so we turned back with our bombs. We never bomb in France unless we are dead sure.

As we were crossing the French coast we found Jerries

had moved in a bunch of mobile ack-ack. They must have been tracking us for quite a time. The first burst was so close I heard it.

I started evasive action. There were 12 of us in the formation, but 30 seconds after that first burst we got hit at 11,000 feet. It happened so fast we were thrown around completely out of control by the smack of the explosions. Jerry got us with seven direct hits in a bunch.

I put the plane into a dive as soon as I got some sort of control and went down fast as I could to 8,000 feet in order to get out of the area. We were not hit again. I realized at once that there was not much left to my ship.

One of the shells burst right inside the bomb bay ripping out the cat walk, which holds the bottom of the fuselage together. This shell killed the Command Pilot, Major Anderson, who was standing between the copilot and me. Major Anderson slumped to the floor and was lying in a heap.

Many years later General Johnson commented on the loss of Anderson. He related that Anderson believed that the formation was out of range of enemy guns and he had removed his cumbersome flak vest. The burst that killed him came seconds later.

James Redus recalls:

Major Anderson flew with us once as Command Pilot. Flak suits had just been issued and he was ever so put out that we had them, but were not wearing them. The two waist gunners, Donal Smith and Wade Lemon, had their floor area lined with them.

Also on January 21st Ray Marner wrote:

Oliver Germann (Strong crew) came back from the hospital in Africa. He was wounded over Foggia.

I just learned that Major Anderson and the ship he was on cracked up here in England. He and another were killed. (Note: Will Lundy reported that while over enemy territory the radio operator aboard this ship was blown free and became a POW. The ship did crash land in England.)

Mark Morris remembers that occasionally they played with the ratio of tracers to other shells in a belt.

Someone decided that we were too dependent on tracers and were being falsely lulled into thinking we were hitting the fighters when we weren't. Consequently, all tracers were removed. This of course left a large pile of tracers. Jack Edwards couldn't pass up that opportunity. He talked me and some of his armament buddies into helping him fill his ammo belts with nothing but tracers. I was grounded and did not go on the next mission. When they returned across the channel it was getting dark. Jack told me later that he fired off a few bursts for effect. Other gunners told me that upon seeing the sky light up with tracers, they thought the formation was under attack and everyone started firing wildly. It was widely rumored that one B-24 was struck by some of that fire.

On January 23rd Norm wrote to his wife:

Do you remember that old ambition of mine? I mean finding a town without any "G.I.s" in it! Well I almost found it. All the time that we were there we didn't see more than 15 American soldiers.

The people on the street would turn and stare at us. One woman came up and asked us what the wings were for. We told her that we were air crew. She said, "How can you be? You are wearing Army uniforms." We explained that our Air Force was different from theirs and that we didn't wear blue.

In one cafe we ordered a meal. The waitress stood in back and watched us eat. You know that we use our eating tools a good deal differently than the rest of the world. She watched us and asked questions about the food and the States. Then she would go to the other end of the room and say something to another girl. They would giggle and come back to watch us. (Note: I believe that I had gone to Newcastle upon the Tyne. The one thing that I still remember about this town was that each night the hotel chambermaid placed a hot water bottle in the bed to provide warmth.)

Information furnished by Jack Warvel, for January 24th, reveals that he and Donnelly were with Albert on A/C #153, Z, Greenwich, on a four hours mission that was recalled. Ralph Golubock also reports that he was in the air on this day.



The 506th put up eleven ships.

In accordance with Squadron Order 1, January, 1944, Coldiron was ordered, by an Officer, to fly on January 26th. He refused the order. He was reduced in grade to Pvt., placed under military arrest and remanded to the guardhouse. (The microfilm history shows that there were four others who were reduced in grade at the same time. It is not known what the circumstances of their reduction was nor what became of them.)

Robert Struble recalls:

Eddie Coldiron was 25 years old. We considered him to be the "old man" of the barracks. Eddie played a guitar as well as any professional. He sang Country and Western and even wrote his own songs. One has always stayed with me (At least the name, *Match Box Blues*). The melody I don't remember.

After the seventh mission he refused to go to the briefings. He would lie in bed and shake. At the time of the Kiel raid, when he was wounded, Coldiron had jet black hair. Now his hair was all white and he was a nervous wreck. He was a sick man. The apprehensions he had regarding returning to combat were too much. Eddie was no coward! He needed help at that point, not heavy discipline.

Dave McCash recalls how badly I felt when I saw Coldiron with the guardhouse gang, under armed guard, doing menial tasks around the base.

In due course of time, Coldiron's court-martial was held. McAtee, as the Squadron Operations Officer, was required to testify that Coldiron had been scheduled to go on a combat mission. Also, that he had to find a replacement for Coldiron when he refused to go. McAtee was not allowed to give any testimony in Coldiron's defense. He believed that Coldiron needed help and was being made a scapegoat to assure that others didn't chicken out. McAtee remembers that the sitting board was composed of young ground officers.

The only Field Grade Officer that could have testified in Coldiron's defense, Major Anderson, his former pilot and Squadron Commander, had been killed in action on January 21st. With the exception of George Hartney, a fellow gunner, all of Coldiron's former crew members were now dead or

prisoners of war.

The board found Coldiron guilty of cowardice in the face of the enemy. He was sentenced to death. Upon review, this sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Many years later McAtee revealed:

After the end of hostilities, when the 506th returned to the United States, an effort was made to right the injustice that Coldiron received. Then Lt. Colonel McAtee, Commanding Officer of the 506th, sent Captain Doughten to Washington to plead Coldiron's case. To the best of his knowledge, McAtee indicated that Coldiron was released from prison.

During the next few days Ray Marner reported:

January 28th--"Germann (Strong crew) just came in with all his medals on. He sure has a slug of them. He got them all at once. Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with Cluster, Air Medal with 3 Clusters and a Purple Heart." (A few days later, an article on Germann appeared in the Stars and Stripes. This article is covered in this work on August 18th.)

January 27th--"The R.A.F. went out and a couple planes crashed near here. About 3 haystacks were on fire.

"Today we got our "Citation for Ploesti" and we can now wear the citation ribbon. We're getting one for Kiel too. We'll wear a Cluster on the ribbon."

Mark Morris reports:

On January 29th we went to Frankfurt, Germany. We hit a rail junction. We dropped fifty-two 100-pound incendiaries. There were about 50 fighters. They were with us from the coast till just after bombs away. Twelve attacks were made on us. They all broke off outside 500 yards. They weren't eager. There was light flak."

Ten ships from the 506th made this mission with Lt. R. A. Johnson leading the second section. We dropped 461 bombs on PFF markers with unobserved results. One aircraft returned early with three generators out and the nose cowling damaged by flak.

*Bolin too*

The combat records of both Mark Morris and Norm Kiefer show that they made this raid with Lt. Purdy on A/C #862<sup>w</sup> Prince Ass.<sup>w</sup> This was Sortie #162 and it took eight hours. The notation showed that there was flak and enemy fighters. The Flight Record for Ollie Bowling shows that he flew this mission with this crew. However, his Combat Record indicates the plane number as 162, the same number as the Sortie number (a typing error). It is not remembered why Jack Edwards was not flying that day. *S/B W 962*

James Redus' combat record agrees with Norm's except for the length of the mission. The Henry Borkowski crew, flying in A/C #153, L, got back a half-hour earlier. *also 25- flown by R. Waane* *ALBERT WAS PILOT*

Information furnished by both John Huber and William Novak indicate that they went on this raid. It is not known who they went with.

Records maintained by Ralph Golubock indicates that he was on this raid. *(CO-PILOT?)*

Ray Marner noted:

Our planes hit Frankfurt today. The 66th and 67th each lost a plane. (In his writings Will Lundy confirmed these losses.) All 506th ships came back again. We're getting a terrific record. One of our planes crash landed. It was Lt. Duffy's crew. Two men were hurt. (Note: Will Lundy does not mention a second injury.)

Lt. Duffy made an excellent landing with a badly damaged aircraft. He had no hydraulics, no brakes, a flat right tire, the ball turret was down, and the tail turret was knocked out by enemy action. He incurred the battle damage shortly after entering enemy territory. However he continued to the target. S/Sgt. Victor J. Chopp, who lost an eye, displayed extraordinary courage and determination by repairing his turret after it had been hit. He was wounded again while firing the repaired turret.

The Flint Journal reported the raid as follows:

800 BOMBERS HIT FRANKFURT

RAID BY U.S. PLANES  
HEAVIEST IN DAYLIGHT;  
BERLIN POUNDED AGAIN

JAN 44

RAF Loses 47 Craft as Nazi Capital  
Gets Second Blasting in 24 Hours;  
London Has 700th Alert of War

The Eighth American Air Force sent the greatest number of heavy bombers in its history--more than 800--in a thunderous assault against industrial Frankfurt today even as Berlin smoked and burned anew from Friday night's second heavy RAF blow in a row.

Fighter escorts probably numbering several hundreds accompanied and assisted the Liberators and Flying Fortresses in the blow at highly industrialized Frankfurt. Losses were not announced immediately.

Swedish reports said the complete evacuation of burning Berlin was contemplated, and the Nazi clamped a tight censorship on details of the second successive devastating RAF blow to mop up the rubble strewn capital. (The article continued with other unrelated accounts).

Whenever possible, when Norm had been on a raid, he tried to write a quick letter to his wife to let her know that he was all right. In these letters he would mention that he had received communion in the morning, but had not gone to Mass. The letter written on the night of Jan 29 is a good example:

I am very tired! I received communion this morning, but could not get to Mass in the afternoon. Yes, everybody is all right today. You will have to excuse me for tonight. I am too tired to write any more.

Ray Marner also wrote on January 29th:

The R.A.F. has raided Berlin two nights in a row. You can hear them going out again tonight.

Klinge (Bunce crew) and Kooken (Bunker crew) finished their missions. (Note: Kooken was an original 506th gunner who had been transferred to the 67th.)

We just got another blackout alert. Some 40 German planes are over the Norfolk area. That's quite a few for "Jerries".

James Clements was the Squadron Leader on January 30th when the Squadron ~~went~~ to Brunswick, Germany. The 506th, with eight ships, was the second squadron in the Group. His

*was scheduled to go*

records reveal that there was moderate accurate flak and about 30 Me-109's and Ju-88's. Waino Hannuksela was his copilot. The crew observed huge columns of white smoke coming up through the overcast. They watched two Ju-88's being shot down by two P-47's. Several dog fights were seen. Seven Me-109's, that were bunched together, made a pass from two o'clock level, but did not close in.

The mission was briefed for visual bombing of Brunswick. However, due to high clouds and persistent contrails, our Combat Wing dropped on a target of opportunity, Hannover. We dropped ninety-four 500-pound general purpose bombs on PFF markers.

The combat records of both Mark Morris and Norm Kiefer show that they flew this mission with Norm Purdy on A/C #201, Baldy and His Brood. The notation indicated that we encountered enemy aircraft. This was Sortie #163 and lasted seven hours.

George Ramsey's combat record reveals that he went on A/C #172, T, flown by Ray Houghtby. The notation shows that they encountered enemy aircraft. Patrick Gallagher was the copilot. (There is a notation in the microfilm history that they dropped their bombs through the bomb bay doors due to a malfunction.)

Records of William Novak show that he was on this raid, but it is not known who he went with.

Ralph Golubock was on this mission. He may have been flying with Horne. *✓*

Records maintained by Ollie Bowling show that he made this mission with Harold Laudig on A/C 965, S.

Mark Morris noted for the day:

This was my 20th mission. I'm counting now as some fellows are finishing their tour. We went to Brunswick, Germany. We had an escort most of the way. There were quite a few enemy fighters, but only seven broke through."

Ray Marner reported, "Our planes went to Brunswick, Germany. We lost none. The rumor that is going around is that this Group is going home."

Mark Morris wrote on the last day of the month:

Up at 3:30. Mission to Frankfurt scrubbed. (I wonder if Mark was one of the enlisted men that failed to go to the lecture that was given by an Officer from the para-troops. The microfilm history noted that the enlisted combat men who failed to attend "Paid".)

*Jan 31<sup>st</sup> Several 506 crews + BOLIN in 2824 scrubbed*  
During the month of January the following personnel received promotions: Harold Laudig to Captain; Lts. Blow, D'Angelico, Martin, and Wulff to 1st Lt.; T/Sgt Rowell to 1st Sgt.

Lt. Richard A. Parker and crew were transferred to the 93rd Bomb Group. It is believed that transferring with Parker were Lts. David R. Simons, Edward L. Rutherford, and John E. Coffey. It is also believed that the following enlisted personnel went with Parker; Sgts. Ivan G. Nyhoff, Harry D. Willey, David L. Lieck, Doy V. Whitlock, Joseph T. Covone, and Claude Sorrow.

In letters to his wife Norm Kiefer mentioned the following during the month of January:

"I am now flying with my old copilot, Lt. Harold Laudig. Captain McAtee is our Operations Officer and doesn't fly very often."..."If you want to buy a stove or anything else, and can find a place to store them, go right ahead. It is OK with me."..."I am writing this from the Club. It is too cold to write in the hut. From now on, whenever it is possible, I will be writing up here. "...Tomorrow morning I am going to try to send \$200 home to you. It is my base pay, flying pay and back pay. Now don't worry about me! That will leave \$118 to spend on the furlough which I am supposed to get the sixteenth of this month. On top of that, Mike owes me 20 some dollars. Do you remember how you laughed when I told you that I would make this much money while in the army?"..."Lt. Young has left us now. He has gone to a higher job."..."Oh! I forgot to tell you. Major Anderson went to visit "Willie" while we were on pass. It was his last one." (Note: I was telling her that Major Anderson had been killed in action.)..."They have four ducks here at the Club. There is a good sized spring out in front and that is where they live. Right now they are gathered here by the window waiting to be fed."..."Mark received the paper dolls and hung them on the wall at the head of his bed. He asked me to thank you girls for him." (Note: While in the rest home, Mark played this song over-and-over.)

On the night of February 1 Mark Morris stated, "They loaded

2000-pounders last night. Our pilot, Lt. Purdy, is grounded. I got a 24-hour pass. I asked Capt. McAtee if I could go tomorrow with someone. He said, 'No, go use your pass.'

On February 2, the day arrived that the author had been looking forward to. That morning I was woke up with the C.Q. shaking me and saying that I was going with Ray Houghtby in aircraft #172, T. This would be my last mission. Patrick Gallagher was the copilot.

At the briefing I learned that I would not be flying as radio operator. Instead, I will fly as nose gunner. Also, I would be the one that would trigger out the bombs. Therefore, I attended the briefing with the bombardiers. I was told to release our bombs when the ship ahead dropped. The target was to be the buzz bomb sites at Watton in the Pas de Calais area of France. The bombing altitude was to be 18,000 feet. We would be dropping 2,000-pound bombs. There were nine aircraft from the 506th.

McAtee's Jeep pulled up to the hard stand just before the signal flare was fired for taxi time. McAtee jumped out of the Jeep and climbed aboard. He shook my hand and wished me luck and then departed.

In the target area there was slight flak and some ice in the clouds that obscured the target. Twenty-eight bombs were dropped on the second pass over the target. Our aircraft suffered slight flak damage and returned to the base without incident. We saw no enemy aircraft.

George Ramsey recalls:

We buzzed the field for a sergeant (we didn't know) who completed his missions with us. We were assigned the hard stand next to the control tower. #56 SAYLER'S CREW

The author was on the flight deck as Houghtby taxied into the dispersal area. I saw quite a few individuals were waiting on the hard stand. When I climbed out of the ship McAtee took my picture and once again shook my hand expressing great pleasure. Then the others repeated the procedure. This was Sortie #166 and it lasted five hours.

While all of this was going on, Captain Laudig was having a celebration of his own. This was also his last combat mission. Upon return, he did not get into the normal position for landing. After all the others were on the

ground, Laudig disappeared from sight. Then he came roaring in at low level and buzzed the control tower. This was an unauthorized maneuver. After he was down Norm joined him and they congratulated each other.

Glenn Hall was aboard the ship when Laudig buzzed the field. He recalls:

That mission was my first as engineer. Laudig had told us that there would be no buzzing. The boys in the back were all sitting down. I was down by the bomb bay to check the landing gear when we seemed to pick up speed. I went back up on the flight deck to see us heading for the enlisted men watching the planes come in. They just stood there until we were almost on them and then they scattered like flies, expecting us to crash. Laudig pulled up to miss the radio building and a big tree. He then yelled, "That's the way these damned things should be flown."

They said that the Group C.O. came over to Laudig after we got on the ground and said "Congratulations, Laudig, you're grounded." He was grounded for two weeks, but felt justified for his buzz job.

In order to understand why Laudig did this, I must tell of events much earlier. Some time before my first mission, a B-24 took off on a local flight, veered off to the left, hit some trees beyond the runway and burned. I was one of five or six men who ran down to the wreckage and Laudig was already there, his uniform burned when he tried to get someone out of the plane. There was nothing he could do but watch the plane burn. He was very upset and cursed us out for being bloodthirsty. Later on when Laudig's crew was formed and we went to the rest home, the enlisted men rode with the officers as far as London. During the train ride, Laudig talked about the "sweaters" who would come down to the line to watch the planes land or crash after the missions. Those were the ones he headed for on his buzz and that was why he felt justified.

Bob Grow (Bunce crew) and C. C. Fry (Stevens crew) also completed their combat tours that day.

George Ramsey's combat record mentions the flak that we encountered.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel reports he and Edmund Donnelly were with Albert who was flying in A/C #42-7 642, N



on this five-hour mission.

The combat record of James Redus indicates that the Henry Borkowski crew flew Sortie #166 in A/C #153, ~~L. Z~~

John Huber's records show that he went on this raid. It is not known who he went with.

William Novak may have been with ~~Purdy~~ or with Bunce.

Another of the raiders that day was Ralph Golubock. He may have been flying with Horne.

Ollie Bowling's records show that he flew this mission with William Michaels on A/C 965, S.

*EASTBORO*  
Lt. James O. Bolin of the 506th Squadron was not as fortunate as Laudig, Fry, Grow, and Kiefer. He was flying in ~~an~~ aircraft that had been borrowed from the 67th Squadron, A/C #41-24 282, Bar Y, Ruth-Less, (An original ship of the 506th). At some point in the return from the target he became separated from the remainder of the formation. In the low clouds that covered England that day, he crashed into a low hill near Bournemouth, England. Eight of the crew were immediately killed. Sgts. Wilson and Bales were taken to Princess Alice Hospital where they both died later that same day.

With Lt. James Bolin were Lts. Orville L. Wulff, Edward J. Ackerman, and Harold W. Schwab. Also, Sgts. James H. Bales, Chester W. Yurick, James L. Wilson, Aubrey J. Maloy, Ralph E. Strait, and George M. Dewald.

That day Ray Marner noted:

Our planes went to France today. Lt. Bolin's crew cracked up ~~at~~ London. They didn't get over the target, but came back because of engine trouble. That's the eighth crew that we have lost. G. Porter came back from Africa today.

Maurice G. (Glenn) Hall recalls:

Paul Blow was my pilot for two missions, but I don't recall which ones. He then took over as Operations Officer and we lost a good pilot.

On one of our missions we were warned of enemy fighters in the area and tension kept building as we approached the

target. After a long period of silence, Paul Blow inquired over the intercom, "Hey Wozniak, does your Old Man work for a living or does your Mother have to take in washing?" That question relieved the tension.

On this second day of February Norm sent a telegram. The telegram read as follows:

*YOU CAN STOP WORRYING -- HAVE FINISHED -- FEELING FINE*

The telegram was delivered on February 6th. It was brief and did not carry the feeling of relief that I felt that day.

The effect of that telegram on my family is still remembered by my younger sister, Marie. She was about seven at the time. She recalls there were two types of telegrams. One was dreaded and the fear of its delivery was always an unspoken family secret. This one was the cause of much joy and the family relayed the message from member-to-member.

My feelings continued to be expressed in letters that I wrote during next few days. That night I wrote:

How would you like a little bit of good news? I hope that long before you get this you will have received a telegram telling of my finishing. It is mighty hard to realize that it is through. Now I can start to sweat out the other boys and thank the Good Lord for taking care of me. You will never know how good He has been to me. There are a lot of things that have happened that we of this world can only explain as an act of God.

There are an awful lot of boys that I have to thank that this day has come. Mostly the boys on the crew including Charley Loftus.

I am going to go into town to celebrate, but first I want to write to Mom.

I had an added incentive for going to town that night. At some point in time, after we landed, Bob Grow and I were called to Group Headquarters. There a Lt. talked to us about the large amount of experience that we had acquired during the last year. We were offered an immediate extended leave of absence in the States, provided we would agree to return to fly another tour of combat.

This just did not appeal to me! I figured that I had used

all of the luck that had been allotted to my lifetime. I replied thanks, but NO THANKS! I stuck to this position even when the Lt. pointed out that he was not certain when I would be shipped back home. Bob Grow also told the Lt. no.

When we left the Lt. we both agreed that it was time to celebrate the completion of our tours and drown the the words of the Lt. We took our bikes and rode off to Shipdham.

On February 3rd Ray Marner wrote:

One of our crews is going to Africa. We're going to get a crew from there. It's Lt. ~~W~~Malne's crew. (There is no information on this crew.) Planes went out today, but were called back.

Information furnished to Jack Warvel by David Klause indicates that Albert flew on this recalled mission in A/C #153, Z, Greenwich.

The flight record of Patrick Gallagher shows he received operations time on the 11th. However, he did not receive credit for a mission.

Will Lundy mentions on February 3rd:

While the planes were warming up, S/Sgt. Hantober, Radio Operator (67th), seeking to obtain missing orders, ducked down out of the bomb bay to go to a nearby plane for a copy of the orders. He ran directly into the whirling blades of the propeller on #3 engine. He was killed instantly. This occurred on M/Sgt. George Baccash's hard stand.

This incident is probably the one recalled by Henry Fetherolf who wrote:

Early one morning a green radio man showed up without his throat mike and the pilot barked at him. The boy jumped out through the bomb bay and ran forward to get his mike. The props were turning over and he ran into the inboard prop. After checking the prop and engine, the ship made the mission with another radio man. It took me a long time to get over that incident.

Norm and Bob Grow didn't even get a chance to peacefully recover from their hangovers the next morning. They were told about 10:00 o'clock to pack enough clothes to take on a

temporary assignment. They were going to Attlebridge.

They were to train the newly arrived 96th Combat Wing (458th, 466th 467th Groups), APO 558 (Attlebridge), under Brig. Gen. Peck. This unit had gone through training together in the States and had come to England as a unit.

I remember soon after our arrival at the base we were invited to meet Gen. Peck. He was a West Point graduate and you only had to look at him to see that he was all military. He welcomed us and commented on the background and combat experience that each of us had. He pointed out that none of his men had been in combat. He wanted us to do everything that we could to prepare his personnel for what was ahead for them. However, he did not want them scared. There was not to be any war stories! Just give them the final polish that they needed. We all agreed. He then assured us that his personnel would cooperate and furnish whatever we needed to do the task at hand.

Success in avoiding war stories proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. The first morning session for radio operators started with my being introduced by a Major from one of the groups. Not long after I started talking, the door opened and a Sgt. walked in, apologized for being late, and took a seat.

I knew this man, but I could not place who he was. On the first break, I spoke with him and mentioned that he looked familiar. He stated that at first he thought that he knew me. We then started tracing our histories to see where we had met. It turned out that he had been with the 506th when it was at Wendover Field, Utah, the second time.

On the next break he started asking about people he had known. The first was Dobbins. Most of the rest that he asked about were also killed or down behind enemy lines. There was no need for war stories! The list was enough!

**Ralph Golubock recalls:**

There was a Lt. that refused to fly combat. He was a 1st pilot. One day McAtee called me in and told me of the situation and asked me if I would take the Lt. as a copilot if he could convince him to go. I very reluctantly agreed and took him as my copilot on the next mission.

He seemed to be ~~okay~~ until we took some minor flak hits and then he went berserk. He grabbed the controls and gave me severe problems in controlling the ship. Finally, he quieted down and just sat in his seat for the rest of the mission, doing absolutely nothing. My engineer had to take over the setting of the landing gear, flaps, etc.

After landing, the Lt. told me that he just could not fly combat and that he would so inform McAtee. Several days later McAtee again talked to me and asked me to take him on one more mission. I refused, but finally "Mac" convinced me to take him again.

The second mission was a repeat of the first, only worse. Upon landing the Lt. told me that he just could not fly combat. I told him to talk to "Mac". Not long after that the Lt. was transferred out of the Group. I always regretted being any part of this incident. He was a very likeable fellow and a competent pilot. I do not think he was a coward in the normal sense of the word. He was just a mixed up kid who could not take the pressure of combat. I understand that the Lt. was court-martialed, but I do not know what happened to him.

The microfilm history indicates that there was only local flying on February 4th. However, this entry appears to be in error. Roger Freeman's, *Mighty Eighth War Diary*, shows that the 44th was airborne on this date. However, the 14th Combat Wing failed to join the attacking force and abandoned the mission when a PFF ship failed to take off. The briefed target was Russelshein. *RECALLED*

Flying that day were Bunce, Blow, Sayler, Money, Houghtby, Larson, and Albert.

James A. Bunce was flying in A/C #201. With him were Capt. Robert L. Cardenas, and Lts. William H. Novak and John J. Huber. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Russel E. Overly Jr., Robert S. Struble, Marion S. Paciorek, Joseph J. Barnett, August A. Fritz, and Thomas E. Davis.

Paul Blow was flying A/C #962. With him were Lts. George B. Davis, Maurice L. Dyer, and Joseph W. Ray. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. John T. Coyne, Donal J. Smith, Marvis T. Bolton, Norbert L. Heger, Frank J. Rizzo, and Aristides G. Litras

David E. Sayler was flying A/C #642. With him were Lts.

Howard B. McCormick, Allen W. Williams, and Gerald G. Gille. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Raymond G. Moffett, Raymond T. Murray Jr., Beauford P. Fletcher, Garnell W. Myers, William I. McFarlin, and Wilbur H. Hiserote.

John D. Money was flying A/C #622. With him were Lts. Joseph C. Kodaj, John J. Horey, and Harold J. Wheatly. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Andrew C. Graff, Richard E. Clarno, Wallace E. Kirchner, Donald E. Young, Eugene W. Roop, and Herbert S. Hill.

Raymond C. Houghtby was flying A/C #172. With him were Lts. Patrick W. Gallagher, and George K. Ramsey. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles R. Loftus, Wayne M. Warren, Ladislao C. Castro, Frank P. Phillips, Norman L. Dye, Thomas M. Cannon Jr., and James W. Lewis.

Gail W. Larsen was flying A/C #535. With him were Lts. Ralph Golubock, Harry H. Putnam Jr., and Joseph A. Ebler. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Walter E. Dunlop, Glenn G. John, Frank J. Juskowski, Dale M. Scarborough, Alfonse A. Truono, and James D. Tolle.

Frank L. Albert was flying A/C #153. With him were Lts. Meredyth F. McGeary, Edmund R. Donnelly, and Paul E. Castellotti. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Beuford K. Walker, Lloyd J. Brady, James K. Warvel, David F. Andello, Edward C. Monteleone, and Carl C. Bolick.

Ray Marner wrote for this day:

Planes went out again and didn't drop their bombs. We got three new crews today. "Jerry" (German Air Force) was over all last night. Some of the surrounding towns were hit.

The new arrivals that Ray Marner referred to were Lts. Guy W. Johnson, Robert R. Lucas, and Frederick H. Rawson.

With Lt. Johnson were Lts. Leroy M. Williamson, Robert W. Kessler, and Charles L. Wiest. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert J. Hickman, Martin P. Goldman, Vernon L. Wycoff, Paul Manak, Wilbur B. Randall, and Jack J. Williams.

The Lt. Lucas crew consisted of Lts. Charles D. Waska, Bernard J. Capella, and Donald E. Kirchner. The crew was rounded out with Sgts. John C. Neely, Ernest C. Luther, Arthur W. Dubail, John F. Bass Jr., Clifford D. Powell, and

4 Feb 44

Lloyd W. Hammer.

Rawson's crew consisted of Lts. James R. Lewis, William P. Johnston, and William D. Fitzsimons. Enlisted personnel were Sgts. Gerald E. Reader, John B. Hoffman, Julian E. Winfree Jr., Richard J. McCoy, Robert E. Shultz, and Russell A. Wapensky.

On February 4th Norm wrote to his wife:

I am feeling very, very happy! By now you know why. Were you very surprised when you received the last telegram? I don't know about you, but I can hardly believe that it is true.

Who was with me? Well there was Bob Grow and Capt. Laudig. The rest of the boys still have to stay for a while.

Please have Father remember the "Poor Souls" at a Mass in each of the next six months.

In this same letter I tried to tell my wife that I had a new assignment and was on detached duty at another base:

I don't know about the mail situation. The boys will have to bring it over to me. Maybe I can meet them in town. I think that I am going to like it over here. We are only about a ten minutes bus (city bus) ride from the middle of town. The officers apparently are going to give us every bit of cooperation that they can. It is too good to last. Bob Grow and Capt. Laudig are with me.

Mark Morris noted on February 5th:

We went to Tours, France, airdrome. We had an escort halfway. We were gone eight hours. We ran out of oxygen after the target so we dropped to 17,000 and did without. I liked it since it was warmer there. We had no known damage."

Mark Morris was with Lt. Purdy that day on A/C #201, Baldy and His Brood. There were three other 506th ships with them. This was Sortie #169 and it took seven hours. The Group dispatched fifteen aircraft on this mission. A 506th aircraft was flying deputy lead. Aboard were Lt. Middleton, Captain McCash, and Lt. Dowsett. They took over the lead about half way to the target. They dropped forty-eight

10-965

PILOT

500-pound general purpose bombs with poor results. There was little flak and only one pass by enemy fighters.

William Novak was credited with a raid on this day. He may have been with Bunce or with Purdy.

Tours of duty were completed by Capt. J. A. Bunce, 1st Lt. J. J. Huber, S/Sgt. J. C. Barnett. (Note: These men were all on the same crew)

Mark Morris remembers:

That morning I was given a K-2 camera to snap pictures of the coast (evidently in preparation for the invasion). It was handed to me just as we were boarding. The only instructions given me were, "Take pictures of the coast". In answer to my question on how to operate the camera I was told, "Just point it and press this trigger". I did as directed. I have no idea how many shots I took. However, on the return over the coast, a B-24 aircraft on our left wing position, but out of formation, had a bad fire between the #1 and #2 engines. I snapped pictures like crazy as it continued to burn. The wing buckled and broke up. I continued to take pictures in hope that I would have proof of survivors and the aircraft identification. As it fell and disintegrated I saw no chutes.

I asked several times in Intelligence about the outcome of my efforts. I never did find out if I got any pictures at all. I think someone finally said that the K-2 was probably out of film. They didn't even say if I got coast pictures.

Ray Marner reported for February 5th:

Our planes went over France today. The 68th lost a ship. There are lots of the boys finishing their missions. Kolliner made Major. (The loss of a 68th ship was confirmed by Will Lundy writings.)

On February 5th, Dan Underwood was promoted to Sgt. and assigned to combat status. Dan had joined the 506th on January 27th, 1944. Many years later, Dan was to tell Norm's wife:

Soon after the orders came out placing me on combat status, I saw Capt. McAtee and thanked him. He indicated

68th SQ  
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that I might change my mind the next day. He had scheduled me to go on a mission.

I was dumfounded! I quickly told him that I knew about 50-cal. guns and how to fire them, but I knew nothing about B-24's. I had never been aboard one. He said, "Come on with me. Kief just came in to get his mail. I'll have him take you down to the line and show you the ropes." That was my preparation for combat. I went up the next morning.

James Clements led the Squadron on a raid on military installations at Siracourt, France, on February 6th. He flew the lead of the second section. He was flying A/C #642, N. Once again Waino Hannuksela was with him. Also, Colman Bogart was in the nose turret. There were seven other 506th ships with him. One crew was flying a ship from the 68th Squadron. In total, there were 24 ships from the 44th Group. One of our aircraft jettisoned his bombs in the channel. Bombs were not dropped due to clouds obscuring the target. There was little flak and no enemy aircraft were seen.

Mark Morris flew this mission with Lt. Purdy on A/C #201, Baldy And His Brood. This was Sortie #170 and it took five hours. It is likely that William Novak was on this mission with them.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel shows that Albert and crew flew this mission in A/C #153, Z, Greenwich.

Ralph Golubock's information shows that he went on this mission, but it is not known who he went with.

Patrick Gallagher's flight record shows that he was on an operational flight on this date, but the flying time is only forty-five minutes. Therefore it is assumed that they aborted.

As the days passed Norm Kiefer spent a good deal of time thinking about what was ahead. What would happen if he did return to the States?

Back there, he would be just another returnee. He would be expected to become a part of the military establishment with it's pomp and ceremony; it's spit and polish. He would have no protection from field grade officers that he had won the respect of while in combat. Did he really want to go back? This was a decision that would have to be made, but not quite

yet. McAtee had assured him that he would have an assignment with the Squadron when the temporary duty was completed.

McAtee's assurances told Norm that he was not going to immediately return to the States. Because of censorship of mail, he could not write to explain this to his wife.. However, in his February 7th letter he tried to prepare her:

Just because you have had some good news, don't start looking for me to come right home. You know that I have had a lot of experience. There are a lot of boys that some day will profit from my experiences; providing I stay here a while and tell them about it. It might mean the difference between ten telegrams like you received and ten of another nature.

Mark Morris stated on February 8th:

I was up at 3:30 A.M.. We hit the rocket coast again near Watton, France. We were gone for four hours. This was the last mission for Albert Kerns and Mike Davis. There was plenty of flak and it was accurate. We took three hits. I only saw one Fw-190 in 6/10 cloud cover. I wore my flak suit about 10 minutes (I told Kerns I would if he would). They are too heavy to move around in.

Mark Morris was on this mission with Lt. Purdy flying A/C #201, *Baldy and His Brood*. There were seven other 506 ships with them. The 44th put up twenty-eight aircraft on this mission. This was Sortie #171 and it lasted five hours. One of our ships returned early. The remaining seven dropped twenty-eight 2,000-pound general purpose bombs using GH with fair results.

It is very likely that William Novak was once again with Mark Morris on Purdy' ship.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he went on this mission on A/C #535 (*Peepsight*). They encountered flak. It appears that Patrick Gallagher was once again with his crew.

The combat record of James Redus indicates that the Henry Borkowski crew went on this mission flying in A/C #153, L.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel showed that Albert and crew, including Donnelly, made this raid in A/C #42-83 965, S.

Ray Warner wrote that February 8th:

*c/L MARSTON  
crew bailed out  
NO! Killed man  
on ground*

Our planes hit France today. The 66th lost a plane. (In Will Lundy's publications no mention is made of any loss on this day.) One of our green crews was on a practice flight and ended up over France. They got back okay after Major Kolliner chased after them. They got into some flak.

Mark Morris remembers that after Albert Kerns last mission Harry Grannon replaced him, moving from hatch to right waist. I think that Bob Struble flew as hatch gunner later on. I remember one mission when his intercom cord was sliced in two by flak.

The author remembers when Lt. Horne transferred into the 506th. He was not only wearing the pilot wings of the United States, but also the wings of the Royal Canadian Air Force. He also recalls when another Canadian Air Force Flight Officer was given a check flight.

For some reason I had returned to the base that morning. Captain Laudig saw me and said "Come on, lets go fly". I had nothing else to do so I agreed. I got some flying gear and went down to operations. Laudig was there with the Flight Officer. After introductions, Laudig told me that we were going to check the Flight Officer out. There was a skeleton crew consisting of three officers and myself (this was not the first nor the last time that I flew as both radio operator and engineer).

When we arrived at the aircraft everything went as normal in preflight. Then we got into the aircraft and the Flight Officer took the pilot position with Laudig in the copilot. The Flight Officer had a little difficulty taxiing, but we made it out to the takeoff position.

When we received control tower clearance for takeoff the Flight Officer still had not put down the flaps. When he pushed forward on the throttles I reached for the flaps. Laudig slapped my hands away and we started to eat up the runway. We just cleared the farmer's fence. Then the Flight Officer started to climb sharply. Laudig shouted, "God Damn you! When are you going to put down the flaps?". The Flight Officer replied, "God damn you, when are you going to tell me something about a multi-engine aircraft. I'm a fighter pilot."

I recall another incident that I believe happened while flying with Laudig:

One of our crews was stranded at a field down around London. We went to ferry them back to Shipdham. After we were loaded to leave, Laudig called the control tower for permission to taxi. His instructions were to go to the end of the runway and wait for a green light.

When we taxied to the end of the runway we saw that it went up hill and seemed to disappear into nothingness. Off to the side at the end of the runway was a small trailer that was displaying a red light. Laudig pulled on to the runway proper and sat with idling engines.

After what seemed to be a long period with nothing happening, we suddenly saw fighters rising from a cross runway. That runway was located beyond the crest of the hill so we couldn't see it. The fighters quickly drew into formation and disappeared.

Then there was a pause followed by a green light from the van. Laudig pushed forward on the throttles and we were off. We had just nicely cleared the ground when a fighter was sighted taking off from the cross runway and we were on a collision course. Laudig dropped to the point that we were skimming the ground and the fighter pulled up to just clear our tail.

Once we had recovered and had our wheels up, Laudig had some very unkind words to say to the woman in the control tower. We later learned that this was a Polish Squadron that was going on a sweep in France. The one pilot had trouble starting his engine. He was anxious not to be left behind. When the engine caught, he took off without notifying the control tower. Thus the near scrape.

On February the 8th Lt. John W. Grow Jr. joined the 506Th. With him were Lts. Robert F. Parrish, Robert F. Westcott, and William G. Richardson. Their enlisted personnel were Sgts. William J. Greenlee, Stephen E. Jones, Jack L. Killian, George N. Smith, Lloyd A. Smith, and Edward A. Wernicki.

Ray Warner wrote on this day:

The Stars and Stripes indicated we can wear the citation ribbon permanently as long as we were in the Group when we had the action. The Kiel citation is approved. We're

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waiting for the Ploesti one now.

I saw a B-17 burning south of here after it crashed. I guess all were killed.

We got another new crew. *LOOAS?*

About 65 men in our Squadron are being transferred to form a new group. Danny, Don Swem, Ryke and a lot of others are leaving. I could go if I wanted to.

On February 11th Ray Marner reported, "Our planes hit France. A man in the 68th was killed by flak." (This loss was confirmed by Will Lundy's works.)

That morning ten of our aircraft joined 19 other ships from the 44th to attack military installations at Siracourt, France. They dropped one hundred twenty 500-pound general purpose bombs with poor results. There were no enemy aircraft attacks. Sporadic moderate accurate flak was encountered.

The Mark Morris combat record shows that he was out on this day with Lt. Purdy flying in aircraft #201, Baldy and His Brood. However, the record and his diary record the target as Pas de Calais. This was Sortie #173 and it took five hours.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he went on this raid on A/C #172, T, with Houghtby. The notation shows that the Group ran into some enemy ground fire. Edmund Donnelly also was with them.

Also, the mission was flown by the Henry Borkowski crew, in A/C #153, L, according to the combat record of James Redus.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel revealed that Albert and crew were in the air this day flying in A/C #42-73 506, X.

Both Waino Hannuksela and William Novak records show that they were on this raid. There was no mention of who they went with.

On February 12th the Group returned to Siracourt, France with 23 aircraft. Eleven of those ships belonged to the 506th. We actually had only nine aircraft drop on the target. They bombed with one hundred eight general purpose bombs using GH through 10/10 clouds. Bombing results were unseen. There

was some flak, but no enemy fighters.

T/Sgt. Thomas E. Davis (Bunce crew) and S/Sgt. George E. Hartney completed their tours. (Note: George was one of the original 506th combat men. He was the only one of Anderson's original crew that completed a tour.)

A/C #107 returned early due to a collision with a plane on the runway. It had a damaged right wing flap. A/C #842, N returned early due to vibration in #3 engine. This A/C was carrying long delay fused bombs which were jettisoned.

Mark Morris went on this raid with Lt. Purdy in A/C #201, Baldy and His Brood. However, once again his combat record shows that the target was Pas de Calais. His diary indicated that they had P-51 and P-47 escort.

The combat record of James Redus shows that Henry Borkowski was flying A/C #153 on this day.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he went on this mission on A/C #506, X. They received opposition from slight flak. This was Sortie #174 and the flight took six hours. Patrick Gallagher flew with his crew on this day.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel reveals that Albert and crew were with the Group this day flying in A/C #41-29 172, T.

William Novak, Ralph Golubock and Waino Hannuksela went on this mission. However, they do not know who they went with.

Mark Morris was back in combat on February 13th. His note read:

I was up at 7:30. However, I was so tired I went back to bed. They called me at 10:30 and sent us to Pas de Calais with no briefing. We didn't need a briefing, we knew the way.

This time Mark flew with Capt. Cardenas in aircraft #201, Baldy and His Brood. Their's was one of seven 506th ships that joined the Group formation. The actual target was Petit Bois Tillencourt, France. Our ships dropped eighty-four 500-pound bombs with good results. No enemy aircraft were seen. Lt. Larsen's aircraft was hit by flak.

Myron Smith tells of events aboard that ship:

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The raid was on the buzz bomb installations in the Pas de Calais area. We were hit with flak which resulted in the right waist gunner, Glenn G. John, being killed. The left waist gunner and tail gunner were wounded. Our number one and four engines were out with the propeller on number four windmilling. The hydraulic system was shot out.

We managed to make it back to the English coast and landed the plane, Peepsight, on a grass spitfire base at Hawk<sup>105</sup>ase. This was the last combat mission for Peepsight. It was later repaired and used as a cargo plane. Our crew was picked up at Manston about four or five days later and flown back to Shipdham. I believe it was Jim Clements who flew us back. After this raid I was grounded and subsequently worked in the Squadron Office as C.Q. and mail clerk.

Quite a number of our ships sustained battle damage on this raid. The next day aircraft #509 and #107 were still out with battle damage. Slight damage had been repaired overnight on #201, Baldy and His Brood; #522, Southern Comfort; #153, Greenwich; #985; and #305, I'll Be Back.

George Ramsey's combat record reveals that he was on A/C #305, I'll Be Back, on this day. They ran into flak over the target. This was Sortie # 175 and it took four hours and twenty minutes. Patrick Gallagher was their copilot.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel shows that A/C 153, Z, Greenwich was flown that day by Albert and crew.

The records of David McCash show that he was out this day. They do not indicate who he was flying with. Also, they show the target to be Raye Sur Authie.

Waino Hannuksela and Ralph Golubock were on this mission, but it is not known who they flew with.

This was the last raid for T/Sgt. W. E. Morrison and S/Sgt. F. L. Rodriquez (Stevens crew). They had completed all of their missions. Bob Struble recalls:

I flew with Rodriquez the day he completed his 25th mission. I have no recall as to who the pilot was. As our ship pulled into the dispersal area, Rodriquez deplaned and kissed the ground. He was so elated that he jumped over the farmers fence, fell, and broke his leg. It was a "green-stick" fracture. Ironic!

Mark Morris remembers "Blackie" Morrison was an enlisted bombardier. He was offered a commission if he would fly another tour. He said, "Shove it!"

The *Flint Journal* reported the attack as follows:

CALAIS GETS  
43 ATTACK  
IN 57 DAYS

6 Types of Bombers Hit  
Area in Day-Long  
Series of Blows

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The much battered French department of Pas de Calais was the objective of every warplane reported flying from Britain yesterday. Eighty five miles long, 50 miles wide at its broadest point, the section has been pounded on 43 of the last 57 days to become one of the most frequently bombed areas in the world.

American Liberators, in strong force, made their fourth attack in five days on the unidentified targets.

The hard working Marauders, flying their 11th mission in 15 days, went across the Channel 200 strong, then fanned out in a dozen or so bombing forces to rip the fortifications in France that have been attacked every day in the last eight days.

P-47 Thunderbolt fighter/bombers also attacked two Nazi airfields in northwest France. In addition RAF Mitchell mediums and Boston Typhoon fighter/bombers showered bombs on the area.

From all these operations, two medium bombers and four fighters were reported missing.

All of the returning Allied fliers again reported that Nazi fighter opposition was practically nil, though flak was intense throughout the area.

"The flak was so heavy it looked as though someone had built a flak Macadam dream highway right up there into the sky," said 1/Lt. Eldon Jamison, of Kansas City, Kan., pilot of Mississippi Mudcat, a B-26.

"We stirred up a hornets' nest, then did all the



stinging," said S/Sgt. William Mitchell, of Salon, Conn., engineer-gunner on the Marauder, Bonnie Lee. It was his 36th mission.

Meanwhile, Eighth Air Force headquarters announced that photographs taken by reconnaissance planes showed great damage to the nine Nazi airfields in northwestern France which were attacked by Forts and Libs Feb. 5 and 6.

Hangars, workshops, barracks and other buildings were destroyed, and numerous bomb craters were observed on the fields themselves. At one fighter training field, Chateauroux, there were ten direct hits on taxi strips and servicing areas and 130 bursts on the landing areas. Other fields hit included Chateaudun, Caen, Parçay Mesley, Villacoublay, Avord, Orlean-Bricy and St. Andre de Eaux. The ninth field was not named.

RAF and RCAF Spitfires escorted the B-24's yesterday. Renewal of the heavy bomber offensive against the secret emplacements across the Channel from Britain marked the 16th day of operations for the U.S. Strategic Air Force in the last 19 days.

Mark Morris relates that just before he completed his combat tour Charley Loftus went to another crew to fly nose gunner on one of the Model H aircraft:

I vividly remember his return from his first mission in that capacity. I went to meet him as they landed that day. When I saw the ship it had most of the plexiglass shot out of Charley's nose turret. Loftus had always gotten air sick when he flew with us in the hatch gun position. This time, he didn't get sick and what's more he was glad to be alive.

George Ramsey recalls:

Loftus flew nose gunner with Houghtby's crew several times. I believe he completed his missions with us. We took one Fw-190 frontal attack that almost took us out.

James Redus remembers an incident that "scared the hell out of me", but he does not know when it happened:

I was looking down into the bomb bay and discovered that we had about six or eight inches of gasoline in it. The cover on the left #2 gas tank was not tight. Gas was

siphoning out, coming across the wing and down the fuselage into the bomb bay. It goes without saying, the bomb bay was emptied and we aborted to get the hell home.

The February 14, 1944, issue of the *Tin Lizzy Times* carried the following article:

(13 FEB)  
HEAVIES HIT PAS de CALAIS AGAIN;  
JANUARY'S 22,000 TONS A RECORD

Raids' Peak Month  
Includes Italy; 930  
Planes Bagged

The U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, comprising the British based Eighth and the Italian based 15th, reached a new peak in their mounting air attack on Nazi targets in January by dropping more than 22,000 tons of bombs and destroying 930 German planes in the air against a loss of 325.

An official review of operations for the first month of 1944 showed yesterday that Lt. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, who assumed command of the USSTAFE early in January, sent his heavy bombers and long-range fighters out in unprecedented force. In 19 operational days the Eighth dropped 11,789 tons, while the 15th, engaged part of the month in supporting the Nettuno landings near Romme, dropped 10,704 tons in 25 days, the summary disclosed.

Notable among the records, established was that achieved by Mustang, Thunderbolt and Lightning pilots of Eighth Fighter Command, who shot down 220 enemy aircraft, 100 of them in three days, bettering the previous month's high of 111 knocked down last November.

In January, occurred what probably was the greatest air battle in history, waged in daylight over the heart of Germany Jan. 11 when Liberator and Fortress gunners, together with P51, P47 and P38 fighters, shot down 152 German planes against the loss of 60 bombers and 27 fighters.

Targets bombed in the fierce, day-long assault were important aircraft/manufacturing plants at Oschersleben, Helberstadt and Bielefeld and the manufacturing town of Meppen on the Dortmund-Ems canal.

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While USAAF headquarters did not acknowledge reports that Berlin was bombed for the first time by American bombers that day, travelers arriving in Stockholm from the German capital said it was bombed by isolated planes.

Another red-letter day in the month's operations was Jan. 5, when U.S. heavies ranged from the Baltic to the Bay of Biscay. Fortresses and Liberators raided the Nazi major naval base at Kiel for the second day running, B17's hit the industrial and rail center at Neuss near Dusseldorf, while other Forts and Libs hammered enemy airfields at Bordeaux and Tours in France. Ninety-five German aircraft were destroyed for the loss of 25 bombers and 12 fighters.

Following four days of attacks on installations in the Pas de Calais "invasion" or "rocket coast" area, between Jan. 14 and 28, the greatest daylight aerial blow ever delivered was mounted on Jan. 29, the target being Frankfurt. Considered the foremost distribution center in southwest Germany, Frankfurt was hit that day with 1,900 tons of bombs, dropped by over 800 heavy bombers, escorted by 700 fighters.

The month's operations were concluded Jan 31, when Liberators, which once flew as part of Fortress striking forces, but now operating on independent missions, gave Pas de Calais its fifth bombing by heavies in two weeks.

The summary revealed that fighter pilots flew approximately 6,400 sorties in January.

Ralph Golubock recalls on February 15th he flew as copilot when Lt. Purdy brought Lt. Larsen's crew back to Shipdham.

On February 15 Norm Kiefer returned to his home base from the temporary assignment at Attlebridge. General Peck forwarded to the 44th, for inclusion in Norm's records, a letter of commendation for the training of radio operators under General Peck's Command. Then I started to work on briefings for combat missions and helping with training of radio operators at Shipdham.

John Huber recalls the close look that a crew got before it was designated as a lead crew:

Colonel Johnson sometimes flew in the waist with a diagram of the Group pasted on the armor plate. He closely

monitored the formation to assure that it was tight. The ability of a pilot to fly a tight "wing-in-waist window" formation was a first requirement to become a lead plane. The balance of the crew, of course, must qualify in order to get the slot.

Huber also recalls an incident that scored points for their radio operator:

One time when General Johnson was with us, Marion Paciorek discovered that the Germans had broken our code. He reported it to the General. The enemy tried to direct us to strike the alternate target, but General Johnson disregarded the message.

On February 17th Ray Marner wrote:

Lt. Vaden (Rebich/Hobson crew) got a card from Nick (Popovich). Tuttle, Cutshall, Hyde, Hobson are all in prison camp and okay. The rest are dead.

Edmund Donnelly recalls:

We delivered two planes to a repair depot. Everybody came back stuffed into one plane.

This probably occurred on February 19th when Lts. Sayler, Albert and Houghtby and their crews were called to ferry ships.

The diary entry by Ray Marner on this day is a good example of the unfounded rumors that frequently spread at Shipdham:

I found out that Capt. Swanson, Myers, Bell, Goodson, Hearne, Ferkauff, Hanson, and some others are out of prison camp. They must have escaped.

It was no rumor that Ray Marner mentioned on the next day, February 20th:

Our planes went into Germany today. We lost Lt. Rawson's crew. This was their first mission. The 67th lost a ship also. (Note: Will Lundy reports that this was a 66th aircraft.)

We were alerted this afternoon, but it was scrubbed.

Ten aircraft from the 506th joined 27 other 44th aircraft on

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this mission. Targets of opportunity at Helmstedt and Oschersleben were attacked. One hundred twenty 500-pound general purpose bombs were dropped with fair results. Enemy aircraft did not attack the formation. Flak was inaccurate except at the target where it was moderate and accurate.

In Will Lundy's works, Gerald Reader told of the loss of the Lt. Rawson crew:

We were on our first mission and were put in formation as "Tail end Charlies". We got our bombs away and were leaving the target area when flak got our right engine. The rest of the formation was leaving when the Me-109's showed up. I shot flares to alert our fighter cover, but they were all busy. One Me-109 hit us in the tail and set that section on fire. Our tail gunner, Rus Wapensky was burned. His chute, which was just outside of his turret, was damaged and partially burned.

Copilot, Lt. Lewis got up from his seat and motioned for us to get out. Engineer, Dick McCoy then bailed out from the front. I don't know what happened to him. Our waist gunners, Winfree and Shultz bailed out from the rear, followed by Sgt. Hoffman, ball turret gunner. Wapensky then came forward looking for a spare chute to replace his damaged one. Lt. Louis got Wapensky on his back and jumped out, both hanging on to each other. But when the chute opened, (Wapensky was torn loose and fell to his death. I, then went out from the front, too. Both our navigator and bombardier were in the nose so I don't know what happened to them or what took place there.

The bombardier, Lt. William Richardson relates:

I was not their regular bombardier. All went well until we reached our destination. There we encountered heavy antiaircraft fire and at least one of our engines was knocked out. After passing over the target the formation started their ascent to the altitude briefed for our return. In our crippled condition, we were unable to keep up.

Shortly after we were alone several enemy fighters moved in and shot the hell out of us. One Fw-190 flew up, right in front of my turret, so close I could look right into the pilot's face. Had my guns been operating, I could have given him a bad time.

My intercom was out so I didn't hear any bail out order, but I was sure it was getting near that time. I couldn't open the door to the turret, but the navigator, Lt. Johnson opened it for me. Had he not done that, I would have been a casualty. At this point our ship was in a pretty violent attitude and heading down. Lt. Johnson went out through the nose wheel door and I followed.

With Lt. Frederick H. Rawson (POW) were Lts. James R. Lewis (POW), William P. Johnson (KIA), and William G. Richardson (POW). The enlisted men on the crew were Sgts. Richard J. McCoy (KIA), Gerald E. Reader (POW), Julian E. Winfree Jr. (KIA), John B. Hoffman (POW), Robert E. Shultz (KIA), and Russell A. Wapensky (KIA).

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he was on this mission. He flew on A/C #172, T. They encountered enemy flak and fighters. This was Sortie #179 and it covered eight hours. Patrick Gallagher was their copilot.

Information furnished to Jack Warvel by David Klaus indicates that there were two raids on this day. Albert and crew flew one mission on A/C #153, Z, Greenwich and the other on an A/C for which no record is found. Edmund Donnelly cannot confirm that Albert flew two missions on this day. (Note: Will Lundy's records show that the Group hit two targets of opportunity on a mission that was briefed for Halberstadt. However, the Ray Marner entry for this day clearly states that the second mission was scrubbed.)

Waino Hannuksela and William Novak were on this mission. It is not known who they went with.

Mark Morris was on this raid flying with Lt. Purdy. In his diary Mark wrote:

This was my 25th mission. We went to Oschersleben, Germany. It was a long, long ride of eight hours.

Mark wrote in a recent letter:

I remember during the briefing, when they taped the route on the map. I thought they were using an awful lot of tape. The good news was that we were to have P-38 escorts. That made me feel better.

As we flew deep into Germany there was cloud cover beneath us most of the way. The flak was accurate particularly in

the target area.

After the target the P-38 escort joined us. It was then that I began to hear comments on the radio from our ship, "Bring em in close." The response from the fighter leader was, "No, we can do a better job up here." Once again from our Group, "I don't give a damn, I want you in close!" I then saw P-38's moving into our formation.

Over the radio I then heard the fighter leader ask, "Close enough?" The sharp response was, "No, I said close!" Then a P-38 almost stuffed his wing into my waist window. Over the radio came, "Close enough?" The answer was, "Yea, perfect!" What was this all about? It was the Group Leader's last mission.

We flew along that way for about five minutes. Then I saw a hole in the clouds about ten miles south and well below us. Suddenly it looked like a swarm of bees coming up through that hole. It was German fighters.

Of course, the P-38's had gone for altitude before the Germans got to us. They were set for the Germans when they came in. About 15 challenged us. We were so well protected that I never had reason to fire a shot. As the dog fight went on they worked well away from us. Once again I had reason to believe that someone up there liked me.

**David McCash also flew this mission:**

I do not remember who I flew with, but my record indicates that we were leading the Group. The weather was fine, but there were broken clouds below us that got thicker in the target area. We could not see the target so we headed for the secondary, which was clear. Our radio operator sent back the code indicating we had hit the secondary. The other group, I believe the 93rd, sent back the code that they had hit the primary as briefed.

Upon landing a Jeep met the plane and took me to the tower. Colonel Dent was waiting and a little hot under the collar. He wanted to know why we didn't hit the primary, but the other group had. I sputtered a little before saying, "No Way! Not with that cloud cover". Later we found that the other group's radio operator sent the wrong code.

James Clements led the Squadron to a target of opportunity at the Diepholz, Germany, airdrome on February 21st. He was flying in A/C #962, W, Princ Ass. Joseph Kodaj was the copilot. Bombs were observed to drop thru the middle of town and straddling the marshalling yards. In the Dummer Lake area they saw seven Fw-190's which circled to the rear/left out of range. Clements remembers:

We were the third or low squadron in the Group. The target was a railroad junction that was attack visually through intense generally inaccurate flak with good results. We encountered 10-to-15 enemy aircraft making intermittent eager attacks.

The Group sent 37 aircraft on this raid with eleven of them being from the 506th. Our Squadron ships dropped 572 M47AS's with poor results.

George Ramsey's combat record indicates that he was aboard A/C #172, T, on this day. The notation mentions enemy flak. This was Sortie #180 and it took six hours. Patrick Gallagher was their copilot.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel indicates that Frank Albert went on this mission flying in A/C #153, Z, Greenwich.

Ollie Bowling made this mission with Paul Blow as the pilot. They were flying in A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back.

The records of Waino Hannuksela and Ralph Golubock show that they went on this mission, but there is no mention of who they were with.

Mark Morris noted in his diary, "My tour is done and I logged 205 hours of combat."

Raymond McCormick remembers it was about this time that the Mendenhall crew arrived. With Lt. Max Mendenhall were Lts. Phillip Quirk, Raymond McCormick, and Herman Flugman. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Marshall Mann, Paul McGee, Nick Adice, Abe Hertzberg, Les Toothacker, and Nate Bernstein.

Ray Marner reported on February 22

Our planes went out today. The 67th lost a couple of crews. (These losses were confirmed by Will Lundy.)

The Group dispatched 35 aircraft on this mission to destroy



Sub 22

244

the aircraft factories at Gotha, Germany. Thirteen of the ships belonged to the 506th. The mission was recalled in the area of Munster. Our bombs were brought back with us. Flak was generally inaccurate and not on our formation, except at Declen where the enemy gunfire was accurate.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he made this mission on A/C #172, T. Flak and enemy aircraft were encountered. This was Sortie #181 which covered six hours. Patrick Gallagher was the copilot.

Records maintained by Ralph Golubock, Waino Hannuksela, and Robert Struble show that they went on this mission.

Once again, Ollie Bowling was in the air with Paul Blow. Also, they made the mission in A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back.

The outstanding work of our ground crews was highlighted when aircraft #107 was late in taking off due to a broken starter. It was repaired in one-third the normal time. The aircraft was able to intercept the formation and fly the mission. Another example happened when the mission returned. Aircraft #506, X, ran off the end of the runway on landing, but was towed without damage.

William Novak remembers the February 24th raid on the aircraft factories at Gotha, Germany:

The weather was perfect and I was confident and beginning to feel like Jimmy Doolittle wanted us to. That means we could go anywhere and beat the hell out of anyone who got in our way.

The young bombardier, whose name I don't remember, was having trouble with the bomb release mechanism. When the other planes started to drop their bombs, I jumped forward to push the salvo lever to get our bombs on the target. Maybe I was getting cocky because I had only one more to go.

The Group dispatched 37 aircraft on February 24th, eleven of them from the 506th. Lt. Clements was the pilot of the ship flying lead of the second section. The Squadron dropped four hundred forty two M47AL's on the target with excellent results. There were intense and vicious attacks by enemy aircraft on the formation ahead and behind, but only a single pass was made on our formation. Flak was generally inaccurate on the entire mission.

James Clements was flying A/C #842, N. Once again Joseph Kodaj was the copilot. Also aboard were Lt. Boydin, navigator, and Lt. Bumbicka, bombardier. W. J. Mulholland flew in the nose turret. On the way back, near the Dutch border, they saw two Fw-190's go through our formation after attacking the B-17's ahead of us.

Aircraft #429, L, returned early because the waist gunner shot a hole in the horizontal stabilizer. A/C #423 was late in takeoff due to primary and booster coil failure on #3 engine. Another ship returned early because the nose and tail turret guns froze. A/C #305, P, returned early after not being able to keep up with the formation.

S/Sgt. A. A. Fritz (Stevens crew) completed his tour of duty.

George Ramsey's combat record shows that he engaged in combat on this day on A/C #172, T. Once again they ran into enemy fighters and flak. This was Sortie #183 and they were in the air a total of eight hours. Once again, Patrick Gallagher was their copilot.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel indicates that Albert and crew flew this raid with the 68th Squadron. They were in A/C #41-29 156, R, V Packet. (This ship was borrowed from the 68th Squadron.)

Ralph Golubock's records show that he made this mission.

Waino Hannuksela was also on this raid. He does not know who he was with.

Ollie Bowling's Flight Record shows that he was out on an operation on this date with William Michaels. However, they must have aborted since they only logged four hours and were not given operations time.

On this 24th day of February Ray Marner wrote:

The planes went into Germany today. The 67th and 68th lost planes. They went to Gotha. (Note: Will Lundy writings indicate that the 66th and 68th each lost a ship.)

Robert Struble recalls they went to Furth, Germany on February 25th:

I was with Middleton on A/C #962. I was flying left waist

*Sub 2nd 44*

gunner and William "Willie" McFarland was the tail gunner. I don't recall the others.

On the way to the target we were hit by one piece of flak while in the Saar area. Gas was flooding back between the #2 engine and the fuselage. It was determined the main tank was hit.

We all prayed for no sparks. The crew debated briefly whether or not to go to Switzerland. It was decided to chance it and return to the base alone. On the return we picked up a lone Spitfire escort which stayed with us until we reached the English coast.

After landing it was discovered our auxiliary line to the main tank had been hit. Our decision to abandon the mission was the correct one. If we had tried to go to the target, we would not have had fuel enough to complete the mission.

*JG. FEB.*

Ten of our aircraft took off with 23 other of the Group's aircraft. Lt. Sayler, pilot, Captain McCash, navigator, and Lt. Dowsett, bombardier, were leading the Group, Combat Wing, and Division. Lt. Colonel Dexter L. Hodge, Group Operations Officer, was flying as Command Pilot. Ninety-six 500-pound general purpose bombs were dropped on the aircraft factory with excellent results. Accurate flak was encountered at the target, Karlsruhe and Juvincourt. The lead crew was given high praise for their excellent performance.

*905*

Aircraft #423, piloted by Captain Cardenas, was struck with flak at Karlsruhe. The #4 engine was knocked out and the #3 engine was damaged. He was again hit at Juvincourt. The pilot did an excellent job of keeping his ship in formation until leaving the enemy coast, landing at Manston.

Being short of gas Lt. Horne landed at Ford. He refueled and arrived at the base later in the evening.

Aircraft #400, Y, returned early and then took off again. It was unable to find the formation. They encountered flak at the French coast and returned once more to base.

Also, aircraft #962, <sup>(P. W. H. Novak)</sup> Princ Ass, sprung a gas leak while over France and returned early.

Lt. W. H. Novak (ordinarily flew with Stevens) completed a combat tour.

Dave McCash remembers:

This was the only time that I led the Division. It was a beautiful flight into the target. The briefed track was almost free of flak and little fighter opposition. The target was clear and we clobbered it.

We then took a big swing south and wound up 12-to-15 miles south of the briefed track for the return home. I didn't catch it until we hit the Rhine and flew directly over Karlsruhe with its briefed sixty guns. As we zigged and zagged I said some silent prayers that no one was lost as a result of my error. After that the rest of the return flight was uneventful.

I received a Distinguished Flying Cross for displaying exceptional skill in navigating the formation to the assigned objective, maintaining the exact briefed course. I guess that I am lucky they didn't count the return course.

James Redus recalls:

On another occasion, the 44th was leading the 2nd Division and our crew was in the deputy lead ship. The lead ship cracked up on takeoff so we became leader of the 2nd Division.

Our navigator was sick, so we had a replacement navigator. We followed the PFF ship to the target, had a good bomb run and I sent a strike message to 7BV per the Command Pilot. As you remember, after leaving the target area we were supposed to send an ETA. The navigator who was with us had not checked his navigational material before takeoff and he hardly had anything to work with. He gave me an estimated time of arrival to send and would you believe it, he was only one minute off.

NOVAHT645

George Ramsey's combat record reveals that he was on this mission on A/C #172, T. Along the way they were subjected to enemy flak and aircraft. This was Sortie #184 and it lasted nine hours. Patrick Gallagher was with them. In five of the last six days this crew had been in combat. Over the period they were credited with 35 hours and 50 minutes of operations time.

Ollie Bowling went with <sup>JOHNSON</sup> Knight on this mission. They were in A/C #506, X.

Sub 27 44

Information furnished by Waino Hannuksela and Robert Struble indicates that they were on this raid.

Ray Marner wrote for this day:

Our planes went into S.W. Germany. Some of the planes are not accounted for yet. A lot of the boys are finishing their missions. All of the 508th planes got back. (Note: Will Lundy reports that a number of our aircraft landed at other fields because of poor visibility and the ships were low on gas.)

A few days later Ray Marner noted, "Today marks one year's foreign service. A year ago today we boarded the *Chantilly*."

On February 28th 1st Lt. Michaels was transferred to the 91st Air Depot Group. 28 FEB

McAtee recalls:

After Kolliner ordered Michaels to fly combat, I scheduled Michaels to go out three times. Each time Michaels aborted. The last time that it happened he was met at his plane and told that he would be shipped out of the Group. I believed that was rather lenient treatment in view of what happened to Coldiron.

Ralph Golubock remembers:

There was an officer in the Squadron who was already a 1st Lt. and was reportedly a highly competent, high time pilot. He did not fly any missions while I was there, but he did abort a few.

He had a penchant for unusual uniforms in that he wore many ribbons on his blouse. However, none of us could ever identify any of them. We assumed that they were all foreign decorations. Once in an edition of *Life Magazine*, there was printed a full color page of every U.S. decoration in existence. One of the pilots cut this out and pinned it on the officer's blouse just as a joke. I am not certain that the 1st Lt. thought that it was funny.

Eventually, the 1st Lt. was transferred out. We all thought that he had been transferred to Africa to fly B-25's.

Lts. Irwin, Marx, Hawkins, and crews assigned and joined the

Squadron. (Note: Records maintained by Uriah Hartman show that the arrival of the Hartman crew was actually February 14, 1944.)

With Lt. Winston C. Irwin were Lts. Uriah G. Hartman, Wallace D. Northfelt, and Robert W. Libell. Their enlisted personnel were George Boatman, Peter E. Merisotis, Grover L. Lawson, James Hunter, James L. Beuoy, and Paul M. Laux.

With Lt. Robert H. Marx were Lts. Vernie R. Brockman, Leon A. Mascolo, and Raymond L. Poljanec. Enlisted men consisted of Sgts. Robert C. Franklin, Ronald J. Taylor, Theodore F. Zimmerman, Deward F. Johnson, Esley E. Nelson, and Edward J. Applegate.

With Lt. Eustice L. Hawkins were Lts. Henderson K. Bennett, Joe (NMI) Bearden, and Albert E. McCloud. The enlisted men were Sgts. Peter E. Gardner, William H. Wright, Jeane M. Hicks, Henry A. Hopkins, Wallace R. Robinson, and Henry O. Siteman.

Promotions were given to the following officers during the month: Captain Robert E. Kolliner, Squadron C.O., promoted to Major; 1st Lt. McCash to Captain; 2nd Lt. Larsen to 1st Lt.

Promotions were given to the following enlisted men during the month: T/Sgt. Paul E. Kubitschek, Carl C. Bolick, Wallace V. McFarlin, Eugene W. W. Roop, Anson G. Daniels, Wallace E. Kirschner, Elmer R. O'Gara, Donald L. Young, Edward I. Kelly, Ladislao C. Castro, Wayne M. Warren, and Frank P. Phillips.

Lt. McCash was appointed Squadron Navigator, Lt. Dowsett Squadron Bombardier, and Lt. Blow Assistant Operations Officer.

*WAYNE*  
The following personnel were transferred out of the Squadron during the month: 1st Lt. Novak and Lt. Huber transferred to the 12 RCD; Lt. ~~Wayne~~ and crew transferred to the 15th Air Force. (It is unknown who was with Lt. ~~Wayne~~.); Captains Laudig, Stevens, and Bunce went on detached service to the 98th Combat Wing; Lt. Caldwell on detached service to RAF Station, Highgate.

The following personnel were transferred into the Squadron during the month: 1st Lt. Sidney W. Paul transferred from the 67th; 1st Lt. Trumbo; Captain Mervis returned from detached service; Private William L. DeSantis joined. Lt. William C. K. Brown was suspended from flying.

Leaves of absence were granted to Lts. Robert A. Johnson, George I. Berger, Estie W. Conningham, and Michael D'Angelico, Willard L. Michaels, Robert J. Bauman, and Robert E. Gutknecht. Captain Meiner, Squadron Engineering Officer, attended a meeting of all Squadron engineering officers conducted by the Group Engineering Officer.

*Baldy and His Brood* was transferred out of the Squadron. This was the last of the aircraft which the Squadron brought overseas.

Lts. Duffy and Miller brought A/C #423 AND #429, Bar L, from Watton.

In letters to his wife during the month of February, Norm mentioned the following:

"Don't you worry about your letters being too old or too dull. I have had quite an exciting life in the last year and that homespun dullness sounds pretty good"... "When I referred to chips, I meant the kind potato that we call shoe string potatoes fried in lard. They have a number of little holes in the wall stores that specialize in these potatoes and occasionally fish patties."..."I think that they ought to make a new medal for the folks that stayed at home and waited. I don't know, that may have been rougher than combat."..."The only ones that we have left to sweat out now are Mark, Edwards and Loftus. The rest of the boys are through. Charley Loftus has the most to go. He is wearing my clothes. He claims that I finished in them and they will bring him luck. Kearns is supposed to return to the States. Davis is trying for a commission."..."I stopped in to see Capt. McAtee tonight. He is very pleased with the radio that we sold him." (Note: With Kearns leaving, Morris close to it and my future uncertain, it was necessary to sell the things that we held in common.)..."I went out and swiped part of a tree to burn. I had a chopping good time. I even got blisters to prove it. I got enough hot water to wash and shave in. Was it worth the blisters? No!"..."Kerns has left us. He has taken the first step on the way back to the States."..."I spent the biggest part of yesterday reading in front of the fireplace at the Red Cross Club. I was sweating out Morris. Yep! He made it. Now that leaves Edwards and Loftus."

It was some time in <sup>Nov 44</sup> ~~February~~ that the William E. Smith crew arrived. With Lt. Smith were Lts. Roy Owens, Sid Lovett, and

Pete Masonis. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Carl Jacobson, Tommy Tompkins, Fred J. Marzolph, Ernie Babek, Eddie Tracik, and Marion W. Jones

Also, it was some time in late ~~February~~ or early ~~March~~ that McCaslin remembers that he was given his own combat crew.

Early in March Raymond H. Baker arrived from the States to join the 506th. He remembers:

We were put in temporary quarters. The building was an old, unused mess hall. They put double bunk beds in rows. This was just fine as long as the lights were on. None of us had flashlights and the nonsmokers had no matches to light the way after lights out.

Whenever anyone had to go to the bathroom, which was a latrine just outside our building, it was worse than a bad dream. We had to get out of our sack and as our feet hit the cold concrete floor the urge of nature was even worse. We had a rough time finding the door to go outside. I'm not certain that everyone found the actual latrine. Later trying to find our bunk in the dark was something else. In desperation we would wake someone up and ask their name. With that information, we went groping back to our own bed.

My first assignment was to help build the base theater. My job was pouring cement. Then I was transferred to the 506th Operations Office and finally to the Orderly Room.

The Base Theater, that Ray worked on, made at least one newspaper clipping:

Capt. Carlisle Crutcher, public relations officer for a Liberator group vouches for this yarn. The group recently opened a new servicemen's club, complete with one of the longest bars in England. A neighboring farmer dropped in for the christening party, had a few stiff snorts and stalked out muttering, "That's the trouble nowadays. Every time you find a good pub it's full of Americans."

Another early in March arrival for the 506th was Carl Hvamsal. He was a radio mechanic. He recalls:

I worked under a real gentleman, "Pappy" Hunter, who was in charge of the 506th Radio Section. We worked out of the radio shack along with all the other radio guys of the



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other squadrons. "Pappy" was a Master Sergeant.

Two engine mechanics and I lived with the armament guys. They were a great bunch and hard workers. The sergeant in charge of the Armament Section, I believe, was one of the original 44th ground men.

I came from North Dakota, a dry and windy climate. It took me six months to be "climatized" to the English weather.

Whenever the opportunity presented itself, I would hook a ride in our aircraft. In addition to engine test hops, I also went along on some flights in which they were flying formation. I also went on the "trolley" operation on May 12, 1945.

Will Lundy reports in his HISTORY OF THE 67TH BOMB SQUADRON, "On March 2nd the Group went to Frankfurt/Main, Germany. The target was attacked by only a portion of the Group because of poor weather conditions. bombing results were unobserved. The remainder of the ships brought back their bombs since a target of opportunity could not be found."

The James Redus combat record indicates that Henry Borkowski crew was on this March 2nd mission. It was Sortie #187 which lasted seven and a half hours. They were in A/C #153, L and encountered some flak. Z-153

Knight, accompanied by Ollie Bowling flew this raid in A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back.

Records maintained by Ralph Golubock show that he was out on this day. No

Ray Warner wrote in his diary on this day:

Orders came out transferring 180 men out of our Squadron. All ground men. We're getting a lot of new personnel. Keefe and I are staying in the 506th. The rest are going to the 856 Squadron, 492 Group at North Pikington. Some have already left.

On March the 3rd, Will Lundy's writings indicate, "Bad weather intervened with a raid to Oranienburg. The formation was forced to return as weather conditions worsened over the North Sea. There were no bombs dropped nor any enemy encounters."

HOUGHTBY'S

George Ramsey's combat record reports that he was out this day on A/C #172, T. They were recalled. This was Sortie #188 and he was in the air six hours. The copilot was Patrick Gallagher.

Ollie Bowling's combat record shows that he made this flight with Knight in A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back.

The James Redus record indicates he was with Henry Borkowski flying in A/C 153, L.Z

Dave McCash's records indicate that he was on this raid. It shows the target as 58 58'N 08 23' E. It is not known who he was with.

It is not known how many other 506th ships participated.

On March 4th Will Lundy indicated, "a mission was scheduled for Oranienburg, then it was changed to Potsdam, and finally it was scrubbed due to weather conditions.

However, on March the 5th the Group took off in snow flurries that hampered assembly. Cloud cover was 10/10 so runs were made on Cognac and Bergerac with respectively good and fair results. Enemy aircraft were seen but no attacks were made. Flak was moderate but inaccurate.

*Borkowski*  
James Redus flew this mission, which was Sortie #190. He was flying with ~~Norm Purdy~~ On A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back. (Note: Records maintained by Webb Todd show that this was an aircraft belonging to the 458th Bomb Group, Z5-N, that was on loan to the 506th.) The Redus record shows the mission covered ten hours and flak was encountered..

*No  
Horne*  
Lt. Money went on this mission. Records kept by Waino Hannuksela indicate that he probably flew this mission with ~~Money~~. Both of their records show the raid to have been Cognac (Bordeaux).

Ray Warner reported on March 5th:

Our planes went out into Germany. There were no losses. Lt. Duffy crashed on takeoff. Colonel Dent was with him. No one was hurt. (Note: The aircraft that Duffy was flying was 42-83 965, S, Name Unknown. This may have been the ship that McAtee and crew brought back from the bone yard in Tunis. The ship was salvaged that same day. A picture of the wreckage appears in Ursel P. Harvell's book

6 Mo  
44

titled 44th Liberators Over Europe. However, the published date of the crash is in error according to records maintained by Webb Todd.)

Will Lundy's works indicate that on March 6th, "The Group made it's first attack against Berlin. Ground fog at takeoff time caused some difficulties. The target was Luckenwalde, but it was covered with clouds. After two passes, our aircraft turned to Berlin itself and selected a target of opportunity along the river in the southwestern area. Rail lines and an industrial area were visible and were bombed. Accurate flak was encountered in the target area. Enemy aircraft were seen, but no attacks were experienced by our aircraft. Although the 44th lost no ships on this day, 16 B-24's from other groups and 53 B-17's were lost." GENSHAGEN

James Clements flew as Deputy Group Lead. Joseph Kodaj was the copilot and they were on A/C #642. N. Once again, William J. Mulholland was with them. Clements records show:

The target, at Genshagen (Berlin), was the aircraft manufacturing and component part factory. It was attacked visually. On the first two passes over the target we were taking evasive action because of the flak. On the third pass over the target the flak continued intense and accurate, but we dropped with good results. Moderate flak was encountered along the route and we were intercepted by 30-to-40 enemy aircraft in the Berlin area. We saw our escort come up after them with at least one enemy going down.

Ollie Bowling's records show that he was aboard A/C #305 on this day. The pilot was Earl B. Knight. With them were Lts. Stockton R. Bartol, Robert J. Bauman, and Robert E. Gutknecht. Other enlisted personnel were Sgts. Maurice G. Hall, William A. Wallace Jr., Melvin P. Peterson, Daniel Wozniak, and Joseph F. Meyers.

Patrick Gallagher's flight record shows that he made an eight hour operational mission on this date. The Combat Record shows that he received credit for a sortie. He was in A/C #172 He believes he was with Ray Houghtby.

Robert Struble believes that he was on this mission.

Ray Marner wrote:

March 6th--"Our planes hit Berlin for the first time. No

losses in the 44th although 68 bombers went down."

March 7th--"A P-47 collided with a B-24 from the 66th Squadron. They exploded and all were killed. It happened over the field." (This accident was confirmed by Will Lundy.)

On March the 8th Will Lundy reports, "For the second time in three days Berlin was attacked by the 44th. The target was a ball bearing factory at Erkner. Colonel F. R. Dent, Commanding Officer of the Group, led the Group on this mission as well as the 14th Combat Wing. Moderate to intense flak was encountered over the target with little damage to our aircraft. Enemy aircraft were seen, but excellent fighter coverage resulted in few attacks on the formation."

One enemy aircraft was shot down by a gunner from the 506th, but it is not known who it was.

This was the 100th mission for the 44th.

<sup>GARDENAS</sup>  
George Ramsey was on A/C #172, T. They reported flak and enemy aircraft along the way. This was Sortie #191 and it lasted eight hours. He probably was with ~~Houghtby~~.

Records maintained by James Redus indicate that the Henry <sup>PURDY</sup>  
~~Borkowski~~ crew was on this mission. They were flying A/C #642.

5-522 Lt. Money made this trip to Berlin. It is likely that Waino Hannuksela flew with Money on this day. Waino's records show the target to be Berlin (Erkner).

Robert Struble believes that he was on this mission.

X Another ship on this mission was A/C# 305, P, I'll Be Back. It was flown by Knight and Ollie Bowling was with him. <sup>ABOETA</sup>

Norm Kiefer is reasonably certain that Captain Harvell recorded portions of this 100th mission on black and white movie film. He later marketed that material, along with other moving picture materials of 44th aircraft, under the title THE MISSION. Shots of aircraft taxiing and landing for this 100th mission are incorporated in the beginning and toward the end of the film. A sequence showing Colonel Dent upon return from a mission was likely taken this day.

Robert Petkoff reports that it was about this time that Lt.

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Richard H. Hrubby and crew arrived. With Hrubby were Lts. Thomas L. Smith and Edwin H. Rosenberg. The enlisted personnel included Sgts. Boyd Bartley, Lloyd Bartley, Robert Petkoff, Cletus C. Clark, Everette E. Foster, and Euclid F. Blanchard.

Lloyd and Boyd Bartley were twin brothers. In spite of the War Department order that members of an immediate family were not to engage in combat together, the Bartley twins insisted that they be kept together. They flew thirty missions together at the waist window. On that 30th mission, one of the twins was wounded in the leg. The other twin flew one mission alone in order to complete a tour.

On March the 9th, Will Lundy's work indicates, "The 44th attacked the airframe factory at Brandenburg, Germany. Only three enemy aircraft were met and no attacks were made on the formation. The flak was meager and inaccurate.

S-522 Lt. Money departed on this trip. It is also likely that Waino Hannuksela was with him. Waino's record shows that they aborted.

↓ Ollie Bowling's records show that he was with Knight on this mission and they were flying A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back. This was Sortie #194 and it lasted eight hours. Flak was encountered. X

Ray Warner wrote on this day:

Our planes were out again without a loss. The 44th is doing all right. One of the pilots was wounded pretty badly. (Note: Will Lundy indicates that this was Lt. Kenneth Jewell of the 66th Squadron who lost his leg in a burst of flak. The copilot was inexperienced and Jewell had to assist in flying home and landing the plane. Jewell later became the first Air Force amputee to receive permission to fly with a wooden leg.)

On March 12th the Group made a mission to the rocket coast. The target was Siracourt. There were 10/10 clouds and bombing results were unobserved. There were no enemy aircraft, but some of our aircraft suffered flak damage.

HOUGHTBY George Ramsey's combat record reveals that he was on A/C #172, T, on this day. There was slight to moderate flak. This was Sortie #195 and it lasted six hours.

all Dambacher, mission in combat, having transf. from refueling units. page 329

\* 172 Patrick Gallagher made this mission with Ray Houghtby in A/C #107.

This was the raid that James Redus had been looking forward to. His last! Once again he flew with Henry Borkowski, but this time they were in A/C #107. 10-107

X Another raider that day was Knight. He was flying A/C #305, P, I'll Be Back. Ollie Bowling was with him.

552 Lt. Money was on this raid. Waino Hannuksela was probably with him.

On that day, March 12th Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes went to rocket coast again. There were no losses. Our field is closed in so they landed at another field. (This explains the various operations times recorded for this mission. Will Lundy reports that they landed at Ford and Thorney Island in southern England).

After his combat tour, James Redus recalls:

When I finished my tour I was assigned to the 489th Group as a radio instructor. This was a new group, fresh from the States. I wanted to make Master Sgt. and thought this was the opportunity.

Colonel Dent went to the 95th Wing, which was on the 489th Base (Halesworth), and took with him Henry Borkowski and Henry Mikolajczyk. I rode in on their coat tails. I remained there from April until the end of August. I was then supposed to become an Aerial Gunnery Instructor at Laredo, Texas. Instead, I was given a refresher course in Aerial Gunnery and Radio Operation with the intent that I would be sent to the Pacific in B-29's. I never made it. The war ended.

On March the 13th Will Lundy reports, "There was no mission scheduled. The majority spent their time returning to base, catching up on repairs, reports and other activities."

Ray Marner wrote on March 14th:

There was quite an air raid tonight. Jerries were over for some time. (Will Lundy's writings stated "the evening hours were livened up by 140 enemy aircraft that operated in four waves over East Anglia and London areas. Our

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field spent a comparatively sleepless night with the sky ablaze with huge slices of white rays from searchlights that crisscrossed the skies seeking out the enemy intruders.")

Will Lundy reports, "The 44th went to Brunswick, Germany on March 15. Their targets were bomber aircraft component factories and construction engineering works. Cloud cover was heavy. Enemy fighter opposition was heavy but ineffective due to excellent cover provided by friendly fighters. Bombing results were unobserved.

<sup>DEARY</sup>  
James Clements flew as a Group Lead on this mission. His records indicate that the target was the marshaling yards. The attack was made through intense accurate flak with results unobserved. They were intercepted by 10-to-15 enemy aircraft. They observed five-to-six enemy aircraft queued up to left rear. One Me-109 attacked from the opposite direction and then turned in at nine o'clock attacking an aircraft that was straggling slightly at six o'clock. That aircraft was hit in the #3 engine and set it on fire. Seven chutes were seen to come out as bomber peeled off and blew up.

429 This was Sortie #196. Ollie Bowling was with Knight aboard A/C #172, T. The raid lasted seven hours with flak being encountered. X

527 Lt. Money was on this raid. It is believed that Waino Hannuksela was with him.

4-460 This mission was Henry Siteman's first. He was with Lt. Hawkins. He saw enemy fighters and flak.

Ray Warner related, "Our planes went to Brunswick. The 66th lost one ship." (Note: Will Lundy's writings confirm this loss.)

The next day, March 16th, Will Lundy indicated, "The 44th went to Friedrichshafen, Germany. The Group encountered little flak and few fighters. Aluminum chaff was released in large quantities in the target area in order to confuse the enemy radar that controls their flak guns."

Waino Hannuksela's records show he took off on this mission but, they aborted. <sup>Group 0-429</sup>

George Ramsey's combat record indicates that he was on A/C

*Hawkins*  
#172, T, on this day. They ran into slight flak. This was Sortie #197 and it covered eight hours.

Information furnished by Jack Warvel indicates that Albert and crew flew this mission aboard A/C #42-52 305, P.

Edmund Donnelly was with them and recalls:

The flak was fairly heavy, but about a half-mile to the right and 2,000 feet low. It was an overcast day and bombs were dropped on Pathfinder.

Henry Siteman's diary indicates he flew this mission with Hawkins. It also shows:

It was a deep trip into Germany, about 18 miles from the Swiss border on Lake Constance. A Dormier Aircraft Works was our target. We saw the Alps in Switzerland.

Uriah Hartman reports that this was the first raid for Winston Irwin. Irwin and one of the enlisted men flew with another crew, but it is not known who.

Ray Warner wrote for March 16th, "Our planes hit into Germany. The 67th had a crack up killing six men." (Will Lundy's works confirm this loss.)

On March 18th Henry Siteman wrote:

We lost five crews over the same target as on the 16th, Manzell Air Armament at Friedrichshafen. I did not go on this one, but 10 men were missing from our barracks, alone. Some reports say some planes went to Switzerland. Some others bailed out over the target. It was a very sad day as news is only what the other crews bring back with them. One crew that came back (came into the Squadron at the same time that we did) had 16 big flak holes in their plane.

On this day the Manzell Air Armaments facilities at Friedrichshafen, Germany was the target. Bombing results were good. Enemy opposition, both fighters and flak, were stronger than expected. The Group lost eight aircraft. The 506th lost four of that total (A/C #42-100 400, Y, piloted by Lt. R. R. Lucas; A/C #41-29 431, Q, piloted by Lt. W. C. Irwin; A/C #41-29 172, T, piloted by Lt. R. C. Houghtby; and A/C #42-52 305, P, piloted by F. L. Albert.



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Lt. Albert's plane did not make it to the sanctuary of Switzerland. At just after bombs away and near Friedrichshafen, this aircraft was hit in #1 and #4 engines by flak. It slid under the formation and to the right for about a minute, seemingly under control. Two chutes were seen, then the left wing tore off and the plane exploded.

Jack Warvel remembers:

We couldn't release our bombs on the first pass over the target because another squadron flew in right under us. Colonel Dent gave the order to go around a second time. We did! The air speed and altitude remained the same. The German ground guns had us. We had our first hit on the first pass. The Germans did not have to make any changes in their gun positions. There were four direct hits. Later, a German antiaircraft Sgt. asked me why we didn't change our altitude or speed.

After I was captured, the Germans treated me well during the first couple of days. I even had my own personal guard. The reason for the special treatment was that they were interested in knowing why Colonel Anderson was flying with us in a bomber. They knew that he was an ace fighter pilot.

Edmund Donnelly was also with Albert. He recalls:

The Friedrichshafen raid was one of the highest loss missions that the 44th had (especially for the 506th). Lt. Albert gave his life to place the bombs on the target and to assure that the four of us that survived could live. The Pennsylvania State Police have named their recreation building, in Wyoming, Pa., after Frank. Lts. Albert and McGeary were to receive their Captain bars when they returned from this mission, but the orders were never cut.

Flying with Lt. Albert (KIA) that day were Lts. Meredyth F. McGeary (KIA), Edmund H. Donnelly (POW), and Paul E. Castellotti (KIA). The enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. Beauford K. Walker (POW), James K. Warvel (POW), Lloyd J. Brady (KIA), David F. Andello (KIA), Carl C. Bolick (POW), and Edward G. Monteleone (KIA).

Will Lundy's material relates that, "Lt. Houghtby's aircraft was last seen at 1446 hours peeling off for Switzerland, under control."

George Ramsey recalls that Bob Kolliner led the 506th that day and that the 506th led the 44th. Also, that Sgt. Bogart was the nose gunner. Brown, the bombardier had not flown with us for quite a few missions. Pat Gallagher did not fly with us that day since he was scheduled to receive his own crew.

An account by Houghtby of what happened to them was furnished by George Ramsey, it revealed:

The Friedrichshafen raid was our 25th. One of the newer replacement squadrons had missed their target sequence and made a run directly beneath the 44th. We held our bomb drop and circled, falling in behind the last group in the bomber stream. Apparently, the German antiaircraft guns had "zeroed in" on our flight parameters. The first flak burst was in the center of the Group and continued very accurate, especially as we were on our bomb run and had to hold steady on course and altitude. Our flight took several hits, but no apparent damage.

After one burst, a waist gunner (Castro or Lewis) reported a stream from under our wing (it had to be fuel). I advised the flight engineer (Warren) to transfer fuel to the opposite wing. Also, after a quick consultation with Ramsey and an intercom check with the crew, we decided to try to make it home. I noted that we could see several B-24's crossing Lake Constance to Switzerland. I also remember German fighters working them over as they left the formations. We did some flight planning and concluded that we couldn't make it to England if we tried to keep up with the Group so I established minimum power and had the crew jettison guns, flak vests, ammo., etc. I radioed a request for individual fighter protection and two P-51's joined us.

We then started a very slow descent in order to hold adequate flight speed. Ramsey and Bogart (a substitute bombardier) were in the nose scanning for any visible towns or other possible antiaircraft installations which we flew around. This procedure worked okay all the way to the Pas de Calais area. As we approached that area, knowing that it was heavily fortified with antiaircraft and other artillery, we discussed the advisability of dropping to the deck. The P-51's dropped down, but I decided that with the fuel gages showing empty, we'd better hold what altitude we could in order to continue our power glide to Ford field on the coast of England. At

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that time we were at 11,000 foot.

As we approached the coastline of France, the first four shell burst pattern took about four foot off our left wing tip. I immediately started violent evasive action. However, the enemy fire stayed close to us with numerous close bursts. After one burst I jammed in maximum right roll/turn controls and almost wound up in the copilot's lap. Apparently my control cables had been damaged. I tried differential power and auto pilot, but couldn't stop a shallow right turn. I lowered the landing gear and the Germans stopped firing.

We could look across the channel and see the white cliffs of Dover, but there was no way to get there. Reluctantly, I ordered the crew to bail out. I believe Castro went first. (I understand that he evaded capture and was picked up by the French underground. He remained with them until liberated by the Canadian 2nd Armored Div.) One of the gunners had to be thrown out of the bomb bay (he pulled his rip cord and landed safely).

I was the last one out, after checking forward in the nose area. There was a strong westerly wind blowing and I drifted east rapidly. While floating down I recall our aircraft circling in the distance with all four engines still running. //

In a letter to Patrick Gallagher on December 19, 1944, Ladislao Castro related:

I do not believe that anyone of us knew about it, but I believe that we were hit, either at the French Coast on the way in or over the target. We made two runs before we dropped our bombs.

Anyway, on the way back our fuel shortage was noticed. We had seen at least five of our planes turn back to Switzerland. Ray Houghtby asked us what we wanted to do; either turn back or try to make it to the channel and ditch. We told him to stick to the ship till the last moment. We thought that we would at least make it to the channel.

Bomb group after bomb group passed us while we were struggling. After a while we stripped the ship, We threw out our waist guns, all the ammunition except a few rounds in the tail and top turrets, all the flak suits, oxygen

bottles, extra flying clothing, and almost anything else that was not fixed to the ship. Of course we kept our parachutes.

When we were about three-quarters of the way home, we were alone in the sky except for our escort of eight or nine Mustangs. Later we were told to be ready to bail out at any moment. However, we already had our chutes on and the fellows in the back were all praying that we would make it.

At about sixty or seventy miles from the French coast and about fifty miles southeast of Abbeville, we ran into intense and accurate flak. We were at about 10,000 feet when Houghtby gave us the order to bail out.

I was the first one out of the camera hatch. After I jumped out I didn't see the ship any more. I had already made up my mind that I would delay pulling the rip cord. I was coming down in a vertical position with my feet down and my face and head up. My hand was on the rip cord handle and when I could see the ground coming up at me I pulled.

I saw the pilot chute go by and then I was sitting on the straps waiting for the main chute to open. With an ejaculation, I found myself guiding my chute between some woods. Then I was on the ground.

I hid my chute along with my gloves and helmet. I then took off, limping. I could see that I was about forty yards from a street that passed through a farm village. There were about twenty houses on both sides of the street. I started to walk into town when I heard some shots. I quickly walked back to hide in a haystack. Along the way, I saw seven parachutes coming down. The lowest one looked like it was Dye. Right after I was in the haystack, there was lots of commotion--motorcycles, cars, trucks, Germans hollering, dogs barking and kids crying. My head was going round and round and I was certain that they were searching for me.

The search lasted for about thirty minutes. During that time I realized that I had not only sprained my ankle, but had also broken a small bone above the ankle. It was so painful that I was on the verge of giving myself up. However, I was afraid that they would make me walk, so I kept to my hiding place. I then gave thought to using the

Morphine that I had in my escape kit. I didn't because I didn't want to fall asleep.

