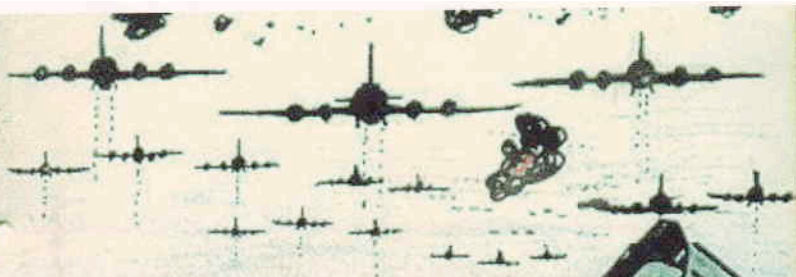


45
35
Missions

84
Woods

**The following is a replica of the
Diary that
1st Lt Robert E. Woods
wrote while serving with the
8th Air Force, 306 Bomb Group,
369 Squadron during
World War II.**

**Plus additional documentation
of his Military Career.**



35 Missions



BY

1ST LT. ROBERT E. WOODS

★ USAAF ★



Dedicated to
all aircrews who
flew the

"BIG IRON BIRDS"

—//—

R.E.W.

PREFACE.

IT'S ALL OVER NOW - THE SHOOTING PART I MEAN - and THE HORRIBLE DREAD OF BEING PULLED OUT OF YOUR BELOVED 'SACK (BED, TO YOU LUCKY CIVILIANS) AT THE UNGODLY HOUR OF 2 AM. IS A THING OF THE PAST. BUT BEFORE ALL THESE HAPPY (?) DAYS DRIFT TOO FAR INTO THE WINDING TRAILS OF MEMORY, I'M GOING TO SET A FEW OF MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN BLACK and WHITE FOR THE BENEFIT OF POSTERITY and FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO DO ON A DULL EVENING.

THIS SHORT HISTORY IS CONCERNED MOSTLY WITH MY VIEWS and EMOTIONS DURING MY TOUR OF DUTY AS PILOT OF A B-17,

(FLYING FORTRESS) ASSIGNED TO THE
306 BOMBARDMENT GROUP, 369
SQUADRON; THURLEIGH ENGLAND, TO
BE EXACT.

NOW FOR A BRIEF BACKGROUND
OF YOUR "AUTHOR" BEFORE HE BE-
CAME A MOVING TARGET FOR
THE FLAK GUNNERS OF NAZILAND.

BORN: ELBRIDGE, TENN. (POP. 300)

DATE: JAN 17, 1922

THE WOODS FAMILY MOVED TO
MEMPHIS, TENN. IN JULY, 1929.
BEING ONLY SEVEN, NATURALLY I
CAME WITH THEM.

I GRADUATED FROM HIGH
SCHOOL AT HUMCS, WORKED AT
FIRESTONE TIRE and RUBBER Co, BELL
TELEPHONE, WESTERN ELECTRIC and
FINALLY GOT MARRIED TO MISS
LOUE V. TAYLOR; AT A VERY MATURE
AGE OF 20.

I SAW THAT ★ You too can
be an Aviation Cadet ★ POSTER
AND WAS SWORN INTO THE AIR
FORCE SEPT. 24 1942.

I WAS CALLED TO ACTIVE SERVICE
JAN. 30, 1943.

I RECEIVED 38 DAYS BASIC TRAINING
AT MIAMI BEACH FLA., B.T.C. #9.
WHEN WE WERENT DRILLING IN
THE "DUST BOWL", A NAME WE
"FONDLY" GAVE OUR DRILL GROUND,
WE WERE LOCKED IN OUR HOTEL.
I WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN
MIAMI - THEY SAY IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

FROM MIAMI TO FAYETTEVILLE
ARK, HOME OF U. OF ARK. THIS
UNIVERSITY BECAME OUR ALMA
MATER FOR 5 MONTHS, WHERE
2 YEARS OF COLLEGE WAS CRAM-
ED DOWN OUR THROATS.

NEXT CAME CLASSIFICATION AND
PREFLIGHT AT SAN ANTONIO TEX.
THEN WE FLEW OUR FIRST
ARMY SHIP AT PRIMARY, IN
VERNON TEX. THOSE WHO WERE
LEFT WENT TO BASIC AT
GARDEN CITY KAN. (I CAN
STILL TASTE THE DUST.) AND
AT LAST CAME ADVANCED,

CLIMAXING 18 MONTHS OF HARD WORK, WITH A PAIR OF SILVER WINGS and A SHINEY SECOND LIEUTENANT'S BAR.

I WAS SENT TO RANDOLPH FIELD, TEX. FOR ONE MONTH OF INSTRUCTORS TRAINING; THEN BACK TO FREDERICK OKLA., MY ADVANCED SCHOOL, AS INSTRUCTOR.

I SETTLED BACK TO RELAX AT LAST, WITH MY WIFE and REGULAR HOURS; IT WAS SWELL. BUT... 30 DAYS LATER - REPORT TO PLANT PARK, TAMPA FLA. IN 48 HOURS FOR CO-PILOT OF B-17. TAMPA FLA. IN 48 HOURS? IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE!

WE, 23 OTHER FUTURE CO-PILOTS and I, ARRIVED IN TAMPA 2 DAYS LATER, VIA the AIRLINES. WE RUSHED TO PLANT PARK DISTRIBUTION CENTER and REPORTED. TWO WEEKS LATER WE WERE ASSIGNED TO CREWS.

AFTER 6 WEEKS TRAINING AT

DREW FIELD FLA, LT. SAMUELS
(OUR FIRST PILOT) HAD TO HAVE
AN OPERATION and WAS TAKEN
OFF THE CREW. HE WAS RE-
PLACED BY 1ST LT L. E. HUBBELL,
AN INSTRUCTOR THERE. HE IS
A SWELL GUY - SHORT, RESERVED,
STUBBORN, LIKES HIS BREW (and
CAN HOLD IT TOO) and HAD 25
MISSIONS OVER GERMANY - YEP,
HE ASKED FOR A SECOND TOUR,
and THIS WAS HIS CREW.....

WOODS, R.E.	CO-PILOT	TENN.
LISEC, V.	NAVIGATOR	ILL.
SOPINSKI H.J.	BOMBARDIER	IND.
MOODY B.S.	ENGINEER	KY.
WEST C.E.	RADIO OPR.	PAN. CANAL Z.
LEOPOLD W.A.	WAIST GUNNER	OHIO
HUNTER C.W.	BALL	" S. CAR.
MORGANROTH L.	TAIL	" ILL.

..... UP TO THIS TIME I HAD
HAD EXACTLY NO LEAVES OR
FURLONGHS SINCE I ENTERED
THE ARMY. - MY LUCK STILL HELD.

AFTER SAYING GOODBYE TO A VERY BRAVE LITTLE WIFE, WE LEFT DREW FIELD NOV. 5, 1944 FOR HUNTER FIELD, GA. MY MOTHER ~~and~~ MOTHER-IN-LAW CAME DOWN FROM MEMPHIS TO SEE ME OFF - ~~and~~ FOR ONCE MOM DIDN'T CRY - AT LEAST NOT WHERE I COULD SEE HER - THAT HELPED A LOT.

THE 2 MONTHS WITH LOVE, MY WIFE, AT TAMPA WERE THE BEST 2 MONTHS OF MY LIFE - AS THE TRAIN ROLLED OUT OF TAMPA I KNEW I HAD TO COME BACK.

AT HUNTER FIELD WE WERE ISSUED STEEL HELMETS, BLANKETS, MESS KITS, PACKS --- THEY ACTED AS IF WE WEREN'T GOING TO FLY ACROSS!

WE STEAMED OUT OF NEW YORK HARBOR ~~and~~ PAST THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AT 4 A.M.

Nov. 30, 1944.

AFTER 8 DAYS ABOARD THE GOOD SHIP "LE DE FRANCE", WE DROPPED ANCHOR AT GREENOCK, SCOTLAND; A FEW MILES FROM GLASGOW. EVER BEEN SEASICK? IT'S AWFUL!

IT TOOK 2 DAYS TO UNLOAD THE SHIP - BUT FINALLY WE WERE ON A TRAIN TO BEDFORD, ENGLAND. BUT FIRST WE SPENT 3 DAYS AT STONE, THE "PLANT PARK" OF THE E.T.O. HERE WE WERE SHOWN MOVIES and TOLD HOW TO ACT IN "LIMIELAND."

G.I. TRUCKS CARRIED US THE LAST 5 MILES TO THURLEIGH AIR BASE, OR THE 306 BOMB GROUP. THE GROUP IS DIVIDED INTO 4 SQUADRONS THEY GO BY NAMES and NUMBERS:

369 th	- FIGHTIN' BITIN'
367	- EAGER BEAVERS
368	- CLAY PIGEONS
and 423	- GRIM REAPERS.

OUR CREW WAS ASSIGNED TO
"FIGHTIN' BITIN'" WITH MAJ.
J.A. MCKINNEY AS C.O. and CAPT.
BILLY CASSEDA WAS OUR SQUADRON
OPERATIONS OFFICER.