About forty minutes later, a French woman came by looking for me. It was around six P.M. when I showed myself to the French woman. She told me to wait till seven thirty. Just a little later than she had promised, she returned with her husband. They opened the back door to a barn and motioned me in.

They had some bread, butter, bacon, and a bottle of cider. They also gave me two raw eggs. The last that I had eaten was our breakfast at three o'clock. By now I was really hungry and I feasted on everything but the raw eggs.

The French couple also brought some old clothes and told me to change out of the two piece electric heated suit that I was wearing. I changed, but kept on my long Johns. They felt good that night since it was very cold.

I was told to stay in the barn till morning and then leave. I got into the hay and covered as much of my body as possible, but I didn't sleep. My arms were so sore, from the vaccination and immunization shots that I had received the day before, that I couldn't move them.

The next morning I got up around eight o'clock and went outside. I saw an old Frenchman, pushing a wheelbarrow, approaching the barn from the direction of the village. I went back into the barn. When the Frenchman reached the barn, he looked all around before coming in.

I didn't know exactly what he was saying, but he was praising all the Americans and their airplanes. He then left. From then on, every few minutes a villager or two would come into the barn and praise the Americans. Most of the women kissed me (on the cheek of course). One brought bread, butter and some coffee for my breakfast. From the rest, I got about 14 eggs.

One lady could speak a little English. She gave me directions on where to go from there. I told her that I wanted some bandage to wrap my ankle. She got a roll and bandaged it for me. While she was doing this, I told her that I did not understand her instructions. She then said that she would take me part way.

When it was time to leave, a young girl of about eighteen

went with us. After about three miles the young girl had to return to the village. I thanked and kissed her. The older lady walked a few more miles with me and then we arrived at another village.

We went to a farm house and I was taken to a back room. The lady took the eggs and left me in the room.

After a while the folks from the house and the lady returned with about four fried eggs, some bread, and cider. They then brought me hot water and I bathed my foot. I stayed at that house for ten days.

The French Underground came and picked me up and took me to the large town of Amiens which is south of Abbeville and north of Paris. I stayed with the one that picked me up for about one month and a week. He was a chief of the Underground. He then took me to another house in the same town. There I met some sixteen other Allied aviators that were evading capture. I stayed there from May 1st till September 1st.

The German lines went over us on the 30th of August. The town was liberated on the 31st and we made our way back to Bayou in two days via Vernon, Borais, Ereaux, and Caen. We flew to England on the 4th. I was in London for about 22 days.

Flying with Raymond C. Houghtby (POW) that day were Lts. Louis A. Safranek (POW), and George K. Ramsey (POW). The enlisted personnel included Sgts. Colman D. Bogart (POW), Wayne M. Warren (POW), Frank P. Phillips (POW), James W. Lewis (POW), Ladislao C. Castro (Evadee), Norman L. Dye (POW), and Thomas M. Cannon (POW).

In his works Will Lundy reports, "Lt. Irwin's ship was last seen at 1446 hours near Friedrichshafen, peeling off and heading toward Switzerland. It was reported that one engine was feathered and one was windmilling. They were also losing fuel."

This was the first mission for all members of this crew with the exception of Lt. Irwin.

Uriah Hartman remembers:

We were flying in a B-24 J called Sho Sho Baby. The flight to the target was uneventful except for a few

scattered flak puffs. At the IP things changed. Flak over the target area was intense. I thought that a black thunder cloud lay over the target. Our bomb run was down the middle of Lake Constance from the northeast. Dropping chaff on the run, we arrived over the target unscathed. At drop time, a group of B-17's crossed directly beneath us by about 1,000 feet. We could not drop.

We made a 360 degree turn and came over again. We had no chaff to throw out on our second pass. We really got plastered. I believe that seven or eight ships of the lead echelon were hit, including us.

We took a hit in #4 engine, which promptly ran away and caught fire from severed fuel lines. Also, we lost the turbos on #1 and #2 engines. Our hydraulic system was out and part of the electrical system. While we were ablaze, our tail gunner left his guns to advise us of the fire. His turret took a direct hit while he was gone. How the hell no one was injured by flak I will never know.

The Group pulled away from us and we lost altitude rapidly. A decision had to be made and quickly. We decided that there was no chance of returning to our base. We knew that Switzerland was a very short distance away. This looked like a better alternative to bailing out somewhere over France with the certainty of capture and sitting out the war in a Stalag. We swung around and headed for the Swiss border.

We crossed at about 8,000 feet and were picked up immediately by one Me-109 of the Swiss Air Force. He dropped flaps and wheels (out of range of our 50's) and showed us his Swiss wing markings. We followed him in to Dubendorf where we landed our plane on a taxi strip (after kicking out our gear). As we came to a halt, all our engines ran out of gas and quit.

We were boarded by a Swiss Army guard who prodded us out at bayonet point. All the time he was saying, "Switzerland, no more war for you."

We were quarantined and sent to internment camps throughout Switzerland. The officers went to a camp separate from the enlisted men. I have not seen any of the enlisted men since then.

My last internment location was at Davos. In October,

Northfelt and I decided to try to get back to France. The Maquis had taken control of the area South of Geneva and a contact had been established.

The night we were to cross the border, we were halted by Swiss Guards right at the fence between France and Switzerland. Somebody had screwed up. So it was back to jail in Geneva, then to Warvwil, a prisoner of war camp, where we were quartered with two Russians, two Italians, French, etc. and next to a German POW barracks.

One night myself and another officer, Eddie Kozel, saw our chance and broke out. We walked all night. Somehow we became separated, and didn't see each other until some days later. We then made another try with the aid of the Military Attache's Office and General Legge.

This time we crossed the river at Montreaux and accompanied by a smuggler walked out over the mountains into France. We located the Maquis, who trucked us to Assnecy and then to Lyon, where we were flown back to our base and to the 506th on 10/27/44. I was returned to the U.S.A. on 12/7/44 and classified as an Escapee.

With Lt. Winston C. Irwin (interned/returned) were Lts. Uriah G. Hartman (interned/returned), Wallace D. Northfelt (interned), and Robert W. Libell (interned). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. George Boatman (interned/returned), Peter E. Merisotis (interned/returned), James L. Beuoy (interned/returned), Grover R. Lawson (interned/returned), James Hunter, (interned/returned), and Paul M. Laux (interned/returned).

Will Lundy's materials show:

Lt. Lucas' aircraft, just after bombs away at 1446 hours, peeled off from the formation under control and started across Lake Constance for Switzerland. It then turned back toward Germany and was last seen going down at 1500 hours in that vicinity.

However, the Swiss records show that Lt. Lucas was the last to land at Dubendorf at 1538 hours.

With Lt. Robert R. Lucas (interned/returned) were Lts. Charles D. Waska (interned/returned), Bernard J. Capella (interned/returned), and Donald E. Kirchner (interned/returned). The enlisted personnel included Sgts.



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John F. Bass<sup>JB</sup> (interned/returned), Jacob F. Stambaugh (interned/returned), Arthur W. DuBail (interned), Douglas D. Brice (interned), Lloyd W. Hammer (interned/returned), and Ernest C. Luther (interned).

Ray Marner reported on March 18th:

Our ships went to southern Germany and 13 planes are missing. Only 2 of ours came back. Albert's ship blew up. We don't know all the details yet. Capt. Cardenas (Note: flying as Command Pilot) went down with LaCombe. Houghtby's, Lucas's and Irwin's crews all went down. The 506th lost 4 ships and 41 men.

Lt. Raymond J. Lacombe, flying with the 87th Squadron also made it to Switzerland and was interned and then released. The author remembers that Lacombe was at some point attached to the 506th (flew the Ploesti raid with Slough). I saw Lacombe in the 1960s when Lacombe was Base Commander at Wurtsmith Air Base in Michigan.

Many years later, McAtee and Cardenas were talking. McAtee related how disappointed he was that Cardenas was lost. Cardenas had been sent to the 506th to get some battle experience. Cardenas had a good deal of flying experience, having been a test pilot. He transferred into the 506th from a staff job higher up in the Air Force. He had been identified as a future General. Both Lacombe and Cardenas remained in the service after the war and became Generals.

ALSO TEST PILOT ON FIRST MACH-1  
In a letter to his wife on March 19th Norm mentioned:

A lot of our boys went to see "Willie" yesterday. It was the biggest group to go over there in some months. (Note: I was trying to tell her that we had lost a number of crews.)

Henry Siteman spent the next few days at the skeet range and hanging around the barracks. His pilot, Hawkins, was grounded.

On March the 20th, Ray Marner wrote:

The Group lost 8 planes a couple of days ago. Bolick (Albert crew) was on his 26th mission.

Capt. Johnson's crew went to the 66th. Major Kolliner transferred to the 67th. Lt. Colonel Brandon is new C.O.

He just came back from Sweden. Escaped!

Will Lundy's writings show, "The 44th went to Pas de Calais on March 21. Bombing was by PFF with unobserved results. Meager to moderate flak was thrown at our formation. The Group lost no aircraft."

On this day, Ollie Bowling completed his combat tour. He was flying with Patrick Gallagher on A/C #827, Bar Q. This was Sortie #200 and it lasted five hours. Flak was encountered.

Lt. Money went on this raid. It is likely that Waino Hannuksela was on the same aircraft.

Lt. Marx also went this day. Siteman went with him in place of Johnson who was ill. The Siteman diary indicates:

The target was the rocket installations in France. We had a runaway prop and had to feather #1 engine. We had four 2000-pound bombs and couldn't get any altitude. We couldn't land with such a heavy load, so we were forced to dump them in the Channel. We then came home on three engines. I was plenty scared, as was everyone on the ground. We didn't get credit for a mission. Hawkins is still grounded.

Ralph Golubock reports that he was on this raid.

In a recent letter, Fred Marzolph recalled:

I can't find my record of missions, but I do remember that we landed at Shipdham with the Group only three or four times out of our first 14 missions. It sure got tiresome looking up our clothes and personal items when we didn't get back the same day.

I also remember early one morning, while waiting for the flare to start engines, the crew was moving about underneath the ship. The pilot and copilot were doing their thing up in the cockpit. Our bombardier was watching our engineer looking about the top of the wing with a flashlight. First he would look the wing surface and then at an engine. As he did so, we could see the flashlights of other engineers doing the same thing on other ships. Curious, the bombardier yelled up to our engineer, "Jake, I see you up there looking around before each mission. What are you looking for?" To which our engineer, a former cowboy from Montana, yelled back,

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"Hell, I don't know! Everybody else is looking at something, so I do it too."

On another occasion our tail gunner was having trouble with his guns before takeoff. He yelled for an armament man. The armament man fiddled with the guns for a few minutes and then said that it was a feed problem that should be all right now. Try the guns. The gunner asked if he really was to try the guns. The armament man said yes. Naturally, our gunner, instead of using the charging handle, reached for the triggers. That time they shot the chimney off the farm house 50 feet away.

Other memories include---"attempting" to find hot water in the hut that had a kerosene heater designed to provide shaving and washing facilities.---The crew that came in from the States with a bottle of bourbon that they raffled off at the "Picket Post". I'll bet they made enough off that one bottle to spend a week at the Regent Palace Hotel in London.---The MP's on the base selling re-spooled aerial film in different sizes; 127, 116, 120 etc. They also did a weird job of processing the film.

Will Lundy's works show for March 22nd, "The 44th bombed Berlin using PFF with unobserved results. The flak over the city was intense and accurate. The enemy used both barrage and directed antiaircraft fire. Many of our aircraft received flak damage. Fighter support was excellent and no enemy aircraft were sighted."

This raid completed the operational tour for Patrick Gallagher. He was flying in A/C #153, L. This was Sortie #201 and it lasted nine hours. Gallagher recalls:

There was heavy flak, but we seemed to have made it all right. That is until we got into the landing pattern. When we tried to lower the wheels, the main gear dropped, but did not lock into place and the nose wheel would not come down. What's more, we did not have any flaps. We were not short of fuel, therefore, the tower put us into a holding pattern while the rest of the planes landed. The engineers on the ground were trying to figure out how they could help us.

On instructions from the ground, we managed to manually lock the main gear and to push the nose wheel up, out and locked. The copilot manually pumped the flaps down. We then started our descent without knowing if our brakes

would work. We landed about half-way down the runway and thank goodness the brakes did hold. Thus, the assembled fire trucks and ambulances had to return to their stations without any customers.

We managed to slowly taxi to the parking area where they found that one of our hydraulic lines had been hit and that we had lost most of our fluid.

Money was at Berlin on this day. It is believed that Waino Hannuksela was with him. Also, Ralph Golubock was on this mission.

Ray Marner wrote for March 22nd, "Our planes went to Berlin today. No losses. We got six new combat crews. Our new A.P.O. is 558."

One of those new crews belonged to Jack J. Wind. With Lt. Wind were Lts. Edwin L. Waldo, Ben K. Mazza, and Arthur C. Stanton. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles R. Eccleston, Harold D. Emch, Deno C. Tulini, Garnet A. Stoltenburg, Harold E. Lightcap, and William A. Gurt.

It was about this time that Lt. Jack M. Winn joined the squadron. With him were Lts. James H. McEver, Max Finesmith, and Alfred C. Walker. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Louis A. Turansky, Charles W. Vaughan, Allen T. Matthews, Richard L. Albert, Leon Preston Isaccs, and Sidney I. Goldberg.

Another of the new crews was led by Lt. Gerald S. Westcott. With him were Lts. Robert H. Reeves, Thomas L. Hine, and Arthur C. Toepel. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Fred A. DuBose, Edward J. Thompson, Frank Artym Jr., Joseph A. Gorski, Walter V. Lawrence, and Joseph I. Morris.

Fred DuBose recalls:

We were assigned A/C #41-28 829, H, My Ever Lovin Girl. The ship already had that name when we got it. The crew chief was S/Sgt. Boyer.

Another crew was with Bernie L. Scudday. With Lt. Scudday were Lts. John A. Farrell, Charles W. Hansen, and Paul Richardson. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph E. Wycheck, Anthony J. Ventura, Robert P. Ries, Coyle J. Acuff, Carl W. Tepe, and Lester D. Warren. They brought with them A/C #42-110 029.

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Raymond McCormick remembers that:

Bernie Scudday was a big Texan--half Cherokee--who handled a B-24 like a Brahman bull. He landed a B-24 on fire in the States and walked away. John Farrell hated flying. On local flights in England, I flew as copilot and John rode a bicycle. I think the T.V. actor from "M\*A\*S\*H", Mike Farrell, is his son.

The last of the known crews that came in at this time belonged to Lt. Dallas L. Sprinkle. With Lt. Sprinkle were Lts. Robert E. Neutze Jr., Joseph R. Smith Jr., and Robert E. Schuyler. Enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. Charles Radu, Charles Winn, Jack B. Freeman, Charles F. Springs,, and Stanley Murach. They brought with them A/C #42-110 045, Banana Barge.

It is believed that the following crew also joined about this time.

Lt. Conrad Scheer accompanied by Lts. James Tucker, John A. Hess, and Alfred R. Wilson. The enlisted personnel joining were Sgts. Santo Romeo, Raymond Khoury, Thomas J. Reeves, Leron M. Whiteside, Ivan C. Millican, and Karl D. Breakey.

Henry Siteman recorded for the 22nd of March:

We didn't fly today. We are just waiting around with nothing to do.

Ralph Golubock remembers:

One night an R.A.F. Lancaster made an emergency landing at our base. The next day we all went out to see it. I thought at the time that it sure looked fragile compared to the B-24.

Will Lundy's writings indicate, "The 44th was on another PFF mission with the airfield near Osnabruck and Bransche, Germany, being hit on March 23. Fighter support was almost completely lacking, probably due to very adverse weather conditions. Clouds were 10/10 over the target Bombing results were unobserved, but reported to have been good. There was little flak and no enemy aircraft were seen."

Money made this mission. It is likely that Waino Hannuksela flew this, his last, ~~combat mission with Money.~~ Was 1st Pilot & LED SECOND SECTION

Ralph Golubock was also out on this day. <sup>7</sup>

Siteman didn't go. He spent the day around the barracks. He then went to a dance, in the evening, at the Red Cross Club, where a bunch of WAAF's were brought in from another base.

Will Lundy's records reveal, "On March 24th the group was scheduled to go to Metz, Germany. However, cloud conditions turned the formation to St. Dizier/Robinson Airdrome in France. All of the vital installations of the field, except for one barracks area and one dispersal area were covered with bomb bursts."

The records of Dave McCash shows that he went on this raid. It is not known who he went with.

Siteman spent the 24th hanging around until evening when he went to town for a few beers.

Will Lundy reports, "There was no flying activity on March 25. However, on this date, Captain Wayne Middleton was assigned to the 67th. His former assignment was with the 506th."

Siteman also reported that there was no activity on this day, "About the same as yesterday, except no trip and no beer."

Will Lundy recorded, "On March 26th a mission was scheduled for Oscherleben, but it was scrubbed. Then a raid was mounted to go to Petit-Bois-Tillencourt. The briefing revealed that the target was a secret installation in the woods south of Abbeville. The target area was clear and bombing was visual with good results. Antiaircraft fire was moderate to heavy and very accurate. Many of our ships sustained minor damage."

Ralph Golubock went on this mission.

Ray Marner's diary entry for this day was:

Our planes came back pretty well shot up, but we had no losses. I've been made Squadron Supply Sgt.

Ray remembers one aspect of this new assignment that was particularly distasteful:

After a combat loss, it was my job to immediately gather up the belongings of the lost airman and store them for

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safekeeping. Later, these belongings were sorted into personal things (that should be considered for shipment to the survivors) and things that would be returned to the Air Force. At one time, Ray had one end of a Nissen hut filled with these belongings.

Combat personnel frequently resented the appearance of a "paddle foot" (ground person) appearing in the barracks immediately after a loss. They looked upon this as the act of a vulture picking over the bones of their fallen comrade.

When they verbalized these feelings, it frequently was vehement. These expressions often were a means of venting their sorrow at the loss and a knowledge that tomorrow it might be their things that were being picked over.

The picking over process was also a matter of misunderstanding. In some cases there were letters, notes or other items that were best not forwarded to the next of kin.

There was also the problem of timing. Just think what happened when a ship was reported as lost, but made it back. The crew man's belongings, that had been confiscated, had to be returned. It had better all be there just as he remembered them.

Will Lundy also recorded a March 26th event that was of significance to combat crews:

Each crewman must now fly thirty missions, not 25, before his tour of combat was over.

On March 27th Will Lundy shows, "The group flew one of its longest missions. The target was Mont De Marsan Airdrome. It is located almost on the Spanish border. German long range reconnaissance aircraft were stationed there. The airdrome was hit visually with good results. Antiaircraft fire was moderate and accurate using directed fire. Fighter support was excellent and no enemy aircraft were observed. Upon return, the weather in England was bad and one 506th ship #42-100 107, J<sub>2</sub> crash landed in Sussex." (Webb Todd reported this loss as occurring at Tangmere, Suffolk). (The fate of the crew is not mentioned in either Lundy's nor Todd's works. Therefore it is assumed that there were no casualties.) 504 A/C PILOT MENDENHALL, LOW ON GAS, MAIN

LANDING GEAR COLLAPSED -

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42-100 107 R

The Siteman dairy recorded this long mission:

Today was my third raid. I was with Lt. Blow. We went deep into southwestern France - an airfield for German Cadets - Mont De Marsan. We made good hits and destroyed the target. It was the longest trip yet, over 10 hours. I was up and ate at 0300 hours and didn't get back to the field till 1930 hours - About 17 hours without food or drink. And was I ever tired. I was credited with eleven hours.

This mission was flown by Ralph Golubock.

The entries in the Siteman diary indicated there was little activity on the next two days. On the 28th he wrote:

I didn't get up till 1300 hours and was plenty tired from yesterday and that long mission. We had 11 flak holes in our ship. Our bomb load was 340 fragmentation bombs. Today I just hung around the barracks and rested up.

The next day there still was no mission so I just hung around the barracks.

On the March 28th Ray Warner wrote:

The Presidential Citation for the Kiel Raid came through today. We can wear a cluster on our ribbon now.

The entry by Will Lundy for March 30th was, "A mission was planned for Berlin today, but was scrubbed. Later another mission to Landsburg and Lech was planned and they too were scrubbed. The monotony of the two previous days was interrupted by enemy aircraft over East Anglia. These intruders came over at about 0430 hours, but dropped no bombs on the airdrome. However, nearby areas were hit."

Siteman's diary reported on that day:

About the same lying around as yesterday, but I did borrow a bike and toured the countryside with Lts. Bennett and McCloud. We managed to get 3-1/2 dozen eggs.

The Siteman diary entry for March 31st seemed to indicate that there was some activity in the air:

Lt. Hawkins is still in the hospital with ear trouble. Hicks has an infected toe and is grounded too. He is



*Col Dent leave*

seeing the doctor daily. Otherwise, no change in the day. The boys are out there flying--25th mission of the month. This is a new record for missions over enemy territory for the 44th. (Note: I can find no evidence that the group engaged in combat on this date.)

During the month of March, Colonel Dent left the group to go to the 95th Bomb Wing. He was to be the new Commanding Officer over two new groups, 491st and 489th. William Duffy, Dave McCash (his orders were not cut until April 26th) and Bob Kolliner went with him.

Dave McCash recalls:

At some point prior to the transfer, I accompanied Duffy on a visit to a British airfield where Duffy's brother was flying the single-tailed version of the B-24. I remembered the breakfast that they were served. Included was little squares of fried bread. This fare was a new experience to me.

The 506th had now completed its first year of combat. While chalking up 88 missions into enemy-occupied Europe, they had ranged from Norway to Sicily; from the lowlands along the English Channel to the oil fields of Romania. They had been to the very core of Germany, Berlin. They had put the truth to the words of the President of the United States, "There is no place in Germany that is safe from our bombers."

During these twelve months the Squadron had been very lucky. Only 12 crews were shot down while flying with the Squadron. There were individuals in the squadron that were killed in action or wounded, but in general our combat losses were light. We had also lost a number of former members while they were flying with other organizations. They didn't take our luck with them.

During the month of March Norm wrote the following to his wife:

"Gee there was a nice snowfall last night and the ground is all covered. Almost like home."..."I just looked down at my hand and arm. You should see how white they are. It doesn't seem possible that I could lose that tan so completely. Maybe the most of it was African dust that came out when I washed!"..."Did I tell you that Edwards is the last of the boys that we have to worry about? Loftus is finished."..."Dinner last night was fried chicken and

ice cream. It was the first time that we have had the latter since I came to this island."..."Edwards can now be added to the list that we do not have to worry about."..."I have a sore arm. I had three shots this noon."..."You may not know me when I get home. There isn't quite as much hair up on my head as there was when you last saw me. Also, there is a number of gray ones in with the black."..."Do you remember last spring that Lt. Graham wrote a story? Well I have found a part of it has been published by the Eighth Air Force in their booklet called Target Germany."..."The envelope of sugar that you sent wasn't even broken. Now I have the jello and the sugar. All I have to do is figure out what to make it in. We are going to have a feast yet."..."On the way home tonight I passed a pond and the Pussy Willows are starting to break out. It reminded me of home."..."Frank Juskowski finished up the other day. The enlisted men are now all through. Not so with the officers, with the exception of Laudig."

April 44

## SOFTENING UP FOR THE INVASION

A listing of officer personnel in the 506th in early April included:

STAFF--William H. Brandon, Olaf W. Anderson, James C. McAtee, Ira C. McKee, James E. Meiner, Charles A. Sandoval, Felix L. Caldwell, Wallis W. Callaway, William N. Doughton, Edgar A. Everhart, Paul T. Betz, Irwin C. Rada, and Thomas E. Shufflebarger.

PILOTS--James H. Clements, William M. Duffy, Stockton R. Bartol, Paul E. Blow, Henry S. Borkowski, Charles R. Conner, George B. Davis, Ralph Golubock. John W. Grow, Guy W. Johnson, Joseph C. Kodaj, John M. McCaslin Jr., Howard B. McCormick, Dean Miller, John D. Money, Robert B. Parrish, Sidney W. Paul, David E. Sayler, Robert G. Stamos, Leroy M. Williamson, William B. Altemus, Henderson K. Bennett, Vernie R. Brockman, John A. Farrell, Virgil W. Fillbach, Eustice L. Hawkins Jr., Ernest A. Herzing, Carlton R. Horne, James H. McEver, Robert H. Marx, Max D. Mendenhall, Robert E. Neutze, Philip J. Quirk, Bernie L. Scudday, Dallas L. Sprinkle, Edwin L. Waldo, Jacob Jack Wind, and Jack M. Winn.

NAVIGATORS--David E. McCash, Robert J. Baumann, Richard A. Boykin, Maurice L. Dyer, John J. Horey, Robert W. Kessler, Henry C. Mikolajczyk, Harry H. Putnam, Allen N. Williams, Joseph Bearden, Gayle J. Dunkerly, Max Finesmith, Charles W. Hansen, Raymond A. McCormick, Leon A. Mascolo, Ben K. Mazza, Joseph R. Smith, and Robert F. Westcott.

BOMBARDIERS--Joseph R. Bumbicka, Sherman N. Dowsett, Joseph A. Ebler, Gerald G. Gille, Robert E. Gutknecht, Walter Lockett, Joseph W. Ray, Grover C. Trumbo Jr., Harold J. Wheatly, Charles L. Wiest, William F. Ball Jr., William C.K. Brown, William D. Fitzsimons, Herman G. Flugman, Albert E. McCloud Jr., Robert E. Schuyler, Raymond L. Poljanec, Paul Richardson, Arthur C. Stanton, and Alfred O. Walker.

Will Lundy's writings show on April 1st, "Twenty-five aircraft from the 44th departed on a mission to Grafenhausen, Germany. Adverse weather and navigational difficulties were encountered by the formation which was led by Capt. Martin of the 68th Squadron. There was no flak nor enemy aircraft encountered. Nine A/C did hit the primary target. The

second element in the formation got off course and struck Schaffhausen, Switzerland. The 86th Squadron reported that the bombs that fell on Switzerland dropped in a wooded area about three miles southeast of the Swiss city. Others appeared to hit along the river front, in the railway yards, and a small factory district, and a few hits on a large plant across the river from the town."

Jack Winn was on this raid. His combat record shows that he flew Sortie #209 in A/C #415, Bar Y, *My Peach*. He recalls:

I left the States with a group of other crews including Gerald Westcott. When we got to England we went to the 506th and some of the others went to Ireland for further training. I made one local practice flight as a copilot.

Then on April's Fool Day, of 1944, I flew as a copilot on a raid. I don't remember who I flew with. The weather was socked in and we missed the target. The lead ship apparently got lost. My navigator said "Man we're way off, we're not anywhere near the target."

Finally we broke out of the clouds and the lead group dropped on a little place in Switzerland. There was a little lake up there. There was a little power station. They dropped on that power station. At that point we were thirty or forty minutes past our target time.

The rest of us, or some of us, held our load. On the way back the clouds cleared and we picked out a plant of some kind, I have no idea of what it was. We dropped on that target of opportunity. It may not have been anything in the world, but we blew up something.

When we landed there was a little consternation, in the chain of command, over what had happened. A General, I believe it was Johnson, chewed on a few people the next morning for dropping on Switzerland and not realizing where they were. Some of us got chewed on because we didn't drop on our leaders.

Herbert J. Wilson recalls:

I went to Shipdham as an armorer and then became a substitute gunner. On the Garfenhausen raid I was in the tail turret. After bombs away, I told the crew what a wonderful hit we had made on the target. The pilot told me to "shut up". It was not until later that I learned we

April 4

had hit Switzerland.

Raymond McCormick was on this mission. He was probably flying with Mendenhall. He recalls:

The first attacking flight, led by Dowsett and Williams, bombed Switzerland. However, the flight that we were with did not. Max Mendenhall was now a lead pilot, but had not received a promotion. Dowsett, bombardier, and Williams, navigator, now were Captains and outranked Mendenhall. Mendenhall looped to the left and dropped our bombs on a nothing town.

As the author recalls, the 44th, without being identified, made banner headlines in the newspapers the next day. U. S. bombers had struck a town in neutral Switzerland. The United States Government sent official apologies and immediately agreed to pay indemnities and to discipline responsible officers.

However, the rumors around base were that this was no mistake. The power plant that had been hit was furnishing power to a ball bearing producing plant. The ball bearings were being shipped across the Swiss border, a few miles away, into Germany. That plant was now without power.

Was this the reason some of the crews were "chewed on" for not dropping on their leaders?

Ray Marner reported for April 1st:

Colonel Dent and Major Kolliner went to 95th Combat Wing. General Johnson went to the States on furlough. Colonel Gibson is Group Commander. Captain McAtee will be Squadron. C.O., and Captain Saylor Operations Officer.

The 2nd Division bombed Switzerland by mistake, except for our Squadron which is always on the ball.

In his book, *Jaws Over Europe*, Ursel P. Harvell recorded:

The gravest error made by any group of the 8th Air Force was the bombing of Schaffhausen in Switzerland on April 4, 1944. (Note: this date is in error.) The 44th Bomb Group was briefed to bomb Fredrickshaven on that day with explicit orders to bomb only if the target was clearly visible and to bring back the bombs if it was cloud covered as we were short of bombs. The target was not

clear and the Group turned for home with their bomb load. The lead navigator got off course, on the way back, and crossed the western tip of Switzerland. Naturally, the Swiss fighters came up to investigate. Their planes were built by the Germans and looked like Messerschmitts. The Command Pilot, Major Frank Slough, ordered the Group to get rid of their bombs and prepare for an air battle with the fighters coming in. Little did the Group know that the drop point for the bombs was over the city of Schaffhausen in Switzerland, just across the Danube River from Germany. Almost immediately Washington was informed about the error by the Swiss and shortly thereafter Bomber Command had us on the line back at the base. Since I was an Intelligence Officer of the Group and in charge of photography, I was ordered to set up for emergency interpretation of the vertical camera films of the bombing as soon as the planes returned to base. The bombers carrying cameras were ordered to land first and were speedily processed. The interpretation of the bombing indicated that the Swiss claim was legitimate. The amount of damage to property and personnel could not be judged from the photographs. The 8th Air Force considered the matter as human error in navigation and that was the last of the mission we heard until Axis Sally came on the air from radio Germany calling us something else.

On April 2nd and 3rd the Eighth Air Force did not schedule any raids. The 44th was in a training mode.

On April the 4th Will Lundy's entry was, "A repeat of yesterday. Crews were scheduled for lectures and ground training. Squadron meetings were held to announce new procedures: no more furloughs, no 48-hour passes--no nothing!"

On April the 5th Will Lundy related that there was a raid on Siracourt, France. However, the 44th was not included.

It was about this time that Lt. Fred E. Stone and crew arrived. With Lt. Stone were Lts. Merritt E. Derr, Andrew E. Patrichick, and Emery R. Lundy. The enlisted personnel included Sgts. Charles J. Brown, Samuel M. Cervellera, William S. Strange, Robert M. Foust, Robert E. Ryan, and Morrie (NMI) Meunitz.

On April the 6th the 44th sent two ships to join 10 other ships on a raid on Watten.

6 April

Jack Wind was on one of those two ships, flying his first combat mission as copilot to Lt. Sidney Paul. His notes record the raid as the coast of France.

Probably, Henry Siteman was with Jack Wind. Henry recalls:

How nice the green grass smelled after our first mission. I will never forget that smell. I had asked the crew chief (Schliesman) why my leather suit had turned almost white. He said, "That happens when you get real scared." Schliesman was the crew chief of Consolidated Mess, our ship for our first mission.

After that first mission, I was lying on the upper bunk, my back sore from throwing out a ton of chaff, listening to the German radio bragging about their great aerial victory.

My future didn't look very bright. We were young and had a lot of living to do.

Ray Marner wrote on that sixth day, "The whole E.T.O. has been restricted."

Once again on April the 7th the 44th was not scheduled to go on the mission that was flown to Wizerness, France. Instead, the Group practiced formation flying.

The following day, April 8th, the 44th, and in particular the 506th, suffered heavy losses on a raid to Brunswick, Germany.

Will Lundy's records show, "38 aircraft were dispatched to Brunswick. However, that primary and the secondary target were covered with smoke clouds. A target of opportunity was selected. It was Langenhagen A/D. Bombing results were fair, with hits seen on the hangars on the north end of the field. Claims of the Group were 12 enemy aircraft destroyed. Colonel Gibson was the Command Pilot." LANGENHAGEN A/D HIT

Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes raided Brunswick and we lost five crews plus three men, (53 men in total). Bartol was killed. All of the planes that came back were shot up. (Will Lundy reported the loss of the five crews but only one additional man.)

Jack Winn, who was flying on A/C #42-100 423, recalls:

This mission was the second that I had made. I was with my own crew and it was their first combat experience. I was flying on the right wing of our three-ship element. We feigned toward Berlin and were going after a ball bearing plant. We were within fifty-miles of Berlin and were hit by fighters. There were Me-109's and Fw-190's after us. They tore us up.

I didn't lose any of my men. My engineer, Turansky, riding in the top turret was hit by shrapnel in his leg. We had three engines knocked out, two on the left wing and the inboard on the right. The tail was shot up. We didn't have any aileron control. So, we went down, but we all got out. I understood, after I got into POW camp, that we lost all but about eight or nine of the 508th ships.

In an account furnished to Will Lundy, Lt. Max Finesmith, Navigator, added:

We were knocked down on our first mission over Germany on the way to Brunswick. Our position in the formation was behind the deputy lead. One Fw-190 hit our port engines, our plane caught fire and all of our crew bailed out safely. We were supposed to get fighter support at the rendezvous point, but never saw them.

The altitude when I bailed out was about 5,000 feet. I injured my back and ankle on landing. I was captured soon after. I was a POW for 13 months at Stalag #1 until liberated by the Russians in May, 1945.

With Lt. Jack M. Winn (POW) were Lts. James H. McEver (POW), Max Finesmith (POW), and Alfred C. Walker (POW). Enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. Louis A. Turansky (POW), Charles W. Vaughan (POW), Allen T. Matthews (POW), Richard L. Albert (POW), Leon Preston Isaacs (POW), and Sidney I. Goldberg (POW).

Another 508th crew reported lost was the Herzing crew flying A/C #42-110 023, Rubber Check.

The engineer on this A/C, Sgt. John J. Brown, wrote to Will Lundy:

I believe that they were mostly Me-109's that hit us in that one flashing pass. We didn't know they were coming and were shocked when we heard the firing.



I was in the top turret and could observe everything as it was happening. The damage was this. The #1 and #2 engines were knocked out and smoking; #3 was on fire immediately with flames that engulfed the whole right wing area. The #4 engine was the only one that was operating.

I quickly reported the damage to Lt. Herzing and it seemed a long time with no answer, so I repeated it a second time. Apparently he and Lt. Fillbach were nearly in shock trying to determine what had happened and what to do about it.

Lt. Herzing then said, "What do you think, Phil?" The reply came back, "Let's get the hell out of here!"

The next order was to salvo bombs and prepare to bail out. Very shortly after that Lt. Herzing could see the hopelessness of the situation and he said, "Go ahead and jump."

Well, it was our first jump. We had practiced the procedure earlier, but only from the ground and just to orientate each person which exit to take. But this was the real thing and we had complications, as the bomb bay doors were swinging back and forth, apparently damaged as well.

After checking those swinging doors, it was decided to jump as soon as they were about to open because they swung back almost immediately. We all bailed out and landed with only a few minor bumps and bruises, banged up legs and backs, but otherwise in good shape. Amazingly, with all of the damage to the plane, no one had been hit! I was told that shortly after we bailed out, the ship blew up.

We were quickly rounded up by German soldiers somewhere near Hannover, and taken to Dulag Luft for interrogation. Then on to Stalag 17 B, Krems, Austria.

The navigator of this crew, Gayle Dunkerly, wrote to Will Lundy:

The name of this ship was Rubber Check; you know like it always comes back. We were attacked by Me-109's and had hits on both wings, but none on the fuselage. At least two engines were knocked out, with a fire in one wing. Not being able to maintain altitude, we were ordered to bail

out. The plane was set on automatic pilot and was observed to blow up shortly after we all got out.

All crew members were captured upon landing, and by evening we were rounded up together in jail cells at the Air Force base in the area. Once we were in the hands of the German Air Force, we were treated with mutual respect. The following day was Easter Sunday, and we were fed a good dinner. Then we were put into one large cell for a few hours so that we could compare experiences. All four of us officers were sent to Stalag Luft I, near Barth.

With Lt. Earnest A. Herzing (POW) were Lt.s. Virgil W. Fillbach (POW), Gayle J. Dunkerly (POW), and William F. Ball Jr. (POW). The enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. John J. Brown Jr. (POW), William J. Weiss (POW), Moren Hirsch (POW), Alvin L. Thorson (POW), Albert A. LeBlanc (POW), and Francis X. Mahaney (POW).

Another 506th crew that was lost belonged to Lt. Johnson, flying in A/C #42-73 506, X.

In a letter to Will Lundy the copilot, Williamson reported:

After all personnel had cleared the aircraft and were descending to earth, we were fired upon by small arms. Upon hitting the earth, I recognized the voice of Lt. Guy W. Johnson saying, "I give up, don't shoot"--or words to that effect. Then followed a burst of rifle fire. I was wounded and did not see Lt. Johnson, although I would judge from the sound of his voice he was about 400 feet away. I could see a number of German soldiers running in the direction of Lt. Johnson. I was told by German military personnel, at the time I was taken prisoner, that Lt. Johnson was dead and notice of his death would be sent through the Red Cross.

Also in a letter to Will Lundy, the navigator, Robert Baumann stated:

While in prison camp I made notes of what I remembered about the mission and I still have them.

On that last flight, our Group was leading the formations and our plane was flying in the number 4 position. We were catching some flak, but just before the IP, I was looking out the side window checking pilotage points when the window was shattered by flak. Other parts of the

plane were also hit by flak, but no one was hurt at that time.

We began to get fighter attacks while on our final approach to the target, but our section had good fighter support and although there were a lot of enemy planes, I don't believe we received any hits, nor do I recall hearing that any other planes in our Group were hit seriously.

We began to get heavy accurate flak just before bombs away and it continued. I remember hearing noises as though flak was hitting the plane at various places. It sounded like rocks being thrown against the plane. However, no one was hit--at least I heard nothing on the intercom about serious hits. I turned around to reach for my log to record the bomb data when all hell broke loose.

The ship shuddered, my legs felt like they had been blown off, and I fell face down on the floor. The space below the flight deck and just to the rear from me was an immediate roaring inferno. I was able to get up on my right leg, but my left leg was useless. I started to open the emergency nose wheel door, but I couldn't hold on long enough to get the door completely open, as the flames were burning my face.

I recall backing away, and then making another try at it with my head turned to the side. The side of my head and face were pretty badly burned, but I did get the door open. I passed out a few times before I finally got out of the ship. I remembered to open the nose turret door. (Our ship was an older model and was the only one in our Squadron which did not have an emergency release handle inside the nose turret. Had I not gotten that door open, the bombardier, Wiest, would have been trapped.

I don't know how I got out of the ship, but I did, and ended up in a prison camp after a few transfers and transportation problems. This flight was my 22nd mission, but my first with this crew. I am almost certain that Lt. Johnson, the pilot, was killed by flak.

I was on Lt. Money's crew during my first 15 missions or so. Then I was being trained for lead crew.

Flying with Lt. Guy Johnson (KIA) were Lts. Leroy M. Williamson (POW/Wounded), Robert J. Baumann (POW/Wounded),

and Charles L. Wiest (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert J. Hickman (POW), Martin R. Goldman (POW), Walter Procyszyn (POW), Wilbur R. Randall (POW), Paul Manak (POW), and George W. Reed (POW).

A fourth 506th crew that was lost on April 8th was the Robert Marx crew flying on A/C #41-29 153, Bar L.

Sgt. Theodore F. Zimmerman, right waist gunner, related to Will Lundy:

The entire crew bailed out over a town named Herford, Germany. Fighters hit us, but what really got us was flak.

After we dropped our load of bombs, four 2,000-pounders, we lost an engine and went into a spin. Our two pilots pulled it out at 4,000 feet and hit the horn. We all started to bail out. The ball turret gunner, Applegate, and I were the last to leave. He had to get his shoes and then he lost them when he opened his chute. I guess he did not have time to tie them to his harness.

We were captured when we landed. Then we were all sent to Frankfurt for interrogation. From there we went to Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria. The officers went to Stalag I.

With Lt. Robert H. Marx (POW) were Lts. Vernie R. Brockman (POW), Leon A. Mascolo (POW), and Raymond L. Poljanec (POW). The enlisted men were Sgts. Robert C. Franklin (POW), Ronald J. Taylor (POW), Edward J. Applegate (POW), Theodore F. Zimmerman (POW), Deward F. Johnson (POW), and Esley E. Nelson (POW).

The last 506th crew that was lost on this day belonged to Lt. Sprinkle who was flying A/C #42-109 827.

Sgt. Jack Freeman reported to Will Lundy:

I was flying in the tail turret position that day and we were flying "tail end charlie". We had just turned at the IP for the bomb run, had opened our bomb bay doors, when several Me-262's came down out of the sun and decimated our formation.

Our plane was hit with cannon shells in the main gas lines across the front of the wing above the flight deck, as well as on the deck above the wing over the bomb bay where

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all of the oxygen supply bottles were secured. Fire erupted immediately, fed by the fuel, the oxygen and the wind blowing in the open bomb bay. It quickly spread back to the waist positions and forward into the flight deck area.

Lt. Sprinkle sounded the bailout alarm very soon after the hits and everyone hurried to get set to abandon ship. We in the waist area prepared to leave through the bottom camera hatch, as the heat from the fire soon was igniting the ammo in the waist gun belts.

Sgt. Charles F. Springs was in the ball turret and he never rotated his turret or raised it in order to get out. As far as I know, he never showed up later. Sgts. Stanley Murach and Jeane M. Hicks, waist gunners, both bailed out ahead of me and were, apparently, OK at that time. Jean Hicks made it all right, but I have heard nothing of Stanley Murach.

I landed after a delayed jump near a wooded area where I ditched my chute and took off toward the west, Holland. I was loose for about 8-to-10 hours before I was captured by a Ju-88 pilot who was home on leave. He spoke English. He took me to a Luftwaffe airfield jail near Luneberg, for the night. The next day they drove me to the area where our plane crashed to see if I could identify one body there without dog tags. It unhappily, turned out to be my friend and crew mate, Sergeant Charles Radu, of Lakewood, Ohio. His chute had not opened.

I was then transported under guard to Dulag Luft, the interrogation center in Bavaria, for several days. This was where I saw Lt. Sprinkle. I had no chance to speak to him, but he had evidently been blown through the cockpit roof when the ship blew up. He had a heavily bandaged nose as though it was broken. I was transported, along with many Air Corps POW'S in boxcars to Austria and Stalag 17B. There I found Jeane Hicks in good shape and learned that Charles Winn had been able to get out. However, he was seriously burned. I've heard nothing about the rest of the crew since that date.

With Lt. Dallas L. Sprinkle (POW/Injured) were Lts. Robert E. Neutze Jr. (KIA), Joseph R. Smith Jr. (KIA), and Robert E. Schuyler (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles Radu (KIA), Charles Winn (POW/Burned), Charles E. Springs (KIA), Stanley Murach Jr. (KIA), Jeane M. Hicks (POW), and

Jack Freeman (POW).

The 506th sustained two other casualties on this raid. Lt. Stockton R. Bartol was flying as copilot for John M. McCaslin. In a letter, McCaslin reported the following:

*66th Army Troop*  
I believe that the 506th was leading the 44th and the 44th was leading the 2nd Air Division. Bartol and I were flying on Colonel John Gibson's left wing and the Deputy Commander, Lt. Colonel Robert Lehnhausen, was on Colonel Gibson's right wing.

The plane we were flying was Galavantin Gal. It had a bottle of "Old Crow" painted on the other side.

My crew had not been together very long. We were, including myself, former members of other crews. The navigator was Al Williams and the bombardier was Bob Gutknecht. I think some of the gunners came from Bill Duffy's crew. Possibly they included Dick Hershey, John Stewart, and Bill Drumel.

Shortly before reaching the target area we were raked pretty severely with head-on attacks by Me-109's. We took a hit in the leading edge of the left wing between the two engines which, unaccountably, seemed to do no serious damage.

Hannover, I believe, was our secondary target. I think this was the reason for the unusually long bomb run (straight and level for about 4 minutes); and hence the God-awful flak. I don't recall how many planes we lost, but I do know it was one of our bad days.

Because we were on the Colonel's left wing, I had to fly cross-cockpit while in formation. Bartol, in the right seat, could more easily keep us in tight and hence flew the bomb run. He was at the controls when he was hit.

Lt. Bartol was killed when some flak came through the windshield and hit him in the head. Our plane, though considerably riddled, did not suffer any extensive functional damage, and I had no undue difficulty in flying it back to England.

Despite my proximity to him, I wasn't even scratched, nor was anybody else on the crew. This happened almost exactly at bombs away. Colonel Gibson then took evasive

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4/8

action, but I did not stay with him due to the commotion in my plane. It was several minutes before I located the Colonel and found a place in the formation.

Bartol had flown quite a number of missions with another pilot. Shortly before he was killed I had checked him out in the left seat and he was in line to get a crew of his own.

Bartol's father, for more than twenty years after the war, came annually to his son's grave in the American Military Cemetery in Cambridge.

Robert Struble reports that he was with Lt. McCaslin on this day. He recalls:

Flak was so heavy we could not see our wing man on the bomb run. We took a burst in front of the cockpit dead even. One large piece of shrapnel went thru the cockpit safety glass, thru Bartol's flak helmet, thru his head, thru the armor plate to his rear and hit the radio operator on the face which drew blood.

We lost #3 and #4 engines on the way back. At the base we cranked and pushed the wheels down. McCaslin sideslipped the ship in on the north/south runway for as beautiful a landing as I can remember.

After burying Bartol in Cambridge, we went on a rest leave to Southpool, England for a week.

Glenn Hall also was aboard this ship on April 8th. He recalls:

We not only had a bomb sight for Robert Gutknecht, our bombardier, but also we had a nose gunner who was an engineer.

On the bomb run our tail gunner, Trinidad Gutierrez was letting us know as each plane was shot down. As I remember it, we had dropped our bombs before Bartol was hit. He was wearing a flak vest and flak helmet. He was hit in the forehead just below the helmet. He was flying the plane when he was hit. Gutknecht acted as copilot until we were ready to land and then I sat in the right seat and the nose gunner took over as engineer. Two weeks later that plane had armor glass, but it was too late for Bartol.

The remaining man that was lost by the 506th on this day was Gerald G. Gille. He was flying with the 67th Squadron when he was wounded while flying as navigator for the George J. Thom crew. Gerald became a prisoner of war.

According to Arthur Stanton, Jack Wind took his crew on this April 8th raid flying their first mission. They were flying in *Southern Comfort* and:

A La "12 O'clock High" the 44th lost 11 A/C in one enemy aircraft pass at our formation over Brunswick. They came out of the sun, wing tip to wing tip. We lost an engine over the target. Then on the way home, we got hell shot out of us by flak over Hannover. We had a flat tire on landing and ran off the runway to the left. The nose wheel collapsed when we hit the dirt. The next day they found an unexploded 20-mm shell in the gas tank. Some beginning!

Jack Wind recalls:

After I had flown my first mission with Sid Paul my crew was waiting to hear what combat was all about. Since the mission had been a milk run, I reported with, "Hey guys, nothing to it. We just flew there, dropped bombs and came home." Two days later I took my crew on their first mission. Brunswick!

Our position was lead of the "coffin corner" element of the lead squadron. Everything was fine till the bomb run. Our fighter cover had pulled out and their relief was coming up behind us.

Suddenly I saw a trail of smoke way out in front of us. Then there was what appeared to be a "swarm of blackbirds" coming at us head-on. Despite our training to call out fighters by clock position, my crew said I screamed, "Fighters, Fighters, Fighters." Those fighters went through us with their cannons blazing "like crazy".

One fighter picked us out and passed close to our left wing. I don't know if it was an Fw-190 or an Me-109, but the top turret gunner, Lightcap, said later that he was blond with a mustache.

We took six 20-mm hits on the left side. Luckily they were armor-piercing shells. There were two hits in the gas tank between the #2 engine and the fuselage. The #2



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engine took a hit that shattered a rocker arm box and caused a fire as oil poured onto the exhaust. We had to feather that engine. One hit us between the #2 and #1 engine and then continued into the wheel. The last hit was through the tail.

I managed to pull up on the leader's wing in time to drop bombs. After our turn from the target we could see chutes everywhere below us.

It was not over yet. We were flying over solid clouds and suddenly were caught in a solid box barrage over Hannover. Flak was everywhere. Fortunately, Ed. Waldo was wearing a flak vest when the piece of shrapnel came through the windshield. I caught a "dollar's worth" of plexiglass in the eyebrows, eyelids and eyes. At that point, the whole world turned "blood red". When I could see again, we were clear of the flak.

However, it still wasn't over! As we were coming in to land and I was turning into the final approach, the plane ahead of us ground looped blocking the runway.

I turned to make the cross runway as the engineer called out that the #3 engine redlined. The copilot feathered it. Then it was the #4 engine that redlined and Waldo and I were struggling with the controls to get us down. When the wheels struck the runway we were surprised to hear what sounded like a million tin cans. We didn't know that our left tire was shot out. Suddenly we ground looped in the grass.

They later counted 78 flak holes in the ship. Included were holes in both the #3 and #4 oil tanks. We had lost all of our oil while coming home. That was the end of a very close first mission for my crew. This was no milk run.

That may have been the end of the mission for his crew, but Jack Wind remembers it was not for him:

After the debriefing, Dr. Allison, the Flight Surgeon, took me to his clinic and bandaged one eye. He then sent me by ambulance to a hospital which was located not far from Shipdham. (Wymondham)

About 7 P.M., that evening, a doctor put me in a dentist chair and began removing the glass from my face and eyes.

All during this procedure he was showing and lecturing another doctor on his technique. This went on until midnight. I was relieved when it was over and I found out that there was nothing serious. There were six scratches in one eye and seven in the other. I left there with a bandage on one eye.

They assigned me to a ward and sent me out in a blackout to find it. The ward was in a Quonset hut that contained about forty beds. Its only occupant was a tough nurse. She took my papers, tossed me a pair of pajamas, told me to take a shower, and lock my clothes in a locker. After that she would assign me a bed.

At that point in time I had been up over twenty-four hours. I had flown a tough mission and spent about five hours in a dentist chair. I was dead on my feet.

I finished my shower and tried to put on the pajamas. I am 6 feet tall and the pajamas were cut for a midget. That didn't provide for much coverage. Nonetheless, I walked into her office and asked if she expected me to wear these.

She sat there with her feet on the desk and a cigarette dangling in her mouth. Her response was, "Go to the storage room and find a pair that suits you." Well you are right, I tore that storage room apart until I found a pair.

I returned to the nurse who took me into the ward of forty empty beds and she took five minutes deciding which one I could have. It was now 1 A.M. and I immediately fell dead asleep.

This lasted until 6:30 A.M. when I was rudely shaken and informed that the bed must be made by 7:00 A.M. After considerable cussing on my part and many threats, I stepped over to the next bed and fell into it. I got one more hour of sleep before I was again shaken and presented with my breakfast--cold white mush and G.I. coffee. Once again there was a period of cussing.

At 10:30 A.M. I woke up, shaved and dressed. Since I was not a bed patient, I wore my flight clothes which consisted of G.I. winter pants, shirt, and flight jacket. I was also told that with the non-bed patient label I had to eat in the mess hall.

When I found the hall I was told that I should have brought my mess gear. I then informed them in no uncertain blue language that I was an Air Force Officer and that I didn't have a mess kit. They found me the top of a mess kit and a spoon. Before being given something to eat, I was admonished that I had to turn in the mess gear when I left the hospital.

After "dinner" I looked for a lounge or a place to kill time. Since I was not a bed patient, I couldn't hit the sack until after 7:00 P.M. There were a few wooden chairs in the ward, but nothing to read. My next best thought was, "Where is the Officers Club." Upon arrival, I was informed that only persons in "Class A" uniforms were admitted. They meant it and I spent the rest of the day looking for something to do.

The next day the bandage was removed and I was told that everything was fine. They were going to start processing the paper work to return me to duty. This procedure usually took two or three weeks and therefore I would be around for a while. Now that word really posed a problem for me. No change of clothes, nothing to do, and I can't get a drink.

My problem was solved the next day when a couple of my crew, Mazza and Stanton, came to check on me in a base ambulance. After dinner I returned to the ward to pick up my shaving gear in order to return to the 44th with my crew members. Yep, my sweet nurse informed me that I was not allowed to leave the hospital without discharge papers. I said bye-bye baby and was gone.

Sidney Paul also recalls this mission:

I believe that I was in the low element. Before the IP, oil pressure sank on #3, and I feathered and turned left to find some "little friends". I hoped for a quiet exit to the Channel. A beautiful silver aircraft with black crosses on it zipped by, heading upstream, so I made a 360 degree turn instead of a 180. I joined a following B-24 unit. We went all the way together and bombed with them. We parted company at the Channel, or near it, and a P-47 buzzed our bird bent on leading us to an emergency field. Nothing doing, we headed for home and landed at Shipdham. McAtee greeted me outside the briefing room, shook my hand and with tears in his eyes said, "I am glad to see you Paul." Fat, dumb, and happy, I replied, "Oh it was

nothing!" Soon enough I discovered that "Mac." wasn't referring to my three engine derring-do. The 44th had caught hell and had suffered losses. In retrospect, I believe that the outfit I joined for the ride wasn't even scratched.

Lt. Money went to Langenhagen Airdrome and hit a target of opportunity on April 8th, 1944.

Raymond McCormick recalls that he went on the first combat mission that Colonel Gibson was on. He was probably with Mendenhall. This operation he considered as the worst that he was on.

The April 8th mission was the 26th for Glenn Hall.:

I expected to have been only required to put in 25. Actually I completed 28 before I was relieved. Robert Gutknecht talked Danny Wozniak and me into signing up for a second tour. We came home on the *Ille de France* and then went back to England on the *Queen Elizabeth*. We were home on D-Day, June 6, 1944. I flew fifteen missions on my second tour. We flew a B-24 to Iceland, Greenland, and on to the U.S. after VE day.

I don't remember which mission it was, but one time the lead navigator goofed and gave us only five minutes to open bomb bay doors. Our plane and seven to nine others dropped bombs through the doors. Coming back we tried to kick the doors off and ruptured a hydraulic line, losing pressure. The copilot pumped the flaps down and I cranked the landing gear down and we landed without incident.

Some of the pilots that I flew with were Laudig, Knight, Cardenas, Blow, McCaslin, Kimball, Waters, and Thorne. Our crew was going to fly with Michaels, but he was transferred out of the Group.

Deno Tulini was with Jack Wind that day. He remembers they were flying in Schliesman's *The Consolidated Mess*. He went on with his memories:

After they had the aircraft flying once again, Mendenhall took it up. He had a runaway prop and he went into a spin. I can still see it. He did manage to pull it out and land safely.

Henry Siteman wrote in his diary for April 8th-10th:

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I went on a pass to see Ronnie. When I returned, eleven men from our barracks, including Jean Hicks, our tail gunner, were shot down over Germany. Jean Hicks went down on Lt. Dallas Sprinkle's crew.

Deno Tulini remembers:

When I first joined the 506th I shared a bunk with a mechanic. When he got in from working all night, I would jump out and he would get in. In about two weeks time there were suddenly a lot of beds available.

It was not long after this that I noticed something different at mail call. The clerk had to go through a lot of letters addressed to individuals that were missing in action before they could find mail for those who were there.

This is probably one of the times that Deno returned from a mission so exhausted:

I would throw my body on my bunk and before it stopped shaking I was out like a light.

There was no doubt that the 506th had suffered the worst casualty loss in its history. The Group as a whole had lost eleven planes on Sortie #211.

Jack Winn remembers:

We got the boys out of the aircraft pretty early. Old Harry and I sat around trying to figure out who was going to go first. We got out one right behind the other. At that time we were only at about 2,000 feet.

When I hit the ground I was in a plowed field. The first thing I saw was a farmer coming out of the house with a double bitted ax. He was headed toward me in a hurry. Boy, I stripped off that chute and I went the other way. There were some woods not too far away and I headed for them. The farmer didn't follow me! He wasn't chasing me! He took one swipe at the parachute shroud lines, cut them, picked up that chute and went back into the house. By the time I got to the woods I met some of their home guard standing there waiting for me.

They took me into a little town and put me in a garage and locked the door. They didn't mistreat me in any way.

They kept me there that night. The next day they put me on a train and took me to Frankfurt. I got together with McEver on the train. In Frankfurt they kept us in a little 6 X 8 foot cell for two or three days for interrogation.

The interrogation wasn't too rough. They started out with the usual gentle approach of wanting to know all about you, where you trained, and what you did. By the time you finished giving them your name, rank, and serial number they would come back after something else. Sometimes they would put you in solitary for a while for not answering their questions. They got tired of it after a while. I guess they figured that a little Second Lt. didn't know anything anyhow. By the time we got to the POW camp they knew quite a bit about us. Even information about my wife, Martha, and my parent's names. (I didn't know at that time how much they knew, but when I left the POW camp, I went through the office and found my card. It was all there.)

Then they threw us into solitary for several days. After that they took us on a sort of troop train made up of cattle cars. They were going to move us to Barth, the home of Stalag Luft 1.

We were caught in an air raid. Boy, those B-17's and B-24's were dropping those little old pills all around us, but they did not actually hit our train. We were locked up in those cattle cars during the whole attack. Then they took us on up to Barth.

After she received word that her husband was down, Jack Winn's wife, Martha, wrote to the next of kin of Jack's crewmen. She had varied responses including an inquiry about what happened to the money that one of the downed air men was supposed to have accumulated. She replied, "I don't know. Money they had one night could all be gone in the next card game." Jack chimed in with, "Boy, I didn't have any! I was in a card game the night before we went down and lost it all."

Martha also wrote a letter to Gerald Westcott. They knew Westcott from the days of training back in the States. She asked if Westcott knew anything about what happened to Jack. Westcott wrote a letter to the next of kin of each of Jack's crewmen. Each letter conveyed the same information. This way Westcott hoped to get as much information through the

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censors as possible. These letters were written prior to June 29th when Westcott was killed in action.

Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife on this day:

I saw Charley Loftus at noon today. He is now stationed in northern Ireland. This Wed. he is going to marry an English girl. I am going to try to attend, but I don't know if I can. It is taking place in a restricted area.

My suspicions were correct; I couldn't get a pass to go into the restricted area. Charley had been seeing Doreen for quite some time. She was with the British Coastal Defense Forces. She worked on an anti-aircraft gun crew. They were still together when Charley died in 1987. In 1988 Norm received a telephone call from Doreen in London. She had gone home for a brief visit.

As a final note for April the 8th, Will Lundy reported that Captain Frank Slough, one of the original 506th pilots, transferred from the 67th Squadron into 44th Group Headquarters.

It was about this time that Deno Tulini remembers that there was a change in wake up procedure:

When we first got over there, some guy would wake us up for missions. He would tiptoe into the barracks and personally gently shake every one of us to tell us we were scheduled to fly. It was too hard to get up that way. I told him to wake us up real loud.

From then on it was a very loud door slam followed by a loud bellow, "YO-HO YO-HO, Men, You've had it again, Wind's crew, and etc. He was a real nice guy, but just had too many rough missions and couldn't go anymore. (Note: The CQ that Tulini remembers was probably Myron Smith who was removed from combat status after the February 13 raid on Pas De Calais when there were casualties aboard the ship.)

Will Lundy's writings reveal, "Tutow Airdrome, Germany, was the scheduled target for April 9th. Very unfavorable weather confronted the formation so a recall was issued. Some of the planes dropped their bombs before the recall was issued. The results were believed to have been good as fires were seen burning even though observations were hampered by poor weather conditions. Very heavy flak and enemy aircraft

attacks were experienced by the Group. It is estimated that 15-to-25 enemy aircraft were encountered. Photographs showed many fires and there was a good concentration in the installation, barracks and minor workshops."

Ray Marner wrote on April 10th

The boys going to North Pinkingham left today. We got men in from the other squadrons on the field. I had four stitches put in my hand because of a K-ration can cut. Capt. Linck is Executive Officer now. Welford is 1st Sgt.

Nick Garza was one of the ordnance personnel that was transferred. He went to join the 856th Squadron, 492nd Bomb Group.

For April 10th, Will Lundy reported, "No mission was scheduled for today. S/Sgt. Chamberlain, who completed an operational tour, transferred in grade to the 12th RCD. (Note: Chamberlain was a former combat crewman from the 506th.) 51 enlisted men transferred in grade to the 506th Squadron."

On the April 11th Ray Marner recorded:

Lt. Money's crew went down today. Herby Hill, Blake and others were along. The ship blew up. We've lost 10 crews in three weeks now. That is more than we lost in one year of operations.

Will Lundy's writings show, "For the third straight time fierce opposition from the air and from the ground was experienced by the 44th Group on a mission to a Junker's aircraft assembly plant in Bernberg, Germany."

Lt. James Clements was on the Bernberg attack. He was flying A/C #642, N. Spencer Hunn of the 66th Squadron was aboard as Command Pilot. They carried 234 fragmentation bombs. They observed 21 aircraft on the field. His notes show:

I flew lead of the 14th Combat Wing. The target was the airdrome. It was hit visually with excellent results through moderate accurate flak. We were intercepted by 20-to-30 enemy aircraft.

In a letter to Will Lundy, Sgt. Wallace Kirschner, left waist



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gunner, reported:

We were carrying incendiary bombs. Near the target we were getting ready for the bomb run and under a barrage of flak. The bomb bay doors would not open as the tracks were frozen tight. I informed Lt. Money, our pilot, that I could not break the ice. We then received a direct hit in the bomb bay.

Sgt. Roop, tail gunner, saw that Sgt. Young's hands were badly burned, took his own parachute and placed it on Sgt. Young and helped him get through the rear camera hatch door. This resulted in Sgt. Roop being without a parachute of his own. I followed Young out the rear hatch, after removing my oxygen mask because I couldn't get the hose to release from the regulator. With the mask removed, I got 3rd degree burns on my face and right hand due to the fire all around me.

I was picked up by German soldiers upon landing and was taken to an aid station in Frankfurt. They had converted an Agricultural School into a hospital. The doctors and aides were a wonderful group of men. They were all part of the Dunkirk Evacuation Force that had been captured.

Then I was sent to Bad Soden for work on my eyes. Even the doctors there were also from Dunkirk. I was later repatriated and returned to the States on February 21, 1945.

LUNDY

Lt. Money told ~~Kirchner~~ Kirchner, "When the fire erupted in the bomb bay it quickly spread forward, filling the cabin with fire and smoke. When I gave the bail out signal, the copilot, Robert Stamos, was already dead from flak wounds. I then contemplated my own escape. There was absolutely no way I could get back to the bomb bay, and the top hatch itself was burning. So it would have to be one of the windows. While still trying to maintain some control of the craft, I got my feet up, braced my back, and succeeded in kicking out the copilot's side window.

"Then I managed to get over Stamos, got hold of his wheel and continued to hold the plane under control as I worked myself out that window. Soon I was entirely outside the ship, but still holding on to the wheel as I needed to tilt the plane right wing high as that #3 prop was still churning a very short distance behind me.

"Then I let go and immediately got clipped on my head by a tip of one of the propeller blades that knocked me out. The cold air brought me to my senses before I hit the ground and I got my chute open in time. On the ground I found I was not seriously injured and soon was taken prisoner."

With Lt. John D. Money (POW) were Lts. Robert G. Stamos (KIA), and Harold J. Wheatly (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Foster A. Blake (KIA), Andrew C. Graff (KIA), Edward A. Wernicki (KIA), Herbert S. Hill Jr. (KIA), Donald L. Young (POW/Burned), Wallace E. Kirschner (POW/Repatriated), and Eugene W. N. Roop (KIA).

Henry Siteman wrote on April 11th:

Just hanging around to get paid and may go on pass again tonight. We are on stand down because of the loss of Hicks, and Lt. Bearden's condition; his nerves are shot because of that big loss on the 8th.

On April 12th Will Lundy reported, "Six aircraft from each of the squadrons took off at 0950 hours to attack Zwickau and/or Schweinfurt, Germany, but the mission was recalled due to the extremely adverse weather conditions. All planes returned to the base at 1630 hours after experiencing meager to moderate, accurate to inaccurate, flak and several enemy aircraft attacks."

Siteman wrote on April 12th:

I got up at noon so half the day is gone. We are back to operational status since Lt. Hawkins can fly again. I am up as a spare for tomorrow so things should start happening again soon. (Note: Siteman indicated that he was listed as a spare also on the 13rd and 14th.)

On April 12th Norm Klefer wrote to his wife:

I am afraid Mrs. Young (wife of our former bombardier) is due for a big disappointment. Joe gave up his desk job and is flying combat again. Don't mention this in your letters to her since Joe may not have told her. He is concerned that she will start worrying again.

Will Lundy wrote for April 13th, "The Group put up 17 ships to attack the fighter production plant at Lechfeld, Germany. The twin engine fighter plant and the adjoining German

airfield were hit visually with good results. Only 14 of our ships hit the target which was deep in the southern part of Germany, near the Swiss border. Generally, weak fighter opposition was encountered and there was moderate and accurate flak."

It was about mid-month that Colonel Dent, of the 95th Combat Wing, passed the word that Dave McCash was to complete his tour so that he could report to the 95th. As a Lead Navigator, Dave's missions were few and far between. Now it appeared that they would be more frequent.

Ray Marner wrote on April 15th:

Our planes have gone on a few raids. No losses, thank God. I have been working day and night for a week. I feel plenty beat up.

Ray was probably working on processing the belongings of the crews that were missing in action. In a recent conversation Ray said:

At one time I was given a barracks building and the whole end was filled with the their baggage. I had to go through it all.

Deno Tulini also recalls those days:

I remember the combat men rushing back to the barracks to get to the bunks of the men that went down before the supply people could get there. When I first got there, some guy asked me if he could have my tools and stuff, not if I went down, but when I went down.

I told one guy that before he goes through my stuff he had better be sure that I wasn't coming back.

On April 15th and 16th Henry Siteman reported:

We test hopped two planes so we got the best one of the two to continue with our missions. Today, Sunday, was a stand down so no mission was flown. We'll be up tomorrow

Ray Marner reported on April 16th:

A kid came in today looking for his brother. He didn't know he had gone down a week ago. His name was Hickman.

*al N. DAMBACHER, recently transferred to 67<sup>th</sup> Sq. flew his 1st mission with Lt MUELLER'S CREW - 27<sup>th</sup> mission - 25 July 44 with*

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Alfred Klein came in the barracks today. He went down in France and got back by the underground. (Note: Klein was one of the original 506th combat men on Bunker's crew. He was shot down at Escalles-Sur-Buchy while flying with the 68th Squadron on January 21, 1944. He evaded capture and stayed with the French underground who helped him to escape through Spain.)

On April 16th the author wrote to his wife:

You should have been here this afternoon. One of the squadrons had the orphan that they are sponsoring here for the day. She is a little girl about five years old. She wore a pink dress and white shoes with anklets.

When I first saw her she looked scared to death. That was at dinner time in combat mess. Around three o'clock she was smiling and playing with the ducks in front of the Red Cross Club.

It will take her six months to eat all the candy, gum, cookies and fruit juice that the boys heaped on her. Where did they get these things? They came out of their weekly rations.

It is a good deal different than the war orphans that I saw in Sicily and Italy. Down there the clothing was army things cut down to fit. When it was time to eat they would run up to us with their tin cans. They didn't want candy! Their bodies needed food. They couldn't talk to us to tell us what they wanted. Our languages were different. What did they want? A place to sleep, clothes to cover their bodies and food.

On April 17th Ray Warner wrote:

Captain Clements and crew are going home for a 30-day furlough.

Soon after completing its first tour, the Clements crew was returned to the States under the rest, recovery, and return leave policy. They were the first complete crew from the Squadron to return to the States with the understanding that they would come back to England and fly a second combat tour. Clements recalls:

It was a slow boat over and back. I had the same crew for both tours with the exception of the copilot. Gail Larsen

was our first copilot and went over with us. Roy Owen flew most of the missions with us and Richard Pedersen some and then came back to the States with us.

Siteman stated in his diary:

Lt. Hawkins didn't care for either ship that we tested yesterday, so we tried another one today. We think perhaps, we will keep this one as there are no new ones available. It is #030 (Note: the call letter on this aircraft was Bar S. There is no indication of a name.)

On April 18th Will Lundy reported, "Brandenburg Airdrome, 35 miles south of Berlin, was the intended target today. However, cloud covered at this target and instead, Cuxhaven, Germany, was hit visually with very poor results. The Group took off at 1000 hours. They bombed targets of opportunity with 21 planes at Rathenow and Cuxhaven. Moderate flak and weak fighter opposition was encountered. Bombing results were very good at both targets".

Jack Wind made the mission to Berlin. His notes show that they ran into clouds near the target. The formation broke up. He came home with a strange group. Deno Tulini's notes indicate that he was probably with Jack.

Notes maintained by Garnet Stoltenburg indicate that he was on this raid, also probably with Jack Wind. They indicate that the mission was eight hours long and they carried fifty-two 100-pound incendiary bombs. They dropped on a target of opportunity just to get rid of the bombs. The results were fair.

Henry Siteman wrote on April 18th:

I was to go to Berlin today (Brandenburg Airdrome), but had to come back to base (abort) due to a gas leak in the bomb bay. The target was to be the underground railroad station in Berlin proper. The boys that did go missed the target due to bad visibility. They bombed any good target of opportunity. (Note: Henry was probably with Hawkins.)

On April 19th Will Lundy's works show, "The Group put up 27 aircraft to attack an airfield at Gutersloh, Germany. This town is about 28 miles east of Munster and the field is about 3-1/2 miles NE of the town. Bombing results were good. Flak and antiaircraft fire was weak and ineffective. Few enemy aircraft were seen. All in all, it was a milk run. Twelve

enemy aircraft were over England last night, but little damage was done."

Jack Wind was on the Gutersloh raid. His notes show it was on the far side of the Ruhr Valley. Garnet Stoltenburg was probably with Jack Wind. They were out for seven hours and carried twelve 500-pound fragmentation bombs. The target was an airdrome which was protected by moderate, inaccurate flak. The results were fair. Another probable member of that crew was Deno Tulini.

The Henry Siteman's diary entry for the April 19th reads:

I was up at 0245 to be briefed for a mission at 0600 hours. We went to an airfield a little east of Munster (Gutersloh). It was about a seven-hour trip and very successful. We hit the hangars and a number of barracks and tents. Flak was not heavy and no fighters at all. We saw other airfields that also caught hell by other groups. They won't be flying ships from that field for quite some time to come. I am now well on my way to a very successful tour. (Note: Henry was probably with Hawkins.)

On April 19th Dave McCash went to Gutersloh A/D. It is not known who he was with.

Jack Wind went on a mission to the Calais area on April 20th. His notes show that they returned with their bombs. Also, that Charlie Eccleston is restricted for missing a mission. Jack also recalls:

This was supposed to have been a milk run. We caught a little flak and suddenly the engineer, Hal Lightcap, called out, "The blanketyblank Germans put a hole in my turret". When we landed I climbed up to look at the turret. I could see where the piece of shrapnel had hit metal inside the plane. When I lined up the hole with where the projectile had struck inside the plane, I discovered that it had to have gone through Lightcap before it hit inside the plane. I asked Lightcap to get in the turret and show me how he had avoided being hit. With a sheepish grin he said, "Well skipper, when there is flak I put my head between my knees like this." Sure enough, in that position the missile had missed his back by inches.

Garnet Stoltenburg was probably with Jack Wind on this day. His notes reveal that they were out for 4 hours and carried

eight 1,000-pound bombs. The target was a supply depot. The flak was moderate, but accurate with their ship being hit twice. The results were nil. It is likely that Deno Tulini was with Jack and Garnet.

The Henry Siteman diary indicates for April 20th:

We left at 1600 hours for a mission over Pas de Calais, France. It was only a short one, but plenty rough. Jerry followed the planes back and shot up some of the barracks (at other bases). They did little damage, but scared the hell out of everyone. I hit the hay about 2350 hours and at 12 midnight was up again. I was flying a mission on the Dines crew.

On April 20 Dave McCash went to Marquise/Mimoyecques. It is not known who he went with. Also, Deno Tulini was on a raid on this day, but there is no indication of who he was with.

This Pas de Calais raid was covered by Will Lundy, "A short, late mission to the now famous Pas de Calais area, Marquise/Mimoyecques being the intended target. The aircraft were recalled before bombs were dropped. The Group dispatched 26 aircraft. Flak ranged from moderate and inaccurate to moderate accurate, with several planes experiencing minor damage. In the target area 6/10 to 7/10ths cumulus clouds at 7,000 feet obscured the target for bombing. The German Air Force sent approximately 40 aircraft over England. Our field was bombed and strafed, with no casualties and only minor damage. Effective immediately, 30 missions are required to earn the Legion of Merit, but more than this number is desired if possible."

*DINES in FILM 67<sup>th</sup> SQ - Flew as Pilot Fred Stone - CP*  
On April 21st Jack Wind reported:

There was no mission. We climbed to 18,000 thru clouds, made con trails, but couldn't form the Group. We let down thru fog and logged 4 hours.

This was the first time out for Merritt Derr. He was probably with Fred Stone. His record also shows that they were recalled. Merritt does not remember if Emery Lundy was with them. Emery, their bombardier, had been given a crash course in navigation. He was later to fly in that capacity with Walsh.

On April 21 Ray Warner recorded:

Last night we had an air raid. One of the barracks was strafed by the "Jerries". Some bombs were dropped too, but luckily no one was hit.

Our planes went out, but were recalled. A couple collided and crashed. Only a few men got out. (Note: Will Lundy's writings show that there was only one 44th aircraft and it belonged to the 68th Squadron. His records show that there is some confusion over whether this aircraft went down as a result of collision with a B-17 or as a result of icing conditions. There were two survivors.)

On April 22 Jack Wind went to Hamm, Germany:

*HAVEN \* DELGRANDE, PILOTS  
ICED UP  
LOST CONTACT  
HOVEN'S*

It was an afternoon mission. We came back after dark with German night fighters following us home.

Deno Tulini's record shows he probably was with Jack. Garnet Stoltenburg was another of Jack Wind's crew. His notes show:

The mission was seven hours and we were carrying twenty-eight 100-pound incendiaries. The target was the rail lines leading into the Ruhr. Flak was heavy and accurate with our ship being hit several times. The results were very good.

The Merritt Derr record shows that he was on this raid. He probably was with Fred Stone. Merritt recalls: Q-496

The mission was unique in that takeoff was late in the afternoon and we returned to Shipdham after dark. It was too early in my tour to judge the intensity of flak, but I thought it was accurate. I was fascinated by the fact I could see the orange flame inside the octopus-shaped black smoke cloud as the shells exploded outside our aircraft.

We could see the German fighters taking off from their airfields near the coast as we approached the European coast line at dusk on our return to England. They followed us back to Shipdham where we landed at night.

Another member of the Fred Stone crew was Robert Foust. His records show that this was his first mission.

Also, this was probably the first mission for the Westcott crew. Westcott had flown a few missions prior to this to get some experience. On this day, both Fred DuBose and "Tex" (Walter) Lawrence were with Westcott. Walter Lawrence



22 April

remembers it was a late mission and we lost our #3 engine. We had to crank down the landing gear.

Fred DuBose recalls:

With the exception of Berlin, the flak was the most accurate and heaviest that I saw in combat. At about the time we left the target we lost our #3 engine. This caused us to lag behind the rest of the formation. We could see the fireworks in the dark as some of the formations ahead of us crossed the coast line. We had no hydraulic power so Eddy (Thompson) and "Tex" (Lawrence) cranked down the landing gear. When we hit the runway, someone in the rear hooked a parachute to the gun mounts and pulled the rip cord to help slow us down. We managed to stop short of the wrong end of the runway.

The crew chief told us the next day that when he attached the sling to the propeller and lifted, it caused the entire assembly to come loose. He couldn't understand why the prop didn't fall off in flight or on landing.

Henry Siteman's diary read:

The marshalling yards in Hamm, Germany, was the target. Take off was at 1600 hours; with "Jerry" on our tail at 2200 hours. We landed after dark with "Jerry" all over our field. The 8th Air Force lost two planes over Europe and 10 more over England. To me, the mission was more of a trap to get "Jerry" in England. Our target was destroyed. Our bomb load was twelve 500-pound bombs. I flew with Dines. Hit the hay at 2400 hours.

Ralph Golubock recalls a mission that I was not on. The ships came back at night. There was a party in the Combat Officers Club and there many English ladies there.

When the crews started returning and we heard anti-aircraft guns, as well as many other guns firing, we knew that something was badly amiss. When we went outside to see what was going on we realized that there was hell in the air. We saw searchlights, flak bursts and aircraft burning. It was a horrible sight. I was lucky that our crew did not make that mission. The English ladies left early.

Dave McCash's big day came on this raid on Hamm. He flew with Robert Johnson. He remembers:

We took off late in the day. I went as pilotage navigator in the nose turret with a lap full of maps. Because of such a late takeoff we didn't hit the target until a little before sundown. It was dark before we crossed the English coast on the way home.

German intruders came right back with us. British radar couldn't pick them out of our formations. As we got in the landing pattern we heard radio reports from other groups about being attacked as they lowered their landing gear. Hearing these reports had me really sweating our landing. You know the old story, the last one is when you get hit. Well we slipped in and I got out and kissed the ground.

It was Saturday night and happened to be the night for a dance at the Club. That seemed to be a great way to celebrate the occasion so I was drinking anything I could get my hands on. That included Mild and Bitter, spiked with grain alcohol, courtesy of the Flight Surgeon; Vat 69 from Robert Johnson and some great ale from the 508th Adjutant who also helped me find the bunk area.

*DINES IN 42-110030 Bennett as C-P.*

On April 22nd Will Lundy reported, "The Group sent 27 planes to the marshaling yards at Hamm, Germany. Enemy aircraft were few. Flak was moderate, but rather inaccurate. This target was selected as this is the busiest and largest marshaling yard dealing with general traffic in Germany. On return to England, other groups experienced German aircraft following them in the evening dusk, hindering their landing. The enemy aircraft were difficult to spot and several B-24's were shot down by the Germans. Possibly, some of our losses were due to the flak that was being temporarily thrown up at the intruders. This is the first time that such a situation has occurred, with our planes returning near dusk and having to turn on their landing lights. It was not done again. Approximately 20 enemy aircraft were involved, making attacks lasting about 45 minutes. Seven B-24's were shot down, eight sustained minor damages, and two had major damage. No 44th craft was involved."

On that same day Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes went out, but got back after dark. "Jerry" followed them in and attacked while we were landing. They shot some down over Hardwick.

Henry Siteman wrote on April 23rd:

They got us up at 0300 hours with only three hours of sleep. This mission was to be a long one, but it was scrubbed ten minutes before takeoff. I was glad of that as I was plenty tired. I hit the hay for the rest of the day. I will be up for #7 tomorrow.

On the same day, Will Lundy reported, "Ground training for the combat crews was conducted after the intended mission to Zwickau. This evening officers who had eaten the evening meal at the Combat Officers Club began suffering what seemed to be ptomaine poisoning."

On The next day, April the 24th, Will Lundy wrote, "Leipheim was to be the target today for the 44th Group, but all parts pertaining to the 44th were scrubbed. A large number of combat officers were too ill."

Henry Siteman briefly wrote:

Nothing doing as our pilot is grounded again and the crew that we have been flying with (Dines) has a crew of his own now.

The Will Lundy writings reveal for April 25th, "Ptomaine poisoning again kept the 44th grounded and Lt. Rider, Mess Officer, was presented with the Iron Cross--an act of comedy and sarcasm."

Will Lundy's material shows the return of the 44th to combat on April 26th when, "The 67th led 27 ships of the Group on an attack at Gutersloh, Germany, with Lt. Colonel Hodge as Command Pilot. The target was covered with 10/10 clouds and bombs were not released. Flak was very inaccurate, barrage-type. Very few enemy aircraft were seen. Fighter support was excellent."

Flying that day were Lts. Saul Fineman, (Deputy Lead), Donald H. Dines, John M. McCaslin, Sidney W. Paul, Gerald S. Westcott, Howard K. Landahl, Bernie L. Scudday, and Max D. Mendenhall.

With Lt. Fineman were Lts. Alfred L. Lincoln, Harold K. Johnson, and Claron E. Markham. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Thomas E. Chocklett, Charles G. Horton, Floyd E. Stallsworth, John J. De Marinis, Romeo F. Di Cicco, Alfonse A. Truono, and Charles E. Reed. Capt. Davido was also aboard as Command Pilot.

With Lt. Dines were Lts. James Tucker, John A. Hess, and Alfred R. Wilson. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Santo Romeo, Raymond Khoury, Leon M. Whiteside, Ivan C. Millican, Thomas J. Reeves, and Karl K. Breakey.

A-95  
With Lt. McCaslin were Lts. Charles R. Conner, Joe Bearden, and Robert E. Gutknecht. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Maurice G. Hall, Richard Hershey, William E. Drumel, William D. Scott, John H. Stewart, and Dale W. Graef.

With Lt. Paul were Lts. Ralph E. Van Ess, Robert F. Westcott, and William D. Fitzsimons. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Loyd A. Smith, John W. Racer, Stephen Z. Jones, Jack L. Killian, William A. Greenlee, and George N. Smith.

With Lt. Westcott were Lts. Robert H. Reeves, Thomas L. Hine, and Arthur C. Toepel. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Edward J. Thompson, Fred A. DuBose, Frank Artym, Joseph I. Morris, Walter V. Lawrence, and Joseph A. Gorski.

With Lt. Landahl were Lts. Randolph K. Smith, Nels W. Pedersen, and Thomas C. Conzoner. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert L. Staples, Walter K. Yount, Underwood Coleman, Charles F. Schiess, Jack Davis, and Frank Rinaldo.

With Lt. Scudday were Lts. John A. Farrell, Ben K. Mazza, and Paul Richardson. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph E. Wycheck, Anthony J. Ventura, Coyl J. Acuff, Carl W. Tepe, Robert P. Ries, and Lester D. Warren.

With Lt. Mendenhall were Lts. Phillip J. Quirk, Raymond A. McCormick, and Herman G. Flugman. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Marshall H. Mann, Nick Apice, Lester G. Toothaker, Milton Bernstein, Paul M. McGee, and James L. Livingston.

The next day, April 27th, Will Lundy reports, "The long threatened two mission-a-day era has finally become a reality. The first mission was to Moyenneville, France, as the primary in the morning. A total of 20 planes participated. The bombing point was the corner of the woods. Bombing results were good as the MPI was covered. Flak was moderate to intense, and accurate. The afternoon job was the Marshalling Yards at Chalons-Sur-Marne. The Group sent 25 ships. Some crews made both missions. Bombing results were good. They returned at 2100 hours. It was at dusk. Flak was moderately accurate with many of the planes sustaining battle damage. Fighter support was excellent."

Flying the morning mission were Lts. John M. McCaslin, Max D. Mendenhall, Sidney W. Paul, Howard K. Landahl, Gerald S. Westcott, and Richard J. Hruby. A-95

Flying Squadron lead with Lt. McCaslin were Lts. Ralph E. Van Ess, Raymond A. McCormick, and Robert E. Gutknecht. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Maurice G. Hall, Melvin P. Peterson, John H. Stewart, William E. Drumel, Daniel Wozniak, and Dale W. Graef.

With Lt. Mendenhall were Lts. Phillip J. Quirk, Joe Bearden, and Albert E. McCloud. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Marshall H. Mann, Nick Apice, Paul M. McGee, Lester G. Toothaker, Milton Bernstein, and James L. Livingston.

With Lt. Paul were Lts. Henderson K. Bennett, Robert F. Westcott, and William J. Fitzsimons. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Loyd A. Smith, John W. Racer, William A. Greenlee, Stephen Z. Jones, Jack L. Killian, and George N. Smith.

With Lt. Landahl were Lts. Randolph K. Smith and Thomas Conzoner. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert L. Staples, Walter K. Yount, Jack Davis, Underwood Coleman, Charles F. Schiess, and Frank A. Rinaldo.

With Lt. Westcott were Lts. Robert H. Reeves and Arthur C. Toepel. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Edward J. Thompson, Fred A. DuBose, Walter V. Lawrence, Frank Artym, Joseph I. Morris, and Joseph A. Gorski.

With Lt. Hruby were Lts. Thomas L. Smith, Edwin H. Rosenberg, and William D. Arthur. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Cletus C. Clark, Euclid F. Blanchard, Fount B. Bartley, Thomas L. Bartley, Everette E. Foster, and Robert Petkoff.

Flying the afternoon mission were Lts. Robert A. Johnson, Donald H. Dines, Jacob J. Wind, Bernie L. Scudday, Richard J. Hruby, Howard K. Landahl, and John M. McCaslin.

Flying Group Lead with Lt. Johnson were Lts. Estie W. Cunningham, George R. Berger Jr., and Michael A. D'Angelico. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James R. Alexander, Marvin G. Jensen, Walter R. Banks, Raymond T. Lippert, Jack T. Christy, and Laban W. Brown. Capt. James C. McAtee was Command Pilot.

With Lt. Dines were Lts. James Tucker, John A. Hess, and Alfred R. Wilson. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Santo

Romeo, Raymond Khoury, Thomas J. Reeves, Leron M. Whiteside, Ivan C. Millican, and Karl D. Breakey.

With Lt. Wind were Lts. Edwin L. Waldo, Ben K. Mazza, and Arthur C. Stanton. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Harold E. Lightcap, Garnet A. Stoltenburg, Harold D. Emch, Deno C. Tulini, William A. Curt, and Charles R. Eccleston.

With Lt. Scudday were Lts. John A. Farrel, Raymond A. McCormick, and Paul Richardson. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph E. Wycheck, Anthony J. Ventura, Robert P. Ries, Carl W. Tepe, Lester D. Warren, and Coyle J. Acuff.

With Lt. Hruby were Lts. Thomas L. Smith, Edwin H. Rosenberg, and William D. Arthur. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Cletus C. Clark, Euclid F. Blanchard, Fount B. Bartley, Thomas L. Bartley, Everette E. Foster, and Robert Petkoff

With Lt. Landahl were Lts. Randolph K. Smith, Nels W. Pedersen, and Thomas C. Conzoner. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert L. Staples, Walter K. Yount, Jack Davis, Underwood Coleman, Charles F. Schiess, and Frank A. Rinaldo.

With Lt. McCaslin were Lts. Ralph E. Van Ess, Joe Bearden, and Robert E. Gutknecht. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Dale W. Graef, Melvin P. Peterson, Charles C. Horton, William D. Scott, Daniel Wozniak, and Trinidad Gutierrez. (Note: Bombs were dropped in the Channel after hanging up over target.)

On April 27th Jack Wind recorded he was on a raid striking at railroad yards near Paris. Jack's crew mate, Garnet Stoltenburg indicated the target was Chalons, France. They were carrying twelve 500-pound fragmentation bombs. They were after a rail center. Flak was heavy and accurate near the coast with their ship being hit several times. The results were good. They were gone for six hours.

The Fred Dubose notes show that they were after the oil that was stored there.

On the other hand, Henry Siteman wrote for the 27th:

Nothing doing for me, but on the 27th "Jerry" paid us a visit and dropped four bombs about 1/4 mile away. Explosions woke everyone up. No damage, but scared the hell out of everybody. Today is the beginning of two missions a day. The Group went to France this morning and

29 April 44

are going out again this afternoon! Good luck men!  
Give'em Hell!

Ray Warner also reported:

Early this morning "Jerry" came over. A bomb was dropped just a little south of our site in a field. The explosion woke us up and like to have knocked me out of bed. Too close for comfort.

Our planes went out to France twice today. A direct hit in the bomb bay of a 87th ship blew it up. (Note: Will Lundy confirmed this loss. There were two survivors.)

The Will Lundy account for April 29th read, "The battle of Berlin was resumed today when the Group was ordered to the German capital. The Group put up 21 ships with takeoff at 0730 hours. All planes were over the target and bombed, but three of the Group's planes failed to return. The formation encountered moderate to intense flak and approximately 30 enemy aircraft. Crews reported a good pattern of bombs, but due to an under cast results were partially unseen. Today, overnight passes have come into the act again. This was good news for the boys and most of them took advantage of it. The days have been getting warmer and that is the best inducement for travel."

Flying to Berlin were Capt. Saul Fineman and Lts. Richard J. Hruby, Howard K. Landahl, Bernie L. Scudday, Gerald S. Westcott, Jacob J. Wind, and Donald H. Dines. (Note: Ralph Golubock indicated that he made this trip to Berlin.)

Flying with Capt. Fineman as Group Deputy Lead were Lts. Alfred L. Lincoln, Harold K. Johnson, and Claron E. Markham. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Thomas E. Chocklett, Floyd E. Stallsworth, Tenal A. Peters, John J. Demarinis, Romeo F. Diccido, Charles E. Reed, and Glen F. Hartzell.

With Lt. Hruby were Lts. Thomas L. Smith, Edwin H. Rosenburg, and William D. Arthur. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Cletus C. Clark, Euclid F. Blanchard, Fount B. Bartley, Thomas L. Bartley, Everette E. Foster, and Robert Petkoff

With Lt. Landahl were Lts. Randolph K. Smith and Nels W. Pedersen. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles H. Horton, Robert L. Staples, Walter K. Yount, Jack Davis, Underwood Coleman, Charles F. Schiess, and Frank A. Rinaldo.

With Lt. Scudday were Lts. John A Farrel, Raymond A. McCormick, and Paul Richardson. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph E. Wycheck, Anthony J. Ventura, Robert P. Ries, Carl W. Tepe, Lester D. Warren, and Coyle J. Acuff.

With Lt. Westcott were Lts. Robert H. Reeves, Thomas L. Hine, and Arthur C. Toepel. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Edward J. Thompson, Fred A. DuBose, Walter V. Lawrence, Frank Artym, Joseph I. Morris, and Joseph A. Gorski.

A-952  
With Lt. Wind were Lts. Edwin L. Waldo, Ben K. Mazza, and Arthur C. Stanton. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Harold E. Lightcap, Garnet A. Stoltenburg, Harold D. Emch, Deno C. Tulini, William A. Curt, and Charles R. Eccleston.

With Lt. Dines were Lts. James Tucker and John A. Hess. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Andrew T. Clarke, Santo Romeo, Raymond Khoury, Thomas J. Reeves, Leron M. Whiteside, Ivan C. Millican, and Karl D. Breakey. (Note: Dines aborted the mission during assembly when his #3 engine supercharger ran away and he could not get full power. He dropped his bombs in the Wash and returned to base.)

On April 29th Jack Wind's notes show:

We encountered enemy aircraft, but sustained no damage. Hruba was reported to have ditched in channel.

Garnet Stoltenburg noted:

*sorter report in file! Wrong spelling*

The target was a rail center in the center of Berlin.. We were gone for about nine hours. The temperature was 34 degrees below zero. We were carrying five 1,000-pound fragmentation and five 100-pound incendiary bombs. The flak was heavy and accurate at the target and one hour out. We had five hits on our ship. Before reaching the target area we were attacked by six enemy aircraft (Me-109 and Fw-190). Enemy aircraft also engaged us near the coast. Bombing results were very good.

Dubose recalls: (WESTCOTT/REEVES)

When the Briefing Officer pulled back the curtain to show a ribbon that stretched to Berlin and back, you could hear a stir in the back of the room as the spare volunteer gunners decided that their presence was needed elsewhere.

Somewhere after we crossed over Holland we encountered



about a half dozen Fw-190's head-on. The farthest B-24 aircraft to the rear, on our right, went into what appeared to be an almost flat spin downward. Then the second B-24 nosed down and went into a spin. As the third and nearest B-24 was hit and went down, our gunners commenced firing. It appeared that the last Fw-190 was hit as he passed from my limited view. According to the rest of the crew, American fighters jumped the enemy aircraft immediately and accounted for several.

As we proceeded to the target I looked out the forward window in time to see a B-24 go past us from above, then drop downward in front of us. I heard someone remark that Scudday had lost his superchargers. That didn't seem right, not on all four engines. The problem was soon corrected as the aircraft did manage to get back into formation.

As we approached the target area I opened the bomb bay doors. Looking downward I could see a formation of B-17's below us. This seemed odd because the B-17's were usually flying at a higher altitude than the B-24's. I notified the pilot of this. Either he called the lead aircraft or someone in that aircraft saw the danger of dropping our bombs through the B-17 formation. We were ordered to close the bomb doors.

We had been briefed that there was an enormous number of anti-aircraft guns in and around Berlin. We were also told that about one-fifth of these guns could be trained on us at any one time. The Briefing Officer was correct and the flak over Berlin was heavy.

After leaving the target area we proceeded to a nearby secondary target and dropped our bombs. I think that this was because a second pass over the target would have been disastrous. The Germans had already determined our altitude.

The April 29th entry by Ray Marner was:

Our planes went out over Berlin. The Group lost 3 planes over the target. Lt. Hrubby and crew ditched in North Sea, but got out okay. (Note: Will Lundy's material indicate that the Group lost 3 aircraft, but that included Lt. Hrubby's ship.)

An Air Force document tells of Lt. Hrubby's ditching:

On April 29, 1944, aircraft #41-29 513, piloted by Lt. Richard J. Hruby, went on a bombing mission to Berlin. Over the target, intermittent flak was encountered and hits were registered on numbers 1 and 2 engines with probable damage to the induction system of the number 3 engine. At the time, these did not appear to be serious. On the homeward journey two separate attacks were made by enemy fighters. Both attacks coming around the coast line. During these attacks the aircraft was flying at about 18,000 feet. Trouble, occasioned by the flak damage began to develop in the numbers 2, 3, and 4 engines. The flight engineer, Cletus C. Clark, was called from the top turret and the guns were taken over by the radio operator, Euclid F. Blanchard. The aircraft was rapidly losing altitude. At about 1500 hours, when the aircraft was at about 5,500 feet, all engines cut out due to a shortage of fuel (probably caused by a punctured tank) and it was apparent that ditching was imminent. At that time, the aircraft was about 40 miles north east of Cromer.

Lt. Hruby lowered the the flaps to 20 degrees and set the trim tabs for a glide of approximately 125 miles per hour. The crew was instructed to throw all available equipment overboard. The formation leader was contacted on VHF channel "A" and informed of the situation. The message was acknowledged. A message was then sent on the emergency band "D". This message was never acknowledged.

The radio operator left the top turret and started to set up for sending a distress signal. No sooner had he lowered his trailing wire antenna than it was clipped off by a flak suit that had been thrown out of the waist window. He then sent one SOS message on the fixed antenna and turned the Identification: Friend or Foe switch to the emergency band. He then screwed down his transmission key and helped prepare for ditching. It later was learned that none of these messages were received.

By this time, all flak suits, tuning units, A-3 bags, frequency meters, guns, ammunition, and other equipment that could be pried loose had been thrown overboard. The aircraft was at about 1,000 feet when the pilot and copilot, Thomas L. Smith, both put on their helmets and ordered the crew to assume ditching positions. In the waist, the ditching belt was snapped into place.

The engineer, at that time was down in the bomb bay attempting to dislodge a flak suit that was hanging across

the catwalk just forward of the aft bomb bay. It was caught in the bomb bay doors and was holding them open about eight inches on each side.

In the waist, the gunners (including Boyd and Lloyd Bartley, Robert Petkoff and Everette E. Foster) were assuming their positions. Three had their backs against the ditching belt and one sat between the legs of one of his fellow crewmen. On the flight deck the bombardier, William D. Arthur, sat with his back against the pilot's armor plating, with the navigator, Edwin H. Rosenberg, between his legs. The radio operator's station was behind the pilot's armor plating next to the bombardier, but because of the fire extinguisher holder, he was unable to get a good back rest. The engineer abandoned his efforts in the bomb bay and had just reached the flight deck and closed the hatch when the aircraft hit the water.

The air speed indicator at that time read 120 miles per hour. The nose was in a slightly up position as if prepared for landing. The approach was directly into the swell and the aircraft landed on the up slope of a crest. No secondary impact was felt.

Upon impact, both the pilot and copilot were thrown forward against the glass windshield. Their helmets protected them from injury. The engineer struck his leg against the radio. The radio operator bruised his back on the fire extinguisher holder. In the waist the gunners were lifted off the floor, but there were no injuries as the ditching belt held in place.

Water immediately rushed into the aircraft. The cockpit was filled within seconds. The cabin was completely under water within thirty seconds. The pilot and copilot tried to get out of the escape hatch, but the other crew members were still climbing out of that exit. The pilot tried to ram his helmet through the top of the ship in order to get some air. He was unsuccessful because the glass and metal were still intact. The airplane then settled to a level position, and the crew on the flight deck had about four or five inches of air at the top of the compartment to breathe. The navigator was the first to emerge out of the top hatch. He was quickly followed by the engineer, bombardier, radio operator, pilot and copilot.

Water also rushed into the waist of the ship. It immediately filled to about two inches above the waist

windows. The gunners were making their exit through the waist windows, taking with them the emergency equipment. They joined the other crew members on the top of the aircraft. Off in the distance, the crew could see some ships that had barrage balloons flying over them. They hoped that it was an Allied convoy. By now, all hands had inflated their "Mae West" life vests.

Being the first one out of the front of the ship, the navigator pulled the life raft release handles, but both rafts failed to inflate. He then pulled a raft from its compartment and pulled the inflation cord, which broke off inside the plastic cover and could not be reached. The cord on the other raft was then jerked, and this also broke off. The copilot, however, was able to get a grip on it and release the gas to inflate the raft. However, it only inflated halfway. Further efforts to inflate the second raft failed.

While these efforts were under way, one of the twins, upon emerging from the waist window, saw the emergency equipment drifting away. He started after it. He was quite a distance away when he retrieved it. Then he was unable to get back to the life rafts.

Five of the crew members occupied the half inflated dinghy on the right side of the plane. The remaining members dragged the uninflated raft to the other side as the aircraft started its final dive under the sea. It had stayed on the surface of the sea for about fifteen minutes. Slowly it nosed into the depths.

Now all concerns turned to the twin that had gone after the emergency equipment. The raft was paddled over to pick up the crewmen who were on the left-hand side of the aircraft when it went down. Then they attempted to paddle after the twin. It soon became apparent that the current was carrying him away faster than they could paddle toward him. There were too many persons hanging onto or in the raft. In fact, most of the time they could only see him when they both were on the crest of a wave.

Efforts were made to find a pump that would inflate the raft. None was found. The navigator was in the life raft in order to stabilize it. The rest of the men were hanging on to the sides. When they would hit the top of a swell the navigator reported that a ship was headed straight for them. The fellows in the water could only

see the barrage balloons heading in another direction.

The crew had been in the water about forty minutes when the Royal Navy mine sweeper Catsmuir arrived. The mine sweeper came right up to the raft and lowered rope ladders. However, the men in the water were too numb to climb without assistance. A launch was lowered to go after the Bartley twin that had the swum after the emergency equipment. He was found and returned to the mine sweeper.

Once aboard the ship, the wet flying clothing was discarded and each man was given what the British Seamen called "Churchill Snuggies" to wear. All the wet gear was thrown into a pile in the middle of the room. A tot of rum was served to all and many tots came up faster than they went down.

Between the rum, warm blankets, and a rub down by some burly English seaman, the air crew members were pretty much recovered from exposure by the time they arrived at the base at Great Yarmouth in England.

An account of what happened on the minesweeper was given by one of the seamen who was engaged in administering the rub downs. He told how he finished working on one of the Americans and then went over to work on the last one that was brought in. He couldn't believe his eyes. It looked like the same fellow that he had just worked on. That is when he learned of the Bartley twins.

This is the only known USSTAF incident involving a B-24 ditching in which all crew members were saved.

In a recent letter, Richard Hruby told:

After the ditching we were picked up by RMT Coismuir and taken to the British Naval Base at Great Yarmouth. We got out of our wet flying gear and were given what we (or they) called "Churchill Snuggies" to wear.

After drinks and dinner at Yarmouth we were able to get through to the base by phone and advise our surprised Squadron Commander, McAtee, that we were all okay except for some minor injuries.

At the Officers Club at Yarmouth we drank and ate in our "Snuggies" while a few crews that ditched in B-17's

appeared in Class A Uniform. They got wet up to their ankles. They stepped off the wing into a launch.

McAtee took a truck to Yarmouth to pick up the Hruby crew. He was not only surprised by the "Churchill Snuggies", but also by the degree that his men had been exposed to RUM. They were in an advanced state of inebriation when he arrived.

Hruby continued:

I remember that during this mission our crew mentioned on the intercom that a ship that was destroyed ahead of us was Glenn Sweigart of the 68th Squadron. We had trained with them in Boise.

I flew 32 missions, the first as copilot. The balance of the crew flew 31, except for one of the Bartley twins who received a flak injury to his leg on his 30th mission.

After our last mission, we were advised by Major McAtee that we were going to Scotland. We were shipped, bicycles and all, to fly Diplomatic Service between Scotland and Sweden. On these missions we would be flying back and forth at night, in black painted, stripped down B-24's. We were carrying periodicals and other miscellaneous things to Sweden and ball bearings on the way back. Each mission was to be completed in one night.

This seemed to be a very exciting and adventurous mission. We were all looking forward to it. However, during the week or two prior to our arrival in Scotland, German fighters were active in attacking and destroying some of the flights. It was then decided that the flights were too dangerous for "Happy Warriors". We were then returned to Shipdham, bicycles and all.

On April 28th and 29th Henry Siteman recorded:

Lt. Hawkins is back in the hospital with the same ear trouble as before. Lts. Bennett, Bearden, and McCloud are flying pretty regularly with other crews as spares. We wont fly again unless they break up the crew and make us all spares; or until Lt. Hawkins either gets better or else the doctor grounds him for good. Tomorrow is pay day and we are getting a pass. I may go to Scotland.

In a recent letter, Deno Tulini remembers that he used to

spend a lot of time in the Aero club playing records. Dick Haymes singing *I'll Get By* was a favorite.

On April 30th Henry Siteman wrote:

Nothing doing but the same old story. Go to bed late and get up early in the afternoon. April was a beautiful month.

There is a good chance that Deno Tulini was referring to Henry when he remembered:

The guys who didn't have to fly were playing poker all night. This keeps the rest of fellows that were going to fly in the morning, awake.

During the month of April Norm Kiefer mentioned the following in letters to his wife:

"Don't worry about telling me about the casualty list (home town acquaintances who are victims of the war). I have gotten used to them."..."I thought that I was going to get some pants pressed this evening. I went down and hooked up the iron. Fifteen minutes later it was still ice cold. For the next two hours we tried to fix it. It still doesn't work."..."As for Flying Cadets, that is now out. I passed the physical and mental tests. All that was left to do was to go before the Board. Now they have washed out all Cadet applications. They seem to think that the war is over. It is, except for the fighting."..."A boy by the name of Struble is now living with me. He has quite a few more to go."..."I don't know what the Nursing Cadets are, but I do know that I want you to stay home. This is the first that I have heard about girls being drafted. I doubt that they will pick on the married women."..."At noon Struble and I went to the Red Cross Club to have a coke. Then we went to chow."..."Joe (Joe Young) and I took some blankets and laid down in front of our hut. Yes, we did get a sun burn."..."The movie that is playing here tonight is one that I saw while we were on the Libyan desert."

The new month opened with five of our ships attacking the primary target at Liege, France, the marshalling yards. They were carrying eight 1000-pound general purpose bombs. The results were good although slightly short and to the right of the MPI.

1 MAY 44

The Group dispatched 15 aircraft on this mission which was intended to destroy the German supply lines. This effort was soon to evolve into the concept that nothing moves on the railroads or main roads. Bombing results on this mission included good concentrations on the choke point and other installations.

Lts. Donald H. Dines and Fred E. Stone were among the crews that went out this day.

With Lt. Dines were Lts. James Tucker and John A. Hess. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Manuel L. Kamanides, Santo Romeo, Raymond Khoury, Benjamin J. Zesdorn, Leron M. Whiteside, Ivan C. Millican, and Karl D. Breakey.

With Lt. Stone were Lts. Henderson K. Bennett and Andrew E. Patrichuk. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Glen F. Hartzell, Charles J. Brown, Samuel M. Cervellera, William S. Strange, Robert M. Faust, Robert E. Ryan, and Morrie Meunitz.

The combat record of Fred DuBose shows that he made this raid while flying with Gerald Westcott.

Also on May 1st Henry Siteman went to London on a seven-day pass.

Deno Tulini recalls when he went to London:

Buzz bombs were dropping while I was there. One hit about 1/2-block away. There were lots of hysterical people. Some had 1/4-inch of dust on their shoulders.

Ray Baker recalls:

One day crew chief Charles "Buzz" Busby received a new plane. He named it after his home town of Joplin, Missouri. The plane was known as *Joplin Jalopy*. Having a knack for cartooning, he painted a couple of mountaineers driving an old flivver on the nose of the plane. With the paint still wet, the ship was scheduled for a quick flight. Upon return, the paint had slightly flowed back toward the tail and the flivver looked as if it were going 150 miles per hour. Against a lot of objections, he repainted it. It is not known what the serial number of this A/C was. 42-50535

The Jack Wind, Deno Tulini and Garnet Stoltenburg records show that they were at Pas de Calais (Wizerness) on May 3rd.

ALSO LT STONES CREW A-952



The Squadron Flight Surgeon, Dr. Allison, was along as a passenger. The notes of Stoltenburg show:

It was 27 degrees Centigrade on this five-hour trip into France. The target was an underground depot. Flak was accurate, but very light. Our ship was hit once.

Wind was flying one of the eight 508th ships that joined 16 other 44th aircraft on this mission to attack the primary target of military works southwest of St. Omer, France. They were carrying four 1000-pound general purpose bombs. Bombs were dropped on pathfinder and the results were unobserved.

Records maintained by Robert M. Foust show the target at St. Omer was the freight yards. The combat record of Fred DuBose indicates that Gerald Westcott was out this day and he was with him.

On this same day, May 1st, Lt. Walter J. Scott and crew joined the 508th. With Lt. Scott were Lts. William H. Clasgens Jr., Dermot P. Perdisatt, and Harold M. Reynolds. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Henry E. Anuskiewicz, Robert E. Yost, John L. Horne, Thomas D. Muff, Lawrence A. Nevins, and Chester D. Gardner.

A second new crew joined the Squadron on May 3rd. Conrad M. Menzel arrived with Lts. Martin R. Swenson, Raymond G. Bennett, and Nester L. Werkstein. The enlisted personnel consisted of Jack Grady, Errol L. Libby, Carl D. Long, Richard H. Smart, John W. Bushby, and James E. Branson.

Many years later, Conrad Menzel revealed:

It didn't take long for me to see that if a crew performed above average there was the possibility for promotions by being made a Lead Crew. However, all too frequently, this would result in a breakup of the crew. I knew that I had a good crew. I didn't want to see it broken up. Therefore, I gathered them together one day and talked about the possibility of our being broken up. It was agreed that we should stay together. It was further agreed that the best way to avoid being made a Lead Crew was to find little ways to screw up. Not seriously, but just enough to keep us off the Lead Crew list. This worked!

Lt. Horey was up early on May 4th. He was the Mission Briefing Officer. Among those being briefed were nine crews

from the 506th. The briefed primary target was an aircraft factory at Waggum, four miles east of Brunswick, Germany. They were carrying six 1000-pound general purpose bombs. Adverse weather conditions forced seven of our ships to bring back their bombs after aborting. Another aborting aircraft jettisoned its bombs. Mission credit was given to only the Scudday and Leonard crews.

There is some indication that a recall was sent out because of severe weather conditions. However, it appears that these two ships continued and dropped their bombs. The other ships may not have aborted as reported, but instead responded to the recall.

There was a second mission on May 4th. Nine of our aircraft took off to attack the primary target, an airdrome at Gutersloh, Germany. However, on the way to the target, it was decided to bomb a target at Osnabruck, Germany. It was bombed through a heavy cloud cover and results were unobserved. Our ships were carrying six 1000-pound general purpose bombs.

The combat record of Fred Dubose indicates that he was with Gerald Westcott on one of these missions.

None of the other squadrons appear to have taken part in this second raid since no mention is made of their aircraft going to Osnabruck. In addition, there is no mention of a raid on Osnabruck in Roger Freeman's *Mighty Eighth War Diary*. However, this book does show that the 392nd Group hit a target of opportunity on this day. The primary target for them was Brunswick. It may be that there was only one mission on this day and that the second entry in the *War Diary* was recording our ships that were flying with the 392nd. They were Lts. Westcott, Van Ess, and Stone (A-957)

Will Lundy's material indicates that Sgt. Middlebrooks, one of the 506th armament men that volunteered to fly combat in May, 1943, finished his tour and was transferred to the 12th RCD on May 4th.

The Garnet Stoltenburg notes show:

The trip to Osnabruck on May 7th took about 6 hours and it was very cold. The target was the rail center. The flak was moderate and fairly accurate. Due to an cloud formation under us, the results were unobserved.

The 44th dispatched 30 aircraft, nine from the 506th, on this raid. There were no abortions and all ships dropped their bombs on the target. We were carrying twelve 500-pound general purpose bombs. There are indications that our bombs may have been placed on an airfield with good results. All aircraft returned to base. A-952 STONE

Aircraft #429 (call letter Bar L) failed to take off due to RPM dropping too low. However, the crew changed to ship #177 without further trouble. (Note: This may have been Mendenhall who caught the formation at splasher #5 and then flew as briefed.)

Flying the mission that day were Lts. Max D. Mendenhall, Ralph E. Van Ess, Ralph Golubock, John W. Docktor, Oscar L. Leonard, and Jacob J. Wind.

Flying deputy lead with Lt. Mendenhall were Lts. Phillip J. Quirk, Joe Bearden, and Albert L. McCloud. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Marshall H. Mann, Nick Apice, Paul M. McGee, Lester G. Toothaker, Milton Bernstein, and James L. Livingston.

With Lt. Van Ess were Lts. James Tucker, Alfred R. Wilson, and John A. Hess. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Santo Romeo, Raymond Khoury, Joseph F. Meyers, Leron M. Whiteside, Ivan C. Millican, and Karl D. Breakey.

With Lt. Golubock were Lts. James H. Walsh Jr., Robert F. Westcott, and William J. Fitzsimons. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Loyd A. Smith, Daniel A. Mattis, William A. Greenlee, Stephen Z. Jones, Jack L. Killian, and George N. Smith.

With Lt. Docktor were Lts. Charles W. Heintz, Walter W. Dunbar, and Wayne A. Miller. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Clarence W. Goebel, Kermit R. Faust, Walter G. Wurzbarger, Virgil R. Guebard, Howard E. Harper, and Thomas N. Farrell.

With Lt. Leonard were Lts. Frank J. Adams, Harold Chambers, and Randolph A. Giroux. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Liddon W. Cowden, George B. Bednar, Louis N. Missig, Charles C. Peters, Henry P. Tuzinski, and Vernon C. Brosh.

With Lt. Wind were Lts. Edwin L. Waldo, Ben K. Mazza, and Arthur C. Stanton. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Harold E. Lightcap, Garnet A. Stoltenburg, Harold D. Emch, Deno C.

8 MAY

Tulini, William A. Gurt, and Charles R. Eccleston.

A-952A

It is likely that Stone in Shack Rat made this trip to Osnabruck. Robert M. Foust was probably aboard. However, the Foust records show that the target was the rail yards.

It is also likely that Gerald Westcott made this trip according to records maintained by both Fred DuBose and Walter Lawrence. It was about a five-hour trip.

Henry Siteman reported in his diary on May 7th:

We went to spend a couple of days in London. Lt. Hawkins is out of the hospital and we are up for a mission tomorrow. I saw quite a few interesting sights in London and enjoyed a nice trip.

The next day, May 8th, Henry Siteman recorded:

We went to Brunswick, Germany. It was just one month to the day that Jeane Hicks went down on the same target! I flew nose turret and toggled out the bombs. Hawkins was the pilot. The target was the city itself.

We were attacked by 15 Fw-190's and I got in a few shots or bursts before friendly fighters came to our rescue. Enemy fighters just made one pass and after that our fighters took care of them. Darn good boys. The mission took seven hours.

We are up again for tomorrow so I am hitting the sack at 2000 hours.

This time, May 8th, the 44th mounted 33 ships to make the trip. The 508th furnished eleven of these ships. The original plan was to attack an airdrome at Guterslow, Germany. However, Plan B was followed and the strike was directed at Brunswick, Germany using Pathfinder. Results were unobserved. We were carrying 500-pound bombs.

Lt. Scudday returned with his bombs when his #2 and #4 engine superchargers went out. Lt. Walsh turned back twice. The first time when a crew member forgot his oxygen mask and the second time when the radio operator broke his arm in the top turret. Merritt Derr, flying as copilot for Stone on A/C # 952, A, took off with the Group. However, they had to abort after a half hour. They picked up another A/C and rejoined the Group over Brunswick. Robert M. Foust's records show

that he also was with Fred Stone at Brunswick. They hit the Marshalling yards and came under heavy enemy fighter attack.

Ralph Golubock was on this raid. According to records kept by Fred Dubose and Walter Lawrence they made this mission flying with Gerald Westcott. Fred Dubose recalls:

The briefing officers often warned us of the possibility of encountering fighters in the Dummer Lake region west of the Brunswick-Hannover area.

When we spotted them they looked like a swarm of bees. There was no formation--just a swarm of fighters. When Bobby Reeves and I compared notes we agreed that there were thirty-two of them. At first it appeared that we were in for a siege. As the first of the Me-109's neared, it looked as if he was coming straight for us. The angle fooled us because he went past us on our right. All of the fighters seemed to be intent upon attacking the formation of B-24's following us. This was probably either the 392nd or 492nd Bomb Groups as they were usually nearby.

As the last fighter went by Bobby said, "That one made thirty-three". Someone in the rear shouted, "Hey, I think I got a hit on the last one." Another voice said, "You'd better hope not. That was a P-51." The interphone was silent after that.

Another crew that made this raid was with Jack Wind. Jack's notes show that the flak was bad and that fighters hit another group. Garnet Stoltenburg was with Jack. His notes indicate that it was a six-hour trip to Brunswick and they met approximately 50 enemy fighters. Another of Jack's crew members was Deno Tulini.

Henry Siteman wrote on May 9th:

The target was St. Trond (Brustrem Air Field), Belgium. We were up at 0230 hours for a 0600 hours take off. The target field was just about three miles east of Liege, Belgium. Four groups hit the same place, while other groups hit other fields in the same area. We got back at 1130 hours. Our pilot was Hawkins. We were carrying two spare crewmen. We had good fighter protection all the way. The flak was moderate and close, but not too heavy. We did pick up one flak hole near Lt. Bennett. The mission took six hours.

The 506th ten-ship contingent represented one third of the 44th aircraft dispatched on this mission. All aircraft reached the target and dropped their bombs. We were carrying fifty-two 100-pound bombs. The target was selected on the request of the RAF. This was the home base for night-fighters that had been harassing their night missions. All or part of the bomb load was jettisoned by aircraft #339; #952, *Shack Rat*; and #045, *Banana Barge*. Strike photos indicate results were very good to excellent.

A-952  
Ralph Golubock was at St. Trond on this day. Merritt Derr made this trip to St. Trond probably flying as copilot for Stone. Robert M. Foust was with them. Gerald Westcott was probably on this raid according to the combat records of Fred Dubose and Walter Lawrence.

The Garnet Stoltenburg record shows:

This trip to St. Trond took about six hours. The flak was light and not accurate. The results were good under visual conditions. The tail gunner received frost bite and is grounded. The notes of his pilot, Jack Wind show that their fragmentation bombs hung up in the bomb bay. Stoltenburg went into the bomb bay and pulled them loose. Deno Tulini was with them.

Ray Marner wrote in his diary for May 9th:

The 68th had a ship blow up today. (Will Lundy confirms that while over the target, a 68th A/C had a premature explosion of bombs just beneath the ship. However, after five crewmen had jumped, the pilot regained control and flew the craft back to a crash landing in England).

Henry Siteman reported for May 10th:

They got us up at 0230 hours and briefed us for a mission to Germany. We took off at 0600 hours and formed up at 18,000 feet. We left England at 0830 hours and were halfway across the Channel when we got a recall. We turned around, came home and landed at 1030 hours. I hit the sack right away. We have had about 6 hours sleep in the last 72 hours. We are "up" again tomorrow.

There were eleven 506th that ships took off in the morning. They were headed for an airdrome at Diepholtz, Germany. Weather and cloud cover were the reason for the recall. No sortie credit was given.

Merritt Derr was on this recalled mission, probably flying with Fred Stone in A/C 952, A. The combat record of Fred Dubose indicates that he made this mission with Jerry Westcott. They were gone for four hours. The records for both Jack Wind and Garnet Stoltenburg show that they took off for this mission.

Jack Wind recalls:

Colonel Gibson, Group Commander, called a special meeting of officers to inform us that an officer had refused to fly. That officer was at that moment on his way back to New York as a civilian. He would be met by the Draft Board and inducted into the Army as an infantry man with the rank of private. He would immediately be placed into a unit that was being shipped out to the Pacific Theater.

Major Walter Bunker, formerly of the 506th, was Group Command Pilot leading the 24 aircraft of 44th on a mission to the marshalling yards at Mulhouse on May 11th. Nine ships from the 506th were with him. Instead of bombing the primary, the marshalling yards at Belfort and the airfield at Orleans Bricy were hit. Bombing was visual with hits being made on the Orleans Airdrome by the leading section and in the marshalling yards at Belfort by the second section. Bombing results were from good to fair. Lt. Doctor flying in aircraft #328 aborted and brought back his bombs when he encountered landing gear difficulties.

Joseph Peloquin was in aircraft #42-94 999 when it was struck by flak before the target. Joseph recalls:

The raid on Mulhouse was our second mission. Lt. James Walsh was our pilot. When we were shot down we were flying at 14,000 feet. Walsh was fortunate enough to be picked up by the French Resistance and returned to England in a very short period of time. Lawrence Richards was with the French underground for a while. Since I spoke fluent French, my stay in France was a little bit longer than the rest. Other members of our crew were captured and became P.O.W.'s.

As for me, I was in the waist of the ship transferring fuel when we were attacked by Me-109 fighters and then hit by flak. The port side waist gunner was up front in my turret while I was working in the waist.

This was a good deal different from what we had been told

in the morning briefing. They said normally we did not need to worry about fighters early in the flight.

When I bailed out I had on a chest type chute. It didn't open when I pulled the rip cord. I had to pull the silk out of it to get it open. I probably was about 500 feet from the ground when the canopy formed above me. Within a few seconds I was on the ground. That long free fall and short descent kept me out of the hands of the Germans.

I was helped by a French woman. She got a doctor to patch up the shrapnel wounds that I had received in the right arm and neck.

After about a month of hiding in France, I was joined by a fellow crew member, Lawrence Richards, who had also evaded capture.

I had a few scares during my stay in France. During the first six weeks I lived in the city of Orleans with two different families.

During those days I faced two enemies. There was the constant threat of being found by the Germans. Then at night we were under attack by British bombers and during the day it was the Americans who were after the railroad yards. That was a real catch 22 situation.

After D-Day it was very hard to move about in the city. This posed a problem since the number of fliers being shot down was greater than the ability of the Resistance to care for and hide them. Allied intelligence and the French Resistance decided to hide us in a forest called Freteval. There was a French Colonel and a Belgian Colonel that parachuted in at night to start this camp. I was one of the first six men that opened the camp. Before many weeks had gone by the camp was so big that it was decided to open a second camp.

The second camp was about ten kilometers from the first and it was headed by one of the Colonels that had parachuted in. I went to the second camp when it opened. Since I spoke fluent French, it was felt that I would be of help. My language abilities often were also a disadvantage. I had a heavy Canadian accent. I only spoke French when I knew that I would not be overheard by someone that was unfriendly.



One night, while in the forest, we got a shipment of goods from a British Lancaster bomber. They dropped several big canisters. I think that there were about twenty of them. They were made of steel and about ten feet long. They contained food.

Food was our big problem. At the time there were over 150 of Allied airmen in the camp. The French Resistance by itself could not feed us.

At one point in time it was decided that the French resistance was in need of additional arms and ammunition. I agreed to go along on a raid on a German ammunition dump.

We didn't get into a shoot out, but we did steal several cases of bullets and hand grenades. This was done right under the German noses without being detected.

The ironic thing about the raid was that the arms that we stole were made in the state of Conn., U.S.A. They had been captured by the Germans during the retreat from Dunkirk.

As the years have gone by, I have often thought about how foolish it was of me to have participated in this raid. Keep in mind, I went because the French resistance needed help. It wasn't that we in the camp were about to take on the Germans. In no way did we want a confrontation with them.

A few years back I returned to France. I went back to the spot where the camp had been located. I was taken there by one of the Frenchmen that had been engaged in gathering food for us at the time. On the highway that passed by the forest, near the camp, was a monument in honor and memory of the airmen that had been shot down over France.

One of those camp members was a Canadian. He had kept a diary that was published in a Canadian Sunday paper back in the mid-1940's.

With Lt. James H. Walsh Jr. (Evadee/Returned) were Lts. Warren F. Bauder (POW), Emery R. Lundy (POW), and Peter O'Shanick (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph O. Peloquin (Wounded/Evadee/Returned), Donald R. Martin (POW), Sydney Roper (POW), Edwin A. Puksta (Wounded/POW), Lawrence C. Richards (Evadee/Returned), and Thomas J. Fanara (POW).

Henry Siteman wrote in his dairy on May 11th:

We went to Mulhouse, France, and the target there was the marshalling yards. We were up at 0500, briefed at 0600 and ready for a 0900 hour take off. However, take off was moved ahead for two hours and so we finally took off at 1100 and returned at 1930 hours. We saw plenty of flak and fighters hit us before we got to the target. I got in a couple of good bursts, too. But the enemy aircraft knocked down one of our planes in the low section. It was Lt. Walsh. Our pilot was Hawkins and Connor was the copilot since Bennett is on pass. We are scheduled for the mission tomorrow.

The raid to the marshalling yards at Mulhouse was also made by Merritt Derr flying in A/C 952, A. Fred Stone, was ~~probably~~ the pilot. Robert M. Foust was with them and they were flying off the wing of Walsh. Walsh was in the #4 position, when that A/C was hit and went down. With Walsh was Emery R. Lundy who formerly had flown as bombardier for Stone. Merritt's records show that the raid was nearly nine hours in length.

Jack Wind recalls that on the way to the target a German fighter went through the formation with P-47's on his tail. Deno Tulini was probably with Jack.

The Ray Marner diary stated for May 11:

Our planes went out and the Group lost 3 ships. Lt. Walsh's crew of the 508th went down. (Note: Will Lundy's works report the loss of only Walsh. However, he does report that two of the Group's aircraft landed in southern England for refueling.)

Henry Siteman was with Conner on May 12th when they took off to bomb an oil refinery at Zeitz, Germany. Henry wrote in his diary:

Up again at 0500 for my 10th mission, but we had a leak in the bomb bay and had to abort. We came back, got another plane (Note: This probably was aircraft #952, Bar A, Shack Rat.) and caught the formation over the Channel. We were in sight of the French coast when an oil leak in the # 3 engine forced us to abort once again.

Our bombardier, McCloud, and navigator, Joe Bearden, are on another crew. Mac's section laid the bombs right on

the nose and was the talk of the Group. He was the only one to hit his part of the target (Zeitz Oil works which produces about 6% of Germany's synthetic oil). We flew with Conner since Hawkins is on nonflying status.

The 44th dispatched 19 aircraft on this May 12th mission. All except Conner reached the target and bombed. There were six ships from the 506th that took off that morning. Our ships carried nineteen 250-pound general purpose bombs. Strike photos showed that the bombing results were excellent.

Records maintained by Fred Dubose and Walter Lawrence show that they made this mission with Gerald Westcott. They were up for nine hours.

Also, Ralph Golubock was on this raid.

Ray Marner reported in his diary on May 12th:

The 67th and 68th lost planes today on the mission (Will Lundy only shows the loss of a 67th ship).

Merritt Derr and Robert M. Foust made a trip to Tutow on May 13th. They were probably with Fred Stone. The Foust record shows:

The target to be the Fw-190 assembly plant. They were attacked by 100 Fw-190's and Me-109's. Foust was credited with destroying one Fw-190. A-952

The 44th put up 17 aircraft on this May 13<sup>?</sup> mission. There were six aircraft from the 506th that morning. Our ships carried fifty-two 100-pound M47 bombs. The target airfield housed a bomber school. There was also a final assembly and testing facility for Fw-190's. Bombing was by Pathfinder. Bombing results were good. Jack Wind, flying in aircraft #034, Bar R, Southern Comfort II, brought back his bombs after aborting due to #2 and #3 engines trouble.

Henry Siteman was back with the Hawkins crew for the trip on May 13th. They bombed with the 392nd Group. Henry recorded in his diary:

I was up at 0700 for a mission to Anklam, in northern Germany, and an airfield at Tutow. This field has a specialized bomber training school. Takeoff was at 1030 and we returned at 1800 hours. We carried 100-pound incendiary bombs. Flak was light. We saw Sweden, a

neutral country. It was a eight-hour trip. Scott was the copilot since Lt. Bennett is still on pass.

We watched the biggest dogfight of the war with over 100 enemy aircraft attacking us over Hamburg. We had a couple of waves of attacks and I got in a few bursts. However, our fighters gave us beautiful support. In doing so, the American fighters shot down 54 of the enemy aircraft. The bombers claimed nine German fighters. The German fighters knocked down eight of our planes. At one glance I saw seven fighters going down in flames and one pilot bail out.

On May 14th Henry Siteman's diary reported:

STAND DOWN! After a very hectic week we all needed a rest. But now I am ready to go again after a nice 15-hour sleep! Mac. and Joe are now on furlough, and we will be going by the end of the month. I played cards today.

Jack Wind, Edwin Waldo, Ben Mazza and Arthur Stanton left on a five-day leave of absence on May 14th. Jack recalls:

We went to Edinburgh, Scotland. We were on a guided tour of the castle when Art Stanton asked the Scottish guide when Scotland became part of England. Now I want you to know that was the wrong question! The guide "swelled up like a poisoned pup" and sputtered, "Scotland become part of England #\*\$? !!!" He then walked off and left us to find our own way out of the castle.

Henry Siteman reported on May 15th:

The target was a supply depot and the construction works at Siracourt, France. We were up at 0200 for a 0600 take off over the Pas de Calais area. We were carrying 1000-pound bombs. This was a "pussy" with only 40 minutes over enemy territory. We were back again at 1030 with no flak and no fighters. Hawkins was the pilot for this five-hour mission.

There were 17 ships from the 44th that took off to bomb this target just outside the village of Siracourt. They had excellent fighter support. Six aircraft from the 506th were put up for this raid. We carried eight 1000-pound general purpose bombs. Bombing results were unobserved. Lt. Walter Scott, in ship #975, brought his bombs back after experiencing a bomb rack failure.

A-42

The records of Robert M. Foust show that the target at Siracourt on May 15 was the rail yards. Both Fred Dubose and Walter Lawrence went to Siracourt. They were with Gerald Westcott.

There was a "Welcome Aboard" party held for the new combat crews not long after the Lt. John Titter crew was assigned on May 15th. With Lt. Titter were Lts. James Whitehouse, Charles Hersh, and Robert Graham. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Milt Becker, Paul Richter, Frank Orehowsey, Harold Brumm, Ernie Puglisi, and Victor Uchansky.

The Fred Dubose notes show:

After the mission of May 15th we were sent on R & R for about a week. I believe that most of the crew spent this time in London. I went to Blackpool.

On the 16th of May the diary of Henry Siteman revealed:

I was up at 0300 hours for a mission to France, but just before takeoff it was scrubbed. I came back to the sack and slept. In the afternoon I went to the presentation of awards and got my Air Medal. I am scheduled up again tomorrow.

The Norman Howe crew arrived on May 16th. The crew probably consisted of Lts. Gordon W. Henderson, David Milton Harris, and Franklin W. Binkley. The enlisted personnel probably were Sgts. Robert E. Smith, Henry D. Faller, Frank Stoltz, William L. McConnaughay, and Francis E. Termin.

Another new crew that arrived that day belonged to Lt. Irving S. Gurman. With Gurman were Lts. Robert F. Jipson and Andrew J. Kaulbach Jr. The enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. James McMaster, George B. Costello, Enio J. Wiitala, Joseph Carson, Theodore D. Willis, and Charles D. Williams.

In writing about May 17th, when a mission was reported scrubbed because of weather, Henry Siteman had different information about why the mission was cancelled:

We were awakened at 0400 hour for a mission and a 0600 takeoff, but at the last minute the mission was scrubbed. The reason it was scrubbed is that the 492nd Bomb Group, a new Group, called us to say they couldn't be ready on such short notice. I went back to bed.

Ralph Golubock "recalls a dog that used to ride around the base on various trucks. We called him Shoe Face. It was the ugliest dog I have ever seen."

On May 18th Henry Siteman wrote:

I didn't get up until 1300. Then I went out looking for fresh eggs in the afternoon. In the evening I went to the movies on base. Again we are scheduled up for tomorrow.

The diary of Henry Siteman shows for May 19th:

Brunswick, Germany, again. This was the roughest mission yet. Plenty of flak and about 200 fighters which took a good toll of B-24's. They almost wiped out the new group, the 492nd, which flew high to our left. The nose gunner and top turret gunners on our plane claimed a fighter. Believe me, our plane really threw out a lot of lead. Our fighters were outnumbered about four-to-one, but they really gave a good account of themselves. We made good hits on the target, but it was plenty costly. The pilot was Hawkins. We carried six 1000-pound bombs on this seven-hour trip.

We finished up a tail gunner and we gave him a beautiful buzz job of the field when we returned.

The 44th formation on this raid consisted of 26 ships. Nine of these aircraft were from the 506th. Enemy aircraft put up a strong opposition. However, the Group claimed 13 shot down. Strike photos showed fair hits in the marshalling yards. The 506th sent nine ships.

The combat record of Eino J. Wiitala shows that Irving Gurman and crew was there. Records maintained by Merritt Derr and Robert M. Foust show that they made this May 19th raid. The Foust notes show that he counted 15 B-24's going down.

On May 20th Henry Siteman wrote:

STAND DOWN! After yesterday, the different groups had to take time out to recover. From all reports, 125 German fighters were shot down and the 44th claimed 21 of them.

The Henry Siteman diary told of:

Getting up at 0700 on May 21st for an 1115 take off to St. Paul, in the Calais area of France. This is nearly the

same place that we went a couple of days ago. "Shorty" took over the tail turret and we got another new man for the ball turret. Once again we encountered no flak and no fighters. We tried out a new radio system on flak guns and all reports showed that it worked pretty good. The pilot was Hawkins and we carried 1000-pound bombs. The flight was five hours in length.

Twenty-one 44th aircraft went on this "milk run". Five 506th aircraft were among them. The target was in the vicinity of Siracourt, France. The target was covered with heavy clouds. Strike photos showed the 1st and 2nd squadrons missed the MPI from 500-to-2000 feet. Fighter support was excellent.

On May 22 Henry Siteman wrote:

They got us up at 1100 to take a practice hop around the field. Then we went to a show tonight to see a pretty good picture.

It was about this time the Squadron received 110 carbines from base ordnance to be issued to our personnel.

Ray Marner wrote in his diary:

We had an alert and some enemy paratroopers were supposedly dropped near the field. Searching parties failed to find them.

The Henry Siteman entry for May 23rd told of being:

Up at 0100 for a 0445 takeoff to an airfield about 60 miles south of Paris, (Avord) France. We carried 100-pound bombs. Hawkins was the pilot on this eight-hour mission.

While waiting for take off, "Jerry" came over and dropped paratroopers just north of the field. A squad of men were sent out to round them up, but only came back with the chutes.

Colonel Gibson led the Division on this mission and reportedly stated that the bombing was the best that the Group had ever achieved. Nine aircraft of the 506th joined 21 other 44th ships in the attack. Our ships carried fifty-two M47 bombs. Strike photos showed excellent results with the pattern covering the MPI. Lt. Max Mendenhall in aircraft #429, Bar L, turned back when the #1 engine blew

out. The Squadron sent nine aircraft.

The combat record of Eino J. Wiitala shows that Irving Gurman and crew made this raid. Records kept by both Jack Wind and Garnet Stoltenburg show that they made this mission. Deno Tulini was also on that crew. The Stoltenburg notes show:

It was extremely cold with a free air temperature of 29 degrees below. We were carrying fifty-two 100-pound bombs. The flak was light and a little low. The bombing results were very good.

On that date Ray Marner reported we are putting 2 guards on each plane.

The Stoltenburg notes for May 24th indicate:

The trip to Melun, France took six hours. We were carrying sixteen 300-pound bombs. The flak was medium, but accurate with our ship being hit twice. Bombing results were fair.

The 44th sent 36 ships on this mission. Eleven aircraft from the 508th went with them.

The combat record of Eino J. Wiitala indicates that Irving Gurman and crew made this mission. Other 508th personnel that were on this mission, 25 miles south of Paris, were Deno Tulini, Jack Wind and Garnet Stoltenburg. In addition to reporting that he had gone on this mission, Henry Siteman wrote on the 24th of May

They rounded up seven Germans of the possible 20 dropped last night. Now the whole base carries arms again to be on the lookout for strangers on the field.

Merritt Derr's records show that on May 24th their crew left for a five-day pass. The officers went to Edinburgh, Scotland, and the enlisted men to London.

On the day they left, Ray Marner recorded:

Everyone is getting a carbine and has to carry it everywhere, day and night.

Notes kept by Stoltenburg reveal for May 25th:

The target was the marshalling yards at Belfort, France.



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The bomb load consisted of twelve 500-pound bombs. Flak was moderate and accurate over the target. Bombing results were very good.

This target was about 10 miles northwest of the Swiss border. The rail line was a main transportation route into southern Germany. The MPI was the locomotive repair shops. The 44th dispatched 26 aircraft in two sections on this day. Included were ten ships that belonged to the 508th. There is no indication of how many were in the individual sections. Although smoke obscured the target, bombing results were good for the 1st section, although slightly over the MPI. The 2nd section flew with the 492 Bomb Group. Due to an oil leak, Lt. John Titter, in ship #150, *Passion Pit*, turned back and landed with his bombs.

Notes kept by both Fred Dubose and Walter Lawrence show that they returned from leave just in time to make this "long run to Belfort in the far corner of France". Information submitted by Jack Wind, Garnet Stoltenburg and Deno Tulini indicates that they were on this mission. The combat record of Eino Wiltala reveals that Irving Gurman and crew flew a mission on this day.

Henry Siteman reported in his diary:

Our plane was grounded for repairs to the wing. So we were not scheduled to fly. I hung around the barracks and caught up on some sleep.

On May 26th the writings of Henry Siteman revealed that he "went egg hunting with Lt. Bearden".

In a number of places Siteman and others have commented on the importance of obtaining eggs. In the mess halls eggs were served, but they were the powdered kind. Henry Fetherolf tells the story of going a bit beyond the egg:

We had a farm boy named Danny Gilbert from Golconda, Ill. One day we had canned corn in the mess hall. He came around and collected everybody's corn. He said that we would have fried chicken that night. Being a city boy, I knew nothing about chickens and corn.

Well Dan went down the road with a bucket of corn and walked that farmer's chickens right to us. We had 25 chickens. What a feast!

Well we got caught and had to pay for 50 chickens. Dan got mad and went back to the farm with a flare gun and burned the farmers hay stack to the ground.

Will Lundy reported on May 26th that our base was to become an armed camp:

New Orders! All men must carry a gun and ammunition. (Note: Our guns were taken from us several months earlier when someone, during an air raid, shot at a crippled RAF plane coming in for an emergency landing.)

Ralph Golubock recalls when these orders came out:

It was frightening because at movies on the base I kept hearing the clicks of guns that the guys could not leave their hands off of. I kept expecting to hear shots ring out.

Walter Lawrence remembers:

One night a 45 was discharged accidentally in our Nissen hut and one airman was shot in the leg. That slug landed on my pillow! Just a moment before my head had been in that exact location.

Jack Wind recalls:

A couple of days after we were issued side arms we were instructed not to have them loaded. This instruction resulted from several being accidentally fired.

Also, one night somebody standing guard on the field with a Thompson Submachine Gun experienced an accidental firing. A gas truck and a B-24 were hit. Now keep in mind that this too could have been a rumor.

Norm Kiefer recalls:

It was about this time that Allied Intelligence lost track of a German paratrooper division. There was concern that there had been a leak regarding the invasion of the continent which was in the final stages of preparation. It was reasoned that the most decisive blow that the Germans could deliver was the destruction of our aircraft on the ground by dropping airborne personnel.

This reasoning also indicated that it was prudent to

prepare for this eventuality by arming and alerting our station personnel.

On May 17th arms were issued to our Ordnance Sections for passing out to the Station Complement. This caused a good deal of concern and much speculation. It was not long after the arms were issued that we began to man the top and tail turrets at dusk and dawn. There is no doubt that there was enemy air activity near the base on May 22 and again on May 29th.

There is nothing in the official records that indicate that there were landings near the field nor that enemy personnel was found. Does this mean that the rumor mills were running?

Henry Siteman wrote in his diary on May 27th:

The mission today was to Saarbrucken, in western Germany. The target was the Marshalling Yards. We had a good trip with the only flak being over the target. They had over 60 guns and they were pretty accurate. We got one hole in our plane. Hawkins was the pilot and we carried 500-pound bombs. We were gone eight hours.

We flew with a nine-man crew. While our ship was grounded for wing repair, they removed the ball turret. They are doing it to all the aircraft on the base.

Twenty-four ships from the 44th were sent out on this mission to the marshalling yards. Nine of those ships were from the 506th. Bombing results were good for the 1st squadron and excellent for the 2nd. Lt. Max Mendenhall, flying in aircraft #429, jettisoned his bombs in the channel when he turned back with the #1 engine feathered after it ran away.

Frank Orehowsky reports that this was the first mission for the Jack Titter crew. A-952

Jack Wind was one of the two 506th crews that participated in the second mission that was flown on May 27th. Deno Tulini and Garnet Stoltenburg were with Jack. Garnet's notes show:

The target was the coastal guns and flak batteries at Fecamp along the coast of France. We were carrying twelve 500-pound demolition bombs. There was no flak and the results were fair. This was a real milk run and the easiest raid yet.

This mission was the continuation of an experiment in the use of PFF (Pathfinder Force) that was being conducted in preparation for the forthcoming invasion. The weather was poor and bombing results were unobserved. However, it was believed that the pattern was good.

Perhaps this was one of the missions on which Deno Tulini experienced stomach difficulties. He recalls:

I remember going to the ground crew mess hall to get good food. Of course that was lousy also. The best they did have was pancakes. I remember my stomach being torn up when we were about halfway to a target. That grapefruit juice served in a mess kit cup never did stay down. It helped some to smoke one of those Chelsea cigarettes after we got to low level. That was just about the time that I could look down and see all the people and ambulances waiting for us when we got back. It was also the time that I would begin to think about that warm English ale.

Ray Marner wrote in his diary on May 27th:

The field was covered with a fine-toothed comb today. Everyone's identity was checked in an effort to locate spies believed to be on one of the airdromes.

Jack Wind remembers:

I was routed out of bed one night to stand guard around the perimeter of the 506th quarters while a group searched the barracks for supposed infiltrators. None were found. There were a lot of rumors flying around at the time.

Jack Wind also has a note for the 27th of May indicating that word arrived in Shipdham that Jack Winn and McEver were captured and are now P.O.W.'s.

The Henry Siteman diary reported for May 28th:

I was up at 0500 for a 1030 take off with nine other 506th ships to a target about 120 miles south of Berlin (Zeitz). I saw Berlin from the Wing Initial Point. The target was a large synthetic oil refinery which produced about 6% of Germany's synthetic oil. We did a swell job with the flames going up to 10,000 feet. Hawkins was our pilot and we carried 100-pound bombs. We landed at 1800 hours after an eight-hour flight,

We lost Joseph Carson who was flying with Lt. Gurman. I can't understand what happened to them as the last I saw they were heading home with fighter escort. However, they didn't make it.

Eino Wiitala was with Gurman and he recalls:

On the morning of our fifth mission, everything seemed to go wrong. Our bombardier, Morton Bouman, was sick and couldn't fly. Then, when we were all set to take off, the plane didn't check out on the final check. We taxied back for another plane. We had to move our guns and other equipment to the second plane, *Banana Barge*.

Before we got to the target we were in heavy flak. We were struck and the plane was disabled. All nine of us had to bail out. We were immediately picked up by German soldiers. I was shot by a German farmer before I was captured, but was not hurt badly.

We were sent to an interrogation center. Then part of us, the officers and one gunner, were sent to a special officer's camp, Stalag Luft 3. Five of us gunners went to Stalag Luft IV on June 7, 1944.

When the Russian troops got close to our prison camp we were marched most of the way across Germany. The British 2nd Army liberated us on May 2, 1945.

With Lt. Irving S. Gurman (POW) were Lts. Robert F. Jipson (POW) and Andrew J. Kaulbach Jr. (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Eino J. Wiitala (POW), George B. Costello (POW), Joseph Carson (POW), Theodore D. Willis (POW), James H. McMaster (POW), and Charles D. Williams (POW).

Fred Dubose reports:

During the last days of May the crew made a number of training flights to qualify for Lead Crew status. By this time the lower (ball) turret had been removed from the aircraft and the well in the bottom of the plane was sealed.

While on training flights Jerry Westcott loosened up a bit. He was normally a conservative pilot who took no unnecessary chances. On one of the flights Westcott scattered haystacks and scared many a farmer's cow out of

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letting down her milk. Jerry was a very good pilot. I hadn't seen flying like that since Bobby Reeves checked out an AT-18 in Oklahoma and flew under some ducks at the Okee City Reservoir. Good thing we didn't get reported.

Records maintained by Merritt Derr show that he went to Politz, Germany on May 29th in a B-24 H. He was probably flying copilot for Fred Stone. Robert M. Foust was on the crew. Derr's notes indicate:

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Smoke from the target rose to 20,000 ft. Several 506th B-24's were destroyed by fighters and flak.

The navigator's flight record indicates "at 1000 hours the copilot called in sighting a possible dinghy; 1015 hours one of the 44th aircraft aborted; 1115 hours another B-24 aborted; 1145 hours sighted Fw-190's; 1150 hours one B-24 down with one chute seen; 1153 hours another B-24 down with one chute seen; 1210 hours another B-24 down with five chutes seen; 1216 hours bombs away; 1240 hours both Me-109 and Ju-88 enemy aircraft seen."

On this morning nine aircraft from the 506th took off to bomb the target cities oil refineries. They were carrying ten 500-pound general purpose bombs. Bombing was carried out using Pathfinder. Our strike photos showed we were either short and to the left or beyond and to the right of the MPI.

Frank Orehowskey reports that this was their second mission.

Lt. Gerald Westcott, flying in ship #829, H, My Ever Lovin Gal, aborted due to an oil leak in the #2 engine which he feathered. Both Fred Dubose and Walter Lawrence made this aborted trip with Westcott.

Ralph Golubock, flying in aircraft #962, Princess, has the following recollections:

This was our 27th mission. Just prior to this one, we installed radar jamming equipment. I can only assume this equipment was installed in my aircraft because it was an old D model and was a good deal lighter and a good deal faster than most of the other Squadron aircraft at that time. I do not believe that the addition of this equipment hampered us in any way.

It is interesting to note that while we were over the target, we received very little accurate flak. Whether

this was a result of Sgt. Hawley's action or not, I can only speculate.

With this new equipment, a first pilot from another crew was flying my right seat. A new navigator on his first mission was along with us in order to gain some experience. Also, this was the first mission for our radar jammer, Sgt. Hawley.

We were flying the lead position in the low element of the low squadron. This put us pretty well back in the overall formation. Our target was in Poland, and our approach was over the North Sea. We had made a feint toward Berlin and then turned toward our target to the northwest. It appeared that we hit the target quite well because we saw a great deal of smoke rising as we left the target area.

We headed out over the Baltic Sea and were feeling pretty good, like the mission was over. In reality we were a long, long way from home.

Shortly after breaking the coast and going out over the Baltic, we were hit by a lone Me-410 or Me-210. It was very difficult to identify because he came slashing through. I don't think he was aiming at my aircraft. I think he was just spraying the formation and he luckily hit ours. Our #1 engine was knocked out immediately and the fuel cells in the left wing were also hit. As a result, fuel was flowing out in huge amounts. Had any of this fuel hit our superchargers, I'm certain we would have gone up immediately. For some reason it did not and the fuel was siphoned off the wing harmlessly. However, we did lose a good deal of fuel.

The main problem we faced, at this time, was that when our #1 engine was hit and knocked out and I was not able to feather it. The feathering motor was inoperative. We were almost on our back. I was finally able to get the ship righted and into a somewhat normal position. Our wings were level, but we were in a dive and the #1 engine was winding up. This created a tremendous drag on the port wing and it was extremely difficult to keep the ship flying straight and level. I then cranked in full trim tab on our rudder and full aileron tab. Even then, I found it extremely difficult to plane in a straight position. I was forced to lock my right leg on the right rudder, holding it down as hard as I could in order to maintain any semblance of true flight. Shortly after

being hit, I rang the bell one time, which was to alert the crew to buckle up their chutes and prepare to bail out. I did not ring the bell the second time because it appeared that the airplane could be flown and we would be able to get somewhere. However, our tail gunner, Sgt. Jones, having seen what happened and seeing the gasoline flowing off the port wing, decided it was time to part company. He bailed out. He was the only one to leave the ship.

I called the navigator, who was inexperienced, and asked him for a heading either back to England or to Sweden. Unfortunately, he did not have any charts that showed him how to get to Sweden. I then contacted our engineer, Sgt. Dunlop, to determine our fuel situation and to transfer the fuel he could from the port wing to the starboard wing. He was able to salvage enough fuel that I felt we could make Sweden. The chances of getting to England were zero.

I was unable to maintain altitude with that windmilling propeller, so I ordered the crew to dump everything overboard. All the ammunition, machine guns, even the Norden bomb sight which Lt. Fitzsimons took a great deal of pleasure in tossing out. We were then able to maintain our altitude at 10,000 feet.

Just at this time a large formation of German fighters were approaching and I saw them coming in on us. I thought there was no way we were going to reach Sweden. They would surely shoot us down and indeed we were dead people. Why they never attacked, I'll never know, except that possibly they felt that we were gone already and there was no need to waste any more ammunition or risk a plane to knock us down. They flew very close to us as they went by and I could only look at them and pray that one of them would not peel off and attack. We were totally helpless.

We then continued on hoping that we had a heading for Sweden. As luck would have it, we did come back over land, which I learned later was the island of Barnholm. Then, finally Sweden. In very short order, several Swedish aircraft, which were early American P-35's, picked us up and escorted us to the Swedish city of Malmo.

One other incident before we landed. When we were hit, our bomb bay doors were knocked open and we were not able



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to close them. One Swedish fighter, seeing those open doors, tried to fly under us to look into the aircraft, presumably to check for bombs. When he did, he hit our left wing! It was only his radio antenna which hit us, but it did tear off his antenna, and our damaged wing withstood the collision. We made an excellent landing on their grass field. We were immediately surrounded by Swedes in various trucks and other vehicles, all armed with submachine guns. Then, we were politely, but firmly, ushered into the headquarters building and interrogation. We landed at Malmo at 1325 hours.

During the fighter attacks, one waist gunner saw our tail gunner fire at one of them and saw it go down in flames. The time was 1220 hours.

Our tail gunner, Stephen E. Jones, known as "Zeke", made the headlines earlier in the year when he got two Me-109's with one burst. It seemed he hit the top one, who in turn, fell into the lower one. He got credit for both of them.

After he bailed out of my ship, he was picked up at sea by the Germans and remained a POW until the end of the war.

After the war at Scott Field, Belleville, Illinois, Lt. Golubock saw his aircraft Princess, which had been returned sometime in 1945.

With Lt. Ralph Golubock (Interned/Returned) were Lts. Charles R. Conner (Interned/Returned), Harold R. Chambers (Interned/Returned), and William D. Fitzsimons (Interned/Returned). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Walter E. Dunlop (Interned), Stephen E. Jones (POW), John C. Neely (Interned/Returned), Jack L. Killian (Interned/Returned), William J. Greenlee (Interned/Returned), George N. Smith (Interned/Returned), and Eugene H. Hawley (Interned/Returned)

As a note of interest, Walter Dunlop was one of engineers that was selected to be detained in Sweden to help in the repair of American aircraft that landed there during the war.

Will Lundy's material indicates:

The 506th may have had a ship, #42-50 328, named Pregnant Peg that made this mission. It is not known who was flying in this ship. The craft crash landed with the left

gear collapsed and the #1 prop bent.

When the recovery crew examined the ship it was determined that it could be repaired if it was transported to a sub-depot. The left landing gear and bent prop were no problem. However, the catwalk in the bomb bay area was split in two. Someone got the idea that a splint could be made with a telephone pole lashed onto the catwalk. With this accomplished the ship was flown to the Depot. After the craft was returned to the 506th, it became affectionately known as the *Flying Log*.

Ray Marner's diary indicated for May 29th:

"Jerry" dropped bombs near here last night. Shook the barracks again. (Note: Will Lundy indicated that these bombs were near the 506th site.)

Walter (Tex.) Lawrence recalls:

Joe Morris and I were on guard duty inside a B-24. I don't recall if it was our ship, *My Everloving Gal*. The ship we were in was located on a hardstand clear across the field from the main area of operations. The night was very dark. Joe was the ball turret gunner and I was 2nd engineer and left waist gunner on Gerald S. Westcott's crew.

We were visiting and trying to keep alert when an airplane, we assumed to be a fighter, zoomed just over the hardstand we were on. We had just scrambled to our feet when we heard the bomb, or bombs, go off in the area of the 506th.

We both rushed to get out of the hatch and into the air raid shelter that was near by. We thought that more ships and bombs were on the way. However, I don't recall any other explosions.

After the ordeal was over, I noticed I had lost my (Clinton) wrist watch. It had been a gift from my parents. You will recall that at that time watches were hard to find. That was quite a loss and we spent several hours looking for it. I hope that some ground personnel found that watch and were thus rewarded for their part in keeping those flying machines in tip-top shape.

It seemed like forever before someone came around to

relieve us and brief us on what had happened. This was the night before my 20th birthday.

Henry Siteman wrote:

Just resting up as they have flown us pretty steady these last few weeks. So we got the day off! I expect to go on furlough the first of the month. I will go to Scotland with "Shorty".

Henry Siteman reported in his diary on May 30th:

We went to an airfield about 10 miles NW of Bremen (Rotenburg), Germany. We were up at 0500 for a 0730 takeoff and a 1300 hour return. Hawkins was our pilot and we carried 500-pound bombs on this six-hour trip. McCloud, our bombardier, led the section and really hit his end of the target. He was congratulated by the General. The General said it was the most beautiful piece of bombing he has seen in a long time.

The 508th sent nine ships on this mission. It is not known who else went. Strike photos showed excellent results with the MPI covered by both squadrons.

The Milliken crew arrived on this date. With Lt. John L. Milliken were Lts. William R. Manierre, Robert J. Bertoli, and Irwin J. Stovroff. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Martin W. Richard, Kenneth E. Beckwith, Morris William Larkin, Darrell E. Larsen, and Leon J. Allen. There may have been another man assigned to this crew by the name of Gilbert Yarbrough.

Merritt Derr was on a mission to Brussels, Belgium, on May 31st. The mission was recalled due to bad weather. They were flying in a B-24H and were in the air just a little over four hours. He was probably along with Robert Foust on Stone's crew. They did receive sortie credit. B-150

Garnet Stoltenburg and Deno Tulini were with Jack Wind on this mission. Garnet's record shows they were recalled with heavy under and overcast clouds going up to 28,000 feet.

Records maintained by Walter Lawrence indicates that he went on this flight with Howard Landahl, but they aborted. It is not known if they aborted before the recall was ordered. (It may be that this mission was a make up one that Walter flew in order to catch up with his crew. He and Joe Morris had

missed some missions as a result of frostbite incidents. That is how they learned not to sit by the open side windows.)

The Hawkins crew didn't go on this mission. Instead the Siteman diary indicated:

I went to see some friends of Lt. Bearden at a B-17 base. We really had a swell time. On the way home, we buzzed everything in sight and at no time were we over 200 feet in the air.

On May 31st Delmar Fox arrived in Shipdham and joined the 506th as a replacement gunner. He had become separated from his training crew prior to leaving the States. He and three others were shipped to England on the *Queen Mary* while the remaining six remained behind to wait for an aircraft. That was the last that he ever heard of them.

C. W. Fuss reports that sometime in the month of May he was with Lt. F. B. Mack and crew when they joined the Squadron. With Lt. Mack were Lts. Richard Cody and Lindstrom. The enlisted men consisted of Sgts. Roger Tweksbury, Hesselink, Grover C. Logan, Jack L. Addis, Dewey Rigger, and George A. Asselta.

Another crew that joined the Squadron during the month was led by Ernest Gossett. They transferred into the 44th from the 492nd Bomb Group. Accompanying Gossett were Lts. Charles Burchard Jr., Sam S. Miceli, David L. Therme, and George D. Wright Jr. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James D. Bradford, Stephen J. Opet, Gerald M. Campbell, James V. Schreiber, George W. Harris, and James R. Doell.

Promotions during the month included: James C. McAtee from Captain to Major; George Berger, Sherman Dowsett, and Michaele D'Angelico from 1st Lt. to Captain; Irwin Rada, Paul Betz, Eustice Hawkins, Bernie Scudday, Howard Landahl, Henderson Bennett, Albert McCloud, Joseph Bearden, and Max Mendenhall from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.

Pilots and crews that went to a rest home or on leave during the month included: Captain Johnson; Lts. Donald Dines, Gerald Westcott, Thomas Hine, Robert Reeves, Arthur Toepel, Fred Stone, Andrew Patrichuck, Wilson, John Hess, Merrit Derr, James Tucker, Dwelle, Max Mendenhall, Joseph Bearden, Philip Quirk, Albert McCloud, Bernie Scudday, Joseph McCormack, John Farrel, Paul Richardson, Herman Flugman,

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Henderson Bennett, Howard Landahl, Van Ess, Paul Blow, Nels Pedersen, Randolph Smith, Thomas Conzoner, Jack Wind, Edwin Waldo, Mason, Arthur Stanton, and Ralph Golubock.

New crews assigned to the Squadron during the month, not previously mentioned, included: Lts. Curman, Howser, and Brown.

Other transfers into the Squadron included: Captain George Weathers and 2nd Lt. Edward Barzilauskas. Lt. Conrad Scheer returned from detached service and William Daughton from the hospital.

Individuals leaving the Squadron included: Captain David McCash to the 491st Bomb Group, Lt. Sidney Paul to the 86th Squadron, 1st Lt. Wallis Callaway to the 87th Squadron, Lt. Robert Kessler to the 389th Bomb Group, Lt. Markham transferred to the 458th Bomb Group, Captain George Berger and Michael D'Angelico to the 12th RCD.

Captain James Clements and George Insley and their crews were placed on secret detached service or to the 66th Squadron.

Some of the activities of Squadron officers during the month included: Lt. John Horey conducted a class in target identification, went to the 492nd Bomb Group to give his lecture and was Squadron Officer Of the Day; Lt. Paul Betz conducted a Presentation Awards meeting and attended a Counter Intelligence Conference at 2nd Bomb Division; Captain George Weathers assisted at his first briefing as the Senior Intelligence Officer of this Squadron.

Aircraft testing and practice formation and/or bombing missions were flown by the following personnel during the month: Joseph McCormack, Sherman Dowsett, Paul Blow, Saul Fineman, Bernie Scudday, Max Mendenhall, Donald Dines, Eustice Hawkins, Howard Landahl, Richard Hruby, Walter Scott, Gerald Westcott, Jack Wind, Merritt Derr, Ralph Van Ess, Irving Gurman, John Docktor, and Thomas McKenna.

Lt. Richard Hruby went to the bombing range accompanied by members of the British Navy Air/Sea Rescue Operations. (Note: This Unit was responsible for the rescue of his crew from the Channel.)

During the month of May Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife.

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"Didn't I tell you that I am taking some Correspondence Courses to fill in some of my spare time?"..."Oh! I saw Captain Laudig while I was in Blackpool. He got back to the States and spent two days with his wife and new baby"..."We had better wait until the war is over before we decide where we are going to live"..."It is pretty cold out. We had to swipe some wood to burn last night"..."We now have a big German Police dog. They call it Danny"..."Some of the boys in the Chemical Detachment bought a flock of chickens. Some time back they got some duck eggs and placed them in a nest for a hen to sit on. The eggs hatched and now the little ducks are following the hen wherever she goes. She treats them like one of her own"..."The boys were playing poker last night until 3 A.M"..."So the girls think that Loftus is mean for marrying an English girl. Tommy wants to know what they think of girl friends that were left at home and six months later wrote to say they were married to a 4F. Some of the fellows have lost all of the money that they thought they were sending home for their future together"..."I think that this field now has seven orphans that they are sponsoring".

Henry Siteman recorded for June 1st:

We were up for a mission (to France), but the weather is against flying for today. I am just hanging around the barracks, waiting to get paid.

On June 2nd, Henry Siteman wrote:

I wasn't scheduled to fly so I went to Norwich and got drunk with "Duke" who had finished his tour. It was a good time to let loose. We got back quite late.

While Siteman was spending his time in Norwich Garnet Stoltenburg was on a cold, five-hour mission to the coast of France. However, it was a milk run on the coastal defense area with the results unobserved. They were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs.

Jack Wind, Garnet's pilot, agreed that it was a milk run. Deno Tulini was probably with them. His record shows that the target was Burch-Sur-Mer. The only other known crew that flew this mission was that of Norman Howe. This was their first raid.

In all, the Group put up 28 ships to go to the target at

Burch-Sur-Mer, France.

According to his diary, Henry Siteman was surprised to find on the morning of June 3rd:

I was not supposed to go, but as the Group put up a maximum effort, I had no choice. The target was the Pas de Calais area (St. Albins).

We got up at 0400 hours for a 0800 take off and back again at 1300 hours. The target was four heavy guns. (coastal gun emplacements). Our bomb load was twelve 500-pound bombs. We were gone for five hours. There were 41 ships in our formation.

Garnet Stoltenburg was also on this mission. His notes indicate that the flak was light, but very accurate. Bombing results were good. Once again, Stoltenburg was flying with Jack Wind. Without a doubt, Deno Tulini was with them. Jack's notes indicate:

We became separated from the Squadron formation as a result of bad weather. I found Richard Hruby and Eustice Hawkins, who were also separated, and led them back.

Deno's note indicates that the target was coastal guns.

Merritt Derr's records show that this was a mission to Merlimont Plage, France, and they were gone for six hours. Probably, Fred Stone was the pilot and Robert Foust was a gunner. A-952

The Norman Howe crew also was out on this day. Their notes indicate that the target was the coastal defenses at St. Albins.

It is ~~not~~ known how many ships the 506th or the 44th put up that day. 28-707A

The Henry Siteman diary entries were combined for June 4th and 5th:

The 44th was supposed to be on a STAND DOWN, but they did send some planes back to the Pas de Calais area. The 5th is just another day--nothing doing. We were restricted to base at 1600 hours.

On June 5, 1944, Ray Warner wrote in his diary:

THIS OCCURRED  
ON 4 JUNE 44

WMA  
249059  
AFC  
A-11  
1111

This evening as I was coming into the site I heard a motor drone and I looked up as a B-24 went into a flat spin and fell around 3,000 feet. It crashed about two miles from here. Three explosions followed and flames shot up a couple of hundred feet. No one got out. The wing from the #1 engine was torn off and slowly floated down. What a sickening sight. Two firemen from here were killed when they went out to fight the flames. (Note: Will Lundy does not mention the loss of any 44th aircraft near the base on this date. Neither does he record the death of any firemen from the 44th.) 2 killed ROH

The Ray Marner diary continues with:

No one was allowed off the post tonight. All men in town are being brought back. The 50-cal. guns in the site are now covered and will be manned all night. Every ship is scheduled to fly tomorrow morning. Already combat men are at briefing (11 P. M.). This looks like the invasion.

Henry Siteman wrote for 8th of June:

After being alerted at 1800 hours on June 5th, we were told to attend a 2000 hour briefing. Everyone sensed that something big was up, but no one knew just what. At about 2330 hours we were briefed for a trip to northern France. We were to be the first Wing of heavy bombers to hit the coast at the invasion point. The cheer that went up was tremendous.

We put up <sup>36 Mc + 18</sup> 54 planes for the first <sup>two</sup> trips on the morning of June 8th. Eighteen more were off at 0600 hours. So all day long it was a shuttle run.

We got off at 0230 hours and were to bomb at 18,000 feet not later than 0628 hours. The invasion boats were to hit the beach at 0630 hours. They were sitting 400 yards off the French coast waiting for us to bomb. We flew to our target and dropped at 0606. The Navy was also doing plenty of shelling at our targets at the same time.

Planes were taking off and landing here all day long. The last mission didn't get back till after 2300 hours. I saw every kind of plane the Army or Navy has and between the 8th and 9th Air Forces over 13,000 sorties were flown. The weather was the only drawback. Nevertheless, everything went off as planned. I expect this same kind of schedule to continue for at least a couple of weeks.



-B 150

Eustice Hawkins was our pilot and we were carrying 240-pound fragmentation bombs. The mission lasted seven hours.

On D-Day, Merritt Derr went on a mission to St. Laurent-Sur-Mer. He remembers:

We took off in the middle of the night and almost had a air-to-air collision with another aircraft while assembling. We suddenly saw this red light approaching head-on at our altitude. We immediately made a diving turn to the right. After that narrow escape, we resumed our assembly procedure and climbed to an altitude of 16,000 feet at 0402 hours. We bombed from 16,000 feet at 0600 hours. Upon returning to Shipdham we stayed with the aircraft while it was reloaded for a second mission in support of the invasion. Our lunch that day consisted of "K" rations. I don't remember if we took off for that second mission.

Merritt was probably with Fred Stone. <sup>(DID NOT FLY (2<sup>ND</sup> MISSION))</sup> Without a doubt, Robert Foust was on that crew. Records show that the Norman Howe crew took part in the D-Day bombings. L-177 1<sup>ST</sup>

Jack Wind took off with the second group of 44th aircraft on D-Day. Garnet Stoltenburg and Deno Tulini were with him. Garnet's notes show:

We went out to bomb on the morning of the invasion. However, there was a 10/10 cloud cover over the invasion coast ammunition dump that was our target and we did not drop. I was disappointed in not being able to help the troops on the ground.

Deno Tulini recalls that "Never have I seen so many boats in all my life."

Fred DuBose remembers:

We went with the second of three waves of formations on D-Day. We bombed St. Laurent-Sur-Mer, a little resort town just east of Omaha Beach.

Walter Lawrence's records indicate that he was also on this mission with Fred and the pilot was Gerald Westcott.

A-952

John C. Titter also took part in the D-Day raids. With him were Lts. James M. Whitehouse and Robert A. Graham. The

enlisted personnel were Sgts. Ernest Puglisi, Harold J. Brumm, Milton H. Becker, Paul T. Richter, Victor J. Uchanski, and Frank Orehowsky.

On June 6th Ray Warner wrote:

This morning at 6 A. M. the invasion started. Everything is going fine. This morning the 44th led the 8th and 9th Air Forces on the first mission. Some honor! General Johnson was flying. We went on three missions.

Tonight reports came through that paratroops landed in Hardwick. I have been up most of the night issuing ammunition, etc.

Norm Kiefer recalls that he worked the radio operator's briefings for these D-Day missions. There was a mixture of desire to go on these historic raids and a common sense reasoning that said, "Let things be!" Just before the raids started, each participating aircraft had white stripes painted on the side for identification as belonging to the Allied invasion force.

Will Lundy included the following comments in his book, *History of the 67th Bomb Squadron*:

T/Sgt. Kipnes, of the 67th Squadron indicated: "I was pleasantly enjoying the movie, "The Song of Bernadette", when the movie went off and the lights in the theatre lights were turned on. Colonel Hodges came up on the stage and announced that all combat crews were to report for briefing and all ground crews were to report to their planes. At the briefing the Colonel read a message from General Doolittle. Even though we didn't know what was in store for us, we couldn't help but cheer as we left the briefing room."

Lundy also wrote: "The first mission for the 44th on D-Day was 38 ships to the defended areas of St. Laurent-Sur-Mer and Colleville-Sur-Mer in the coastal area ~~NW~~ of Caen. The 506th put up ten of these ships to bomb tactical targets in the beachhead area in support of our ground troops. We used PFF sighting as the weather was closed in and there was no visibility. Bombing results were unobserved.

"The second mission of the day for the 44th was aimed at the defended locality at Foret de Cerisy, France, with three each aircraft from the 67th and 506th. The 68th furnished six

aircraft. Once again the mission was directed toward support of our ground troops. This mission had to be abandoned because of intense clouds and the lack of PFF assistance.

"The third mission of the day included no ships from the 44th.

"However, the fourth mission was at a choke point located in Vire, France, with 24 of our ships participating (8 ships each from the 68th and 506th, six from the 67th and two PFF's from the 66th.) All of our aircraft bombed and returned to base.

*TITTER - A-957*

"A fifth mission came in, but we were stood down. The Squadron personnel wanted to go out again even though they were tired from the day's activities."

On June 7th the diary entry for Ray Marner was:

Planes went out again. Invasion going good.

Henry Siteman wrote:

The weather is bad (raining), but we still sent some planes to bomb ahead of our troops and others are hitting Berlin.

Garnet Stoltenburg must have been in that group of ships that went out on the 7th. His diary entry shows:

It was a seven-hour trip to the invasion coast of France. Our target was a highway junction. We were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs which we dropped with good results. I saw lots of boats. I also saw some action along the coast near a city in France.

The notes of Garnet's pilot, Jack Wind, indicate they dropped in back of our beachhead.

The notes of Fred DuBose show:

We went after some bridges near Lisieux, further to the east. Once again, Walter Lawrence was aboard and the pilot was Gerald Westcott.

The record of Deno Tulini indicates that he also was with the ships that went to Lisieux.

Also, Merritt Derr must have been with this group of aircraft. His records show that A/C #952, A, ~~Shack Rat~~ flew to a highway intersection and bombed near Lisleux. Merritt was probably flying with Fred Stone. No  
e-337

Another 506th aircraft that day was flown by Norman Howe whose record indicates they bombed tactical targets at Lisleux.

*7 JUNE 8 494C*  
It is not known how many 44th or 506th ships participated in this raid on the roads and the railroad choke point at Lisleux in the invasion area.

On June 8th Henry Siteman diary reports he was:

I was up at 0200 hours for a 0430 takeoff to a marshalling yard a few miles ahead of our troops in France. We climbed to 24,500 feet and ran into a snow storm, so the Group got a recall. No credit was given for a mission. We logged five hours of flying time.

*R 034* Jack Wind's notes show that he was up for an afternoon mission on June 8th. However, it was recalled because of bad weather.

*STONE*  
In spite of these two reports, Merritt Derr's records show that he made a mission to Angers, France, on June 8th, in A/C #952, A, Shack Rat. The trip took six hours and ten minutes. He probably was on the crew with Fred Stone and Robert Foust was with them.

Also, the Norman Howe crew record shows they hit rail targets in the marshalling yards at Angers, France, on this date.

Sam Miceli recalls:

An experimental, tactical, practice mission that his crew was involved with. The purpose, in theory, was to synchronize our bombing with a sudden withdrawal of our ground troops. As they withdrew, our ground troops would leave on the ground a cross made up of large cloth sheets. These were to be left near enemy territory. At the prescribed time our troops were to fall back from the battle line about a mile. The bombers were then to drop so many seconds beyond the sheets into enemy territory. Our troops would then once again advance and hopefully be able to move beyond the original battle line.

After a couple of successful days of practice on our own, General Johnson joined us for a deciding mission. In our briefing we were given eleven seconds to drop after crossing the sheets. Our crew members determined that the eleven seconds was an error. It should have been 31 seconds.

We took off and headed to the practice area where we dropped with the eleven-second interval. Coming down the road, over which we crossed, was an English "lorry". Our bombs dropped just off the road and a few feet behind the lorry. General Johnson was immediately and excitedly on the intercom with, "Bombardier! Bombardier! This is Johnny. We almost hit a lorry." I responded with, "Yes Sir, I know." The General then said, "Lets go home; I don't like this."

Part way back to the base the General had the pilot turn around and head back to the target. The pilot, Gene Gossett announced that I was to bomb the target in normal fashion. I dropped one practice bomb on target. General Johnson asked for my estimate of distance of impact. I responded with, "One hundred feet at eight o'clock, Sir." I was asked to repeat and did so with the same response.

After we were back on the ground we were asked for our opinion of the theory of the mission. I gave my response that it would work if we were to drop on our 31 second calculation as opposed to the eleven seconds as briefed. I believe at this point General Johnson had made up his mind he would not recommend this tactical type mission.

I will always remember the gentle, manly manner in which the General tested my bombing skills. This incident, which could have been nasty, enhanced my respect for the General as an officer and a man.

On June 9th and 10th the Henry Siteman diary indicated:

The weather is bad and we are not scheduled to fly. Some ships are out bombing. We are resting up, waiting for a break in the weather.

Once again Garnet Stoltenburg was with the group of aircraft that got off the ground on June 10. His notes show:

The target was an airfield near Orleans, France. We were carrying fifty-two 100-pound bombs which were dropped with

unobserved results. Flak over France was light. Visibility was poor, but I did see twenty Fw's hitting a formation next to them. We also had the interesting experience of encountering flak over England.

*R-034*  
Jack Wind was probably the pilot for the ship that Garnet was on. Jack's notes are that:

The target was near the French coast at the Orleans/Bricy Air Field. We had to sit in our plane from 0445 hours till 1030 hours waiting for the green flares that signaled that the mission was on.

Deno Tulini probably remembers that wait since he too went to Orleans Du Bricy on the 10th of June.

Records maintained by Merritt Derr show that he was once again aboard A/C #952, A, *Shack Rat*, for this trip to Orleans, France. Fred Stone was probably the pilot and Robert Foust was on the crew. Another crew that made the trip to Orleans belonged to Norman Howe.

Will Lundy's works show that on June 11th, "There was a tactical mission to Montfort (a bridge) and La Passonniere (a viaduct). Montfort was bombed with unobserved results, while La Passonniere was not found and a suspension bridge, a target of opportunity, was bombed with excellent results. The "Jerries" finally came up to try to cope with the attacking aircraft. Two attacks were made on our Group."

The diary entry for Henry Siteman on June 11th was:

The target was a railroad bridge near Montfort, France. We missed it due to an overcast, so we picked a target of opportunity, another railroad bridge. We went in three-ship elements over the target and bombed at 8,000 feet. This is the lowest altitude yet that we have bombed at. We are going to get more of these kinds of targets to aid our troops in their drive to conquer France. Takeoff was at 0400 hours after being briefed at 0130 hours. The mission was seven hours long. Eustice Hawkins was the pilot and we carried four 2000-pound bombs. B-150

*U 492* Gerald Westcott was on this mission according to records maintained by Walter Lawrence. Fred DuBose missed the mission to Montfort, France.

Henry Siteman wrote for June 12th:

We went to an airfield about twenty miles southeast of Paris (Illiers L'Eveque). Albert McCloud led a section (#2) in which we were the #4 plane. He couldn't pick up the target so we didn't bomb the airfield. Instead, he picked a railroad with a highway running along side of it and we hit this target. On the way home we passed between Caen and Bayone and got the S--- shot out of us. I thought that we held those towns! Now I don't believe the papers or radio as to who gained what and where. The pilot was Eustice Hawkins and we were gone for seven hours. We were carrying 52 one hundred-pound general purpose bombs.

Garnet Stoltenburg was also on this mission. His notes show:

The bombing results were fair. The invasion coast was clear. However, we encountered medium accurate flak about 18 miles from the coast.

Jack Wind and Deno Tulini probably were with Stoltenburg.

Another aircraft that made this June 12th mission to Illiers, France, was #952, A, Shack Rat. Merritt Derr was aboard that craft. Fred Stone probably flew the ship to and over the target with Merritt Derr bringing it home. Another of the crew members was probably Robert Foust.

The Group dispatched 36 aircraft on this mission.

On June 13th and 14th Henry Siteman recorded:

We aren't flying for a few days, but we got Albert McCloud and Joe Bearden back on our crew. They are going to make us a Lead Crew. We have a new Operations Officer and Captain Paul Blow is going to take a crew home on a bond selling tour. I sure hope that it is our crew as now we are the oldest crew in the Squadron.

Notes maintained by Jack Wind show that on June 14th he was credited for a raid on the airfield at Chateaudun, France, near Paris. Deno Tulini's records indicate that he was probably with Jack.

Merritt Derr was another of the crews that was out this day. Once again they were flying A/C #952, A, Shack Rat. Fred Stone was probably the pilot and Robert Foust was on the crew. Records for the Norman Howe crew show that they also hit the airfields at Chateaudun on this day.

The Group dispatched ~~36~~<sup>24</sup> aircraft on this raid.

Will Lundy's History of The 67th Squadron gave the <sup>24</sup> following account of events of June 15, "An ~~unknown~~ number of 44th aircraft attacked the bridges near La Frilliers and Tours. Strike photos show the results were excellent with the pattern completely covering the MPI. The Group had 100% of their bombs within 2,000 feet and most of them were within 1,000 feet. Moderate flak was encountered. The Group met enemy aircraft. One was shot down by a gunner from the 506th. Fighter support was excellent."

BAR H  
829  
On June 15 Walter Lawrence reports that he flew a mission to bomb a bridge at Tours, France. The pilot was Gerald Westcott. Fred DuBose was probably with them since his combat record shows that he made a six-hour mission on this day.

W-209  
Another 506th crew that made the June 15 mission was that of Richard Hruby. Hruby carried with him that day T/Sgt. David H. Appenzellar of Base Public Relations. Appenzellar wrote the following account of this mission.

The Luftwaffe served notice today that it was not going to give the Allied Air Force freedom of the skies over France. Focke Wulf 190's swept into Liberator formations and cascaded 20 millimeter shells into flights of the heavy bombers as they attacked military targets in eastern France. I flew in a plane piloted by 2nd Lt. Richard J. Hruby of Marlin Green, Washington D.C. While the youthful pilot put his Liberator through violent evasive action, I watched the bullets from the top-turret guns of T/Sgt. Cletus C. Clark of Roswell, South Dakota, turn one Fw-190 into a smoke-trailing, uncontrollable loss to the Luftwaffe. In other sections of the French skies I saw furious dogfights between U.S. P-51 Mustangs and German fighters with at least one of the enemy ships hurling down to destruction.

The mirror-clear June day made the skies an arena of incredible beauty as the planes continued to clash in violent battles. The opposition failed to interrupt the bomb run and I watched the heavy explosives speed down to their objectives in patterns that were the acme of symmetry and accuracy.

I flew in the waist of the Liberator. The waist gunners were the twins, Fount B. "Boyd" and Thomas L. "Loyd"



Bartley of Keystone, Oklahoma.

I saw the blue predawn haze of England end as the colorful landscape dipped into the English Channel. Later the equally peaceful appearing countryside of France rose from the waters. This peace apparently belied the fact that the greatest military clash in history was taking place on the placid looking beaches and fields. The skies too were calm and quiet except for the hum of the Allied bombers as the aerial force of the invasion crossed into the Continent of Europe.

Not long afterward the first sign suddenly broke that enemy planes were about. The keen eyes of the Liberator gunners quickly identified an Fw-190 as it plummeted down from a height of well over fifteen thousand feet. It was spinning and twisting when last sighted going into a low cloud.

As Lt. Richard Hruby continued on his course into France, 2nd Lt. Herman C. Flugman of 504 Grand Street, New York City, the bombardier, announced over the interphone that there were repeated twenty millimeter bursts directly ahead. Approximately two minutes later the staccato bursts of Liberator gunners to our right gave notice that enemy fighters were sweeping into the attack.

Pulling on past the liberator formation and to the front once more, five or six Focke-Wulf's turned and started back through the flight of heavy bombers again. This time they headed toward Hruby's ship and as cannon bursts exploded beneath the numbers one and two engines, Sgt. Cletus Clark opened fire and riddled the attacking fighters. Boyd Bartley at the left waist gun and Robert Petkoff, of Carnegie, Oklahoma, tail gunner, also sprayed bullets into the damaged aircraft as it sped by. The Liberator shook and groaned as the vibration of fifty calibre guns took effect. None of the gunners had the opportunity to watch the finish of the attacking Nazi as they opened fire again on the second of the two planes.

During the period of this attack, Hruby put the Liberator into evasive action that mauled and pushed us around the waist of the ship. The Bartley twins clung to their guns as I was being thrown against the side of the ship. Through all of this wild action, I could hear the clatter

of Boyd Bartley's gun as it rattled on undisturbed. The twins seemed to work in perfect coordination with each twin anticipating the move of the other. All the while their backs were turned toward each other.

Shortly after this, Mustangs and Thunderbolts engaged the enemy planes and although the Focke-Wulf's remained in evidence, no further attacks were made on our formation.

After seeing our bombs drop on the target, we watched, in a period of comparative quiet, the explosions caused by the other formations of bombers. Mustangs and Thunderbolts hovered about in protective groups as we made our way back. A Liberator with one engine knocked out and another trailing smoke fell to the rear of the formation. Four Thunderbolts fell back with them as support for the return trip.

From a town to the left, as Hruby guided the Liberator back, brilliant flashes appeared as antiaircraft batteries opened fire. In the sky the explosions appeared as puffs of wispy, black smoke that seemed slight and harmless. As they continued however, the clusters of sooty patches hung motionless in the air and took on a forbidding atmosphere. Finally the welcome blue waters of the English Channel appeared once more and with the break of tension came jocular and raucous chatter over the interphone.

The patch work of the English fields never appeared so lovely and serene as when they passed smoothly beneath us on the return to base. As we neared our airfield we looked down and silhouetted upon the light, half transparent clouds was the shadow of our Liberator completely circled by a perfect rainbow of most brilliant reds, blues and yellows. The entire crew watched it with awe, forgetting now the earlier encounters, the deadly guns and the load of destruction that had been our cargo as we left the base some hours earlier. The shadow and rainbow glided along beside us, disappearing finally as the airfield pushed into view. Lt. Hruby slowly let the bomber down as we headed in to land.

On this day, Merritt Derr had the misfortune of flying a three hour abortion.

Will Lundy wrote, "To illustrate how vast the 8th Air Force has grown, an excerpt from the Daily Operations Report is herewith quoted: "1528 heavy bombers (859 B-17's and 672

16 JUNE

B-24's from three bombardment divisions were dispatched against a variety of targets in France, Belgium, Holland and the Rhine Valley...." This does not include medium bombers, fighter bombers or fighters! A total of 2051 aircraft made sorties from England over enemy territory with losses of nine aircraft: five heavies, three fighters and one weather plane. Claims against the enemy were: 12-4-7. This is for the 8th Air Force ONLY!

"For the first time, V-1 buzz bombs hit London! The long heralded secret weapon of the Huns was at last revealed, but it came as no surprise to the populace.

"Considerable damage is being wrought, but it is usually a nonmilitary target as it is inaccurate or unpredictable in its flight."

Ray Marner wrote on June 16th:

Our planes have been going out almost everyday. Sometimes twice. Rumors are getting heavier about our going home. Maybe it will happen in three or four months.

It looks like more landings in Europe will be made soon. I think it's been postponed twice because of the weather.

On June 17th Will Lundy's works show, "Bources airfield was to be the target on this mission, but it was scrubbed and another target was selected. Melum A/F, Germany, was the mission that was flown by one element of a 12-ship squadron. This was a G-H mission and the field was hit with unobserved results. Inaccurate meager flak was encountered, but no enemy aircraft."

Henry Siteman's diary indicated:

We were up early for a mission. In fact we never really got to bed. The call was at 0030 hours for a 0200 hour briefing. However, the mission was scrubbed at the last minute. I went back to the barracks and to bed. In the afternoon and evening I went to visit my English friend "Pop" Browne. This is the second day in a row that I have been there.

On June 18th, Merritt Derr flew a combat mission.. His notes show that A/C #952, A, Shack Rat went to Wesermunde, Germany. He probably was with Fred Stone. Robert Foust was undoubtedly with them. His notes show:

The primary target was near Hamburg, but because of cloud cover they bombed at Wesermunde.

Garnet Stoltenburg's diary entry for June 18th indicates:

I was on an eight hour mission to an airfield southeast of Hamburg, Germany. We were carrying fifty-two 100-pound bombs. The target was obscured. We picked a target of opportunity. It was a coastal city which they hit with good results. The bombs struck in the center of the city.

Garnet was probably with Jack Wind whose notes indicate that the name of the targeted airfield was Luneburg. Deno Tulini probably was with Jack Wind. However, his notes show the target to be Wesermunde. *T.I.D.*

The Fred DuBose notes state:

I was involved in the long one to Luneburg. On this flight we were followed by Me-410's. The Me-410 would hide in the condensation behind until it was pretty close. Suddenly it would veer to one side to get into the clear for a shot at the formation. Joe Gorski was our tail gunner. He used up all of his ammunition shooting at the Me-410 behind us. The other gunners passed their ammunition back to the rear turret to replenish his supply. I can remember that each burst that he fired was felt all the way up to the front of the aircraft. It was particularly noticeable because he was the only one firing at the time.

Walter Lawrence will remember this incident since he was with Fred and Gerald Westcott. Norman Howe's crew notes show the primary target to be an airfield at Luneburg, but it was too cloudy. Frank Orehowskey believes the Titter crew made this "long haul". Will Lundy's material shows that a 67th aircraft, #013, was flown on June 18th by a 506th crew. There is no indication of which crew it was. *C.N.W.*

It is unknown if any other 506th crews or ships participated in this raid.

Henry Siteman's notes reveal for June 18th:

I was called for a 1500 hour briefing and a 1700 hour mission. Once again it was scrubbed because the 492nd Bomb Group couldn't get ready in time. (Note: two PFF ships from the 66th Squadron were scheduled to lead the

12 A/c  
SCOTSDAY  
WIND WESTCOTT  
VAN ESS  
STONE  
HRUBY  
MENZEL  
LEONARD  
SCOTT  
HOWE  
WILLIAMS  
McKENNA

#166  
#1013

6/12/44  
6/19/44

392nd Bomb Group. It is not known if the Eustice Hawkins crew was to fly with them or the 492nd).

On June 18th Will Lundy reported, "Pilotless aircraft are operating over southern England in larger numbers."

The next day, June 19th, Lundy wrote, "The Group was scheduled for two missions today. The 68th, with 11 aircraft, represented the entire 44th when the 506th's ships were cancelled. Autheaux, France, was the target--a military installation--and was hit with unobserved results due to 10/10 cloud cover. Moderate, accurate, predictor-controlled flak was encountered, but only one ship suffered battle damage. The second mission was scrubbed."

There seems to be some confusion in the records since the following 506th personnel went to Autheaux on June 19th. They may have been flying with the 68th.

Henry Siteman reported:

We went to the Pas de Calais area to look for a plant where they make the V-1 Buzz Bombs. They are pilotless planes that they have been sending over London. They got us up at 0500 hours for a 0800 hour takeoff. The mission was then set back for eight hours. We took off at 1530 hours and returned at 1930 hours. The pilot was Eustice Hawkins. Our load was forty 300-pound general purpose bombs. I managed to hit the hay at 2330 hours for some well-earned sleep.

Garnet Stoltenburg also was out on June 19th. He was probably with Jack Wind and Deno Tulini. Garnet's notes indicate:

We went to Autheaux, France. The target was the construction works for rockets. Bombing results were good with a good pattern that destroyed the target. Flak was light and inaccurate. However, there were some places that the flak was accurate. There was no fighter opposition. Once again we had a bomb hang up.

Walter Lawrence's records also show that the target was Autheaux, France. He and Fred DuBose were on this four-hour mission with Gerald Westcott. Once again, Merritt Derr was flying with Fred Stone in A/C #952, A, *Shack Rat*, on this mission to the rocket installations at Autheaux, France. Robert Foust was probably one of the gunners aboard.

Will Lundy's *History of the 67th Squadron* shows that on June 20th the Group made a deep penetration to Politz, Germany. From the information that is available, there was only one known 506th crew that made this mission. The notes of the Norm Howe crew indicate that the target was the oil industry at Politz, Germany.

However, the 506th had other crews that engaged in combat on this day.

Henry Siteman's diary shows for June 20th:

I was up at 1400 hours and briefed at 1600 hours for a 1800 departure to the Calais area of France. Our target was once again the pilotless plane production facilities. Flak was rough and we led the Group. "Happy" got a piece of flak about four inches from his rear end and today is his birthday. He says they can't do that to him. He was plenty mad at "Jerry" on our return to base. I can't write his remarks here, but one can imagine what he said. The pilot was Eustice Hawkins and our load was fifty-two 100-pound general purpose bombs. We didn't bomb our briefed target as it was overcast with heavy clouds. This was the second mission of the day and was made up of a small formation. We were gone for five hours.

Garnet Stoltenburg must have also been on this second mission since his diary shows:

We did not drop bombs. The heavy flak resulted in eight hits on our ship. Also, I saw a B-24 blow up while we were over the water on the way home.

Jack Wind's notes indicate:

We went back to the same area as the day before (Airfield at St. Cry, France). There was a 600-foot ceiling so we hedgehopped all the way home.

Deno Tulini's note indicates that the target was Anthens on June 20th.

On that same date, the notes maintained by Merritt Derr show that he flew a mission to Enguinegatte, France, that took four hours. On the other hand, the Robert Foust notes report the target to be the rocket pads at Bolougne, France. They both were on the Fred Stone crew.

20 JUNE

It was on June 20th that the Louis J. Wimsatt crew arrived. Accompanying Lt. Wimsatt were Lts. James W. Wood, Kenneth G. Adrian, and Eugene C. Bockstedt. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Raymond W. Robertson, Harold H. Hannon, Elwood F. Hairr, Frank B. Collins, Robert H. Mason, and Frank S. Perman.