WE RECEIVED 8 DAYS OF
GROUND SCHOOL - CONSISTING OF
LECTURES ON RADIO SECURITY,
FLARE CODES, STARTING and TAX-
ING TIMES, TYPES OF FORMATIONS,
and SOMETIMES A FLAK HAPPY
CHARACTER WOULD MAKE OUR
HAIR STAND ON END WITH TALES
OF BLOOD and THUNDER - THAT'S
ALWAYS GOOD FOR THE MORALE
OF NEW CREWS....

ABOUT THIS TIME, DEC 20, 1944,
GENERAL VON RUNDSTEDT WAS WHOOPING
IT UP IN THE ARDENNES OFFEN-
SIVE. THE WEATHER WAS ZERO,
ZERO - EVEN THE BIRDS WERE WALK-
ING. RUNDSTEDT HAD TO BE STOPPED!
SO, IN THE WEE HOURS ON THE MORN-
ING OF DEC 28, 1944 THE TELE-
TYPES OF THE 8TH AIR FORCE POUNDED
OUT THE BATTLE ORDER.....

MISSION NO. 1

28 DEC. 1944

COBLENZ, GER.

Flight time:
7:00

Diary...

WAS AWAKEN THIS MORNING AT 0005 BY MY BUNKMATE; WHO HAD JUST "CLOSED" THE BAR AT 'B' MESS. BEFORE HE DOZED OFF HE MUMBLED SOMETHING ABOUT THE LOADING LIST OF TODAY'S MISSION WAS OUT - and I WAS ON IT... SO I DIDN'T SLEEP MUCH THE REST OF THE REMAINING NIGHT.

AT 0500 THE C.O. INFORMED ME THAT BREAKFAST WAS AT 0515 and BRIEFING WAS AT 0600. EVER TRY TO DRESS IN BED? IT COMES IN HANDY WHEN IT'S DOWN TO ZERO and THE NEAREST FIRE IS A HALF MILE AWAY AT THE MESS HALL.

WE WERE CARRIED FROM THE MESS HALL TO THE BRIEFING ROOM BY TRUCKS.

CAPTAIN NICKELHOFF, GROUP OPERATIONS OFFICER, and our GROUP C.O., COL SUTTON, WERE ALL SEATED ALONG THE FRONT ROW, NEXT TO THE COVERED MISSION MAP. THESE FRONT SEATS WERE FOR THE "BIG WHEELS" - and so they were referred to as "THE WHEEL CHAIRS".

CAPT. NICKELHOFF READ THE LINE-UP FOR TODAY'S SHOW; OUR GRP. WAS 2ND IN FIRST DIVISION STREAM, OUR SQUADRON WAS FLYING LEAD. THIS POSITION GAVE US THE RADIO CALL SIGN OF "FOXHOLE BAKER LEAD." OUR BOMBLOAD WAS 18/250 LB DEMOLITION BOMBS and 2 CLUSTERS OF INCENDIARIES.

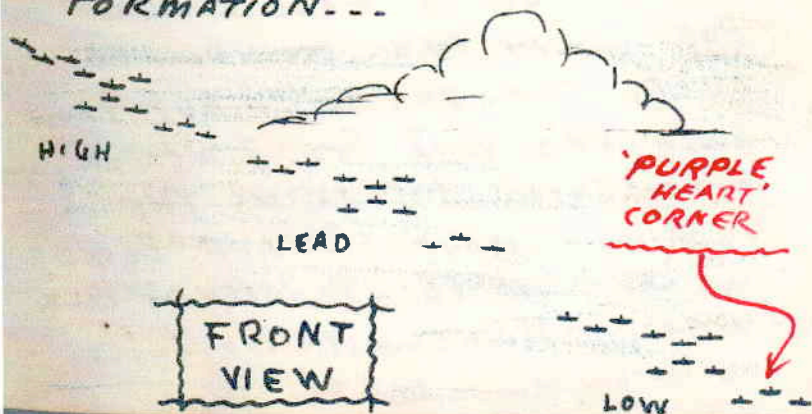
THE COVER OVER THE BIG MAP WENT UP - TARGET... COBLENZ GERMANY. AIMING POINT... THE MARSHALLING YARDS. FLAK WOULD BE SLIGHTLY HEAVY IF IT WAS VISUAL - LIGHT IF TEN-TENTHS.

AS WE ROLLED UP TO NO. 1 TAKE OFF POSITION and STOPPED,

HUBBELL PULLED OFF HIS GLOVES and WE SHOOK HANDS; SORT OF WISHED EACH OTHER GOOD LUCK. HUB SLOWLY OPENED THE THROTTLES AS I GAVE EVERYTHING A FINAL CHECK-- BOOST PUMPS, COWL FLAPS, TURBO SET, HIGH R.P.M, AUTO PILOT OFF, TAIL WHEEL LOCKED, ECT.

WE USED EVERY FOOT OF THE RUNWAY, ENGINES ROARING BEAUTIFULLY, and INTO THE SOOP WHICH WAS DOWN TO 200 FT.

WE BROKE OUT OF IT AT 12000 FT - LISEC HEADED US FOR MOUNT FARM, OUR GROUP RENDEZVOUS POINT. THERE WE CIRCLED FOR 25 MIN. UNTIL THE 36 SHIPS FORMED INTO A GROUP FORMATION---



WE JOINED THE BOMBER STREAM AT CLACTON, ENGLAND and HEADED FOR GERMANY. NEVER HAVE I SEEN SO MANY PLANES! HUNDREDS! THEY LOOKED LIKE BEES SWARMING AROUND THE HIVE.

WE PICKED UP OUR FIGHTER ESCORT AT 4° EAST (P-52'S). THEY KEPT CONSTANT PATROL ALONG THE BOMBER STREAM - QUICKLY CHALLENGING ANY JERRIE INTRUDERS.

BURSTS OF FLAK DOTTED THE SKY AT 2 O'CLOCK LEVEL - TOO FAR AWAY TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT.

AS WE ROLLED OUT ON THE BOMB RUN A FEW BLACK PUFFS OF FLAK MUSHROOMED OVER THE TARGET - BUT IT DWINDLED OFF TO 3 O'CLOCK*, HARMLESSLY FOLLOWING THE LEADING GROUP'S CHAFF. BOMBS WERE DROPPED BY MICKEY and WE HEADED HOME - WITH NO LOSSES.

* see diagram on page 84.

Mission No. 2.

29 DEC. 1944

BINGEN, GER.

Flight time:

7:20



BREAKFAST AT 0300, BRIEFING AT 0400. THE RIDE DOWN TO THE BRIEFING ROOM IN THESE TRUCKS SURE HELPS TO SETTLE THOSE PAN CAKES - AFTER EATING 3 OF THEM YOU FEEL ABOUT AS COMFORTABLE AS IF YOU HAD SWALLOWED A 500 POUNDER.

TAKEOFF WAS DELAYED 1 HOUR. HOPING THE WEATHER WOULD LIFT - BUT IT DIDN'T. WE COULDN'T SEE THE SHIPS AFTER THEY WERE HALF WAY DOWN THE RUNWAY. THE TOWER GAVE US THE TAKE OFF INTERVAL WITH A GREEN LIGHT.

WE ASSEMBLED AT 15000 and JOINED THE BOMBER STREAM, LEAVING ENGLAND AT 1032.

THE GROUP CROSSED THE ENEMY LINES SOUTH OF BOHN, GER, FAKING A RUN ON COBLENZ AGAIN, PICKED OUR I.P. and TURNED ON THE BOMB RUN FOR BINGEN.

IT HAD BEEN TEN-TENTHS ALL THE WAY - BUT RIGHT OVER OUR TARGET IT WAS WIDE OPEN.

TODAY I SAW MY FIRST REAL FLAK, and WHAT IT CAN DO TO AN AIRPLANE.

JERRIE WAS THROWING UP A BARRAGE AT OUR EXACT ALTITUDE - and WAS HOLDING IT THERE - JUST WAITING FOR US TO FLY THROUGH IT, and WE DID. I SAW 2 SHIPS IN THE LEADING GROUP GET HIT. ONE BLEW UP and THE OTHER LOST IT'S RIGHT WING and WENT INTO A SPIN - I COUNTED 12 CHUTES FROM BOTH SHIPS. THE 367TH LOST ONE SHIP - THE GROUP'S ONLY LOSS. BUT BATTLE DAMAGE WAS HEAVY. OUR SHIP GOT 9 HOLES, ONE PIECE OF FLAK BARELY MISSED MY HEAD and SMASHED THE ASTRODOME.

Mission No 3.

30 DEC. 1944

MAINZ, GER.

flight time:
7:40

A

MILK RUN. ONLY 4 BURSTS OF FLAK! THIS FLAK BARRAGE WAS SHORT LIVED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE SQUADRON AHEAD WHO DROPPED THEIR LOAD RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF JERRIE'S GUN BATTERY.

OUR JOB WAS TO HIT A TUNNEL ENTRANCE ~~and~~ CAVE THE SIDES OF THE MOUNTIAN IN ON A VERY BUSY RAILROAD. IT'S GOING TO TAKE LOTS OF DIGGING TO FIND THOSE TRACKS AGAIN.