On June 21 Will Lundy recorded in his writings, "Almost one month has elapsed since the last trip to the Big City--Berlin. Today the crews were briefed to attack the large motor works at Genshagen, a suburb just 20 miles south of the heart of Berlin. The specific target was the Daimler--Benz Motor Works. Very bad weather prevented visual bombing, so Berlin was hit utilizing the PFF method with results unobserved. Aircraft #618, R+, Glory Bee and #411, E, belonging to the 67th, were flown by crews from the 506th.

"Our aircraft were over the target and bombed with fair results. The flak was fairly moderate, barrage tracking and accurate. Out of the 36 planes that bombed, 25 were damaged. There was one enemy aircraft attack on the low left squadron. The enemy aircraft, Me-109's, were driven off by our fighter support, but not without hits being made. Some rockets were encountered also, but their effect was of little value. The 506th took the brunt of the enemy attacks. At first it was reported that three of their ships were lost, but the final count was only one.

The June 21st entry in the Ray Marner diary was:

We lost Lt. Norman Howe's crew today over Berlin.

Frank Stoltz was with Howe and he recalls:

I was in the top turret gun position when we were shot down. We were just south of Frankfurt, Germany. Somehow I got caught in the slip stream of my parachute and the intense pressure broke several of my ribs. I'm not even certain that my chute opened all the way.

About 15 minutes after I reached the ground a three-seated vehicle carrying six or seven German officers and civilians came roaring across the field. They ordered me to get up. As I painfully rose I noticed the skull and cross bones on their caps. They were from the dreaded SS troops that reportedly did not take prisoners. I thought they would kill me right then. They only beat me a little, mostly the civilians. It was nearly a month

before I got any treatment for my broken ribs, some bandages from a medic at the POW camp.

I was in about three prison camps. During the last four months we were on the road ahead of the lines. The skies were constantly flashing with the explosions of artillery and bombs. Our biggest fear was the civilians and the American fighters. They shot up everything that moved. I still have a scar on my head from a German civilian walking stick. One member of our crew was hit with a rifle butt and lost all of his front teeth.

In letters written to Will Lundy and recorded in his *44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor AND Casualties* two other crew members told of their experiences.

**William L. McConnaughay** recalls:

Our trip to Berlin, our fourteenth into Germany, was uneventful due mostly to a good cloud cover, with only isolated pockets of inaccurate antiaircraft fire. About fifty miles out from Berlin, our cloud cover dissipated, and we could see a light haze hanging over Berlin. Our flight plan routed us southeast to a point approximately twenty miles south of Berlin, and then due north across the city.

As we turned north and quickly approached our target, the whole damn sky, almost as far as the eye could see, was a blazing inferno created by hundreds of antiaircraft guns installed there. Off to each side, German spotter planes were flying at our exact altitude, relaying this information to the gun batteries below, increasing their efficiency for their devastating barrage on our bombers. Although we tried to ignore it, we could see bombers ahead of us falling out of the formation, some blowing up, and an ever increasing number of parachutes floating down over the city.

In spite of what we saw, I believe all of us thought we lived a charmed life and were going to make it, but seconds before we were to drop our bombs, a shell exploded in the vicinity of our left outboard engine. We dropped out of formation like a ton of bricks and continued to lose altitude until we could jettison our bomb load. With the bombs gone, we were able to stabilize our position and were soon over the outskirts of Berlin. A quick check of the plane revealed our condition was not critical, and our



navigator, Lt. David Harris estimated we could be in Sweden in approximately 35 minutes....

I saw some Me-109's closing rapidly from the rear. These fighters had a 20-mm cannon in the nose and three .30-caliber machine guns in each wing. As the first two fighters made their pass at us, their cannons made gaping holes in our left rear stabilizer and left wing....

Surveying the damage from my vantage point, I could see that the entire left rear stabilizer was gone and approximately one-third of the left wing. It seemed like there were thousands of holes. Our plane at this time was completely out of control, and I'm sure that the pilots were far too busy to inform the rest of us what we could expect....

I was brought back to reality when the pilot announced over the intercom that he could handle the plane and we should all parachute out as quickly as possible. I started looking for my parachute that I had so nonchalantly tossed on the flight deck earlier.

Crawling over to the bomb bay, I jumped out, following my plan to free fall as long as possible. But suddenly I was in a small, low lying cloud and could not see the ground....I pulled the cord for a short ride to earth with my chute blossoming above me.

With all of this activity, I had completely forgotten about the rest of the crew. Looking up, I quickly counted eight chutes--all of the crewmen. They were all in the same general area and still about a mile up. Breaking almost every rule, I headed on a dead run for a relatively small wooded area where I stopped, sat down and became violently ill at my stomach....

....I jumped up and ran out of the woods, back into the potato field where I had landed and then I noticed a small green spot ahead and ran for it--anything was better than this open field. The green area turned out to be better than I had dreamed because it was a hole perhaps 30 feet in diameter, about eight feet deep, a small pond of water in the middle and small trees and shrubs around the entire bank. Soon I was into the water up to my armpits, my head and shoulders well covered by a small tree....

I was captured 10-to-12 days later while trying to get to

Sweden....I was sent to Stalag Luft #1.

Henry Faller also was aboard this ship and he recalls:

I don't remember why we were flying in a borrowed plane. We received a direct hit through the #1 engine just before the bomb run and fell out of formation. After salvaging our bombs we headed cross-country with the hope that we could tag on to some formation, but were hit by about six Me-109's who took turns at us. When it became evident that we could no longer stay airborne (about 12,000 feet), we bailed out and all became POW's except our copilot Gordon Henderson. He was killed by civilians when he landed.

With Lt. Norman E. Howe (POW) were Lts. Gordon W. Henderson (KIA), David Milton Harris (POW), and Franklin W. Binkley (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert E. Smith (POW), Henry D. Faller (POW), William L. McConaughay (POW), Frank Stoltz (POW), and Francis E. Termin (POW).

Gerald Westcott was also in the air on June 21st. The records of both Fred DuBose and Walter Lawrence show they were on a nine-hour trip to Genshagen (Berlin), Germany. Another crew that may have made this trip to Berlin belonged to Titter according to Frank Orehowskey.

Henry Siteman, according to his diary, spent June 21st around the barracks and went to a movie in the afternoon.

Henry was not resting on June 22nd. Instead:

I was briefed at 1400 hours for a takeoff at 1630 hours for an airfield just 2 miles south southwest of Paris (St. Cyr). Once again, this was the second mission of the day for the 44th. I got a good look at the Eiffel Tower and the city itself. The flak was rough in the target area. The pilot was Eustice Hawkins on this five-hour mission on which we carried twelve 500-pound bombs.

Jack Wind wrote in his notes for June 22 that he:

Went to an airfield at St. Cyr on the coast of France. He also noted that this was Ben Mazza's 30th mission.

In his works, Will Lundy wrote about this raid, "St. Cyr, France, an airfield, was the second mission for today. This airfield has been hit a number of times, but always with

rather poor results. This time however, the airfield was hit with very excellent results. There was meager to moderate flak." Lundy also described the earlier mission that was flown on June 22nd, "It was a short one to Nucort, France, a main supply site for the military installations along the coast of France. Nucort is also suspected as being a supply site for the Buzz Bomb installations. The results of the bombing were good."

Garnet Stoltenburg must have been on the first mission of this day. His notes reveal:

We had a bomb load of twelve 500-pound demolition bombs which we took to a supply depot for the buzz bomb sites in the Calais area. Flak was light and inaccurate. The bombing pattern was excellent and the bombs were right on target. The mission took five and a half hours.

Records kept by Deno Tulini show the target to be Nucort. Merritt Derr's records also show the target to be a rocket depot at Nucort, France. On this trip he was back on A/C #952, A, *Shack Rat*. Fred Stone was probably the pilot and Robert Foust was a crew member.

Will Lundy's works show that on June 22nd, "Between 50-and-75 pilotless aircraft (V1's) were over England today. There were about 37 over London. They are being handled with much better success by the ack-ack batteries and fighter planes over southern England."

Norm Kiefer remembers:

One of my friends from home became involved in this battle of the buzz bombs. Howard Benner was in an American Artillery unit that was transferred to an area outside London. They were throwing up barrages set to burst in the path of the incoming buzz bombs.

Some American and British fighters were assigned to destroy these threats to London. At first they tried to shoot them down. Then they discovered that there was more success if they flew along side and tilted the wing of the pilotless craft, thus upsetting their gyroscope. The uncontrolled craft then crashed in a less populated area of England.

Henry Siteman went to visit his English friend, Mr Browne, on June 23rd. His crew was on stand down.

On the other hand, Gerald Westcott was on the swing assignment and found himself on the way to bomb an airfield at Laon/Anthies, France. Records maintained by Walter Lawrence and Fred DuBose show they were on a six hours mission on June 23rd. Records maintained by Merritt Derr show he also was at Laon, France. It is probable that he was with Fred Stone and Robert Foust on that day. The note in the Robert Foust diary indicates:

We had to make two runs over the target. We lost the #4 engine and our hydraulics were shot out. The nose wheel tire blew out during the landing. We counted 82 holes in our plane due to flak.

Henry Siteman was on stand down once again on June 24. He needed the time off as well as the beautiful day to offset the bad news that he received that morning.

Orders just came out that crews have to fly 35 missions now to complete their tour!! They say it is because the missions flown during the invasion period--June 6th to the 17th--didn't count on the tour. I may have to pull 33 as I got three during the period.

The weather is so bad that no mission could be scheduled. I did go up for a check flight to qualify Henderson Bennett for first pilot.

Garnet Stoltenburg was on a raid to Abbeville on June 25th. He was probably flying with Deno Tulini and Jack Wind. Garnet's diary stated:

*Diary*  
We were carrying fifty-two 100-pound general purpose bombs. The specific target was the plants that furnish power to the rocket sites along the coast of France. Flak in the target area was light, but fairly accurate. Bombing results were poor. The old problem of bombs hanging up in the bomb bay resulted in the bombs being salvaged.

The Gerald Westcott crew appears to have been with another 44th formation on June 25th. Both Walter Lawrence and Fred DuBose were with him on a five-hour trip. The notes of Walter indicate that the specific target was Doullens, France.

The Fred Stone crew probably was at Doullens. Robert Foust's notes show:

The raid was somewhere in France. All of our crew is very tired of flying and needs a rest. William Strange observed a ship from another group flying close to us. It requested permission to join the formation for protection. We could see the crew members scurrying about trying to stop the flow of gasoline from battle damage it had received. A few minutes later, a fire blossomed out in the bomb bay and the pilot of this aircraft (named Tuffy) then dove out of the formation to keep from taking our B-24 down with him in case he exploded.

As we watched, we could see the men bailing out of the rear hatch on fire! Some of the chutes opened, but they were on fire as well. It appeared that none of the crew escaped alive. William Strange remarked then that if we were ever hit like that he was going to jump immediately and advised the rest of us to do the same.

The June 26th entry in the Henry Siteman's diary revealed:

Now that Henderson Bennett is a first pilot, they are taking Eustice Hawkins away from us and sending him off to PFF in the 66th Squadron. It means a Captain rating for him. So now Bennett will take over. I visited "Pop" Brown in the evening and had a great time.

On the following day, June 27th, Garnet Stoltenburg continued to fight the war in the air by going to Creil, France. His diary entry was:

We carried twelve 500-pound demolition bombs. Our target was the rail center. Flak was heavy and very accurate. Bombing results were good. Our ship was hit several times. Bernie Scudday and crew went down.

Garnet was probably with Jack Wind and Deno Tulini on this raid. Jack's notes show that the target was the Creil Rail Tunnel and marshaling yards. In a recent letter Jack described events of that day:

While waiting for takeoff that morning, Bernie Scudday and I talked about this being our 31 mission and hopefully our last mission. At that time a tour consisted of 30 plus missions, but not more than 35. Weather over the target was predicted as overcast and we would bomb through the clouds. The lead squadron was following a PFF ship and we were the second squadron consisting of 12 planes. Scudday flew Deputy Lead on the right wing of the leader. I led

the second element so that I had to not only watch the leader, but also Scudday.

It turned out that the weather was clear over France and the target. We were flying at 20,000 feet. Our leader fell behind the lead squadron. If I remember correctly, my navigator said we were six minutes behind. We should have been directly behind the lead squadron since our drop point would be the smoke marker left by the PFF leader when he dropped his bombs.

In the distance ahead I saw the lead squadron drop its bombs and the black puff of the marker. There was some medium flak near them.

Our leader was tracking towards the marker and we could see the German gunners zeroing in on the marker as we approached. Then the flak guns stopped firing.

I tried to call our leader in order to get him to change altitude since the German gunners had us zeroed in and were waiting for us. I believe that I also heard Scudday calling. Neither of our calls were responded to verbally or by a change in altitude.

Just as we reached the PFF marker and bombs went away, the flak hit us. Scudday took the first burst and it appeared to be in the cockpit. I saw the dark red flame and smoke burst from the window. The plane staggered and fell off into a spin. My crew reported seeing one parachute from Scudday's ship.

I remember seeing two flak bursts directly ahead of me and I "blanked out". When I snapped out of it we were about five miles from the rest of the Squadron. My copilot told me later that I suddenly kicked left rudder and dove out of the formation.

In Will Lundy's *44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor and Casualties* the following account was recorded by Raymond McCormick, who was with Scudday:

We were on an unusually long bomb run from Reims, France, straight into the target which was a bridge over the Seine River, just north of Paris. There was a G-H aircraft (radar controlled) in the lead, being vectored from England. In establishing the bomb run, he was all over the sky and our bombardier, Paul Richardson flying in the

deputy lead slot, decided to go up on the flight deck because he said he could not follow the lead ship through the bomb sight. This was a fatal decision! Carl Tepe and I were in the nose when we were hit.

The flight deck was destroyed by that original flak burst, which entered behind the nose wheel and took out the entire flight deck. It was a direct hit. I looked back from the navigation compartment and the entire flight deck was empty; it looked like a big canoe. No roof.

I saw Carl Tepe start to come out of the nose turret and I turned to open the nose wheel doors. Those doors were kinked upward and jammed. I made a wild dive at the doors that propelled me out of the nose wheel opening. I found out later that Tepe had hooked his shoe laces on the gun sight and had some difficulty freeing himself from the electrically heated felt boots. He did, however, get free and was picked up on the ground shortly after parachuting.

Coyle Acuff, a waist gunner, reached for his chute on the plywood floor, that had replaced the ball turret, when the plane began to burn. He thinks he was blown out through the floor! He hung onto his chute and placed it on his chest in midair. One of the other gunners in the rear, either Lester Warren or Robert Ries bailed out and did not open his chute at once. When he did deploy it, the chute went through the propeller of the number one engine of another 44th plane that was trailing the formation at approximately 1,500 feet. The chute then became a long single rope-like structure and I followed it all the way to the ground. A terrible way to go! (Note: The airplane that the parachute struck on the way down was piloted by Lt. John Milliken of the 506th.)

Since I had impulsively opened my chute at about 20,000 feet, I think, it took me a very long time to get to the ground. It seemed about 20 minutes. I fell in a wooded area, caught between two birch trees, like a towel in a clothespin. I sustained a partially ruptured urinary bladder for which the Germans hospitalized me at Beauvais, France. Later I met Carl Tepe and Coyle Acuff at a transient camp at Beauvais. They went to Memel, in Lithuania, and I went to Stalag Luft I. In this camp with me were at least twenty other officers from the 44th.

With Lt. Bernie L. Scudday (KIA) were Lts. John A. Farrell (KIA), Raymond A. McCormick (POW), and Paul Richardson (KIA).

The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph E. Wycheck (KIA), Anthony J. Venture (KIA), Carl W. Tepe (POW), Robert P. Ries (KIA), Coyle J. Acuff (POW), and Lester D. Warren (KIA).

On June 27th Ray Marner wrote in his diary:

We lost Lt. Scudday's crew today. Also, a man bailed out of a ship over France.

Merritt Derr flew the June 27th mission to Creil in A/C #052<sup>209 W</sup>  
~~A, Shack Rat~~. He recalls:

It was always customary for Fred Stone to fly the mission to the target. After bombs away, I would take over and fly back to Shipdham. This mission was no exception. Flak was very intense and accurate. Over the target we were bracketed with it.

Bernie Scudday's plane was flying on our right when it suddenly turned belly up and went down. I don't believe there were any survivors.

We received numerous hits which started a fire in the #3 engine and cut a big hole in a fuel cell that poured gasoline into the open bomb bay area. I'll never know why we didn't blow up.

Charles Brown and Herman Flugman, who flew on this mission as an observer, plugged the fuel leak as best they could with clothing. I feathered the #3 engine and hit the fire extinguisher switch. This stopped the fire.

A piece of flak entered the aircraft on the left side of the cockpit and flew across the instrument panel before going out the window on the right side. If Fred Stone and I had not been switching jobs at that precise moment, Stone's hands would have been on the yoke and would have been shattered by the piece of flak.

There was debris flying all over the cockpit. Another piece of flak entered the cockpit from below and lodged in my seat. Fortunately, the armor plated seat saved my butt.

We were losing altitude and couldn't keep up with the Squadron. About this time Robert Foust reported on the intercom that William Strange had bailed out.



No bailout signal had been given, but apparently from the waist gun position it appeared the bailout signal was imminent. Strange was captured by the Germans about dusk that same day.

Meanwhile, back on the Shack Rat flight deck, we called our little friends for support. Soon we had the most beautiful P-51 escort that I have ever seen.

We checked our fuel supply and decided we would bail out after crossing the Allied lines, if need be. Upon reaching that position we again checked fuel and decided to stay with the airplane as long as possible.

Eventually we got back to Shipdham with only vapor remaining in the tanks and landed on the grass. This made the Engineering Officer very unhappy because the aircraft had to be towed back to its revetment.

Robert Foust was also with Fred Stone. His diary reported the events in the back of the ship:

Right after bombs away, there was extra heavy flak over the target. Bursts directly below the bomb bay took away the fuel transfer pump. This allowed high octane fuel to flow into the bomb bay and through the rear of our aircraft. All of us in the tail were soaked with fuel. The pilot was diving out of formation because there were exploding B-24's on either side of us. On a mission two days earlier we had seen a ship from another group that was in the same condition that we were in now. None of them escaped. Our right waist gunner, remembering his statement that he would not wait till it was too late, thought we were going down and handed me my parachute. He then bailed out of the rear hatch.

The pilot gave us the choice of bailing out over France or riding back to England with him in a fuel soaked aircraft. None of the rest of us bailed out and we returned to base with very little, if any, gasoline left.

Jack Wind recalls:

On one of our missions we caught some flak and I saw a man jump from the plane ahead of us. My tail gunner reported that the chute opened. All of our planes returned to base. It turned out that the ship that the man jumped from had flown into some smoke from a flak burst. When

the smoke entered the waist of the ship the gunner dove out of the window.

The 506th also lost Santo Romeo on the return from the Creil raid. Will Lundy's works recorded this loss as follows:

Lt. James Tucker, remembers that after our first two missions I was made first pilot. I was never assigned a regular copilot to take my place. We used a number of copilots from then on.

On 27 June, 1944, our target was Creil, France, approximately fifty kilometers north of Paris. Enemy action had been rather heavy on the way in. On the bomb run and over the target antiaircraft fire was very heavy and accurate. We had direct hits on our #1 and #4 engines, knocking them out.

After the bomb run, we were intercepted by enemy fighters because we were crippled. The fighters knocked out our hydraulic and oxygen systems. Then we lost our #3 engine over the Channel on the way back, and lost our last engine, #2 near the coast of England. We just made it to a fighter base just inland from the coast line.

We were unable to lower the landing gear with the #3 engine and the hydraulic system out. Probably due to another malfunction, neither could the landing gear be cranked down.

Upon learning that Sgt. Romeo had gone below the flight deck to try to lower the nose wheel and get it locked into place, I gave the order for him to return to the flight deck immediately. We were close to ground contact. However, for reasons unknown, he delayed his return too long and upon contact with the ground, the nose wheel was forced back and crushed him. His death was immediate. No other members of my crew were injured.

This was our seventh mission. I went on to complete my tour, but our tail gunner, Karl Breakey was killed while on his last mission while flying with another crew.

During the next few days Henry Siteman reported:

June 27th--"Lt. Henderson Bennett is going to London to speak on the radio. Operations gave us all a three-day pass. We are flying down so that will be OK with me.

27 JUNE

"We went to London for three days so I didn't do any flying. However, our boys went out, just the same and really had a rough time of it. A very good friend of mine that I met over here was killed and another one was wounded pretty badly. A big piece of flak hit him in the posterior.

"Santo Romeo was killed on the 27th of June while doing his job and saved the rest of the crew from the same fate.

"Also, we lost three ships and all lead crews in the Squadron. So we are now the only lead crew except for the Group Lead Crew. I am going to Romeo's funeral Saturday down at Cambridge. Crews that went down were Scudday and Westcott who came together in the air." (Note: Will Lundy's works report that Scudday was hit on the 27th and Westcott on the 28th. The third ship was Landahl who got a direct hit by flak and collided with Westcott.) The boys say about nine or ten men got out of these three ships. They still had 23,000 feet to fall, so reports later on will show if more men got out.

The June 28th entry for Ray Marner's diary was:

We lost Lt. Gerald Westcott's and Lt. Howard Landahl's crews today over the target.

Fred DuBose was flying with Gerald Westcott on this last mission to Magdeburg, Germany. He recalls:

We were to serve as Deputy Lead Crew but were replaced by Pathfinder aircraft. We were moved back to the left in the formation with Howard Landahl flying off our left wing.

Everything went smoothly until we approached the target. Flak was close, but not particularly heavy. We dropped our load and started to turn to the right afterward.

I had closed the bomb doors and stood in the hatchway to the radio compartment when I heard a loud whacking sound behind me. When I turned around I saw that a piece of flak had severed one of the hydraulic pipes to the reservoir located in the right side of the bomb bay. Fluid was spurting into the bomb bay. I then called "Jerry" Westcott and told him what had happened.

Westcott told me to get the fire extinguisher and stand

by. As I reached for the extinguisher behind the pilots seat, I felt the plane lurch and the nose and left wing dropped. There was rapid deceleration.

Before I could get the extinguisher I lost my balance and fell struggling into the bomb bay. When I came to I was on the left wall of the bomb bay with the doors at my feet. The area around me was on fire.

In one of the classes we had been told that the door was designed to give way when one hundred pounds of pressure was applied. I kicked at the door to see if I could break it loose. Instead of breaking loose, the door slid open.

I kicked out of the bomb bay into a free fall. In one of the briefings the instructor had told us that in a free fall one could control his body position or attitude through the use of his hands and feet. This meant that you were using them as ailerons and rudder. I tried it and it worked. When I pulled my feet inward I began to cannon ball. This scared me so I quit that foolishness.

Somewhere in the free fall I decided that I was low enough to pull the rip cord. When I did this I found that I was yet above the level of the clouds. It seemed that I would never get down from there.

One thing that helped speed things up was the presence of a part of the fuselage sheet metal that seemed to be following my slip stream. As it caught up to me I began to pull the forward shroud lines and caused the chute to slip away from the piece of metal. When my arms tired I had to turn loose of the shroud lines. The metal would then begin to catch up with me again. Then the whole procedure was repeated.

At some time in the process I realized that I was very close to the ground. I didn't have time to prepare for the landing. It seemed as if I bounced about three times when I did make contact with the earth.

I landed in some sort of turnip patch that had very little vegetation. About four or five other airmen were also in the process of landing. These people quickly gathered their chutes and took off.

One man was lying on the ground about fifty yards from me. He was yelling fiercely. I went to him. He had both legs

broken. I straightened them and then stood up to look around. I spotted "Tex" Lawrence in a wheat field nearby. We waved at each other and then he started to move in my direction.

At about this time I heard a voice behind me say, "Hands up". There was an accent, but there was no mistaking what he meant. As I turned there stood a German "Blue Suiter". (It should be noted that "Tex" claimed that it was a German farmer with a shotgun.)

When "Tex" arrived at the turnip patch I pointed to the injured man and then to my chute. I told our captor that I wanted to go to my chute. The German seemed to understand and motioned me on. I opened the First Aid Packet that was attached to the harness and took out the morphine syringe. We returned to the injured man where I administered the morphine. The injured man was later identified as Howard Landahl, the pilot of the B-24 that had been hit and had collided with My Everloving Gal.

Some time later the others were captured and returned to the area where we were being held. We were told to place Landahl on the piece of metal that had followed me to the ground. Using the metal as a stretcher, we moved to an access road thru the fields.

A medical doctor arrived on the scene within an hour after our capture. He administered a shot to the injured man. Howard Landahl died sometime around noon of the 29th of June, 1944

We were transported into a village nearby. Later in the day we were combined with some captives from a B-17 crew. Their pilot was Lt. Johnson. We were then taken to a German army base. After a couple of days we were transported to Dulag Luft near Frankfurt. After questioning we were separated and the enlisted men were sent to Kiefheide, Pomerania, Germany, where Stalag Luft IV was located. The official name of this camp was Kriegsgefangenenlager der Luftwaffe Nr. 4.

I was greeted there by Robert Smith and Francis Termin who had been shot down on June 21st. We also found crew members from the crews of Scudday and McManus. Also, there was a Lt. Moreland who was with the original Group at Blyth, California. I seem to recall that Lt. Scheer made a forced landing at another base injuring some of the

crew.

In his *44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties* Will Lundy reported the recollections of Walter Lawrence, another member of Gerald Westcott's crew:

We were on the bomb run and flak was very heavy. When the bombs were dropped we received some damage from a close one. The pilot, Gerald Westcott, called me to check the damage in the bomb bay. As I opened the interior door, fluid from the hydraulic reservoir was pouring out and the bomb bay doors were still open. All of the bombs had cleared.

I learned later that Fred Dubose was on the cabin side of the bomb bay to close the doors when the fire began in the bomb bay.

Fred jumped from that position before the explosion. The last thing I remember was closing my door to the bomb bay and then talking to the pilot on the intercom. At that point I was at the left waist position and then the explosion occurred. Even though I was thrown out of the aircraft, I could still feel the terrific heat.

My first thought was to pull the rip cord (I had been wearing my chute), which I did, and somehow my chute did not catch fire nor was it hit by flying debris.

On the way down I counted chutes and assumed we all got out. At this point I did not know about the collision with Howard Landahl's plane. My only injury was a broken collar bone and pulled muscles in my left arm. I sprained my ankle when I landed. Fred DuBose and I landed within about 200 feet of each other. After getting out of my chute harness and putting on those G.I. shoes that I had strapped to my harness, Fred and I went to help Howard Landahl who was about 100 yards from us.

It was 1000 hours. A Land Watch farmer was coming for us as we approached Landahl. He quickly saw we were trying to help so he went on searching for others.

Howard Landahl was in great pain from wounds in his thighs and legs, but neither of our first aid kits had any morphine. We did find some in his kit and we gave him a shot. Both of his legs were mutilated, broken in several places and evidently he had lost most of his blood during

the decent. I put a tourniquet on for a bit, but after cutting his trouser leg to see what was wrong, I removed it. His wounds were not bleeding since he had lost most of his blood already. Fred gave him another shot of morphine. He died shortly thereafter.

We were near a small village, but did not leave the field where we landed until that evening. Only three men from our ship survived. Three men from the other ship were there with us at the time.

Joe Morris, tail gunner, also was blown out and free from the debris after the explosion. There was no ball turret gunner on this plane as he, Joe Gasky had been invited to London by Bebe Daniels. Only nine men flew this day.

With Lt. Gerald S. Westcott (KIA) were Lts. Robert H. Reeves (KIA), Thomas L. Hine (KIA), and Arthur L. Toepel (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Edward J. Thompson (KIA), Fred DuBose (POW), Walter V. Lawrence (POW), Frank Artym Jr. (KIA), and Joseph I. Morris (POW).

Frank Rinaldo, from the Howard Landahl crew, furnished Will Lundy with the following account which was included in Will's works:

We were hit about 10 A.M. I remember that we were being hit by flak all the way on the bomb run. I had my flak suit over my body. When the bombardier said bomb away, I looked up at my window and it was shattered. That was enough for me.

I said, "Let's get the hell out of here!" That is when we got the first direct hit. It knocked me over and when I started to get up we were hit again. I thought that it was flak again, but instead that was when we crashed into Gerald Westcott's plane, *My Everloving Gal*. I was knocked out for a few moments and when I came to again, all I could see was open space where the bomb bay had been.

Luckily, I had a back type chute on. The next thing I did was to dive out where the bomb bay used to be. Our two waist gunners bailed out on the bomb run, just before we got hit. Both the pilot and copilot were blown out after the collision. The radio operator and bombardier had jumped out of the bomb bay after the direct hit and before the collision.

Lt. Thomas Conzoner, Walter Yount, and I were captured about two hours after we hit the ground. Also captured were Lt. Randolph Smith, and our two waist gunners, Jack Davis and Coleman Underwood. Howard Landahl, after being blown out, parachuted to the ground safely, but was so seriously wounded that he died about an hour after being captured. So, after 27 missions and five diversions, the war had ended for us.

An additional account was furnished to Lundy by Thomas Conzoner:

First I recall, we were #1 aircraft in a formation when our #3 aircraft, high and slightly right, received a direct hit. The resulting wreckage collided with our aircraft which at the same time received severe flak damage. This resulted in an explosion of the right gas-filled wing.

My first impression was that of intense silence and I became aware that I was outside and slightly above the nose section of our B-24. This in turn, was separated from many pieces, both large and small, of what was left of our plane. I surmise that when the aircraft exploded, I was blown out along with the other crew members, both dead and alive. My only injury was slight, where a piece of flak hit my helmet and probably penetrated, as I still have a bump on that side of my head.

I parachuted down with no problem, and ended in the same field with Frank Rinaldo and Walter Yount. We attempted to hide in a grain field, but eventually were rounded up by the Land Watch within an hour or so after landing.

They took us to a central gathering place where my copilot Randolph Smith and aircraft commander, Howard Landahl were both alive. However, Landahl was mortally wounded in his upper thigh to lower abdomen, which was fairly open and he was in shock. Smith was totally unharmed, but was in a daze from shock. I did what I could for Landahl, but he died in my arms about 20 minutes later.

By that time they had rounded up Coleman Underwood. At that time it appeared that five had survived, one was dead and four were missing. The German troops arrived and put Landahl in a cart and marched us about three miles to a village. There we were dispatched to the interrogation camp at Frankfurt. I suppose that they buried Landahl in



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the area.

With Lt. Howard K. Landahl (KIA) were Lts. Randolph K. Smith (POW), Nels W. Pederson (KIA), and Thomas C. Conzoner (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert L. Staples (KIA), Walter K. Yount (POW), Charles F. Schiess (KIA), Jack Davis (POW), Coleman Underwood (POW), and Frank A. Rinaldo (POW).

Part of the George Beiber crew arrived at Shipdham on the day that the Group went to Magdeburg. They were later to tell the rest of the crew:

Aircraft were crash landing with battle damage. A plane would no sooner land than crew members would hop out waist windows and any place you can think of and make a run for it.

The Henry Siteman diary revealed that as usual, the last day of June was pay day. Also, there was no flying as our ships were shot up too badly. They will be repaired and ready to go tomorrow.

During the month of June Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

"Enclosed is a 'Buddy Poppy'. Not the paper kind. This one was growing wild on the top of our air raid shelter."..."Gee! There are parts of England that are really pretty. The other day I went for a motor trip for the first time in a long time. Majors McAtee and Strong accompanied Sgt. Harbison, and I on a drive down toward London in a Jeep. The good roads are all built along old Roman routes."..."No, I don't think that I would recognize my two young sisters if I saw them on the street. They must be getting pretty big now."..."Have you priced any of the house trailers? If you can get one without going too deeply into our savings, it will be all right. How big a one are you looking at? Does it have a place for a heating unit?"

July

### DRIVING THEM BACK FROM BEACHES

The (Muddy) Waters crew arrived some time late in June or early July. With Lt. Thomas Waters were Lts. Victor Louise, Amondos Boyle, and Robert Daniels. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Michel Yuspeh, Robert Funke, Patrick Colucci, Alfred G. Hawkins, Charles Walsh, and Eugene McMahon.

On the first of July Henry Siteman wrote:

I went to Romeo's funeral and it was very nice. Came back and flew with Lt. Henderson Bennett on a practice mission shooting landings and takeoffs. He let Wallace Robinson and I get in about 20 minutes flying time each. While in London, I saw four buzz bombs or doodle bugs, and heard about 14 of them go off. I also saw a church where nearly 500 people were killed by one of these pilotless planes.

The Lt. George M. Beiber crew arrive on July the 3rd. With Beiber were Lts. Gerald W. Folsom, Willis A. Edgecomb, and Paul A. Boensch Sr. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Nathan L. Woodruff, William A. Uvanni, Carl K. Miller, Harold H. Maggard, William I. Rebhan, and Perry A. Morse Jr.

William Uvanni remembers:

The fellows in our barracks seem to be a swell bunch. No loudmouthed ones at all. Honesty seems to prevail as no one takes any precautions to protect their belongings. The barracks are crowded and very dirty. I sleep near the door and every time it is opened at night it bumps my bed and wakes me up.

We all had to attend school for a few days before we can become operational; that is to fly missions.

The field is very pretty. It reminds me of life on a farm. Everything is so spread out and our Squadron is on the outer edge of the field. Things are so far apart that during a normal day we travel from 5-to-10 miles just going to and from the mess halls, schools, briefing rooms, etc.

Almost everyone has a bicycle. I paid 2 pounds for mine (approximately \$40). It is black and as old as the hills. I call it The Black Queen. It is very hard to pedal, but it beats walking. They have a flat-bedded wagon they pull

around the post for transportation, but you have to wait for it as it makes its rounds.

Two crews that trained with us at Biggs Field have also been assigned to the 506th. I know the radio operators very well. They are Bob E. Mann on Lt. Butler's crew and Gene Maschmeyer on Lt. Bentcliff's crew.

In celebration of our nations birthday, Henry Siteman reported on July 4th:

I was up at 0100 hours and briefed at 0200 hours for a 0400 hours takeoff. However, the mission was set back two hours, so takeoff was at 0600 hours. Target was an airfield about 30 miles southeast of Caen, France (Beaumont Le Roger Airfield). We bombed using the GH method at 24,600 feet. We came back at 1030 hours. The pilot was Henderson Bennett and we were carrying fifty-two 100-pound general purpose bombs.

Garnet Stoltenburg's notes show:

The weather was bad and the bombing results were unobserved. The condensation trails were especially heavy. There was no flak on our formation. The mission took five hours to complete. It was 31 degrees below zero.

There were nine 506th ships took off that morning. However, only three of them flew with the 44th. The remainder went with the 492nd Bomb Group as the third squadron. All of our ships bombed their assigned targets and returned to base.

Merritt Derr flew this mission in A/C #952, A, Shack Rat. He probably was with Fred Stone, and Robert Foust was likely aboard. Merritt's notes show:

The mission was to Beaumont, France. Our target was an airfield.

We were all very tired after returning to base (from the day's operational mission) and I hit the sack. Suddenly the Adjutant burst into our quarters to announce that Stone, Derr and Patrichuk were promoted to 1st Lt. At the moment I could have cared less.

On July 5th Henry Siteman reported:

*July 4*

I got up late. I went to the show in the afternoon. Then I went to the Red Cross club in the evening and wrote a letter.

However, Henry Siteman was on a mission on July 6th and reported:

*B-150*

I was up at 0145 hours and briefed at 0245 hours for a target in Germany--Kiel submarine pens. We took off at 0600 hours and rode two hours out over the North Sea. We hit the target at 0946 hours. Flak was heavy and very accurate. There were 44 guns there. Our pilot was Henderson Bennett and we were carrying six 500-pound bombs and 100 incendiaries.

*DINES*

The 506th put up nine ships for the trip to Kiel. We were joined by three aircraft from the 67th Squadron to make up the second squadron in the formation. Lt. Max Mendenhall flew lead with Lt. Scott as his deputy. The target was obscured so we started to use PFF assistance. However, actual bombing was visually sighted with bombing results unobserved. All of our ships bombed; except for Lt. Fred Stone in aircraft #952, Shack Rat, who turned back with their bombs due to personnel trouble.

Frank Orehowsky indicated that he believes the Titter crew was on this mission. Merritt Derr's notes indicate that he took off to make this mission, but their aircraft aborted. The balance of our ships returned to base. A second mission for that day was scrubbed.

*X* On July 6th Ray Warner wrote:

*YH* The 68th lost three ships today. North Pickenham lost 12. (Will Lundy reports these losses by the 68th to have been on July 7.)

Records maintained by Gerald Folsom indicate that he was on a raid to Bernberg on July 7th. He probably was copilot for George Beiber. William Uvanni was with them and wrote the following about this raid:

They woke us up for our first mission at 1:00 A.M. We knew we were going last night and I doubt any of our crew got any sleep. Trucks took us to the mess hall and then to the briefing.

On the wall map of Europe a red line (tape) was stretched

all the way from England to Bernberg, deep in Germany. We were briefed to expect fighters as this is in a fighter region and also to expect heavy flak.

We were pretty tense on the way to the target. About five minutes before target time we were hit by fighters. We flew in the lead element and were right up front. Approximately 80 fighters, lined 15 abreast, came in at us from 1 o'clock and slightly high. They fired as they came in and you could see orange 20 millimeter shells as they came through the air. None of the planes from our Squadron were hit, but an entire squadron (12 aircraft) were knocked out on the first pass. Some blew up and others went into dives and never came out.

Some of the crew saw several chutes come out of these planes and a few minutes later the report came over VHF radio the Germans were strafing the airmen hanging in their chutes. We had been warned to delay our chute openings until a lower altitude to avoid this, but under tension we don't always do the proper thing.

We were in heavy flak all of this time and I watched through the open bomb bays. We had P-38 fighter escorts and they gathered where the German fighters were and in a few minutes they really paid them off. The ones that hit us were Me-410's (Germany's latest) and the interphone rang out with, "There's a 38 on a 410--he blew up!!" "There's another 410 on fire!" "Hey, do you see that B-24 burning on our right?" "Another B-24 blew up behind us." "Look at that P-38 after that German--there he goes--look at him, he's coming apart!!"

I saw Bernberg below and it looked rather small. Our target was a bomber assembly plant right on the edge of town. It was easily identified because of the large runways in front of the plant. Our bombing was excellent. All the bomb explosions I saw were on the plant area and a few minutes after bombs away the whole place was nothing but smoke and flames.

We were about 7-to-10 minutes in the flak and when we broke away from it, all the enemy fighters had disappeared. We had no further trouble on the way home.

At interrogation the intelligence officer told us that missions didn't come any rougher than today's and we were relieved to know that they would not all be like this one.

506 lost A/C crashed on base

Our Group lost five aircraft. (Note: Will Lundy only reported the loss of three ships by the 44th.) The mission lasted seven hours and we were on oxygen for four hours. Our bombing altitude was 19,000 feet and the temperature was minus 7 degrees.

Once again Henry Siteman was engaged in combat two days in a row. On July 7th he recorded:

1706 I was up at 0100 hours and briefed at 0200 hours for an 0500 hours takeoff to an engine plant in central Germany (Bernberg). Flak was heavy over the target and over Hannover. We were attacked by about 60 enemy fighters (Me-410's, Me-109's and Fw-190's), but they didn't get any of us. However, the 44th's 68th Squadron lost three, including Lt. Morrison's crew. (Will Lundy's research reveals the loss of three ships by the 68th on this day, but there was not a Lt. Morrison reported as lost.) "Happy" set one of them on fire. Lt. Bennett now has 32 missions and needs three more. Hope the next ones are easy because the last two were kind of rough. The pilot was Henderson Bennett and we were carrying twelve 500-pound general purpose bombs.

Pilot was Morrison's crew continued

DINES

The Robert Foust and Merritt Derr records show that they made this mission. Morris Yoanitz was with them. They were flying with Fred Stone. Derr's notes were:

We flew in A/C #952, A, Shack Rat. The mission was to Bernberg, Germany. As we turned from the IP toward the target, I saw heavy smoke rising from the target and a formation of twin-engine aircraft flying toward us at our altitude. This formation, which turned out to be German Me-210's, flew right through our formation. They were so close I could see the faces of the German fliers. We exchanged fire as they passed through and I believe Ryan was credited with one aircraft downed. There were many chutes seen in the area as planes went down and one of our gunners reported seeing some set on fire as they were pursued by German fighters.

The Robert Foust note was:

Our target was the airfield and fighter assembly factory at Bernberg, Germany. We were attacked by twin-engine fighters (Me-110's). I saw a twin-engine German aircraft with no props (Jet Engine). A lot of B-24's went down on this mission. If all the men in parachutes had 45-cal.

7 July

McCORMICK e/L BURNED

#088

pistols they could have captured the target.

On July 7th eleven aircraft of the 506th departed England on the Bernberg mission. Lt. Leonard led the Squadron as well as the Group with Lt. Henderson Bennett as the deputy lead. Bombing was visual and rated as good. Eight ships bombed and returned to base. Lt. Leonard and Lt. Doctor bombed a target of opportunity. Lt. Richard Hruby failed to bomb due to mechanical failure and brought his bombs back. Aircraft #088 and aircraft #209 returned early due to engine failures.

DINES-

On the next day, July 8th, George Beiber was on a mission to attack a bridge at Esternay, France. It is likely that Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni were aboard. Uvanni's notes were:

Today's target was a bridge near Rotterdam. After yesterday's mission we expected anything, but were happily disappointed. How two missions could differ so much I can't understand.

It was pretty cloudy but a break through near the bridge gave us a good view of the target. I watched bombs fall for about two minutes and not one hit the bridge. They landed on both sides and I was rather disgusted with the bombardiers. A strange thing to me was that we bombed across the width of the bridge and not its length!! (Later I found out that we knocked the bridge out with near misses. It seems that concussion from 1,000-pounders going off tears structures apart anyhow!)

There were only a couple bursts of flak and I didn't see them.

For the 8th day of July there were only three 506th ships airborne for the attack on the bridge. They were part of a twelve ship squadron. They used visual sighting. As a result, they bombed a bridge other than the assigned one. Bombing results were rated as excellent. Lt. Titter jettisoned his bombs and returned early due to mechanical trouble. Our other two aircraft bombed with the formation and returned to base.

TITTER 156  
BUTLER 142  
BEIBER 429

Jack Wind's notes show that he went to a rest home on July 8th. However, he did not stay there very long:

When we were sent to rest camp, Ben Mazza and I went AWOL to Edinburgh, Scotland, on the 9th.

A July 9th British newspaper article reviewed the cost of the invasion:

25,000  
AIRMEN  
PAID FOR  
INVASION

To Make The Invasion  
Of France Possible,  
Nearly 25,000 Young And  
Highly-Trained Men--equivalent  
to two divisions--  
Died Or Were Taken Prisoner  
In The Five Months Before  
The Actual Landings.

They were the British and American flyers who fought to smash the Luftwaffe in its breeding grounds among the great aircraft plants of Europe, and in the air whenever it came up to answer the challenge.

They fought to dislocate the communications of German-occupied France so seriously that when the time came for landing on French soil the German supply system was too clogged to allow the swift rallying of German reinforcements.

The daily communique which announces that "Twenty-five of our bombers are missing" has become so regular that the effort and sacrifice by RAF Bomber Command and the U.S. Eighth Air Force, which made the invasion possible, is liable to pass almost unnoticed.

In the first five months of this year--say to within a day of D-Day--the RAF lost 1,483 bombers, mostly four-engine heavies, and the U.S. Eighth Air Force, in the same period, lost 1,407.

Fighter losses were respectively 276 and 873, while the U.S. Ninth Air Force, operating medium and light bombers, lost over 100.

Flying these planes were some 24,260 young men, now listed as dead or prisoners.

Many more, of course, were killed or wounded, but their planes returned to their home bases.



This is the balance sheet in terms of men and blood.

I estimate that in this five months pre-invasion period the two great air forces, the RAF and U.S. Eighth Air Force, dropped 250,000 tons of bombs on selected tactical and strategic targets.

That is to say, for every man lost, ten tons of bombs were dropped on some point of vital importance.

In terms of money alone, and money can never be offset against human life, the value of aircraft lost is at least 70,000,000 pounds.

On July 9th Ray Warner reported:

Tonight a buzz bomb hit outside of Watton. It would have liked to have shook us out of bed. That was some explosion. The time one hit the Regent Palace in London, Harbison was in the hotel on the third floor. The bomb blew off the 7th and 8th floors.

The following day, July 10th, the Ray Warner entry was:

We can now wear four bronze stars to our E. T. O. ribbon. They are for Ploesti, Sicilian Campaign, Italian Campaign, and Air Offensive Over Europe. We also can wear a service stripe for each 6 months service overseas.

On July 11th William Uvanni was a raider at the Rein Air Field near Munich, Germany. He was probably flying with George Beiber, and Gerald Folsom. Uvanni wrote for that day:

We had a two-day rest and then we were briefed for Munich, Germany, the Reich's second largest city. When we saw our target during the briefing, a murmur of conversation filled the room. It was going to be tough and no use kidding ourselves.

The day was clear and we could see for 25 miles in advance of arriving at Munich. There was an immense flak barrage over the city before the first bombers reached it. I watched through the open bomb bays again today and counted 14 oval shaped stadiums. I thought they were race tracks, but most were probably sports stadiums for German physical culture movements.

Munich was very large and pretty from the air. The flak

however, was anything but pretty. We were in it for at least 12 minutes and our Group lost five more bombers. (Will Lundy only reported the loss of one aircraft each from the 66th and 68th Squadrons.) We expected fighters, but none were reported. The mission lasted 9 hours with 7 of them on oxygen. We are tired tonight and our faces are tender from wearing oxygen masks.

One of the P-51's in our escort was hit by flak right over Munich. I watched him go down as I was monitoring the distress channel and he appeared to land in a river running through the city. Nobody reported a chute coming out--either he was killed when hit by the flak or he delayed his jump until we could no longer see his chute. I had a funny feeling in my stomach when this happened.

DING 127X  
Eight ships from the 506th were in this raiding party on Munich. Lt. Mendenhall led the second squadron and Lt. Bentcliff was his deputy lead. Bombing was done using PFF assistance due to a heavy cloud cover. Bombing results were unobserved. All of our craft dropped on the target, except for Lt. Eberhardt who experienced a mechanical failure. All of our ships returned to base.

Notes maintained by Kenneth Adrian indicate that he flew this mission, probably with Louis Wimsatt. They were carrying six 1,000-pound bombs. Frank Orehowiskey believes that the Titter crew also made this mission.

The Henry Siteman Diary reported for July 11:

Our Group and the whole Eighth Air Force went to Munich, Germany. They dropped over 4,000 tons of bombs on the city itself. German radio reports said bombs were falling for 45 minutes. I didn't go on this one.

Gerald Folsom went to Munich for the second day in a row on July 12th. He probably was with George Beiber and William Uvanni. Uvanni reported: 0-429

There was plenty of excitement when Munich appeared again today! Our hearts beat a little faster to say the least. The weather is very clear and the flak will be accurate again.

We reached the target with no trouble; other than a light barrage of flak on the French coast. It looked as though Munich had a priority on flak guns by the size of the

barrage they threw up at us. There were fighters in the area, but none hit our part of the formation.

Munich looked pretty again today, but I've seen all of it I ever want to see! The same goes for all of our crew. Our faces are sore now from another 7 hours on oxygen.

Ten aircraft from the 506th made the repeat performance over Munich. Once again PFF assistance was used. This time, we had two PFF aircraft with us and we flew as the lead squadron. Once again, bombing results were unobserved because of the heavy cloud cover. Lt. Stone returned early and brought back his bombs because of an oil leak in engine #1 on ship #952.

The Kenneth Adrian notes show that he flew <sup>034</sup> this mission in an A/C with the tail marking of Bar R. He was ~~probably~~ with Louis Wimsatt. For the second day in a row the Titter crew <sup>E-309</sup> was on a raid according to Frank Orehowsey. The Merritt Derr notes indicate that their crew had to abort on this mission. A-95

Henry Siteman didn't go on this raid on Munich, but he did write:

Still just hanging around the site, but the Group went to Munich again in force--1,400 this time. Just about cut off the supply line railroad to Italy so things should break soon down that way. (Note: The primary target was not hit on the 11th so they returned on the 12th to get Rein Airfield.)

The Ray Warner entry for July 12 was:

Our planes went to Munich yesterday and today. The 68th lost a ship that ditched in the Channel killing five men. (Will Lundy's works confirm this loss.)

For the third day in a row, July 13th, the Kenneth Adrian notes show that they were in combat. Once again he was in A/C Bar R. <sup>034</sup> He ~~probably~~ was with Louis Wimsatt. DINES

The 506th placed eight ships in the formation headed for the rail and communications center at Saarbrucken, Germany. They used the PFF ships that that were with them. All of our ships, except for Lts. Docktor and Allen, who experienced mechanical failures, dropped on the target and all aircraft returned to base.

N-925

A-95

Notes maintained by both Merritt Derr and Robert Foust show that the Fred Stone crew went to the rest home in Southport, England, for a week.

Norm Kiefer received a big promotion on July 14th. On July 17th he wrote to his wife:

As you probably noticed it has been quite a few days since I last wrote to you. Boy! A lot has happened since then.

Last Friday I got up at the usual time and went down to work. There wasn't anyone there, so I went back to the billets. The phone rang and Lt. John McCaslin told me to come down to his office as quickly as possible.

I had no more than walked in when they started to pick on me and wouldn't let me sit down. McCaslin wanted to know if I didn't know how to report to an officer and salute. He then said that I had a lot of learning to do in a hurry.

There was a group of enlisted men there and he told me to take them over to the drying room and put them to work. As I left the room there was a bunch of officers waiting for me. Major Frank Slough grabbed my hand and said, "Let me be the first to congratulate you." I asked him what he was talking about and he said that they had orders to swear me in as a Second Lt. in the afternoon. From then on it has been a mad race.

I had to borrow clothes. Major James McAtee was off base, but I swiped one of his blouses. Lt. Carlton Horne contributed the pants, Capt. Coppens a shirt and tie and Capt. Larry Linck a hat.

I had to go down to Group Headquarters and fill out scads of forms. Then the swearing in ceremony was held at a little after noon on the stage of the Group theater. Major Cannelli administered the oath.

After we left the theater I was walking along the street when Jimmy Caillier passed, going in the opposite direction. He threw a salute without thinking and then stopped. He then said, "Well I'll be damned! A bastard in the morning and a son of a bitch in the afternoon." He then continued on his way. That was my first salute.

I was assigned the BOQ just to the east of the Orderly

Room. The Flight Surgeon, Capt. Allison, has the room across the hall. Lt. Richard Wynes is my roommate. He was a friend of McAtee. They are both from the same general area back in the States.

That evening Major McAtee took me to the Combat Officer's Club for dinner. He had a grand time introducing me as his radio operator.

Then an unplanned drinking party started. After an appropriate period of attendance at the party, I bought a bottle and went down to the enlisted men's barracks. (Note: In December, 1985, Walter Bunker wrote "I remember you well and when you were commissioned. There was an impromptu party at the Club where Chaplain Patterson enjoyed his toddy(s) while saying he never could handle more than one.")

The next morning I got up early. I talked to Major Slough and arranged for Jimmy Caillier to be given a pass to London. Jimmy and I took the train to London so that I could get some officer's clothing at the quartermaster store.

We were fortunate to be able to get a room at the Regent Palace. Then we went to the quartermaster store. I want you to know that a Sgt. and a guy in a mixed uniform of officer's pants and a shirt with Sgt. stripes can gather a lot of stares.

Now here is where you are going to be surprised. I had saved three hundred dollars to come home with. Now that money has to be spent on my clothing. So far, I haven't spent much over one hundred dollars, but I am not through yet. The Govt. will be giving me two hundred dollars for a clothing allowance.

That evening Jimmy and I were crossing a street just in front of the hotel. Who should be approaching us but Captains Joe Young and David McCash. When they saw me in an officer's uniform they were horrified. They thought that I was impersonating an officer. They wanted to get me off the street and back into my enlisted man's uniform. After I showed them my new identity card there was another drinking party.

The next night the air raid sirens sounded. We were in the hotel bar at the time and should have stayed inside.

However, we went out in front. The searchlights and guns over in St. James Park were all in action and had locked in on a low flying plane. I thought at the time that it was strange that the pilot was not taking evasive action. Then I realized that the ship did not have a pilot. It was a buzz bomb. Suddenly the engine stopped and then there was a big explosion.

The next morning we went to Mass in a church that was on the far side of St. James Park. During Mass the drone of a buzz bomb was heard and then it stopped. That is when I hit the floor. There was an explosion. When I looked over the top of the pew, the priest was still saying mass prayers. I don't think that he missed one word. A number of parishioners left to go see if they still had a home. A few weeks later I heard that the church was demolished by one of the bombs.

Henry Siteman wrote on July 14th:

Yesterday, July 13 I went to tea at Pop's and had a swell time. Today Lt. Bennett got his Distinguished Flying Cross at 32 missions and finished his tour. He is now going on detached service somewhere in Scotland. I have no crew now, but am going to fly with Lt. Tucker. I refused to fly with another pilot as we didn't think him capable of bringing us back home. Raymond Khoury came home from the hospital today, but won't be flying for a while.

Since there were no operational flights scheduled for July 15th Henry Siteman wrote:

I went looking for strawberries with Lt. Henderson Bennett. I learned that Bennett would spend 90 days flying between Scotland and Sweden. He was to then return to the base before going back to the States.

On the 16th of July Henry Siteman was on this his 29th mission and he wrote:

*DINKS*  
A fine way to spend a birthday -- 23,000 feet over Germany. We went to Saarbrucken again and hit the marshalling yards. This target was requested by the ground troops. We were up at 0130 hours, briefed at 0245 hours and took off at 0530 hours. We were carrying 2,700 gallons of gas and twelve 500-pound general purpose bombs. We returned at 1230 and I hit the sack. It was a seven

hour mission.

*A-024*

The pilot was Kearney and his copilot and navigator were on their first mission. They were quite thrilled. Flak was moderate and there were no fighters. "Jerry" now has bombs hanging from cables attached to a balloon. We were shooting at these to clear a path to the target. Eustice Hawkins led the Group in a PFF ship and had to abort. I don't know why.

The Kenneth Adrian record shows that he made this second trip to Saarbrucken. He probably was with Louis Wimsatt. *W-209*

William Uvanni, who probably was with George Beiber and Gerald Folsom, wrote: *429*

Saarbrucken, Germany! Back to good old Germany again! Looks as if we are doomed to do all our missions in Adolph's back yard! This one wasn't so far though; being just over the French border. This means a lot to us in the event we have to bail out or are forced to crash land in enemy territory. French people offer aid to our escape while the Germans offer virtually no hope.

Bombing results were good. Flak was quite accurate and heavy. Quite a bit of flak was of the tracking variety. (Ack-ack batteries track and shoot at individual planes and squadrons rather than shooting at the entire formation.)

We've flown all of our missions in a plane named Consolidated Mess and she is a honey! So far we've had no serious battle damage--the "Mess" seems charmed. *0 429*

For this mission the 506th placed 12 aircraft in the air. PFF assistance was used. Lt. Max Mendenhall led the second *A-626* squadron with Lt. Titter as the deputy lead. Bombing results *E-309* were unobserved. All ships bombed the target and returned home.

On July 16th Ray Warner recorded:

*AT NIGHT*

*BROKEN BACK*

*NON-OPERATIONAL*

*WEATHERWAX OFFICER IN CHARGE*

Danny Mattis was killed when a reconnaissance vehicle hit a truck. (This accidental death was not recorded in Will Lundy's works.) *BAKER & BOB BOTH SEVERELY INJURED - CUTS, ETC*

*(NON-OPERATIONAL)*  
Garnet Stoltenburg recorded on July 17th that he was on a mission:

*18TH?*

18TH  
TROOP  
NO SUCH  
PERSON

We went to Aussex, northeast of Caen, France. We were carrying 52 one-hundred pound general purpose bombs. The specific target was enemy tanks and troops that were dug in about 3,000 yards from our forces. The flak was medium accurate and it lasted for a long time. Bombing results were very good. Our ship was hit eight times by flak. (Note: The Microfilm history did not show that the 506th was in combat on this day. Will Lundy does not show that the 44th went out this day. Neither does Rodger Freeman report that the 44th was in combat on the 17th of July. However, Freeman does show that the 392nd Group was on a mission. Garnet may have flown with another group in the Division on this day.)

NOT  
LIKELY

Henry Siteman reported for July 17 that Lt. Henderson Bennett left for Scotland to ferry officers back from Sweden.

A report prepared by the Operations Office, dated July 17, 18 1944 named the following personnel:

PILOTS--Mendenhall, Leonard, McKenna, Kearney, Dines,  
Tucker, Wind, Scott, Docktor, Menzel, Titter, Stone,  
Milliken, Butler, Bentoliff, Beiber, Wimsatt, Eberhardt,  
Allen, Atkins, Clements, Insley, and Van Ess.

COPILOTS--Quirk, Adams, Grene, T. L. Smith, Waldo,  
Clasgens, Heintz, Swenson, Whitehouse, Derr, Manerre,  
Kincaid, Gempel, Folsom, Wood, Airoidi, Jacobs, Ryan, and  
Kodaj.

NAVIGATORS--Bearden, Williams, Goe. Dwelle, Wilson, Mazza,  
Perdisatt, Dunbar, Bennett, Hersh, Patrichuk, Bertoli,  
McKay, Fiskum, Edgecomb, Adrian, Gleichenhaus, Healy,  
Boykin, Feinstein, Giraux, and Hess.

BOMBARDIERS--McCloud, Dowsett, Stanton, Reynolds, Miller,  
Werkstein, Graham, Stovroff, Perry, Celentano, Boensch,  
Bockstedt, Beirne, Flora, Faigenblat, Bumbicka, Gutknecht,  
and Walfish. In addition, there were two enlisted men who  
were bombardiers: Foster and Millican.

ENGINEERS--M. H. Mann, Cowden, Sheldon, Gardner, Zesdorn,  
Reeves, Lightcap, Yost, Goebel, Smart, Brumm, Brown,  
Richard, Rasmussen, Griffin, Woodruff, Robertson, Favers,  
Pettelli, Browning, Bolger, Stoeften, Hartzell, De Boer,  
Moffett, and Jandreau.

ASST. ENGINEERS--McGee, Missig, Hobbs, Siteman, Emch,



Gardner, Wurzbarger, Bushby, Becker, Larsen, Connelly, Cena, Rebhan, Perman, Parker, Petz, Cummins, Tiemeier, Young, Yaniga, Thompson, Underwood, Lynch, Cash, Fox, Clarke, and T. L. Peters.

RADIO OPERATORS--Apice, Bednar, Kovach, Wright, Racer, Khoury, Stoltenburg, Horne, Foust, Grady, Uchanski, Cervellera, Beckwith, Mann R. E., Maschmeyer, Uvanni, Hannon, Raniello, Kempowicz, Norwood, Shook, Kittle, Fletcher, and Stallworth.

ASST RADIO OPERATORS--Toothacker, C. C. Peters, Miller, Robison, Hiserote, Whiteside, Tulini, Muff, Guebard, Branson, Richter, Foust, Larkin, Deifer, Fuller, Maggard, Hairr, Garrett, Priddy, Bechtold, Hagner, and Edmonds.

TAIL GUNNERS--Murray, Brosh, Gaudin, Hopkins, Struble, Breakey, Eccleston, Anuskiewicz, Farrell, Libby, Gorski, Meunitz, Yarbrough, Eramo, Downey, Morse, Mason, Gross, Pacylowsky, Gardner, Huggins, and Federlin.

GUNNERS--Bernstein, Tuzinski, Livingston, Meyers, Gurt, Harper, Puglisi, Ryan, Allen, Humphries, Capps, Miller, Collins, Behnke, Shay, Higdon, Horner, Deutsch, Westerman, Mulholland, Wycoff, Williams, Porter, Hardwick, Di Cicco, Parks, Reed, Truono, Nealy, Banks, Grannon, Powell, Richardson, O'Gara, Howser, Murray, and Moerbe.

It must have been after Henry Siteman completed his diary entry the night before, but he got some good and bad news on the evening of the July 17th. The good news was that he would only have to fly 30 missions. The bad news was that he was flying that last mission on the next day. Henry wrote:

18 JULY  
TROARN

I was briefed at 0200 hours for a 0400 hours take off to the German lines which were about eight miles southeast of Caen. The British troops were to start a drive through this area later on in the day. The British requested we help out. We bombed just 3,000 feet from the British and Canadian troops. We bombed from 14,000 feet and the pilot was hit by flak in both feet and legs. We gave him first aid and the copilot brought our plane home. Lt. Smith did a beautiful job. Our pilot almost lost his left foot at the ankle. We gave him morphine to deaden the pain. We had a hard time with him while in the air and also getting him out of the plane after landing. I am glad that it is all over now, at least I will be able to sleep nights. The pilot was Kearney and we carried fifty-two 100-pound

A-952

bombs. The mission lasted four and one half hours.

My crew mates Wright, and Gardner finished today. Robbie has one more to go. Hawkins has five to do in the 66th Squadron. Joe (Bearden) has five and Mac (McCloud) has nine still to go. I will surely pray for them all and then we can have a great reunion after it is all over. Hawkins is now a Capt.

<sup>5-429</sup>  
~~It is likely that~~ George Beiber went to Troarn on July 18th with Gerald Folsom, and William Uvanni aboard. Uvanni wrote:

We had yesterday off, but today we at last drew a haul to France. It lasted 4 hours. We were briefed to support our ground troops by bombing German troop concentrations at Troarn. Our altitude was 15,000 feet and we carried fifty-two 100-pound bombs. They never seemed to stop dropping when we released them.

The results were excellent as bombs away was at 7:30 A.M. and we caught the Germans either at breakfast or in their barracks. The flak was heavy and awfully gosh darned accurate at this lower altitude.

We could see the English Channel at all times and this was comforting. If we were shot up, chances to ditch in the Channel and get back to England would have been good. Lately Air/Sea Rescue has been dashing in right next to the French coast and picking up Allied airmen who went down in the Channel.

We pulled our mission and were back in the "sack" at 9:30 A.M. (Banker's Hours???) This mission qualified our crew for the Air Medal. We haven't received them yet. It usually takes a month or so for it to come through.

There were twelve aircraft from the 506th in the formation that left on this ground support mission of July 18th. They flew as the first squadron in an effort to allow a breakthrough for our ground troops. Lt. Leonard led the Group with General Johnson aboard. Lt. Clifford Bentcliff flew ~~deputy lead~~. Bombing was visual with results being from good to excellent. Lt. Louis Wimsatt in ship #177 failed to take off due to mechanical trouble. Ten ships suffered battle damage with seven of them being quickly repaired.

After our return, four ships were scheduled for a second mission. The target was to have been Rotterdam, Holland.

19 July

That mission was scrubbed due to weather.

The diary of William Uvanni and the combat list of Gerald Folsom show that they were both in combat on July 18th. They were probably with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote: 19<sup>th</sup>

We went into Germany by way of Belgium this morning. Our target was the city of ~~Koblenz~~ which is about 125 miles from the German/Belgium border.

There was plenty of flak in the target area. We expected this because of the city's location. It's right where the Rhine and Moselle rivers meet and it is easy to see why the Germans would defend it well.

We are all very tired tonight. We have flown seven missions in the last 13 days and the effect of oxygen and long hours at high altitude have really made us weary.

The 506th placed thirteen ships in the air for this trip. The assigned primary target was Russelsheim, Germany. Instead, the secondary at Koblenz, Germany was struck. Lt. Max Mendenhall led the second squadron with Lt. Titter as the deputy lead. Bombing was performed visually after preliminary sighting by PFF. Bombing results were good.

This was the fifth mission for Kenneth Adrian. His notes show that he flew the raid in A/C Bar W and they were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs. The target was Koblenz. He was probably with Louis Wimsatt.

Henry Siteman reported on July 19th:

I am just hanging around waiting to see what they are going to do with me. Lt. Bennett came back from Scotland as they didn't need him up there.

The George Beiber crew was out on July 20th. The records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni show that they were along. Uvanni recorded:

Erfurt, Germany. We were briefed to bomb an airdrome in Central Germany.

We used the city of Frankfurt as a check point. I saw the "Autobahn" which runs through Frankfurt and it is the largest highway I have ever seen. It seemed a third as wide as the entire city!

There was an awful lot of flak over Frankfurt (box barrage) and we were thankful that we were able to go around it rather than through it.

At Erfurt the flak was light and I was really surprised. (Maybe the barrage at Frankfurt made it seem that way!) The airfield that we went after was an easy target as the weather was real clear. Our bombing results were excellent and we came home over Holland. We caught as much flak off the Dutch Coast as we did over Erfurt.

I can't understand why the Germans didn't defend the airfield better. We could see several multi-engine bombers on the field and although our own bombs hit hangars, I imagine some of our heavies disposed of the planes also.

On this mission there were only nine aircraft from the 506th dispatched. Lt. Oscar Leonard led the Group and Lt. John Milliken was his deputy lead. Clear weather allowed visual sighting and the bomb strikes were good. Lt. John Allen experienced mechanical failure and brought his bombs back to base early. All other ships bombed and returned to base.

Once again the Louis Wimsatt crew appears to have been in combat on this day. At least Kenneth Adrian was. His records show that he flew this raid in an aircraft with the call letter Bar W.

Gerald Folsom was probably flying copilot for George Beiber on July 21st. This was the fifth time in the last six days that this crew had been in combat. William Uvanni was with them. Uvanni wrote:

When they briefed us for Munich again, we began to wonder. A good way to get rid of a fellow is to keep sending him to Munich.

We never saw the ground after takeoff until we reached the target. There was an opening over Munich and it was the only one we saw over three countries; England, France and Germany! We were up to 25,000 feet trying to find an opening between cloud layers so that the dangers of flying formation would not be so great.

As we started our bomb run we saw, coming head-on, a formation of B-17's making their run exactly opposite ours!! We withdrew to one side and passed over the city

again catching all the flak they threw up. Having our bombs all of this time, we never really knew what worry was until then.

We skirted the city and came back to try our run again. We flew over the break in the clouds once more and caught the flak all over again. Several bombers had been hit and were going down. We finished this second run and still did not drop our bombs. We were all scared to death after making that second run and when the report came over VHF (radio) that we were going to try once more, I think everyone's heart stood still. Mine did and after the mission all of our crew admitted the same thing.

About this time we flew into a cloud bank and when we broke through we were the only bomber around!!!! We had become separated from the 8th Air Force! At that point, we had been cruising around Munich for more than half an hour. "Woodie" told Lt. Beiber that our gas was getting low and if we didn't head for home we'd never make it. (He didn't know whether or not we could as it was.)

I had opened and closed the bomb bay doors twice already and Lt. George Beiber told me to open them again. As soon as they were opened, we dropped our bombs and Lt. Beiber told our navigator, Lt. Willis Edgcomb to plot the straightest route home. We were deep in Germany; all alone and fighters had been reported around Munich. If they spotted us now, we'd be lucky to make "Stalag Luft. (The airmen's prison camp in Germany.)

The Good Lord smiled on us and we crossed Germany without seeing anything other than clouds, which were all over.

About 15 minutes after we crossed the French/German border we saw a formation of about 18 American bombers. A B-17 was leading it and there were both B-17's and B-24's in it. We headed for them and as we did we saw flak start to break around them. As much as we wanted to join them for protection against the fighters, our pilot decided we'd stick it out alone rather than fly through the flak with them.

About 20 minutes later I made a terrible mistake. I looked out my window and saw flak climbing to <sup>meet</sup> us. I was listening to my radio (I was assigned the channel at briefing) and didn't know what was being said on interphone throughout the plane. I took it for granted

that one of our crew had reported the flak.

It climbed steadily to our altitude looking for all the world like a great big staircase. One burst exploded right under our right wing and threw it high into the air. I couldn't wait any longer and switched to interphone and reported that antiaircraft batteries were tracking us.

By this time Lt. Beiber had taken evasive action and soon the flak stopped. He replied back over the interphone that he knew they were shooting at us now, but no one except myself had noticed it. (I made a solemn oath to myself that from now on when I see flak I'll switch to interphone and unless I hear it called out, I'll call it myself.)

Our navigator, Lt. Edgecomb, did a beautiful job plotting our course home and we landed at our base with 15 gallons of gas left for each engine. "Woodie" called it right. We were one of the few crews who landed at their own field. A large number of planes that came back crash landed on the English coast and almost every other plane landed in southern England, not having enough gas to reach home.

The next day I found out that the lead plane in our formation had its bomb sight destroyed by flak preventing the bombardier from dropping his bombs. His interphone was also shot out making it impossible for him to tell the deputy lead bombardier to take over and drop the bombs.

Lt. Butler's crew had its left rear vertical stabilizer shot off over the target and was leaking gasoline badly. We heard them say over the VHF radio they were trying to make Switzerland.

Rumor has it that this mission to Munich has been one of the most costly ever undertaken by the 8th Air Force. The 44th lost several planes on it and quite a few of those who came back had to crash land on the coast. (Note: Will Lundy reports the loss of four 44th aircraft on this date.)

On July 21st the 506th put up eight <sup>46<sup>30</sup></sup> ships. We were accompanied by two PFF aircraft from the ~~68th~~ Squadron. They led the first section on takeoff. The target was the armament works at Munich, Germany. PFF sighting was used with poor results. Two of our 506th ships were shot down.

*really #3*  
Lt. John Allen was flying aircraft #034, Bar R, Southern Comfort II. They were believed to have been attacked by enemy fighters and started to go down. The tail gunner was seen to be firing at enemy aircraft as the ship fell. When last seen the ship was in a steep dive and then was lost from view.

In Will Lundy's 44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor and Casualties, Dan Healy reported what happened aboard Southern Comfort II:

We were shot down by an antiaircraft battery despite strong evasive action taken by pilots Allen and Jacobs. One engine failed, I believe #4, and we stalled. Then we righted ourselves when #1 & #2 were adjusted, etc. We had not bombed Munich because of cloud cover, but bombed a target of opportunity not far from Munich. Southern Comfort II had two new engines on one side and two old ones on the other. We could not keep up with the formation and set off for England alone. When the antiaircraft shell hit the other engine, the bells went off. I got Lt. Flora out of the nose turret and followed him out the nose wheel hatch. John Kempowicz, our radio operator, did not pop his chute after the crewmen had put him out through the bomb bay. I never saw fighters on us, but then, I couldn't from my position. We were collected in a small village (Leonbronn), and then transported to the Stuttgart area. We were interrogated at Oberusal (near the Leica Works outside Frankfurt), then sent by train to Stalag #1.

Lt. Orville Flora added:

Stalag #1 was located on a peninsula jutting out into the Baltic Sea, 90 miles north of Berlin and just 60 miles from Sweden. Some 10,000 officers including 8,000 Americans were confined in barracks there, behind barbed wire.

For me the war was a short one. I was on my fourth mission when enemy flak struck a wing and touched of an oil fed fire. Because of our heavy concentration of 110+ octane gasoline in the wing tanks, we were under orders to jump any time we had a fire. An open field near a small Austrian village, just across the border from Munich, provided a convenient landing place and an opportunity for the village home guard to capture its first American. One member of the bombing crew, a radio operator, had to be pushed out of the plane and did not survive. The others

were scattered over 60 miles of German and Austrian countryside before being taken prisoner.

In a recent letter William Shay wrote:

I was shot down on my second mission, July 21, 1944. I didn't really have much time with the 506th. I spent 10 months in a POW camp or on a death march from February 2, 1945 until May 8, 1945.

With Lt. John W. Allen (POW) were Lts. John R. Jacobs Jr. (POW), Daniel J. Healy (POW), and Orville E. Flora Jr. (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Alex Patelli (POW), John J. Kempowicz Jr. (KIA), William E. Shay (POW), Steve J. Petz (POW), George C. Prida (POW), and Frank P. Pacylowsky (POW).

The other 506th crew that was lost on July 21st belonged to Lt. Myron Butler, flying in aircraft #142, Bar K. They were hit by flak and about three feet of wing tip was missing. The pilot called on the VHF radio and said that he was going to Switzerland. When last seen all engines were running and the ship appeared to be under control.

In Will Lundy's *44th Bomb Group Roll of Honor And Casualties* Oliver C. Perry reported:

We did not make it to Switzerland. However, all ten men survived to become POW's. We were hit over Munich and had a very large hole in the wing. It was most unlikely that we could get back to base. So we proceeded to go toward Switzerland. We were hit again before we got there. That was southwest of Munich, over a town named Lorach (Eurach or Durach) where we lost an engine and a rear stabilizer was shot off. Not then being able to make Switzerland, we all bailed out.

I think that we encountered some fighter action south of Munich, but it was in very cloudy conditions and they lost contact with us in the 10/10 overcast. We had been told that we would have had to fly at least eight miles into Switzerland before we could be considered safe internees, as those people living near the German border might be tempted to sell or give us back to the Germans.

Our radio man, Robert E. Mann, received a broken arm while either bailing out or upon landing. A few of the crew members got banged up on landing. We were captured and made prisoners.



We were taken to Mulhouse, France, and then to Frankfurt and placed in a jail for a couple of days. Then we went to Dulag Luft for interrogation. We then took the trip to Stalag I, Barth, on the Baltic Sea. We remained there until the war ended and we were liberated by the Russians.

With Lt. Myron H. Butler (POW) were Lts. Jack A. Kincaid (POW), John E. McKay ((POW), and Oliver C. Perry (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Jack D. Rasmussen (POW), Robert E. Mann (POW), Paul C. Humphries Jr. (POW), John J. Connelly (POW), Louis W. Deifer (POW), and Leonard A. Eramo (POW).

That same day, July 21st, the Louis Wimsatt crew was on their third raid in as many days. This was by far their worst raid to date. In a recent letter Kenneth Adrian wrote:

The mission was a failure for the 44th as we missed the target a good mile.

Due to high clouds and a lead pilot that made a diving turn into them after dropping our bombs, we had planes scattered all over the sky. We didn't see the 44th from Munich till we got home.

Anyway, we dropped under the clouds and could see the ground again at about 16,000 feet. We flew back to the coast without incident. On the coast one German 88-mm gun got on us and we would have had a direct hit if the pilot had not taken a steep right turn. One shot was in front, one was in the back and the next one was where we would have been if we hadn't turned. Anyway, we picked up 35 holes in the ship.

The nose gunner got a piece of shrapnel in his forearm and was bleeding profusely. He called me (I was right behind him in the navigators compartment) and said that he had been hit. He had a "hell of a time" getting the turret turned so that he could get out. I helped him out and found that he was lucky with only a flesh wound.

Many of our aircraft received battle damage on July 21st. Aircraft #42-95 207 landed at Warningford, England and was later salvaged (At Shipdham). Ship #016, Z, Down De Hatch, also received battle damage.

The entry by Ray Marner on July 21st was:

Today we lost Lt. Butler's and Lt. Allen's crews over

Munich. The Group lost several. (Note: The Group lost four ships on this day.)

This was a very poor day for the Komasinski crew to arrive. With Lt. Bernard J. Komasinski were Lts. Winfield Scott Gippert, Edgar W. Michaels, and Charles H. Lain. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Stanley J. Hulewicz Jr., Frank La Fazia, John H. McKee, Nelson E. Brott, Walter E. Bohenko, and Frank N. Schaeffer.

Henry Siteman wrote:

July 22--"We have been released from the Squadron. and now the Group has charge of us. I went to the hospital today to see about a pain in my back at the bottom of my spine. Doc. Allison says I'm to go to the General Hospital tomorrow."

July 23rd--"I was admitted to the hospital and was operated on at 1830 hours. I was in hellish pain for 48 hours, but feel better now. I will have to have another operation after this one heals. Later on the cyst will have to be removed. I may be in the hospital four or five weeks."

It is likely that George Beiber was on a ground troop support mission on July 24th. Records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni show that they were out on this day. Uvanni's notes show:

Caen, France. Today we supported British ground troops in a drive southeast of Cherbourg.

We assembled and headed for France at 15,000 feet. We could see the channel at all times, even on our bomb run. We again carried fifty-two 100-pound bombs. As we approached "no man's land" the British lit red smoke pots so we wouldn't drop on them.

Our bombs were dropped in train and they seemed to drop for several minutes when we released them. The German lines were covered with a rain of bombs and as they hit the British artillery opened up with a barrage of shells. Flak was thick and very accurate. When the British first opened their barrage, I thought they were German ack-ack batteries and froze all over because I had never seen so many shooting at once.

We were in the flak about seven minutes and then we were over the channel and on our way home. The mission lasted 4 hours and that part of it we all liked.

There were twelve ships from the 506th that flew in support of the ground forces that were trying to affect a break through at St. Lo, France, on July 24th. The microfilm record shows that our aircraft could not release their bombs because of cloud cover. Sortie credit was given since there were no abortions and all ships returned to base. Lt. Max Mendenhall led the third squadron with Lt. John Titter flying as deputy lead.

Both Robert Foust and Merritt Derr were on this mission. They were probably with Fred Stone.

The Robert Foust note reads:

The target was the German buildup at St. Lo, France. Low level mission in support of ground troops. 10/10 cloud cover and we returned to base with our bomb load.

The records of Kenneth Adrian show that he was on this mission to St. Lo. He was probably with Wimsatt.

The George Beiber crew returned to St. Lo on July 25th. Both William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom were along. Uvanni's notes were:

St. Lo, France. Today's mission was quite similar to yesterday's only today we supported our own troops.

As there were only 1,000 yards between our lines and the Germans, red smoke pots were again used. Lt. Edgcomb, upon seeing some of the heavies unload their bombs ahead of us told us they were dropping short and would hit our own troops. He said the wind had shifted and was blowing the smoke towards them. I felt badly when I heard this as my brother, Frank, and brother-in-law, Fred, were somewhere down there. (Frank was in Armored and Fred was in Infantry.)

Lt. Beiber kept flying beyond the point of release of the others and we released our bombs well beyond the smoke making sure they fell on German troops. As we were at 12,000 feet the flak was very heavy and accurate.

We were glad to see the Channel below and landed an hour

after bombs away. Our Group was badly damaged by flak.

Lt. Edgcomb was right, American bombers dropped on our own ground troops and many were killed.

The 506th sent twelve ships on this return visit to St. Lo on July 25th. Once again the intent was to assist our infantry boys that were tied up by the German forces. Our target was section A. This was one of three sections. We overran the MPI and had to make a second pass on section C with excellent results. Lt. Max Mendenhall led the third squadron with Lt. Titter as his deputy lead. All ships bombed and returned to base. Intelligence later notified us that our bombing enabled the break out of our ground troops. They poured through the gap and were able to make significant ground gains.

The Robert Foust note for this mission was:

The target was the German troops at St. Lo, France again. This was a maximum effort with B-24's, B-17's, B-25's and B-26's. The bomb group ahead of us dropped their bombs on our own troops.

The Merritt Derr note was:

We were in aircraft #952, A, on the mission to St. Lo, France. We were gone for five hours. The target was the German troop concentrations. At the briefing we were given a road that would serve as the line between our ground troops and the German forces. There was to be no bombing behind that line. As we approached the target, artillery marked the corners of our designated target area with colored smoke. I'll never understand how the 8th Air Force could possibly bomb our own forces, but I saw it happen. The group preceding us to the target dropped their entire load on the Allied side of that road. I felt sick. Upon release of our bombs, we made a diving turn to the right at speeds up to red line to avoid flak from all the 88's (antiaircraft and artillery guns) the Germans had there.

The following newspaper article described this error:

#### 558 AMERICANS KILLED

German troops were defying Allied troops on the Normandy peninsula seven weeks after D-Day in 1944. A massive

effort code-named Operation Cobra was mounted to break out into the rest of France.

After fighter/bombers worked over the German lines, 1,500 heavy bombers of the U.S. 8th Air Force were assigned to blast the way for tanks and infantry. They dropped 3,400 tons of bombs close ahead of the Allied ground troops.

Fritz Bayerlein, Commanding General of the Panzer Lehr, lived through it. He said, "They kept coming over as if on a conveyor belt. My front lines looked like the face of the moon. At least 70 percent of my troops were out of action, dead, wounded, crazed or numbed. All my forward tanks were knocked out. The roads were practically impassable."

General Bayerlein was the enemy. Lt. General Leslie McNair, commander of the U.S. Army ground forces, was on our side. Unlike Gen. Bayerlein, he did not live through it. He was one of the 558 American casualties from that overwhelming bomb drop.

#### "GROUND BELCHED, SHOOK"

The worst hit U.S. division was the 30th Infantry, whose commander said, "It was horrible. The ground belched, shook and spewed dirt to the sky. Scores of our troops were hit, their bodies flung from their slit trenches." Maj. Gen. Clarence Huebner, of the 1st Infantry Division, who had seen much combat said, "It was the most terrifying thing ever seen. I had a remote feeling of helplessness."

Gen. Omar Bradley, commanding the U.S. First Army said, "Oh, Christ! Not another short drop."

Another 506th crew that made this break through mission was that of Louis Wimsatt. Kenneth Adrian's records shows they were carrying fifty-two 100-pound bombs.

Ray Marner wrote regarding this ground support bombing:

The 44th led the 8th Air Force today and bombed 1500 yards in front of our troops in Normandy. (Note: I can find no other evidence that the 44th was leading that day. Roger Freeman, in his *Mighty Eighth War Diary* indicated that there were two incidents of short drops on July 25 and also short drops on July 24th.)

It was probably about this time that the Lt. McGuire crew arrived. With Thomas J. McGuire were Lts. Dudley G. Titus, Peter G. Crawford, and Merle G. Turley. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Edward W. Kramer, John C. Cullinane, Carl E. Daniel, James C. Nokes, Joseph L. Hansen, and Robert J. Reiner.

It was on July 27th that Captain Wayne Middleton was reassigned to the 506th. He had served with the 67th for a number of months prior to being sent back to the States on leave. He now became acting Commanding Officer while Major James C. McAtee was sent on secret detached service. That was some secret assignment. He went back home on leave.

Jack Wind's notes show that:

T. L. Smith assigned as pilot for crew.

George Beiber went on a mission on July 29th. With him were Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni. Uvanni's notes indicate:

We weren't scheduled to fly this mission last night, but one of the pilots got into a fight in town (from another squadron) and is riding the sick boat so we were elected.

We would draw one like Bremen on a deal like this. The older men in the barracks had told us that Bremen was second to none and they were not wrong. We flew in D with another squadron (67th). There wasn't any seat at my desk so I spent most of the time on the floor.

Bremen was covered completely with clouds when we arrived and thank heaven for that!! We dropped our bombs on PFF (instruments used to bomb through the clouds) and they shot flak by radar. There was a solid flak barrage the length of the city and you couldn't see through it!! They were off slightly to the right. However, as we flew in the middle element, we made it OK.

Bombing results were perfect. Bremen was "pinpointed" through 10/10 overcast and that is remarkable. Our Group lost five heavies however. (Note: Will Lundy only mentioned the loss of two ships for the Group on this date.)

At interrogation they told us about Lt. Green (67th) and a plane from our Squadron colliding over the Channel during assembly. They were at 2,000 feet and both planes dropped

like rocks. The enlisted crew members slept in our barracks. "Red" Alva Favors was the only member of either plane to get out. He was in the bomb bay and had his chute on when it happened. It was his sixth mission. His chute opened as he hit the Channel and a Dutch rescue boat picked him up.

The radio operator slept next to me. His name was Johnny Raniello and he had a picture of his baby tacked to the ceiling over his bed. He had never seen the baby, but he would lie in his bunk and look at the picture. He was killed instantly in the Martin upper turret. The pilot and copilot were also killed as the propellers from Lt. Greene's plane chewed right through the flight deck.

Someone had taken Johnny's picture of his baby down before we got back -- I don't know who.

Our crew was awfully tired after this mission, but we couldn't sleep. We just talked occasionally and rested as well as possible.

Ten ships from the 506th paid the visit to Bremen, Germany, on July 29th. Lt. Max Mendenhall led the second squadron and Lt. Conrad Menzel was his deputy lead. We lost Lt. Bernard Eberhardt flying in aircraft #309, V. At eight-thirty A.M., while making a left turn, the low element slid under the second element. The number three man in the second element was caught in prop wash and nosed down colliding with the number three man in the low element. The Eberhardt aircraft went into a flat spin.

Sgt. Alva Favors, the sole survivor of this accident, has no recollections of what happened that day. One body was recovered, Sgt. Gale Gross, and it is buried at Cambridge.

With Lt. Bernard J. Eberhardt Jr (KIA) were Lts. John A. Airoidi (KIA), Seymour Gleichenhaus (KIA), and Milton R. Beirne (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Alva F. Favors (Rescued), John V. Raniello (KIA), Victor Parker (KIA), Wayne D. Garrett (KIA), George C. Behnke (KIA), and Gale H. Gross (KIA).

Notes maintained by Merritt Derr and Robert Foust show that they were on this mission. Probably, Fred Stone was the pilot.

Frank Schaefer reports that this was the first mission for

the Bernard Komasinski crew. They flew in aircraft #42-110 024, Bar P, Old Cock. (Note: This ship carried an eleventh man, the radar jammer.). Frank remembers:

There was a solid undercast when we arrived in the target area. However, the area was evident when we saw the giant barrage of flak that greeted us. One plane in a higher element must have dropped its bombs through the bomb bay doors because they were hanging straight down.

Notes kept by Robert Foust indicate that he was on a mission to Ludwigshafen, Germany, on July 31st. The pilot was probably Fred Stone.

There were seven 506th ships in the formation. Bombing was performed using PFF assistance and results were unobserved. All of our ships bombed and returned to base.

The Kenneth Adrian record show that his crew was out this day. They were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs and the specific target was a rubber plant. Merritt Derr was also on this mission. Frank Schaeffer's records indicate the Komasinski crew took Old Cock to this target.

Lts. Ogden K. Hill and Hal C. Tyree Jr. arrived in the 506th on July 31, 1944.

With Lt. Hill were Lts. Ellsworth J. Zitzman Jr., William W. Albert, and Raymond H. Parshall. The enlisted men were Sgts. James B. Barnett, Charles W. Buechler, Owen A. Warren, Abe Friedman, William G. Hahn, and Walter P. Yost.

With Lt. Tyree were Lts. Rudolph D. Santini, Walter H. Eichensehr, and Jacob R. Young. The enlisted personnel consisted of Sgts. John P. Cronin, Charles J. Turner, Joe W. Cutright, Theodore Niemczura, Jack Rollins, and George Weidig.

Also, some time during July, the Ellis crew arrived. With Lt. Raymond E. Ellis was Lt. Edwin E. Cowles III. The enlisted personnel Sgts. Ben M. Samuels Jr., Leonard G. Slack, Leon B. Runions, James E. Vaisey, Roy H. King Jr., and Raymond A. Kaufmann Jr.. Before this crew could get into combat, Ellis was replaced by Thorne, Cowles was replaced by Wilson, Slack was replaced by Ekonomski, King was replaced by Frank Sullivan and Kaufmann was replaced by George Lewis.

Another crew that arrived about this time belonged to Paul



Durett. With Lt. Durett were Lts. Donald Clapper and Frank Hope. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Jim Burton, Floyd Nesbitt, Horace Ellis, Charles Greene, and Herman Smith.

Promotions, not previously mentioned, were given to the following 506th personnel during the month: 1st Lts. John Horey and Allen N. Williams appointed temporary Captains; 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. included Martin Swenson, Miller, Richard Hruby, Robert Bertoli, Gee, Henderson Bennett, Forseth, Robert Graham, Grene, William Manerre, James Whitehouse and Morton Bauman.

New crews, not previously mentioned, joining the Squadron during the month were: Wood, and William Atkins. In addition, Jack Wind (and crew) and John Docktor (and crew) returned from detached service to duty. Captain George Insley (and crew) from detached service to duty. Lts. James Tucker, Fred Stone, and crew, and Alfred Wilson from detached service to duty. Lt. Richard Hruby (and crew) from rest home to duty. T.G. WATERS?

Individuals, not previously mentioned, leaving the Squadron during the month included: Captain Robert A. Johnson assigned to the 14th Combat Wing; Captain Paul Blow and Lts. Robert Westcott and Ellwood Van Ess transferred to the 12th RCD; Captain Saul Fineman and Lt. Alfred Lincoln transferred to the 489th Bomb Group; Captain Carlton Horne on detached service to the 10th School of Technical Training, RAF; Lt. Richard Hruby detached service, RAF Station Louchers, Scotland; Lts. John Doctor, and crew, and John Titter, and crew, to detached service, ARC Club, Southport; Lt. Thomas McKenna and crew transferred to the 66th Squadron; Lt. Conrad Scheer assigned to the 10th replacement depot; Lt. Grover Trumbo assigned to the 491st Bomb Group; Major James C. McAtee was given a three-day leave of absence; Jack Wind, and crew, and Walter Scott, and crew, to a rest home.

Local test, practice formation and/or bombing missions were carried out by the following individuals during the month: Henderson Bennett, Conrad Menzel, Joseph McCormack, Donald Dines, Albert McCloud, Oscar Leonard, Sherman Dowsett, Max Mendenhall, Clifford Bentcliff, Myron Butler, George Beiber, Thomas McKenna, John Milliken, William Atkins, Louis Wimsatt, John Allen, Bernard Eberhardt, John Titter, Ralph Van Ess, Kearney, John Docktor, Joseph Bearden, Richardson, Eustice Hawkins, Paul Blow, Jack Wind, George Insley, Raymond McCormick, Thomas McQuire, Thomas Waters, Myron Jacobs, Williams, and Forseth. Lt. T. L. Smith ferried Lt. Walter

Scott and crew to Stoney Cross. Lt. John McCaslin flew to Lasham to pick up Lt. Richard Hruby and crew. Lt. Jack Wind made a cross country flight to Liverpool.

Confusion still reigned regarding the number of operational missions required for the completion of an operational tour. To a large extent the problem was created by the many short unopposed missions that were carried out during the landings on the continent. No definite requirements have yet been established. Crews are being finished on any number of missions between 30 and 35. A lot depends on the length of time the individual has been in the theater, the individuals physical condition, the type of missions already flown, and etc.

During the month of July Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

"This morning I was deserted by three very good friends. They all are on their way back to the States for a thirty-day period. They are Major's McAtee, Strong and Slough. The part that really makes me feel badly is that I didn't get a chance to see them before they left. It was one of those hurry up jobs"...."I spent the biggest part of my day off in a hospital. Joe Barnett is having an operation on his nose. I had to leave him at noon since they wanted to get him ready"...."You are wrong, they do allow women in Pubs. However, in most of them, there is a separate part for the ladies"...."I am going to go shave and clean up for supper. You know I have to get dressed for dinner every night now. Just one of the disadvantages of being an officer"...."Did I tell you that we are losing Tommy Davis? He is returning to be a permanent instructor in Florida. He will drop a few lines to you the first chance that he gets"...."I resent your insinuation that I couldn't take a bike apart and put it back together without having parts left over"....

T.O. 400  
It appears that George Belber started the new month by going to France on August 1st. Gerald Folsom's records indicates the target to be Corbie. William Uvanni shows they went to Amiens. Therefore, they may not have been on the same ship. Uvanni's diary entry was:

CORBIE RR BRIDGE T.O.  
We were briefed to hit Amiens today. The briefing was held at noon due to a low ceiling and poor visibility.

We arrived over France around 3 P.M. and sky conditions

were still bad. The clouds were almost solid beneath us. As we approached the target area the overcast broke and Amiens was very visible below.

It looked very small with its red-roofed buildings. Before bombs away I could see flashes throughout the town which I figured were flak guns firing at us. The flak wasn't too heavy.

After we dropped our bombs I watched for several minutes. When the bombs struck Amiens, the whole town was engulfed in flames and smoke. I had a very good look at the results and the flames and smoke seemed to be forced upward several thousand feet. I don't see how a single person could have escaped destruction in Amiens.

This mission lasted five hours and we were home in time for supper.

Twelve 506th ships joined with 24 other 44th aircraft on this raid. The primary target was a railway bridge at Corbie, France. Captain Insley led the third squadron with Conrad Menzel as his deputy. Bombing was visual. Lt. Thomas McQuire became separated and bombed a target of opportunity. The remainder of the 506th ships did not bomb due to the heavy undercast.

Records maintained by Merritt Derr show that he made this raid on a railroad bridge at Corbie, France. He was flying in A/C 952, A, Shack Rat. Michel Yuspeh also indicates that the Thomas Waters crew made this August 1st trip to Corbie.

STONE  
YES

Z-016  
CORBIE

The Louis Wimsatt crew went on the mission to Amiens according to records kept by Kenneth Adrian. Adrian's note indicated they carried eight 1000-pound bombs to a bridge at Amiens, France. (This may have ~~was~~ been a target of opportunity.)

S/B  
AUG  
1st

Records maintained by Robert Foust show that he was on a mission to destroy a railroad bridge at Amiens, France, on August 2nd. (Note: Neither Will Lundy nor Roger Freeman show that there was a mission to Amiens on this date. Therefore it is assumed that there is a date problem and Foust was actually on the mission to Amiens on August 1st.) YES.

In a letter to his wife on August 2 the author wrote:

Will you look around downtown to see if you can find a

store that sells officer's clothing? I would like a pink shirt and a green shirt. Now, the pink isn't really the pink that you are thinking of. It is gray with a pinkish hue. The green is a deep green. I can buy the pants over here, but not the shirts. I bought some underwear, green pants, pillow cases and stockings from the quartermaster store today.