OUR LITTLE FRIENDS KEPT US COVERED ALL THE WAY. YOU COULD SEE DOG FLIGHTS UP AHEAD, BUT NO JERRIES GOT INTO THE STREAM.

MY OXYGEN REGULATOR FROOZE TODAY. WHEN I CAME TO, MOODY WAS SHAKING ME. HUBBELL HAD TURNED THE EMERGENCY ON. I WAS OUT ONLY 2 OR 3 MINUTES.

MISSION No. 4

2 JAN. 1945

KYLLBURG GER.

flight time

6:30

OUT

OF THE SACK AT 0300.

TOOK OFF AT 0648. THE FOG IS STILL 12000 FT. THICK - and ABOUT 3 FT. ABOVE THE GROUND.

OUR AIMING POINT TODAY WAS AN ORDNANCE DEPOT. WE DROPPED OUR LOAD, 18/250 LB DEMOS. and 2/500 LB INCENDIARY CLUSTERS, BY INSTRUMENTS. RESULTS NOT VISIBLE. 'BOMBS AWAY' AT 1013, DROPPED AT 50 FT. INTERVAL.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 26,500 FT.

I HOPE THIS TRIP HELPED SOPINSKI'S BROTHER WHO IS FIGHTING IN LUXEMBOURG.

WE MADE AN S.O.P LETDOWN FROM MOUNT FARM and SET HER DOWN AT 1227. "GOOD SHOW!"

Mission No. 5

3 JAN. 1945

COLOGNE GER.

flight time
7:20

THE LINE ON THE MISSION MAP STOPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF A BIG RED SPOT NAMED COLOGNE. I NOTICED THE OLDER MEN, WHO HAD BEEN THERE, GULPED.

MAJOR BAIRNESFATHER, THE S-2 OFFICER, SAID IT WOULD BE TEN-TENTHS and READ US THE STATISTICS OF PREVIOUS RAIDS ON THIS TARGET - LOSSES HADN'T BEEN TOO BAD.

THE MAJOR WAS RIGHT - IT WAS TEN-TENTHS and FLAK WAS LIGHT and IN-ACCURATE.

TOOK OFF 0730

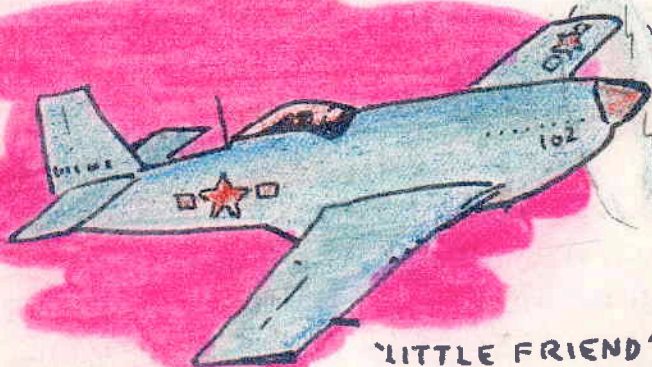
BOMB LOAD 12/500LB DEMOS.

BOMBS AWAY AT 1100

ALTITUDE 25000 FT.

Mission No. 6
5 JAN. 1945
NIEDERMENDIG Air Field, GER.
flight time
6:40

TODAY'S JOB WAS TO POSTHOLE
ONE OF JERRIE'S FRONT LINE
AIR FIELDS. THE WEATHER IS
STILL BAD. WE MADE A GOOD
GEE RUN and DROPPED OUR
BOMB LOAD OF 38/100 LB'ERS.
NO FLAK - and NO FIGHERS
NICE MISSION - I COULD TAKE
ABOUT 30 MORE LIKE THIS.
BOMBING ALTITUDE, 24,500.FT.
THE FIELD WAS LOCATED 17
MILES WEST OF COBLENZ.



'LITTLE FRIEND'

Mission No 7.

7 JAN. 1945

BOHN, GER.

Flight time
7:20

I

IT SNOWED LAST NIGHT - NOW THE WIND IS BLOWING IT AROUND. I HOPPED A TRUCK and GOT A RIDE TO THE MESS HALL FOR A CHANGE. I WISH THE NEW CREWS WOULD HURRY UP and GET OUT OF GROUND SCHOOL SO WE COULD GET A REST.

WE TOOK OFF AT 0700. THE SNOW HAD STOPPED FOR A WHILE.

WE CLIMBED THROUGH SNOW STORMS UP TO 11000 FT. ICE FORMED HEAVY ON THE WINGS, BUT WE HAD A SHIP WITH GOOD DE-ICEING BOOTS and WE GOT MOST OF IT OFF.

TARGET WAS RAILROADS - WE DROPPED BY WICKET. NO FLAK, EXCEPT ON CROSSING THE LINES, IT WAS NOT TOO ACCURATE.

Mission No. 8

10 JAN. 1945

COLOGNE, GER.

Flight time
7:30

EVERYBODY WAS PRAYING FOR A SCRUB THIS MORNING. THE CREW CHIEFS HAD BEEN WORKING ALL NIGHT CLEARING THE SNOW and ICE OFF THE SHIPS. IT WAS SNOWING HARD. SALT HAD BEEN SPREAD AROUND THE PERIMETER TRACK and ON No. 1 TAKE OFF POSITION. THIS MELTED SOME OF THE SNOW and KEPT THE BIG LUMBERING FORTS FROM SLIDING OFF THE TAXI STRIPS and RUNWAY.

TIME TO START ENGINES and STILL NO "RED-RED" FROM THE TOWER. WE GAVE UP HOPE and STARTED TURNING 'EM OVER.

YOU COULDN'T SEE THE SHIPS AS THEY ROARED DOWN

THE ICY RUNWAY. ALL THAT WAS VISIBLE WAS A BALL OF WHIRLING SNOW.

ON THE WAY UP THROUGH THE STUFF WE HAD THE SAME TROUBLE AS YOU WOULD EXPECT IF YOU FLEW IN A SNOWSTORM. ICE ON THE WINGS, ICE ON THE PROPS, ICE IN THE CARBURATOR, ICE IN THE PITOT TUBE and COLD AS BLAZES IN THE SHIP.

THE CLOUDS WENT UP TO 30 THOUSAND FT. - BUT WE FOUND A FAIRLY OPEN SPOT and ASSEMBLED, AT 17000 FT.

EVERY THING WAS O.K. UNTILL WE LINED UP ON THE BOMB RUN - THEN ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE.

IT HAD BEEN SOLID UNDERCAST ALL THE WAY, BUT JUST LIKE THE BINGEN RAID, IT WAS CLEAR OVER COLOGNE.

HALF WAY DOWN THE BOMB RUN ANOTHER GROUP CAME

BARRELING THROUGH OUR SQUADRON,
WHICH WAS LEADING THE GROUP.
WE HAD TO SCATTER TO A-
VOID A MIDAIR COLLISION. THIS
FOILED OUR RUN ON THE PRIMARY,
THE HOENZOLLERN BRIDGE, SO THE
LEAD SHIP STARTED A TURN TO
THE LEFT FOR A RUN ON THE
SECONDARY. WE NEVER COMPLETED
THAT RUN.

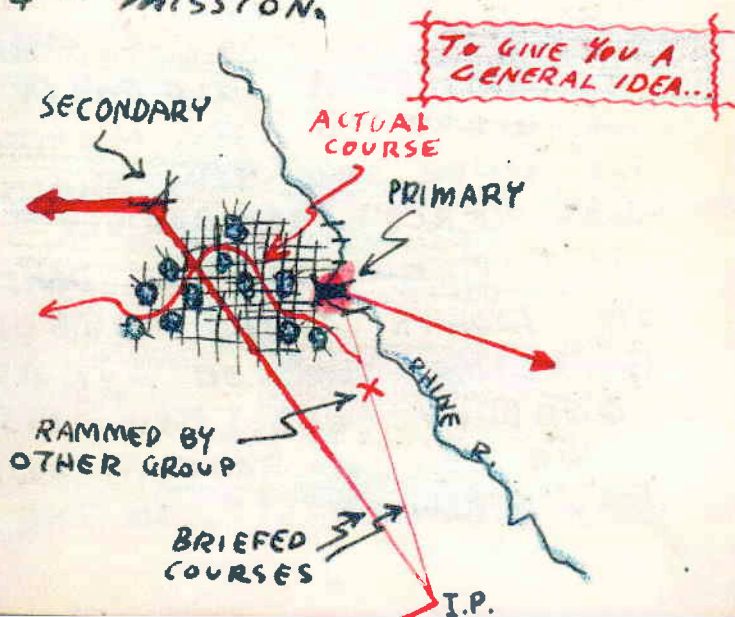
THOSE BLACK PUFFS BEGAN
TO BREAK ALL AROUND US. THE
DEPUTY LEAD GOT HIT IN THE
#2 ENGINE - HE PEELED OUT OF
POSITION AND BLEW UP; TAKING
ANOTHER SHIP DOWN WITH HIM.
THE HIGH ELEMENT LEAD WENT
DOWN NEXT, WITH NO TAIL SECTION.
THE LEAD SHIP GOT HIT IN THE
BOMB BAY - SCATTERING BOMBS
LIKE PAPER. 3 OTHER SHIPS
HAD TO LAND IN FRANCE WITH
DEAD OR INJURED ABOARD.

WE WERE LEADING THE LOW
ELEMENT, THE ONLY ELEMENT TO

NOT LOSE A SHIP. BUT WE
COUNTED 19 HOLES AFTER WE
LANDED. AFTER WE GOT OUT
OF THE FLAK WE BROUGHT OUR
ELEMENT IN WITH THE 423RD
SQUADRON and CAME HOME
WITH THEM FOR FIGHTER PRO-
TECTION.

MOST ALL THE SHIPS THAT
RETURNED WENT TO THE HANG-
ERS FOR REPAIRS.

I LOST TWO GOOD BUDDIES
TODAY. LT MATTSON and LT
PIERCE - THIS WAS PIERCE'S
34TH MISSION.



Mission No. 9

17 JAN. 1945

BIELFELD, GER.

Flight time

7:40

LT. POWERS, LT. PIERCE'S CO-PILOT, BROUGHT #287 BACK TODAY. HE SAID PIERCE GOT HIT IN THE HEAD BY A PIECE OF FLAK THE SIZE OF YOUR FIST. HE DIED RIGHT AFTER THEY LANDED. LT. SNOEMARBER SAYS WHEN THEY GET HIM ON ANOTHER MISSION IT WILL BE A COLD DAY IN HELL. HE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL - WE NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN. HE WAS PIERCE'S BOMBARDIER.

I FLEW WITH LT. DENTON ON TODAY'S RAID. HUBBELL IS BEING CHECKED OUT AS SQUADRON LEAD. I FLEW "FLAK SHACK."

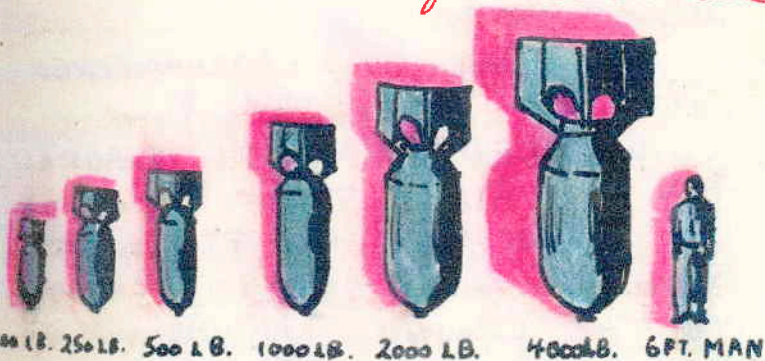
WE HIT A RAILROAD BRIDGE NEAR BIELFELD GER, IN THE HEART

OF THE RHUR, BETTER KNOW TO
US AS "FLAK HAPPY VALLEY." IT
LIVED UP TO IT'S NAME, BUT
DUE TO A SOLID CLOUD LAYER
IT WAS INACCURATE. THE
GROUP AHEAD LOST ONE SHIP.
A FEW OF OUR SHIPS WERE
HIT, BUT ALL CAME HOME.

TEMPERATURE AT BOMBING
ALTITUDE WAS 31° BELOW ZERO, C.
BOMB LOAD - 6/1000 LB. DEMOS,
DROPPED SALVO.

I WAS SURE TIRED TONIGHT -
HIT SACK AT 1830.

COMPARATIVE SIZES of DEMOLITION BOMBS.



Mission No. 10
29 JAN. 1945
COBLENZ, GER.
flight time
7:40

ENTERED ENEMY COAST NEAR
ALKMAAR, HOLLAND - CROSSED THE
ZUIDER ZEE and TURNED SOUTH
AT 7°30' TO MISS THE OSNABRÜCK
FLAK. WE KEPT EAST OF HAPPY
VALLEY, WELL OUT OF RANGE OF
THEIR GUNS. I SAW A B-24 GROUP
PLOWING UP THE VALLEY, IT WAS GET-
TING CUT UP PRETTY BAD - 4 BIG
BIRDS WENT DOWN WHILE WE
WERE PASSING.

NO FLAK WAS ENCOUNTERED
OVER THE TARGET.

WE LED THE HIGH SQUADRON
FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY.

CEILING WAS 400 FT ON RE-
TURN TO BASE - WITH HAZE DOWN
TO THE GROUND. LANDING WAS THE
ROUGHEST PART OF THE MISSION.

Mission No. 11

6 FEB. 1945

FULDA, GER.

flight time

9:40

0

OUR BRIEFED TARGET WAS BOHLEN, GER., BUT ORDERS WERE TO BOMB A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY IF BOHLEN WAS CLOSED IN. NOT ONLY WAS THE PRIMARY TEN-TENTHS BUT THE LEAD and HCGH SQUADRON'S MICKEY and 'G' EQUIPMENT BECAME INOPERATIVE. WE WERE LEADING THE LOW, SO WE TOOK OVER and LED THE GROUP THROUGH A THICK HAZE THAT WENT UP TO 35 000. OUR MICKEY SET WASN'T WORKING SO WELL EITHER, BUT FINALLY THE TOWN OF FULDA GER. APPEARED IN THE MICKEY SCOPE. WE OPENED BOMB BAYS and DROPPED - 10/500 LB DEMOS.

Mission NO. 12.

9 FEB. 1945

LUTZKENDORF, GER.

flight time

8:45

BRIEFING AT 0400. WE TOOK OFF AT 0650 and HEADED FOR THE BIG SYNTHETIC OIL PLANT AT LUTZKENDORF, 11 MILES SOUTH OF MERSEBURG. I FLEW CO-PILOT FOR LT ROZETTE and WAS LEADING THE HIGH SQUADRON.

ABOUT 12 GROUPS WENT IN ON THIS TARGET. TO MAKE SURE THIS PLANT WOULD BE OUT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE WAR.

ALTITUDES VARIED FROM 15000 UP TO 27000 FT. WE WERE AT 24,500 FT. THE FLAM WAS WORKING UP and DOWN THE SCALE - IT WOULD START BREAKING AT 15000 and WALK UP TO 28000, and PLENTY OF IT. WE GOT PLENTY NEAR

MISSILES - YOU COULD HEAR and FEEL THE SHIP RING and JUMP WHEN A BURST HIT CLOSE.

TWO ME 262 JETS CAME THROUGH OUR SQUADRON LIKE STREAKS OF LIGHTENING and TOOK OUT TWO FORTS IN THE GROUP AHEAD OF US. ONE FORTRESS ROLLED OVER ON ITS BACK and SPLIT SID STRAIGHT DOWN. I DIDN'T SEE ANY CHUTES.

WE LOST THE OTHER TWO SQUADRONS and CAME HOME ALONE.

WHEN BANDITS ARE REPORTED IN THE AREA, THE SQUADRON'S REALLY FLY A TIGHT FORMATION. THEY TRY TO PUT THEIR WING TIP IN THE NEXT SHIP'S WAIST WINDOW.

WE HAD A FEW HOLES IN THE SHIP, NOTHING SERIOUS.

HIT SACK AT 2100 - VERY TIRED.

Mission NO. 13

10 FEB. 1945

DULMEN, GER.

flight time

8:30

I CALLED THIS "MISSION NO 12-B:"
(NOT THAT I'M SUPERSTITIOUS.) BUT I
DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES.

WE WENT TO HAPPY VALLEY
TODAY AFTER AN OIL STORAGE DUMP.

IT WAS TEN TENTHS and THE
FIRST 'G' RUN DIDN'T TAKE, SO
WE MAKE A 360° and TRIED IT
AGAIN. FLAK BY THIS TIME
WAS SO THICK YOU COULD TAXI
ON IT. WE LOST ONE SHIP-
3 OTHERS GOT HIT BAD. 1
TOGGLIER and 2 RADIO MEN
ARE IN THE HOSPITAL.

OUR GROUP LED THE 8th AIR
FORCE, ("CHIEF FLAK BAIT")

WEATHER WAS SO BAD and
GAS SO LOW, WE BROKE UP THE
GROUP and CAME IN ALONE.

Mission NO 14

23 FEB 1945

PLAUE, GER.

flight time
10:00

SOMETHING NEW HAS BEEN ADDED! OUR BOMBING ALTITUDE TODAY WAS THE LOWEST IN OUR HISTORY - THE 8th BOMBED ITS TARGETS AT 12,000 FT.!

WE ARE GIVING PATTON'S 3RD ARMY A HAND - HITTING COMMUNICATIONS, RAILS, BRIDGES, and ROADS. EVERY TOWN AS FAR AS YOU COULD SEE WAS BLAZING. I SAW ONE GROUP DROP ON A TOWN - IT SEEMED TO LIFT OFF THE GROUND, THEN WENT UP IN SMOKE.

P-51'S GOT IN A FIGHT RIGHT UNDER OUR GROUP - ONE P-51 WENT DOWN ON FIRE - NO CHUTE - HIS BUDDIES GOT THE JERRIE, HE BLEW UP. THE LITTLE FRIENDS TAKE GOOD CARE OF US "BIG FRIENDS".