Records maintained by both Robert Foust and Merritt Derr indicate that they went looking for rockets on August 3rd. They probably flew with Fred Stone. The notes for Merritt Derr were:

Mission to Mery-Sur-Oise, France. The target was a rocket depot. This was the last mission for the Fred Stone crew (Patrichuk, Foust, Ryan, Cervellera, and Meunitz). Brown and I were hospitalized earlier in the tour and consequently had some missions to fly to make the required 35. (Later this total was reduced to 30)

The Robert Foust note was:

Target: Rocket base outside of Paris, France. Found out on return to base that this would be our last mission and we are to be rotated home.

Once again, the 44th put up 36 aircraft on this raid. Twelve of those ships belonged to the 506th. Visual bombing was to have been used. However, adverse weather conditions resulted in most of our ships returning home with their bombs. The sole exception was Lt. William Atkins in aircraft #030, U+, who bombed a target of opportunity with fair results. Lt. Bernard Komasinski aborted after experiencing a mechanical failure. There was battle damage to six of our ships. Aircraft #626, Bar H, My Gal Sal, and #177 are out for repair of battle damage.

It appears that Gerald Folsom did not fly with his regular crew when he went to Mery-Sur-Oise. There is no indication of who he was with. Another crew that apparently went out on August 3rd belonged to Thomas Waters. At least, Michel Yuspeh made the trip to Mery-Sur-Oise. The Louis Wimsatt crew also went according to records belonging to Kenneth Adrian.

After a few days rest the George Beiber crew returned to combat on August 4th. The records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni show they were out on this day. Uvanni wrote:

We knew that we would get around to Kiel sooner or later. Kiel is a great naval center and port on the northern tip of Germany. It's on Kiel Bay which is a part of the Baltic sea. We were told to try for Sweden if battle damage was prohibiting our return home. Our target was a submarine base.

We went in by way of Denmark, after crossing the North Sea. The water at Kiel was one of the prettiest sights I have ever seen. From our altitude of 21,000 feet I could see right through the blue water to the bottom of the bay. Sand bars stood out just as if we were but a few feet away.

As we approached our target, naval vessels anchored in the bay started to lay a smoke screen to cover Kiel, but they were too late! The flak they threw up at us was on time though and it certainly took its toll of bombers. We saw several going down on our bombing run. The flak was very intense and accurate.

We were all much relieved when we broke clear of the flak. We came home over Holland and saw what appeared to us as launching pads or platforms for "Buzz Bombs". The houses on both sides of the canals seemed to run for miles.

A bomber that had been hit by flak over the target had been sticking it out with us most of the way. However, now trouble seemed to set in further and it started down and to lag behind. I watched him for about 15 minutes and the flak batteries picked him up. When I last saw him they had his altitude and were giving him everything. It looked like they had him and I doubt he made it home. You have a strange feeling inside when you see this happen and know there's no way to help. I am usually assigned to monitor the distress frequency and have to report these planes going down.

When we landed we reported the buzz bomb sites. Rockets were also fired at us over Kiel, but we didn't see any hit our part of the formation.

(Note: After this date, Rebhan, tail gunner on this crew, started to fly with other crews.)

On this raid, the 44th put up 39 ships, including four PFF aircraft from the 66th. There were eleven aircraft from the 506th that departed Shipdham that morning. Lt. John Titter

was deputy lead in the first squadron. Except for the PFF ship, that squadron was made up entirely of 506th ships. Bombing was carried out visually with poor results for the lead and high right aircraft. The low left strikes were good. Lt. William Atkins jettisoned his bombs and returned early as a result of mechanical difficulties.

The Merritt Derr note for this raid was:

This mission was to the submarine pens at Kiel, Germany. It took seven hours. I flew as copilot; replacing Thomas Smith who was copilot for Richard Hruby.

One of the raiders that day was Garnet Stoltenburg. There is no mention of who he was flying with. His notes show:

We were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs. The flak was low, medium and missed most of us. We didn't take a hit. Bombing results were good. The temperature was 22 degrees below.

Another of the 506th crews that made the August 4th Kiel raid belonged to Thomas Waters. Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon were with him. The Louis Wimsatt crew was on this mission. Kenneth Adrian was with him. His notes indicate they carried twelve 500-pound bombs to a submarine factory.

There was a second mission on August 4th. In total the 44th furnished four aircraft with half of them belonging to the 506th. Lt. Oscar Leonard was leading and Bernard Komanski was his deputy. Ships from the 392 Bomb Group flew as the right element and the 492 Bomb Group flew the left behind us. The primary target, a military installation at Villers L' Hospital, France, was hit visually. The results were unobserved due to cloud cover. There was reason to celebrate after our aircraft returned that night. We had now completed 200 missions.

Frank Schaeffer recalls:

On this trip we did not take the *Old Cock*. I believe the target was a V-2 rocket site.

Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni made the long trip to Brunswick, Germany on August 5th. Uvanni wrote:

It looks as if the government is mad at us!!! Paris, Bremen, Kiel and now Brunswick. These are some of the

4 AUGUST

roughest targets Germany has.

Visibility was unlimited with not a cloud in the sky over Germany. They briefed us that we'd be in heavy flak for 15 minutes. When we started our bomb run you couldn't see the bombers ahead for flak. It was all over the sky. There was more of it than any target we'd hit so far.

Flak shells were bursting between all our planes and I have never before felt the concussions the way I did today. The air rushes like a locomotive when they go off so close.

When we opened the bomb bay doors, since I had not fastened my helmet chin strap, the flaps on my helmet were rising and falling with the concussions of the explosions. One shell tore several holes in our bomb bays and knocked out our hydraulic system. The doors closed on what fluid remained and spared us the trouble of cranking them closed.

When we reached the Channel and dropped down to lower altitude, "Woodie" and I went back into the bomb bay to see what we could do, but the hydraulic lines had too many holes in them.

"Woodie" cranked the landing gear down for our landing. We lost more men today, but I was too excited to find out the number. (Note: Will Lundy reported no losses for the 44th.)

A very strange incident happened over Brunswick on this mission. It happened after our bombs had fallen and while the bomb bay doors were still open. A flak shell burst under our plane at about the very front of the bomb bay and right wing. The plane lurched upwards and smoke from the flak rushed into the airplane and up on to the flight deck. It was all around "Woodie" and myself. Lt. Beiber couldn't believe we were both okay. We were though and as far as we could see no flak had hit the flight deck at all.

When we landed we looked the plane over on the outside. Flak had hit our #2 engine and had crushed its exhaust pipe for about 15 inches, but had failed to enter the engine. It must have been a huge piece as there were no other holes visible.

The Group effort for this raid consisted of 40 aircraft, including six PFF's from the 68th. The 44th was leading the 14th Combat Wing. Eustice Hawkins flew Wing Lead. There were twelve ships from the 506th up that day. We were the third squadron with Captain Insley leading and Lt. Walter Scott as deputy lead. We were carrying thirteen 100-pound M47s and nine 500-pound general purpose bombs. PFF assistance was used in the bombing. Lt. Thomas Smith had an early release of bombs in a field due to an oxygen tank being hit by flak. Lt. John Milliken aborted due to a mechanical failure. The balance of our ships bombed and then returned to base. Nine of our aircraft suffered battle damage. Aircraft #016, Z, *Down De Hatch*, is not available until repairs can be made.

Merritt Derr was once again flying with Thomas Smith on this mission to Brunswick, Germany. The mission took seven hours. This was the first time that he had flown an unpainted aircraft in combat.

For the second day in a row Garnet Stoltenburg was in combat. It is not known who he flew with. His notes show:

It was a cold 22 degrees below again. This time we were carrying incendiaries to an aircraft factory at Brunswick, Germany. The flak was medium and accurate. Our ship was hit six times and the oxygen system was shot out. Bombing results were good.

Frank Schaeffer, flying with the Komasinski crew, recalls:

We were in a new silver aircraft #42-50 626, Bar H. We were carrying bundles of incendiaries. Unfortunately, in going up through the overcast we lost the lead plane. In the great maze of airplanes assembling in the sky we attached to some other squadron. Our course to Brunswick was over the North Sea and then southward at Helgoland, where their flak gunners took pot shots at us. The flak in the target area was pretty tough and accurate. When we landed back at base there were a couple of holes in the side of the nose. This attracted a lot of attention from the off duty spectators as we taxied back onto the hardstand.

Michel Yuspeh went to Brunswick on this day. He probably was with Thomas Waters and Gene McMahon. The notes kept by Kenneth Adrian show that he flew in Bar Z on this trip to Brunswick. He probably was with the Louis Wimsatt crew.



8 August

On August 6th Merritt Derr wrote:

I went on a mission to Hamburg, Germany, that took seven hours. At the briefing I couldn't believe that the target was defended by 700 antiaircraft guns. I knew we and the British had been hitting Hamburg a lot and I thought there couldn't be much left to bomb. As we turned from the IP toward Hamburg, I could see an immense cloud of black smoke ahead and realized the intelligence reports at briefing were correct. Flak was very intense and accurate. We flew number 4 slot in the lead element. Right after "bombs away" the other three ships in our element were hit and just seemed to disappear. I really racked that B-24 all over the sky in evasive maneuvers to get out of there. I knew this was my last mission prior to rotation back to the U.S. and I sure wanted to get safely back to England.

On this raid on Hamburg, the 44th put up 22 aircraft including one PFF from the 86th. There were seven 506th aircraft in the formation. Our ships were part of the first squadron. Lt. Clifford Bentcliff was the deputy lead. We were carrying twelve 500-pound general purpose bombs. PFF assistance was used in bombing and the results were excellent. Lt. Myron Jacobs aborted due to engine failure and brought his bombs back.

The weather warmed up on August 6th for Garnet Stoltenburg so that he could fly his last mission. His notes show:

It was 18 degrees below today. We carried twelve 500-pound bombs to Hamburg, Germany. The target was the oil refinery. The flak was heavy and accurate. Once again our ship was hit--this time eight holes. Bombing results were good.

William Uvanni must have been trying to get his missions over in a hurry since he was out for the fourth day in a row. There is no indication of who he was with. He wrote:

When we arrived at briefing this morning the red tape on the map ran to Hamburg, Germany. Our target was an oil refinery in the city itself. Flak batteries would have us for 17-to-21 minutes and it would be intense. We carried two kinds of chaff to drop as the Germans had two types of radar working to determine our altitude.

The weather was crystal clear again and we could see for

50 miles all over Germany. Hamburg was a very pretty city. It is located on a bend of the river Elbe. The flak barrage started while we were miles from the target. We were in the third element and we could see planes going down ahead of us as they entered the barrage.

Several B-24's went down before we even entered the zone and it looked impossible for an airplane to get through. There was even more flak than at Brunswick. As we started our bombing run the flak was bursting regularly between planes in our Squadron and it looked as if everyone was getting hit by it.

I was sitting on the floor of the flight deck having already opened the bomb bay doors and our plane was being forced upward rhythmically by concussions. This was just like Brunswick. When the bombs dropped I jumped to close the bomb bay doors. (not that it would protect us, but it sure helps morale!)

I had no sooner closed the doors and turned around than "WHOOMPH" a burst of flak hit us and right where I was sitting a hole the size of a 50-cent piece appeared!! My flak vest was covered with cotton batting and the air was filled with it. I thought at first that I had been hit and flak had torn right through my flak vest. I didn't feel anything, but I must be injured. When I found out I wasn't hurt I called "Woodie" in the upper turret thinking it might have hit him. I was relieved when he said he was okay.

The same burst ripped through the fuselage right in front of Perry Morse, tail gunner, missed his head by inches and then tore through some K-rations he had stored. The rations were torn to pieces.

A B-24 behind us took a direct hit which blew its right wing off. It started down in a crazy spin and no chutes came out. We watched it all the way down and it landed in a small town and blew up.

We were in flak 17 minutes and then broke free. It seemed like ages. We came over the Dutch Coast coming home and the meager barrage they threw up seemed like a joke after Hamburg.

When we landed we watched planes behind us come in and most fired red/red flares meaning planes were damaged and

there were injured aboard.

At interrogation we found out that we had sent out 48 bombers (a maximum effort) and of those we lost 5 over Hamburg to flak and the remaining 43 who came home had all been badly shot up!!! (Note: Will Lundy only reported the loss of one aircraft from the 44th.)

Our plane, Consolidated Mess, had holes in the left wing a foot long; holes in the flight deck; in the bomb bays; in the tail section; holes beneath the pilot and copilot seats and holes in the nose compartment. However, not one of our crew had received a scratch!!! The Good Lord surely smiled on us today.

A waist gunner from another crew had gone to Brunswick with us yesterday and Hamburg today. He had 23 prior missions and said he had seen more flak on these 2 missions than all of his previous missions.

A fifth 506th crew that went to Hamburg on August 6th belonged to Louis Wimsatt, according to records maintained by Kenneth Adrian. Adrian's note shows they flew Bar B and carried twelve 500-pound bombs to an oil refinery. He also noted that James McKenna, from the 66th went down.

After a one-day rest, the Thomas Waters crew returned to combat on August 7th. They made the trip to Saleux, which is near Amiens, according to records maintained by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon.

The Group effort on this day consisted of 24 aircraft. Eight of those ships belonged to the 506th. There was no PFF lead ship. Lt. Oscar Leonard led the first squadron as well as the Group. Our aircraft were carrying twenty-four 300-pound general purpose bombs. Bombing was visual. All ships bombed with good results.

The Komasinski crew was on this mission according to the records maintained by Frank Schaeffer.

On August 8th the 506th put up eight aircraft to bomb the primary target at La Perth, France. We were carrying fifty-two 100-pound M47s. Bombing was visual. Two of our aircraft failed to return.

Lt. Myron Jacobs and crew in aircraft #328, Q, Flying Log, crashed near our field due to engine failure and burst into

flames. All crew members were lost.

The Group Operations Report indicated that this aircraft aborted because of mechanical reasons and returned to the field. While in the traffic pattern the aircraft suddenly spun in and crashed with a full load of bombs.

With Myron G. Jacobs (KIA) were Lts. Howard K. Harmon (KIA), Frederick F. McDaris (KIA), and Kenneth P. Ward (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Emil L. Grogg (KIA), Jack V. Whalen (KIA), Robert J. Bell (KIA), Karl D. Breakey (KIA), Shirley A. Jones (KIA), and Rolon D. Borgstrom (KIA).

The second missing aircraft belonged to Lt. Bernard Komasinski. He was flying aircraft #42-100 415, Bar Y, My Peach. Frank Schaeffer was with him and remembers:

The mission was postponed for several hours because of ground fog. This was our sixth mission.

Because the prop governor was faulty for the #2 engine, I was told to stay on the flight deck to monitor the engine RPM's with the synchronizing switch. Sgt. Nelson Brott took my place in the top turret. One of our gun positions was left unmanned.

As I recall, there was little or no flak up to the point of the target area. While on the bomb run and with the bomb bay doors open, the #2 engine began to speed up and the synchronizing switch would not slow it down. We had a runaway prop that was turning over at 4500 RPM's. Our copilot, Gilbert operated the feathering button and closed the throttles, but the propeller would not feather.

I went to the forward end of the bomb bay to turn off the fuel selector valve and booster pump switch to that engine. The engine continued to run wild and the oil pressure went to zero.

The engine continued to howl and shake violently. I was afraid the prop would come off and fly right through the fuselage. By that time we had reached the target and the bombardier, Lain, had released the bombs. I had dropped my flak suit and removed my helmet, head set, oxygen mask and gloves in order to more easily cope with the runaway engine.

I heard no bailout order or bell. Suddenly the copilot

raised out of his seat and headed back. With my parachute snapped on, I tapped Brott, who was in the top turret, on the knee and motioned for him to come down. Then I got into the bomb bay and suddenly thought that because I hadn't heard any bailout signal, I'd be the first one out. In order to get out of the way of the others, I swung out and around the bomb rack in order to move back on the catwalk. With the chest pack on I could not go back on the catwalk between the bomb racks.

When I made my move around the bomb rack, the handle on my rip cord caught on a bomb shackle and it pulled out about 3/4 inch. I pushed it back in, but the damage had been done. The chute started to spill out. I started to bundle the folds of my chute in my arms. However, the wind going through the ship spilled even more of the chute onto the catwalk. Frantically I gathered the remaining folds in to my arms.

It was now or never, so I moved to the forward end of the aft bomb bay section. There I rolled head first off the cat walk and out the right side of the bomb bay. The chute was immediately pulled out of my arms.

A moment later I was swinging violently. Overhead I could see the chute was fully open, but there were three rips, each about a foot long, in the panels.

While drifting down in the silence I searched for our ship. Then I saw it about a mile away flying level. There was a long trail of black smoke behind it. While looking, I saw that one of my fellow crewmen was below me. I yelled as loud as I could, but got no answer. There were two others about a mile away and lower than I was. I then noticed that my big black escape shoes had not pulled off, and I still had my G.I.'s attached to the chute pack.

When I was a few thousand feet from the ground I noticed two bicycles or motorcycles traveling along a road. A little lower and I could see people running out of houses and along the road. I prepared to land with my knees slightly bent. On impact my legs folded and I fell backward, being dragged by my un-spilled chute. I pulled on the lines and the canopy collapsed.

I was in a cut grain field. I quickly released my harness, gathered up the chute in my arms.

Then a shot was fired. The bullet went over my head. I ran for some bushes and threw the chute under one. Then I ran about a hundred feet before I realized that I was still wearing my Mae West. Without stopping I took it off and threw it under another bush. I moved to the ditch and ran low in order not to be seen.

Suddenly I was surrounded by French people. One had a bicycle and was coaxing me to get on it and ride down the road. I wanted to head for my nearest crewmate, but that would have taken me in the direction from which I had been shot at.

I went down the road about half a mile with a crowd of people following me. The crowd stopped in front of a farm house and wanted to take me inside. One woman objected and it appeared to be her house. After a heated debate among them, two young men took me to another house further down the road.

They quickly got civilian clothing for me and a woman brought me a loaf of bread and some butter. Outside was a cart that I was loaded into for a rough ride of about a mile into some woods.

Next I was placed in a hole which not easily seen from the road. There was straw to sleep on, a bag of potatoes, and a keg of wine. When I was comfortable they covered me over and then left. About two hours later the two men returned. They whistled a tune so that I would know that it was them. I got out to stretch and they shared a bottle of cider which they had. Somehow they got across to me the idea that they would leave again and at dusk return to start me off on a trip. I was cold. One of the men left, but soon returned with my flying clothing.

Just as the sun was going down I heard the whistle again and I started to crawl out of the hole. They took my flying clothing and we started across fields on an eight or ten mile hike. When we were coming out of a forest I noticed a light flashing about 200 yards away. My companions answered with their flashlight. At that point they went back and I went with my new escort.

My new friends had a French-English translation book. Using it I indicated that I was not hungry. We then continued to walk. I thought we were approaching a village when I heard a church bell ringing. We were soon

on a path that led along a stone wall. They stopped at a house and one of my companions went alone to knock on the door. When he came back they led me around the front and to the back door. An old woman admitted us and took us to the kitchen. The two escorts then left. It now was about midnight.

I could not speak French and the woman could not speak English. We just sat there and waited. After about half an hour a man and a woman came into the house. They had a number of questions which I answered using the translation book. I was then taken to a room where I was to sleep. I was told that I would be joined by a fellow that could speak English. However, when he arrived I quickly found that he could only speak French. He left during the night and I never saw him again.

At nine o'clock I was served breakfast of a bowl of something and slice of bread with honey on it. I then went back to sleep until noon when the woman reappeared to feed me again. First, I washed and shaved using the items from my escape kit.

There was a young dark-haired man that ate with us. Little did I know that he would become my closest companion for the next month. He could speak some English! He also stayed at that house most of the time.

I never knew his name, but I called him "Shorty". I later learned that he was a spy that had been trained in England. He had English made and American made radios. There were batteries and a generator that worked off of a bicycle. He was well armed with a gun, knives and a hand grenade.

"Shorty" told me I was in the town of Orbais L'Abbaye (SW of Reims). We were living with some people named Benier. There were three of them (The old woman and her two unmarried children). The children were between forty and fifty years old. They treated me well while I was with them. The presence of "Shorty" and I was kept a secret. I was not allowed to leave the house except to go into the highly walled backyard.

I learned that there had been a B-17 copilot that had stayed with the Benier family before I joined them. He had to be moved when some of the neighbors saw him. He had been there about five weeks before he was found. He

went into the woods and stayed with the Free French Forces. His name was William Weatyherwas. While living in the house he had drawn pictures of the house and of B-17's.

Eventually I learned that my host family knew where some of my fellow crewmates were. Four of them were in the woods with the Free French. Three others were in another forest. Our radio operator had been taken by truck to Paris as a prisoner of war.

There was one radio in the house. They played it only a few minutes each day. That was to get the news broadcast in French from the BBC in England. Since I didn't understand the broadcast, they would daily point out on a map how far the front lines had advanced.

Finally, the Yanks took Paris and the Third Army made a fast drive to the south. Before long we could hear gunfire. The Germans seemed to be scurrying around more than before. There were power outages. Sometimes for days at a time.

On the 28th of August we were having dinner when I saw a German go by on a motorcycle. Then there was the sound of machine-gun fire. Soon thereafter, the door bell rang and an excited friend of the family told them something that prompted them all to run to the center of the town, leaving the front door open. Soon one of them returned with the news that the Americans were there!

Early in Sept 1944, those of us who were with the French Underground were liberated by General Patton's 3rd Army and returned to duty and eventually back to the U.S.

*In the 44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor And Casualties Will Lundy recorded the following memories of Nelson Brott:*

Coley W. Richardson was assigned to our crew for that mission when our regular member, Frank La Fazia was placed on guard duty. He was our ball turret gunner. This was our seventh mission.

We had been flying at 25,000 feet. I bailed out at 22,000 feet and landed about 100-to-200 feet away from our copilot, Lt. Gippert. We both had pulled a delayed jump. Luckily, we landed in a corn field and there to greet us, unexpectedly, were members of the French Forces of the



8 AUGUST

Interior.

They hid us in the woods away from all civilization where we had to fend for ourselves for food. We caught rabbits in snares, drained a pond, stripped and then went into the mud and ooze to catch carp. They provided us with our civilian clothes. We threw away our dog tags and hoped we'd never be caught as we would have been shot as spies.

It was only about a month until the American Forces came through near us and liberated us. What a celebration that was! Coley W. Richardson was seriously injured. Eventually he was evacuated back to the States on the 23rd of December, 1944.

With Bernard Komasinski (Evadee/Returned) were Lts. Winfred S. Gippert (Evadee/Returned), Edgar W. Michaels (Evadee/Returned), and Charles H. Lain (Evadee/Returned). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Frank N. Schaeffer (Evadee/Returned), John H. McKee (POW), Nelson E. Brott (Evadee/Returned), Walter E. Bohenko (Evadee/Returned), Coley W. Richardson (Wounded/Evacuated), and Stanley J. Hulewicz Jr. (Evadee/Returned).

On August 8th Henry Siteman recorded:

I got out of the hospital and went right to a rest home. That was very nice. However, as usual, I had to come home to rest up.

On that same day Ray Marner wrote:

We lost Lt. Komasinski's crew today and Lt. Jacob's crew crashed near Shipdham killing everyone. Coley Richardson was on the first ship.

On August 8th Norm Klefer wrote to his wife:

I'll bet that you are not as sleepy as I am this morning. You see, I got a couple hours sleep last night and then had to get up to go to work. This morning I went to bed at 0730 hours and at 0900 hours Capt. McKee came in and woke me up. We are going to leave here around ten for a funeral. Bob Struble is going with us..

One of the boys that helped to take care of our guns was very foolish and signed up for combat. He was just unlucky. At the least he didn't suffer very long.

It's funny, I have seen lots of things happen, but it took me eighteen months to get up nerve enough to go to a burial. Even then, I looked at the flag covered pine box and thought, "It very easily could have been me".

In a recent letter Henry Fetherolf mentioned:

One of our armament men named Bradford Barber, from Alabama, got tired of the war. He thought that it was dragging on too long. He agreed to sign up for combat. He thought that he would fly 25 missions and go home.

His first mission was a milk run. On the second one he was flying with a crew from the 492nd. The ship he was on was shot up pretty badly and there were wounded aboard. As they were trying to land at the 492nd field, Bradford got excited and bailed out. They were too low and his chute never opened. We buried him at Cambridge.

Rudy Thrower, was an Alabama boy and after the war he went to see Bradford's folks. He met the sister and married her.

The Kenneth Adrian record shows that he received credit for a raid on the marshalling yards at Saarbrucken, Germany, on August 9th. They were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs.

Records show that the Group sent 24 aircraft (The total included two PFF ships from the 66th.) on a raid with Sindelfingen, Germany, as the primary target. The 506th placed seven aircraft in the air on this day. Lt. John Titter was the deputy lead in the first squadron. In reality, the secondary target was hit visually with results from fair-to-excellent. Lt. Clifford Bentcliff in ship #733, and Lt. Thomas Waters in ship #150, Bar B, *Passion Pit*, aborted due to mechanical failures and brought their bombs back. The remaining raiders returned to base.

Will Lundy's works indicate that the weather would not allow any operational flying on August 10th. He also stated "Everyone is awaiting the big Group 200 Mission Party scheduled tomorrow"

Lt. Rosser & crew arrived on base, assigned to SDG Sq. Letter

On August 11th Ray Marner reported:

We had our 200 mission party today. Brad Barber was killed in a crack up at Pickenham. It was his second mission. He was the only one on the ship that was killed.

On the 11th Norm Klefer wrote to his wife:

Oh what a day this has been! Only the surrender of Germany will be able to pass it.

To begin with, there was no rank on the field today. Anyone caught wearing insignia of rank was put on K.P. Instead of enlisted men being on guard duty or K.P. it was the officers. The Deputy Commander was on M.P. duty at the main gate most of the day.

The day started with some prayers by the Chaplains. Then they went into a ball game between the "Brass" (Higher than Capt.) and the "One Bars" (Lower than Capt.). The "One Bars" won!

Just about the same time they started a football game between the officers and the enlisted men. In a little while there was a volley ball game going on between the Pvts. and 1st Sgts.

After the games were over they held a three-legged race. It was then that Gen. Johnson put in his appearance. He and a Lt. Colonel ran in the race. Now the Gen. isn't a young man by a long way. Thus, you can appreciate that it was quite an accomplishment for him. He did all right until they had to turn around and then they fell, but he got up and finished the race.

By that time it was high time to take on some chow. Everyone made a dash for the Mess Halls.

I will write more about this day in Mother's letter. (This letter is not available.)

However, there was no partying on the 12th of August when the William Uvanni record shows that he made a mission to Juvin-court, France. Gerald Folsom does not appear to have been with him. Uvanni wrote:

We were briefed for the area around Paris this morning. Our target was an airfield about 50 miles east of the city. This was a famous battleground of World War I--it is the location of Chateau Thierry.

We expected considerable fighter opposition as it was a fighter base we were after. Our entry was uneventful except for light flak on the coast. There was light flak

over the airfield, but we saw nothing of fighters. I had a feeling it was a trap of some kind, but the return trip was as quiet as the entry.

I can't understand the situation when we hit an airfield and encounter such little opposition.

The 44th led the 14th Combat Wing on August 12th. We put up 32 aircraft and no PFF's. There were nine ships belonging to the 506th in the air that day. Lt. Oscar Leonard led the Group as well as the Squadron. Captain Insley was the deputy lead. Our ships were carrying fifty-two 100-pound general purpose bombs. Bombing was visual with results being from good to excellent. Lt. Paul Durett, in ship #293, G, Judy's Buggy, (A ship from the 67th) turned back because of engine failure and brought his bombs back.

We lost Lt. Thomas McGuire and crew flying in aircraft #024, Bar P. Their aircraft was seen to leave the formation losing altitude. The pilot called and said he was low on gas and was advised to call for fighter help. He then headed for allied lines. The pilot called again and reported that his #3 engine had cut out and the #4 was empty. The ship was last seen headed for friendly lines.

In the book, *44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor And Casualties* written by Will Lundy, it was reported; "Both Lt. Crawford, navigator, and Robert J. Reiner, gunner, bailed out, evaded capture, and with the assistance of the French Underground, returned to duty on 31 August, 1944. That was just 19 days from the date of the mission."

With Thomas J. McGuire (KIA) were Lts. Dudley G. Titus (KIA), Peter G. Crawford (Evadee/Returned), and Merle G. Turley (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Edward Kramer (POW), John C. Cullinane (POW), Robert J. Reiner (Evadee/Returned), Carl E. Daniels (KIA), James C. Nokes (POW), and Joseph L. Hansen (POW).

Delmar Fox reports that this was the first mission for the Durett crew.

A list of missions kept by Firman Mack shows that his crew went to Reims on August 12th. It was the first mission for the crew.

Records maintained by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon show that this was the sixth mission for the Thomas Waters crew.

Ray Marner reported on August 12th:

We lost Lt. McGuire's crew today.

The Ciesielski crew arrived on August 12th. With Lt. Ramond J. Ciesielski were Lts. Bert Cheney and Tom Appert. The enlisted personnel were James C. Crume, Robert Beauchampes, Sylvan Hines, Clarence Unger, Raliegth Turner, and Lewis M. Robinson.

Lewis Robinson recalls:

We were a replacement crew that survived three other crews in our hut. We were welcomed by name and serial number over German radio in the mess hall when we arrived. Carl Snavelly was the Base Commander and his reputation was not good for us. At that time my service record was like a "yo-yo". I arrived as a busted private and flew as S/Sgt.

As a matter of practice, whenever we finished a successful trip, we would hold a broom up through the top hatch. I believe it made a picture and news story back home at the time, but I have no record of it.

I think it was after five missions we became a lead crew. From then on our passes were extended and we would head straight for "London Fog", "Underground", "Regent Palace Hotel", and "Piccadilly".

At one time in our stay in England, our "An American Air Crew" was given a "special tour" of Parliament. During the tour I happened to bump into a little man carrying a sheaf of papers. When I bent down to help pick them up, I became acquainted with the Chancellor of Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps. Sorry, a closer relationship never developed.

The three biscuits and a wool blanket that we were issued for bedding just didn't measure up for sleeping comfort. On our first London pass the hotel contributed two large bed sheets toward increased comfort. When these were cut for the upper bunk and turned over once in a while, they would last until the next pass.

Did anyone ever complain about those cold-water showers?

Do you recall those letters from home? Mail call was always a big event. However, those "Dear John" letters

13 Aug

were some letdown. Of the three I remember, one caught up with me overseas. The heartthrob, that had come all the way to Topeka with Mom and Dad to see us off, had met a better "hot shot" (available?) at Hunters College where she trained for WACS. I presume they were married and lived happily ever after.

The diary entry by Ray Marner on August 13th was:

We lost Lt. Milliken's crew today. It was their last mission.

The Group effort consisted of 25 attacking ships and no PFF's. The 506th furnished nine of those ships striking the primary target of a road junction between Le Harve and Rouen, France. The bomb load was fifty-two 100-pound M47's. Bombing was visual with generally good results. Six of our ships were subjected to much battle damage.

Will Lundy reported in his 44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor And Casualties the words of John Milliken:

We were in aircraft #150, Bar B. Our plane's name was *Passion Pit*. It was named after the basement bar of the Santa Rita hotel in Tucson, Arizona, where we took our phase training. This plane had been our regular one since June 14, 1944.

They had raised the tour requirement to 33 missions and this one was our 31st. I found out later that they had lowered it to 31 that day. If we had returned, they would have told us it was our last mission.

This raid required a long bomb run over the Falaise pocket. We had three road intersections in a direct line. We were supposed to drop 1/3rd of our bombs on each one. It was believed that would stop the Germans from escaping Patton's pincer movement. It was too long and straight a run. The first flak burst did knock out both #1 and #2 engines and set us on fire. I was flying Group Deputy Lead (#2) and had a hard time sliding out of the box without hitting others.

We all bailed out and were captured by the Germans. I escaped that night by jumping out of a canvas-back German G.I. truck that was taking us back to Germany. I walked through the German front lines and joined the advancing Canadian 1st Army four days later.

13 TK  
J.C. WILLIAMS crew  
TRANSFER TO 667# SQ

No one was hurt as far as I know except Larsen who escaped before the end of hostilities when he was being marched across central Europe by the Germans. Stovroff, a Jew, was beaten up and given a bad time by the S.S. The rest of the crew were all prisoners until the end of the war.

In a conversation with the author a long time later, John Milliken related, "When the opportunity to escape presented itself, we knew that we couldn't all go. The crew decided that since I had spent part of my life in France and could speak fluent French, I was the logical one to go."

With John L. Milliken (POW/Escaped/Returned) were Ltas. William R. Manierre (POW), Robert J. Bertoli (POW), and Irwin J. Stovroff (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Richard W. Martin (POW), Kenneth E. Beckwith (POW), Morris W. Larkin (POW), Darrell E. Larsen (POW), Leon J. Allen (POW), and Virgil R. Guebard (POW).

The Paul Durett crew made this mission according to records maintained by Delmar Fox. Fox recalls that they received battle damage from flak. Also, Firman Mack indicates that his crew went to Lisieux, France on August 13th.

The records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni show they went to Lyon/Bron, France, on August 14th. It is likely that they were with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote: ✓

This morning we were given one of the longest hauls yet. We were briefed to hit a German fighter base in southeastern France. It is about 150 miles from Turin, Italy. Because of the distance from our base we were forced to eliminate any zigzagging on the entry and withdrawal routes.

We were warned to look for heavy enemy fighter attacks in southern France. They told us not to be surprised if we saw older German fighters as they might be German cadets taking advanced training in outmoded planes. Lyon is the center of all German fighters in southern France.

This bit of briefing must have gone over big with our fighter escort because their talk over VHF sounded as if they couldn't wait to get there.

Before we reached our target area reports from our

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advanced escort told of enemy fighters being engaged by them. When we arrived, there wasn't an enemy plane around so they must have really had things under control. Flak was light again and after bombs away, we had a long and uneventful trip. This mission lasted over nine hours. It was in support of the invasion of southern France.

Again our strike force consisted of 25 aircraft; however, this time there was one PFF ship. Will Lundy reported in his works that this raid was "a prelude to the invasion of the South Coast of France that followed two days later". There were nine aircraft from the 506th with this formation. Lt. Ernest Gossett led the second squadron and Lt. Clifford Bentcliff was deputy lead. Our aircraft were carrying ten 500-pound general purpose bombs. We bombed visually with all ships hitting the target, scoring excellent results, and returning to base.

KNECKER

WATERS

BEIBER

MACK

HILL

WYNES

TYREE

Firman Mack was also in combat on this date. The only other known 506th crew to make this raid belonged to Thomas Waters according to records maintained by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon.

On the 14 of August Merritt Derr made a three-hour local check flight in the left seat.

The next day, August 15th, the George Beiber crew were up early. The records of William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom show that they were out. Uvanni wrote:

We are now in the airfield wrecking business. Today it was Ardorf near Wilhelmshaven on Germany's north coast. It is a port on the North Sea.

Intelligence briefed us for moderate to heavy flak and possible fighter attacks. We experienced neither on penetration and located our airfield with ease as the day was cloudless.

We flew over the field and could see several multi-engine (probably bombers) planes in the parking areas. We didn't drop our bombs on the first run, but circled and came across again. This time we let them go for a bull's-eye on a set of hangars.

We were rather tense on our second run. Experience has proven that two runs can be mighty risky business. However, we experienced no opposition at all. Not a



single burst of flak. We're getting to like airfields.

There were 24 aircraft from the Group on this raid. The attacking force was forced off its first bomb run by an approaching formation and had to turn around and do it again. There were no enemy aircraft and flak was light. The fighter support was excellent. Seven crews from the 506th went on this raid to Ardorf (Wittmundhafen), Germany. We made up part of the 1st squadron. Bombing was visual. We were carrying 500-pound general purpose bombs, except for one ship which had fifty-two M47's. All ships bombed with fair-to-good results and returned to base.

Hal Tyree recalls that this was the first mission for his crew. Accompanying this rookie was the Thomas Waters crew according to records kept by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon. The Firman Mack records show that they went to Wittmundhafen on this date.

Henry Siteman got some good news on August 15th:

I got back from rest home to find out I was to leave for home today! Gardner and Wright left early this morning. So I got on the ball and chased up to Group Hqdrs. Now I leave in the morning to join the boys at the P.O.E. I also got my Distinguished Flying Cross today. I am all packed and ready to go to the 12th R.C.D.

While I was away, we lost Larsen. He was flying with the John Milliken crew when they went down on the 13th of August. They are all POW'S.

Ray Marner had a reason to celebrate on the evening of August 15th. He wrote in his diary:

I made S/Sgt. today. S.O. #227. The 856th Squadron has split up and went to Chetingham. The fellows went to different places from there. *WBN*

It is likely that on August 16th George Beiber and Gerald Folsom went to Kothen, Germany. The William Uvanni diary states:

Our last three missions were unusually easy and this couldn't go on forever. Today's trip to Kothen, Germany broke the run of easy ones. When we were given today's target we had a rather thrilling memory revived. Kothen is only 15 miles east of Bernberg which was our first

mission and as bad as they come. Kothen is right in the heart of a fighter belt and has heavy flak.

As we approached Kothen, things looked more natural. The flak was heavy and it pretty well covered the sky. Fighters failed to show--enemy aircraft that is--ours were there.

The Group dispatched 34 aircraft on this raid, including two PFF's. The 506th dispatched twelve ships on the aero engine works there. Captain Insley led the third squadron and Lt. Ernest Gossett was the deputy lead. The bomb load was ten 500-pound PG's. Bombing was by PFF. Strike photos showed that the first and third squadrons achieved excellent hits. The second squadron bombing was poor. Lt. William Atkins in ship #030, U+, aborted due to engine trouble and returned with his bombs. All of our ships returned to base.

Hal Tyree remembers that his crew made this trip. Delmar Fox reports that the Paul Durett crew also went on this raid. Another 506th crew that was out on this date belonged to Thomas Waters. Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon were with him. The last known 506th crew that was at Kothen on this date belonged to Firman Mack.

In a letter to his wife on August 16th Norm Kiefer mentioned:

We had a big boxing show here tonight. There was a couple of good fights and then Billy Conn (World's Light Heavy Weight Champion) put on an exhibition bout.

On August 17th the Richard H. Habedank crew arrived. With Lt. Habedank were Lts. Robert Dupont, Murry G. Margolies, and William E. Laughlin. The enlisted men were Sgts. Albert J. Urania, Arthur J. Schmidt, Elwood A Matter, David Moore, Melvin C. Murrack, and J. C. Wheatley.

The Group sent 24 aircraft on a mission to an airfield at Nancy/Essey, France, on August 18th. The 506th Squadron furnished eight aircraft on this effort. Lt. Philip Quirk led the second squadron and Lt. Kuecker was the deputy lead. Once again, our Squadron had to make a second run on the target after being forced off the bomb run just prior to bombs away. There was no enemy opposition and fighter support was good. Bombing was visual with good to excellent results being achieved. All ships bombed the target and returned to base.

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JTC

Hal Tyree recalls that this was the third straight mission for his crew. Another crew on this mission, according to Delmar Fox, belonged to Paul Durett. This may have been when they started to fly in Tinker Belle. The Thomas Waters crew returned to combat on this date after a one-day rest. This was the fifth raid they had pulled in the last seven days according to records maintained by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon. Notes kept by Kenneth Adrian show that they carried fifty-two 100-pound bombs to Nancy. He probably was flying with Louis Wimsatt.

On August 18th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Do you know where I am right now? I am at Lt. Jack Edward's home base. If you remember, he flew our tail guns. He has also been Commissioned.

He came to see us yesterday and talked me into coming back with him. He has a good job with a nice office. I can't say that I would want the responsibility that he has. His job would ordinarily be held by a Major.

On August 18th our acting Commanding Officer, Captain Wayne Middleton, was promoted to Major.

It was during this lull in operations that Ray Warner went to London. In his diary he wrote:

Buzz bombs kept me awake all one night. They kept going over and dropping near the hotel. Some shook us up fairly much. London is taking a beating again.

The August 24th mission to Hannover, Germany was the first combat mission for the Ray Ciesielski crew. Lewis Robinson recalls:

On the mission to Hannover, instead of flying head-on into the Cliffs of Dover, (two engines out, supercharger on a 3rd, hydraulic system out), we managed to crash land on an 8th Air Force field. Base Commander, Jimmy Stewart, came out as the dust settled. He took our officers in his Jeep and later sent a truck for the rest of us. That was the end of our first plane, Clean Sweep. When we got back to base, we came to the realization that we would have to do better if we were to keep on good terms with our ground crew.

There were 24 aircraft from the 44th on the mission of August

24th, including two PFF's from the 86th. Seven of these belonged to the 506th. We comprised a part of the first squadron. The briefed target was at Langenhagen, Germany. However, the secondary, an airfield near Hannover, Germany, was hit visually. Our bomb load was a mixture of six 500-pound general purpose and M47 bombs. All of our ships bombed the target and returned to base. Extensive battle damage was inflicted on three of our ships.

Hal Tyree remembers that his crew made their fourth mission on this day. The Firman Mack records show that this was their sixth mission.

Will Lundy noted on August 24th that, "2nd Lt. Harbison was transferred to Group Headquarters". Harbison was originally with the 506th. At Group, he became the Group Gunnery Officer.

On August 25th it is likely that George Beiber was over Schwerin, Germany. The records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni report that they were out. Uvanni wrote in his diary:

Schwerin is an inland port of northern Germany. It is about 70 miles east of "good old Hamburg"!

Flak conditions at Schwerin were rather vague to our intelligence, but we were told to expect moderate to heavy flak. Our trip in was near Dummer Lake in western Germany. We were repeatedly told to avoid this lake. It is a training area for German artillery outfits and they can throw up a horrible barrage of flak. To fly over it is to ask for a one-way ticket!

We made certain not to pass over the lake. It looked small and insignificant way below and to our left. Every airman who has ever flown in this area has respect for that little lake.

At Schwerin, the flak was negligible and we dropped our bombs and headed for home. The withdrawal route brought us by Dummer Lake again and they opened up at us. We were out of their range however. Their flak demonstration made us happy to be "once removed".

This mission was another comparatively easy one. Opposition over the target seems to be on the decline. I think a good deal of this is due to the confusion caused

by our ground forces rapid advances through Europe.

There were 36 aircraft from the 44th participating in the mission August 25th to Schwerin. Twelve of these belonged to the 506th. Captain Insley led the third squadron and Lt. Clifford Bentcliff was the deputy lead. We were carrying twelve 500-pound general purpose bombs. Bombing was visual with PFF assistance. Bomb strikes were excellent for all three squadrons.

Today's mission was the fifth in a row for Hal Tyree's crew. "When we returned from this mission our crew was given a three-day pass and we all went to London". Kenneth Adrian went on this mission. He probably was with Louis Wimsatt. Lewis Robinson was in combat on this date. He probably was with Ray Ciesielski.

The next day, the George Beiber crew was engaged in a combat flight for the second day in a row. This was August 26th. The records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni show combat time. Uvanni wrote:

Salzbergen is in the vicinity of Schwerin. The day was clear again and we had no trouble locating the target. No flak was encountered and no fighters were seen. Germany looked very pretty as we flew over it today. Things looked peaceful and a war seemed the last thing existing below.

We flew no more in August due to bad weather.

There were 24 aircraft from the 44th that made the trip to bomb the oil refinery at Salzbergen on August 26th. The 506th furnished eight of those ships. Lt. John Ryan led the Squadron and Lt. Louis Wimsatt was deputy lead. Our craft were carrying twenty-four 250-pound general purpose bombs. Bombing was visual with the assistance of PFF ships. Bomb results were very good. All of our ships bombed the target and returned to base.

Kenneth Adrian was with Louis Wimsatt. Adrian kept this newspaper article about the raid:

REICH GETS NEW DOUBLE BLOWS

OIL OUTPUT HALVED IN 90 DAYS

Yesterday, in a furious coordinated attack by more than

1,350 heavy bombers of the 8th and 15th Air Forces, German aircraft factories, airdromes and other objectives were hit. Yesterday's attack followed Thursday's massive offensive by British based and Italian based heavies; the largest number of USSTAF bombers ever dispatched. The record task force battered seven enemy oil producing centers in another of the Allied assaults which in a 90-day campaign slashed Nazi oil and gasoline production by more than 50 percent, according to a joint statement released yesterday by USSTA and Air Ministry.

No interceptors penetrated the screen thrown around the Eighth Fortresses and Liberators. Nearly 750 P-47's, P-38's and P-51's participated. Our fighters destroyed 51 German aircraft--11 in the air and 40 on the ground. Our losses were 17 heavies and seven fighters.

?  
MORRICE  
Glenn Hall recalls:

I was engineer when Menzel was checked out for instrument flying and he did better with the seat lowered than most pilots under visual conditions. Conrad Menzel was a pilot's pilot. He finished his tour as a lead pilot and stayed around as instructor, test pilot and other things such as checking weather before the planes went on their missions. James Deboer usually was Menzel's engineer. On one occasion they took off and brought back to Shipdham a B-24 on three engines. DEBOER (SP)

On August 27th two missions were scheduled. The first to Wezendorf, Germany, was scrubbed due to weather. The second mission called for our Squadron to put into the air ten ships to attack the primary target at Basdorf, Germany. Except for the PFF ship, our aircraft made up the first squadron. The mission was recalled due to weather conditions and all ships returned with their bombs except for Lt. Hal Tyree, who jettisoned his bombs before returning to base.

The Kenneth Adrian notes show that he was going to Berlin, but aborted in Denmark due to weather. He probably was with Louis Wimsatt. Records maintained by Lewis Robinson indicate that the Ray Ciesielski crew was on this mission. Lewis recalls: "the fog that was encountered". The last known crew that went on this Berlin mission belonged to Firman Mack.

A noncombat item was it was Merritt Derr's turn to make the big trip back to the States. It was August 27th when he climbed aboard the Louis Pasteur and left England.

On August 28th 1st Lt. John Milliken returned to our Squadron. John Milliken had been shot down in France 15 days earlier, was captured, escaped, and was returned to Allied control by the French Underground.

The Lt. John W. Jones crew joined the Squadron on August 28th. With Lt. Jones were Lts. Clyde Horsely, Clement R.C. Holcomb, James T. Westenhiser, and Edward Baird. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert Kirkland, Elwood A. Van Epps, Raul Garza, John P. Haggard, Robert E. Simon, and Mitrey K. Hage Jr. They flew most of their missions in Down De Hatch.

On August 29th Henry Siteman wrote:

I boarded the Queen Mary for the trip home.

The next day, August 30th, the Group put up eleven ships to attack military installations at Haute Maisnil, France. Captain Insley was the deputy lead. Our aircraft were carrying 250-pound general purpose bombs. Sighting was carried out using PFF. Lt. Louis Wimsatt experienced a malfunction and brought back six of his bombs. All other ships dropped on the target. Results were believed to be good.

Kenneth Adrian was with Wimsatt. Thomas Waters was on this mission according to records maintained by Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh.

Ray Marner wrote of some bad news in his diary entry for August 30th:

A kid named Kenny James, who worked in finance, was killed when a truck hit him while he was riding a bike. He was a nice guy too! (Note: Will Lundy does not list any casualties on this date.)

Fred Marzolph recalls:

Sid Lovett was a real nice guy who flew with us on our first six missions. This was his second tour of combat. He made a mission seem like a ride on a tourist bus. He would say, "In five minutes look out to the left and you'll see Bremen or Hannover or look to the right in such and such time and you'll see this or that. He seldom needed a map to know where he was. A Major, he left us to go back to the 100th Bomb Group.

I was the Mess Officer (or Sgt.) for the plane. When we first started flying missions in England, we usually received one or two good candy bars (Hershey Almond or plain Hershey bars) for each member to eat en route. The sugar in the candy was supposed to allow us to fly at altitude without using as much oxygen; and to satisfy our hunger on long flights. Shortly after this good ration, someone thought that plain cake doughnuts and coffee would be just as good and maybe cheaper. This idea almost caused the whole Group to die from choking to death while in flight. The doughnuts were very dry and had to be eaten while we were wearing oxygen masks. We took them off long enough to take a bite and we couldn't digest the darned things. Coffee??? As soon as the thermos was open, it froze solid. We had to choke the doughnuts down or try to spit them out.

Next we received a small package the English were using. It was a box about 4X4 and had openings at each of the four corners. If you opened one end you received a Chicoret piece of gum, another end gave you some dry, almost stale-tasting pieces of divinity, another end gave you a piece of candy called "Charms" and the fourth side gave you some kind of nutty candy. None of this was very tasty.

Finally, before war's end, the U.S. came up with a box of their own which was colored in red, white and blue. The candy was somewhat similar to the British, but much tastier. My job was to see everyone got their rations before we took off or else I had to scramble around the plane with an oxygen bottle to distribute the goodies.

Speaking of food, our Combat Mess really left a lot to be desired. On some combat missions all we had to eat for breakfast would be some pancakes that would leave your stomach still dragging on the ground even when the rest of you is at 22,000 feet.

One "creation" by our master chefs remained on a table morning, noon and night. It was a mixture of beets and onions.

Many times after a seven-hour mission the sandwiches we received at debriefing were better than the COLD HOT DOGS we got at the Combat Mess.

Now our "Deluxe Blue Plate" special for breakfast



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consisted of greenish-yellow eggs from the package, wonderful half-mixed powdered milk and tasty grapefruit juice. Rare were the occasions that we received real eggs.

So good was the food at the Combat Mess that the air crews were "borrowing" those fleece-lined old style flying suits, the ground crews wore, and carrying a wrench or aircraft part as they tried to imposture their way into the Ground Mess. It got so bad they had a huge M/Sgt. who stood at the door to guard against "Alien" air crews.

What was the big attraction in the Ground Mess? They had to "suffer" with pork chops, American fried potatoes, fresh baked bread, coffee, desserts and other treats.

I do have to admit that the Christmas and Thanksgiving meals in the Combat Mess were a real delight. There were the traditional foods including mashed potatoes and gravy. However, I just couldn't understand the depraved individual at the end of the line who threw a handful of hard candies into the mashed potatoes and gravy. As these goodies sank into the mixture on your plate, he would say a holiday greeting. Our only salvation was knowing it wasn't being served to those troops on the front lines.

The following individuals received promotions during the month: 1st Lt. to Captain; Mendenhall, and Scott. 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.; Chamberlain, Atkins, Walsh, Durett, Ryan, Adrian, Backstedt, Celentano, Edgecomb, Cempel, Wood, Fiskum, and Williams. Flight Officer to 2nd Lt.; Titus, Hersh, and Stovoff.

The following additions were made to the active duty roster during the month: New crews not previously mentioned included Lts. Hare, Egan, Salfen, Rosser, Spohn, and Smith. Crews returning to duty included Mendenhall, Menzel, Scott, Hruby, Atkins, and Clements.

The following individuals were removed, either temporarily or permanently from the active duty roster: Transfers to the 12th RCD were McCormack, Scott, Dines, Spohn, Titter, Tucker, and Wind. Transfers to the 8th AFRD were Mendenhall and 16 combat Sgts, Swenson and twelve combat Sgts. To detached service rest home were Atkins (and crew), Mendenhall (and crew), and Menzel (and crew). To detached duty other were Bennett, Hruby, and Rosenberg

Individuals participating in training, test or other local flights during the month were: Mendenhall, Quirk, Leonard, Menzel, Titter, McCormick, Durett, Wynes, McCloud, Waters, Bentcliff, Celentano, Daniels, Insley, Mack, Tyree, Hill, Horne, McCaslin, Gossett, Stone, Wimsatt, Salfen, Ciesielski, Ryan, Rosser, Kodaj, Kuecker, Hosington, Burns, and Clements.

In letters to his wife during the month of August Norm Kiefer wrote:

"I paid my Mess Bill. It was \$30 even."----"You mentioned the picture that was taken when I finished my missions. Was that the one with the airplane in the background? I don't remember sending it to you. I don't know how I got it by the censors."----"They are having a bond drive in the Squadron. Therefore, instead of sending you a check for \$100 this month it will be a bond."----"I am finding myself pretty much alone as far as enlisted men are concerned. Joe Barnett got out of the hospital last night and in the morning he leaves for the first leg on the trip home. That just leaves four of the original combat boys here now."----"You said that you see our car go by every once in a while. Who has it now?"----"Today I am very happy. The reason being that this afternoon the orders came down for the commissioning of Sgt. Harbison. Now there will be two of us. I was the first Direct Commission Officer in the Group and "Harbi" is the second."----"They did get rid of Danny (the dog). A farmer took him and now he wants to get rid of Danny. It seems he is a bit too familiar with the farmers chickens."----"Am I ever glad that I didn't come home in time to "watch" you build the garage. I'll bet that you would have tried to get me to help."----"Say!!! Where do you get off calling me a "shave tail"??? You had better watch out or I will make you "Hit a Brace". What do you say to that."----"Dobbins has now been listed as Killed In Action."

Early in September William Uvanni wrote in his diary:

We flew no more in August due to bad weather. September started the same way with very low ceiling and complete overcasts. Although we wanted to keep flying and finish our tour of 30 missions, we were put on orders to go to the rest home.

At 3 A.M. on the day we were to leave for Bournemouth Rest home, we were alerted to fly a mission. Lt. Beiber went

to Headquarters and straightened the matter out and we left for this "vacation" at 9 A.M.

We stayed over in London for a day, but when we got to Bournemouth, we were sorry to have wasted a day. Bournemouth is on the southern coast of England and it was the nearest thing to an American city we had seen since leaving the US.

In peace time it is a resort for rich Americans traveling in Europe. It is very clean and modern. We lived like "Kings" at an American Red Cross hotel. We slept as late as we wanted, swam, rode horseback, saw the sights, played games, etc. I got a horse called Satan at a riding place and couldn't control him. Carl Miller, who has been around horses on a farm and can control them, came to my rescue. We traded a little mare he had and Satan was no longer a problem. Thanks Carl!!

Food was better than we were used to and people treated us like their own sons around town. We stayed seven days and then we returned to our Bomb Group. (Unwillingly of course!) We felt like new men and told all of our friends not to miss their "rest leave" for anything.

On the first day of the month six of our ships went to Foret-De Dehaguenau, but were recalled due to weather. No sortie credit was given.

On September 2nd Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Do you know something? I am going to find a job that gets an advancement or something of that sort every month. You see, with my most recent promotion, I am receiving mail from people that I haven't heard from before.

Capt. Michael Neri took a picture of me at my desk today. He also had one taken of himself and I, just outside of the building. Last week a couple of the enlisted men stopped me and wanted a picture of the three of us in front of the Squadron sign.

On September 4th Lt. John Milliken started out on the long trip back home. Sgts. Joseph O. Peloquin and Lawrence C. Richards were on the same orders.

Also, on September 4th, the author wrote to his wife:

You asked how I was getting along on my new job. I will answer that question in this manner. Today Capt. Michael Neri asked how much longer I had to wait until I was eligible for a promotion.

On September 5th the Squadron sent six aircraft to the marshalling yards at Karlsruhe, Germany. Captain Ernest E. Gossett led the 2nd section. Bombing results were poor.

Records maintained by Lewis Robinson indicate that the Raymond Ciesielski crew was on this mission.

Also, the Firman Mack record shows that he was in combat on this date.

The Henry Siteman diary entry for September 5th was:

I had to spend a week on board the ship waiting for Winston Churchill. He is going to the States to see President Roosevelt. However, I am now on the high seas heading for home.

On September 6th Ray Warner recorded in his diary:

Lots of men are coming back after going down. Most of Komasinski's crew are back. Milliken also escaped.

On that day Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I was up for a ride again today. This time it was a British Mosquito. Boy, you could really have some fun in one of those ships. We were playing tag with the clouds and you really know that you are in a nice ship when you pour the soup to it. We did more "buzzing" today than I have done since we were practicing for the "Big Raid". (Note: I must have been with Dick Wynes.)

Lt. Van E. Lowe joined the Squadron on September 7th. With Lt. Lowe were Lts. Clyde Housley, Marion A. Williams, and Fred Benkert. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Odie D. Hill Jr., Wallace Penney, Kieth Ellis, Bernard Schmidt, Leroy Holmberg, and James Hazen. Clyde Housley took over another crew in October, 1944, and Marian Williams became lead navigator in December, 1944.

Ten 506th ships joined 26 other aircraft from the 44th for a mission to Karlsruhe, Germany on September 8th. The Group flew lead for the 14th Combat Wing and 2nd Air Division.

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Bombing results were excellent

This was the first raid for the James Clements crew on their second combat tour. It was sortie #334. They were flying in A/C #800, Bar E. They were carrying two 1000-pound bombs. Clements was flying as Group Deputy Lead. Joseph C. Kodaj was the copilot. The remainder of the crew were the usual members. Lt. David L. Therme and Capt. David E. Sayler were also aboard. The target was the marshalling yards. Bombs away was at 1149 hours at 25,000 feet. They were dropped by H2X through 10/10 under cast with unobserved results. There was moderate inaccurate flak in the target area with no enemy aircraft encountered. Fighter escort was excellent.

The Lewis Wimsatt crew was on this raid according to records maintained by Kenneth Adrian. The Adrian notes indicated that they were carrying twelve 500-pound bombs and the raid took 9 hours. A newspaper report, kept by Adrian, read:

#### HEAVIES ATTACK

#### PLANTS IN REICH

Ludwigshafen, Karlsruhe,

Kassel Among Targets

Of 1,000 B17s, B24s

More than 1,000 Eighth Air Force Liberators and Fortresses, escorted by nearly 500 Mustang fighters, yesterday attacked chemical and synthetic oil plants in Ludwigshafen, marshalling yards in Karlsruhe, and ordnance depots at Kassel, near Mainz, and a tank armored vehicle plant at Gastaveberg, southwest of Frankfurt in Germany.

Approximately 300 Eighth Thunderbolts, Lightnings and Mustangs strafed rail and road targets in western Germany.

Twenty bombers are missing from the day's operations. All escorting fighters returned safely.

Ninth Air Force P-47 fighter bombers attacked Brest yesterday morning, destroying 16 fortified buildings and damaging 21 others. In addition, four gun positions were bombed and strafed. Two fighter bombers were lost.

Unfavorable weather was encountered at all targets,

crews reporting temperatures as low as 50 degrees below zero.

The B-17's braved intense flak at Ludwigshafen, while only moderate ack-ack was encountered at Karlsruhe, an important rail center for traffic supplying the Siegfried Line.

Records maintained by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon indicate that the Thomas Waters crew was on this raid.

Another crew that was on this raid belonged to Ray Ciesielski according to records maintained by Lewis Robinson.

The next day, September 9th, eight aircraft from the 506th joined with 27 other 44th ships to go to Mainz, Germany. Lt. John Ryan led the Group. Bombing results were unobserved. Lt. Wilson completed his combat tour. The only other known 506th crew that made this raid belonged to Louis Wimsatt.

In his *History Of The 67th Squadron* Will Lundy wrote: "---the high squadron of 11 ships, after being forced off its bomb run by the 467th BG, went on to attack the Worms M/Y with that formation.---No E/A were observed and flak encountered was moderate to intense and accurate. Fighter escort was excellent throughout the mission and all of our aircraft returned safely.---(the target was) the rail yards and supply dumps to aid General Patton.---Parachute flak was sent up. It has a can of explosives under it and floats through the formation."

It was probably about this time that the Homer E. Still arrived. With Lt. Still were Lts. William Welborne, John Wilson, and Henry Strunc. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Helge Wessmann, John B. Lord, Connie Wyant, Kenneth Dahlin, Leo Hibbs, and Vernon Buhl.

On September 9th the author wrote to his wife:

Did I tell you about the robes that Father had made? They are for serving mass and benediction. He had them made out of parachute silk. He got hold of a chute that was pretty badly messed up, but still had enough material that he could use. The actual sewing of the fringe and tassels was done in town. It really is nice and is something that he can keep for the rest of his life.

On September 10th nine 506th ships joined 25 other 44th

Sept 10/11

aircraft on a mission to attack the ordnance depot at Ulm, Germany. The Group led the 14th Combat Wing. Bombing results were unobserved.

Ray Ciesielski was over Ulm on this day according to records kept by Lewis Robinson.

Will Lundy wrote in his *History Of The 67th Squadron*:  
"---Enemy resistance was encountered only in the form of meager and inaccurate flak along the way. No serious battle damage was reported. The formation returned to base at 1455. The bomb load was twenty-four 260-pound fragmentation bombs dropped from an altitude of 22,600 feet."

The Henry Siteman diary entry for September 10th was:

We pulled into Halifax at 1400 hours to let Churchill off and left at 1639 hours; headed for good old New York.

On September 11th nine aircraft from the 506th went to attack the locomotive works at Hannover, Germany. Our crews joined with 26 other crews from the 44th on this mission. Lt. Clifford J. Bentcliff led the high right squadron. All of our aircraft reached the target and bombed thru cloud cover and the results were unobserved. Ten-to-20 enemy aircraft were seen, but no attacks were made on our Group's formation. Flak was intense and accurate, but we sustained no losses. \

The Thomas Waters crew was on this mission according to records kept by Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh. Also, the Firman Mack record shows his crew was there. This was the first mission for the Richard Habedank crew according to records maintained by Elwood Matter.

On that September 11th day Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I often wonder just how much things have changed there at home. We sit over here and think of things as they used to be and hope that they haven't changed a bit. They must have changed though or the boys wouldn't want to come back into foreign service after they have been home for a while. If I can believe what they tell us in the magazines and papers, everything back there is the same as always. The trouble is that we have changed! If that is so, I hope that it is for the better.

On September 12th seven aircraft from our Squadron participated in a mission to hit the oil refinery at Misburg,

Germany. The 506th ships joined 17 other ships from the 44th on this mission.

Will Lundy wrote: "The primary target for today is a repeat of yesterday--- the Hanomag Works at Misburg. However, an intense smoke screen hid the primary, so the rail junction at Lehrte, 5 and a 1/2 miles west, was bombed.---the first squadron bombed long, dropping their twenty-four 250-pound bombs too late. The second squadron's bombs were on the target. Bombing altitude was 23,000 feet, temperature was at -32 Centigrade. Flak in the target area was heavy, but inaccurate, and no enemy aircraft were observed.---as they (our returning aircraft) flew low over Holland and Belgium they could see how the Germans had flooded the low country there.---"

Records maintained by Delmar Fox show that the Paul Durett crew was on this mission. Another raiding aircraft that day was flown by the Firman Mack crew.

On September 13th eight aircraft from the 506th struck an airfield at Hall, Germany. Our ships joined 28 other 44th ships on this mission and led the 14th Combat Wing. Captain Gossett led the Group and bombing results were excellent.

Will Lundy told in his *History Of The 67th Squadron*: "Flak was encountered at Gernsheim and Mannheim where six aircraft sustained slight battle damage.---Fighter support was excellent and the Group had no losses.---Four A/C became separated from the formation and bombed targets of opportunity.---(our) ten 500-pound general purpose bombs from both squadrons covered the target very well, dropping them from altitudes of 25,000 to 20,000 feet.---the target was the Me-262 Jet Propelled airfield and we caught them flat-footed. The P-38's and P-47's had a field day, strafing Jets, Me-109's and Fw-190's on the ground. They must have destroyed at least 150!---We had an overcast up to 26,000 feet and couldn't get over it. We called the leader and dropped to 19,000 feet before breaking out. About this time we crossed the Moselle River and they shot the hell out of us.---"

*Yes*  
Thomas Waters was on this operation according to the records of Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh. & FUNKE

Another of the raiders on this day was the Paul Durett crew according to the Delmar Fox record.



Also, Elwood Matter reported that the Richard Habedank crew was on this raid.

On September 15th the author wrote to his wife:

Here is one of the things that burns me up. One of the boys went back to the States to be discharged. He was going to a movie. Because he was in uniform he got into the movie for a few cents less than the civilians that were also going. One of the civilians turned and said, "I wish that I was in uniform. I could save a few cents". Now this boy was getting a medical discharge for wounds received in action. The civilian could only see the saving of a few cents. The military man faced a life of suffering.

On September 16th Ray Marner wrote:

Castro came back after living with the French underground for six months. Three Ploesti raiders came back after being liberated by the Russians.

On September 17 Will Lundy reported "All crews participated in practice mission--at low level."

Norm Kiefer remembers I took part in planning for briefing this practice mission. When I saw my roommate, Dick Wynes, we agreed that he would have a passenger on this practice flight.

We quickly left England by way of the English Channel where we flew at wave top level. After breaking the Dutch coast, we turned and returned at wave top.

I will always remember watching the shore line cliffs as we approach England. I was standing between the pilot and copilot and could clearly see the cliffs beginning to loom above us. There were fishermen on a dock. At the last minute, Wynes pulled up to miss the cliff. As we went over, the fishermen went into the water. That same day, it was decided that we would not have to fly so low.

Glenn Hall went on a low level flight over the lowlands on September 18th. He does not recall who he was with. He does remember:

We had no enemy opposition and had a very good view of the country, coming in at tree top level. We passed over an

air raid shelter and saw six Dutchmen nearby holding a very large Dutch flag with one hand and waving like crazy with their other hand. It was a very moving sight and made me realize what we were fighting for.

Glenn was on a supply mission for our ground troops. The Group dispatched 10 aircraft from each of the four squadrons on this mission to Best, Holland. There had been an air landing in that area.

The Richard Habedank crew was on this mission. Two of the crew members, Robert Dupont and Elwood Matter were wounded. Matter received his Purple Heart from General Johnson. As a result of his wounds, Matter missed several missions with his crew and then tried to catch up by flying with other crews.

Gene McMahon's record shows that he was on this mission, but does not show who he was with.

Will Lundy reported in his *History Of The 67th Squadron*:  
"---(The mission was) to drop food supplies and ammunition to air-borne forces operating behind enemy lines at Best, Holland. The entire mission was carried out at low level. We left the English coast at 1100 feet, entered the Dutch coast at that same altitude, came down over the target at 400 feet, dropped the huge packages, climbed to 3,000 feet, and then let down again over the Channel to enter the English coast at 1,000 feet. The results were excellent as reported by the drop masters, with all parachutes landing in the drop zone. Enemy resistance encountered was from small arms fire, and 27 of the Group's airplanes were slightly damaged and two men were wounded. All planes returned safely to base except one squadron's ship that was forced to land in Belgium near Brussels. Three ships were involved in crash landings due to flat tires, etc.---All along our course the Dutch people gathered in groups to wave at us. We're so low one can almost shake hands with them. We pulled up to 300 feet to release our cargo.---all the cattle in Holland got a good workout today!"

On September 18th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Tonight I received an invitation to a party. The enlisted men that were with us back in the States are having a get together. Lt. Harbison and I are the only officers that have been invited. The only reason, I think, is that we were enlisted men with them. I was afraid, at first, that there would be some hard feelings, but so far, I haven't

18 SEPT.

found a bit of it.

The next night he indicated:

I checked to make certain that everything is set for the party tonight. They had thirty chickens killed and dressed when I left the kitchen.

The George Beiber crew were back in combat on September 22nd. Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni were on the crew. Uvanni wrote:

We resumed our tour in true style. Good old Germany! Kassel was the town and it is located at the eastern end of the Ruhr Valley.

Our target was the Henschler Locomotive Works. The plant currently is producing, of all things, 88-mm Flak Guns!!! This is the first time in 24 missions that flak guns were our target.

Intense flak was expected and also fighter attacks. There were clouds scattered pretty well throughout Germany and our gunners were especially alert. Kassel was covered by clouds so we bombed by PFF. Flak was moderate and nothing like we expected.

Our bombers left contrails all over the sky and it's lucky for us that clouds obscured the antiaircraft gunner's eyes. The fighters in our escort wove pretty patterns over and under us with their S'ing motions leaving contrails.

Woodie, flying the top turret, reported a German jet overhead followed by 2 P-51's. The jet emitted a trail of black smoke when the Mustangs approached him and left them "hanging" in the air.

At interrogation, after the mission, Woodie reported the jet plane and the intelligence officer told us he was the only one from our Group to do so. Fighter pilots from our escort turned in reports bearing out what Woodie said. Everyone else had mistaken the jet for one of our planes with wing-tanks!

The 506th sent six aircraft on September 22nd. Our ships joined 14 other ships from the 44th in this attack. Bombing was by PFF and the results were unobserved.

Lewis Robinson reports that he was with the Ray Ciesielski crew on this mission to Kassel.

The 506th continued to pound the enemy on September 25th when we sent eight of our aircraft to bomb the marshalling yards at Koblenz, Germany. Lt. Ryan led the Squadron with Major Middleton as the command pilot. Bombing was carried out using PFF equipment and the results were unobserved. Captain Sherman Dowsett completed his combat tour with a very excellent bombing record. He was lead bombardier on 30 missions and scored excellent on 26 occasions. In addition to our ships, the Group dispatched 22 other aircraft on this mission.

Records maintained by Kenneth Adrian show that the Louis Wimsatt crew was on this raid. Adrian's note indicate they carried twelve 500-pound bombs and hit a marshaling yard. A newspaper account of the raid is as follows:

#### NEARLY 2,000 U.S. PLANES BLAST REICH THROUGH CLOUDS

After a weekend lull because of bad weather, more than 1,200 Fortresses and Liberators of the Eighth Air Force yesterday swarmed over western Germany to blast railroad yards and other military and industrial objectives. Bombing was done with the aid of special instruments through solid clouds.

For the first time since D-Day, both Eighth and Ninth fighters, numbering nearly 750 Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings, escorted the heavies. Part of the escorting force also strafed enemy supplies and reinforcement facilities in the Ruhr north of Marburg and in the vicinity of Pederborn.

Although no enemy pursuits were encountered and antiaircraft fire was comparatively light, nine bombers and three Eighth fighters were lost.

The B-17's and B-24's pounded two railroad yards at Frankfurt, two at Coblenz, and one at Ludwigshafen, as well as the Oopau chemical and synthetic oil plant. The railroad yards are important distribution points for German troops and supplies sent to the western front.

Records maintained by Delmar Fox indicate that the Paul Durett crew was on this mission.

Both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni were on a raid to Hamm, Germany, on September 26th. They probably were with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote:

Recently our efforts have been concentrated around Germany's Ruhr Valley. Today's target was the marshalling yard at Hamm. This is the biggest railroad yard in Germany at present. They are moving thousands of German troops through it daily.

Clouds were again in favor of the Germans. Our bombing was instrumental in creating some smoke cover. Light flak was encountered instead of the intense flak expected so I guess it was even all around.

The 44th sent 32 aircraft sent on this mission. They went after the transportation facilities. Capt Gossett was the deputy lead. PFF bombing was used with poor results. Lt. George D. Wright completed his combat tour.

The ship flown by Louis Wimsatt carried six 1000-pound bombs according to records maintained by Kenneth Adrian. The Ray Ciesielski crew was on this raid according to the Lewis Robinson record. It is possible that the Homer Still crew was on their first mission on this day.

Lewis Robinson recalls:

Combat crews didn't get to know ground personnel. In fact we didn't care to know other combat crew members, even in our own hut. If you formed a friendship, it hurt when they disappeared.

He also recalls the digestive problems caused by fright during predawn preparations after a breakfast of limp flapjacks, powdered eggs, bacon grease. These conditions did not lend themselves to carrying out the bodies natural functions.

Frostbite was another problem that occurred when heating units in the boots or socks failed.

I switched to a "Limey" suit and back parachute after my chest chute was riddled with flak as it rested on an ammunition rack at my side. Of course I didn't know my chute was riddled until we landed.

Our white silk gloves allowed us to touch our metal guns

at high altitude. Without them the skin on our hands would have remained frozen to the gun.

On September 26th Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

I had a letter from Major McAtee. He said that it was sure swell to be home once more, even if it is only for a little while. He claims that none of his clothes fit him any more. The letter was written on Aug. 31st and he ended it by saying that he would see me in about a month.

Speaking of my pass. I have something to tell you that I though was good. You know that since I have been over here I have had one pass for seven days, seven days in the rest home (which isn't supposed to count) and three times I have had a three-day pass. Well when I turned in for a seven-day pass I was turned down. Capt. Doughten told me that he had to cut my leave to six days. I haven't been an officer long enough to take a seven-day pass. Well here is one boy that is going to take my seven days the same as the rest of them. They can take a jump in the lake.

On September 27th seven aircraft from the 506th made a trip to Kassel, Germany. Captain Clements led the Group. As a result of the failure of the H2X equipment he turned the lead over to the deputy at the Group I.P. There were 23 other ships from the 44th on this raid.

James Clements was flying in A/C #800, Bar E. He had aboard his usual crew except for Sgt. C. N. Cash. Also aboard were Capt. Davis (Not 506th), Lt. R. J. Bennett and Lt. W. R. Partridge. They were carrying two 1000-pound bombs which were dropped on H2X at 0945 hours at an altitude of 24,700 feet. They encountered light accurate flak at the target area. There were no enemy aircraft.

The Delmar Fox record shows that the Paul Durett crew was on this mission. Delmar recalls:

Although there were no enemy attacks on our Group, one of the groups behind us lost quit a few planes.

Probably what Delmar Fox saw was the air battle that Roger Freeman, reported in his *Mighty Eighth War Diary*:

On this Kassel raid there were 26 Second Air Division

B-24's lost. Gunners on our B-24's shot down five enemy aircraft. Fighters escorting the 2nd Air Division shot down 30 enemy aircraft. Including crashed aircraft, the 445th Bomb Group lost 28 ships out of the 37 dispatched. This was the largest loss for any group on any mission.

Also, the Ray Ciesielski crew was in combat on this day according to the Lewis Robinson record.

It is possible that the Homer Still crew was on this mission.

On September 27th Lt. Milliken received the Distinguished Flying Cross. (Note: Milliken had left for the States early in the month. The orders would be forwarded to the States.)

Lewis Robinson recalls:

I carried my own small box camera on the first few missions. After a while, I was given an 8-mm hand held movie camera to take pictures of combat. I was also supposed to place a big K-24 camera over the escape hatch to photograph the bomb run results. Sometimes I was so busy throwing out chaff (by the boxful at times), that I didn't get the bombing results.

I never did forget the debriefing interrogations! We had a couple of the teetotalers (did not drink) on the crew. This resulted in a bonus for the rest of us. Our officers were good suppliers of the scotch, acquired at their club, which we kept in our hut.

On September 27th Norm Kiefer wrote:

Well there goes the blackout warning and since I don't have any lights on my bike I am going to get back to my quarters before it gets too dark. What happened to my lights? Somebody borrowed them and forgot to return them.

On September 28th eight aircraft from the 508th were briefed to returned to Kassel, Germany. Lt. Bentcliff led the Squadron. The Group flew lead for the 14th Combat Wing. There were 30 ships from the 44th in the attacking force. Bombing was by PFF with poor results.

In that formation was an aircraft flown by the Firman Mack crew.

On that same day Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I am glad that Joe Young got back to the States all right. You will probably get a letter from him. (Note: Norm's wife went to visit with Joe and his family while Joe was in the States.)

Both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni were on a return trip to Hamm, Germany, on September 30th. They were probably with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote:

Clouds of the 26th caused our bombing to be off and less effective than it should have been so we were briefed today for a return engagement. If we can knock out Hamm, we'll be helping our ground forces tremendously. Hamm has a large number of German troops who are being transported through there each day.

Visibility was perfect and we had a 100-mile an hour tail wind going across the target. Our ground speed was 367 MPH and the flak, which was heavy, was all behind us. The flak gunners failed to compensate for our higher than usual speed and didn't lead us properly.

As we turned to come home we were against this wind and our actual ground speed was only 97 MPH! This time the flak gunners gave us too much lead and the flak was all in front of us. It was a great feeling to see them off so much in their aim.

Our bombing results were good and I don't think we'll have to pay Hamm a visit for a while.

There were six aircrews from the 506th that made this trip to Hamm on September 30th. Bombing was by PFF and results were poor. In addition to our ships, there were 23 other 44th ships in the air on this day. The Group led the 14th Combat Wing which led the 2nd Air Division.

The Paul Durett crew was on this raid according to records kept by Delmar Fox. It is possible that the Homer Still crew was on this mission.

+ This was a disappointing day for M/Sgt. Iverson. His record of 96 missions without an abortion was broken when Captain Insley returned early with malfunctioning prop governors.

On September 30th Norm Kiefer wrote:

I am only going to take six days on this leave. They made



certain of that by naming me as Officer Of The Day for the Base on the day they want me back. Nice of them wasn't it.

During the month of September the excellent record of no turn-backs continued, making a total of 175 sorties with no abortions. M/Sgt. Robert M. Iverson, Crew Chief, continued his outstanding record. Aircraft maintained by Iverson completed 95 sorties without a single abortion due to mechanical failure. Crew Chiefs M/Sgts. Favero, Steele and Yerke were recommended for the award of the Bronze Star. X

During the month the following personnel were given promotions: From Captain to Major Lawrence J. Linck; From 1st Lt. to Captain Bearden and McCaslin; From 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. Waters, Bayless, Clapper, Jolvitz, Tyree, Daniel, Parshall, Fuss, Litzman, and Ward.

During the month the following additions were made to the duty roster: New crews not previously mentioned included William R. Partridge and Van E. Lowe; Returning from the rest home was Major Middleton; Captain John F. King assigned.

During the month the following temporary or permanent removals from the duty roster were made: Captain Sayler to the 14th Combat Wing; Captain Joe Bearden assigned to the 70th Replacement Depot; Lt. Frank Adams to the 12th Replacement Depot; Lts. Gippert, Komasinski, Lain, and Michaels and Sgts. Bohenko, Grett, and Hulewicz transferred to 8th Air Force Replacement Center; M/Sgt. Nathan Sweedler, Line Chief, transferred to the 302nd Air Transport Wing; 2nd Lt. William K. Brown assigned to the 96th General Hospital; Sgt. Owen transferred to the Zone of Interior; Major Middleton to rest home.

During the month of September Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

"I received a letter from Albert Kerns today. He is now a married man. He is working as a mechanic on a B-17 field. He said that he wishes that he was back over here."---"Jack Edwards was up for a little while again today. He had to leave quite early since they came up in a Cub."---"Barber was married and lived in Penn. It was his funeral that I went to."---"Maybe I will spend the later part of this evening in the manner that days off are supposed to be spent. Sgt. Delores Brumagin is trying to persuade me into going out for a few brews with

him."---"You asked what I wanted for Christmas. Since all of my good wings are broken, I could use a pair if you can find them. Also, I am out of the little wire collar holders."---"I did some sewing today. I put three gold braided bars on my left blouse sleeve. Each one stands for six months of overseas duty. That one blouse of mine sure is getting full of junk."---"The picture of Sgt. Klose was taken back in the States. He was killed with Dobbins."---"Today I had some of my old flying clothes out. A moth miller flew out of my heavy helmet. I suppose that by this time next year I won't have any fur left in it."---"Cutshall is now a prisoner of war."---"Yesterday I was in town most of the day. When I got back to the field I had a package from you. The shirt fit just fine except for the sides. I will have it tailored down."---"I had no more than finished opening your package when there was a knock at the door. It was one of the enlisted men. He wanted to know if I wanted to go out with a bunch of the boys to play darts at one of the "pubs". We had a pretty good time. However, we were soundly beaten at darts by a group of Englishmen."---"I'll bet you that I beat you at something this morning. I got to vote before you did. I sent in my ballot this morning."

NOTHING MOVES ON THE ROADS OR RAILS

The Group dispatched 25 ships on a mission to the marshalling yards at Hamm, Germany on October 2nd. We led the 14th Combat Wing. All aircraft bombed with unknown results. After making a second run on the target the bombs were dropped visually, but the target was completely obscured by clouds. Flak was moderate and accurate; fighter support was excellent. We incurred no losses, but some of the returning planes had slight battle damage. The 506th furnished eight of these raiding aircraft.

Records kept by Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh indicate the Thomas Waters crew was on this raid. Another crew that made this trip belonged to Paul Durett according to records kept by Delmar Fox. It is possible that the Homer Still crew was on this raid according to John Lord.

Ray Marner wrote in his Diary on October 2nd:

Lt. Irwin came back from Switzerland. Capt. Cardenas is back too. They went down in March.

The George Beiber crew was on a raid on October 3rd according to records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni. Uvanni wrote:

Last night Hal Hannon (friend from another crew) and I went to Hingham, a little town near the field. We bought some scotch in a local pub and had quite a celebration. This morning when I awoke I had to have Perry Morse help me out of bed. My left foot was swollen so much I couldn't get my shoe on. Perry practically carried me to breakfast and briefing. He took care of me as though he were my mother.

Our target was Gaggenau in south western Germany. I felt pretty good while we were waiting around to take off and had to tell the crew about last night and its episode. Lt. Boensch didn't think I should go on the mission, but rather to the infirmary. Lt. Beiber told me to take it easy on the mission and to let Lt. Boensch open and close the bomb bay doors. (So I wouldn't fall out, I guess!!)

Gaggenau is located in mountainous country and I was figuring how much more accurate the flak would be because of it being closer to us than usual. (You remember that I

served a year in an antiaircraft outfit before entering the Air Force.)

For some reason we took the secondary target today. It was a hydroelectric plant in the mountains. I opened and closed the bomb bay doors as I felt better in the cold air. There wasn't any flak and we dropped our bombs while Lt. Folsom was catching a cat nap. About 10 minutes after dropping them he woke up and told our pilot that we should open the bomb bay doors as we should be at the target soon!!! We all got a kick out of this.

The cold air was a great help and I recommend a flight at high altitude for "the morning after"! I went to the flight surgeon after the mission and he said I had sprained my foot and wrapped it good and tight. He observed that I must have been anesthetized when it happened or it would have hurt like heck!!

The Lorry Works at Gaggenau, was the ordered primary for October 3rd. The Group was the second group in the "B" wing, echeloned to the right of the 491st, with the 14th Wing leading the Division. Thirty aircraft were dispatched on this mission. Due to a bomb sight malfunction in the lead ship on the bomb run, the formation ended up to the right of the target. However, the second and high squadrons broke away to bomb the primary with excellent results. The first and third, lead and low left, squadron headed for Pforzheim, the secondary, but were cut off by another wing. They then went on to choose a target of opportunity, the Offenburger marshalling yards, with fair to good results. We encountered no flak or enemy fighters. Seven aircraft from the 506th took part in this attack. Captain Hal S. Kimball was flying lead ship of the Group, but had to abort due to mechanical problem.

Kenneth Adrian's notes indicate that they had to make an emergency landing at Rheims after attacking a target at Appgnheimer. He was probably with Louis Wimsatt. Lewis Robinson reports that he flew with Ray Ciesielski on this raid. It is possible that the Homer Still crew was on this raid according to John Lord.

Lewis Robinson recalls:

My escape boots--those black issues to be attached to the parachute harness in case of bail out over enemy territory--never saw our ship. They were exchanged for

cash in Brighton, where our crew was sent for a week rest and relaxation.

The Group sent 30 aircraft to bomb an airfield at Lippstadt, Germany, on October 5th. Fighter support was good through the mission. Neither flak or enemy aircraft were encountered. The results were good for the first and second squadrons, but poor for the third. They were carrying fifty-two 100-pound bombs.

The Thomas Waters crew was on this mission according to records maintained by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon. Also, Paul Durett and his crew were there according to the Delmar Fox records.

On October 6th James Clements was Group Deputy Lead on the trip to the Aero Engine Works at Hamburg, Germany. He was flying in A/C #644, -H. His copilot was Joseph Kodaj and Wade Huggens was the tail gunner. Lt. Loyd W. Hare was also aboard. They were carrying four 500-pound bombs. They dropped at 1207 hours from an altitude of 25,000 feet. His notes indicate that they dropped visually through a slight haze. The flak was intense and bombing results were excellent. There were seven ships from the 506th that were with them.

Records of both William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom show that they were on this raid. Another of our crews that made this mission belonged to Ray Ciesielski according to records kept by Lewis Robinson.

October 6th was the first day back to duty for Major McAtee after returning from home leave. Major Middleton will be in charge of Squadron Operations with Lt. Horne as his assistant. ✓

On October 7th the 506th sent ten aircraft to Kassel, Germany. Two of our aircraft failed to return.

John Lord was with Homer Still on this raid. They were flying in aircraft #789, Lakanookie. Lord recalls:

We flew on the oldest wreck of a B-24 in the Group since we were the last crew in the Squadron. On the way to Kassel we lost an engine and soon after lost the Group. Before John Wilson could get a return heading, we lost the other engine on the same wing.

Still continued on course, flying into Germany, while John was looking for a new heading to an emergency landing in France. Suddenly we heard a loud pop! We were hit and the bomb bay was on fire.

I immediately got out of the ship. I landed in a plowed field near Bielefeld. I was immediately captured by a German soldier who was with a group training nearby. He took me to the airfield that shot us down. I was visited by the flak gunners who did the job while I was in a bed in the field infirmary.

I was burned on the hand and around the eyes while getting out of the plane. Several days later we were taken to Dulag Luft in Frankfurt for questioning and assignment to a permanent camp.

By that time my burned hand was seriously infected and I was in great pain. On arrival in Frankfurt they put me in a holding barracks with a large number of British para-troopers that were taken at the bridgehead at Arnhem. They gave me morphine to help with the pain. A British doctor, captured with them, saved my hand in the infirmary at Dulag Luft.

I still love those British guys!!

After I was able to travel I went by train to Stag Luft IV at Kiefheide (about 50-to-60 miles east of the Oder river in what is now Poland).

I stayed there till February 7, 1945. We then started to march. First it was west across the islands at the mouth of the Oder. Then to the north of Berlin (Wittenberg). Early in April we moved by train from near Hannover to near Magdeburg. This was a huge tent camp that primarily held troops from the British 8th Army that were captured in 1942. Among them were Sikhs and Gurkhas.

On April 12th, the day Franklin Roosevelt died, we went back east and heard our guns for the first time. We moved to around Torgau. On the 21st the Russian drive to Berlin started and the Germans got us back west in a hurry. The Russians were so close that we could hear small arms fire. Eventually we were marched into the U.S.A. lines near Halle on the Saale river. We were lousy, dirty and hungry but HAPPY!

In Will Lundy's 44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor And Casualties John Dahlin told:

Our plane was hit by flak and set on fire. Seven of us bailed out. The plane broke into pieces soon afterwards. I met the other six men who bailed out safely, but none of us ever again saw Sgt. Hibbs. Later a German Major told me that three bodies were found in the crashed plane. He had a correct list of names of the missing crew members.

With Lt. Homer E. Still (POW) were Lts. Francis C. Welborn (POW), John E. Wilson (POW), and Henry Strunc (POW). The enlisted personnel were Helge E. Wessman (KIA), John B. Lord (POW), Leo R. Hibbs (KIA), John C. Wyant (POW), John K. Dahlin (POW), and Vernon Buhl (KIA).

The other aircraft that we lost on this day was #187 flown by Lt. William Salfen.

In the previously cited work by Will Lundy, Salfen's copilot, Donald B. Iden stated:

We had just closed the bomb bay doors after releasing bombs over Kassel when our plane took two bursts of flak. One hit the wing and the other went into the tail section. The hit in the wing took out the #1 and #2 engines, so that made it impossible to keep a heading without complete cross-control of ailerons and rudders. Needless to say, loss of altitude was very rapid.

We rode it down to 1,500 feet, at which time we bailed out and soon were captured. After Salfen and I bailed out, the aircraft entered a flat spin, crashed and burned.

Leo Suszek was captured by the Germans as were the rest of us. Somehow he was badly injured on bailing out. When we last saw him on the ground, he was unable to converse and appeared to be in extreme pain. I thought he had internal injuries of some kind. We gave him an injection of morphine before he was taken away.

We were told that Robert Doherty's parachute failed to open. Apparently Francis Buckley went down with the aircraft. I can only assume that he was unable to bail out. Possibly the flak hit in the rear could have injured him or damaged his chute.

With Lt. William S. Salfen (POW) were Lts. Donald B. Iden

(POW), Edward F. Vetter (POW), and Morton Bauman (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Carney W. Baggett Jr. (POW), Robert L. Doherty (KIA), Leo C. Suszek (POW), Norman L. Sinclair (POW), and Francis X. Buckley (KIA).

There was another casualty suffered by personnel of the 506th on this October 7th strike at Kassel. Aircraft #849 was badly hit by flak and landed at Brussels, Belgium. Its pilot John W. Jones Jr. received severe wounds in the left leg which required amputation below the knee.

Will Lundy's work reported the memories of Clement R. C. Holcomb, copilot on this ship:

The mission was to Kassel and the target was the Tiger Tank Factory. We were hit on the bomb run before dropping our bomb load. Lt. Jones was injured and I was hit in the back of my left shoulder, rendering my left arm useless.

Sgt. Kirkland, engineer, also was hit, but fortunately his flak suit protected him from serious injury. The right wing fuel tanks were punctured and both #1 and #2 engines were damaged and we lost normal power. The radio was damaged. I learned later that we were transmitting all right but could not receive. Adding to our problems was our compass which was malfunctioning and would not indicate correctly. The #4 engine caught fire briefly, but was blown out because we lost a few thousand feet in a hurry.

When I finally got the plane straightened out, the formation was gone. I got Sgt. Kirkland to help Lt. Jones out of his seat and had the Sgt. sit in Jones' seat to handle the throttles and help me with the rudder pedals. With my injured left arm I could not manipulate the throttles and other controls which were on my left side. The plane was "crabbing" due to the uneven power output between the left and right sides, making straight flight most difficult.

We salvoed our bombs to help hold altitude and tried to contact our "little friends", but were not able to contact any of the fighters. Since Jones was hurt badly, and we were losing fuel steadily, I was afraid we might have to ditch if we continued towards England, and probably couldn't get Jones out of a ditching situation.

Lt. Westtenhiser, navigator, found that Strip B-58, near



Brussels, had very recently been taken from the Germans, so we decided to try to land there. With the compass screwed up, we just plain lucked out, finding it on the first pass.

I followed a B-17 in on the final approach, but he did not make it and crashed just short of the runway. There were bomb craters everywhere, but enough had been filled in to make a landing possible.

With Sgt. Kirkland handling the throttles, I got the plane down OK. Jones and I were taken to the hospital. A day or so later I was able to walk around with my arm in a sling. Our crew hitched a ride back to England in a C-54, but we hit bad weather and had to land near Dover. Next morning the C-54 dropped us off right in front of the control tower.

Lt. Holcolm was recommended for the Silver Star medal for his remarkably safe emergency landing under the most trying of conditions.

The 44th sent 39 aircraft on this mission. Flak in the target area was intense and accurate.

Delmar Fox reports that he was with Paul Durett on this raid. Also, Lewis Robinson's records show that the Ray Ciesielski crew was there. The Firman Mack record shows that he was part of this attacking force. Another 506th crew that made this mission belonged to Thomas Waters according to the Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh records.

Ray Marner recorded on October 7th:

We lost Lt. Salfen's and Lt. Still's crews today. Lt. Jones' crew went down in Brussels. Jones' leg was shot off and Lt. Holcomb flew and landed the ship with one arm. Two engines were out. He was wounded in the arm by flak.

On October 7th, Norm Kliefer wrote to his wife:

Last night when I jumped off the truck it was right into the arms of Major Strong. Yes, Major McAtee is also back. I think that in the month that he was home he put on more weight than you have since I left home. McAtee told me, "Norm you will never know how good my brogans looked next to her mules at the foot of the bed".

On October 9th thirty-two ships from the 44th went on a mission to the marshalling yards at Koblenz. Captain Gossett led the Group with Major Middleton as Command Pilot. We were the 3rd group in the Wing and the 14th Wing led the Division. The primary target could not be found through 10/10 clouds so the secondary was bombed on PFF. Flak in the target area was light and inaccurate and no enemy aircraft were encountered. Fighter support was excellent throughout the mission. All of our ships returned safely to base.

The Louis Wimsatt crew went to Koblenz. Kenneth Adrian's notes show that they were in A/C Bar Z and were carrying six 1000-pound bombs.

Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni were on this mission.

The Paul Durett crew continued their every other day raid schedule by flying this day, per the Delmar Fox record.

For October 12th Achmer was the primary (visual) and the Osnabruck marshalling yards the secondary if PFF was to be used. The 44th flew a split formation with the first squadron being high right on the 392nd Bomb Group and the second squadron was high right on the 491st. The high right squadron bombed the secondary with poor results, because of human error, with the bombs six miles west of the MPI. The other squadron's results were unobserved because of bomb smoke. There were no enemy aircraft and flak was moderate and inaccurate. Fighter support was good. There were no losses in the Group. The 506th sent five aircraft on this mission. However, two of them aborted as a result of mechanical problems. It appears that we bombed the marshalling yards at Osnabruck.

The record of Gene McMahon shows that he went to Osnabruck. Michel Yuspeh also reports that the Thomas Waters crew went to Achmer on October 12. (Note: Roger Freeman in his *Mighty Eighth War Diary* indicated that the primary target was Achmer. However, because of weather the 2nd Bomb Division hit the secondary at Osnabruck by PFF.)

On October 13th Ray Marner wrote:

A couple of buzz bombs came right over our site. They landed out a way, but shook us up some. They were so low that they vibrated the barracks.

Records of William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom show that they

14 Oct.

were on a mission on October 14th. Uvanni wrote:

Last night when an alert was posted my name showed up on another crew's list, Lt. Ryan a lead pilot. As I had flown all my missions (29) with my own crew, I was quite put out. I ran over to headquarters to talk to the Major.

I explained my desire to stay with my own crew, but he said I had to go with Ryan as he was a deputy lead ship on tomorrow's mission and had to have an experienced radio operator to send bomb strike messages to Division Headquarters.

The air was cloudy and the target fairly well covered. After bombs away I sent the bomb strike message to Division Headquarters. I worried about being with this unknown crew as I did not have the feeling of security that I had with my own. However, I worried more about my crew mates and kept my eye on their ship, which was in the same part of the formation, as often as I could.

Everything went OK for both crews, but I hope I don't draw anymore of these screwy assignments.

Thirty ships from the 44th were on this October 14th mission to the rail yards at Kaiserslautern. Our Group was the only one from the Wing that participated. We were the third wing in the Division. All aircraft reached the target and bombed by G-H with result unobserved. There was no flak. All ships returned to base. The 506th sent seven ships on this trip. Lt. John J. Ryan flew as deputy lead. Lt. Raymond J. Bennett completed his combat tour. Another 506th ship that made this mission was flown by Thomas Waters according to the Michel Yuspeh records. Lewis Robinson reports that he was with Ray Ciesielski on this trip.

On October 14th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

In my letter last night I sent another name for your Christmas card list. He is the crew chief that worked on our ship while I was flying. Jackson told me that his wife will soon be out of uniform. She is a British girl in the WAAF. From what he said I take it that there is a baby on the way.

Ray Marner reported on that day:

We got another battle star for the Western European

Campaign. That makes five Bronze Stars. We can wear one Silver Star now.

Mid-month, October 15th, was marked with the Group launching 38 aircraft on mission to Cologne, Germany. The target was the largest motor transport works at Cologne. Our ships were broken into A and B sections to lead the 14th Combat Wing. We were the third wing in the Division. All aircraft reached the target and bombed by PFF. The A section bombed the Gereon marshalling yard at Cologne with unobserved results. At the IP the PFF in the lead ship of the B section was jammed and the order to bomb was not received by the others. Committing to a visual run, the B section went on to bomb Dormigeon, a target of opportunity just north of Cologne, with good results. No flak or enemy fighters were in the target area. Flak on the route out was only meager and inaccurate. Fighter support was excellent and there were no losses. There were nine aircraft from the 506th in this attack on the Ford Motor Company plant. All of our aircraft returned to base. This was the first mission for Lt. Thomas Williams.

Firman Mack's notes show that he led the Squadron on this raid. There was no rest for Michel Yuspeh on the 15th since the Thomas Waters crew was out for the second day in a row. Gene McMahon was with them. Also, Ray Ciesielski crew was up two times in as many days. Lewis Robinson was with him.

Fred Marzolph recalls while he was with the Squadron:

We had a good-looking T/Sgt. that had completed his first tour and stayed overseas to be a navigator and hopefully get a commission. He didn't really belong on our crew, but he flew one or two missions with us. The navigator we brought overseas with us was returning for a second tour and was a Major. He flew six missions with us and then returned to his original Group to be Group Navigator for the bloody 100th.

When we were made a Lead Crew, we received a radar navigator that was a Flight Officer and definitely on the "outs" with Colonel Snavely. I don't remember hearing any name other than FX for our new crew member. For some unknown reason, he was definitely an anti-saluting man when it came to Colonel Snavely. Probably for this reason, Snavely, would not put him up for 2nd. Lt. To the best of my knowledge, the navigator returned home from the ETO as a Flight Officer.

Our bombardier once had visions of a monstrous statement of charges for causing our Squadron's and another's bombs to drop 20 miles from the target. We were leading the Squadron this day and had to go through a front. When we came out the sky was almost clear of any airplanes. We finally got some of our Squadron together, plus some from several other squadrons. Then a squadron from another group pulled alongside and said their bomb sight had gone out and asked if they could drop bombs when we did. Our pilot signaled them an OK.

Just about when we hit the IP, I heard our bombs crunch out of the bomb bay and saw the other ship's bombs drop. I notified the pilot all bombs away. He immediately said not yet since we were still on the bomb run. I said they were all gone as I was looking in our bomb bay. He had the radio man check and he confirmed it.

Then the question of what had happened was addressed. Our bombardier was rather tall. While moving around in the nose of the ship he somehow sat on the salvo lever, releasing all the bombs. The remaining ships in the formation released when they saw the smoke bombs go.

At that point, our bombardier thought Sweden looked so inviting. He was certain that all of the top brass and our pilot would look on him as a German agent. No one in his right mind would do something so dumb. However, during debriefing, General Johnson saved the day when he came up to the battered bombardier, put his arm around him and said once it had happened to his crew also. This calmed all the rest of the brass. We later said it was a peace offering to some German farmer as we sure took care of his spring plowing. I don't remember if we got credit for a mission or not.

On October 15th Major Frank Slough returned to USA. Frank was one of the pilots that flew overseas with the 506th.

Ray Warner reported on October 16th:

Danny Bitzell came back from Ireland. It is very nice there. Harry Davis is in Paris now.

Thirty-one Group aircraft were out on October 18th to attack Leverkusen, Germany. We led the 14th Combat Wing, the second wing in the Division. The target was the Chemical Works. Gee-H was used for bombing and the results were unobserved.

There were seven crews from the 506th that were with them. Equipment failure in a PFF ship resulted in 11 aircraft not dropping. The Group lost three aircraft with only two survivors.

One of those crews that received sortie credit belonged to Ray Ciesielski. However, the Lewis Robinson notes show the target to be Cologne (a short distance away). Also, the Kenneth Adrian notes show that the Louis Wimsatt crew carried six 500-pound and six incendiary bombs to Cologne on this date. Michel Yuspeh recorded that the Thomas Waters crew chalked up their 20th mission by going to Leverkusen, Germany.

The Group dispatched 16 ships on a mission to attack the diesel works at Gustavsburg, Germany, on October 19th. They formed the "A" wing of the 14th Combat Wing. The target was struck with unobserved results. No enemy aircraft were observed and flak in the target area was moderate and accurate. Fighter support was excellent and the Group had no losses. There were five 506th ships in the formation. Lt. Harold B. Waldorf, and Sgts. Hulton Thurston and Kenneth F. Coles completed their combat tours.

Records of both Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni indicate that they were on this mission. They were probably with George Beiber. Uvanni does not remember why he made no notes for the raids on Hamburg, Koblenz, and Gustavsburg. All I remember is that on our last several missions that I had trouble clearing my ears on descending from high altitude and it resulted in headaches. I can think of no other reason as I did not write it down.

The Thomas Waters crew also made this raid according to Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon.

On October 20th an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to Captain Dowsett.

Ray Marner took a break on October 23. He wrote about it:

I left on furlough. I went to Peterborough and then up to Edinburgh. I spent the night there. I met Don Wombacher at the Palais. He said Wes Pogge went home. We went to Aberdeen and spent our furloughs there. We had a swell time dancing, etc. We also swam in the municipal pool, the best in Briton, roamed around the harbor, Hazelhead Park, College and etc. All houses there are made of

granite. We came back on London train. Sir Strafford Cripps was on it.

George Beiber probably made a raid on Gelsenkirchen, Germany on October 25th. At least the records of William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom show that they were there. Uvanni wrote:

25 Oct

Today we were briefed to hit the key steel city in the Ruhr Valley. Up to now it had been considered suicide to go into this valley in daylight. The RAF had been trying to knock out the Ruhr at night, but hasn't been successful.

The Valley is approximately 100 miles long and is Germany's most prized area. There are 2,700 permanently located flak guns in it and no telling how many on flat cars. (Flak guns mounted on railroad flat cars and moved about by rail so intelligence can't brief airmen on what to expect.)

There were clouds between our formation and the ground until we hit the target area. We were thankful for this as we were in flak for 30 minutes. Due to the clouds it wasn't as accurate as it could have been.

There was a break in the clouds over Essen and we bombed visually. Our results were good. Flak over Essen was not too heavy, but up through the Valley it burst in clusters of six shells all around. (I've been told each six guns are fired electrically and simultaneously which is why they burst in these clusters. I know now why they call this "Flak Valley"!!!!)

The 44th dispatched 35 aircraft on this mission. They were the second wing in the Division. Bombing was Gee-H through 10/10 undercast with unobserved results. There were no enemy fighters. Flak in the target area was intense and accurate. All aircraft returned to base. The 506th sent twelve ships in this strike at the synthetic oil plant. Captain Kimbal led the Squadron.

The Louis Wimsatt crew was on this mission according to notes maintained by Kenneth Adrian.

For the second day in a row, William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom were in the Ruhr Valley. This time, October 26th, the target was Bottrop, Germany. They were probably flying with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote:

We didn't feel so good to see Essen as the target today. We only lack three missions to finish our tour and we could think of better places to go.

The mission was similar to yesterday's with a little less flak in the sky.

There were 21 ships from the 44th on this mission. They were the only ships from the 14th Combat Wing to participate and led the Division. Bombing was executed by Gee-H through 10/10 cloud cover with unobserved results. Flak was intense and accurate in the target area. No enemy aircraft were observed. No losses were incurred. There were five aircraft of the 506th that was with them. Lt. Richard Wynes led the Group.

The Lewis Robinson notes show the target to be Essen (10 miles south of Bottrop). Lewis was with Ray Ciesielski.

Crew reports reveal that Robert L. Hosington flew this mission in A/C #896, R, Southern Comfort III. With Lt. Hosington were Lts. Victor P. Lousa and William A. Lohr. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles E. Pursley, John A. Striegel, Frank B. Collins, Alvin B. Breeland, Jack J. Warner, Harold L. Shockey, and Clint J. Fuller Jr.

William Uvanni was on his last trip on October 30th. He was flying with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote:

Our Group went to Harburg which is near Hamburg this morning. We couldn't get up over 14,000 feet due to engine trouble. All the others were at 19,000 feet and approximately four miles ahead of us.

"Woodie" checked everything possible and told Lt. Beiber that whatever was wrong with the engine could not be fixed from within the aircraft. With this fact staring us in the face, we turned back. (Our first abortion in 34 missions.)

Lt. Bentcliff went down near Brussels on the way back. Gene Maschmeyer, a friend from Biggs Field Training at El Paso, was the radio operator. He was a fine young man, exceptionally clean in his living habits.

Subsequent findings about our plane's engine revealed a defective crankshaft which couldn't possibly be fixed from within the plane. "Woodie" was right again.



To the best of my knowledge, I believe that our crew was the first in the 506th to complete 33 missions without an abortion.

The Group dispatched 30 aircraft on the mission of October 30th. We led the 14th Combat Wing. Due to weather conditions at the IP and interference by preceding wings, our formation integrity was broken, forcing 19 aircraft to bomb the Hamburg Oil Refinery by PFF and eight others to attack Uetersen, Germany. No enemy aircraft were encountered, flak at the target was heavy, but inaccurate. The 506th furnished eight of the attacking aircraft. Lt. Bentcliff's ship, #523, was lost in action. Immediately after bombing, at 1318 hours, in the vicinity of Hamburg, this aircraft went into a very steep bank. Heavy flak was encountered at this time. The aircraft came out of the 90-degree bank and was last observed flying apparently under control on a heading of 180-degrees. Poor visibility, due to high clouds, made further sightings impossible. No chutes were seen.

In Will Lundy's 44th Bomb Group Honor Roll And Casualties Lester Griffin, engineer aboard the craft, was quoted:

Three men survived: Fuller, Capps and myself. We were a radar crew and flew only in bad weather. We were on our 23rd mission. The plane exploded, knocking or blowing me out and I came down by parachute after regaining consciousness.

No Griffin ~~died~~ <sup>WAS POW</sup> in the V.A. Hospital before further information could be obtained. This information was added to by Clint Fuller: *X. Stone*

Bentcliff, Gempel, Fiskum, Barefoot, Celentano, Maschmeyer, Downey, and Garza went down with the plane. Ralph N. Capps and I bailed out over Hamburg.

We flew into a heavy front while leading the high, right squadron. Soup was so thick that we had to fly on instruments. Someone crossed over in front of us with the prop wash flipping us over. The plane spun into the ground from approximately 28,000 feet.

I do not believe that the plane exploded. I was on the flight deck flying in the top turret. The radio operator, Maschmeyer, froze, apparently from shock, and would not bail out. I had to climb over him in order to get to the catwalk in the bomb bay. Both Barefoot and Garza were new

to our crew. Barefoot was riding the nose turret in order to complete the final mission of his tour. He was killed.

We did drop our bombs, but only to get rid of them. We saw no fighters or flak!

The three of us were sent to Dulag Luft, Frankfurt, Stalag Luft IV; moved to Stalag Luft I and liberated by the Russians in the first week of May, 1945.

With Lt. Clifford L. Bentcliff (KIA) were Lts. Charles L. Gempel (KIA), Lowell A. Fiskum (KIA), and Louis S. Celentano (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles L. Barefoot (KIA), Lester A. Griffin (POW), Gene E. Maschmeyer (KIA), Clint J. Fuller Jr. (POW), Ralph W. Capps (POW), Raul Garza (KIA), and John J. Downer 3rd (KIA).

After a 10-day break Lt. Thomas G. Waters was back in combat on October 30th. With Lt. Waters were Lts. Alvin R. Rockman, Robert L. Daniels, and Amandus J. Boyle. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Michel Yuspeh, James S. Gray, Patrick Colucci, Charles C. Walsh, Eugene M. McMahon, and Alfred G. Hawkins. In the target area they lost the formation in a cloud bank. They rejoined the formation in a different position after bombs away.

Another crew that returned to combat after a long break belonged to Paul Durett. Delmar Fox was on the crew. Crew reports show they were flying A/C #896, R, Southern Comfort III.

Lewis Robinson was flying with Ray Ciesielski on this mission. Lewis's record also shows the target to be Harburg.

Bill Hahn reports:

I trained as a Sperry Turret Gunner, but when we became a Radar Crew, the radar dome replaced the turret and my job was winding it up and down.

During the month the following personnel received promotions from 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt.: Jones, Hosington, Plutick, and Young;

The following not previously mentioned additions were made to the Squadron duty roster: New crews included Wendell C. Irwin and Richard R. Pedersen; Lt. Durett and crew returned from detached service, Scotland; Lt. Thomas P. Williams Mickey

Operator/Navigator.

The following deletions, either permanent or temporary, were made to the Squadron duty roster during the month: Captain John F. King assigned to the 67th Squadron; Captain John McCaslin returned to the States; Captain Sherman N. Dowsett assigned to the 489th Bomb Squadron; Lt. Tyree and crew on detached duty to Loch Katrine, Scotland; Other reassignments included Captain Meiner (Lt. Rada assumed command of the Engineering Section), and Lt. Albert E. McCloud. At some time during the month Lt. Harold M. Reynolds completed a tour of duty.

During the month of October Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

"On the way back from the movie tonight, I stopped in to see Dick Wynes. Did I tell you that he moved? He is now a Capt. and living in the quarters with McAtee. They fixed an egg sandwich for me"---"Do you know what a couple of days will bring? No, I haven't forgotten. About a month and a half ago I made arrangements for some flowers to be sent to you. I hope they get there on time. They wouldn't assure me of the correct date of delivery this time." (Norm was telling his wife that he had sent flowers for their wedding anniversary)---"The biggest share of the evening I spent in the Officer's Club. It was just about the only warm place that I could find."---"I think that tomorrow night I am going to go stepping out on you. Sgt. Edwards (Radio instructor from another sqdn.) wants me to go to an ATS dance with them. I think that I will go. I haven't been off the base for nearly a month."---"Dick Wynes stopped in today and we talked for a while. After that I had to go up to the Censors Office and censor mail. That is the last time this month. I must close for tonight. Yes, it is now night. You see, I was disturbed right in the middle of this letter." (I had started the letter while on duty. Raid information, for the next day, started to come over the teletype and I had to start preparing briefing material.)

When November rolled around, the Louis Wimsatt crew had been with the Squadron for a little over four months. During that time they had qualified as a Lead Crew. However, Wimsatt turned down flying as a regular Lead Crew. Starting in November he did fly a few Group leads.

Also by early November Glenn Hall was well along on his second combat tour after completing a tour of 28 missions and

returning to the States on furlough. When he went home for furlough, it was aboard the *Ille de France* and then it was back to England aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*. On his second tour he flew 15 missions. Hall remembers:

On the second tour I was not assigned to any special crew so I flew waist gunner on one mission, nose turret on four missions and engineer on 10.

On one of the missions when I was in the nose turret I saw two Me-109's try to shoot down a straggler from some other group. Just as the fighters were ready to fire the tail gunner opened up and put the lead fighter out of commission. The other fighter decided not to take on the B-24.

*Note?*  
The new month opened with an attack on the oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen, Germany. The Group furnished nine aircraft to the third group in the Wing which was the second wing in the Division. The bombs were dropped on PFF through a 10/10 cloud cover with unobserved results. Flak in the area was heavy, but inaccurate. Fighter protection was excellent. The 508th sent three ships in this effort. Lt. Richard Wynes led the Group.

The records of both William Uvanni and Gerald Folsom show they were on this raid. Uvanni wrote:

— Essen, Germany! IT COULDN'T BE!!! Knocking out the Ruhr is mighty important. The flak seemed a little heavier and more accurate today.

On the next day, November 2nd, some members of the Beiber crew found the day they had been looking for. On this raid on the oil refinery at Castrop/Rauxel were Gerald Folsom and William Uvanni, probably flying with George Beiber. Uvanni wrote

Essen, Germany! Some other name would have had a more pleasant sound this morning.

We hoped and prayed the Valley would be cloud covered and it was!! All the way in there was only an occasional break in the cloud formation below.

There were only two missions I can remember when I was freezing and sweating at the same time. On our first, to Bernberg, and on our last, to Essen. This may seem

humorous, but believe me, it is not!! The temperature at high altitude was usually extremely cold and accounts for the freezing, but it was tension that caused the sweating over the target.

We returned home without further incident and it was a good feeling to have completed our "Tour Of Duty"!! We withheld any extreme emotional exuberance as two of our crew must fly three more missions.

The Group sent 34 ships to this target which is northwest of Dortmund. Bombs were dropped on PFF through 10/10 clouds with unobserved results. Vapor trails were heavy. Flak was slight and inaccurate. Fighter protection was good. Five of those aircraft receiving sortie credit were from the 506th. Captain Kimball led the second squadron. Three of our aircraft aborted due to mechanical reasons.

This raid was made by Herbert L. Bayless flying in aircraft #209, Bar W, and Robert E. Meagher flying in aircraft #894, Bar N.

With Lt. Bayless were Lts. James W. Wood, James T. Westenhiser, and Edward A. Baier. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert Kirkland, Elwood A. Van Epps, John Flynn, John P. Haggard, Mitry K. Hage Jr., Robert E. Simon, and Marvin L. Moerbe

N-894 With Lt. Meagher was Flight Officer Edward H. Cousin. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James P. Crawford, Anto J. Cavalieri, Raymond J. Snape, Edward J. Stusovsky, Robert S. Mitchell, Gordon W. Fulmer, and Joseph E. Johnston. This crew aborted and brought their bombs back.

Squadron members who completed their tours of duty on this raid included Lts. Belber and Folsom; Sgts. Woodruff, Uvanni, Maggard and Morse. (Note: Folsom's records show that this was not his last mission.)

William Uvanni noted in closing out his diary:

An 88-mm flak shell travels approximately 1,000 feet per second when fired vertically at an aircraft. Evasive action at 19,000 or 20,000 feet called for a slight change of direction each 18 seconds which theoretically would take us away from the location of the shell burst. This type of evasive action cannot be taken on the bomb run as the plane must be a steady platform for the bombardier who

is actually flying the plane at this time. Sometimes after dropping our bombs we will descend rapidly under power and make a drastic turn to throw off the flak gunners who have had us on a steady course for the time of the run. This always felt good to me.

As an observation of the German flyers and flak gunners I might note that their flyers were good and had plenty of courage. They often came into their own gunner's flak to attack our formations. Their flak gunners were rated as equal to the world's best. (They could certainly put a lot of flak up there.)

Fred Marzolph recalls: *Wrong mission - this target was safe*

*Dec 11?* On one mission, we were going to bomb a bridge, I believe. Over the target we dropped two of the three 2000-pound bombs we carried. The third one just wouldn't fall out of the shackle. I was in the bomb bay with screw drivers, pliers and my body thrown against it and it just wouldn't budge.

We flew our plane over the dispersal area in the North Sea until gas became a problem and the pilot told me to wire the fuses the best I could to keep the props from spinning and we would try to land at the base with it. We notified the base of our problem and they got ready for us. The pilot lowered the flaps and wheels.....naturally, that was all it took to open the shackle all the way and down went the bomb.

A passenger train was passing underneath us, but we missed it. The bomb landed in an open field where a farmer kept circling it. It made a hole about 8-10 feet deep. It never exploded.

After we were down I remembered what really happened during those hectic moments in the bomb bay with the bomb hanging there. It was like a tourist attraction. I had the engineer come out to see it, then the waist gunner, then the bombardier and navigator and finally the pilot.

Several times we flew with an enlisted navigator and on this flight I didn't know who the navigator was. When one of the persons came down to watch, I saw he was wearing navigators wings and thought it was the T/Sgt. I told him to get the hell out of the bomb bay, which he did very promptly. It wasn't until I got back on the ground that I

4 Nov.

found that I had ordered a Major out of the bomb bay. I apologized.

On November 4th the oil refinery at Gelsenkirchen was visited for the second time this week. There were 34 ships from the Group leading the Wing on this mission. The target was the Nordston Refinery. Bombs were dropped on GH through 10/10 clouds with results unobserved. Flak was moderate to intense with high accuracy. Fighter protection was accurate. The 508th furnished eight aircraft that received sortie credit. Captain Hal S. Kimball, flying in aircraft #797, led the Group.

John L. Ryan Jr. led the Squadron on this raid flying in A/C #081. The Michel Yuspeh record shows that the Thomas Waters crew was on this mission. Gene McMahon was with them. Records maintained by Lewis Robinson show that he went to Essen on this date. He probably was with Ray Ciesielski. Lt. Paul, formerly of the 508th, flew his 34th mission as copilot on a 67th ship. T/Sgt. William J. O'Neil completed his tour of missions.

On November 4th Ray Marner wrote:

There were more buzz bombs again tonight. One really shook us up. There were no broken windows however.

The records of Kenneth Adrian show that the target was Karlsruhe on November 5th. He probably was with Louis Wimsatt. The bomb load was four 2000-pound bombs.

Our Group sent 33 aircraft on this support mission for a new ground drive in the Metz area. The 508th, flying low left squadron, became separated from the rest of the formation and dropped visually on Landau railroad. We furnished eight ships with Lt. John L. Ryan leading. Flak was moderate and accurate. Fighter support was good.

The Ray Ciesielski crew made this raid according to records kept by Lewis Robinson. Robinson's record shows the target to have been Karlsruhe.

It was some time in early November that the William D. Edkins crew joined the 508th. With Lt. Edkins were Lts. James Whittle Jr., R. J. Wilson, and Ed Smith. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Charles K. Jones, Frederick J. Huso, William Heyburn 2nd., Victor Czarnecki, Charles B. Austin Jr., Lavar Godfrey, and Edward E. Walsh.

On November 6th the 44th bombed a target at Sterkrade, Germany. The 32 ships that the Group dispatched formed the 14th Combat Wing and were third wing in the Division. The target was an oil refinery. The target was covered with 10/10 clouds with unobserved results. 506th A/C 44-40071, O, Sweat Box, crashed on return. The 506th sent eight ships to Sterkrade. Lt. Richard L. Wynes led the second squadron. The Thomas Waters crew made the mission according to the Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon records. Also, records maintained by Delmar Fox show that the Paul Durett crew were over Hamburg on this date. Gerald Folsom made this mission but it is not known who he was with. S/Sgt. Gerald M. Campbell completed a tour of duty.

For November 6th Ray Warner wrote:

Golubock's crew came back from Sweden. Killian and Smith came in tonight.

In a recent letter Ralph Golubock related:

Regarding the time that I spent in Sweden, there is not a great deal to tell. We were at a summer resort called Locka Brun. The quarters were OK and the food was not too good. There was a lot of pork belly and I gained a few pounds while I was there.

About the most interesting thing that happened was when we left Sweden. We were all taken by bus to the Stockholm airport where American planes were to pick us up. I remember that it was a cold, rainy night in November.

We were taken out to an all black B-24 that had seats in the bomb bay. The bomb bay was sealed. I remember talking to the pilot because he had been in the 506th. He had completed his tour and had volunteered to fly these Carpet Bagger Missions. I am very sorry, but I do not remember his name. I think that it might have been Capt. Duffy.

The flight back was long and extremely cold. All we had were light rain coats. Riding in the bomb bay was hell. We finally arrived back in Scotland after an uneventful trip.

You will recall that we were flying in Princess when we landed in Sweden. I last saw the Princess in 1945 when I was stationed at Scott Field. It had been repaired and



flown home. I inspected the aircraft carefully because I had left a Zippo lighter on the flight deck. No such luck!. I sure missed that Zippo.

Also on November 6th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Do you know where I was last Saturday? I went to a wedding. Capt. Sandoval, one of the Communications Officers, was married. I have known for a long time that I was going to the wedding, but it just kept slipping my mind to tell you about it. There were sixteen of us there. Included were Major Neri, Captains Clements and Coppens and Lts. Barry, Crucher and Griffen.

The wedding took place in the Catholic Cathedral in the city of Norwich. It was a good deal different than ours in that they didn't celebrate the mass. It took place at 2:30 in the afternoon.

You are probably wondering what the bride wore. All that I can tell you is that it was a white dress, with veil and long train. There was one bridesmaid and three flower girls.

After the ceremony, we marched out and formed a column on both sides of the church door. We then went to a pub across the street where they held the reception. They had a good deal to drink and a nice big bridal cake.

In the next few months I may be a little lax about writing to you and Mom. The reason is that I have just had a big job tossed in my lap and I am apt to be very busy. This is in addition to my regular job and it is going to take a lot of time. I hope that you will understand and bear with me.

I recall after I was commissioned:

My primary responsibility was standing watch at night waiting for the next day raid information to come in by teletype. I would then prepare for briefing the radio operators. After the raiders were dispatched or the raid was cancelled, I was free to return to my quarters.

I was introduced to my new responsibilities by Capt. Neri. He asked me to go for a walk with him down to the Tech Site. As we were walking he explained that there was a big problem in the distribution and storage of

communications supplies. Nothing could be found when it was needed. He thought that I could straighten out the problem.

By that time we had reached a large Nissen Hut. When the door was unlocked we walked into a room that was piled with communications equipment. The pile literally reached to the ceiling. I was told that I would be given a sergeant from the 68th Squadron to work with me. We would also have three privates so that supplies could be drawn on a 24-hours basis. We then went to meet Sgt. Lillard. He and I were then given keys to the Hut and we went back to stare at the job that was stacked in front of us.

On November 8th the Group sent 11 aircraft to bomb the marshalling yards at Rheine, Germany. Our briefed position was low group in the Wing, second wing in the Division. Assembly was confusing because of weather conditions and heavy vapor trails. The formation proceeded on the briefed course to the target. Personal error and misinterpretation resulted in the railroad at Enschede east of the Rheine being attacked through 10/10 clouds with poor results. There were three crews from the 508th that participated in this effort. The Kenneth Adrian record shows that he was with Louis Wimsatt on this raid.

Elwood Matter went on a ground support mission in the Metz area on November 9th. It is believed that he flew with Capt. Burns. This was Matter's first mission since being wounded on the low level supply mission to Arnhem.

This mission was flown by 34 ships from the 44th. Bombs were dropped just ahead of Patton's troops by GH with unobserved results. There were no shortfall drops. Flak was light and there were no enemy fighters. Lt. Richard L. Wynes led the Squadron with Major Middleton as the command pilot. Lts. Charles N. Atkins and Gerald Folsom as well as Sgts. Daniel W. Underwood and Harrel L. Gardner completed their combat tours. Michel Yuspeh's record shows that the Thomas Waters crew was on this raid. Gene McMahon was with them. Also, the Paul Durett crew was there according to records maintained by Delmar Fox. However, that record shows the target to be Duisburg, Germany. In his records, Lewis Robinson shows that he was on this raid and probably was with Ray Ciesielski.

On November 10th there were 21 ships from the 44th leading the 14 Combat Wing on a raid on the airfield at Hanau,

14 Nov.

Germany. We were fourth wing in the Division. Group Lead was flown by O.K. Hill of the 506th. Bombing was on GH through 10/10 clouds. Results were thought to be excellent. Flak was moderate and accurate in the Koblenz area. Fighter support was excellent. Hill was flying one of the five Aircraft that the 506th sent on this mission. Sgts. William K. Becktold, James P. Griffin Jr., William J. Rebham, and Garnell W. Myers completed their combat tours. The combat records of Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh indicate that the Thomas Waters crew was on this mission. It shows the target to be Hanau/Langendiebach. Another crew that made this raid belonged to Louis Wimsatt. Kenneth Adrian was with him. Adrian's notes show the target was Frankfurt. They were carrying forty 100-pound bombs. Paul Durett was on a raid on this date. Delmar Fox's record show that he was with him. The record shows the target to be Metz, France.

On November 11th Lt. Clement R.C. Holcomb was submitted for the award of the Silver Star in connection with the military operations against the enemy on October 7, 1944. Lt. John W. Jones and S/Sgt Robert E. Kirkland were submitted for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for that same action.

In letters mailed on November 14th the author wrote:

Slowly, but surely I am beginning to see some progress in my office building project and the new job. We now have all the frame work and one wall done. It is surely going to take a lot of headaches and work to get these things straightened out. However, it is better than sitting at one desk all day long in Headquarters.

On top of that, the job presents me with another challenge as to my abilities and an opportunity to gain experience.

After Sgt. Lillard and I were given the assignment of straightening out the communications supplies problem, we agreed that the first step was to make some sense out of the pile. However, there had to be some place to put the material as it was sorted out. That's when I found out that Lillard had a number of skills that I needed.

First off, he knew his way around and could get things done. Secondly he knew how to cut and nail wood. He scrounged wood to build a counter across the front of the building, shelves to store things on and an office for me, including a desk that he built with top and side drawers. When he finished we had facilities that I was really proud of. So was Major

McAtee. He was always bringing people around to see what we were accomplishing.

On November 15th I wrote to my wife:

I met a boy from Flint last night. He knows Kate, Bud Berry and John Evert. His name is Delmar Fox and he lived in Civic Park.

Enclosed you will find some more pictures. Now with some of them you are going to have to be broad-minded and use discretion as to where you show them. (Note: The pictures in question were taken of some of the boys while swimming in the Mediterranean. Since a swimming suit is not standard government issue and we did not have any to bring with us from England. We went without! Privately owned film was developed in our Group Photo Lab.; therefore there was no censorship of these snapshots.)

On November 16th the Group scheduled 34 aircraft to takeoff in a ground support effort. The target was in the Aachen area. The weather was bad at take off time and continued to worsen. Only 11 of the Group ships got off the ground, one from the 506th. Then the field was closed. The airborne ships took their position as the second group in the Wing leading the Division. The target was bombed with excellent results. Flak was moderate. Fighter support was good. Since Shipdham was closed down by weather, our returning ships were diverted. There was only one ship from the 506th on this mission. Captain Kimball flew with Colonel J. G. Merrel as the command pilot.

In Will Lundy's works Sgt. Chaffin of the 67th was quoted, "We bombed enemy ground troops and installations a short distance northwest of Aachen. The big push by our ground forces, into the area we bombed, started right after."

On November 16th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

How would you like to hear a little about the office. It is coming along nicely. Of course it doesn't look like much right now, but in a couple three months everything ought to be set up and running smoothly. I am hoping that by the first of next week we can be moved out of here and over into our own place. It is just too congested in the place that we occupy now.

Do you know what you did in your letter of Sept 26th? You

were telling me about Bill Everette and Warren Colby writing to you and you hadn't answered. Then you wrote, "Gee! I can hardly wait until they get home. They are so cute!" Now what I want to know is just who were you talking about???

No we still haven't heard from Joe Young. Maj. McAtee sent him a letter the other day.

For November 18th the airfield at Leipheim, Germany, was the briefed target. Weather closed in before takeoff. The mission was canceled.

The next day, the 20th of November, five of our aircraft were dispatched to bomb a target at Bottrop, Germany. All planes were recalled on assemble because of weather.

The Lewis Robinson record shows that he was on this recalled mission. In all likelihood he was with Ray Ciesielski.

On that day the author wrote to his wife:

Did I tell you that I have been put in charge of the Squadron Communications Section? That will mean a little more work for me. Captain Sandoval transferred to the 67th Squadron

Lewis Robinson remembers:

Paydays!! By pay day some of us had already borrowed more than we earned. It was sometimes difficult to slip off base without paying our debts. I recall 10% or was it 50% usury charges. The tailor at the latrine also charged a reasonable (?) rate for a haircut.

Tail gunners had to pull safety pins from bombs before the bomb run and learn to keep the pins in their pockets. In case of a recall or abortion those pins had to go back in order to safely land.

It was my experience on a pin pulling trip, to also pull a piece of flak from the upper turret gunners thigh (Clarence Unger), slap on a bandage, and give him a shot of morphine. Unger returned to fly combat in a few days, but he had missions to make up.

On another occasion, I had pulled the pins and stuck my head into the cockpit. Starting to return to the waist

and tail turret, I noticed a "hole" from bottom to top, through the catwalk, where a "105" had passed without detonating. Imagine the ground crew's surprise when we returned to base.

On November 21st the Group sent 30 aircraft to hit the oil refinery at Harburg, Germany. We were leading the 14th Combat Wing on this raid. Bombing was on PFF. In the target area the flak was intense and accurate with both barrage and tracking techniques being used. Many planes suffered flak damage. There were eight ships from the 506th in that intense flak.

Elwood Matter's records indicate that he was on this raid. He probably was with Burns. Kenneth Adrian and Louis Wimsatt were both on this mission. Their ship was carrying twenty-four 250-pound bombs

The diary of Ray Marner shows:

November 21---A man in 86th was killed today by flak. (This incident is confirmed in Will Lundy's works.)

November 22---A Liberator from Rackheath cracked up in Norwich and killed the whole crew. It hit near the City Station. (Note: Today, on a building near the crash site, there is a plaque commemorating this accident. The pilot probably sacrificed his crew to avoid crashing in a highly populated area of the city.)

After a three day lull, the Group dispatched 25 aircraft to attack Bingen, Germany, on November 25th. Bombing was on GH with unobserved results. Flak was light and fighter support was good. There were five aircraft from the 506th on this mission. Captain Hal S. Kimball led the Group.

The next day, November 26th, the Squadron was again in action when the 44th sent 32 aircraft to Bielefeld, Germany. The target was a railroad viaduct near Munster. There was no flak in the target area and fighter support was excellent. Eight 506th crews received sortie credit on this raid. Bombing results were rated fair-to-poor as a result of malfunction of bomb racks and bomb sight on the lead aircraft.

James Clements flew as Command Pilot on this mission leading Section B of the 14th Combat Wing. He was not with his usual crew. They were carrying four 1000-pound bombs. Bombs were

26 Nov.

away at 1222 hours using GH.

This appeared to be the first mission for the William Edkins crew. A newspaper article that was kept by Charles Jones read:

8th Fighters  
KO 110 More

For the second time in six days the Luftwaffe yesterday took to the sky in force and according to the preliminary reports, Eighth Air Force fighter/pilots recorded another banner day by shooting down at least 110 of the enemy fighters.

Another 12 Nazi craft were shot down by the heavies gunners. The pursuits destroyed another seven enemy planes on the ground in a strafing attack.

Last Tuesday Eighth fighters shot down 73. The record bag of 134 Nazi craft was established on Nov. 2.

In two large-scale operations over the weekend more than 2,100 heavy bombers of the Eighth hammered oil and rail objectives in the Reich.

Yesterday over 1,100 Fortresses and Liberators, escorted by about 700 Mustangs and Thunderbolts, struck at a large oil refinery at Bielefeld, rail yards at Hamm, and other targets in northwest Germany.

Saturday's assault on the synthetic-oil plants at Leuna and Lutzkendorf, near Merseburg, and rail yards at Bingen, a communications center west of Mainz, was carried out by more than 1,000 Forts and Libs, shepherded by over 1,000 Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings of both the Eighth and Ninth Air forces. There was no enemy opposition.

The Eighth's losses in Saturday's operations were 12 bombers and five fighters. Yesterdays U.S. losses were 37 heavies and 13 pursuits.

The records of Elwood Matter show that he was on this raid, probably with Burns. Also, Louis Wimsatt was on this raid with Kenneth Adrian as the navigator.

For the third day in a row, weather permitted operations. On this November 27th raid to the marshalling yards at

29 Nov

Offenburg, the 44th sent 24 aircraft. We were leading the 14th Combat Wing. The target was bombed visually with the aid of GH. Results were excellent. Flak was light and fighter support good. The 506th furnished seven of the attacking aircraft. Major McAtee was the command pilot.

Kenneth Adrian was on this mission, probably with Louis Wimsatt. This was their last combat mission. Adrian's notes show it was an eight-hour trip. A newspaper article that Adrian kept read:

#### 98 NAZI PLANES BAGGED BY 8TH

Eighth Air Force fighter pilots dealt the German Air Force another staggering blow yesterday, shooting down 98 more enemy fighters for a total of 208 in two days.

Approximately 500 Mustangs and Thunderbolts carried out offensive sweeps over northwest Germany and encountered the Luftwaffe in strength for the second day straight.

Another force of more than 250 Mustangs escorted about 500 Fortress and Liberators of the Eighth in an assault on rail yards at Ossenburg, ten miles southeast of Strasbourg, and Bingen, west of Mainz, which was hit for the second time in three days.

The heavies met no enemy fighter opposition.

Early reports indicate 14 fighters and one bomber were lost.

The 357th Fighter Group, a P-51 outfit led by Maj. Joseph E. Broadhead, of Rupert, Ida. bagged one-third of the day's toll, shooting down 30 Nazi craft in the Magdeburg area.

For November 29th the Group sent 24 ships on a mission to hit the railroad viaduct at Altenbecken, Germany. Bombing was on GH through 10/10 clouds with unobserved results. There was no enemy opposition. Five aircraft from the 506th were with them. Lt. Clyde M. Housley aborted due to mechanical trouble. Elwood Matter was probably flying with Burns when he made this mission. Also, the Thomas Waters crew was there per records kept by Michel Yuspeh. The Gene McMahon record shows the target to be Paterborn. Firman Mack's records also show the target to be Paterborn on this date. Mack was



flying Squadron lead. Records maintained by Delmar Fox show that the Paul Durett crew made a raid to Limburg on this date. This may have been the second mission for the Edkins crew. A newspaper clipping that Charles Jones kept reported:

**1,000 HEAVIES BOMB OIL, RAILS;  
LUFTWAFFE REFUSED CHALLENGE**

The Luftwaffe refused the challenge yesterday when more than 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators of the Eighth Air Force, escorted by over 1,000 Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings of both the Eighth and Ninth, bombed the oil refinery at Misburg, railroad yards at Hamm and other targets in northwest Germany. Four bombers and no fighters were lost.

This was the Eighth's tenth attack on the large refinery at Misburg, near Hannover, over which area German fighters were encountered in force on Sunday, when fighter/pilots shot down 114 enemy craft and the heavies' gunners bagged 16 more.

Some of the pursuits carried out strafing attacks and reported shooting up 11 locomotives, 28 rail cars and six barges. Bombing was done in adverse weather.

The month ended by going to the marshalling yards at Neunkirchen, Germany. The Group sent 23 aircraft to fly with the 392nd Bomb Group. Flak was light and fighter support good. Lt. Bayless of the 506th led the Group to the target. Bombing was on GH and the results were unobserved. The Paul Durett crew made this raid with Delmar Fox aboard. This may have been the third mission for the Edkins crew. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones read as follows:

**1250 U.S. HEAVIES  
HIT REICH AGAIN**

Following up the previous day's terrific assault on rail objectives in the Reich, more than 2,000 U.S. heavy bombers and fighters for the second straight day hammered rail objectives in the Frankfurt area Tuesday, as well as the Leuna synthetic-oil plant at Merseburg.

Meantime, it was disclosed that all of the synthetic-oil plants in the Ruhr now had been knocked out of production by Allied bombing.

Upward of 1,250 Fortresses and Liberators of the Eighth Air Force, covered by approximately 900 Mustangs, Thunderbolts and Lightnings of both the Eighth and Ninth were dispatched Tuesday.

In addition, an unspecified number of Forts and Libs of the 15th Air Force, based in Italy, carried out an attack in bad weather on the Blechhammer oil refinery in southern Silesia.

Early unofficial reports indicated the Eighth lost nine bombers and 11 fighters, some of which were believed to have landed in friendly territory. There was no enemy fighter opposition.

This completed a very successful month for the 508th. We experienced no operational losses.

During the month the following not previously mentioned promotions were given: From 1st Lt. to Captain Carlton R. Horne; From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt. Harry Faigneblat.

The following additions, not previously mentioned, were made to the Squadron duty roster: Captain Robert C. Schmidt was assigned; Lt. Confer and crew assigned; Lt. Boykin returned from Sick Quarters status.

The following either permanent or temporary removals from the duty roster were made: Captain Gossett and crew to 8th AF rest home; Lt. James A. Walsh assigned to 1st Air Force, Mitchell Field, New York; PFC Wirck transferred to 8th AF Service Command Station A-3, France.

During the month Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

"Today I am Group Officer Of The Day. No, that is not some type of honor. Instead, it is a somewhat dirty job. That means that today I am the law and you had better watch out. I spend most of the time in the Guard House with the M.P.'s. Tonight there was a dance in the Combat Officers Club. I had to be there, wearing side arms, but could not participate in the festivities. The girls were brought to the base by truck from Kings Lynn. When the trucks left it was my job to see that no Officers were leaving on the trucks. There were one or two that were on the trucks and they were very upset that I forced them off. I had two M.P.'s to back me up."... "Last night I went to a U.S.O. show. It wasn't very good."... "When I

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went to London last week, I rode down with a couple of enlisted combat men. We couldn't find rooms in the same hotel, but we met at the American Bar later on and spent the evening together."..."The next day I went to the Red Cross to see if I could find out where Howard Benner is. As near as I can determine, he is in France."

On the first raid of the month, December 2, the Group dispatched 11 aircraft to strike the marshalling yards at Bingen, Germany. They were leading the 14th Combat Wing. Lt. Bayless of the 506th, flying in A/C #766. D+, was leading the low left squadron of the 392nd. Bombing was by Gee-H with unobserved results. Flak was meager and inaccurate in the target area and enemy fighters were observed. There were four 506th ships in the formation. Lt. Lowe aborted with an oil leak in the #3 engine. Lt. Bayless was lost in action.

In Will Lundy's work titled *44th Bomb Group Roll Of Honor And Casualties*, Joseph B. Dosmann reported:

There were four survivors from this aircraft.

Although this aircraft was leading an element of the formation, they did not have PFF equipment. When their aircraft came out of the clouds, they were separated from the other planes and were soon under attack by enemy aircraft. His first indication of an attack was hearing the top turret firing, so he looked out of the small window in the radio compartment and saw Me-109's attacking from about 4 o'clock, a bit high. One or more 20-mm shells exploded just under the flight deck, hitting either the gasoline in the "putt-putt" or the hydraulic fluid reservoir as flames immediately erupted.

Joseph Dosmann said that his instructions were for him to leave his radio and go to the waist position to man a gun there when and if they were attacked. Upon hearing the top turret firing, he snapped on his parachute and was on his way toward the bomb bay when the explosions and fire occurred.

At this time Robert L. Moore, engineer, seeing the fire and feeling the heat, dropped down out of his top turret in order to determine the extent of damages and attempted to extinguish the fire. Finding the situation hopeless, he opened the top hatch next to the top turret, but decided against that exit, preferring to attempt to open the bomb bay doors. Sgt. Dosmann stated that the last he

saw of Bob Moore was when Bob jumped down to the catwalk in an attempt to open the doors and at that time he was waist deep in flames.

At that moment, the pilots lost control of the ship and it flipped upside down and provided a miraculous escape for Joseph. He was thrown completely out of the plane through that open top hatch! It is believed that the copilot, Lt. Victor P. Louisa exited from this hatch, but for him it was a real struggle as by then the plane was in a flat spin, upside down. As a result, centrifugal force made movement difficult. Every time he tried to push away, the falling plane would catch up with him. But, at about 2,000 feet, he finally managed to free himself and barely got his chute opened before he hit the ground. This ended mission number 23 for him, but his first with this crew. He had volunteered for this mission as this crew was short and his regular crew was not scheduled.

Lt. Louisa recalled that his hearing was damaged for several days. Nonetheless, he took evasive measures to avoid capture. He stripped himself of all identification and began working his way back to Allied lines. Along the way he was subjected to barrages of artillery, which he later learned was our own. He was captured on December 12th while hiding along a river bank. Had he found a means of crossing, there was a good possibility that he may have made it to the nearby Allied lines. He was sent to Stalag #1 until liberated by the Russians.

Bombardier, Lt. Francis W. Brennan said he never saw the planes attacking us, but when I was coming down in my parachute I saw radial-engine fighters. They had to have been Fw-190's.

The cannon fire did hit the auxiliary power unit and the gasoline from it started the fire. With that fire between us and the bomb bay, our only way out was through the nose wheel doors. I opened the doors, then Alfred Jolovitz and I put on our back-type chutes and got ready to bail out. Jolovitz was first out and I was next. Just as I was about to jump I looked back at the nose turret gunner, Thomas Passantino. He was snapping on his chest type chute. I jumped, but never saw Passantino again. I don't know why he did not make it.

Records show that Passantino was the right waist gunner on this mission, but he actually was the nose gunner. This

explains why the radio operator was on his way to man a waist gun. The crew was flying one man short. Robert Crawford had been granted a leave about two weeks earlier and had never been replaced.

With Lt. Herbert L. Bayless (KIA) were Lts. Victor P. Louisa (POW), Alfred W. Jolovitz (POW), and Francis W. Brennan (POW). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Robert L. Moore (KIA), Joseph B. Dosmann (POW), Thomas J. Passantino (KIA), William H. McBryde (KIA), and William A. Beggs (KIA).

On December 2nd Ray Warner wrote:

Lt. Bayless and crew went down today. Other groups lost a lot of ships. Cause--fighters.

After completing his combat tour, Louis Wimsatt remained with the Group in a number of capacities. These included Group Air/Sea Rescue Officer, Link Test Pilot and ILS Instructor. He also flew as weather Pilot and Group Withdrawal Support Ditch Monitor.

For December 4th, the 44th sent 27 ships on a mission to the marshalling yards at Soest, Germany. The leading group of the Wing was forced to make a right turn on the bomb run due to a collision course with the preceding combat wing. The 44th was able to get on to the Gee-H bombing trace, but was forced to avoid another collision course. The lead aircraft turned left and the PFF Deputy Lead took over to bomb a target of opportunity at Wetzlar ~~(2)~~ or Kolschhausen. Results were unobserved. Fighter support was excellent. Six crews from the 506th received sortie credit on this date. The Microfilm History indicated that the credit was given for a mission to Giessen, Germany.

The Thomas Waters crew was on this mission according to records maintained by Michel Yuspeh. His record shows the target to be Kolschhausen, Germany; while the Gene McMahon record shows Koblenz.

On the next day, December 5th, the Group launched 13 ships going to the marshalling yards at Munster, Germany. We led the 14th Combat Wing. There was 10/10 cloud coverage and bombing was by Gee-H. Bombing results were unobserved. Flak was moderate and fighter support was excellent. Three aircraft from the 506th were with them. Records maintained by Delmar Fox indicate the Paul Durett crew was on this mission. Another raiding ship was flown by Burns according

to records kept by Elwood Matter.

Captain Gossett led the Group when they bombed the secondary target of Bielefeld on December 6th. There were only 11 ships on this raid. Thirty seconds before bombs away, it was decided to bomb visually. As a result, the bombs dropped to the right of the aiming point. Bombing was rated as fair to good. Enemy opposition was light and fighter support was good.

Fred Marzolph recalls:

Then there is the mystery of the "hanging down bomb bay doors". Most of the time we had a crew chief from Montana named Iverson. He maintained a plane called *Tinker Belle* which we flew a lot. He was getting pretty flustered about us bringing back his ship with the bomb bay doors wired up after we had dropped our bombs through them. *Tinker Belle* was a silver plane that seemed to always have a new pair of olive drab bomb bay doors.

I don't remember who or when we solved the problem, but it had to do with the use of the relief tube in the back of the ship. At altitude it would freeze and back up. The fellows would then use the bomb bay for relief. This resulted in the rollers being frozen over the target.

For the 10th of December the Microfilm History indicated that there was no mission. However, the Squadron Histories of the 67th and the 68th show that the 44th was in combat on this day. Also, Firman Mack's combat record shows that he went to Bingen on December 15th. He flew as Group Lead. Another crew that went to Bingen on this date belonged to Thomas Waters. Both the records of Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh show they were out.

Perhaps the confusion resulted from the chain of events that accompanied the mission. Our ships started on the bomb run and picked up tracking and release signals at the Initial Point. Three miles from the target the signals faded and the release signal was not received. The lead ship passed over the target and then decided to make a 360 degree turn to bomb on the smoke markers of the following wings. It soon became obvious that the smoke markers had drifted too far from the target for accurate bombing. Weather scouts were requested to assist in finding a target of opportunity. There was no response. It was then decided to return to base with the bombs.

On December 10th the author wrote to his wife:

After the movie last night, I went to the Communications Party. I didn't stay very long, but we surely had some good fried chicken. The beer wasn't very good. Do you know how much that party cost me? Just \$28 is all. That is just one of the bad parts of being an officer. Everyone feels that you are flush with money and should part with some of it.

On December 11th the Group sent up 45 aircraft on a ground support mission. The specific target was the railway and road bridge north of Karlsruhe, Germany. Bombing was on Gee-H and results were unobserved. Flak was meager and fighter support was good. The 506th sent 10 aircraft. Major Middleton was the command pilot. Ten of our crews received sortie credit for this raid. Lt. Hal C. Tyree aborted with #3 engine throwing oil and vibrating.

Probably this date will always be remembered by the crew of Lt. Jack C. Thorne. On returning from the mission, their aircraft was drawn into a cumulo-nimbus cloud at an altitude of 9,000 feet. Upon entering the cloud the aircraft went into a steep bank to the right, losing altitude. All the gyro instruments, except the needle and ball, tumbled. By bracing his feet against the rudder pedals and with the assistance of the copilot, they were able to regain level flight at an altitude of 500 feet.

With Lt. Thorne on this day were Lts. Walter W. Wilson and Kenneth J. Schoh, and Flight Officer Jesus Martinez. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Ben M. Samuels, George C. Economski, Frank J. Sullivan, James E. Vaisey, George W. Lewis, and Leon Runions.

The Firman Mack record shows that he flew Squadron Lead on this raid. Also, Elwood Matter was on this mission, probably flying with Burns. Records kept by Lewis Robinson show that he was on this ground support attack. He was probably with Ray Ciesielski.

The Group sent 29 ships, representing the 14th Combat Wing, on a mission to Aschaffenburg, Germany on December 12th. The target was attacked visually. There was no enemy opposition. Fighter support was good. The 506th Squadron sent nine of the total aircraft dispatched. Lt. O. K. Hill led the Squadron. Ray Parshall was the bombardier on Hill's aircraft. The Paul Durett crew made this raid according to

records kept by Delmar Fox. Another ship that made this raid was flown by Thomas Waters according to records kept by Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon.

During the next couple of days, the author wrote to his wife:

December 13th--"Here I am again after a little trip and roaming around. Where have I been this time? Well I will only say that I was in France. I went over with Dick Wynes. When I got back I found that I have six packages to open on Christmas."

December 14th---"Enclosed is the marker for my place at Lt. Saladick's wedding dinner."

Major Wayne H. Middleton was reassigned to the 67th Bomb Squadron on December 15th.

During the next few days the author wrote:

December 18th--"Tonight I saw the first lit-up Christmas tree, outside, that I have seen in two years. You can't imagine how funny it seems to see lights outside.

"I went along with our truck after supplies today and had it stop in a little town long enough for me to buy some electrical parts. I needed them in order to build a bed lamp for my room."

December 20th--"Do you know what I spent the afternoon doing? Shoveling gravel for a road. That's right, I was doing a little work, or at least trying to. I get a kick out of some of the enlisted men. Whenever I would get my hands on a shovel they would want to take it away from me. They don't think that an officer should be doing that kind of work. There is one old Sgt. that I can't quite figure out. I mean that he tries to wait on me just a little too much. If he is doing what I think he is trying to do, he is going to be badly mistaken. He won't get any favors out of me."

December 22--"How would you like to have a little fog? We have a whole lot more than we can use. I wish that we could get off from the ground! The boys in France sure could have good use of us and our ships right now. (Note: This letter was written during the Battle Of The Bulge and Bastogne. The Germans were making an offensive move to Antwerp. They penetrated the Allied lines and were



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seriously damaging our troops. The battle was taking place in deep snow and heavy fog.)

"Yes, I did forget mother's birthday. I was very sorry about it, but I didn't even know that it was Halloween. That is how I usually remember that date."

The author remembers:

For quite a number of days, we would get up in the morning and the ground, trees, and buildings would be covered with heavy frost. Briefings would start because it was crystal clear. However, when the sun rose and its heat reached the frost, it was changed to a dense fog that lasted all day. Our men wanted to take off to bomb in support of our ground forces. They would take their chances on finding a break in the fog on their return. However, higher command would not allow this. This condition changed in the next few days.

We were able to get into the air on December 23rd. As expected, the target was selected that would provide relief for our besieged ground troops. Four 506th aircraft joined with 11 other ships from the 44th to attack a road and choke point at Ahrweiler, Germany. Bombing was carried out using GEE-H. (Note: For a newspaper account of this raid see December 24th) Delmar Fox's records show that the Paul Durett crew made this mission. James Clements was also there. However, he was flying lead for the 392 Bomb Group which was leading the Division. He was in A/C #644, Bar A. He carried his usual crew except for Lt. R. F. Seymer, a GH operator. Maj. M. J. Kelleman was the Command Pilot. They bombed visually at 1250 hours from 20,000 feet. They were carrying four 500-pound bombs. Flak was slight to moderate and fighter support was excellent.

KELLMAN

On the morning of Christmas Eve, December 24th, there was a ~~near~~ maximum effort with 81 of the 44th's aircraft dispatched. This was a new record for the Group. It was only marred by one abortion. Our targets were located at Ruwer, Pfazel, Wittlich and Eller. There was some flak, but no enemy aircraft. Hits were made on all targets. Fighter support was good.

X

1st? Mission

Flying that day were Hill, Burns, Ciesielski, Smith, Durett, Edkins, Rockman, and Waters

With Lt. Rockman was Lt. Nester L. Werkstein and Flight

Officer George Jeanos. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Chester J. Kryszozuk, Charles H. Hickman, Reginald C. Nichols, Milton F. Bailey, Robert T. Schram, Clark T. Harmon, and Frank R. Lafazia.

With Hill were Sgts. Warren, Buechler, Hahn, and Friedman.

With Burns were Sgts. Kennedy, Caldwell, Toy, Sirup, J. Gray, and Truslow.

With Ciesielski were Sgts. R. L. Beauchamp, Unger, R. Turner, and Louis Robinson.

With Smith were Sgts. C. A. Jacobsen, F. J. Marzolph, E. G. Babek, and M. W. Jones.

With Durett were Sgts. Nesbitt, Fox, Cash, Burton, and Smith.

With Edkins were Sgts. C. K. Jones, L. Godfrey, C. Austin, and E. E. Walsh.

With Waters were Sgts. Yuspeh, Colucci, Hawkins, McMahon, Funke, and Walsh.

The Delmar Fox and Lewis Robinson records show they hit Eller.

According to some notes in the possession of Fred Marzolph they were flying in *Down De Hatch*.

The following is a newspaper article kept by Charles Jones:

#### RECORD BOMB BLOW 8TH AF'S YULE GIFT TO NAZI

##### Over 2,000 Heavies--Biggest Single Mission Unload on Christmas 'Eve'

While the weather closed in again yesterday to curtail air activity against the enemy; the Eighth Air Force was still counting up the results of its Christmas present to the Nazis, delivered Sunday by more than 2,000 heavy bombers and 900 fighters, the largest force of heavies ever flown on a single mission.

Sunday's big air attack was part of a weekend pattern, which continued yesterday, designed to pound the hell out of all communications lines supplying and reinforcing the German armies in their current counter-offensive. It was

24 Dec

in direct support of the U.S. First Army forces which have been rolled back into Belgium by the weight of the German drive.

Taking advantage of clear weather, the Dec. 24 mission started for Germany in the morning and the first bombers were entering Germany as the tail of the tremendous column was leaving England.

The Eighth started its Christmas blow last Saturday when a force of more than 400 heavies, protected by some 700 fighters, struck at airdromes in the Frankfurt area from which the Germans had been operating tactical aircraft in support of their offensive. At least 11 airdromes attacked were rendered unserviceable.

Marshalling yards at Coblenz and rail centers near Trier, close to the Luxembourg border, Kaiserlautern and Homburg were also hit. The Luftwaffe came up to meet the attackers and lost 77 planes in the resulting dogfights.

Sunday's big attack continues the pounding of the airdromes at Frankfurt. These lie across the Rhine just opposite the bulge the Germans have driven into the 1st Army line. The heavies dropped 100, 250 and 500-pound bombs on the hangars and fields.

Most of the targets the heavies went for were tiny road junctions, railroad crossings and bridges. Clear weather enabled crews to see the targets and to bomb visually. Reports were that the bombing was all "good".

On Christmas Eve Ray Warner wrote:

The Eighth Air Force pulled the largest raid in the world today. Lt. Hoisington was forced down in Brussels. Fog had held up planes from helping against the drive by the "Jerries".

On December 24th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I thought that we weren't going to have a white Christmas this year, but I was wrong. For the last few days it has been very foggy and early today it turned cold. Now almost all of the fog has been condensed and everything is covered with about a quarter of an inch of frost. Thus, we have a white Christmas.

I have been working all night and I don't think that I am going to get a chance to get to bed. I won't complain as long as it will help the boys in France.

I opened my Xmas packages just before I came down here. I thank you very much for the shirts, your wings, and the other things that you sent to me. Mother sent me a nice scarf and a pair of gloves. Thelma Long sent a box of candy and there were pictures and so forth. The glass frame of your picture was broken.

On December 25th, Christmas Day, there was an early morning briefing to bomb the marshalling yards at Bebra, Germany. An hour after the briefing the mission was scrubbed.

On the day after Christmas Ray Marner wrote:

Coldest days we've ever had over here. It has hit 19 degrees two days in a row.

We were back in combat on December 27th with Homburg as the objective. Our Squadron sent five ships. The 44th sent 23 aircraft on this mission. There was haze in the target area that affected the bomb run. Flak was accurate, but moderate. Fighter support was fair. The Thomas Waters crew was on this raid per the Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon records.

On the morning of December 28th James Clements was briefed to bomb a road and a rail junction near Kaiserlautern, Germany. His records show he was flying in A/C #644, Bar A. He was flying lead for the 2nd Air Division and the Eighth Air Force. He had his usual crew. In addition, Colonel Eugene H. Snavely, and Lts. Harry W. Alexander, Loyd W. Hare, and Raymond F. Seymer were aboard. Bombs were dropped by Gee-H with very good results. There was meager, inaccurate flak on the bomb run, but none in the target area. Fighter support was good. The Group dispatched 36 ships on this target. Paul Durett and crew were on this mission according to the Delmar Fox record.

On December 28th Ray Marner wrote:

The 68th lost two ships on the marshalling yard raid today. They also had a ship abort and it cracked up on the landing. One of the 1,000 pounders exploded killing the whole crew. It really shook us up down here, which is about 2 miles away from Shipdham Road. (Note: Will Lundy's works reveal that one of the 68th ships that Ray

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Warner reported as lost was able to land on the continent.)

On December <sup>29</sup>28th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Now the fog has pretty much lifted, but we still have the frost and it is plenty cold.

The 44th sent 33 ships against enemy communications centers at Stadtkyll, Germany, on December 29th. Briefing materials for this mission consisted of some map coordinates. This resulted in a poor choice of bomb run and poor bombing results. Meager, but accurate, flak was encountered from the battle line to the target. Fighter support was good. The 508th sent nine crews on this raid. Captain Insley led the Squadron. Lt. Robert L. Hosington aborted with the #1 engine out. The record of Firman Mack shows that he went to Neuweid on December 29th flying as Group Lead. Also, the Thomas Waters crew was on this raid according to the Michel Yuspeh and Gene McMahon records. McMahon's note shows the target to be "front lines". A third ship on this mission was flown by Ray Ciesielski per the Lewis Robinson records.

On the morning of December 30th the Group dispatched 34 aircraft to a road and railroad junction at Altenahr. There seemed to be some confusion regarding the city that was bombed. Scope photos showed that Stadtkyll was hit even though the Gee-H equipment was set up to hit Ahrweiler. After the mission the Gee-H equipment checked out correctly on the ground. There was no enemy opposition and fighter support was good. There were eight aircraft from the 506th in that formation. Lt. Firman B. Mack led the Group. Delmar Fox was with the Paul Durett crew on this raid. Fox's record shows the target to be Ahrweiler. Another of our ships that participated in this raid was flown by Thomas Waters. Michel Yuspeh was with him. Yuspeh's records also show that the target was Ahrweiler.

DURETT  
BURNS  
EDILINE  
TYREE  
ROCKMAN  
KYES

To close the year out the Group furnished 35 aircraft in a ground support mission to Neuweid, Germany on December 31st. Specifically they were to hit a railroad bridge. Once again, due to equipment failure, the lead ship assumed they bombed the primary target. However, they actually hit a railroad junction at Dorsel. Bombing was through cloud cover and results were unobserved. The Squadron sent eight crews with Captain Clements leading the Group. The James Clements records also indicate that he was leading the 14th Combat Wing on this mission. He had his usual crew. In addition,

Major C. Hughes was Command Pilot. They released their bombs at 1125 hours from an altitude of 22,000 feet. Fighter support was excellent and they encountered moderate inaccurate flak after the target. For the second day in a row, the Paul Durett crew was in combat. Delmar Fox was with them. Another of our ships that was out on this day was flown by Burns according to the Elwood Matter record.

Lewis Robinson recalls:

During the Battle Of The Bulge the weather finally cleared and we were able to fly a number of days in a row. Our Flight Surgeon issued Benzedrine tablets and we remained awake.

A newspaper article that was kept by Charles Jones summarized the year 1944 as follows:

450,000 TONS UNLOADED  
BY THE 8TH AF IN 1944

In 1944 the U.S. Eighth Air Force flew 357,272 combat sorties-196,314 by heavies-160,958 by fighters-striking with nearly 900,000,000 pounds of high explosives and incendiary bombs at the enemies industrial sources of war power and at his armies and communications in the field. (the figures include operations through Dec. 30.)

More than 7,000 enemy aircraft were destroyed by fighter pilots and bomber gunners, not including any which were destroyed on enemy airfields that were attacked. Bomber gunners shot down 2,234 of the total.

During the month the 506th Bomb Squadron was given special recognition when Lt. Joseph R. Bumbica received credit for two outstanding jobs of bombing during the month. The bombing of the road and rail choke point on Christmas Eve was specifically mentioned.

Special awards of the Distnigulshed Flying Cross were made to John A. Hess and Harry Fagenblat. Oak Leaf Clusters to the Distinguished Flying Cross were given to Victor F. Mikko, Hal S. Kimball, and Charles T. Closs. Finally, an Air Medal was awarded to Eugene H. Hawley.

During the month promotions were given to: Flight Officer to 2nd Lt. Murray G. Margolis; 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. Alvin R. Rockman and Edward A. Baier.

Additions to the duty roster were: Lt. Bennett returned from detached service; Lts. George Bakanic, (and crew) and Captain Donald L. Ackerman (and crew) were assigned;

Separations, either permanent or temporary, from the duty roster were: Captain Kimball and Lts. Kenneth C. Adrian, Charles A. Hersh, Alfred R. Wilson, Eugene C. Bedkerstedt and Rudolph A. Cirou were assigned to the 70th Replacement Depot; Captain Ernest S. Gossett and Lts. Sam Miceli and Willis A. Edgecomb were reassigned; Lts. Lowe and Benkert went to rest home.

S/Sgt William H. Peiffer and Sgt. Arthur E. Adams were reclassified.

During the month Norm Klefer wrote to his wife:

"I just came back from a movie. We saw "The Night Is Falling". It is a good propaganda picture. Maj. McAtee went with me."...After supper tonight, Maj. McAtee and I sat down and started to play cards. We were playing a game called "Pip". I didn't know anything about it. It wasn't very long before Capt. Clements and Lt. Horne were playing with us. McAtee and I beat them, but they said they would get even.

JAN 45

THE CLEAN UP

It was sometime early in January, 1945, that the Max Chandler crew arrived. With Lt. Chandler were Lts. Hugh O'Donnell, and Robert T. Dantzler. The enlisted men were Sgts. Sakis T. Nedder, Thomas Clark, Louis DeBlasio, Eugene L. Elliott, Thomas H. Cordes, and Robert D. Vance.

*copy*

The new year opened just as the old year closed; we were on a raid. The Group dispatched 33 aircraft to take out a railway bridge on January 1st. It was at Koblenz-Lutzell. The target was bombed visually. Flak was encountered in the target area and along the Rhine river. Bombing results were excellent. Some of our aircraft received damage. Lt. Hill was flying Deputy Lead. In all, the Squadron put up seven aircraft. Records maintained by Lewis Robinson indicate that the Ray Ciesielski crew was on this mission. Also, the Edkin's crew may have been there. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones follows:

HEAVIES OUT 11TH DAY;

MONDAY ENEMY TOLL 364

With the Luftwaffe relatively quiet after its stunning setback Monday, over 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force dealt staggering blows in and around Rundstedt's salient yesterday on the 11th day of the 8th's nonstop offensive against Germany.

More than 650 Thunderbolts and Mustangs covering the heavies met little resistance from the Luftwaffe--latest counts last night listed 364 Nazi planes destroyed in Monday's big air battles--as the bombers punched at rail yards, bridges, communications centers and troop concentrations.

The bridges in the Koblenz area took another pasting as the heavies dropped loads on six structures and one Mustang Group came down to strafe the area. Three rail yards and five communications centers in the shoulder of the German salient, grouped in an arc east and south of Prum, suffered a sound shellacking. Further south, enemy troop concentrations and tanks were attacked northeast of Saarlautern. Nine bombers and two fighters failed to return.



JAN 1945

On that day first day of the month Norm Kiefer wrote:

Last night, after I had cleaned up, I went up to the club with Maj. McAtee and a bunch of the other officers. It was around eleven o'clock when we went in and the liquor had been flowing pretty freely all night.

A little after midnight, one of the combat men who had quit, decided to tell off the world and Major McAtee. He was quite drunk and said a lot of nasty things. He also said a lot of things that I agreed with in regard to one individual case.

It was all right as long as he used his mouth, but the second that he grabbed the Major by the lapel of his blouse, some of us broke it up. McAtee is in no position to strike back even in self-defense. He has everything to lose and nothing to gain by such a move. He is also the type of man that wouldn't use his rank to punish the guy the next day.

1-24-45  
A railway bridge at Koblenz-Lutzel was again the target on the second day of the month. The Group sent 35 ships on this January 2nd visit. There was little flak in the target area and fighter support was good. The Group sustained no battle damage. Bombing results were unobserved. Lt. Richard H. Habedank led the high right section. Nine of our crews received sortie credit. The Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh records show that they flew this, their last mission, on January 2. They were probably with Thomas Waters. The Ray Ciesielski crew was in combat on this date according to the Lewis Robinson record. Elwood Matter's record indicates that he was with Burns over this target. 2 Jan 45  
YES

On that second day of January the author wrote to his wife:

Do you want to do something for me? See if you can find some copies of the music for a mass in two parts. If we can get the music and work it out in time, Father will sing high mass for Easter.

The supply depot at Landau, Germany, was the center of Group's attention on January 3rd. The Group effort consisted of 23 aircraft on this tactical mission. Major Middleton was the command pilot leading the 14th Combat Wing. There was no flak or enemy aircraft. Bombing was by GEE-H with unobserved results. Lt. Firman S. Mack led the Group. There were five aircraft from the 506th in the formation.

For the third day in a row, the Lewis Robinson record shows that Ray Ciesielski crew was on a mission.

On January 3rd Norm Kiefer wrote:

We spent another day trying to get our filing cabinets straightened out. It seems that all I do is sign papers and initial orders.

Speaking of orders reminds me of something that happened. The other night before I left the office, I said, "Tell the night man to clean and sweep the office every night". The following morning there was a notice for the nightman posted. At the bottom it said, "By Order Of Lt. Kiefer". The first thought that crossed my mind was that I hadn't ordered that, but rather had asked that it be done. It was the first time that I realized that a request from me now is an order to the men. Anyhow, I somehow resented the bottom part and had it removed. Not much of an officer am I?

Many years later Norm Kiefer was to meet with Sgt. Fred Lillard in his home town in Tenn. Lillard recalled some of those papers that Norm complained of signing:

One time General Johnson came over to the 44th on an inspection tour. When he entered the barracks I had my radio playing. Now this wasn't just any radio. I had spotted it while on a trip to a communications depot and decided that I wanted that set. I then set about getting it. When the General heard the radio he admired the tone quality and asked about the reception. I showed him the number of stations that I could receive from both England and the continent. He said that was pretty nice and that he wished he had one like it. I told him, "That's no problem, I can get Kief to sign anything". I did and he got his radio.

Lest you get the wrong impression of Lillard I must point out that when it came to Air Force Regulations and the Supply side of Communications I didn't know what I was doing. Sgt. Lillard kept me out of trouble and I forgive him the extra things that I signed for.

On January 5th the Group dispatched 22 ships on a ground support raid on the marshalling yards at Neunkirchen, Germany. However, only 11 made it to the target and bombed. Errors during assembly resulted in many abortions. Also,

5 JAN 45

errors on the bomb run resulted in bombing the secondary target. Flak was moderate and fighter support excellent. Bombing results were rated as only fair. There were three crews from the 506th that received sortie credit.

For the next couple of days Ray Marner wrote:

January 5th--"Buzz's" ship caught on fire and burned pretty badly. Probably it will have to be salvaged. No one was hurt as the gas didn't explode. "Buzz" was burned a little on the face." (Note: Ray was probably referring to Charles "Buzz" Busby. The ship did not appear to have been salvaged since Webb Todd did not record the loss of a ship on this date.)

January 6th--"Dunlop came back today from Sweden. He's headed for home."

Leading the Wing, the Group launched 35 aircraft on a mission in support of our ground troops. They went out to destroy a railway junction at Landau, Germany, on January 7th. There was very little enemy opposition. GEE-H was used in the bombing and results were unobserved. Eight of our aircraft received sortie credit. Captain Clements led the 491st Bomb Group.

Clements was leading the 2nd Air Division while flying with the 491st Bomb Group. His record shows that he dropped on a Kaiserlautern rail junction using GEE-H and unobserved results. Colonel J. G. Merrell was the Command Pilot. There was no flak, no fighters and fighter support was good. The Ray Ciesielski crew went on this raid according to the Lewis Robinson record. Their target was Landau. Delmar Fox's record also shows the target to be Landau.

On January 8th there were 22 ships from the 44th on a ground support mission to Burgh Reuland, Germany. The railroad junction was to be destroyed. There was little enemy opposition and fighter coverage was good. There was heavy cloud coverage and bombing was by GEE-H with unobserved results. Lt. Firman B. Mack led the Group. There were eight ships from the 506th in the formation. Firman Mack's record also indicates that he was flying lead for the 14th Combat Wing. It appears the Burns may have been on this mission. At least, the Elwood Matter record shows that he was on a ground support mission on this date.

On January 8th Ray Marner wrote:

I went to London. I saw where a V-2 (rocket) hit some flats near Charring Cross. It must have killed people by the hundreds. They were still digging them out. We got our first real snow since we've been here. Probably 3 or 4 inches.

On that day the author wrote to his wife:

Today I believe that I achieved a major victory. Up until today, I knew that my men were working for me, but not with me. I mean by that that if I told them what to do they would do it and a good job. If, on the other hand, I didn't tell them what to do they would sit around the stove and let everything go.

Last night before I left, I told them that I probably wouldn't be down in the morning and told each one what to do in the morning. This afternoon when I walked in the work that I had assigned was done and a whole lot more to boot. I don't need to tell you how pleased I was. Of course, I didn't tell them all what I just told you. However, just before I left tonight I commented upon what a successful day it had been.

I felt all along that sooner or later I would win their confidence. All they needed was someone that would fight for them as well as with them. I haven't been afraid to fight because I knew that I had a lot of pull and backing in both the Group and Squadron.

We are still having snow flurries. It isn't quite as cold and the snow will probably start to melt soon.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

When I assumed command of the Squadron. Communications Section, the Staffing Tables showed that there were a number of promotional opportunities. I asked Sgt. Hunter why these openings existed. He assured me that it wasn't a case that we had poor quality in our personnel. It was just that they would not allow the men to be promoted. When I asked among the Officer personnel, I was advised that you had to keep these opportunities open as an incentive. McAtee told me to use my own judgment.

My judgment reminded me of my own days when I was flying as a PFC., CPL. and SGT. The Ranking Table called for a S/SGT. I told Sgt. Hunter to prepare a list of personnel

that he considered eligible for promotion. I would do the rest. I believe that the incident recorded in the letter to my wife was about the time that Hunter gave me the list. Eventually there were a number of promotions in Squadron. Communications.

On January 11th the Group was on stand down. We had been alerted earlier, but snow and rain prevented operational flying. This was a real taste of winter in England. Ice and snow covered all the roads and buildings.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

When Dick Wynes was promoted he moved from the room he shared with me to a room next to McAtee in another B.O.Q.. My new roommate was Milton Parrish. This room assignment worked out pretty well since Parrish spent a good part of the early evening hours in the Officers Club, even on the night before he was scheduled to fly. This allowed me to get some sleep before going down to wait for briefing material to come in for the next day's raid.

Inclement weather on the 12th of January resulted in a continuation of the stand down.

After a two-day lull the marshalling yards at Kaiserslautern were attacked on January 13th. There were 23 aircraft from the 44th on this mission. Flak was light and fighter support was excellent. Bombing was by GEE-H with results unobserved. Lt. Hill led the formation. Firman Mack was on this raid. According to his records he flew Group lead. Another crew on this raid belonged to Ray Ciesielski according to the Lewis Robinson record. Records maintained by Delmar Fox show that he was on this mission.

Bill Hahn remembers that there was one time in January, 1945, that Hill was flying Group lead.

On that day the Eighth Air Force sent out over 1,300 bombers. Our crew was the 1st one heading over the Channel. We were leading the Eighth Air Force.

Then there was a mission in 1945 when we spotted the first German Jet Fighter to enter the war. There were so many P-51's in the area that the German Jet came in and flew formation with our bombers in order to avoid them. I think it was a Me-209.

On January 13th Ray Warner wrote:

Lt. Edkin's crew went down on the continent. Cracked up.

They got back here okay, but the ship is no good. (6158)

*Repaired*  
*Returned later (TINKER BELL)*  
In a recent letter Charles Jones recalled:

We crash landed in Maix Vill, France. We were there about five days before we were picked up to come back to England.

Leading the 14th Combat Wing, on January 14th, the 44th sent 32 aircraft on a mission to attack the oil refinery at Hemmingstedt. We were the only Wing to hit this target on the Danish Peninsula. Bombing was visual. There was no enemy resistance and fighter support was excellent. There were eight aircraft from the 508th with them. Lt. Richard H. Hadedank led the low squadron. Excellent hits were made by Hadedank's bombardier, William E. Laughlin. The crew received a citation from the Group. Elwood Matter's record shows that he was on this mission. He may have been with Burns.

On January 14 Ray Warner wrote:

I saw a ship crack up near North Pickenham today. All crewmen must have been killed. It was a British Halifax.

The Microfilm history indicated there was nothing to report on January 16th. However, it appears that there was a raid on this date. The Group dispatched 33 aircraft to lead the 2nd Air Division on a deep penetration to the synthetic oil plant at Ruhland. Because the target could not be seen and there was not a radar equipped aircraft left in the lead, the Division turned to the secondary target at Dresden with poor results. Enemy opposition was slight and fighter support excellent. The William Smith crew was on this mission. Fred Marzolph recalls:

Probably our most famous mission was the "Colonel Snavelly Hat Caper"! We were to bomb an underground oil plant at Ruhland (near Berlin). A large part of the 2nd Air Division was taking part in the raid. As I remember, there were some B-17's among us. The secondary target was Dresden, and we were told that it was filled with 300,000 refugees. If we had to bomb it, we could do it any way that we wanted. That is we could salvo, drop at every two feet or whatever.

As luck would have it, at the target a B-17 <sup>FORMATION</sup> came from nowhere and blew the whole bombing run. We had to veer away and head for Dresden. Colonel Snavely was in the lead plane over the target and the ship was hit. We watched it going down. (Note: Crew member, Robert Dubowsky reports that as they left the formation they were in a steep dive to put out the fire. They actually did not leave the ship until they reached the Rhine River.)

On the way back from this long haul of a mission, the Deputy Lead told the Group that anyone low on gas or whatever, could land when we reached checkpoint #7 at such and such time. Checkpoint #7 was the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Guess what! The whole sky emptied! That included our ship. We landed at Orly Field. Actually, many fields around Paris had guests from the 8th Air Force for many days. 16 Mc

Our visit lasted four days and three nights. The field didn't have room for us so we were trucked into Paris and stayed in various hotels. The enlisted men on our crew stayed at the Grand Hotel. We were told that if we left the hotel we must wear side arms. It seems that not long before, 50 German para-troopers had been captured while looking for "Ike" (General Eisenhower). It was believed that another 50 were somewhere in town.

Not having eaten since before briefing, early in the morning, we set out to find some food. In our quest for food we were gently "eased" out of several saloons. Some of them were fancy ones with chamber music. Probably they didn't think that our flying clothes, including the electric cord for the heated suit, was appropriate.

Finally we found a place that would accept 8th Air Force flyers. After a few cognacs we met an infantryman that was with a tank unit located near Dresden. What had caught our attention was the Officer's hat that he was carrying. The hat had the typical 50-mission crush of the Air Force.

The infantryman told us that he was on leave. He asked about the kind of aircraft that we flew. When we told him that we were on B-24's, he claimed that he had found the hat in a B-24 that had crashed near his unit just before he left for leave.

When we examined the hat we found the words "Eugene

Snavely" written on the sweat band. That started us to bargaining. We didn't tell him that Snavely was our Commanding Officer and that we had watched his ship go down. We did tell him that we wanted to send the hat to the next of kin. I don't remember what we paid him for it, but it didn't matter since we were living on escape money.

When we finally got back to the 44th, who should greet us as we landed, but Colonel Snavely. He had been rescued and delivered back to the base. My tail gunner and I took the hat to the Colonels' quarters the next day and left it without seeing the Colonel. We never did hear from the Colonel.

The Chandler crew may have been on this mission of January 16th. Louis DeBlasio recalls:

While flying missions we were not assigned to any one particular aircraft. We always seemed to get ships that were pretty "battle weary" and full of "flak patches". After a Berlin run we returned to base with heavy flak damage of our own. Luckily, no one was injured. Now that we were experienced combat men, we believed we were invincible. However, we were not allowed to test the feelings since we were given our first three-day pass.

On January 16 Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes hit a target south of Berlin. It was the longest flight we've ever pulled. They covered the continent almost completely by swinging way down south. It was closed in here so they landed in France. All but eight ships have reported in, including Jarvis' crew. Four ships are known to go down, including Colonel Snavely, the Group C.O. (Note: Will Lundy's works report that one aircraft was abandoned in flight and three were abandoned after landing on the continent.)

Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Can you guess where I am right now? That was a silly question! I am sitting before a big fireplace in the Queens Hotel in the city of Great Yarmouth on the East Coast of England.

It was late when we got to town so we climbed aboard the first train that was leaving the city of Norwich and here

6812  
LINDSAY'S  
HAWMAN'S



we are.

I imagine this was a pretty nice town in peace times. It is a resort town. I can't think of any place back home that you have seen that would compare with it.

We spent the biggest share of the time right here before the fire and have seen two movies.

On January 17th the Group sent 11 ships on a mission to destroy an oil refinery at Harburg. Bombing was carried out visually with excellent results. Some of our aircraft sustained damage from intense flak. Fighter support was excellent. The 506th commitment to this effort was two ships. Lt. Lowe was the Deputy Lead.

On January 18th Ray Warner wrote:

The planes that were left here went out. One of our ships came back with 200 flak holes. Three men were wounded critically. (Will Lundy does not mention any wounded personnel at this time.)

A mosquito made a crash landing here. It broke right in two. The men in it were unhurt.

Lewis Robinson recalls:

One time we were on a raid that took us deep into Germany. Part of our fighter escort was to come out of Italy. Sure enough, here came the P-51's. What we heard on the radio was "Jive Talk" that was only understood by our nose-gunner who was from one of the southern States. Later, we were to recognize and appreciate those Tuskegee flyers.

Louis DeBlasio remembers:

On one of our earlier missions we were delayed on takeoff because of an engine problem. We were quickly assigned to another ship and transferred our weapons and other gear. After pre-flight we taxied out for takeoff. By the time we were in the air we couldn't locate our Group. Our pilot figured that he would find another B-24 group and go with them. Every time that we spotted "flares", we would head for that group only to find out that they were B-17's.

Finally we all agreed that we should abort the mission since we had wasted so much fuel flying from one group to the other. We dropped our bombs in the Channel and headed for home. Upon landing we were met by "intelligence personnel" who carted us off in separate vehicles to separate rooms for debriefing. They really interrogated each individual to confirm that we were telling the truth and had not planned the whole thing to avoid a "Hot Target".

Ray Marner wrote on January 19th:

Lt. Jarvis' crew reported in and are okay. Colonel Snavely is also all right. They bailed out in France and just got back.

Two days later, January 21st, the Group again put up a very small force (11 ships) to attack the marshaling yards at Pforzheim. The raid was originally briefed for Heilbronn. However, failure of radar equipment resulted in visual bombing of Pforzheim. There was no enemy opposition. Two 506th crews received mission credit on this date. One of those aircraft was probably flown by Burns. Elwood Matter's record indicates he was on a mission on this date.

Norman Chown recalls:

Charles Moffett and I were first assigned to the <sup>4</sup>889th Bomb Group. Just before that group returned to the States, Charley and I were involved in a chain of events which resulted in our aircraft being forced to return to base from a training mission. There was the impression that Charley and I were at fault. That was not entirely true. However, we gained the tag of "foul-ups" and were left behind. That reputation went with us when we transferred into the 506th. WITH LT. CONFERS CREW 16 NOV. 44

Charley and I went on a three day pass to London. We didn't return on time. Our crew was on a combat mission when we returned. There was talk of a general court-martial with a charge of desertion in the face of the enemy. We were given an alternate choice of a reduction in grade. We accepted the reduction to private.

When we were given our Air Medals, the Major said we were to be made Tech. Sgts. again.

On January 24th the author wrote:

There was a Captain here today to look over the work which I have been doing. I am sort of sweating out the report to see what he thought of it all.

Speaking of Captains, did I tell you that I got bawled out for not being strict with the enlisted men? I was walking down the street with a Captain. An enlisted man (which I have known for the last two years) passed us. The enlisted man saluted. When I looked up and saw who it was, I said hello. The enlisted man also spoke and said, "Hello Norm". The Captain was highly browned off. He didn't say anything to the enlisted man, but he sure lit into me.

On January 25th Ray Marner wrote:

A total of 16 men from the Squadron (76 from the Group) went to the infantry today. Most were volunteers. Looks like more will be taken. Copain volunteered. Hated to see him go.

On January 26th Norm Kiefer wrote:

This afternoon I went on the warpath again and told off a couple of Captains. Some day I am going to get into trouble doing that.

They both had this job before I did and made a flop of it. Now this afternoon they came around to make some "constructive criticism". They wanted charts and what not. I told them that I didn't have time to worry about such things. They didn't like it the least little bit. I will probably have to do what they want in the long run, but not until I get darned good and ready.

After a week of bad weather the Group returned to combat on January 28th by sending out 28 aircraft. The target, the marshalling yards at Dortmund, Germany, was covered by haze. On the bomb run the lead bombardier was wounded and GEE-H equipment was not used. There were poor bombing results with the bombs falling 800 yards to the right of the assigned point. Flak was intense. Seven of the crews from the 506th received sortie credit.

On January 28th Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes went out today and the 66th lost two ships over the target. They collided and no one got out. A 68th

ship cracked up near the mile stretch on takeoff. I think everyone got out. Ammunition was going off like mad as the plane burned. (Note: Will Lundy's works confirm the loss of two ships in combat. However, one was a 68th ship (Corkey). The other was a 66th ship that crash landed on the continent. The 68th also lost a ship that crashed on takeoff. They encountered icing conditions. The engineer was crushed by the top turret in the accident.)

The Group had 30 ships in combat on January 29th. On this mission they attempted to hit a railway viaduct at Altenbecken, Germany. Instead, the secondary target at Hamm was bombed with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and fighter coverage excellent. The 506th furnished seven ships on this effort. The Lewis Robinson record shows that the Ray Ciesielski crew was on this ground support mission. Also, the Delmar Fox was on this mission. Finally, it is likely that Edkin's crew was on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones.

1,000 HEAVIES

DEFY ICE, FOG

HIT NAZI RAILS

Despite bitter cold, ice, fog and thick clouds which have stepped in as foes of the heavy bombers in the absence of opposition from the Luftwaffe, better than 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force, protected by approximately 650 Mustangs and Thunderbolts, yesterday hit rail facilities in an area stretching south from Hamm, northeast of the Ruhr, to Rastatt and Aachen southeast of Karlsruhe.

The blows followed Saturday raids by the 8th and RAF--the latter's 11th successive night of heavy bombing--when 800 Fortresses and Liberators shellacked Marshalling yards at Cologne, Coblenz and Ludwigshafen and bridges across the Rhine at Cologne and Bonn, and the RAF's Hallifaxes and Lancasters struck at the railway center and industrial town of Hanau, ten miles east of Frankfurt.

All of the 8th's weekend bombing was accomplished by means of instruments. No enemy fighters were out either day and the rough weather obviously bothered Nazi ack-ack crews. Flak was only moderate Saturday, returning pilots

yesterday described it as meager. Temperatures upstairs hit a frigid 50 below yesterday.

Seven bombers and nine fighters out of an escort of some 550 Mustangs did not come home from Saturday's mission. Losses yesterday were nine bombers and one fighter.

On January 30th the author wrote to his wife:

Boy have I ever got a weather report to turn in tonight. This morning I went to breakfast and there were snow drifts that were knee deep in the roads. Just like home! About noon it started to melt. This evening it is sprinkling. You can guess what it is like now. Everybody had a good time throwing snowballs while it lasted.

We put in another stove in the store room today. It is a homemade one. We made it out of a barrel and it seems to work all right.

On January 31st the Group sent 30 aircraft to destroy the steel works and blast furnaces at Hallendorf, Germany. The recall signal was not sent out until the force had reached Dummer Lake (training area for German antiaircraft gunners). The base was closed in on their return so landing was carried out in Yorkshire. Sortie credit was given to eight of our Squadron personnel. The Elwood Matter notes show that on this day there was a plan A to strike at Berlin and a Plan B to hit Brunswick. The mission was recalled when they were 20 minutes from Brunswick. He probably was with Burns.

We were very pleased to report that during the month of January, 1945 we did not loose any aircraft.

It was some time late in January that the Erland J. Jacobson crew arrived. With Lt. Jacobson were Lts. Hal McCullough and Carlton Cook Jr.. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Francis J. Raysinger, James V. Gratta, William N. Weaver, Douglas Kirk, Harry Bryant, and Milton Silberman.

During the month the following personnel were given promotions: From 1st Lt. to Captain, Richard A. Boykin, Joseph R. Bumbicka, Ogden K. Hill, Firman B. Mack, and Richard L. Wynes; From 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. William D. Edkins, Edward P. Jarvis, and Thomas P. Williams; From Private to Sgt. Chown and Moffett.

Also, the following additions, either permanent or temporary,

were made to the duty roster: Lt. George F. Brown Jr. (and crew), Lt. Milton Parrish, and Captain Elmer H. Hammer were assigned; Lt. Egan to duty from hospital, Lt. Lowe (and crew) to duty from rest home; S/Sgt F. C. Moore to duty;

Finally, the following removals from the duty roster were made: S/Sgt Niemezura to hospital as a result of Jeep accident on New Year's Eve; Assigned to the 70th Replacement Depot Lts. Henderson K. Bennett and David L. Therme, and S/Sgts. Charles J. Brown, Thomas J. Reeves, Cletus C. Clark, and Clarence W. Snyder; T/Sgt. Winn to AAF Station 528; Private Feagans to Station 572; Corporal Pedro T. Rodriguez to 496th Fighter Training Group; Lt. Sidney D. Lovitt to the 305th Bomb Group; Lt. Ryan and T/Sgt. Ihrig to the 231st Hospital; to seven day furlough T/Sgt. Wilson; Lt. Menzel to AAF Station 118; Captains John J. Horey and Carlton R. Horne reassigned; 14 enlisted men assigned to the 12th Reinforcement Depot for Infantry training; S/Sgt. Harold H. Hannon transferred; Sgt. Walter L. Jones to the 10th Replacement Depot

Private Roy L. Russel was reclassified.

During the month of January Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

"I heard a pretty good question the other day. What do you think the answer is? 'What did women do before there was war work; and who does now, what they used to do?' Now don't get mad at me!!! It was just in the paper."..."Enclosed you should find a Nazi Eagle emblem which I cut off from a German uniform down in the hills around Tunis. It is badly faded and weathered."..."So at last you received the flowers that I tried to send you for our wedding anniversary." (Note: They were ordered about two months prior to the anniversary, Oct 26th)... "The day has been pretty clear out, but rather chilly. We might be having some snow in the next few hours."..."I will close for now. My roommate doesn't feel well tonight and is in bed trying to go to sleep, but can't with the light on."..."Enclosed you will find a clipping from the Stars And Stripes. Once a week they have one of these that show the things that we will have to put up with when we get home. I will try to send a few of them. You might enjoy them."..."I went into town on the early train today. Can you guess why? I needed a bath!!! It is a whole lot warmer taking them at the Red Cross Club."..."No I never did send the second box of cigars. They didn't like the

idea of shipping them over here and then shipping them back."... "Did I tell you that Dick Wynes is now a Capt. He is now the Squadron Operations Officer. I was very glad to see him get it."... "Lt. Horne, Capt. Horey and Pooch More all left to go home today. They were all pretty old men over here. They used to fly with the RAF."... "You are wrong about that picture of me with a civilian tie. I am sorry, but I can't tell you what it is all about. You will have to wait. (Note: This was an escape picture that was taken of all combat personnel. They were dressed in clothing that was supposed to represent that available on the continent. The purpose was to have a picture that could be quickly placed on forged identity papers when you were shot down. These photos did not prove to be effective. The Germans knew what we were carrying. They even got to the point that they could tell which group you were assigned to by the tie that you were wearing in the picture. Each group had one tie and the Germans had connected that specific tie to the group identification.)

The author wrote to his wife on January 2nd: *Feb<sup>??</sup>*

They have been working your "Old Man" pretty hard in the last couple of days. Last night I was Convoy Officer. I had to go get a whole truck load of girls. Then at 11 o'clock I had to take them back once more. It was after 1 A.M. before I got back to the base. Now don't get excited! I was up in the cab and the girls were in the back.

This morning I was supposed to be the mail censor. However, there were enough officers there. Now, Capt. Doughton called and asked me to Base Officer of The Day today instead of the 18th. I told him that I would. Soon I will be going out to check the Guards. Then I will try to get some sleep before I go down to Group to do my regular standby-shift down there.

On February 3rd the Group sent 33 aircraft on a mission to destroy an oil refinery located four and a half miles slightly north of Magdeburg.. Bomb sight difficulties in the lead ship resulted in the Deputy Lead dropping on the marshalling yards at Magdeburg. H2X was used for sighting. Heavy flak was encountered on the way into the target. The 506th furnished eight of the attacking craft. Lt. Burns aborted when an oil leak developed.

The Ray Ciesielski crew went to Magdeburg according to records maintained by Lewis Robinson.

The William Edkins crew may have been on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

180 NAZIS  
KO'D IN AIR;  
OIL BOMBED

Air battles flamed anew over the Continent yesterday as more than 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts of the 8th Air Force, protecting a force of some 900 Fortresses and Liberators that plastered oil refineries and storage depots deep within the Reich, shot 149 attacking Nazi planes out of the air.

In addition, 31 enemy planes were knocked down by gunners of the heavies. Fighters shot up three more aircraft on the ground, making a grand total of 183 planes destroyed.

The bombers hit the large Hemmingstedt oil refinery near Heide, on the Danish peninsula; farther south, plastered a synthetic oil plant at Magdeburg; the Salzgitter benzol plant, and two oil storage depots, one at Derben, northeast of Magdeburg and one at Ehmen, northeast of Brunswick.

Ray Lee, Stars and Stripes writer who went along on this raid with the Liberator, Witchcraft, of the 467th Bomb Group, reported a solid wall of flak, but little fighter opposition over the target as the Lib completed its 100th mission without an abort.