Mission No. 15

28 FEB. 1945

HAGEN, GER.

flight time

8:10

GOT UP THIS A.M. AT 0600.
BRIEFED AT OTIS FOR ANOTHER
OIL DUMP AT HAGEN GER.
TOOK OFF AT 1100. LEFT
ENGLISH COAST AT 1300.

THIS WILL BE MY LAST
MISSION AS CO-PILOT. I WAS
CHECKED OUT YESTERDAY AS FIRST.
I FLEW WITH LT. BOWLEY TODAY,
WE LED THE HIGH SQUADRON.

WE MADE AN INSTRUMENT
RUN ON THE TARGET, WHICH
IS ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE
RHUR VALLEY. MEDIUM and IN-
ACCURATE FLAK; SLIGHT DAMAGE.

TEMPERTURE 49° BELOW ZERO.

BOMB LOAD 6/1000LB DEMOS.

BOMBING ALT. 26000 FT.

SGT PATTERSON, OUR ENGINEER, FINISHED
TODAY. HE PROMISED TO CALL LOVE.

Mission No. 16
10 MAR. 1945
DORTMUND, GER.
flight time
7:40

I

FLEW AS FIRST PILOT - I DON'T HAVE A CREW OF MY OWN AS YET. I CHECKED OUT A BRAND NEW CREW, SANDINA WAS MY CO-PILOT.

I MADE SURE THEY KNEW WHAT TO DO and TOOK OFF AT 1046. WE CROSSED INTO ENEMY TERRITORY IN HOLLAND and TOOK A COURSE FOR DORTMUND.

THE NEW BOYS WERE O.K. ONLY THEY KEPT ASKING IF THOSE BLACK PUFFS WERE FLAK. THEY SOON FOUND OUT. WE WATCHED IT TRACK A SHIP - GRADUALLY COMING CLOSER. FINALLY IT WALKED RIGHT UP TO THE LEFT WING and TOOK IT OFF. 105MM STUFF IS ROUGH. THE SHIP WENT

INTO A FLAT GRAVEYARD SPIN- WE
COUNTED 3 MINUTES BEFORE IT
WENT INTO THE CLOUDS.

THIS FLAK SUIT and HELMET
SEEM VERY HEAVY and UN-
COMFORTABLE, UNTILL YOU SEE SOME
THING LIKE THAT, THEN IT GETS
AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER- and YOUR
BIG FLAK HELMET FEELS LIKE A DERBY.
SOMETIMES I'D LIKE TO HAVE
PULLED IT DOWN OVER MY SHOULDERS,
WITH JUST MY FEET STICKING OUT.

ALL OUR BOMBS WENT OUT
O.K. and THE RADIO MAN GIVE
THE WORD THAT THE DOORS WERE
CLOSED. I BREATHED EASIER, IT'S
ALWAYS A RELIEF TO GET THAT
LOAD OF T.N.T. OUT OF THE
SHIP.

WE LANDED AT 1705.

HUBBELL MADE CAPTAIN
TODAY. HE REALLY DESERVED IT.

I WONDER HOW THE FOLKS
AT HOME ARE DOING- I FEEL
A LITTLE LONESOME TONIGHT.

Mission No. 17
12 MAR. 1945
SWINEMUNDE, GER.
Flight time
10:25

BREAKFAST AT 0300, BRIEFING AT
0400.

WE BOMBED THE DOCKS AT
THIS BIG NORTHERN PORT, NOW
VERY BUSY TRANSPORTING RE-
TREATING GERMAN TROOPS FROM
THE RUSSIAN FRONT. ALSO THE
POCKET NAZI BATTLESHIP "ADMIRAL
SHEER" WAS IN THE HARBOR.

TAKE OFF WAS AT 0702.
OUR COURSE WAS ACROSS THE
NORTH SEA - OVER DENMARK, DUE
EAST TO AN I.P. IN THE BALTIC
SEA. OUR BOMB RUN WAS ON
A HEADING OF 180°.

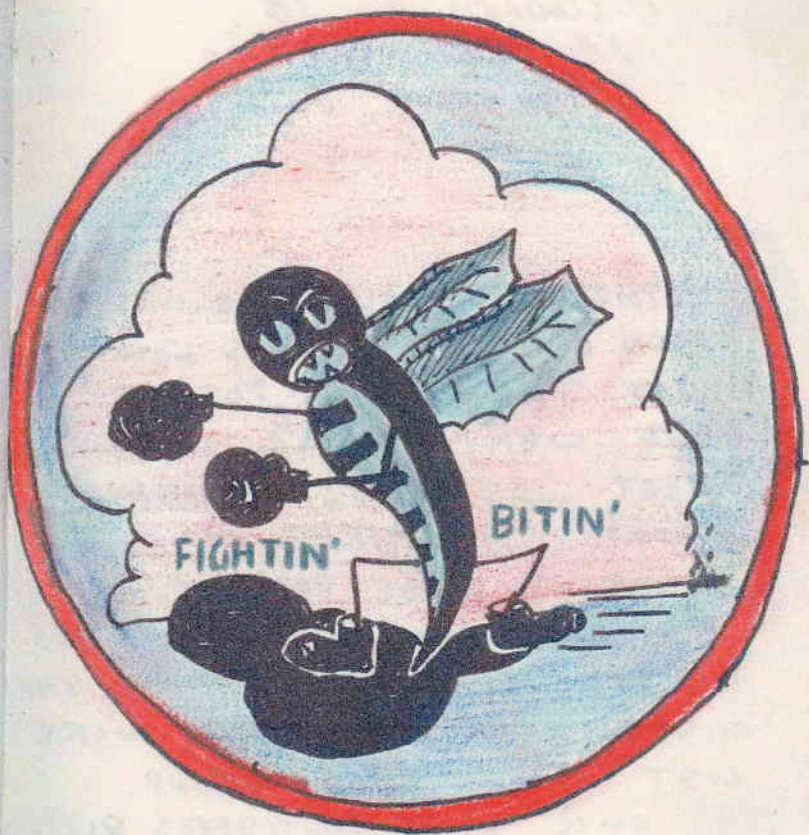
IT WAS FROM FIVE-TO
TEN-TENTHS ALL THE WAY -
and COMPLETELY COVERED OVER
THE TARGET.

WE ALL KNEW IF THAT BATTLESHIP WAS DOWN THERE IT WOULD THROW UP SOME MEAN FLAK. and THE FIRST GROUP OVER CAUGHT IT - THEY LOST 3 SHIPS BUT THEY STOPPED THE FLAK.

THE UNDERCAST WAS AT 12000. THE SMOKE FROM OUR HITS BOILED UP THROUGH IT and ROLLED OUT ON TOP. BLACK SMOKE, MEANING OIL, MAYBE "BATTLESHIP" OIL.

ONE 1000 LB. BOMB HUNG UP IN OUR RACKS - THE TOUGHER CLIMBED OUT ON THE CATWALK and TRIPPED IT WITH A PAIR OF PLIARS. I DON'T LIKE TO LAND WITH BOMBS IF THEY ARE HANGING DANGEROUSLY.

THIS WAS MY LONGEST MISSION. IT'S NO FUN FIGHT. A 60,000 LB. FORT IN FORMATION FOR 10:25. I'VE GOT BLISTERS IN MY HAND - ALL OF US HAVE, and THIS OXYGEN MASK ALMOST DRIVES YOU CRAZY AFTER 8 HOURS OF IT.



OUR SQUADRON INSIGNA.



Mission No. 18

14 MAR. 1945

HILDESHEIM, GER.

flight time

8:45

A

NOTHER LOW ALTITUDE MISSION.
I DON'T LIKE IT THIS LOW - THE
HIGHER THE BETTER FOR ME.

WE WENT IN AT 12000 FT.
TARGET WAS A JET AIRPLANE
FACTORY. ALL THREE OF OUR
SQUADRONS MADE PERFECT HITS.

VERY LIGHT FLAK - AT THIS
ALTITUDE I DON'T SEE HOW THEY
MISSED - BUT NO SHIPS WERE
LOST FROM THIS GROUP.

OUR 1000 POUNDERS RIPPED
THE FACTORY OPEN and THE
INCENDIARIES SET IT ON FIRE -
SMOKE BELLOWED UP TO 8000 FT.

ALL THE "BIG WHEELS"
WERE PROUD OF THE RESULTS.

I GOT THE SECOND CLUSTER
TO MY AIR MEDAL TODAY.

WEATHER WAS C. A. V. U.