On February 3rd Ray Warner wrote:

Van Wye (original 506th) came back from Russia and is here for a while. He's had some pretty good experiences. Traveled through Persia also. (Note: As the author recalls, we had a number of our ground personnel that were sent to Russia. It was expected that our ships would be taking part in a shuttle raid and the ground personnel would service the ships for their return trip. The hot story that these men brought back was that, "on the Russian Base that they just returned from, the male and female Russian Military personnel shared a common barracks and other facilities".)



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On February 5th the marshalling yards at Munich was the briefed target. However, a stubborn weather front closed in and the mission was cancelled.

The 44th put up 32 aircraft and led the Wing on February 6th. The primary target was the oil refinery. However, it was cloud covered and the secondary target, the marshalling yard, was hit using H2X. Bombing results were unobserved. Flak was inaccurate and fighter support was good. Lt. Richard H. Habedank led the third squadron. In total, there were eight 506th ships on this raid. Records maintained by Elwood Matter indicate that he was on this mission. He probably was with Burns. The William Edkins crew may have been on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

KONIEV NEARS SAXONY  
IN 2-PRONGED DRIVE  
TO SPLIT GERMANY

The heart of Germany rocked with tremendous explosions yesterday as more than 1,300 8th Air Force heavy bombers dropped tons of high explosives and incendiaries on transportation and industrial targets in three important cities--including Dresden, still blazing from the effects of a double RAF blow the night before, and threatened by the advance, less than 70 miles away, of Red Army troops. Both the 8th Air Force and RAF attacks on Dresden were in support of one offensive of Marshal Koniev's forces, smashing toward the city in a bid to cut the Reich in two, while another drive struck north toward Berlin.

German "Achtung" reports last night indicated continuing air attacks over western Germany.

Heavies Plaster Arms Factories

Heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force, idle since last weekend's operations, thundered out yesterday in support of the Red Army salients aimed toward the heart of Germany, when more than 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators dealt solid blows to the industrial cities of Dresden, Chemnitz and Magdeburg. They dropped heavy explosives and incendiaries.

On February 6th Ray Marner wrote:

A plane blew up in ~~mid-air~~ <sup>ON BASE -</sup> south of here this morning while <sup>CAUGHT FIRE WHEN LOADING</sup> ~~loading~~ <sup>BOMBS</sup>

*also a mission*

the planes were getting in formation. No one got out. (Note: There is no record of a 44th ship lost on this date.)

Will Lundy reported in his works for February ~~14th~~<sup>6th</sup>:

During the early morning there was a terrific explosion out on the line. A bomb loading crew was loading one of the aircraft for an operation when one of the men turned on the main line and battery switches, and then attempted to start the auxiliary power unit located beneath the flight deck. However, the auxiliary unit was void of fuel, so the man obtained a container of fuel from his service truck and proceeded to refill this power unit. He then started the auxiliary unit running and left the bomb bay to return the container to the truck. Upon returning to the aircraft to set up the hoist, he found that there was a fire in the area of the power unit. He got some of the other members of the crew who tried to put the fire out, but it was out of control.

There were ten 500-pound bombs lined up beneath the aircraft in preparation for loading. The men succeeded in getting seven of the bombs rolled to the edge of the dispersal area before the fire became too dangerous for them to remain.

Approximately ten minutes after the fire started, there was an explosion, when two of the bombs detonated while the fire fighting unit was just moving into position. A large part of one bomb casing, three feet long and two feet wide, was hurled over 300 yards and went through a crew chief shack. This casing fragment struck and instantly killed a guard, S/Sgt. Stanley R. Ducki, though he did not have an apparent mark on him. The explosion completely destroyed the aircraft and produced a huge hole five feet deep and several yards across.

The Group dispatched 33 aircraft on February 9th. The primary target of the Rothensee Oil Refinery was cloud covered so the marshalling yards at Magdeburg were hit. This was the second time within a week that this target was selected. Bombing was carried out using H2X and the results were unobserved. Flak was accurate and fighter support was excellent. Captain George R. Insley led the high right squadron with nine aircraft participating. The Ray Ciesielski crew went to Magdeburg per the Lewis Robinson record.

*(over Copain)*  
Fred Marzolph recalls:

The little English laundryman, who came to the barracks weekly with the laundry, had me in a bad way after 4 weeks of looking for the laundry that I had given to him. I finally cornered him and he swore he didn't have my clothes, but we went back to his truck and found several bundles of my clothes. His excuse was that he had yelled my name "Marzipan" several times and I had not answered. I told him my name was not pronounced like the candy confection. From then on I got my clothes.

On February 11th Ray Marner wrote:

I got a letter from Copain. They are having rugged training. All the men from here will be riflemen on the western front.

An early morning raid was carried out by 33 aircraft from the 44th on the 14th of February. The primary was the oil refinery at Rothensee. However, the secondary target of the marshalling yards at Magdeburg, Germany, was hit when clouds obscured the primary. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and fairly accurate. Fighter support was excellent. There were eight aircraft from the 506th participating in this mission. Captain Firman Mack led the Group. The Delmar Fox records show that he was on this raid.

The next day, February 15th, the Group orders once again were to hit the oil refinery at Rothensee, near Magdeburg. Bombing was to be carried out through the use of H2X and results would be unobserved. There was no secondary. Flak was once again moderate and accurate. Fighter support was excellent. Captain George Insley led the low left squadron. Seven of our aircraft received sortie credit. Major McAtee was the command pilot. Lt. Ivan E. Lowe aborted. The Lewis Robinson records show the Ray Ciesielski crew went to Magdeburg. It is likely that the William Edkins crew was on this mission. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

KEY RAIL CITY  
NEAR CAPITAL  
IS POUNDED

The 8th Air Force fashioned another mighty blow yesterday as its part in the growing air offensive in

support of the advancing Red Army when it sent out more than 1,100 Fortresses and Liberators, covered by 450 Mustangs, to attack Dresden and Magdeburg for the second day in a row, and the key rail center of Cottbus, between Dresden and Frankfurt.

The raids followed a night in which the RAF again was out in strength, dispatching more than 1,300 planes, most of them heavy bombers, which rocked industrial Chemnitz before the rubble left by the 8th's raid Wednesday afternoon could be cleared, smashed an oil plant near Leipzig and bombed Berlin, Duisburg, Mainz, Nurnburg and Dessau.

Heavy blows by Allied air forces and the Red Army have slashed German oil production by more than four-fifths, SHAEF announced today. They warned, however, that the Wehrmacht could still muster enough fuel to launch another large scale counteroffensive. It is not expected that oil production will be sufficiently cut to prevent it from doing so.

During the past few weeks oil refineries have seemed to be our high priority. On February 18th it was the one at Salzbergen that was selected. However, there was a malfunction in GEE-H and the secondary target at Rheine was struck instead. Flak was meager. Heavy contrails were encountered in the target area. The weather at Shipdham prevented a return to base and thus all ships landed on the continent. Elwood Matter made this mission. He probably was with Burns. On this day the Ray Ciesielski crew flew their last combat mission according to the Lewis Robinson records.

Lewis Robinson remembers:

During my combat career I never got a shot at the Me-110 that destroyed the plane on our wing. However, I did share credit for one P-51 making an attack on our tail. It must have been a captured plane flown by a German. I reported the incident at interrogation and never heard about it again.

When it got time to go home, they placed us on a troop ship, *President Wilson*, out of Liverpool headed for Boston. We had no escort or convoy. We finally arrived in Boston after a five-day gale and submarine warnings, but no attacks off our East Coast. Everything I had traded for souvenirs was taken away from me in Liverpool.

I do remember the continuous chow line and a live craps game run by a new buddy of mine, Tony Giametti. Tony and I ended up at Radio Mechanics School, Truax Field, Madison, Wisc.

On February 17th the ships that had landed on the continent on yesterday's raid returned today.

On that day Ray Marner wrote:

Charley Walters came over here today. He is a 1st Lt. now. He used to work in our operations back at Pueblo.

More men are going to the infantry. Luke Holmes is going. They are taking nine men from the 506th this time.

Two more battle stars came through. That makes six. The one on the Germany Campaign is still pending and will come through soon. We have stars from the Ploesti Raid, Invasion of Sicily, Invasion of Italy, the Normandy Campaign, the Northern France Campaign and Air Offensive Over Europe.

On February 19th there was one aircraft from the Group that went into combat. Lt. Burton A. Maglitsch, from the 506th, led the 491st Bomb Group in an attack on the rail yards at Slegen. He was also leading the 14th Combat Wing.

On that same day the author wrote to his wife:

It has been five days since I last wrote to you. We have been very busy. Last Thursday we decided to take an inventory and set up a new set of books. That meant that we had two days typing to do in excess of our other work.

On Sunday morning we started to work on the inventory. It is a big job, but I think that we will be through by Friday. That is if we hold up under the pace that I have set for the boys. We are working 18 hours a day. On the days that I handle briefings, the only sleep that I have gotten is cat naps.

These boys that are working with me are certainly swell about it. Not a word of complaint, nor are they sulking around trying to find a way out of work.

For February 21st The 44th put up 32 aircraft. The attack was against the marshalling yards at Nurnburg, Germany.

Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Many of our aircraft landed on the Continent after bombing. About half of our ships received battle damage. There were seven ships from the 506th in the formation. Captain James H. Clements led the way for the Group.

Clements was leading the 2nd Air Division and flying with his regular crew except for Clement R.C. Holcomb and Murray G. Margolios. Eugene H. Snavely was Command Pilot. They were in A/C 322, Bar D. They were carrying six 500-pound RDX bombs. They were at 21,500 feet when the bombs were dropped at 1213 hours. They encountered meager, inaccurate flak in the target area and near Stuttgart on the way out. Fighter support was very good.

The Group dispatched 31 aircraft on February 22 for a raid with the primary target being Hohengandern and the secondary the Gottingen marshalling yards. A slight ground haze caused difficulty in finding the primary on time and the secondary was struck. Bombing took place at 8,000 feet under visual conditions. Bomb results were excellent. The Group received a 2nd Air Division Commendation for this operation. Flak was meager and fighter support excellent. Group personnel reported seeing smoking towns all along the route on the way in and out. Lt. Burns led the low left squadron. Sortie credit was given to eight of our crews. William Edkins probably made this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

6,000 PLANES SWOOP  
DOWN TO PINPOINT  
RAIL, CANAL SYSTEM

The greatest mass air assault since the Normandy invasion was loosed by more than 6,000 Allied aircraft yesterday against the entire system of German rail communications in Western Europe as planes from seven different Commands--including heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force, the 15th Air Force, and RAF Bomber Command--dropped a tremendous weight of bombs almost simultaneously on hundreds of targets throughout western Germany and northern Holland.

In weather so clear that airmen could see for 50 miles, the Allied air forces thundered through the skies to carry out the vast, long planned operation of smashing all highways, railways and canals connected with central Germany.

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The 8th Air Force led the gigantic flying arsenal with more than 1,400 Liberators and Fortresses which blasted more than 24 marshalling yards over a 38,000-square mile area through the very heart of the Reich.

Confusion reigned throughout Germany as, first, German "Achtung" broadcasts reported small groups of every type of Allied aircraft penetrating over Germany at the same time--from the south and all along the West Front--until they blanketed the western part of the country. Then frantic reports began trickling through the German communications network of hundreds of cuts in railway lines from Denmark to Italy. Liberators from Maj. General William E. Kepner's 2nd Air Division struck the central third of the targeted area.

Hal Tyree recalls:

We interrupted our missions early in 1945 and were detached to Merville Air Base in Belgium. We ferried B-24's that could not make it back to England after landing on the Continent. We were in Paris for one night during Mardi Gras. When we returned to Shipdham we finished our tour on February 22, 1945.

On February 22nd Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Did you know that I have had a nickname for some time now? I didn't either, until the other night. I found out when I called the barracks for one of the boys. When the phone was answered, I heard them call the boy to the phone. He asked who wanted him. The response was "The Ball Of Fire".

Later on I started asking questions about the nickname. It seems that when I first came up here I got pretty hot under the collar at a couple of Captains and lit into them verbally. Some of the men heard me and said something about me being a ball of fire. That has been my unofficial name every since.

The Group led the 14th Combat Wing on February 23rd with 30 of our aircraft participating. This time the marshalling yards at Weimar, Germany, was the target. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. There was no flak and the fighter protection was excellent. Many of our aircraft landed at other bases in England upon return.

On February 23rd Ray Marner wrote:

The Group completed 300 missions today. There are a lot of rumors going around that we will move in April.

For February 24th only eleven aircraft from the Group participated in a raid on the oil refinery at Misburg, Germany. Our ships were not able to find the 14th Combat Wing on assembly. They tacked on to the 2nd Combat Wing. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and accurate. Fighter support was excellent. This was the last mission for Delmar Fox. He doesn't know which crew he was with.

The Group dispatched 35 ships on February 25th. The target was the marshalling yards at Aschaffenburg, Germany. The weather was clear and the target was hit visually with excellent results. There was no flak on our formation. Some of our aircraft landed on the Continent after bombing. Captain Firman B. Mack led the Group. There were eight crews from the 506th that received sortie credit. Lt. Thomas J. McKenna aborted.

This was the first mission for the Erland J. Jacobson crew according to records maintained by William Weaver.

On February 25th Ray Marner wrote:

A lot of boys just came back from Switzerland. They really had a good time there. They brought back a lot of watches and other things. These boys were interned for a year.

A total of 22 of the Group's aircraft participated in the raid on the Pankow marshalling yards, in Berlin, on February 27th. Cloud cover was solid on the way in. Flak was meager and inaccurate. Fighter support was good. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Captain Ogden K. Hill led the Group. There were five of our aircraft in the formation.

Fred Marzolph recalls:

A visit that one of the fellows in our barracks received from his brother. It happened just after the "Battle Of The Bulge". The brother was an infantry man. He brought with him a gift/souvenir which he gave to his brother. It was a live hand grenade. Now Air Force people don't know much about grenades. Our barracks buddy pulled the pin



for some unknown reason and couldn't get it back into place. Everybody in the barracks flew that day! That is, out of the barracks and into the bomb shelter which was just outside. They immediately found themselves in about one foot of water.

Meanwhile, our buddy made his way out the back door and threw the grenade over the pond into the farmers field. Luckily, no one was hurt, but there was grumbling about wet shoes and clothing.

Major Middleton was the Command Pilot leading the 14th Combat Wing on the February 27th attack at Bitterfeld. There were 22 aircraft from the 44th on the mission. The briefed primary was the marshalling yards at Halle. Radar difficulties at the primary resulted in striking Bitterfeld which presented a better radar target for our H2X equipment. There was no flak and fighter support was excellent. Lt. Richard H. Habedank flew as Deputy Lead. Six of our aircraft received sortie credit. The Elwood Matter record shows that he flew a mission on this date. The target indicated is Halle, Germany. Matter was probably with Burns.

On February 27th Ray Marner wrote:

We entered foreign service 2 years ago today. We are having an inspection sometime this week by some Inspector Generals.

For the 10th straight day, February 28th, the Group has been in combat. There were 24 ships from the Group that participated in a raid on the marshalling yards at Seigen, Germany. Bombing was by GEE-H with unobserved results. There was no flak and fighter support was excellent. Sortie credit was given to six of our crews.

Summarizing the activities for the month of February, 1945, we find the Squadron participated in fifteen operational missions, sending a total of 104 aircraft with only nine abortions. Thirty-five enlisted men and seventeen officers completed their operational tours. For the second month in a row the Squadron did not lose a crew to enemy action. The site and living quarters were considerably improved. Fencing off the grass and a general cleanup of the grounds made quite a change.

During the month the following personnel received promotions: From 1st Lt. to Captain, Irwin C. Rada; From 2nd Lt. to 1st

Lt., Linwood Clay and Harry W. Alexander; From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt., George Joanos.

Also during the month the following additions were made to the duty roster: Crew Chief, M/Sgt. Yerke from hospital; Captain Hill, Lt. John W. Peck, and Sgt William M. Welford from sick quarters; Lts. Laurence F. Wallace, Eugene T. Cunningham, and Donald M. Schake (and crews) assigned.

Finally, the following deletions, either permanent or temporary, were made from the duty roster: Lt. Schufflebarger to Station 10 RAF; Lts. Raymond J. Ciesielski, Clyde M. Housley, and Fred W. Illgner were reassigned; T/Sgt. Stephen J. Opet transferred to replacement depot; PFC Irvine Ryke (mail orderly), S/Sgt. Charles E. Reed and Lt. Joseph C. Kodaj transferred; Lts. Jack C. Thorne and Thomas P. Williams to rest home; 1st Sgt. William Welford to sick quarters

In letters to his wife during the month of February Norm Kiefer wrote:

"No I don't remember the person that you mean when you speak of Len Stumon. I hope that you didn't go and tell him that I had forgotten! Don't ever do that. I will remember those people once more when I get back and see them again."..."I went to see a couple of old movies last night. One of them was Clark Gable in *Call Of The Wild* and the other was Jane Weathers in *You're In The Army.*"

On March 1st the Group dispatched 21 ships on a mission to the marshalling yards at Ingolstadt, Germany. Capt. Benadom flew as Command Pilot with Capt. Firman B. Mack leading the Group. The objective was the rail equipment and the repair facility located there. Failure of the H2X equipment in both the lead and deputy lead ships resulted in dropping bombs on the smoke markers of the 392 Bomb Group. Bomb results were unobserved. One Me-262 made a tail attack on the low squadron. This ship passed over the squadron and passed out of the formation at eleven o'clock. There were no hits. There was no flak and fighter support was excellent. There were five ships from the 506th in the formation.

On the second day of the month, March 2nd, there were 21 aircraft from the 44th in combat. This was to be another attack on the oil refinery at Magdeburg, Germany. However, because of weather conditions over the refinery, the marshalling yard was bombed. Bombing was carried out using H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate. Five crews

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from the 506th received sortie credit.

On March 2nd Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

How are you feeling this evening? Well I hope! My cold still has a good hold on me. I feel tired and sore all over. (Note: At this time the base was undergoing a flu attack.) Yes I am working tonight. I wish that I could get out of it. A little rest would do my cold a world of good. I guess that I will have to follow Maj. McAtee's example and go to the hospital for a few days.

We now have the whole outside of the office covered and the biggest share of it painted. It looks pretty nice, even though I say so myself. Last night Sgt. Lillard got a bright idea about what sort of material to use in covering the inside of the office. It is a fiber-like board that lines our ammunition boxes. That will make it rather nice inside, I hope!

The 44th was out looking for oil once again, at Magdeburg (Rothensee), on March 3rd. The Group sent 21 aircraft on this raid on the oil facility which was covered by a smoke screen. However, the refinery smoke stacks could be seen and our bombs were dropped visually. Flak in the target area was moderate and accurate. Enemy jet aircraft struck the formation ahead and four of the aircraft in that formation were lost. Our P-51 escort could not match the speed of these German aircraft. Captain Mack flew as the Deputy Lead for the Group. In total, there were six ships from the 506th on the raid. Records maintained by William Weaver indicate that the Erland Jacobson crew was on this mission.

On March 3rd Ray Warner wrote:

We were attacked tonight and early in the morning by "Jerry". There were piloted planes for the first time in nine months. "Jerry" was about for around three hours. He strafed the field and hit some planes and hangars. The boys were hitting the deck for the first time in a long while. No casualties here on the station to my knowledge. Some people in the small towns were killed.

The Group placed 24 aircraft in the air on March 4th. The objective was the tank factory at Aschaffenburg. Dense contrails and a haze over the target resulted in the abandonment of the primary. Targets of opportunity were bombed. These included the marshalling yards at Tuttlingen

and other targets at Aachen and Offenburg. Flak was encountered over the front lines and in the target area. Lt. Burns led the second squadron of the Group. Seven of our crews were credited with a raid. The Erland Jacobson crew was on this mission per records kept by William Weaver.

Again on March 4th Ray Marner reported:

"Jerry" was over again early this evening strafing the field. No one hurt here on the field.

The mission was to Harburg, Germany, on March 5th. Our eleven ships were the high right squadron for the 14th Combat Wing in this attack on the oil refinery. The bomb run was short due to crowded conditions in the target area. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. On the way to the target flak was encountered near Heligoland. Lt. Emmett J. Burns led the Group. There were three 506th ships over that target.

On that same day Norm Kiefer wrote:

We got more of the fiber squares today. Yours truly was up on the top of a ladder nailing them on the wall when the Colonel walked in. He didn't say very much of anything. Now just offhand I would take that to be a good sign. You see it was pretty dirty out in the storeroom. If the Colonel had not been pleased with the progress he would have most certainly complained about the dirty conditions.

I may be a little conceited, but I think that Maj. McAtee is very proud of the job that we are accomplishing. Last night at the Squadron meeting, he wanted to know if all of the officers had been over to see Kiefer's place of business.

The Group sent only three aircraft to attack the target at Bielefeld, Germany, on March 7th. They were to provide leadership for other groups. Will Lundy's works show that Overstreet of the 67th flew Lead and Meglitsch of the 506th flew Deputy Lead for the 491st Bomb Group. They struck the railway viaduct using GEE-H with unobserved results. There was no enemy opposition.

On March 8th the Group sent 26 aircraft on raids. They split and struck two assigned targets. One formation hit the railway center at Betzdorf. Others went with Lt. Emmett J.

9<sup>th</sup>? where is it.

Burns to fly the high right squadron with the 491st. They were on a GEE-H run on the marshalling yards at Siegen when the GEE-H trace faded. The Mickey operator took over for an H2X attack. Due to the confusion on the short run, the marshalling yards at Limburg was hit instead. There was flak in the Frankfurt area. Records maintained by Elwood Matter indicate that he was on this mission. He probably was with Burns.

Fred Marzolph recalls:

We were never shot down, but came back one time with unexploded 20-mm antiaircraft shells in our self-sealing gas tanks. There was another time that we had no hydraulic fluid because of a malfunction. All of the fluid was pumped from the plane. In order to land we had to manually lower the flaps and wheels. Parachutes were rigged on the waist gun mounts in order to slow the plane down after reaching the ground. One time we had to land at a base in southern England. This was an emergency field. The runways were about three football fields wide and three miles long. Coming in without brakes was real neat since you could coast to a stop with lots to spare. The runway was lined with bombers and fighters of all kinds.

The Group sent 37 aircraft on a return visit to the viaduct at Bielefeld on March 10th. Once again the target was cloud covered and GEE-H equipment was used with unobserved results. No enemy opposition was encountered. Lt. Burns led the second squadron. There were ten ships from the 506th present.

On March 10th Ray Warner wrote:

Two years ago tonight we were torpedoed. An unconfirmed report came on teletype that Japan was invaded. It hasn't been made public as the report came from Japan.

The Group sent about 30 aircraft to the submarine pens at Kiel, Germany, on March 11th. That is about twice the number dispatched in May, 1943, when our ships also dropped incendiaries on this target and won a Distinguished Unit Citation. There was also three times the number of friendly bombers, all B-24's, over the target and friendly fighters were there. However, they weren't needed since no enemy aircraft appeared. Flak was moderate. This time the target was cloud covered and bombing was by H2X with unobserved

OK HILL WED 44<sup>th</sup>

results. Captain Ogden K. Hill Jr. flew as ~~Deputy~~ Group Lead. There were eight aircraft from the 506th in the formation. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones indicates the William Edkins crew may have been on this raid:

HEAVIES HIT U-BOAT YARDS,  
CONTINUE BLITZ ON OIL, RAILS

Bombing through clouds, more than 1,200 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force attacked German submarine construction yards at Bremen, Hamburg and Kiel yesterday and spiralled down loads on eight oil refineries in the first two cities.

The raids climaxed a big week end for both the 8th and the RAF. On Saturday more than 1,350 Forts and Libs continued the drive to cut Nazi communications to the Ruhr by aiming an assault at interlocking rail lines running from the area. Three marshalling yards in and near Dortmund and other targets north and east of the Ruhr were bombed, also through the clouds.

Captain Mack led 33 ships from the Group to the marshalling yards at Wetzlar, Germany, on March 12th. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Enemy opposition was nonexistent. Fighter support was good. There were nine 506th ships in the formation.

In the August 1988 issue of the 44th Logbook Firman Mack wrote:

Our mission to Wetzlar got complicated almost at once. At some point on the way to the Group forming area, the airplane suddenly filled with acrid smoke. Everyone except me was coughing and hacking and gasping, trying to put on their oxygen masks. Fortunately, I had put on my oxygen mask before we left the ground because I was usually pretty busy during form-up. After the people got their masks on, someone in the waist told me that Logan had triggered a smoke bomb accidentally while walking through the bomb bay. After a certain amount of confusion, we got the bomb bay doors open and dropped the 100-pound smoke bomb into the 10/10 cloud cover below us. I never could find out where that bomb landed. Either the people didn't know or they didn't want to tell me.

After we got rid of that bomb, the smoke cleared out of

our drafty old B-24 pretty rapidly. However, our troubles were not over. I received a call from the waist that the acid from the bomb had sprayed Logan in the face and he was unable to wear an oxygen mask. If he continued on the mission with us he would surely die of anoxia. It shouldn't happen to a nice guy like Logan. We had a little powwow in the cockpit. The guy that was riding Command Pilot that day said, "You can't go back!". I guess we already knew that because we knew that we were expendable. On the way to the target, you were working for the Government, but after you dropped your bombs, you had the luxury of working for yourself.

While I was still trying to figure out what to do about this situation, the waist called me and said "Logan wants to bail out!" I had another short powwow with the navigator who said, "If he's going to do it, he had better hurry because we are approaching the coast". I called the waist and told Logan to go ahead, but he shouldn't open his chute until he hit the clouds below us, which were at about 5,000 feet. (We were then about 13,000 feet.) The wind was behind us and if he drifted too far, he might end up in the drink. Logan said O.K. and shortly after that he bailed out. The guys in the waist said he opened his chute almost before he got out of the airplane. I think he came down somewhere around Ipswich.

I don't remember much about the mission, but when we returned to Base, our revetment was swarming with staff cars. I seem to remember that General Johnson was among those present. In the uproar someone said, "We found one of the people who bailed out, but we can't find the other two!"

It took a little while to figure that out, but it seems that someone in the formation had reported that we bailed out three people. The "two people" who were missing were Logan's pants and jacket which had been thrown out because they were smoldering from the acid.

Shortly after this mission, at a meeting which Colonel Snavelly was addressing, someone commented that Capt. Mack and his crew were to be congratulated for the way they handled the Logan incident. Colonel Snavelly said, "I don't know whether they should be congratulated or whether Capt. Mack should be court-martialed." To which I responded, "I'm right here, Sir". Colonel Snavelly and I never liked each other.

A few days later Colonel Snavelly called me into his quarters and gave me a Clark bar from his candy ration and told me that the Brass had decided to award Logan the Distinguished Flying Cross. This would tell the Germans that we were so eager to come and bomb them that our people were prepared to bail out rather than disrupt the mission.

The following press release appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*:

An 8th Air Force Station in England, April 9 (AP). Burned severely by the accidental explosion of a smoke bomb in his Liberator, Sgt. Grover Logan Jr. of Hattiesburg, Miss., bailed out over England so the plane would not have to abandon its mission to return him to its base for medical treatment.

Logan landed near a railway station in time to catch a train to a civilian hospital. An ambulance took him to an American military hospital.

Pilot Capt. Firman Mack, Chicago, Ill., said he gave permission to jump upon learning that Logan's burns were causing extreme pain but apparently were not serious. Sgt. Roger Tweksbury, of Bath N.H., the engineer who took over Logan's gun position, said "He stepped through the emergency escape hatch as nonchalantly as if he was going across the street for a pound of butter."

On March 12th the author wrote to his wife:

I can't answer your question about when and if we will come home upon the fall of Germany. They don't up and say, "Norm old boy you have been a good boy. Now you can go home when Germany turns in it's chips". There are boys here on the same field that have been here three years and there still isn't a chance for them to go home. How can I say that I will come home. You will just have to wait until I get there and then pray that I don't have to leave again.

There were 36 ships from the 44th that went to the marshalling yards at Gutersloh, Germany, on March 14th. The weather was clear and bombing was visual. Generally, the bombing results were excellent. There was no enemy opposition. Ten aircraft from the 506th received sortie credit. *ALL*



12 MAR

A newspaper article that Charles Jones kept may have referred to this point in time:

GOOD HITS  
SNARL LINES

The back breaking blitz on German railway lines, slowed up somewhat Thursday night because of bad weather, roared anew yesterday afternoon when over 1,200 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force dropped a pulverizing load of bombs on approximately 20 marshalling yards in southeastern Germany while heavy bombers of the RAF pommelled the communications center of Essen and hit a benzol plant at Geilenkirchen.

The Fortresses and Liberators, again carrying out their missions from medium altitudes of from 6,000 to 15,000 feet, blasted yards in five towns situated on rail lines radiating from the key transport center of Nurnburg, at which the 8th struck two mighty blows earlier in the week. The attack thus took the form of a mopping-up operation, in which the bombers, having paralyzed the hub of this section of German communications, reached out to disable its smaller component parts.

The complete pattern of yesterday's assault by the 8th covered an area stretching from Schweinfurt south to Nurnburg and east to the Czech border, a much more compressed area than the one hit in Thursday's savage blow.

Our Group sent 33 aircraft to lead the 14th Combat Wing to Zossen, Germany, on March 15th. The German General Staff Headquarters is located there. When our ships arrived there were heavy contrails from preceding ships. Also, the MPI area was covered with haze and smoke from exploding bombs. The MPI was changed and visual bombing was carried out. However, bombs from some of the squadrons dropped short and to the right. Meager and inaccurate flak was encountered both in the target area and at Stendal. Elwood Matter was on this mission and was probably flying with Burns.

On March 17th the marshalling yards at Munster was bombed by 25 of the Group's aircraft. Captain Clements led the Division. For bomb aiming, GEE-H was used with unobserved results. Moderate and inaccurate flak was encountered in the target area. There were six aircraft from the 506th there. James Clements was flying in aircraft #322, Bar D. Flying

with him, in addition to his usual crew, was Lt. Elmo C. Trudeau and Flight Officer Frank A. Clarvoe. Bombs were released at 1345 hours at 23,500 feet. Erland Jacobson made this raid according to the William Weaver record.

Ray Warner wrote:

"Jerry" was over again last night.

There were 33 aircraft from the 44th in the attack on the Borsig Armament Works in (Tegal) Berlin on March 18th. The objective was the manufacturing facilities for the V-2 rockets and anti-aircraft ammunition. We were carrying a new type of incendiary bomb that is practically impossible to extinguish. Weather conditions, resulting in dense contrails, hindered formation flying after the Initial Point. The 67th became separated, but the remainder of our ships in the lead and low left squadrons struck the target visually. The remainder dropped on Berlin using H2X. Strike photos showed excellent results for all. Flak was intense and fairly accurate. There were no enemy aircraft.

Louis DeBlasio believes that he was on this mission. He probably was with Max E. Chandler. DeBlasio recalls:

We had flak damage, but there were no casualties. This was my sixth mission. After our return we were given our first three-day pass.

*No* The William Edkins crew was probably on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

1,100 HEAVIES  
KEEP BLITZING  
REICH'S RAILS

Carrying their relentless attack into its ninth consecutive day, more than 1,100 heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force raided Nazi rail lines yesterday for the eighth time in their new offensive, 750 Fortresses pouring it on the traffic center at Leipzig while 350 Liberators attacked the marshalling yards at Halle, 20 miles northwest of Leipzig.

The escort of 700 Thunderbolts and Mustangs continued strafing enemy airfields and rail lines yesterday, reporting destruction of more than 70 parked aircraft and damaging 44 locomotives and rail cars.

In Monday's attack on Berlin, from which 16 bombers and seven fighters are missing, the 8th may have dropped its 500-pound "Goop" bomb, an incendiary that defies all extinguishing devices, the Associated Press reported yesterday, quoting officials in Washington. USSTAF said last night it had no knowledge of the bomb being used Monday.

A Reuter dispatch from Stockholm reported huge fires started in the three railway terminals hit by the 8th, with many freight cars, loaded with food, munitions and other supplies for the Russian front, destroyed.

On March 18th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I have been wasting a lot of money in the last couple of days. To begin with, I bought a new Olive Drab colored battle jacket and some other odd and end bits of clothing. Then tonight, as per custom, I had to spend a great deal of time at the bar and buy drinks.

Of course I am taking it for granted that you noticed the change in my status. My promotion came through today and was back dated to the fifteenth of the month.

After I decided that I had spent enough money at the bar, I purchased a bottle and took off to see Jimmy Caillier and the enlisted men.

On March 19th the Group launched 33 aircraft in a strike at the jet plane assembly facility at Neuburg. We were leading the 2nd Air Division. In the area of the initial point, heavy haze was encountered and the Group was forced to drop to 1,500 feet under it. Bombing was visual with excellent results. Five of the Group's returning ships landed on the Continent. The 66th lost one ship. Captain Mack flew as Deputy Lead.

Records kept by William Weaver indicate that the Erland Jacobson crew made this raid. L #524

YES

The 44th sent 11 aircraft, flying the left squadron for the 14th Combat Wing, to the oil refinery at Hemmingstedt, Germany, on March 20th. The weather was good, but the target was covered with smoke. The Lead Bombardier tried to use the offset method of bombing, but the bombs fell beyond the intended striking point. Lt. Burns led the Group. There was no flak and no fighters.

On March 21st there were 35 aircraft from the 44th on a mission to clear the way for fighters that were to strafe the airfield at Achmer. Confusion at the Initial Point resulted in the lead squadron having good results, the high right squadron having fair results and the low left poor. There was no enemy opposition. There were ten aircraft from the 506th that were there.

In the afternoon of March 21st a second mission was flown. The Group, with 11 aircraft, led the 14th Combat Wing to the airfield at Essen. While on the bomb run the lead aircraft was hit by flak. Unknown to the crew the bomb sight was damaged. This was not known until it was too late to turn over the lead. The bombs were 4,000 feet east of the target. Flak was moderate and accurate in the target area. There were three crews from the 506th that received sortie credit.

The William Weaver record shows that he was in combat on this date. He probably was with Erland Jacobson. There is no indication of whether they were on the morning or afternoon shift.

A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones indicates that the William Edkins crew may have been on this raid:

PLANE PLANTS, AIRFIELDS  
STRUCK BY 1,200 HEAVIES

Rumbling through ineffective enemy air opposition, more than 1,200 bombers of the 8th Air Force swung deep into eastern and southern Germany yesterday to cut Nazi air strength at its source. Liberators struck at plane plants and airfields in the south and Fortresses thundered eastward to hit at industrial objectives in Chemnitz and Leipzig areas.

The Libs, bombing from clear skies, emptied their bomb bays over a factory making jet plane parts at Baumenheim, 20 miles northeast of Augsburg, and over airfields near Ingolstadt and Ulm, both in the general area of Augsburg. The latter field is believed to be assembling jet planes.

USSTAF revealed yesterday that 25 bombers and five fighters are missing from Sunday's operations over Berlin. At the same time it announced that photographs taken during the attack showed excellently placed bombs carpeting the centrally located Schlesicher and North Station rail yards and fires burning in the Tempelhof

airdrome and marshalling yards. Libs which struck at industrial objectives in the suburban areas also achieved good results, photos showed.

Also, on March 21st the 506th had a new experience. For the first time, our Squadron Commander would carry the rank of Lt. Colonel. We were all proud to now call him Lt. Colonel McAtee.

On March 21 Ray Marner reported:

"Jerry" was over tonight. One plane made a pass at our site. I saw him coming and we all hit the ditch. He went right over us when every .50-cal. in the site opened up. We almost got him.

Captain Clements led the Division on March 22nd. The Group sent 32 ships on this mission northeast of Stuttgart. The target was an airfield at Schwabisch-Hall. Bombing results were excellent. Flak was encountered. Six of our ships, although undamaged, landed on the Continent before returning to base. James Clements was flying aircraft #644. Flying with him, in addition to his regular crew, was Major Vaughn, Capt. Dale F. Benadom and Lt. Roy W. Owen. Bombs were dropped from an altitude of 16,000 feet at 1314 hours. Charles Jones kept a newspaper article that may have referred to this raid:

8TH PUNISH  
LUFTWAFFE'S  
AIRFIELDS

In a savage blow aimed at crippling the Luftwaffe, which appeared to be forming a comeback in the past few weeks, U.S. heavy bombers and fighters yesterday thundered out to hammer airfields, many of them bases for jet-propelled fighters and fighter bombers, in northwest Germany, the Ruhr and southern Germany. The 8th had some 2,200 planes out, nearly 2,000 of which figured in the drive on airdromes, while the 15th dispatched a separate force of Liberators to lash at the Neuburg drome, jet base 50 miles north of Munich.

The bombers and fighters carried out their assault under excellent conditions--ceiling visibility was unlimited. In the greatest blow of the whole operation, approximately 1,100 bombers of the 8th and most of its 300 fighters zoomed in over nine fields in northwest Germany to wield a

three-ply blow.

First the bombers came in for their run, followed by fighters which laid fragmentation bombs on runways and other vital spots on the fields. Fighters carried out the third phase of the attack by sweeping in to strafe the dromes.

On March 22nd the author wrote:

You keep asking me if they will let us come home when the war is over with Germany. I Don't Know! If you look back over the history of this war you will find that every time there was something big going on, we were there. When the U-Boats were harassing our convoys we were chasing them and got a "blue ribbon" while doing it. When they stormed the beaches of Sicily, we were a couple of miles ahead of them. We have been on every low level that the heavies have been on. Maybe it was only supplies to the paratroopers, but we were there. Do you remember the hard position our ground troops were in at Anzio and Salerno? How long did it take them to get us down there? That was the time they called us back from leave. When they landed in France we were again pounding the beaches ahead of those troops. We are known at times as oil men. They have sent us on some of the longest raids of the war to get at the German oil. Again there was a "blue ribbon". To sum it up, we are trouble shooters. It is hard telling what our next job will be.

Thirty Group aircraft made a mission to the marshalling yards at Rheine on March 23rd. Each squadron made its own bombing run. The results were excellent for all. Flak was moderate, but accurate in the target area. Some of our ships were damaged. The Erland Jacobson crew was on this mission per records kept by William Weaver. A news article kept by Charles Jones may have described the day's events:

Heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force and the RAF again lent their crushing weight yesterday to the great tactical blitz on Nazi military and communications zones in the Ruhr. More than 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th, with cover of some 700 Mustangs, lashed out in excellent weather at nine Wehrmacht Administration and supply centers ringing Essen in the Ruhr and continued to blast enemy airfields, striking four more near Frankfurt-on-Main and Stuttgart and one at Ahlhorn, near Bremen, which had been pommelled in Wednesday's big blow.

From the south, Forts and Libs of the 15th thundered up from Italy to bomb the Ruhland oil refinery, 70 miles south of Berlin, and oil refineries and rail yards in Vienna.

Mustang fighters had the distinction of providing protection for three separate forces, for in addition to shielding the 8th and 15th, some went along to defend the RAF's Lancasters which poured 11 tonners on the bridges. Some enemy air opposition was met but no passes were made at the heavies and 8th fighters KO'd 13 in the air and shot up nine more in strafing attacks on fields in central Germany.

On March 24th the 44th, leading the 14th Combat Wing, launched 27 aircraft on a mission to drop supplies to air-borne troops that landed on the far side of the Rhine River, near Wesel, Germany. The ground troops assignment was to establish a bridgehead that was essential for Allied troops to cross the river and then move into the north German plain. Our ships were carrying 60 tons of critically needed supplies for the troopers who had been dropped earlier in the day. The crews were carefully briefed to drop supplies on previously pinpointed positions. The drop was to be made from an altitude of 100-to-200 feet. The turn from the drop zone was to begin immediately after the drop. This would minimize their time over enemy lines. The turn was estimated to take 15 minutes.

On the chalk board the mission looked like a milk run. However, almost immediately after the drop the B-24's began to sustain hits from every type of weapon the Germans had in the field. The aircraft were especially susceptible when their bellies were exposed as they were making tight turns to get back to the Rhine.

Will Lundy's works indicate:

Sgt. Diaz was flying as left waist gunner on Lt. Pyle's aircraft, #535, Bar O. The supplies were dropped at 1314 hours at approximately 300 feet. Sgt. Diaz was standing between the open ball turret well and the bomb bay, facing the rear of the ship. He was hauling in the static lines which had been attached to the parachute-packed supplies. Sgt. Diaz was wearing a chest type parachute at the time and it is unknown in what manner, but his parachute was spilled and went out the open ball turret well. The force of the air in the open chute pulled him down into the well

and out of the plane. The Germans later reported him as dead.

We also lost Lt. Chandler's crew. He was in Aircraft #314, Bar R, *Southern Comfort III*. They were flying the number three position in the second squadron. The left wing of this craft was seen to drop down and the ship began to lose altitude. The wing tip touched the ground and the plane bounced back into the air momentarily and then nosed into the field and exploded.

Louis DeBlasio was with Chandler. Deblasio recalls:

This was the seventh mission for our entire crew. Our top turret gunner, Nedder had a habit of getting air sick while flying. On the morning of the supply run, Nedder was late getting down to our assigned ship, the bright and shiny *Southern Comfort III*. He had been with the Flight Surgeon obtaining airsickness pills. We had already loaded the upper, nose and tail turrets. We were not carrying waist guns and the Sperry Gun sights had been removed. During the briefing we were told not to fire any guns since there were paratroopers in the area. We were also told that once we made the drop, we were on our own and could head back to England by any course we wanted. There would be no formation.

They had also removed the ball turret. The supplies were to be pushed out of the of the ball turret opening as well as the bomb bay.

There was an air of excitement amongst us because of the type of mission we had been briefed for. We had also been informed that it was a "milk run". We might not even get credit for a mission.

When the ground armorer came around with "flak suits" a lot of the crews weren't taking them. I made certain that I got one for each member of our crew. However, my own crew did not feel they were required and I deposited them in the waist of the ship.

What was different about this mission was that after takeoff we were to cross the channel at about 1,000 feet. At the coast of France we were to start our descent to 500 feet. Our briefed course took us across Cologne, Germany, where we were fired upon by guns located in a church steeple. As briefed, we did not return the fire.



As we approached the Rhine River and the drop zone, the men in the waist of the ship prepared to push out the supplies. Robert Vance took his position on the left waist window and I was on the right one. Thomas Clark was by the bulkhead. He would be pushing his bundle out of the rear section of the bomb bay.

Near Wesel we could see Allied gliders that were smashed in the fields. We could also see all of the parachutes on the ground where they had been abandoned by the landing paratroopers.

By now we had dropped to 300 feet and the bailout bell rang. That was the signal to push our bundles out.

After the drop I looked out the waist window and saw a crew member from one of the ships ahead of us hit the ground. He had accidentally gotten tangled in the parachute harness of one of the bundles as he pushed it out and was dragged from the plane.

Immediately after the drop, we were chattering on the intercom system and everyone was saying, "Let's get the hell out of here".

Just as we were banking to leave the area, we were hit. The whole ship seemed to stall in mid-air and shudder. Flames were coming into the waist section from the bomb bay. I tried calling the flight deck, but the intercom system was dead. I hollered to Vance and Clark, "We've had it.".

Immediately Vance and I got into the "ditching position". Clark braced himself against the right side of the bulkhead. The plane pancaked into the ground, bounced up and crashed on the second impact. It must have split in two in the bulkhead area. Both Vance and I were wearing our flak suits at the time of the crash. We were also wearing our sheepskin flying suits and boots. These tended to protect us from more injuries than we received.

Both Vance and I managed to crawl out of the wreckage moments before she blew up. Everything around us was burning and exploding. Even the little ammunition we had was exploding. I could hear Vance saying, "Pray Lou, Pray Lou". My reply was, "Let's get the hell away from here and then worry about praying".

We crashed in a cornfield. On the far end we could see a wagon which we managed to crawl under. I bandaged Vance's head which was bleeding profusely from a deep gash in his skull. He tied a bandage over my left eye which was also bleeding badly. We remained hidden for about 20 minutes and then saw civilians looking for us.

Later we found that a German Field Artillery unit was concealed in the a small nearby woods. Their gunners saw us crawl out of the wreckage. However, fearing the P-47's that were strafing the area, they did not attempt to apprehend us.

Vance and I watched the approaching civilians. Vance was incoherent due to the head wound. I was trying to get my pistol out of the holster. At the time I thought my left arm was broken. My parachute harness was over my weapon and I needed two hands to unbuckle the harness. I tried to get Vance to assist me. I never got it unfastened.

When the civilians found us they tried to talk to us, but neither Vance nor I understood German. They thought that we were Canadians. They turned us over to the German soldiers that were in the woods. One of them could speak a little English and we managed to get some first aid.

Also captured with us was a P-47 pilot whose plane had crashed in the next field. He had managed to bail out, but had a badly injured leg. We remained hidden in the woods that day and travelled only at night. The only mode of transportation was a horse and wagon. Very few gasoline driven vehicles were to be seen. If you saw one, it would most often be pulling another vehicle.

We eventually arrived in a town called Ahrlen. It had six hospitals that were full of Germans. The doctors changed our bandages. There was nothing they could do about the numerous contusions that we had sustained in the plane crash. At this point we could hardly walk.

On the eighth day of our capture, while lying in the hospital, we heard this rumbling noise. We didn't know what it was, but the Germans recognized it as Tiger Tanks. About the same time there seemed to be a lot of activity by the hospital personnel. We saw the German Chaplain collecting, from the German wounded, the weapons which they still had.

As the rumbling got louder, the P-47 pilot, Vance, and I discussed whether we should try to walk out of the hospital. We decided to give it a try. Sure enough, soon after our departure, an American Jeep from the 2nd Armored Division pulled up. It seems that they had declared this to be an "Open City" to protect the wounded in the hospitals.

Shortly thereafter we were transported to an American Field Hospital to be treated. We also got our first decent meal in eight days.

After viewing the moving picture film that Harvell took of our plane crashing and exploding, I realize that it was certainly a miracle that Vance and I survived.

With Lt. Max E. Chandler (KIA) were Flight Officer Hugh X. O'Donnell (KIA) and Lt. Robert T. Dantzler (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Thomas H. Cordes (KIA), Sarkice (Sarkis) T. Nedder (KIA), Eugene L. Elliott (KIA), Louis J. DeBlasio (POW), Thomas W. Clark (KIA), and Robert D. Vance (POW).

Elwood Matter was on this mission. It was the second low level supply mission that he had flown. On the first one he was wounded by ground fire.

Many of the returning 44th ships had suffered battle damage. One ship had to land on one wheel. Another came in with a flat tire and an engine out. The most dramatic was two ships racing down the runway side by side after landing at the same time.

Pilots of other 506th ships that flew this mission were <sup>BAKANIC</sup> Kanic in A/C #158, Bar Q; Edkins in A/C #209, Bar W; McKenna in A/C 351, Bar P; Rockman in A/C #643, K; Ackerman in A/C #644, Bar A; Keys in A/C #682, G; and Wallace in A/C #883, Bar D. <sup>2nd MISSION ON 24th</sup> <sup>FILE 0 535</sup>

The Group sent 12 aircraft on a second mission on March 24th. The target was the airfield at Stormede. Five of those aircraft were from the 506th. They were flying low left squadron of the 14th Combat Wing. Bombing was visual and there was no enemy opposition except for a few bursts of flak at Koblenz on the way home. These few bursts did hit half the ships in the attacking force.

For a newspaper account of this days events see the next day's raid below.

On that next day, March 25th, there were 22 ships from the 44th that went to bomb the underground oil storage facility at Hitzacker, Germany. They formed two squadrons. One flew high right on the 491st, which was leading the Wing. The other flew high right on the 392nd. Heavy cloud formations, that reached 22,000 feet, compelled a course change before reaching the continent. The weather cleared and the target was attacked visually. Bombing results were excellent. Flak was encountered in the target area and along the route. Fighter support was excellent. Lt. Smith led the second squadron. It is likely that the William Edkins crew was on this mission. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

#### HELPED ALLIED PARATROOPS

Having culminated its role in the Rhine crossing with blazing bomber and fighter sweeps up and down enemy territory, activities of the 8th Air Force fell off sharply yesterday as approximately 250 Liberators and 250 Mustangs and Thunderbolts attacked three underground oil storage depots near Brunswick and Hamburg.

But on Saturday, the 8th put together a mighty procession of bombers and fighters which flew 3,000 sorties in cooperation with the troops streaming across the river. The bombers, which had been devastating enemy airfields east of the Rhine for three days, plastered 16 more and dropped weapons and supplies in a daring low-level operation to paratroops immediately after they landed.

From dawn to dusk Thunderbolts and Mustangs patrolled the battle area, riddling troop concentrations, supply columns, rail yards and airfields. Only 66 Nazi fighters were met, an indication of the results of the bombers' relentless attacks on Luftwaffe fields, and 53 of these were shot down. The 8th lost 22 bombers and four fighters during the day.

Liberators which dropped supplies to the air-borne troops bore the brunt of the losses--20 out of approximately 240 which followed directly behind transports and gliders and dropped the sky-fighters some 600 tons of weapons and medical supplies from 100 feet. The Libs had to battle through an intense storm of 20-mm antiaircraft, machine-gun and small weapons fire.

The massive operation of the 8th was split three ways.

Early in the morning, around 1,050 Forts and Libs hit 12 airfields east of the Rhine. This was followed by the mission supporting the air-borne troops. Then late in the afternoon 450 heavies struck four additional fields in the Reich, raising to 25 the total of airdromes hit by the 8th in its fierce attack on Nazi fighter bases.

At day's end the German lines were a shambles, supply lines wrecked, rails torn and twisted, airfields gutted and cratered. Long columns of enemy convoys were set aflame and riddled by fighters. An entire motorized infantry battalion was battered and routed by Mustang pilots who caught the unit as it roared along a highway near Cologne.

On March 26th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I'll bet that you can't guess what I had to eat this noon. I went with one of my boys on a run today and he stopped at a little English cottage to pick up his laundry. I was sitting in the truck waiting when the door opened. Mrs. Godfry (the laundry lady) handed me a homemade piece of custard pie. It really tasted good.

He (the Sgt.) really has that town sewed up. The lady that runs the pub saves him a drink of Scotch (almost impossible to get over here) and the best of ale every week. (Note: This was probably Sgt. Lillard.)

Fred Marzolph remembers:

I always felt safe when we had Ernie Babek aboard at our waist guns. He could always be relied upon to spot trouble. I was usually resting on the flak mats on the floor until we left England. I became the other waist gunner after they removed the ball turrets. Whenever we were hit by fighters I had to avoid him as much as the enemy fighters. He was big and strong and would take whatever was in his way when he swung a waist gun.

Thirty-three of the Group's aircraft hit the submarine pens at Wilhelmshafen, Germany, on March 30th. They flew second group in the Wing which was leading the Division. The lead group bombed visually with excellent results for all squadrons except the high right. That squadron could not see its target and had to resort to H2X. They overshot their

target. Flak was moderate and inaccurate. Fighter support was excellent. Captain Clements led the Group. Clements flew A/C #644 with his usual crew except for Lts. Richard R. Pedersen, James H. Stevens, and Murray G. Margolies. Their bombs were away at 1330 hours from an altitude of 22,500 feet. There were no enemy aircraft in the area.

On that day Ray Marner wrote:

It is getting hard for us to bomb now. They can't keep track of the bomb line. (Note: In order to avoid bombing our troops there was an area near the known location of our troops that was not to be bombed.)

On the last day of the month, March 31st, we struck Brunswick, Germany. There were 33 ships from the 44th to lead the 14th Combat Wing. Dense clouds covered the primary target, the Hoya Ammunition storage depot. The secondary, the marshalling yards, was hit using H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and inaccurate. Fighter support was good. Lt. Smith led the Squadron.

During the month the following personnel received promotions not previously mentioned: From 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. Virgil J. Scherzberg, Henry Faingeblat, and William M. Smith; From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt. Jesus Martinez.

The following named personnel were added to the Squadron duty roster: Lt. Leonard G. Pyle (and crew) and Lt. Elmo C. Trudeau; Major McAtee and PFC J. W. Allen returned from sick quarters.

The following named personnel were either permanently or temporarily removed from the duty roster: Ten enlisted men were transferred to the 12th Reinforcement Depot for Infantry training; Lt. Thomas P. Williams transferred to the 68th Bomb Squadron; Lt. Holcomb assigned to the 70th Reinforcement Depot; Captain Wynes and Lt. Edkins to sick quarters; Lt. Jarvis and crew to rest home; Lt. Paul Betz and S/Sgt. William H. Peiffer on leave.

During the month of March Norm Kiefer mentioned the following in his letters to his wife:

"I haven't made any decisions on the subject of staying in the Army after the war. I will wait and see what they offer me and what chances I have."..."Do you know what I am going to eat before I go to bed? That is if it is

ready! Some Jello! I fixed a package of it an hour or two ago and have it on the window sill now."..."No I have never heard the Rum and Coca-cola song. I am afraid that we are a little bit behind the rest of the world in song hits. It should be over here before very long."..."I am sorry that you are disappointed about not receiving flowers for Christmas. We can't send them any more. Don't ask me why, I can't guess!"..."No, I have not heard from Gordon Horton for a number of months. The last I heard he was still in Africa."

On April 1st the author wrote:

Do you remember the last Easter we were together? That was way back in 1942. We were in St. Louis. That morning Marie (Norm's sister) found her bunny and candies in the big chair. I wonder if she found any this year. She is a pretty big girl by now and may have learned a little more about those things. That will spoil Easter and Christmas for me. I always got a big kick out of watching the kids.

Today has been the same as any other day for me, except that I wore my blouse to work and tried to make it seem different. Oh yes, we had a high mass instead of the usual low one:

A newspaper article that Charles Jones kept summarized our March activities:

#### MARCH RECORD MONTH FOR 8TH

Heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force were idle yesterday after rounding out their greatest month of the war on Saturday, when more than 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators, protected by 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts, attacked rail, industrial and oil targets in Germany.

During March, featured by the mighty assault that helped clear the way for the Rhine crossings, the 8th unloaded 73,000 tons of bombs on the Reich, surpassing by 15,000 tons its previous heaviest month, June of last year, when its planes dented the French coast in cooperation with the invading Allied Forces.

The heavies flew more than 28,500 sorties, bettering by 2,600 the number flown during D-Day month, until now the record month. Fighters made 16,400 sorties, topped only

by June, July, and August of last year.

The record tonnage represents nearly two tons of bombs dropped every minute during the month. It took the 8th 18 months, from mid-August 1942 to mid-February 1944, to drop its first 73,000 tons on Nazi strong points.

The 8th lost 138 bombers and 99 fighters during March, or one plane lost for every 200 sent out. At the same time, 410 enemy fighters were destroyed, 250 shot down and 129 destroyed on the ground by fighters and 31 shot down by bomber gunners.

The Group dispatched 32 aircraft on a mission to attack an airdrome at Tirstrup, Denmark, on April 2nd. Adverse weather conditions over the North Sea forced the formation to return with their bombs. No sortie credit was given.

On this same day Norm Kiefer:

I'll bet that you can't guess what I had to eat this afternoon! A piece of chocolate cake! Don't you wish that you were with me? That is right, I went out with Sgt. Lillard once again.

Whenever I have anything like that happen I will tell you about it. It seems, from some of Mom's letters, that you folks wonder how these people like and treat us.

In this case the lady brought the cake from home to give to us in the pub. There were some of her neighbors there and she didn't offer any of the cake to them. They live in a little village. It seems that where the most of the Yanks are stationed is the place that they are the most welcome.

45 On April 4th the Group sent 44 aircraft on this mission to a target that was 18 miles from Hamburg. The target was an airfield at Kaltenkirchen. Major Middleton was the Command Pilot leading the 14th Combat Wing. The continent was completely covered with clouds. Meager flak was encountered, but no enemy aircraft. All twelve of the 506th ships brought back their bombs. Firman Mack's records show that he flew Deputy Group Lead on this mission. A notation shows that they encountered enemy jets. Records maintained by William Weaver indicate that the Erland Jacobson crew was also on this mission. Also, the Ellwood Matter record indicates that he was in combat on this date. Elwood was credited with



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damaging one Me-109. This enemy aircraft was reported, by bombers further back in our formation, to have crashed. The Edkins crew probably made this mission. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones may have referred to this raid:

HEAVIES ROCK KIEL FOR 2ND DAY,  
POUND HAMBURG AND AIRFIELDS

German naval installations were again plastered by 8th Air Force bombs yesterday. Roughly half of a force of some 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators swung in over Kiel to attack U-Boat yards there, while the remainder of the force hit submarine pens at Hamburg and lashed at airfields in northwest Germany.

It marked the second day in a row that Kiel had been hit and the third time in the last six days that the heavies poured it on Nazi naval bases. Two of the last six days, incidentally, were non-operational for the 8th.

(The London Daily Express reported Monday in a dispatch from Stockholm that it is believed there that the Germans in the last two months have been speeding experiments in launching V-weapons from ships and large U-boats, adding that a sub sunk off Bergen, Norway, in February, was believed to have been involved in such experiments.)

Approximately 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts escorted the heavies and met determined opposition from small numbers of enemy fighters, mostly jet propelled Me-262's, which struck at formations of Liberators. The fighters knocked down 15 Jerries, 11 of them jets, and got eight more in strafing attacks on airfields, but not before some of the Libs were tumbled from the skies.

Nine bombers and four fighters failed to return from the overall operations.

The fighters slashed at the Libs singly and in groups of four and eight. A Lib tail gunner from Minneapolis, Sgt. Calvin W. Mattsson, reported that two jets zoomed at his plane from the rear, but neither showed any ability to maneuver as he and other gunners blazed away from all parts of the ship. He reported one as a probable kill.

Glenn Hall recalls:

There was less fighter opposition on my second combat

tour. They finally took the ball turrets out of the B-24's. On one of my last missions there were fighters. An Me-262 passed us up, hitting the group ahead of us. Some P-51's chased one Me-109 into our Group. The German pilot seemed to know about the ball turrets being removed. He came in under our planes. At least six tail and waist gunners were firing on it as it climbed, stalled and with its pilot slumped over, the enemy fighter went straight down.

On April 4th Ray Marner wrote:

Lots of rumors floating around. we have to start packing our excess equipment. Don Swem and some of our other fellows are going on detached service to the continent. Rumors have it that we will move to Frankfurt.

The author recalls an incident that happened when they started to pack the excess equipment:

We received written orders to remove excess headsets from all aircraft. Quite a number of Aircraft Commanders had requested an extra headset at each of their ship's stations. We were now to collect those extra sets.

I was in the office in our supply room one day and heard Sgt. Lillard say, "I'm sorry Major, but I can't do that. You will have to talk to Lt. Kiefer." Another voice said, "Well where will I find this Lt. Kiefer? I'll get this thing straightened out."

Sgt. Lillard knocked on the door and asked me to come out. As I emerged from the office I heard, "Don't you damn paddle feet have anything else to do. Now this is a direct order, put those headsets back."

I turned around and went back into the office and put on my Eisenhower jacket, with ribbons, and then returned to the supply counter. I said, "Now first Major, lets settle the paddle foot comment. I notice that you are wearing the Distinguished Unit Citation ribbon with Cluster. By what right do you wear it? I wear mine because I was present on both raids. Next, I have written 8th Air Force orders to remove those headsets, therefore they will not go back. Finally, if you are thinking of a court martial for violation of your direct order, come into the office and I will call my Commanding Officer. I flew combat with him. If you are going to Group I will go with you. I

flew combat with most of the rank up there. If you would like, I will even introduce you to the General." The Major left and we heard no more.

It was about this time that they were surveying the Air Force to determine which individuals had experience in civilian life that could be used in an Army Of Occupation. These skills included Lawyers and Judges, Public Works Operation, Local Government, Transportation, etc.. Those selected would be given training and rank according to the job assigned. I was told that my experience in communications could be used.

On April 5th the marshalling yards at Plauen, Germany, were bombed. The Group had 43 ships in the air. They were leading the 2nd Air Division. Adverse weather conditions resulted in attacking the secondary target, the transportation network at Plauen, using PFF with unobserved results. Ten aircraft from the 506th participated. Lt. George F. Brown and his crew were forced down in enemy territory.

Lt. Brown was flying A/C #158, Bar Q, Tinker Belle. They were last seen about 11 miles from Frankfurt at 14,000 feet. At that time they were in radio contact with our ships and reported the #1 engine to be feathered. They were making a controlled decent through clouds with the intent of reaching an airdrome in friendly territory. He had three P-51's for escort.

Will Lundy reported in his works:

No word was heard from these men until 10 days later when Lt. Barry telephoned the 44th base and asked for a plane to come and pick them up. Barry reported that they let down through the overcast to about 3,000 feet. We were over the Ruhr pocket, and they opened up on us with machine-gun and small-arms fire. Our gunners fired back and we could see the Germans running for cover. Right after that they really opened up on us.

The engineer, Howard M. Burkhardt, indicated that they had lost one engine to mechanical failure before arriving at the target. We couldn't keep up with the formation. The #1 engine was feathered, #2 was on fire and Lt. Brown was wounded. Engines #3 and #4 were smoking and the radio operator, Travis E. Nash was killed by flak. The decision was made to try to land at Brussels, Belgium. We didn't

make it! Flak, along with small arms fire, got us about 60 miles east of Koln. I was busy transferring gasoline when the pilot rang the bailout signal. We all hit the silk.

George F. Brown and Travis E. Nash both had been hit in the head. Brown was hit just above the ear and he was never heard from after he parachuted. Travis went down with the plane. It crashed near Wipperfurth.

One man did not take to his parachute immediately however. He was Sgt. James E. Otto, who was busily strafing enemy troops from his nose turret position. This 19 year old gunner had not heard the bailout signal. When he turned around to look he was all alone in the Liberator except for the dead radio operator. He bailed out immediately. His chute opened at about 500 feet. He landed in a tree and was hanging in mid-air for about five minutes until a German soldier climbed up to cut his straps so that he could fall to the ground.

While Otto was immediately taken in hand by the German soldiers, his fellow crewmates were going through a series of adventures that kept them well occupied. Lt. Barry had three bullet holes put in his parachute by a German soldier. Sgt. Robert E. Sampley had been caught in a tree also. When he tried to unharness his parachute he lost his balance. Suddenly he found himself hanging upside down from a branch some twenty feet in the air. He was precariously suspended by one foot caught in the straps of his chute. Gingerly, he pulled himself upright and slid down the tree to momentary safety. Within thirty seconds he had his hands in the air and a number of bayoneted rifles pointed at him.

The fifth member of the group landed in the midst of a band of Hitler's Youth. Sgt. Ernest McAlpine, 19 years old and a tail gunner, reported that he had never thought much of that Nazi organization, but he owed them a debt of gratitude now. They kept a bunch of angry civilians away from me and brought me to the military authorities. These civilians were all for taking care of me right then and there.

All five crewmen eventually ended up in a large prison camp that had French and Russian slave laborers in it.

Lt. Barry reported that the Russians and French were

wonderful to us. They couldn't do enough for us. Some of the Frenchmen had been there for five years and when we arrived they broke out food they had been saving all that time. They gave us a party. They even told the Germans that they wouldn't work the next day.

On the morning of the ninth day, the first platoon of American soldiers, members of the 78th Division, arrived in camp. Two days later our men were in Paris. Shortly after that they were back in England.

Sgt. Burkhart said that the pilot, Lt. Brown had bailed out with the rest of the crew, but no one saw him again. No other information has been found to clear up the mystery of what happened to him. He eventually was determined to have been killed in action. It is possible that he was killed while parachuting, or was killed by civilians or soldiers while trying to avoid capture or even died from his head wound.

The other two crew members, copilot Flowers and navigator Thomas, also returned to military control--Flowers on the 18th and Thomas on the 14th.

Flying with Lt. George F. Brown Jr. (KIA) were Lts. Harl N. Flowers (Returned) and James J. Barry Jr. (Returned). Also, Flight Officer Robert S. Thomas (Returned). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James E. Otto (Returned), Howard M. Burkhart (Returned), Travis E. Nash (KIA), Robert E. Sampley (Returned), and Earnest E. McAlpine (Returned).

Elwood Matter flew this mission.

On April 6th the oil storage facility at Stassfurt, Germany, was briefed. However, weather conditions forced the bombing of the secondary target at Halle. It was bombed using H2X with unobserved results. Captain Wynes led the Wing. Five of our aircraft received sortie credit.

The author wrote to his wife:

Do you know what I bought today? An Alarm Clock!!! For the first time in more than three years they shipped in some clocks to this field. All six of them! I waited in line for more than three-quarters of an hour. It is mostly made of cardboard, but it ticks and rings and that is the most important thing.

Twenty-two aircraft from the 44th were briefed to bomb the Krummel dynamite works on April 7th. While over Krummel the lead aircraft experienced a bomb rack problem that resulted in visually bombing the secondary target, the railway center at Newmunster, with excellent results. The high right squadron bombed the primary target, the dynamite factory. The target was covered by bomb smoke which resulted in the poor performance. Enemy aircraft were encountered. Lt. Balanic aborted. According to records maintained by Elwood Matter, he was on this mission. That record shows the target to be Duneburg, Germany.

On April 8th the Group furnished eight aircraft to fly high right squadron in the "B" group for an attack on the Ordnance Depot at Bayreuth, Germany. The visual bombing provided excellent results. There was no enemy opposition. Three 506th crews received credit for a raid.

Once again, Elwood Matter appears to have been in combat for the second day in a row.

On April 8th the author wrote:

Today I shipped a box full of junk to you. I will try to remember what all was in it. There was my Distinguished Flying Cross and a lot of Stars and Clusters. Two pairs of wings and a watch. You will find a pencil clip, two metal buttons and a tiny round piece of metal with a glass cover. Keep these pieces separate and a little distance apart. Now don't ask questions, just wait and I will show you some day. (Note: These were all compasses from my Escape Kits) There are some bars and a tin can with pieces of metal in it. (Note: These were the pieces of shrapnel that was removed from Coldiron on the May 14, 1943, raid on Kiel. The can and the shrapnel are now a part of the Ellsworth Museum collection.) Also there is a couple of necklaces, some earrings, a ring, and a little straw doll. (Note: The straw doll was purchased in South America and was kept on the aircraft wall over the gun or radio operator station when I was flying. At this moment the doll is hanging over the computer.) Also, there are two Flying Eight Ball insignia. There are three pocket folders with pictures and money from the various places that I have been. That is all that I can remember. I still have more that I will send later on.

Captain Firman B. Mack led the Group to the airfield at Leipheim, Germany, on April 9th. There were 28 Group

aircraft that participated in bombing the target 11 miles from Ulm. Both the Lead and Deputy Lead of the high right squadron aborted, but all remaining aircraft bombed by squadron. Bombing was visual with excellent results. There was no opposition. Six of the 506th crews were credited with a raid.

Parchim, Germany, was the target selected for the next day, April 10th. There were 33 ships from the 44th leading the Wing to the airfield which is located 25 miles southeast of Schwerin. Bombing was visual, by squadron. The lead and high right squadrons had excellent results. The bombardier in the lead aircraft for the low left squadron cocked the trigger on his bomb sight while making a preliminary run. When the lines crossed, the bombs were away and fell seven miles short of the target. There was no enemy opposition. Sortie credit was given to eight of our crews. The Erland Jacobson crew was on this raid according to records maintained by William Weaver.

On April 10th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Jack (Edwards) was here yesterday. Colonel McAtee and I took a flight to Paris and when we returned Jack was waiting for us. We took him home last night. He still wants to come back to the Group.

As the author recalls it was on this flight to Paris that I blasted the Paris control tower with our radio transmission.:

Once again, I was flying as radio operator/engineer. When it came time to contact the Paris tower our command radio was out. Since the Germans did have some B-24's that could be flown, we did not want to take the chance of being shot at because we did not contact the tower. I lowered the trailing wire antenna and tuned in the tower. As close as we were, any transmission was bound to be on the high volume side. When McAtee spoke into the microphone his words apparently lifted the headsets off the operators heads. When we were parked, a Jeep approached with a 2nd Lt. He wanted to talk with the radio operator. He was rather surprised to find that the "radio operator" outranked him. The chewing out that he had intended to give ended up with a, "Please don't do that again."

Another good sized raid, 40 aircraft, was mounted on April 11th when the 44th went to the marshalling yards at

Neumarket, Germany. The bomb run was visual. Bombing results for the high right squadron were short because of a malfunction in the telescope motor on the bomb sight. The low left squadron salvoed their bombs on a second run when the bombs would not drop electrically on the first run. There was no enemy opposition. Lt. Acker led the eleven Squadron ships that participated. This mission was flown by the Erland Jacobson crew according to the William Weaver record.

On this date Ray Marner recorded:

President Roosevelt died today.

Norm Kiefer wrote:

I must be getting very hard to get along with. Why? Well, I had another scrap with a certain Captain today. It seemed that he had been challenged to a ball game. During the noon hour he came to the supply room and told the biggest share of my men that he wanted them to play ball in the afternoon.

When I got back and they were gone, I got on the phone and asked him if the war was over. If so, I hadn't heard about it. He then told me about the challenge. I retorted that I understood that the Germans were the real challenge. He then decided that he only wanted enough men to play the ball game. I contended that if we were going to give seven men the afternoon off to play ball, we should give the rest of the men off to watch the game or do as they wanted. Well, he still wanted the men and asked me to also play. I refused on the grounds that I had worked all night and still hadn't been to bed. If it was going to be declared a Holiday, I was going to bed. The result was that he got his men, the rest of the men were free and I went to bed.

On April 14th the Group sent 33 aircraft on a mission to attack a pocket of Nazi soldiers that have been isolated at the Gironde Estuary; near Bordeaux, France. These pockets have refused to surrender and have spent their time building defenses in the area using supplies brought to them by submarines and air lifts. As these sources of supplies were cut off, the Germans began to raid neighboring villages. Our ships were second in the Wing bomber stream. However, they assumed the lead at the Division assembly line. Our drop point was at Fort De Royan. The 1,000 and 2,000-pound bombs



were dropped with excellent results. Seven of our crews received sortie credit.

The William Weaver record shows that he flew a mission on April 13th. I could find no reference to a raid on that date. Therefore, I have assumed that the raid was actually on the 14th.

On April 14th Ray Warner wrote:

I got a letter from Copain. He's in Germany and seems to like it. (Note: Copain was one of our enlisted men that transferred to the infantry.)

On April 15th, for the second day in a row, the Royan area was attacked. The Group sent 33 aircraft on this second visit. This time they were carrying Napalm Jelly bombs that were being used for the first time in this theater. The first three squadrons, of ten aircraft, were carrying Napalm in wing tip fuel tanks, used on our fighters. The fourth squadron, consisting of four ships, dropped incendiary bombs. Two squadrons could not pick up their aiming point on target #7 because of smoke. As an alternative, they dropped on target #1 which had not been hit. They achieved good results. The remaining ships dropped on target #7 with a pattern in the briefed area. Bombing results were rated as good. Flak was meager. Captain Clements led the Group. Eight ships from the 506th were in the formation.

Clements was flying in aircraft #322, D. In addition to his regular crew, he had Lt. Stanley Prawdzik, Capt. J. M. Smith and Major Vaughn with him.

Other 506th crews that took part in this raid were Jacobson in A/C #351, Bar P; Edkins in A/C #500, Bar S; Parrish in A/C #535, O; Bielinski in A/C #682, Bar G; McKenna; Jarvis in A/C #691, Bar F, and Thorne in A/C #748, Bar J.

Charles Jones kept a newspaper article regarding this raid:

HEAVIES THROW  
FIRE TO FREE  
BORDEAUX

Using a new type of fire bomb for the first time, as well as thousands of tons of high explosives, 8th Air Force Fortresses and Liberators flew more than 2,450 sorties Saturday and Sunday in the drive to wipe out

German pockets of resistance in the Gironde area and free the big French port of Bordeaux.

Many of the 1,300 bombers taking part in yesterday's clear weather assault were loaded with tanks which exploded on impact, igniting incendiary material and splashing the flaming contents over an area of approximately 60 square yards.

Tanks containing more than 460,000 gallons of this liquid were showered on the target areas in the vicinity of Royan on the east side of the Gironde estuary in an assault coordinated with movements of French ground forces.

In addition to the new fire bomb, more than six thousand 100-lb. incendiaries were dropped in the same areas. Large coastal guns on both sides of the estuary were attacked with nearly a thousand 1,000-lb. and 2,000-lb. high explosive bombs.

There was no enemy air opposition and, as in Saturday's mission, in which 1,150 B-17's and B-24's struck at defended areas with about 3,500 tons of demolition bombs; the bombers were unescorted.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

I was on briefing duty for this raid. During the preparation of briefing material, I noted a statement that the Napalm would not only burn anything that it touched, but would also burn the oxygen out of the air. It was expected that all personnel in the area would suffocate even if they were not touched by the inflammable material.

On April 15th Ray Warner wrote:

Colonel Smith is now Group Commanding Officer. Colonel Snively went to 14th Wing.

Colonel McAtee was the Command Pilot on a mission to Rosenheim, Germany, on April 16th. The Group sent 33 aircraft to lead the 14th Combat Wing on this raid. Weather ships reported the primary and secondary targets were covered. Our formation then struck the marshalling yards at Landshut. A visual run was attempted, but our lead and high right squadrons were cut off by B-17's and had to abandon their run and hold their bombs. The first squadron salvoed

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their bombs. The second squadron jettisoned their bombs. The low left squadron had sufficient time to move their aiming point and bombed visually with excellent results. Flak was moderate and accurate. Eight ships from the 506th received credit for a mission.

Crews from the 506th that made this mission included Wallace in A/C #209, Bar W; Friedel in A/C #351, Bar P; Mosher in A/C #643, Bar K; Thorne in A/C #682, Bar G; Keys in A/C #691, Bar F; and Scherzberg in A/C #748, Bar J.

Softball practice was the most dangerous mission carried out on April 17th.

The Group sent 30 ships, leading the 14th Combat Wing and the 2nd Air Division, on a mission to Passau, Germany on April 18th. The primary target was covered with clouds so the secondary, the marshalling yards, was hit with visual bombing by squadrons. The bombing pattern was excellent and on target. There was no enemy opposition. Captain Clements was Deputy Group Lead. Clements was flying aircraft #322, D. In addition to his regular crew he had Flight Officer Joseph M. Dudek, Lt. C. L. ~~Frimstad~~, and Major C. Hughes with him.

Other 506 crews that took part in this raid were Pyle in A/C #209, Bar W; Parrish in A/C #351, Bar P; Cunningham in A/C #500 Bar S; Jacobson in A/C #643, Bar K; Bielinski in A/C #682, Bar G; Jarvis in A/C #691, Bar F; and Edkins in A/C #748, Bar J.

A newspaper article that was kept by Charles Jones read:

#### HEAVIES BOMB RAIL TARGETS

While fighters of the 8th Air Force had a lean day in continuing their drive on Nazi airfields--early reports last night showed only one plane destroyed on the ground--more than 750 Fortresses and Liberators again swung deep into western Czechoslovakia and southern Germany yesterday to bomb marshalling yards in seven localities ahead of the advancing Third Army.

Approximately 600 Thunderbolts and Mustangs went along to cover the heavies and blast fields in the same areas. Whether the Luftwaffe had withdrawn its planes from these fields or had lost what it had in the area was not disclosed. But some enemy aircraft did appear during the

long mission and fighters shot down three.

The marshalling yards attacked, mostly in small localities, were near Prague, Pilsen, and Regensburg. Weather was generally clear.

Four bombers and one fighter are missing.

For April 18th Ray Marner reported:

McAlpine, Otto, Burkhardt, Sampley, and Lt. Barry and Flight Officer Flowers of Brown's crew came back today. Nash was killed. These fellows were POW's for 12 days and were liberated later. Flowers hid out for quite some time. They were in the Ruhr Pocket when they parachuted.

The author recalls an original 506th combat man was among those that returned about this time. Richard Tuttle, who had been shot down on October 1st, 1943, came back to the base. He was surprised not only to find me still around, but also as an officer. Richard was a rather tall boy. His height was now exaggerated by his thin condition. He had no hard feelings at that time for the Germans. He said, "They not only didn't have any food to give us; they didn't have any for themselves." I must say that he was only too happy to go with me to eat at the Combat Officers Club. He looked around and said that it was more than he was used to.

On April 19th the railroad junction at Schwandorf, Germany, was briefed. However, the mission was scrubbed before takeoff.

On this date Ray Marner wrote:

Vance of Chandler's crew came back. He and DeBlasio were hurt. The rest of the crew was killed. They crashed and exploded.

The Group dispatched 30 aircraft on a raid to Irlaching (Schwandorf), Germany, on April 20th. At the Initial Point the Group assumed the lead. The railroad junction was hit with visual bombing. Bombing results were excellent. There was no enemy opposition. Captain Burns led the Squadron.

Flying for the 506th on this date were Wallace in A/C #209, Bar W; Bakanic in A/C #351, Bar P; Bielinski in A/C #500, Bar S; Mosher in A/C #643, Bar K; Burns in A/C #644, Bar A; Friedel in A/C #682, Bar G; Keys in A/C #691, Bar F; and

Scharzberg in A/C #748, Bar J.

On April 20th Ray Marner wrote:

Danny Bitzel came back here on furlough. He is stationed in Brussels and Paris. He has a good deal.

On April 21st softball practice was top priority. The Squadron's first game is scheduled for May 12th against the 12th Communications Section.

On April 22, 23, and 24 there were no missions.

The next time we were in combat was April 25th. There were 30 Group aircraft attacking the marshalling yards at Hallein, Germany. Bombing was visual with good results. Flak was moderate and accurate from Bertsgaden and Saltzburg. Seven 506th crews were credited with a mission. The Firman Mack record shows that he flew Deputy Group Lead on this date. This was his 30th mission and the completion of a tour for this crew. By this time, Wayne H. Dickerson had replaced Clarence Fuss and Wendell C. Swartz replaced Jack L. Addis. Major Hurley may have been aboard the ship with Mack.

This also proved to be the last combat mission that the Group was to fly.

Other 506th crews that flew this last mission were Jacobson in A/C #351, Bar P; Bielinski in A/C #500, Bar S; Wallace in A/C #524, Bar L; Parrish in A/C #535, Bar O; Pyle in A/C 691, Bar F; and Thorne in A/C #748, Bar J.

For the remainder of the month Squadron personnel engaged in site cleanup, routine duties, rest, and softball practice. All personnel were in good spirits since the rumors indicated that we were going home.

About this time Ray Marner wrote:

Lou was transferred to Eccles Road. Six men were transferred to the 453rd to go home and then to the Pacific. They sent us replacements. We are having crates made here for our equipment.

During the month the following named personnel were promoted: From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt., Gerand J. Gross.

Additional personnel changes included the return to the duty

roster of Lt. John J. Ryan from sick quarters.

Also, during the month the following, either permanent or temporary, deletions were made to the duty roster: To the 70th Replacement Depot, Lt. Fuss, T/Sgt. Odie D. Hill Jr., and William T. Emmart; To rest home, Lts. Burns, Hare, Jarvis, and Pedersen (and crews); To temporary duty at Highgate, Lt. Betz; and to leave, Lts. William E. Laughlin, Paul Betz and S/Sgt. William H. Peiffer.

During the month of April Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

"Did I tell you that Father Harshaw has gone home? His mother was pretty sick and he obtained leave to return."..."Oh yes, did I tell you that I heard the Rum And Coca-cola song the other night? I really didn't think much of it. Remember, you asked me about it some time ago."..."Gee, it seems funny! It is now nine o'clock and it is just getting dark outside. I can hear some of the boys playing volley ball. In the morning when I wake up, it will be broad daylight once more. These days never end over here."

1 MAY

OFF WE GO  
HOME TO THE USA

Glenn Hall recalls:

Toward the end of the war we helped move, to England, an American Fighter Group that was occupying a captured Luftwaffe base in Belgium. It was a weird experience to approach a runway that had roads, trees and houses painted on it.

During the next few days Ray Marner wrote:

May 1st--"Last Wednesday the Russians and Yanks linked up. Mussolini was killed in Milan. Many more allied prisoners have been liberated. Maybe Nick (Popovich) is out by now. Looks like it will be over soon.

"We haven't flown a mission since the 20th of April. We have 342 missions now. Looks like the 8th Air Force is stood down for good.

"General Spatz says air occupation men will be based on the Continent. That means us. They are going to fly men on ground crews over our old targets in the Ruhr. I'll probably be on pass at the time."

May 2nd--"Hitler is reported as dead and Doenitz has taken over the "Jerries"."

May 7th--"A teletype came in about 9 A.M. telling of the end of the war. They broadcast it to the public this afternoon. However, these reports are unconfirmed. German radio states they surrendered. I don't feel very elated over it all. There is no celebration here."

Norm Kiefer recalls:

Early in the morning of May 7th McAtee came to me and told me to get my Class A Uniform and quickly get to the flight line. I asked him where we were going, but he would not say. When I got there I found Colonel McAtee, Colonel Middleton and Major Linck. There were no other crew members visible.

We wasted no time in getting airborne. Within ten minutes

our radio announced that all American aircraft were grounded and fields were closed. We landed at a British field near Coventry. In town we found a room for the night, but were warned that the doors would be locked at 9 P.M. That afternoon V-E Day was announced. We wandered from bar-to-bar and participated in the celebration.

There was a field hospital near town and the bars were filled with American enlisted men that were recovering from wounds. Some of them had been obtained during the battle for the Remagen Bridge. We had to pound on the hotel door when we decided to call it a night. The next morning we took a train to London. We returned to Shipdham two days later.

On May 8th Ray Marner wrote:

Today is V-E Day. Churchill and Truman announced it at 3 P.M. People are really celebrating in London and Norwich. Yesterday on the Continental trip to Germany a ship from our Division went down and 14 men were killed. Another went down today. I am kind of leery about going."

The author's youngest sister, Marie, remembers events back home on historic V-E Day:

I had been playing outside. I came into the house to find Mom crying. Before I could ask why, Dad rushed through the back door. He was home from work early. He said, "Get your duds on! We're going to a parade!" He grabbed Mom and twirled her around the kitchen. It is the first time I can recall someone laughing and crying at the same time.

We drove downtown. People were milling around in the street. They were jumping up and down, laughing, hugging and shaking hands. I remember looking up and seeing folks hanging out the windows waving flags and hands and throwing out all kinds of paper.

There was a very gala parade of which I really don't remember much. I do remember that the folks were all having fun.()

On May 10th Ray Marner wrote:

I went on a trip to the Continent today. This is the first time that I have been off the Island in two and a



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half years. I flew with Capt. Wynes in the lead ship of the Division. There were 17 men aboard our ship. We took off at 9:30 A.M., crossed the Channel to Ostend, Belgium, over Brussels, down past St. Vith, where the Germans broke through in December 1944, over part of Luxembourg, down the Rhine River to Ludwigshafen and Mannheim. We then went over to Aschaffenburg and Frankfurt. Then we went up to Koblenz at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle. Then we went up to Bonn and Cologne. The Cathedral is practically the only building left standing in Cologne. All these cities are like ghost towns. We then went up to Dusseldorf where I didn't see one building that wasn't bombed out. All the bridges on the Rhine were bombed out. That included the bridge at Remagen. We saw three prison camps. One must have been 10 miles long and about three miles wide. Every inch was taken up by prisoners. I believe I saw at least a million men today. From Dusseldorf we went over the flooded parts of Holland and over Rotterdam and The Hague. Then it was back across the Channel to Shipdham. We landed at 3:30 P.M. It was a wonderful trip.

William Hahn recalls that his crew was one of those that took ground personnel on the "trolley runs".

For May 11th Ray Warner reported:

Edkins and crew cracked up near Watton today. All 6 men were injured pretty badly and the ship was demolished.

In the June 1984 issue of the *Second Air Division Journal* James L. Whittle Jr. reported:

After V-E Day the Group began making making training flights that were required by Air Transport Command prior to making over-water flights.

On one such flight, on which I went along as the copilot with my original crew, we spent 4 or 5 hours accomplishing those requirements. We were returning to Shipdham from a flight to south England when it was decided that practicing some emergency procedures would help fulfill part of our requirements. One of the drills was to practice feathering procedure to test the pilot's reaction to engine failure and the subsequent change in flying characteristics. We were probably at 4,000 or 5,000 feet with lots of air speed so that the loss of one engine would create no danger at all. One outboard engine was

feathered with nothing more than a slight drop in air speed.

As soon as that simulated emergency was under control, the opposite outboard engine was feathered. Once again the simulated emergency was handled with no difficulty because of the experience of the pilot and the higher than normal air speed we were achieving during our descent.

From that point on, things get a little vague. I believe that a pretense was made of feathering one of the remaining engines. In fact, I think that the feathering button was depressed without the intention of actually feathering it.

Everything happened very quickly and unexpectedly. When the feathering button was pulled out, which should have either stopped the feathering and returned it to normal or if it had actually feathered, it should have immediately unfeathered. Neither of those things happened. We reached for the outboard buttons to unfeather them. Neither of those worked either. After a few futile attempts to unfeather the engines, our attention turned to finding the nearest airfield.

From the copilot's seat I remember seeing an airfield off our right wing. I took over the controls since I was in the best position to see the field. We were rapidly losing both air speed and altitude and in a matter of minutes we would be on the ground, air field or not.

The events happened so fast that there was no time to alert the three airmen in the rear of the aircraft, nor did we even have time to broadcast a "Mayday". Fortunately our flight engineer, radio operator and one gunner, who were in the back, realized there was an emergency and took the appropriate positions for a crash landing.

We now had emergency military power on the one remaining engine. I'm certain that although we exceeded the maximum boost limit it was still a constant fight to keep from stalling.

Since the field was off our right wing, I had to make two turns into the one good engine. Although we were then lined up with the runway, it was a question of whether we would make it before our altitude and air speed ran out.

One of the last things I remember was wondering whether we would be able to top the big trees which loomed between us and the overrun. The air speed was just slightly above stalling speed and my last thought was that if I hauled back on the yoke at the very last moment I would be able to get the nose back down quickly enough to keep us from stalling.

None of us remember what happened in those last few moments, but we obviously had not gotten over the trees. My very next recollection was that we were on the ground.

Through a haze I can remember seeing our navigator trying to walk and complaining about his back. He had been standing between the pilot's and copilot's seats when we impacted and was thrown through the bullet proof glass that surrounded the cockpit.

My next hazy recollection was opening my eyes in a hospital bed and feeling as though every bone in my body was broken. Fortunately, the only broken things were a rib and a tooth. With considerable effort I turned my head enough to see that next to me was our navigator who had a broken back and was encased in plaster of paris from his neck to his hips.

The 1st pilot sustained the most severe injuries. Most of the bones in his face were shattered and he had head injuries that were life threatening. Injuries to the three airmen in the rear of the plane were limited to cuts and bruises. They did not require hospitalization.

I later found that the trees had sheered off our outer wings between #1 and #2 engines on the one side and between #3 and #4 on the other. Ruptured fuel cells had allowed gasoline to drop onto the white-hot #3 supercharger from the moment of impact till the crash crews arrived. They had to remove the 1st pilot and me from the crushed cockpit.

To this day we do not know why the props would not unfeather. Neither do we know the name of the airfield we crashed on.

On May 13th Ray Marner wrote:

Capt. Doughton gave me orders to start packing today. Looks pretty definite that we'll go home in about a month.

On that date, Norm Kiefer went on the "trolley run":

The orders indicated that we were to land at an airfield in Germany and be taken by ground transportation to Dusseldorf. Each man was to carry one day's supply of K Rations, 1 steel helmet, enlisted personnel will carry a rifle and officers a 45 pistol. Lt. Colonel Goodman G. Griffin was aboard our ship. Personnel from the 506th consisted of Capt. Ira C. McKee and Lt. Edward G. Schwarm. The enlisted personnel were August T. Goodman, John C. Jackson, Harry Steele, James F. Gibbons, Alexander J. Favero, Robert M. Iverson, Arthur W. Morris, Jacob Yerke, and Stanley S. Gornet.

During the briefing we were warned that the area that we were entering was still to be considered dangerous. We were not to fraternize with the Germans and were to remember that a few days ago they were shooting at us. In no way were we to show sympathy or a softness on our part.

We wandered around the city trying to imagine what it was like when all of this destruction rained down. The 101st Air Borne was stationed there. One of its members told us that the Germans had been ordered to turn in all guns and military knives. There was a large pile of them in front of the City Hall. We asked him how we were going to clean up the mess the city was in. He replied that we weren't, they were.

Every morning a convoy of our trucks entered the city. They proceed quickly to an area that has not been visited recently. At a pre-designated spot, they disperse and surround a number of city blocks. Everyone caught in the middle is loaded onto trucks and taken to work that day.

Projects to be worked on are selected with the objective of bringing the city back to life. An example that he used was the single water spout at which people were lined up at with pails and buckets. This was the sole source of water in the immediate area.

The order not to show any softness toward the Germans posed a problem for the four of us that stayed together. We were walking, four abreast, down the middle of a cobblestone street. Behind us we heard a woman's voice say something that we could not understand. When we turned there was a young woman on a bicycle not too far from us. She wobbled on the bike and seemed confused as

to where she was going to go to pass us. Also, we were confused and started to scatter out of her way. As she went by she lost her balance and fell. Now what were we to do? Should we help her up? As we moved toward her a nearby para-trooper shouted, "Leave her alone!" Fellow Germans helped the woman to her feet as we went on our way.

One of the para-troopers told us that he knew where we could buy some good Rhine wine. We went with him to a wine store. The owner took us down to his wine cellar where he selected some bottles which he handed to us. The para-trooper said that the bottles were a gift and that we wouldn't have to pay. We took the bottles and left with the wine merchant smiling. Back in England we discovered the reason for the free gift and smile. The wine was "green".

During the next few days Ray Marner wrote:

May 15th--"Our Squadron is supposed to be alerted. I don't know for sure. Doughton is going to 14th Wing. So are Paul and "Peaches". General Kepner has taken over the 8th Air Force. He was formerly head of the 2nd Air Division."

On May 25th--"Since May 16th we have been working day and night. We are not getting much sleep and have to take benzedrine to keep going. We have most of the Quartermaster stuff shipped out and the Medical stuff is done. CWS equipment will be out in a couple of days. We still have T.A.T. (Take Among Troops) equipment to do, not to mention, bicycles, showdowns, P.C.S. property, etc.

"We were alerted about the 17th and have until the 31st to be ready to go. We will leave around the 1st of June. All the key personnel must stay until last and go by boat. Paul, "Peaches" and Capt. Doughton aren't going to 14th Wing.

"We have three ships taking off tomorrow and the rest on Monday and Wednesday. There will be 19 altogether. Six left last Monday. There will be less than 200 of us to go by boat. Nineteen groups are going home within the next two months. We are the first to go.

"We got some men today from the 56th Fighter Group. They replaced men from here with less than three months

overseas.

"We will get two more Bronze Stars, since they split up the Germany Campaign, into the Rhine, Ardennes and Central Germany. That will make 9 Stars and I'll have 106 points. We won't get the Stars until we get home because they won't have time to enter them on the service records.

"It looks like we will dock in Boston. The ships are landing in Conn. We'll get a 30-day furlough.

"This movement is really screwed up. They have changes everyday and the teletype is about three feet long. I am about ready to tear my hair out. I haven't had a chance to shave in five days because we have been so busy.

"It is rumored that we will be in Air Transport Command back in the States on the east coast. Some groups will end up in South America and Africa."

The three ships that Ray Marner referred to were #44-50748, Bar J, to be flown by Conrad Menzel; #44-50500 to be flown by Leo S. Bielinski and #42-51351, P, to be flown by William M. Smith.

The Ray Marner diary entries continued:

On May 27th--"We got rid of 40 boxes of CWS stuff today and 20 boxes of T.A.T. material are ready to go. We are just about through. Nine of our aircraft are leaving tomorrow and the rest on Wednesday.

"It looks as if we'll leave around June 7th. Some Colonels inspected my books today and I got very good compliments. They are from U.S.S.T.A.F. They said that I have done a remarkable job.

"Major Linck told me today that he, myself and the 1st Sgt. must go to our base as soon as we dock. We have to get things set up. I won't be able to take my furlough till the rest get back. I don't know where we will be stationed."

The author has documents that show what was taking so long in preparing to go home. In many cases it wasn't just packing equipment. For example, file cabinets had to be searched for documents to be destroyed or to be sent to a central organization in England or a central organization in the

United States or to the new base in the United States or to be taken among troops or given to the individual. In each case, there was paperwork listing the documents and certifying that the appropriate action had been taken.

Ray Marner also reported

May 28th--"Our Ships didn't take off today. Valley, Wales, can't handle them now. They had a broadcast from the field today about the 44th going home. Lord Ironside spoke. It will be broadcast all over the States this Saturday and another one on the following Saturday."

In spite of this entry, there is some indication that the Jack C. Thorne crew left Shipdham on this date. With Thorne were Lts. Walter W. Wilson, Kenneth J. Schob, and Jesus Martinez. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Ben M. Samuels, George C. Economaki, Frank J. Sullivan, James E. Vaisey, George W. Lewis, and Leon Runions.

The Ray Marner entries continued:

May 29th--"I now have all of my equipment shipped out except the T.A.T., which is ready to go. However, there is plenty of work yet to be done."

May 30th--"Our ships finally left today. We have only 2 more to leave. I went to a meeting in the War Room with Major Linck. All the brass was there, including Colonel Smith. They only succeeded in confusing me. Now I know why this movement is so screwed up."