Mission No. 19

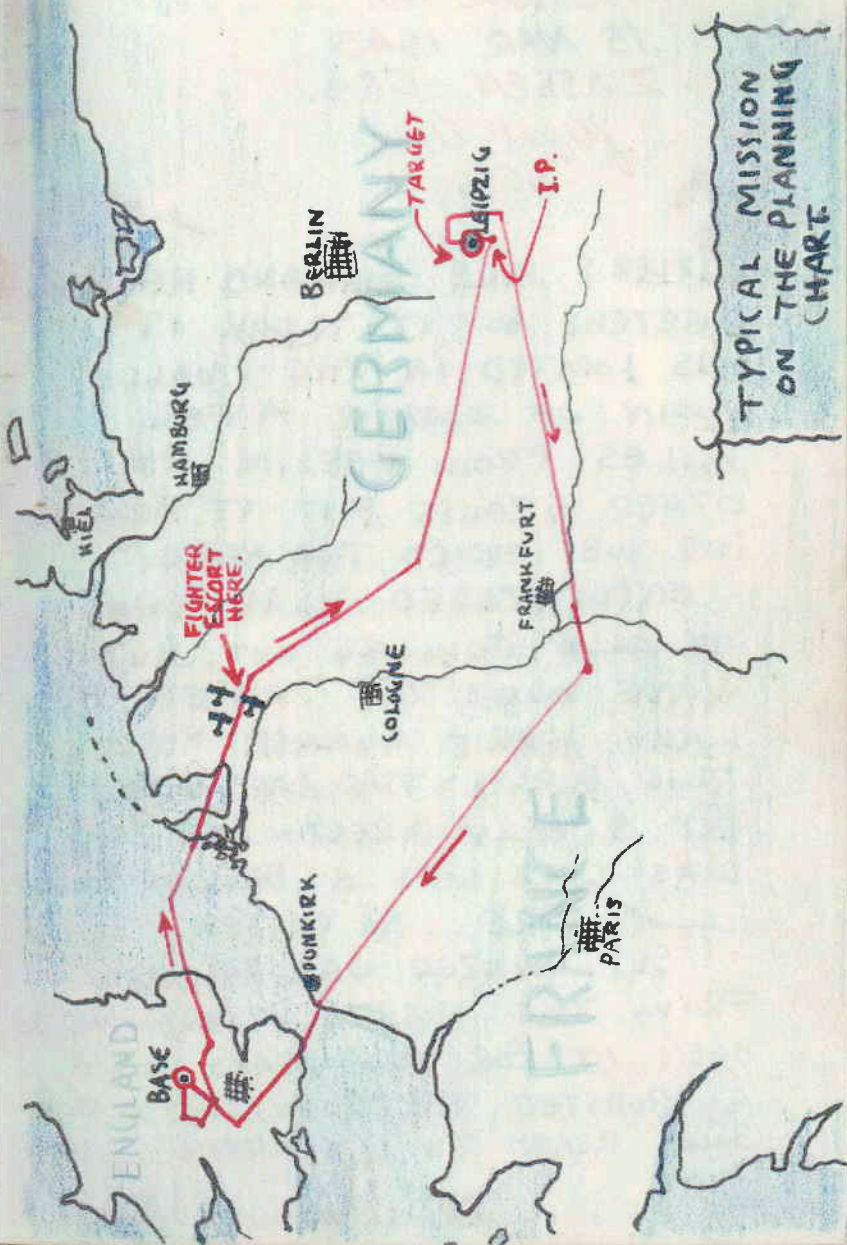
15 MAR. 1945
ZOSSEN, GER.

flight time
9:30

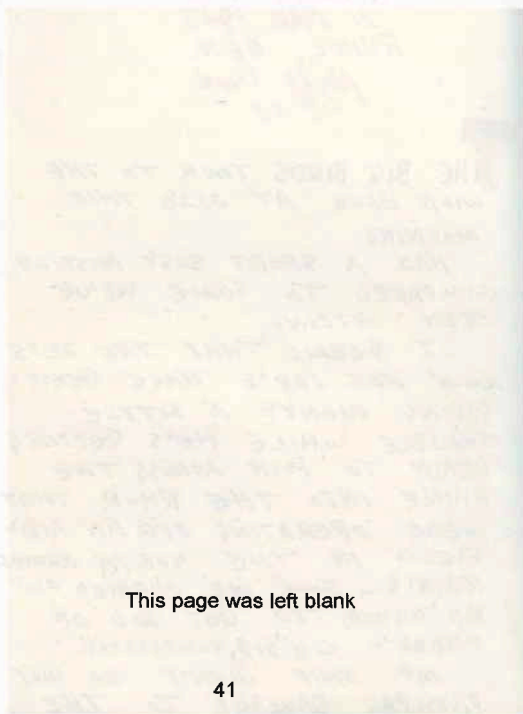
HITLER'S HIGH COMMAND HEAD-
QUARTERS GOT IT TODAY. IT
WAS LOCATED IN THE SMALL
TOWN OF ZOSSEN, A FEW
MILES FROM BERLIN. 14
OTHER GROUPS HIT IT BESIDES
US. WE LEVELED THE PLACE.

ENCOUNTERED FLAK GOING
IN and COMING OUT, BUT
NONE OVER THE TARGET- A
LUCKY JERRIE GUNNER FIRED
TWO BURSTS- THE LAST BURST
HIT A B-24 DIRECT- ALL THAT
WAS LEFT WAS A BALL OF SMOKE
and FIRE... NO CHUTES.

Sgt HUNTER WAS RELEASED
FROM THE HOSPITAL TODAY. HE'S
BEEN IN FOR TWO WEEKS WITH
A BURSTED EARDRUM. HE'S O.K.
and READY TO FLY AGAIN.



TYPICAL MISSION
ON THE PLANNING
(CHART)



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Mission No. 20
21 MAR. 1945
RHINE, GER.
flight time
7:20

THE BIG BIRDS TOOK TO THE WILD BLUE AT 0620 THIS MORNING.

HAD A SHORT EASY MISSION, COMPARED TO SOME I'VE BEEN GETTING.

IT SEEMS THAT THE JETS and W.E. 109'S HAVE BEEN GIVING MONZY A LITTLE TROUBLE WHILE HE'S GETTING READY TO PUSH ACROSS THE RHINE INTO THE RHUR. THEY WERE OPERATING OFF AN AIR-FIELD IN THE NORTH NAMED RHINE - and WE CARRIED OUT AN ORDER TO GET RID OF THEM - WE DID, COMPLETELY.

MY SHIP DIDN'T DO ANY PHYSICAL DAMAGE TO THE

FIELD - I WORKED ON THE MORALE. I CARRIED NICKELS - NOT THE AMERICAN 5 CENT PIECE - BUT SURRENDER LEAFLETS and NEWSPAPERS TELLING JERRIE WHAT THE SCORE WAS and ASKING HIM TO CASH IN HIS CHIPS.

THE REST OF THE GROUP CARRIED 38 PACKS OF SMALL ANTI PERSONELL (FRAGMENTATION) BOMBS. OTHER GROUPS CARRIED 1000 POUNDERS. WE WORKED ON THE BARRACKS and FLAK BATTERIES and THEY DROPPED ON THE RUNWAYS, GIVING THE FIELD AN ALL AROUND GOOD PLASTERING.

FLAK WAS LIGHT - BUT AFTER WE DROPPED THEY QUIT ALTOGETHER FIRING and RAN TO THEIR HOLES. AFTER WE, THE HEAVY BOMBERS, FINISHED; P-51'S WENT IN and STRAFFED WHAT WAS LEFT.... MARK OFF ONE LUFEWAFFE FIELD!

Mission No 21

22 MAR 1945

FILDHAUSEN, GER.

flight time
7:20

A

ANOTHER NAZI HEADQUARTERS HIT THE DUST THIS MORNING, THIS TIME IT WAS ON THE WESTERN FRONT. I'LL BET WE SCATTERED NAZI "MORNING REPORTS" OVER HALF OF GERMANY.

TARGET WAS LOCATED IN THE RHUR, BUT NOT THE FLAK WE EXPECTED CAME UP - THEY'RE POKING IT BACK. ONE OF THESE DAYS WE'RE GOING TO GET HIT IN SOME UNEXPECTED and UNCHARTED FLAK AREA. THESE GUNS ARE PILING UP SOMEWHERE IN GERMANY - and S-2 DOESN'T KNOW WHERE.

WE TURNED OFF THE TARGET IN A HEELISH 60° BANK - BUT JUST IN TIME - THE WHOLE

AA

SKY 500 YARDS AHEAD BURST INTO FIRE and SMOKE - THE GROUP AHEAD HADN'T TURNED OFF THE RUN SOON ENOUGH and WAS CAUGHT IN THIS BLACK DEATH - THEIR SHIPS BEGAN PEELING OUT OF FORMATION LIKE SICK FLIES - SOME BURNING, SOME JUST SPIRLING DOWNWARD. FOUR WENT DOWN, BEFORE A CHANCE FOR EVASIVE ACTION COULD BE TAKEN FROM THIS BARRAGE.

ONE OF OUR SHIPS LANDED IN FRANCE - 2 ENGINES SHOT OUT. TWO OTHERS HAD ONE ENGINE OUT - BUT THEY CAME IN WITH THE GROUP.

MACDONALD, J.G., HUNTER, IFRATIE, SOPINSKI & LEOPOLD WERE WITH ME TODAY. THEY ARE ON MY CREW. SOPINSKI IS MY NAV. and LEOPOLD MY TUGGER. MACDONALD IS MY CO. PILOT - HE'S A GOOD PILOT. HOPE I GET TO KEEP HIM.

Mission No. 22
23 MAR. 1945
COESFELD, GER.
Flight time
6:25



BREAKFAST AT 0500, BRIEFING AT 0600. WE WENT TO THAT D—M HAPPY VALLEY AGAIN. I WISH MONTY WOULD HURRY AND CROSS THAT RHINE AND PUT THAT FLAK NEST OUT OF THE WAR.

WE BOMBED A MARSHALLING YARD AT COESFELD, HELPING TO ISOLATE THE RHUR SO IT WILL BE EASIER FOR MONTEGOMERY TO TAKE IT.

WE SAW ANOTHER V-2 ROCKET BOMB LEAVE HOLLAND. I HAVEN'T MENTIONED IT BEFORE. BUT WE USUALLY SEE 2 OR 3 EVERY TIME WE GO OVER THERE. YOU CAN'T SEE THE ROCKET ITSELF, JUST IT'S CON TRAIL - A THIN WHITE STRIPE ACROSS THE SKY.

STRAIGHT UP - 70 MILES. WE ALWAYS MADE NOTES OF WHERE THEY CAME FROM - SO THE MEDIUMS AND FIGHTERS COULD COME OVER AND SHOOT UP THEIR LAUNCHING SITES.

JERRIE TRIED TO DRIVE US OFF, AS USUAL, BUT THE BIG GAS BIRDS CAN'T BE STOPPED - SOME GO DOWN - BUT YOU CAN'T STOPP'EM, AS HE FINALLY FOUND OUT.

HALF OF OUR BOMBS DIDN'T GO OUT WHEN THE TOGGLIER HIT THE SWITCH - I HAD TO DROP 'EM FROM THE EMERGENCY SALVO SWITCH IN THE COCKPIT. WE DROPPED 20 SECONDS LATE.

A PIECE OF FLAK HAD CHIPPED SOME WIRES IN THE BOMBARDIERS CONTROL PANEL.

BOMBING ALTITUDE 26000.
TEMP. 49° BELOW ZERO.

Mission No. 23
HANNOVER, GER.
28 MAR. 1945

flight time
7:30

HAD TO CALL IN A DELAY OF
TAKE OFF FOR MY SHIP, BOMBS
WERE NOT COMPLETELY LOADED.
WE TOOK OFF 38 MINUTES LATE.
OUR GROUP WAS ASSEMBLING NORTH
OF PARIS OVER A RADIO BUNCHER.

30 MINUTES AFTER TAKE OFF
LARRY CALLED and SAID THE G.
BOX and RADIO COMPASS WAS OUT.
WE HAD BEEN ON INSTRUMENTS
SINCE TAKE OFF, I DIDN'T WANT
TO ABORT SO I TOLD HIM
TO DO HIS BEST TO D.R. US
TO THE RENDEZVOUS POINT. WE
WERE AT 13000 FT and STILL
NO SIGN OF A BREAK IN THE
WEATHER.

WE WERE BRIEFED TO BOMB
BERLIN - ONCE TARGET I WANTED

TO HIT, BUT THE WAY IT LOOKED NOW I WOULDN'T MAKE IT. I COULD HEAR OUR GROUP LEADER TELLING THE HIGH and LOW SQUADRONS HE WAS LEAVING THE ASSEMBLY POINT; and I HADN'T EVEN BROKEN OUT OF THE OVERCAST YET.

WE DIDN'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE WERE, SO I TOLD THE CREW TO LET ME KNOW IF THEY SPOTTED A GROUP WHEN WE CAME OUT OF THIS STUFF.

WE BROKE OUT AT 20,000 FT. I SPOTTED A GROUP CIRCLING AT 2 O'CLOCK LEVEL ABOUT 5 MI. AWAY. I HEADED FOR THEM, IT ISN'T HEALTHY FOR A BIG BIRD TO BE WONDERING AROUND UP THERE, BANDITS LIKE MEAT LIKE THAT.

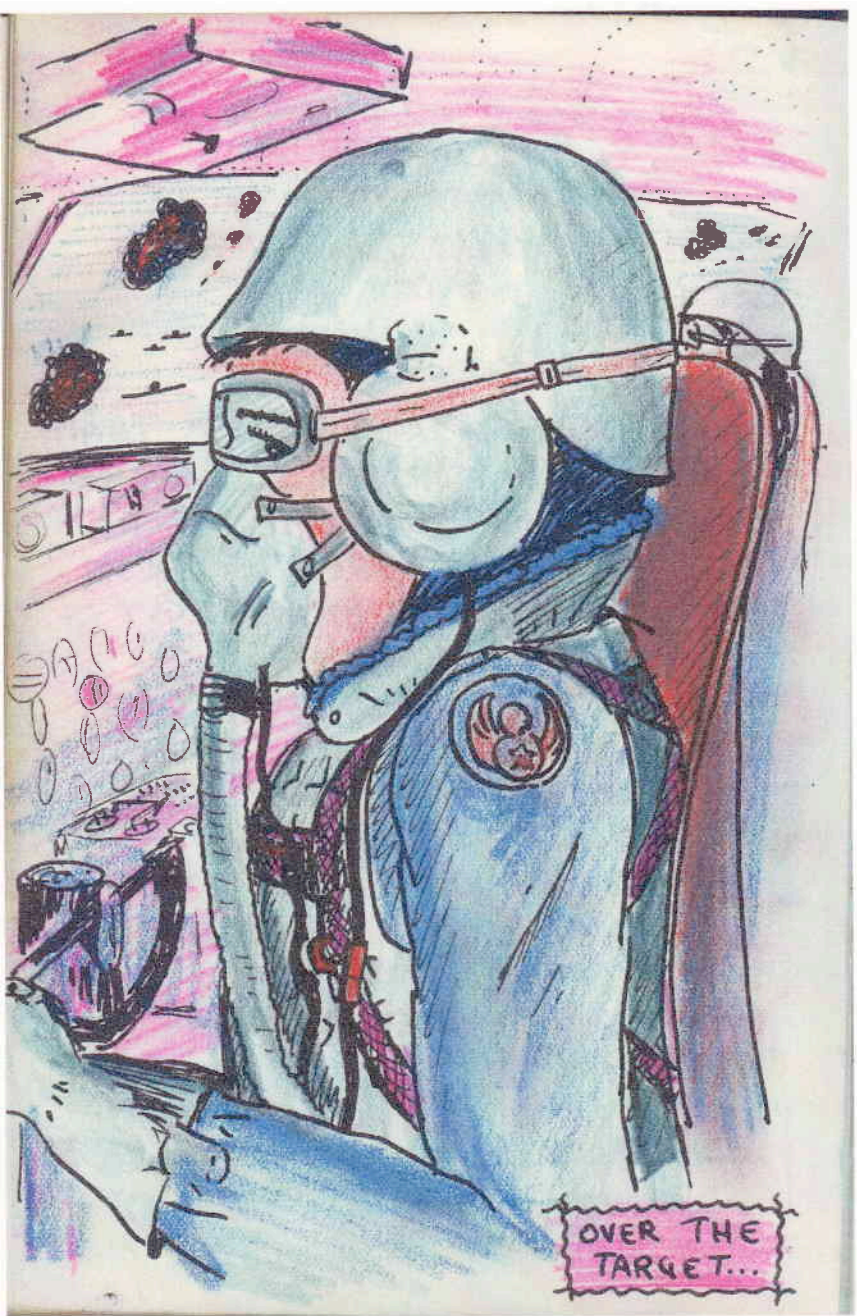
THIS GROUP DIDN'T FLY THE SAME FORMATION AS OUR GROUP DID, BUT I SETTLED INTO A POSITION NEXT TO

A SHIP THAT WAS FLYING ABOVE THE LEAD ELEMENT OF THIS SQUADRON. HE MUST HAVE JUST SPOTTED ME - FOR SUDDENLY HIS GUNS SWUNG OVER ON ME. I WAS A STRANGER, and HE WASN'T TAKING ANY CHANCES ON A JERRIE SNEAKING IN and PICKING HIM OFF, AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST.

I COULDN'T MAKE RADIO CONTACT WITH HIM, OUR SETS ARE TUNED DIFFERENT FROM THE 3RD DIV. WHICH WAS HIS OUTFIT.

HE MUST HAVE CALLED HIS LEADER, BECAUSE THEIR ROVING HEAD MAN CAME UP and GAVE ME A ONCE OVER - HE MUST HAVE IDENTIFIED MY MARKINGS and WAS SATISFIED. THE GUY NEXT TO ME PULLED HIS GUNS OFF and EVERYTHING WAS O.K.

FLAK WAS HEAVY, BUT WE MADE IT BACK WITHOUT CASUALTIES.



OVER THE
TARGET...

Mission NO. 24
HALLE, GER.
31 MAR. 1945
flight time
8:00



OUT OF THE SACK EARLIER THAN
EVER THIS MORNING --- BREAK-
FAST AT 0100 and BRIEFING AT
0200. SOME OF THE BOYS GOT
IN FROM THEIR DATES JUST IN
TIME TO MAKE BRIEFING.

PRIMARY TARGET, IF VISUAL,
WAS TO BE OUR OLD FRIEND
LUTZKENDORF AGAIN. IF THE
PRIMARY WAS COVERED, and IT
WAS, WE WERE TO HIT THE
MARSHALLING YARDS AT HALLE.
THESE YARDS WERE FULL OF ROLL-
ING STOCK HEADED FOR THE EAST-
ERN FRONT.