One of the combat crews that appeared to have left about this time belonged to Firman Mack. Another belonged to Hal Tyree.

When our ships left, each one had aboard not only the air crew, but also members of the ground and support crews. As the field was drained of enlisted ground personnel, those remaining found themselves learning new skills in order to get the required assignments accomplished. For example, the author learned to drive one of the big trucks that was needed to ship our radio equipment.

On the last day of the month Ray Marner told of everything being screwed up after yet another meeting. He then reported:

June 1st--"The last of the planes left today. Most of my

work is done. I worked until 2:30 A.M. again. We shouldn't have much more night work."

June 4th--"Well, we're about ready to go. We will be restricted tomorrow. I am working again tonight. We should leave here about the 7th. We are supposed to catch one of the Queen ships. I believe the *Mary* is leaving on the 8th. I got a letter from Nick (Popovich) and he's okay. I believe he is in France, but he didn't say. He should be home soon."

June 7th--"Today we were supposed to leave, but we are held up. I still think we'll go on the *Queen Mary*, which is supposed to sail the 14th. It looks as if we'll leave here around the 12th. I went to town yesterday. As long as we remain here I have plenty of work to do. All of our planes are now in the States. We have been issued new combat jackets in place of field jackets." (Note: A copy of the Movement Orders, which Norm Kiefer has, describe the jacket as "one Jacket, field, wool, OD in Lieu of Coat, wool, service, OD.")

June 10th--"We got rid of all of our T.A.T. baggage today. Also all the T.A.T. equipment. All we are doing now is waiting. We'll leave on Wednesday or Thursday. It will be a 14-hour train ride."

June 12th--"We will leave on Thursday, the 14th, and go to Greenock, Scotland."

June 14th--"We left Shipdham today and caught a train at Waxham. We traveled all night via Doncaster, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow."

June 15th--"We arrived in Greenock at 0800 hours. We detrained and got on a tugboat which brought us here to the *Queen Mary*. We get two meals a day and sleep on deck one night and below one night. There are about 17,000 men aboard. Also, there are about 400 nurses. The ship pulled out today at 5 P.M. I met Kenneth Kinsey on board. He's a sailor! He was in southern England for a year."

Norm Kiefer seems to remember we had to climb up cargo nets to reach the ship's deck.:

The first thing we were directed to do was get a room assignment and then a duty assignment. These transactions were to be accomplished by standing in two lines.



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My first line was for room assignment. I was assigned to Room A-8. Most of the other officers then got into the duty assignment line. I reasoned that if I went to the room first I could have the pick of bunks. This I did.

I picked a lower bunk immediately under a port hole. I placed my things on it and then went to get my duty assignment. When I returned the things on the bunk did not belong to me. My things had been put on one of the upper bunks. I immediately took the things on the lower bunk, placed them in the middle of the floor and then returned my belongings to the lower bunk and sat down.

Soon a Lt. entered and wanted to know what I was doing. I told him that I was reclaiming the bunk that I had first occupied. He claimed that he outranked me by time-in-grade and that he had a right to move my things. I told him that I came up from the ranks and that if he wanted to exercise his right, "Let's have at it". He didn't accept the challenge, but grumbled that I had a lot to learn back in the States. That is when I determined that I would not stay in the service.

Among the troops that were returning to the States were a number of returning prisoners of war. I went to the area where they were quartered. The only one that I knew was Richard Tuttle.

The first few days at sea were reported by Ray Warner:

June 16--"Nice day today. There is plenty of sunshine. That makes it nice on the Sun Deck. This is really a beautiful ship. The Promenade Deck is terrific. They have a mess hall over the swimming pool."

June 17th--"It is rough today. The wind is so strong you can't stand in it. We are supposed to get in the harbor on Tuesday and dock on Wednesday. We will probably go to Camp Kilmer for about one day. There is lots of publicity for this trip. This is the first boat load of only returning veterans. They say there will be lots of bands etc., in New York for us."

Norm Kiefer had a late night watch that night:

I was down in the bowels of the ship. Down there, each roll was exaggerated and seemed to also have an ending hook to it. I didn't get sick, but I probably was green.

The Ray Marner entries continued:

June 18th--"It is nice out today. Somewhat warmer! Everything is OKAY!"

June 19th--"We must be pretty close to New York. We should get off the boat tomorrow. It was really hot last night and this morning. This is something new for us."

June 20th--"We came into New York Harbor today. Everyone is on deck. Two Navy blimps, a helicopter, P-47's, launches with bands, Wacs, Waves, etc., came out to meet us. We came past the Statue of Liberty and up the Hudson. We docked at Pier 90. There were bands and crowds here also. It was a wonderful feeling! We got off the boat about 10 P.M. The Red Cross gave us milk on the pier. We got a ferry and went down to Jersey City for Camp Shanks."

The author does not remember all of the things that Ray mentioned, but he does remember the fire boats shooting their water hoses into the air. It was quite a display.

The next day, June 21st, Ray Marner told of being home:

We got into Camp Shanks and they also had a band there for us. There was a steak dinner at 4 A.M. Today we didn't do much but eat ice cream and drink milk.

Soon after this last entry in his diary, Ray Marner went home on a 30 day leave.

Norm Kiefer did not go to Camp Shanks. Instead he was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey. I don't remember any bands that were waiting for us at Fort Dix. I do remember the 4 A.M. steak dinner. The thing I remember most was the speech that followed. We were told that we would be sent on leave. We were to have a good time! When we returned we would be shipped to our new base where we were to start training on B-29's. There was an airfield waiting for us on Okinawa.

Two days after my arrival I was given a 33-day leave. Other 506th officers that were given leaves were Lts. William D. Arthur, Joseph A. Ebler and Paul Betz.

When we returned from our 30-day leave we reported back to Fort Dix, New Jersey. After a few days we were shipped by train, on July 28th, to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Personnel from the 506th that were on the train with me were Lts.

William D. Arthur, and Paul T. Betz. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Joseph M. Barth, Samuel J. LaRocca, Elmer P. Serino, Frank Orehowiskey, Clyde R. Sihris, Ralph H. Miller, John L. Miller, Roland P. Macciocche, Robert B. Hall, Edgar J. Dowd, Arthur W. Buzza, William W. Williams, Myron L. Smith, Frank Notich, George R. Murray, Miles B. Lutes, John T. Jones, Tony Yates, Sidney R. Prinkey, Andrew N. Giran, Philip J. Bellante, Robert D. Allison, Monroe E. Yoder, Robert M. Stough, Frederick C. Soloman, Vern W. Snow, William H. Peiffer, Charles C. Norris, Robert R. Duncan, James F. Boyer, William R. Bee, and Harold R. Hunter.

The 506th Bomb Squadron title was changed on August 5th, 1945, to 506th Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy). This designation was in recognition that the Squadron would be changing from the B-24 aircraft to the B-29. It's official base at this time was at Great Bend, Kansas.

After our arrival in Sioux Falls, there was nothing for us to do but play baseball and read the newspapers. Some of the officers had brought their wives with them when they reported to Sioux Falls. My wife was insistent that she was going to take a train ride to South Dakota. I told her to stay put, the town was bulging at the seams. It was almost impossible to find a room in the town.

The newspapers seemed to indicate that it would not be long before Japan surrendered. After a good deal of searching I found a single room at 810 North Duluth, in Sioux Falls. On August 24th I requested permission to live off base. Permission was granted on August 27th. I then told my wife to take her train ride.

Dorothy, my wife, arrived in Sioux Falls in the afternoon of September 1st. We immediately claimed our room and notified the base of my whereabouts. A little after 9 P.M. I received a telephone call with orders to report back to base immediately. Within hours I was on a train bound for Great Bend, Kansas. All that equipment that I had signed for back in England had to be turned over to someone else.

Many years later, while talking to Ray Warner, I learned that he too was on that train going to Great Bend. Neither of us remembered the other being at Great Bend. However, we both remembered that we were on the train when V-J Day was being celebrated.

The morning after I left Dorothy in Sioux Falls, she went out

for breakfast and then returned to her one-room home. She recalls:

There was nothing to do! Although I was alone in a strange town I decided to do some window-shopping when it was lunch time. While wandering I noticed a movie house and decided that I would take in a movie and then have dinner. The movie was about half-way over when it was interrupted with the announcement of V-J Day. Theater patrons went wild, jumping up and down, over seats, kissing, hugging and throwing things. I decided that this was no time for me to be on the streets. I quickly left and returned to my room. That is where I stayed.

Soon after V-J Day was proclaimed, the Squadron, as most of us knew it, started to break up. Our long service overseas and the number of campaigns that we had participated in produced a high number of points that allowed large numbers of our personnel to be demobilized. Equipment was turned over to a succeeding organization that had no true structure and few personnel.

While in Great Bend, in addition to passing the responsibility for the equipment that I had signed for:

I also retrieved the special box that I had packed to be shipped back to the States. It contained enemy guns and other souvenirs that I had not been able to send through the mail. I had a box built and then went to the rail office. In due time the box was delivered to my father's home. Against Mother's wishes, Dad opened the box as soon as it arrived.

The 508th detail, that had been sent to Great Bend, returned after a few days. That is when I announced that I would not be staying in the Air Force. I left Sioux Falls on Sept 23rd, 1945, for the demobilization Center at Scott Field, Ill. I was able to arrange that trip so that I was not part of a troop movement and Dorothy traveled with me.

Cecil Thompson recalls:

After V-J Day the assignments of the five B-29 groups that were located in Kansas and Nebraska came into question. Discussions/Plans for these groups were to assign them to the European Theater. Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker was the sponsor of these plans. Over time the shortage of personnel and a State Dept veto of the plans, due to pressure from Russia,

continued the question.

When we moved from training on B-17's to B-29's we were first assigned to the 489th Bomb Group. However, they were deactivating and we were reassigned to the 44th Bomb Group, 506th Squadron on September 13th, 1945.

In November, 1945, our flying was somewhat curtailed. West Pointers arrived and we were relegated to Basic Training (Air Force Infantry). Equipment was issued, including back packs, and we made flat land marches of 10 miles or more. The objective I guess was to flush out crew personnel. The resultant effect was that the 44th ceased to exist as an active group.

I do recall that during this period, three of our crew members flew some big name bands in C-47's to other B-29 bases for scheduled performances. One of them was the Woody Herman Band.

The Squadron was then moved to Smokey Hill, Kansas, on December 14th, 1945, where it remained until August 4th, 1946.

Cecil Thompson made the move to Smokey Hill. However, not long after his arrival, he was transferred out of the 506th and went to Barksdale.

The Squadron was deactivated on August 4th, 1946. It was redesignated as the 506th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) on August 20th, 1958. It was actually activated on December 1st, 1958. At that time the Squadron was located at Lake Charles, Louisiana, and the assigned aircraft was the B-47. Cecil Thompson returned to the 44th at Lake Charles, but was assigned to the 67th Squadron.

The 506th Bomb Squadron was again deactivated on June 15th, 1960.



## ORIGINAL CREWS



### McAtee crew

(Back Row, L-R) Charles W. Elledge, Others in back row unknown; (Middle Row, L-R) John W. Schliesman, Joseph R. Duncan, George E. Christensen, Stanley W. Glemboski, William J. Mears, Fredrick T. Wolf; (Front Row, L-R) James C. McAtee, Douglas B. Myers, Richard L. Schiefelbusch, Sidney W. Bank.  
(Photo-McAtee)



### Bunker crew

(L-R) Walter I. Bunker, "Pop" Strickland, William D. Middlebrooks, Richard D. Butler, Loy L. Neeper, William P. Newbold, Henry R. Swicker, Chamberlain, Gerald Mason, Mike Curtain, B. C. Martin, Gong, Hill, Unknown, Warren K. Kookan.  
(Photo-L. Neeper)

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## ORIGINAL CREWS



### Strong crew

(Top, l-r) Oliver R. Germann, Warren E. Morrison, Clarence W. Nelson, Lloyd G. Fretwell, Thomas A. Flaherty, Edger O. Hamel; (Bottom l-r) Lemuel B. Fleming, Vernon D. Haas, Lyle S. Davenport, Ursel P. Harvell, John W. Swanson. (Photo-W. Morrison)



### Graham crew

(Top, l-r) Joseph J. Young, Nathaniel H. Graham, David E. McCash, Harold J. Laudig; (Bottom, l-r) Melvin H. Davis, Norman C. Kiefer, Albert G. Kearns, John R. Edwards, Mark Morris. (Photo-N. Kiefer)



## SUCCEEDING CREWS



### Austin crew

(Top, L-R) Charles J. Warth, Dale V. Lee, Glenn C. Hickerson, Edgar L. Shaw Jr., Joseph W.B. Jett; (Bottom, L-R) Horace W. Austin, Andrew T. Fabiny, Paul S. Singer, Shelton Finder.  
(Photo-D. Lee)



### Houghtby crew

(Top, L-R) Ground Crew member, Norman Dye, L C Castro, Ground Crew Chief, Ray Houghtby, Frank Phillips, George Ramsey, Unknown; (Bottom, L-R) Unknown, Tom Cannon, Patrick Gallagher, Wayne Warren, Jimmy Lewis. (Photo-P. Gallagher)

## SUCCEEDING CREWS



### Purdy crew

(Top, L-R) Harry Brannon, Albert G. Kearns, John R. Edwards, Melvin H. Davis, Mark Morris, Norman C. Kiefer; (Bottom, L-R) Norman E. Purdy, E. B. Knight, Unknown, Richard I. Fisher.  
(Photo-N. Kiefer)



### Hruby crew

(Top, L-R) Bartley Twins, Richard H. Hruby, Edwin H. Rosenberg, Thomas L. Smith, Robert Petkoff; (Bottom, L-R) Cletus C. Clark, Evert E. Foster, Euclid F. Blanchard.  
(Photo-Hruby)

## SUCCEEDING CREWS



### Scudday crew

(Top, L-R) Bernie L. Scudday, John A. Farrell, Paul Richardson, Charles W. Hansen; (Bottom, L-R) Anthony J. Ventura, Robert P. Ries, Coyle J. Acuff, Lester D. Warren, Joseph E. Wycheck, Carl W. Tepe. (Photo-R. McCormick)



### Mendenhall crew

(Top, L-R) Herman G. Flugman, Raymond A. McCormick, Phillip J. Quirk, Max D. Mendenhall; (Bottom, L-R) Milton Bernstein, Lester G. Toothacker, Abe Hertzberg, Nick Apice, Paul M. McGee, Marshall H. Mann. (Photo-R. McCormick)

## SUCCEEDING CREWS



### Hulman crew

(Top, L-R) Clement R. Haulman, Joseph C. Kodaj, Harry H. Putnam, Joseph A. Ebler; (Bottom, L-R) Walter E. Dunlop, Glenn G. John, Myron L. Smith, James B. Toile, Dale M. Scarbrough, Alfonse A. Truono. (Photo-C. Haulman)



### Komasinski crew

(Top, L-R) Stanley Hulewicz J. Jr., Frank La Fazia, John H. McKee, Nelson E. Brott, Walter E. Bohenko, Frank N. Schaeffer; (Bottom, L-R) Bernard J. Komasinski, Winfield S. Gippert, Edgar W. Michaels, Charles H. Lain. (Photo-N. Brott)

## SUCCEEDING CREWS



### Ciesielski crew

(Top, L-R) Clarence Unger, James C. Cruae, Raliegh Turner, Sylvan Hines, Robert L. Beauchamp, Lewis M. Robinson;  
(Bottom, L-R) Bert Cheney, Raymond J. Ciesielski, Thomas H. Appert, Unknown. (Photo-L. Robinson)



### Titter crew

(Top, L-R) James M. Whitehouse, Charles A. Hersh, Milton H. Becker, Paul T. Richter, Robert A. Graham, Frank Grehowskey;  
(Bottom L-R) John Titter, Harold J. Brunn, Earnest Puglisi, Victor J. Uchanski. (Photo-F. Grehowskey)

SUCCEEDING CREWS

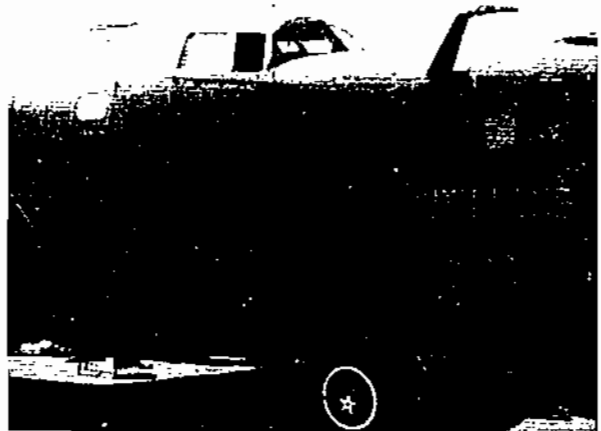


Edkin Crew (Photo-J. Whittle)

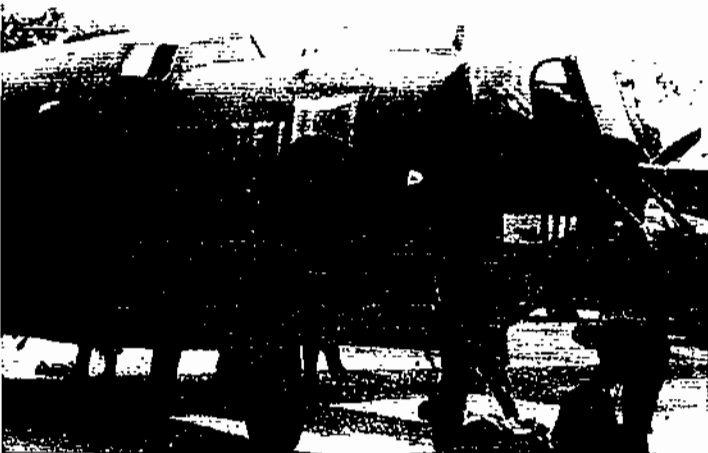


McAtee crew  
(Top, L-R) Harry Brannon, John R. Edwards, Norman C. Kiefer,  
Mark Morris; (Bottom, L-R) Albert G. Kearns, Melvin H., James  
C. McAtee. (Photo-N. Kiefer)

OUR NOSE ART

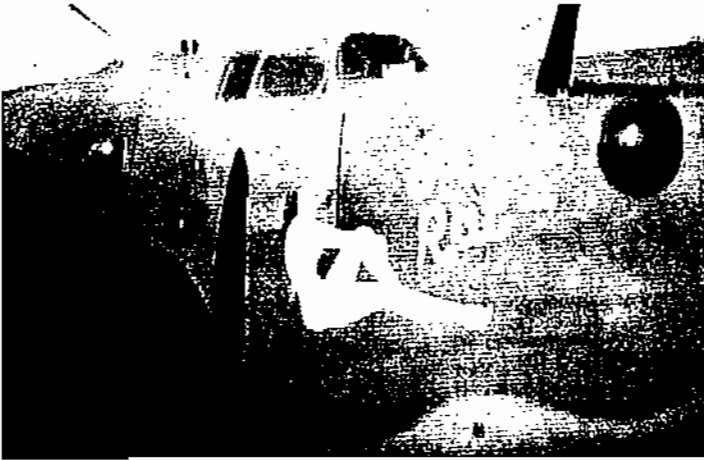
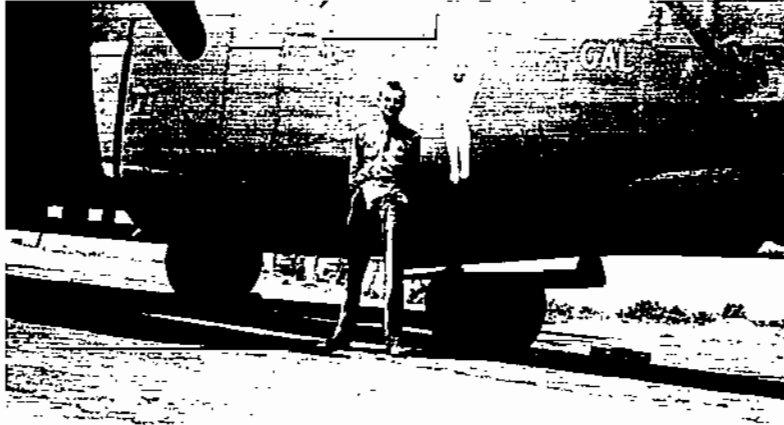


OUR NOSE ART

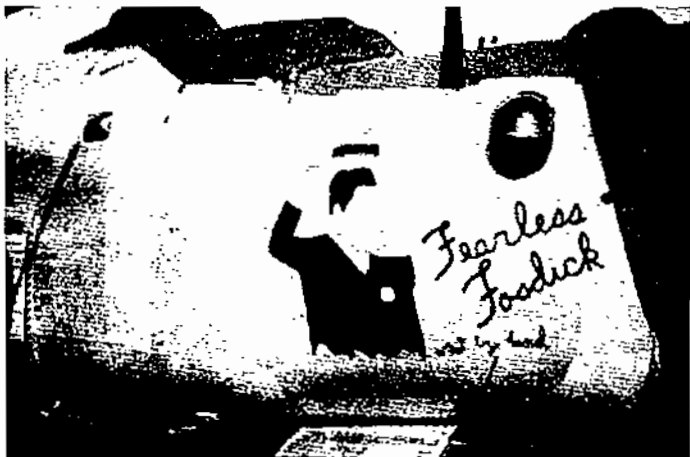




OUR NOSE ART



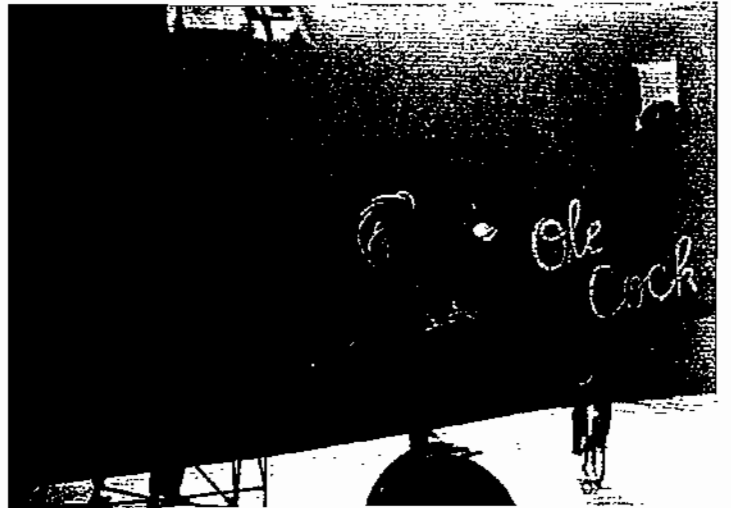
OUR NOSE ART



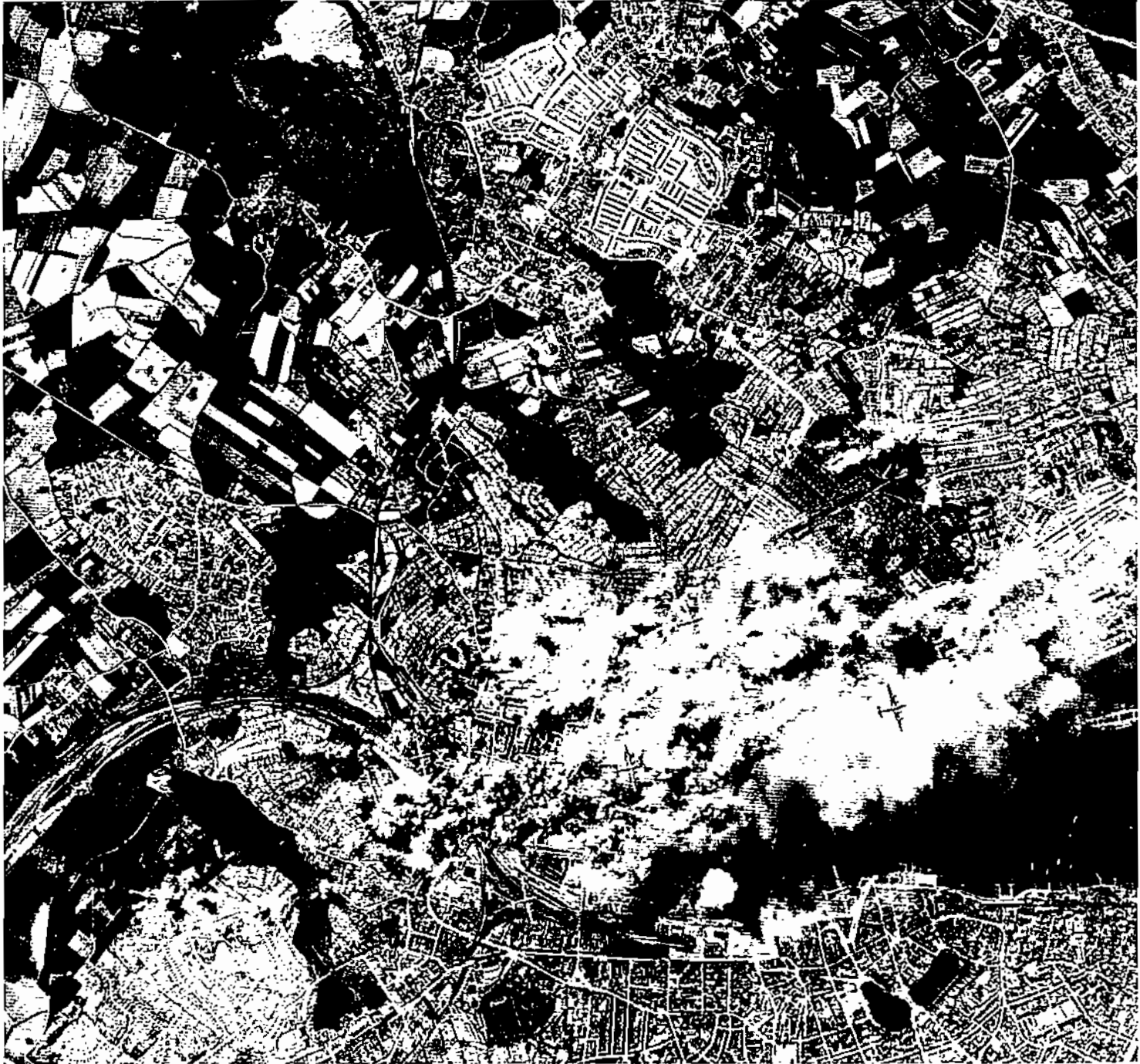
GLORY BEE



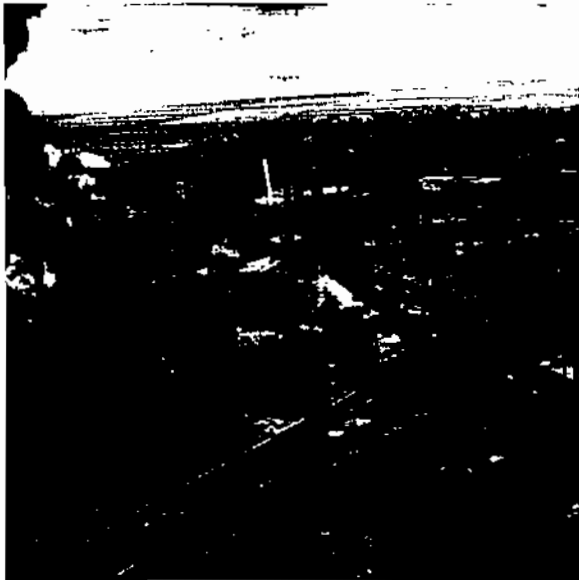
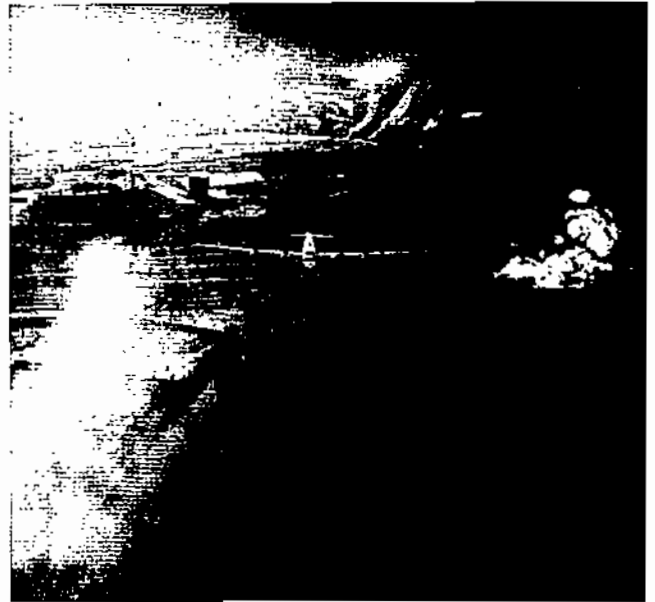
OUR NOSE ART



OUR FIRST DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION  
KIEL GERMANY, MAY 14, 1943



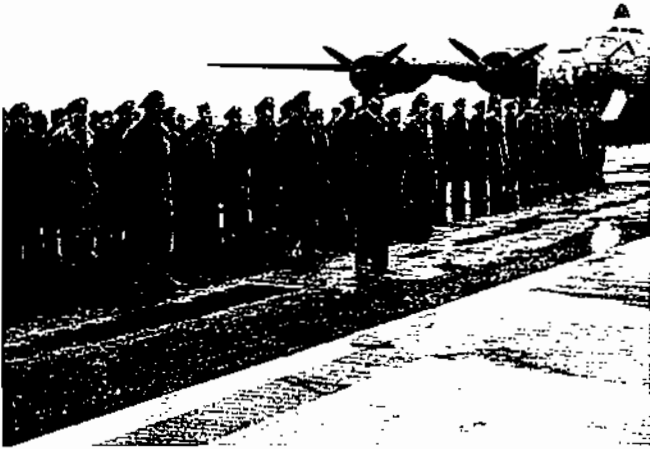
OUR SECOND DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION  
PLOESTI, RUMANIA, AUGUST 1, 1943



COLONEL JOHNSON RECEIVES CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR  
SHIPDHAM, ENGLAND, NOVEMBER 22, 1943



COLONEL JOHNSON RECEIVES CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR  
SHIPDHAM, ENGLAND, NOVEMBER 22, 1943

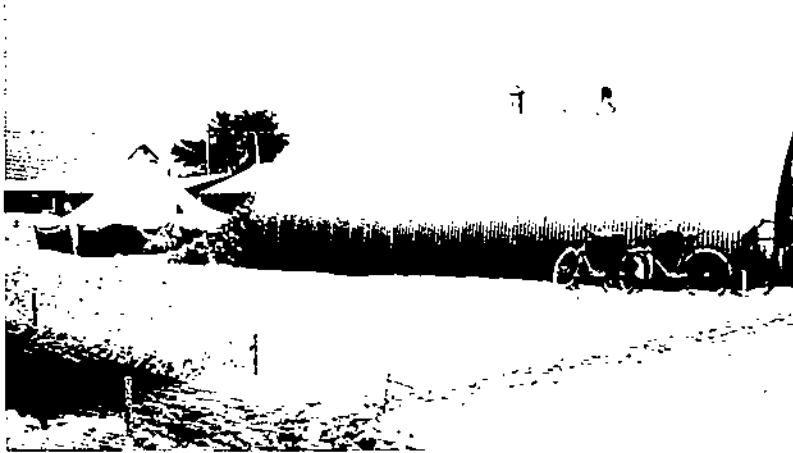
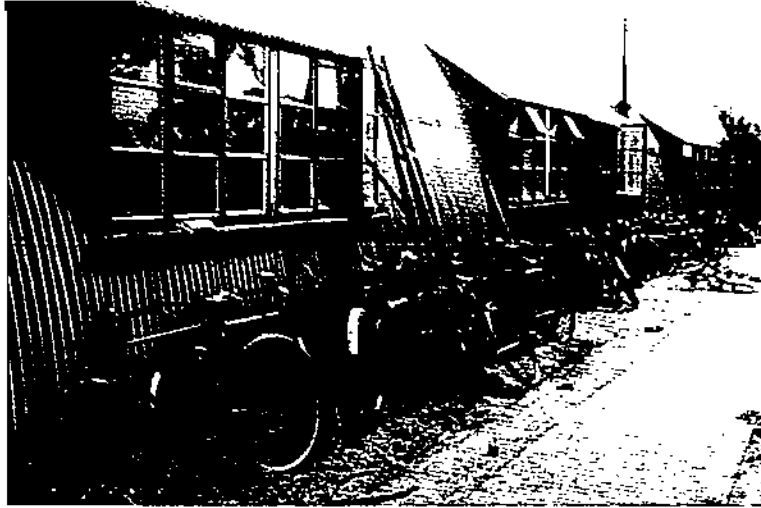


506TH SITE, SHIPDHAM, ENGLAND





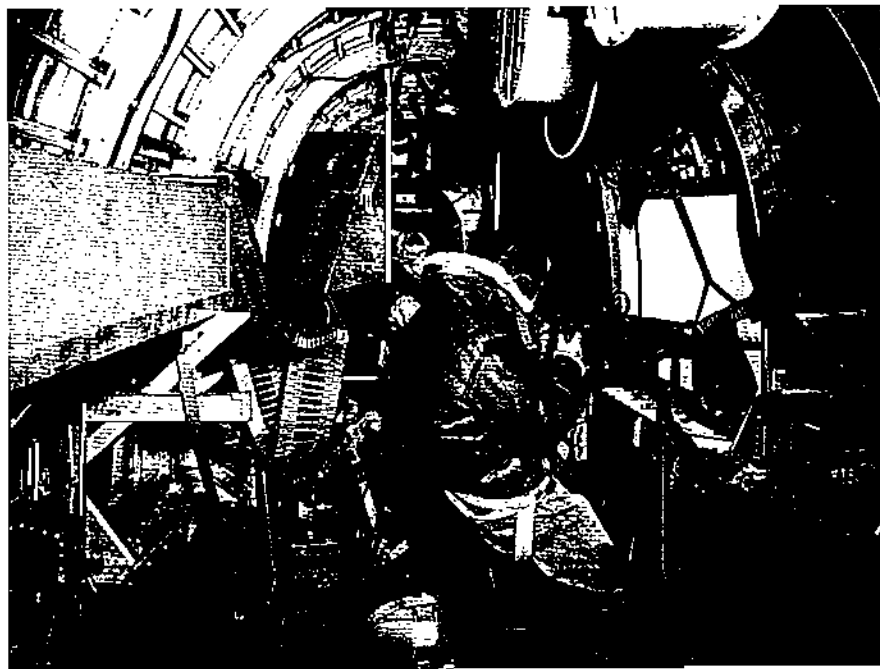
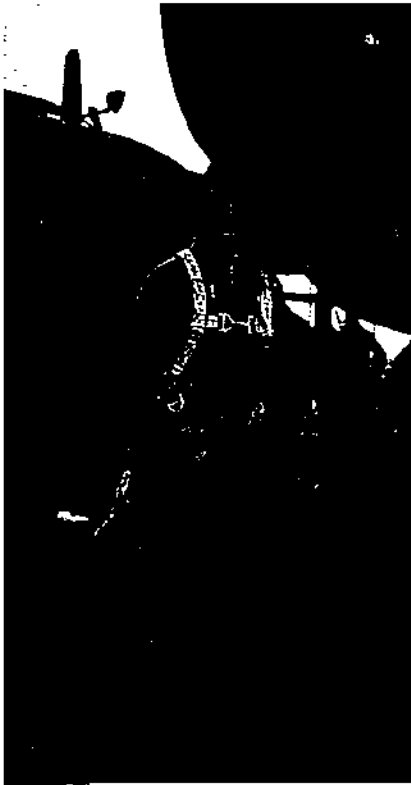
506TH SITE, SHIPDHAM, ENGLAND



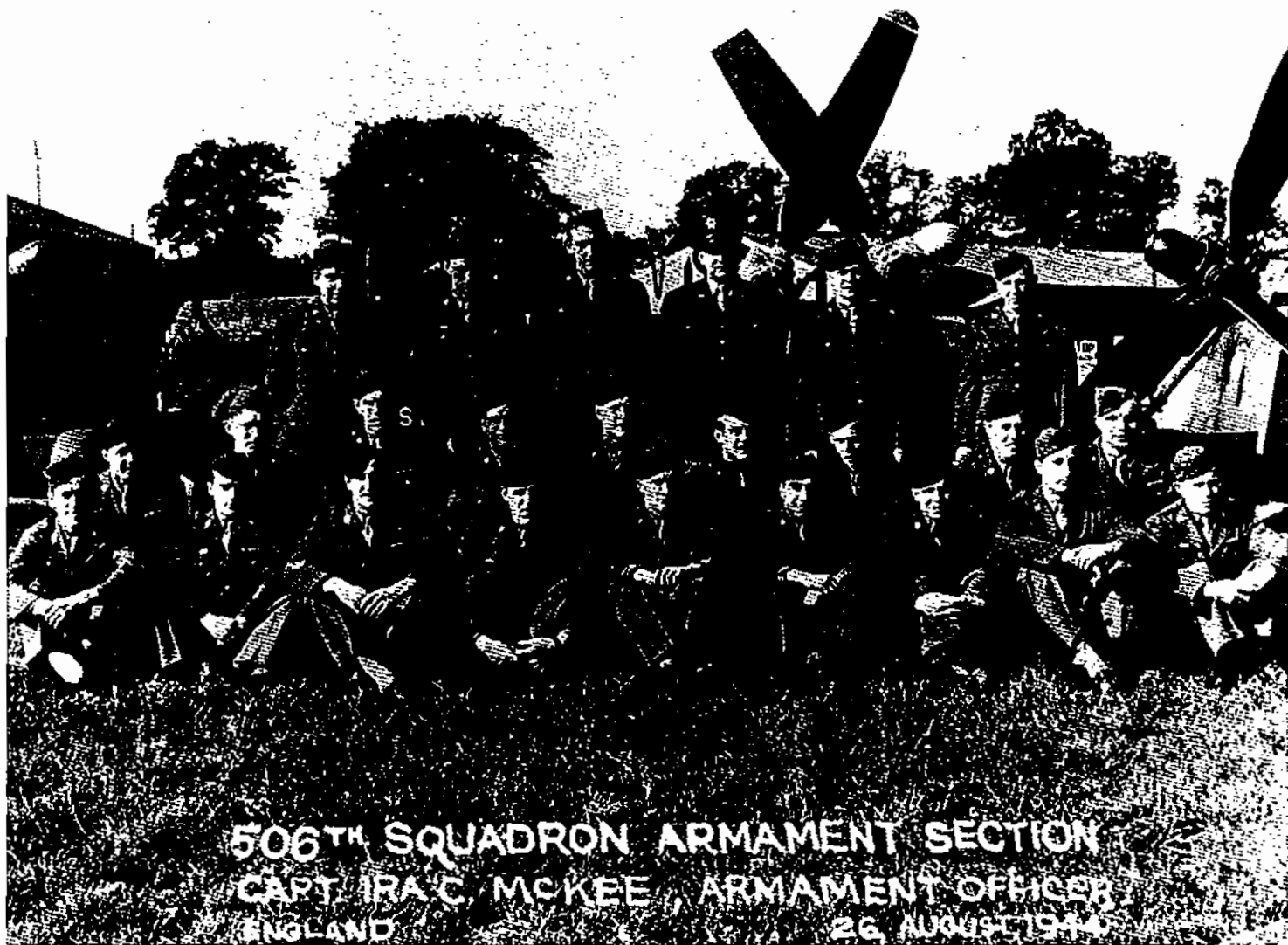
AROUND THE BASE



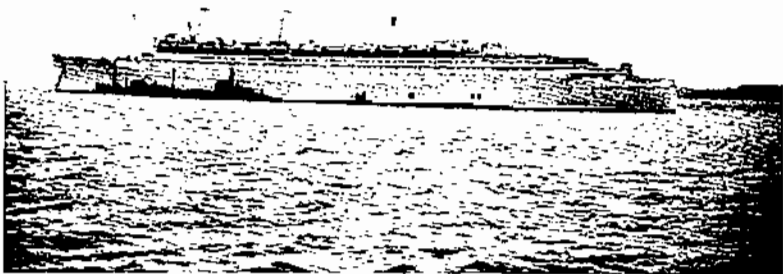
AROUND THE BASE



ARMAMENT SECTION



GOING HOME





506th BOMB SQUADRON PERSONNEL

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
**Boldface**=Killed in Action  
Underscore=Prisoner of War  
@=Interned  
#=Evaded Capture  
%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Abler,  
Ackerman, Donald L.  
**Ackerman, Edward J.** (KIA 2/2/44)  
Ackerman, Lonny L.  
Acuff, Coyle J.  
Adams, Arthur  
Adams, Captain  
Adams, Frank J.  
\*Adams, Frank L.  
Addis, Jack L.  
\*Ader, Marvin W. (ENGINEERING)  
Adice, Nick  
Adrian, Kenneth G. (C.)  
**Aho, Augustus**  
**Airoidi, John A.**  
- **Albert, Frank L.**  
Albert, Richard L.  
Albert, William W.  
Alexander, Harry W.  
- Alexander, James R.  
Allen, John W.  
Allen, Leon J.  
\*Allen, Ronald S. Jr.  
\*Allison, Olaf W.  
Allison, Robert D.  
Altemus, William B.  
**Andello, David F.**  
Anderson, Olaf W.  
\*Anderson, William N. (Squadron Commander) *Angell*  
**Andris, Eugene E.** *Killed you for brave flight*  
\*Angell, Benjamin E. *ANTONORO, SAL (PHOTO) GRD.*  
Anuskiewicz, Henry E.  
Apice Nick  
Appert, Thomas H.  
Applegate, Edward J.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

\*Arentz, Samuel M. (ENG.)

\*Aro, Augustus

Arthur, William D.

**Artym, Frank Jr.**

\*Ashmore, Richard F. (ENG.)

Asselta, George A.

Atkins, Charles N.

Atkins, William J.

\*Atwood, Berten E.

\*Ausland, Oscar H.

Austin, Charles B. Jr.

%Austin, Horace W.

\*Avalos, Manuel

Babcock, Ernest G.

Babek, Ernie

Bachrach, **MARTIN**

Backstedt, (Lt.)

Baensch, (Lt.)

Bagen, Sheldon R. (from 47<sup>th</sup> SQ)

Baggett, Carney W. Jr.

Baier, Edward A.

Bailey, Milton F.

Baird, Edward

Bakanic, George Jr.

Baker, Raymond H.

**Bales, James H.**

Ball, William F. Jr.

\*Balough, Coleman J.

\*Bank, Sidney W.

✓ Banks, Walter R

\*Barber, Bradford F. → KIA in 492<sup>nd</sup> Bst AC

Barefoot, Charles L.

Barnett, James B.

Barnett, Joseph C.

Barone, Nick

Barry, James J. from 66 SQ 36MB

Barth, Joseph M.

Bartley, Boyd

Bartley, Lloyd

Bartol, Stockton R.

BARHAM, L.L.: Ball tunnel

+ Cluff? page <II>

RFA  
2/2/47



\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Bartus, ~~JOSEPH A.~~  
Barzilauskas, Edward  
@Bass, John F. Jr.  
Bata, Frank B.  
Bauder, Warren F.  
Bauman, Morton  
Baumann, ~~Bauman~~ Robert J. *OK*  
Bayless, Herbert L.  
\*Beam, James C. (Squadron Commander) *BEAN, CLEO J. ENG. SECT.*  
Bearden, Joseph  
\*Beasley, Paul  
Beauchamp, Robert L. (Beauchampes)  
Bechtold William K. *A.C. BEAUCHENE (Horne's)*  
Becker, Milton H.  
Beckerstedt, Eugene C.  
Beckwith, Kenneth E.  
Bednar, George B.  
Bee, William R.  
Beggs, William A.  
Behnke, George C.  
\*Behrens, Elam H.  
Beiber, George  
Beirne, Milton R.  
\*Bell, J. R.  
Bell, Robert J.  
Bellante, Philip J.  
Benkert, Fred  
Bennett, Henderson K.  
Bennett, Raymond G. (J)  
Bentcliff, Clifford J.  
\*Benton, Greene Jr.  
Berg, E. N.  
✓ Berger, George I. (~~X~~)  
Berger, M. P.  
Bernstein, Milton (Nate)  
Bertoli, Robert J.  
Betz, Paul T.  
@Beuoy, James L.  
Bielinski, Leo S.  
\*Billhymer, Gerald E. (*FNKs.*)

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

**Boldface**=Killed in Action

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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

~~BICKEL, ALF~~ PHOTO

Binkley, Franklin W.

\*Bitzel; Daniel

Blake, Foster **A**

Blanchard, Euclid F. RADIO OP. FOR HRUBY 32 MISSIONS

Blow, Paul E.

@Boatman, George

Bobrick, Edward

Bockstedt, Eugene C.

Boensch, Paul A. Sr.

Bogart, Colman D.

#Bohenko, Walter E.

Bolger, James

~~Bolick, Carl C.~~

Bolin, James D..

~~Bolton, Marvin T.~~

Bombalski, Ziggy S.

Bonham, Robert W.

Borgstrom, Rolon D.

Borkowski, Henry S.

Boroski, Hank

Bortus, Joseph

Boughner, Jack L.

\*Boulanger, Clement C.

Bouman, Morton

Bowden, ROBERT W. 7/10/43

Bowling, Ollie C.

Boyer, James F.

Boykin, Richard A.

Boyle, Amondos J.

Bradford, James D.

\*Bradley, Grant J.

~~Brady, Lloyd J.~~

Brandon, William H. (Squadron Commander)

Branson, James E.

Breakey, Karl D.

Breeland, Alvin B. V. DALLAS

Brennan, Francis W.

Brennan, Henry E.

\*Brenner, Joseph L.

\*Bretz, Glenwood

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

@Brice, Douglas D.

Brisendine, Ned H.

*NICK GARZA REPORTED DEATH AUG 99*

\*Britton, Stanley S.

Brockman, Vernie R.

Brockstedt, Eugene C.

Brosh, Vernon C.

#Brott, Nelson E.

Brown Charles J.

**Brown, George F. Jr.**

\*Brown, Jack E. (ENG)

\*Brown, Joe E.

Brown, John J. Jr.

*BROWN JOE D.*

✓ Brown, Laban W.

Brown (Lt.)

Brown, Russel V.

Brown, William C.K.

Browning, Albert

Browning, Fredrick

Browning. (Sgt.)

Brumm (Brumn), Harold J.

*BRYD, JAMES H. (ENG)*

Bryant, Harry

Buckley, Francis X.

\*Bucknell, Henry G.

Buechler, Charles W.

Bugyie, Steve F.

**Buhl, Vernon**

Buhler, Ted W.

Bumbicka, Joseph R.

Bunce, James A. JR.

\*Bunker, Walter I.

Burchard, Charles Jr.

Burkart, Howard M.

\*Burke, Phillip E.

Burns, Emmett J.

Burton, Jim

Busby, Charles

Bushby, John W.

Butler, Myron H.

\*Butler, Richard D.

\*Butterbaugh, Jack W.

*NOTE Killed Jan 43 Training flight*

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

**Boldface**=Killed in Action

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@=Interned

#=Evaded Capture

Z=Escaped from Prison Camp

B

Buzza, Arthur W.  
Caillier, James E.  
Caldwell, Felix L.  
Caldwell, (Sgt.)  
✓ Callaway, James P. CAMERON, DONALD L. (ENG.)  
Callaway, Wallis W.  
Cameron, William (Squadron Commander)  
Campbell, Gerald M. CAMPOLO, DOMINIC (ENG.)  
Cannon, Thomas L. (M.) Jr  
@Capella, Bernard J.  
Capps, Ralph W.  
@Cardenas, Robert L. CARTY, HERBERT E. (ENG.)  
\*Carrow, Ross  
Carson, Joseph  
Cash, Charles N. CATES, JESSE E "  
Caskey, James  
✓ Castellotti, Paul E.  
@Castro, Ladislao C.  
\*Caulfield, James B. DIED 2/98 PER NICK GALZA  
Cavallieri, Anthony J. (Cavalier)  
Celentano, Louis S.  
Cempel, (Lt.)  
Cena (Sgt.) JOSEPH J.  
Cervellera, Samuel M.  
Chamberlain DONALD M.  
Chamberlain, (Lt.) WINTROP S.  
@Chambers, Harold R.  
Chandler, Max E.  
Chase, Donald V.  
Cheney, Bert  
\*Chipman, Francis M.  
Chockett, Thomas E. (Chockett)  
✓ Chopp, Victor J.  
\*Christensen, George E.  
✓ Christy, Jack T.  
Chown, Norman  
\*Chunchal, Robert H.  
Ciesielski, Ramond J.  
\*Cipolla, Andrew J.  
Cirov, Rudolph A.

CIRANI, A.J. GRD CREW for FE. MOORE  
Page <VI>

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
**Boldface**=Killed in Action  
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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Clapper, Donald  
Clark, Cletus C.  
\*Clark, James B.  
**Clark, Thomas W.**  
Clarke, Andrew T. JR.  
Clarno, Eugene  
Clarno, Richard  
Clarvoe, Frank A.  
Clasgens, William H. Jr.  
Clay, Linwood R.  
\*Cleaver, John J.  
Clements, James H.  
Closs, Charles T. Jr.  
Cody, Richard  
Coffee, (Coffey) John E.  
\*Coldiron, Edward E.  
Coleman, Underwood  
Coles, Kenneth F.  
Collins, Frank B.  
Colucci, Patrick  
Condon, Jim  
Confer, (Lt.) Louis C.  
Connelly, John J.  
@Conner, Charles R.  
Conningham, Estie W.  
\*Conroy, Delbert G.  
Conzoner, Thomas C.  
Cook, Carlton Jr.  
Coomes, Thomas L.  
Coonelly, Joseph M.  
\*Copain, Edward  
**Cordes, Thomas H.**  
Corrigan, James L.  
Corueliera, Samuel E.  
\*Cose, Wallace E.  
\*Costel, William L.  
Costello, George B.  
Courtaway R. M.  
Cousin, Edward H.  
Covone, Joseph T.

*CODDINGTON, VINCENT A. (ENG.)*

*COLE, RALPH*

*COFFEE*

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
**Boldface**=Killed in Action  
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@=Interned  
#=Evaded Capture  
%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Cowden, Liddon W.  
Cowles, Edwin E. III  
✓ Coyne, John T.  
Crawford, James P.  
Crawford, Peter G.  
Crawford, Robert  
Crisian, Norius  
\*Crismore, Oliver H. LOCATED ~ ORDNANCE  
Cronin, John P.  
\*Croson, Donn C.  
\*Crowley, William M.  
Crume, James C.  
Crutcher, Carlisle  
Cullinane, John C.  
Cummings (Lt.) — ?  
Cummins Harry A.  
✓ Cunningham, Estie W.  
Cunningham, Eugene T.  
Curman (Lt.) ~ ?  
\*Curry, John H.  
Curt, William A.  
Curtin, Mike  
Curtis, Orville D.  
\*Curtzwiler, Arnold M.  
Cutright, Joe W.  
\*Cutshall, Ernest J.  
Czarnecki, Victor  
Dahlin, John K.  
Dahlin, Kenneth  
\*Dailey, Joseph M.  
\*Dambacher, Albert N. (Dambacker) (ENG)  
✓ D'Angelico, Michael A.  
Daniels, Anson G.  
Daniels, Benson G.  
Daniels, Carl E.  
\*Daniels, George H.  
Daniels, Robert L.  
Dantzler, Robert T.  
\*Daugherty, Paul P.  
Davenport, Lyle S.

\*=Original SO6 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
**Boldface**=Killed in Action  
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@=Interned  
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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Davido, Frank  
✓ Davis, George B.  
\*Davis, Harry R.  
\*Davis, Hobbard D.  
Davis, Jack  
\*Davis, Melvin H.  
✓ Davis, Thomas E.  
\*Davis, Wordie A.  
\*Dawson, James K.  
De Blasio Louis J.  
De Boer (Debore), James  
\*De Bord, Walter L. — (ENG. SECT.)  
Deifer, Louis W.  
\*Delval, Rene —→ ENG. SECT.  
De Marinis, John J.  
Denley, Hosea E.  
Derr, Merritt E.  
Desantis, William L.  
Deutsch (Sgt.)  
De Wald, (Dewald) George M.  
Diaz, Aribal S.  
Di Cicco (Diccido), Romeo F.  
Dickerson, Wayne H.  
\*Dickman, Edward  
Dines, Donald H.  
\*Dobbins, Maurice H.  
Docktor, John W.  
Doel, (Doell) James R.  
Doherty, Robert L.  
✓ Donnelly, Edmund H.  
\*Donnelly, John E.  
Dosmann, Joseph E.  
? Doughton, William N. — ENG. SECT.  
Dowd, Edgar J.  
Downey, (Downer) John J. III  
Dowsett, Sherman N.  
\*Drake, Richard C.  
\*Dravis, Anthony J.  
Drumel, William E.  
@DuBail, Arthur W.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

**Boldface**=Killed in Action

Underscore=Prisoner of War

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#=Evaded Capture

%=Escaped from Prison Camp

DuBose, Fred A.

Dudek, Joseph M.

**Dudrich, John**

Duffy, William ✓ M. JR.

Dugan Charles H.

\*Dull, Cecil O.

**Dunajecz, Hugo**

Dunaway, Gordon J — (ENG)

Dunbar, Walter W.

\***Duncan, Joseph B.**

Duncan, Robert R.

\*Dunham, Robert J. Jr.

✓ Dunkerly, Gayle J. Pfw

@Dunlop, Walter E.

DuPont, Robert P.

Duquette, George T.

\*Durand, Bert H. — (ENG.)

Durett, Paul

Dwelle (Dwell) (Lt.)

✓ Dye, Norman L.

Dyer, Maurice L.

**Eberhardt, Bernard J. Jr.**

Ebler, Joseph A.

Eccleston, Charles R.

Economaki, George C. (Econowski)

Edgecomb, (Edgcomb) Willis A.

Edkins, William D.

Edmonds, Earl A.

\*Edwards, John R. —

\*Edwards, Norman R.

Egan, (Lt.) JOHN J

Eichensehr, Walter H.

\*Elledge, Charles W. — (ENG)

**Elliott, Eugene L.**

\*Elliott, Truman H.

Ellis, Horace

Ellis, Kieth

Ellis, Leonard

Ellis, Raymond E.

Ellison, Robert L.



\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

**Boldface**=Killed in Action

UnderScore=Prisoner of War

@=Interned

#=Evaded Capture

Z=Escaped from Prison Camp

\*Elrod, John H.  
\*Elrod, William L.  
Emch, Harold D.  
Emmart, William T. — (ENG.)  
\*Enloe, William L. — (ENG.)  
? Ensley  
Eramo, Leonard A.  
\*Erdos, Steve M. — (ENG)  
\*Escocedo, Joe F.  
Everhart, Edgar A.  
Fabiny, Andrew T.  
Faigenblat, Harry  
\*Fairbairn, Desmond N.  
Faller, Henry D.  
Fanara, Thomas J.  
**Farrell, John A.**  
Farrell, Thomas N.  
Farris, Thomas E.  
Faust, Kermit R. — See FOUST, K.R.  
\*Favero, Alexander J. — ENG.  
Favers (Sgt.)  
Favors, Alva F.  
Federlin (Sgt.)  
Fegans, (Pvt.)  
Feinstein (Lt.) MILTON S.  
\*Feldman, Abraham D.  
\*Ferkauuff, Oscar  
Ferrell, Tom  
\*Fetherolf, Henry T.  
Fillbach, Virgil, W.  
\*Fincke, Melvin R.  
Finder, Shelton — FINKELSTEIN, ABRAHAM — (ENG.)  
? \*Fineman  
- Fineman, Saul  
Finesmith, Max  
\*Finstad, Clarence  
\*Fischer, Rudolph J. — (ENG.)  
- Fisher, Richard I  
Fiskum, Lowell A.  
@Fitzsimons, William D. (J.)

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
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#=Evaded Capture  
%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Flaherty, Thomas A.  
Fleming, Lemuel B.  
Fletcher, Beuford P.  
Flora, Orville E. Jr.  
Flowers, Carl N.  
Flugman, Herman G.  
Flynn, John  
\*Fogel, John F.  
Folsom, Gerald W.  
Forseth, (Lt.)  
Foster (Enlisted Bomb.)  
Foster, Everette E.  
Foust, Robert M.  
Foust (Sgt.)  
\*Fouts, Virgil R.  
\*Fox, Clarence O.  
Fox, Delmar  
\*Francis, Elmer F.  
\*Frank, Arthur G.  
Franklin, Robert C.  
Fredericks, Adrian E.  
Freeland, Robert C.  
Freeman, Jack B.  
Fretwell, Lloyd G.  
\*Frickelton, Francis W. - (ENG.)  
Friedel, John O.  
Friedman, Abe  
Fritz, August A.  
Fry, Clyde C.  
\*Frye, Thomas C.  
Fuller, Clint J. Jr.  
\*Fuller, Donald C.  
Fulmer, Gordon W.  
Funke, Robert  
**Funkhouser, Eugene H.**  
Fuss, Clarence W.  
Gallagher, Patrick W.  
\*Garcia, Felix  
Gardner, Chester D.  
Gardner, Harrel L.

KERMIT R. 9 MAY 44 S/SGT 5/9/44 W/ DOCKTOR PILOT Pg 399

Cambridge Cemetery has FREDRICKS

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
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Underscore=Prisoner of War  
@=Interned  
#=Evaded Capture  
%=Escaped from Prison Camp

\*Gardner, Moses P.

Gardner, Peter E.

Garrett, Wayne D.

\*Garza, Nick E.

Garza, Raul

Gasky, Joe

\*Gaster, Eugene E. — DIED PER JERRY —

\*Gates, Alwin A.

\*Gates, Jesse E.

Gaudin, Percy J.

Gee (Lt.) W.H.S. (46)

Gempel, Charles L.

\*Gerber, James

\*Gere, Albert R. — (ENG)

\*Germann, Oliver R.

\*Gerrity, Martin V.

\*Gibbons, James F. — (ENG.)

Gilbert, Danny

\*Gilbertson, Stanley H. — (ENG.)

\*Gill, Albert A.

Gille, Gerald G.

#Gippert, Winfield S.

\*Giran, Andrew N.

Giroux, Randolph A.

Gleichenhaus, Seymour

\*Glemboski, Stanley W.

\*Gobel, Omer W.

Godfrey, Lavar

? Goe (Lt.)

Goebel, Clarence W.

Goldberg, Sidney I.

Goldman, Martin P. (R.)

@Golubock, Ralph

Gong K.D.? 67

\*Goodman August T. (ENG.)

\*Goodson, Walter N.

Gornet, Stanley S.

Gorski, Joseph A.

Gossett, Ernest E.

Grady, Jack

Graef, Dale W.

Pilot CR. 1943 JAN ONLY SUR  
WAS TO 486 BG,  
BEN ANGELL 835 65,  
KILLED

GEBHARD, ROBT J.

GRIFFIN, W.R. Owner for F.G. MOORE

— GOENER, WALTER H. (ENG.)

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
**Boldface**=Killed in Action  
Underscore=Prisoner of War  
@=Interned  
#=Evaded Capture  
%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Healy, Daniel J.

\*Hearne, Allie T.

Hedinger, Herbert A.

Heintz, Charles W.

**Henderson, Gordon W.**

\*Hendricks, Robert T.

Hersh Charles A.

✓ Hershey, Richard

Hertzberg, Abe

Herzing, Ernest A.

Hess, John A.

Hesselink, (Sgt.)

Heyburn, William II

Hibbs, Leo R.

✓ %Hickerson, Glenn C.

Hickman, Charles H.

Hickman, Robert J.

Hicks Jeane M.

\*Hicks, John W.

Higbee, Charles M.

Higdon (Sgt.)

**Hill, Herbert S.**

Hill, Odie D.

Hill, Ogden K.

✓ Hills, Neil M.

Hine, Thomas L.

Hines, Sylvan

\*Hippe, Clifford E.

Hirsch, Moren

Hisprote, Wilbur, H. *conv. Ap.*

\*Hitchcock John V.

Hobbs, Harold B.

\*Hobson, Thomas B.

Hockensmith, C. H.

Hoffman, John B.

Holcombe, Clement R. C.

\*Holderman, Jim D.

Hollaway, Cpl.

\*Hollingsworth, Gordon E.

Holmberg, Leroy

HEGER, NORBERT L.

(INTELLIGENCE) + NAVIGATOR

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Holmberg, Melvin L.  
Holmes, Luke  
Holtz, Charlton H.  
\*Hooper, Leonard K. (ENG.)  
Hope, Frank  
Hopkins, Henry A.  
Horey, John J.  
Horne, Carlton R. —  
Horne, John L.  
Horner, Claude D.  
Horsley, Clyde M. (Housley)  
Horton, Charles C. (G.)  
Hosington, Robert L.  
\*Hotchkiss, Roy C.  
Houghtby, Raymond C.  
\*Howard, William H.  
Howe, Norman E.  
Howser (Lt.) E.P.  
Howser (Sgt.)  
Hruby, Richard H.  
- Huber, John J. Jr.  
\*Huff, Herbert A. — (ENG)  
\*Huffman, Orville E. — (ENG)  
Huggins, Wade  
#Hulewicz, Stanley J. Jr.  
\*Humphrey, Lloyd R.  
Humphries, Paul C. Jr.  
@Hunter, James  
Hunter, Harold R. "Pappy"  
Hursh, Floyd  
Hurst Clifford C.  
Hurst, Oliver F. ←  
Huso, Frederick J.  
\*Hutchins, Louie C.  
Hvambal, Carl  
\*Hyde, Thomas I.  
Iden, Donald B.  
Idlet, Philip D.  
Ihrig, (Sgt.)  
Illgner, Fred W.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

ILLGNER ? 14 FEB 45 PILOT

Insley, George R.

@Irwin, Winston C.

Isaacs, Leon Preston

\*Iverson, Robert W. OR M. ENG.

\*Jackson, Henry H. ✓

\*Jackson, John C. ✓

\*Jackson, Marvin M. - ENG.

\*Jackson, Norvell F. ✓

Jacob, Walter E.

Jacobs, John R. Jr.

Jacobs, Myron G.

\*Jacobs, Ralph W. OR B. ENK

Jacobson, Carl

Jacobson, Erland J.

\*James, Harry H.

\*Janski, Johnie R. - - - ENG.

Jandreau (Sgt.)

Januszyk, Alexander - Photos - Did crew? So. Comfort ✓

\*Jaromin, Tony B.

Jarvis, Edward D.

Jarvis, Edwin P.

Jeanos, George

\*Jennings, Glenn E.

\*Jensen, Donald J.

\*Jensen, Royal S. - ENG.

\*Jenson, Earl S. ENG.

✓ Jensen, Marvin G. (Jensen) ✓

%Jett, Joseph W.B.

Jipson, Robert F.

Joanos, George

\*Jobe, James R.

Johannesen, Harold C.

✓ John, G. Glenn

\*Johnson, Aaron T. ENG.

\*Johnson, Arthur ✓

\*Johnson, Carl J. ✓

Johnson, C. W.

Johnson, Dean W.

Johnson, Deward F.

Johnson, E. T.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Johnson, Frederick V.

Johnson, Guy W.

Johnson, Harold K.

\*Johnson, John A. — **A.M. ENGINEERING.**

\*Johnson, John H.

Johnson, Joseph E.

Johnson, Leon W. (Group and Wing Commander)

Johnson, Robert

✓ Johnson, Robert A.

\*Johnson, Tom A. — **ENG.**

\*Johnson, William A. **ENG.**

**Johnston, William P.**

Jolovitiz, (Jolvitz) Alfred W.

Jones, Charles K.

\*Jones, Charlie F.

Jones, John W. Jr.

Jones, John T. ✓ **DIED 2/9/78! Colon Cancer.**

Jones, Marion W.

Jones, Richard S.

Jones, Shirley A.

Jones, Stephen E. (Z.)

**JONESCHILD, CLIFFORD — ENG.**  
— **ENG. — CREW CHIEF.**

\*Jorgensen, Ralph C.

\*Juskowski, Frank J.

\*Kachadoorian, Jack

Kalke, Oliver D.

\***Kallal, Lawrence B.**

Kamanides, Manual L.

\*Kamrad, William J.

? Kanic (Lt.)

Kapp, Orville W.

Kaufmann, Raymond A. Jr.

Kaulbach, Andrew J. Jr.

Kearney (Lt.) **J.L. CG**

\*Keefe, Paul P.

Kelly, Edward I.

**Kempowicz, John J. Jr. OR N. ENGINEERING.**

Kennedy, James

\*Kennedy, William J.

**ENG.**

Kennon, Dan

Kenyon, Fred

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\*Kerns, Albert G.  
\*Kesseringer, Cecil G. OR. **KESSENGER**  
Kessler, Robert W.  
Keys, Robert J.  
Khoury, Raymond  
\*Kiefer, Norman C.  
@Killian, Jack L.  
Kimball, Hal S.  
King, Gerald L.  
King, John F.  
King, Roy H. Jr.  
Kincaid, Jack A.  
\*Kirby, Arthur F.  
@Kirchner, Donald E.  
Kirk, Douglas  
✓ Kirkland, Robert E. \*ROY E  
Kirschner, Wallace E.  
Kite, Marvin S.  
Kittle (Sgt.)  
\*Kivinin, Harold A. (Kivinen)  
\*Klawson, Hamilton S.  
\*Klein, Alfred M.  
\*Klein, Harry R.  
Kleinhenz, (Sgt.)  
✓ Klinge, Henry A.  
\*Klose, Kenneth A.  
\*Knaflewski, Stanley  
Knight E. B.  
\*Knope, Walter J.  
%Knox, Ralph B.  
✓ Kodaj, Joseph C.  
Kolliner, Robert E. (Squadron Commander)  
#Komasinski, Bernard J.  
\*Kooker, Warren K.  
Korda, Robert J.  
**Kosch, Ermil M.**  
Kovach (Sgt.)  
Kramer, Edward W.  
\*Kramer, James R.  
\*Krohn, Arnold C.

- KERR, EVERET V. JR. ENG.

KIVIREN, HAROLD A. (ENG.)

- (ENG.)



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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Kryszozuk, Chester J.

Kubitschek, Paul E.

Kuecker (Lt.) **RAYMOND G.**

@LaCombe, Raymond J.

La Fazia, Frank

#Lain, Charles H.

\*Lamb, Joseph H.

\*Lamb, William F.

Landahl, Howard K.

Larkin, Morris William

La Rocca, Smauel J.

Larsen, Darrel E.

Larsen, Gail W.

Larson, George N.

Larson, Richard A.

\*Lathrop, Donald E.

Laudig, Harold J.

\*Laue, Fred C.

Laughlin, William E.

@Laux, Paul M.

Lawrence, Walter V.

@Lawson, Grover R. (L.)

LeBlanc, Albert A.

%Lee, Dale V.

→ Lemon, Wade R.

Leonard, Oscar L. — **PILOT**

Lercoux, Vincent W.

Lewis, George W.

Lewis, James R.

Lewis, James W.

Libby, Errol L.

@Libell, Robert W.

Lieck, David L.

Lightcap, Harold E.

Lillard, Fred (Not 506th--Sgt working with Kiefer)

Linck, Lawrence J.

Lincoln, Alfred L.

**Lindau, Edward W.**

Lindgren, Morton G.

Lindstrom, (Lt.)

**KYES, B.W. — PILOT**

**LAMBERT, MARK H. (ENG.)**

→ Pg 16. Killed Jan 43 during flight  
**ENG.**

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

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Z=Escaped from Prison Camp

✓ Lippert, Raymond T.  
✓ Litras, Aristides G.  
? Litzman, (Lt.)  
Liss, Michael J.  
\*Littlemoon, Joseph M.  
Livingston, James L.  
Lockett, Walter  
✓ Loftus, Charles R. Jr.  
Logan, Grover C.  
Lohr, William A.  
Long, Carl D.  
? Lopez  
Lord, John B.  
Louisa, Victor P. (Lousa)  
\*Love, Roger M.  
Lovett, Sid  
Lowe, Van E. *OR IVAN C. - PILOT*  
\*Lowenthal, Jerald  
\*Loyd, Jesse L.  
@Lucas, Robert R.  
Lund, Carl A.  
Lundy, Emery R.  
Lundy, Will (Not 506--Compiler of 67th History and 44th Roll  
Of Honor and Casualty  
\*Lunt, William C.  
\*Lush, Herbert B.  
Lutes, Miles B.  
@Luther, Ernest C.  
\*Luzzi, Michael J.  
\*Lynn, Hugh M.  
\*Lytle, Garold D. *--- (ENG)*  
Maas, Robert  
Macciocche, Roland P.  
Mack, Firman B.  
\*Maddux, Harry W.  
Maggard, Harold H.  
? Maine (Lt.)  
Mahaney, Francis X.  
\*Makroginis, Bill  
Maloy, Aubrey J.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
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#=Evaded Capture  
Z=Escaped from Prison Camp

Manak, Paul  
\*Mangialaschi, Victor  
Manierre, (Manerre) William R.  
Mann, Marshall H.  
Mann, Robert E.  
Margolies, Murray G. (ENG)  
\*Marinos, Jack  
Markham, Claron E.  
\*Marner, Ray I. Jr.  
\*Marold, Fred W.  
Martin, Albert A.  
Martin, B. C.  
Martin, Donald R.  
Martin, Richard W.  
Martinez, Jesus  
Marx, Robert H.  
Marzolph, Fred J.  
Maschmeyer, Gene E.  
Mascolo, Leon A.  
\*Maslowski, Edward A.  
Mason (Lt.)  
\*Mason, Gerald D.  
Mason, Robert H. B?  
Masonis, Pete  
\*Mata, Alexander C. — (ENG.)  
Matter, Elwood A.  
Matthews, Allen T.  
Mattis, Daniel A. — DIED 16 JULY 44 COLLISION W/GI. TRUCK  
\*Maury, Dale W.  
Maynor, William M.  
Mazza, Ben K.  
McAlpine, Ernest  
\*McAtee, James C. (Commanding Officer)  
**McBryde, William H.**  
McCash, David E.  
✓ McCaslin, John M. Jr.  
McCloud, Albert E. Jr.  
\*McCombs, Emmet B. OR McCOME  
McConaughay, William L.  
McCormack, Joseph

Special Order #47 (1944)  
Pvt. MERRILL F. MARSHALL  
17164462  
14 FEB 44 BECAME PRISONER

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McCormick, Howard B.  
McCormick, Raymond A.  
\*McCormick, William H.  
**McCoy, Richard J.**  
\*McCright, Hubert S.  
McCullough, Hal  
McDaris, Frederick F.  
McEver, James H.

McFarlin, Wallace V.

✓ McFarland, William I.

? McGeary, Meredyth F.

McGee, Paul M.

McGuire, Thomas J.

\*McIlrath, James H.

McKay, John E.

\*McKee, Ira C.

McKee, John H.

McKenna, Thomas

McKinney, Donald W.

McMahon, Eugene

McMaster, James H.

McMenamin, Victor. A.

McQuire, Thomas J.

Meagher, Robert E.

\*Mears, William J.

Meglitsch, Burton A.

\*Meiner, James E. Jr. — ENG.

Mendenhall, Max D.

Menzel, Conrad M.

@Merisotis, Peter E.

Mervis Capt. IRVIN

\*Messerly, Eugene F.

Meunitz, Morrie

\*Meurer, Johnny A.

✓ Meyers, Joseph F.

\*Micarelli, Mario A.

Miceli, Sam S.

#Michaels, Edgar W.

\*Michaels, John L.

\*Michaels, Willard L.

McDONALD, ROBERT — KYES CREW

OK GRAHAM CREW - Bailey - 31 MISSIONS

McFADDEN, JAMES N. (MAJOR) 9 Aug 44

1  
Suicide

McQUADE, WILLIAM F.

OR-MEYER — ENGINEERING

ENG. SECT.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Michaels, William

\*Michalla, Anthony R. *OR. MICHALIA - ENG. SECT.*

\*Middlebrooks, William D.

Middleton, Wayne

Mikko, Victor P.

Mikolajczyk, Henry C.

Miller, Carl K.

\*Miller, Charleston D. *(ENG)*

✓ Miller Dean

Miller, John L.

Miller, Ralph H.

Miller (Sgt.)

Miller, Wayne A.

Millican, Ivan C.

Millican (An Enlisted Bombardier)

%Milliken, John L.

\*Milster, Kenneth *✓ Aaron @*

Miner, James E.

Missig, Louis N.

Mitchell, Anthony P.

Mitchell, Robert S.

\*Moe, Andrew Jr.

Moerbe Marvin L.

Moffett, Raymond G.

Moffett, (Sgt.)

Moir, Alexander B.

✓ Money, John D. *PILOT*

Monteleone, Edward G.

Moore, David

Moore, Francis C. - *C.O. on SABRINA III 29<sup>th</sup> 106 mission*

Moore, Robert L.

\*Moore, Wallace T. - *Pg 16 Killed on 21 Jan 43 Drummy flight*

\*Moran, John T. - *DIED 4/1/00*

\*Morgan, Dwight L.

\*Morris, Arthur W.

Morris, Joseph I.

Morris, Mark

✓ \*Morrison, Warren E.

Morse, Perry A. Jr.

\*Morton, Lyle A.

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Mosher (Lt.) **ROBERT D**  
Mueller, Allen D.  
Muff, Thomas D.  
Mulholland, William J. — (ENG)  
@Mundell, Robert F.  
Murach, Stanley Jr.  
\*Murphy, Lyle B. (V.) — (ENG.)  
Murrack, Melvin C.  
Murray, George R.  
\*Murray, Raymond K.  
Murray, Raymond T. Jr. TAIL GUN — SAYLER 11/13/43 - 27/20/44 31  
Murray (Sgt.) C. - On Hill crew - CLAUDE F. OK  
\*Myers, Douglas E.  
Myers, Garnell W.  
Nash, Travis E.  
\*Navas, Frank  
Nealy, Lewis M.  
Nedder, Sarkice T.  
\*Neeper, Loy L.  
@Neely, John C.  
Neillen, Louis F.  
Nelson, Clarence W.  
\*Nelson, Gene A.  
Nelson, Esley E.  
Neri, Michael J. (Not 506th- Group Communications Officer  
that Kiefer reported to as an officer)  
Nesbitt, Floyd M.  
Neutze, Robert E. Jr.  
Nevins, Lawrence A.  
\*Newbold, William P.  
Nickols, Reginald C.  
Niemczura, Theodore  
Nokes, James C.  
\*Nordquist, Richard K.  
Norris, Charles  
Northfelt, Wallace D.  
Norton, John P.  
Norwood (Sgt.) CHAS. B  
Notich, Frank  
~Novak William H.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

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Z=Escaped from Prison Camp

Nyhoff, Ivan G.

\*O' Connor, John J.

O' Donnell, Hugh X.

\*Ofedahl, Elmer W.

O' Gara, Elmer R. T.

O' Shanick, Peter

Olsen, G.E.

\*Olson, Stanley F.

O' Niel, William J.

Omens, John W.

Opet Stephen J.

Orehowsky, Frank

\*Orr, Don M.

Orr, Robert A.

Otto, James E.

Overly, Russell E. Jr.

? Owen, (Sgt.)

Owen, Roy W. Jr.

Paciorek, Marion S.

Pacylowsky, Frank P.

\*Palmer, Kermit J.

\*Parker, Albert S.

Parker, Joel Jr.

Parker, Richard A.

**Parker, Victor**

Parks, Carrol

Parrish, Milton

Parrish, Robert B.

Parshall, Raymond H.

Partridge, William R.

Passantino, Thomas J. Jr.

Patelli, Alex

\*Patri, Pasqualino P.

Patrichok, Andrew E. (Patrichuck, Patrichuk)

Paul, Sidney W.

\*Payne, Charles H.

\*Peach, James J.

Peck, John W.

Pedersen, Richard R.

Pederson, (Pedersen) Nels W.

(ENG.)

OLSCHEK, LOUIS E.

(GRD) CREW

OWEN, DOUGLAS B 2LT NAV.

LTC. NAV.

\*=Original 506 Personnel (October 27, 1942)

**Boldface**=Killed in Action

Under score=Prisoner of War

@=Interned

#=Evaded Capture

%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Pederson, Richard

Peiffer, William H.

#Peloquin, Joseph D.

\*Penner, John E.

Penny, Wallace (Penney)

Perdisatt, Dermot P.

Perman, Frank S.

Perry, Oliver C.

\*Pescho, Mike

**Pest, David**

Peters, Charles C.

\*Peters, James

Peters, Tenal A. (L)

✓ Peterson, Melvin P.

Petkoff, Robert

Petrichuk, Andrew L.

? Pettelli (Sgt.)

Petz, Steve J.

Peyrounat, Alfred J. - *ENG. SECT.*

\*Pfau, Edward R.

\*Phillips, Coy W. - *ENG*

Phillips, Frank P.

\*Phillips, Ralph M.

✓ Phipps, William H.

\*Pierce, Leonel F.

Pogge, Wes

Poljanec, Raymond L.

\*Poolaw, Newton B.

\*Popovich, Nicholas

Poppe, William F.

Porter, Gerald E.

Posey, James; (Group Commander)

\*Posthumus, Warren R.

Powell, Norman A. ✓

Powell, Clifford D. - *Don? Incl. Creas? 50. Comfort #3 Photo*

\*Powers, John S.

\*Pratt, Donald H.

Prawzik, Stanley

Pribonic, Joseph

Priday, George C.



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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Priddy (Sgt.)

Prinkey, Sidney R.

Procyszyn, Walter

\*Proulx, Earl D. ✓ *OR P. ENG. SECT.*

\*Pryor, Donald E.

Puglisi, Ernest

Puksta, Edwin A.

? Pultick, (Lt.)

%Purcell, Thomas Q. (D.)

Purdy, Norman E.

Pursley, Charles E.

Putnam, Harry H.

Pyle, Leonard G.

Quirk, Phillip J.

Rabesa, Lou

Racer, John W.

Rada, Irvin C.

**Radu, Charles**

Ramsey, George K.

Randall, Wilbur R.

\*Rang, Glen E. ----- *(ENG)*

**Raniello, John V.**

Rasmussen, Jack D.

\*Ratliff, Arien L.

Rausch, Robert N.

Rawson, Frederick H.

~ Ray, Joseph W.

Raysinger, Francis J.

Reader, Gerald E.

Rebhan, William I. (J)

\*Rebich, George

Redlich, Henry J.

Redus, James D.

Reed, Charles E.

Reed, George W.

Reed, John Y.

**Reeves, Robert H.**

Reeves, Thomas J.

#Reiner, Robert J.

\*Renteria, Isaac M.

\*=Original SO6 Personnel (October 27, 1942)  
**Boldface**=Killed in Action  
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%=Escaped from Prison Camp

\*Repetsky, Fred W. 33324090  
Reynolds, Harold M.  
\*Reys, Miguel G.  
Richard, Martin W.  
#Richards, Lawrence C.  
\*Richardson, Coley  
Richardson, Coley W.  
Richardson, (Lt.)  
Richardson, Paul  
Richardson (Sgt.)  
Richardson, William G.  
Richter, Paul T.  
Ricks, Robert A.  
? Rider (Lt.)  
Ries, Robert P.  
Rigger, Dewey  
Rinaldo, Frank A.  
✓ Rispoli, Anthony  
✓ Rizzo, Frank J.  
Roberts, Edgar W.  
Robertson, Raymond W.  
Robinson, Lewis M.  
Robison, Wallace R.  
Rockman, Alvin R.  
Rodgers, John W.  
✓ Rodriguez, Frank L.  
Rodriguez, Pedro T.  
Rohrer, Warren K.  
Rollins, Jack J.  
Romeo, Santo  
✓ Roop, Eugene W. N.  
Roper, Sydney  
Roschie, William E.  
\*Roscoe, Herbert M.  
Rosenburg, Edwin H.  
Rosengren, Robert  
Rosser, Billy A. (Rosseer)  
Roughan, Fred.  
\*Rowe, Roy V.  
\*Rowell, Arthur N.  
ROSEN, DAVID S.

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Ruffo, Sam  
Ruions, Leon B.  
Rush, Perl R.  
**\*Russell, Eldo A.**  
Rutherford, Edward L.  
Ryan, John J. (L)  
Ryan, Robert E.  
Ryke Irving  
Safranek, Louis A.  
Saladick, (Lt.)  
Salfen, William S.  
Salvatore, Michael  
**\*Sample, Alford W.** OR ALFRED - (ENG.)  
Sampley, Robert E.  
Samuels, Ben M. Jr.  
**\*Sanders, Laverta F.W.**  
**\*Sandoval, Charles A.**  
**\*Sands, John C.**  
Santini, Rudolph D.  
Satterlund, Carl S.  
Sayler, David E.  
**\*Scanlon, Charles M.**  
Scanlon, Walter J.  
Scarborough, Dale M (Scarborough)  
#Schaeffer, Frank N.  
Schake, Donald M. - CO-PILOT  
Scheer, Conrad  
Scherer, William H.  
Scherzberg, Virgil J.  
**\*Schiefelbusch, Richard L.**  
**Schiess, Charles F.**  
**\*Schliesman, John W.** - ENG. SECT.  
Schmidt, Arthur J.  
Schmidt, Bernard  
Schmidt, Robert C.  
Schneidwend, Robert G.  
Schoh, Kenneth J.  
Schram, Robert T.  
Schreiber, James V.  
**\*Schroeder, Harold C.**

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#=Evaded Capture

%=Escaped from Prison Camp

Schueler, Arthur W.  
Schueler, Frank N.  
Schufflebarger, (Lt.) **THOMAS E - O-731233**  
**Schuyler, Robert E.**  
- Schwab, Harold W.  
Schwarm, Edward G.  
Scott, Henry W.  
\*Scott, Peter F.  
Scott, Walter J.  
✓ Scott, William D.  
Scott, Winfield  
Scudday, **Bernie L.**  
\*Sczesny, Benjamin J.  
\*Seaman, **Robert H.**  
\*Seelen, Anthony J.  
Seigfeld, Herman  
Semons, E M.  
Settle, Herman  
Serino, Elmer  
Serino, Harold L.  
Seymer, R. F. **RAYMOND**  
\*Shadle, Robert A.  
\*Sharpnfsawack, Leon L. ?  
\*Shaw, Charles M.  
Shaw, Edgar L. Jr.  
Shay, William E.  
Sheldon (Sgt.) **STANLEY W (McKENNA)**  
Sherer, William H.  
Shockey, Harold L.  
Shook, Carl **CURTIS**  
Short, Emerson D.  
Shufflebarger, Thomas E.  
Shultz, Robert E.  
\*Shurtleff, Dwite K.  
Sihris, Clyde E.  
Silbermon, Milton  
Simmons **68?**  
Simon, Robert E.  
Simons, David R.  
Sinclair, Chester L. ✓

**SHEA, WALTER J.** - *Eng. Sect.*

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Sinclair, Norman L.  
**Singer, Paul S.**  
? Sirup (Sgt.)  
Siteman, Henry D.  
Slack, Leonard G.  
Slough, Frank D.  
Smart, Richard H.  
Smith, Donal J.  
Smith, Donald ←  
Smith, Ed.  
@Smith, George N.  
\*Smith, Graham C.  
Smith, Herman  
Smith, Irvin C.  
**Smith, Joseph R. Jr.**  
Smith, Lloyd (Loyd) A.  
? Smith, (Lt.)  
✓ Smith, Myron L.  
Smith, Randolph K.  
Smith, Robert E.  
Smith, Thomas L.  
Smith, William E.  
Snape, Raymond J.  
\*Snow, Cecil E.  
Snow, Vern W.  
Snyder, Clarence  
Solatka, Archie M.  
\*Solderberg, Jacob C.  
? Solfen  
Soloman, Frederick C.  
Sorrow, Claude  
? Spohn, (Lt.)  
**Springs, Charles F.**  
Sprinkle, Dallas L.  
\*Squires, Travis  
Stahl, Clarence E.  
Stallsworth, Floyd E.  
@Stambaugh, Jacob F.  
**Stamos, Robert G.** ✓  
\*Stange, Donald H.

SAIVER, JOSEPH B 34303915  
(LARSON'S RADIO OP.) 1943

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**STEININGER, JOHN A**

FROM 492 BG 8/44 - 2 WEEKS TO 36<sup>TH</sup> BG RADAR COUNTER WORK

Stanton, Arthur C.

**Staples, Robert L.**

\*Stark, John W.

\*Stahl, William V.

Steele, Harry

\*Steele, Harry

\*Stephens, Ellis M.

Stevens, Gordon S.

Stevens, James H.

**Stewart, Edwin N (M).**

Stewart, John H.

Still, Homer E. Jr.

\*Stites, Walter W.

Stoefen (Sgt.) M.J. - COMEY

**Stoffel, Glenn C.**

Stoltenburg, Garnet A.

Stoltz, Frank

Stone, Fred E.

\*Stone, Rodger L.

Stough, Robert M.

Stovoff, Irwin J. (Stovroff)

**Strait, Ralph E.**

Strange, William S.

\*Strelczyk, Albion F.

Strickland, "Pop"

Striegel, John A.

Strohmaier, Erwin

Strong, William H.

\*Stroud, Roy W.

\*Struble, Robert S.

Strunc, Henry

Stusovsky, Edwards J.

Sullivan, Frank J.

\*Sullivan, John J.

Suszek, Leo C.

\*Swanson, John W.

Swanson, Richard

Swartz, Wendell C.

\*Sweedler, Nathan

\*Swem, Donald D.

o. ?

Eng. Sect.

Eng. Sect.

SULLIVAN, LEE A. (ENG SECT)

Eng. Section  
Arch. Draw? Photo So. Comfort III

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Swenson, Martin R.  
\*Sykes, Percy H.  
\*Szumski, Thaddeus J.  
\*Szyper, Edward T.  
\*Tacoma, Ralph C.  
\*Taylor, Robert L.  
Taylor, Ronald J.  
Tepe, Carl W.  
\*Teplow, Morey  
Termin, Francis E.  
\*Terry, Wayne J.  
Tewksbury (Tweksbury) Roger L.  
Therme, David L.  
\*Thomas, Percy L. — *Eng. Sect.*  
Thomas, Robert S.  
Thompson, Cecil M.  
Thompson, Edward J.  
Thompson, Frederick F.  
Thorne, Jack C.  
Thorson, Alvin L.  
\*Thrower, Kelton R.  
Thrower, Rudy  
Thurston, Hulton  
Tiemeir, Marion J. (Tiemeier)  
Titter, John  
Titus, Dudley G.  
Tobey, Dana  
Todd, Webb (Not 506--Compiler of 68th History)  
\*Todesco, Anthony P.  
Toepel, Arthur C.  
Tolle, James D.  
Tompkins, Tommy  
\*Toney, John H.  
Toothacker, (Toothaker) Lester G.  
Toy, (Sgt.) D.J. (*Burns*)  
Tracik, Eddie  
Traudt, **BERNARD G.** (*CG*) *TRAGER, MELVIN (FINANCE)*  
Trevino, Ernest L.  
\*Triick, Robert G. — *Eng. Sect.*  
\*Trimble, Roy E. — *Eng. Sect.*

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Trudeau, Elmo C.  
Trumbo, Grover C.  
Truono, Alfonse (Albert) A.  
Trusler, Kenneth R.  
Truslow, (Sgt.) *Wallace 1st Jr. Wounded 28 Mar 44*  
Tucker, James  
Tulini, Deno C.  
Turansky, Louis S. (A).  
Turley, Merle C.  
Turner, Charles J.  
Turner, Raleigh  
\*Turner, Raymond C.  
\*Tuttle, Richard E.  
Tuzinski, Henry P.  
Tyree, (Tryee) Hal C.  
Uchanski, Victor J.  
Underwood, Daniel W. ✓  
Unger, Clarence  
Urania, Albert J.  
Uvanni, William A.  
Vaden, Preston E.  
Vaisey, James E.  
\*Valko, Nichole  
\*Van Bidder, Elmer N. ✓ *OR VAN BIBBER - Eng. Sect.*  
Van Epps, Elwood A.  
Van Ess, Ralph E.  
\*Van Wye, John W.  
Vance, Robert D. *VAUPEL, ARTHUR W*  
Vaughan, Charles W.  
Ventura, Anthony J.  
Vetter, Edward F.  
\*Vibberts, Kenneth L.  
✓ Vickers, Harold J.  
Vincent, Larry W.  
\*Vornsand, William A. — *Eng. Sect.*  
\*Vos, Wesley W.  
Wademan, Louis E. — ✓ ✓  
Waite, John Kellogg  
Waldo, Edwin L.  
Waldorf, Harold B.



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Walfish (Lt.)  
Walker, Alfred O. (C.)  
- Walker, Beauford K.  
\*Walker, John E.  
\*Walker, John T.  
Wallace, Lawrence F.  
\*Wallace, William A. JR. *Eng. Sect.*  
\*Walmsley, John W.  
Walsh, Charles C.  
Walsh, Edward E.  
#Walsh James H. Jr.  
Walsh, John A.  
\*Walters, Charles D.  
\*Walton, Howard S.  
**Wapensky, Russel A.**  
Ward, James B. JR  
**Ward, Kenneth P.**  
? Ward, (Lt.)  
\*Ward, Stuart S.  
Ward, William W.  
\*Wardle, Robert E.  
Warner, Jack J.  
Warner, Lester  
\*Warren, Gordon L.  
**Warren, Lester D.**  
Warren, Owen A.  
\*Warren, Quentin L.  
Warren, Wayne M.  
%Warth, Charles J.  
- Warvel, James K.  
@Waska, Charles D.  
Wasson, Herbert ✓ *PHOTO-GRD.?*  
Waters, Thomas G.  
\*Watkins, William F.  
? Wayne, (Lt.)  
Weathers, George  
Weaver, William N.  
\*Weber, John P. — *Eng. Sect.*  
\*Webster, Arthur H. — ✓  
Weidig, George L.

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\*Weihe, Neill E.

Weiss, William J.

Welborn, Francis C.

Welford, William

\*Wentworth, Frank W.

Werkstein, Nester L.

Wernicki, Edward A.

Wessman, Helge E.

Westcott, Gerald S.

Westcott, Robert F.

Westenhiser, James T.

Westerman (Sgt.) *EMIL L. (McKENNA)*

Whalen, Jack V.

Wheatley, J. C.

Wheatly, Harold J.

\*Whisenand, Norman R.

%Whitby, Ray

\*White, Howard P. Jr.

Whitehouse, James M.

Whiteside, Leron (Leon) M.

Whitlock, Charles A.

Whitlock, Doy V.

Whitt, Oscar F.

Whittle, James L. Jr.

\*Wieser, Jerry H.

Wiest, Charles L.

Wiitala, Eric J.

\*Wilburn, Louis E.

Willey, Harry D.

Williams, Allen N. (W.)

Williams, Charles D.

Williams, Henry D.

Williams, Jack J.

\*Williams, Lawrence A.

Williams, Marion A.

\*Williams, Richard H.

Williams, Thomas P.

Williams, William W.

Williamson, Leroy M.

Willis, Theodore D.

*Eng. Sect.*

*R. WESTLAKE GRD. CRE WITH F.C. MOORE*

*Eng. Sect.*

*WATTLESEY, STEPHEN J*

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Wilson, Alfred R.  
**Wilson, Edward R.**  
\*Wilson, Foster W.  
Wilson, Herbert J.  
Wilson, James L.  
Wilson, John E.  
Wilson, R. J.  
Wilson, Walter W.  
Wimsatt, Louis J.  
Wind, Jack Jacob.  
Winfree, Julian E. Jr.  
Winn, Charles  
Winn, Jack M.  
Winn, (Sgt.)  
Wirck  
\*Wold, Russell A.  
\*Wolf, Frederick T.  
\*Wolfe, Joe R.  
Wombacher, Don  
? Wood (Lt.)  
Wood, James W.  
Woodruff, Nathan L.  
Woods, A. C.  
Wozniak, Daniel  
Wright, George D. Jr.  
Wright, William H.  
Wulff, Orville L.  
Wurzburger, Walter G.  
Wyant, Connie  
Wyant, John C.  
**Wycheck, Joseph E.**  
Wycoff, Vernon L.  
Wynes, Richard  
\*Yaniga, Stephen  
Yarbaugh, (Yarbrough), Gilbert  
\*Yates, Tony  
\*Yerke, Jacob  
Yoanitz, Morris  
Yoder, Monroe E.  
Yost, Robert E.

WILSON, CLAIRE M. — ENG. SECT

*Pop. 16 Killed Jan 43 Irianing flight.  
brother / Voluntary ComBAT*

*Eng. Sect.*

*Eng. Sect.*

*Eng. Sect.*

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Yost, Walter P.

\*You, Look

\*Young, Austin B.

Young, Donald L.

Young, Jacob R. — *BOMB. ON TYREE CREW*

Young, James D.

\*Young, Joseph J.

Young (Sgt.) *CLARENCE A. (THOMPSON)*

Yount, Walter K.

**Yurick, Chester W.**

Yuspeh, Michel

Zesdorn, Benjamin J.

\*Ziehler, Dunham V. — *Eng. Sect.*

\*Zimmerman, Glen O.

Zimmerman, Theodore F.

Zitzman, Ellsworth J. Jr.

\*Zwicker, Henry R.

*ZANNISER, NORMAN J. Eng Sect.*

*ZUCKER, LEO — Eng Sect.*