WE HAD A LONG HARD
CLIMB - PULLING 38" MANIFOLD PRESS
and 2300 R.P.M ALL THE WAY.

I WAS SWEATING OUT MY ENGINES-
THE BEST FRIENDS A MAN'S GOT
WHEN HE'S 5 MILES UP and
300 MILES IN OVER ENEMY LINES.

WE GOT TOO CLOSE TO MER-
SEBURG GOING IN and GOT
CLIPPED BY THEIR FLAK- ONE
OF OUR SHIPS GOT HIT and
HAD TO TURN BACK. OUR
SQUADRON COULDN'T GET THE RIGHT
INTERVAL FOR THE BOMB RUN SO
WE MADE A 360° TURN.- OFF
TO THE SOUTH THE "LITTLE
FRIENDS" WERE HAVING TROUBLE
WITH SOME JETS WHO WERE
TRYING TO GET AT US. THEY
NEVER SUCCEEDED. THANKS AGAIN
TO OUR MUSTANG ESCORT.

IT WAS ABOUT FIVE-TENTHS
OVER HALF- and FLAK WAS
INACCURATE - NO ONE WENT
DOWN- BUT LOTS OF CLOSE ONES.

WE TOOK OFF LATE AGAIN, DUE
TO A FLAT TIRE.--THEY GAVE US A
SHIP WITHOUT BALL TURRET GUNS,
WE JOINED OUR GROUP AT THE COAST.

Mission No. 25

KIEL, GER.

3 APRIL 1945

flight time

8:40

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE BEEN "SCRUBBED" and FLEW A MISSION, ALL IN THE SAME DAY.

WE WERE UP THIS A.M. AT 0100 — BRIEFED and WERE READY TO GO OUT TO OUR SHIPS WHEN RED-RED FLARES BROKE THE EARLY MORNING SKY. WE PULLED OFF OUR FLYING GEAR and HIT THE SACKS AGAIN AT 0615.

THEY GOT US UP AGAIN AT 0915 and TOLD US THE WEATHER WAS BETTER OVER THE TARGET — and THEY WE WOULD TAKE OFF AT 1015.

WE CLIMED THROUGH ONE FRONT and OVER THE TOP OF ANOTHER. WEATHER WAS CLEAR OVER THE WESTERN COAST OF

GERMANY and DENMARK. BUT IT CLOUDED UP AGAIN. OVER THE TARGET IT BECAME EIGHT-TENTHS SO WE DECIDED TO MAKE A MICKEY RUN ON IT.

ON THE BOMB RUN, 4 BRITISH "MOSQUITOES" CAME PAST US and LET GO WITH THEIR LOAD OF CHAFF. THIS IS KNOWN AS A SCREENING FORCE. IT HELPS TO RATTLE THE JERRIE FLAK GUNNERS and THEIR RADAR EQUIPMENT.

YOU COULD SEE THE CHAFF and THE FLAK PUFFS FOLLOWING IT DOWN - BUT YOU CAN FOOT JERRIE FOR JUST SO LONG. WE MUST HAVE MADE A BLUER SPOT IN HIS RADAR SCOPE, FOR THE BLACK PUFFS BEGAN MUSH ROOMING AROUND US - TOO CLOSE.

THE SHIP GAVE THAT OLD FAMILIAR LURCH, LIKE A SIGH OF RELIEF, AND THE TOGGELER CALLED "BOMBS AWAY".

WE MADE A SLOW 180° TURN TO THE RIGHT OFF THE TARGET and DOUBLED BACK. WE GOT A GOOD VIEW OF OUR WORK.

OTHER GROUPS WERE DROPPING ON THEIR AIMING POINTS IN THIS MIGHTY GERMAN PORT.

DOCKS, WAREHOUSES, MERCHANT SHIPS and MACHINE SHOPS WERE GOING UP IN BILLOWS OF SMOKE - FIRES STARTED, OTHER EXPLOSIONS ROLLED OUT OF THE BOILING WRECKAGE.

LITTLE P.T. BOATS WERE RUNNING OUT OF THE HARBOR, LIKE FRIGHTENED RABBITS. P-SIMUSTANGS WERE WAITING FOR THEM. THEY DIVED ON THEM, POURING OUT DEADLY 50 CAL. SLUGS and INCENDIARIES INTO THEIR HULLS.

OUR WING LOST 3 SHIPS - NONE FROM OUR GROUP. A VERY SUCCESSFUL MISSION.

COMING HOME, WE LET DOWN OVER THE NORTH SEA and CAME BACK UNDER THE FRONTS, BARELY SKIMMING THE TOP OF WAVES. SNOW and RAIN WAS PLENTIFUL.

Mission No. 26
HALBERSTADT, GER.

8 APRIL 1945

flight time
9:00



MY BREAKFAST OF THREE HOT-
CAKES AT 0300 THIS MORNING
DIDN'T SETTLE RIGHT.

I DID O.K. WHILE WE WERE
ASSEMBLING - BUT ABOUT HALF
WAY THERE I FELT LIKE I HAD
SWALLOWED A DOZEN OR SO BUTTER-
FLIES, and THEY WANTED TO
COME UP FOR AIR.

ON THE BOMB RUN, OF ALL
PLACES, IT REACHED IT'S CLIMAX.
I TOLD MAC TO TAKE OVER - I
PULLED OFF MY FLAK HELMET,
and AS BOMBS WENT AWAY -
I TOSSED MY COOKIES. THANK
GOD THERE WAS NO FLAK...

WE MADE EXCELLENT HITS ON
THE RAILROAD YARD.... and MY
INSIDES SETTLED BACK TO NORMAL.
WOTTA MISSION!

Mission No. 27
ORANIENBURG, GER.
10 APRIL 1945
flight time
11:00

IN THE AIR CORPS THEY SAY THAT WHEN YOU START FLYING YOUR MISSIONS, YOU ARE ALLOTTED SO MUCH LUCK. WHEN YOU USE UP THIS GIVEN AMOUNT OF LUCK- YOU DON'T COME BACK.

TODAY I THINK MAC, I AND THE REST OF MY CREW USED UP OUR ACCOUNT, AND OVERDREW ABOUT A DOZEN FOUR-LEAF-CLOVERS WORTH OF THAT LUCK.

I DON'T BELIEVE TOO MUCH IN HUNCHES- BUT THIS MORNING, FOR THE SECOND TIME SINCE I STARTED FLYING COMBAT, I PERSONALLY CHECKED THE EMERGENCY WALK-AROUND OXYGEN BOTTLES. I HAD TO FORCE MYSELF TO OPEN THE THROTTLES, AS WE ENTERED

THE FOG. A COLD CHILL WENT THROUGH ME.

EVERYTHING WAS GOING FINE- THE CREW CHECKED IN: "TAIL OK," "WAIST O.K.," "BALL O.K." "RADIO O.K." and SO ON UP TO THE TOGGIER IN THE NOSE. I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT MY PECULIAR FEELING.

WE BROKE OUT AT 6000 FT. THE SUN WAS SHINING BRIGHTLY. THE CIRCLING SHIPS IN THE DISTANCE GLISSENED LIKE DIAMOND DUST FLOATING IN THE AIR--FIRST TIME I EVER THOUGHT OF THEM THAT WAY.

AS WE JOINED THE BOMBER STREAM and CROSSED THE CHANNEL, THE CLOUDS THINNED OUT and FINALLY IT CLEARED UP COMPLETELY.

BRUSSELS APPEARED OFF OUR LEFT WING TIP - THEN COLOGNE and THE RHINE RIVER. COLOGNE HAD BEEN TAKEN A FEW WEEKS AGO. JERRIE HAD BEEN FORCED BACK FROM HIS BELOVED RHINE and NOW HIS VERY

EXISTANCE WAS AT STAKE - HE HAD GAMBLED, and NOW HE WAS LOSING THE HARD WAY. "THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD, SHALL DIE BY THE SWORD".

WE WERE FOLLOWING THE GROUP AHEAD, WE WERE "BAKER FORCE" OR SECOND GROUP IN OUR DIVISION. WE WERE USING THEM AS OUR INTERFERENCE. THEY HAD ENCOUNTERED NO FLAK OR FIGHTERS SO OUR GROUP NAVIGATOR CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THEM, WHICH LATER PROVED VERY UNWISE.

WE WERE PAST WHITTENBURG, BETWEEN THE ELBE RIVER and BERLIN, 5 MINUTES BEFORE OUR I. P. WHEN IT HAPPENED. THINGS HAPPENED SO FAST FROM NOW ON I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN PUT THEM IN THEIR RIGHT ORDER OR NOT. BUT HERE GOES.

WE WERE AT 24000 FT, and STILL CLIMBING, AT THE ABOVE

POSITION. SUDDENLY OUR SHIP
JUMPED and LOUD SERIES OF THUMPS
RANG THROUGHOUT HER INSIDES.
I CALLED THE GUNNERS and
TOLD THEM TO STOP TEST-
FIRING THEIR GUNS. HUNTER
CALLED FROM THE TAIL "SIR,
WE AREN'T FIRING, IT'S FLAK,
and those too!"

ANOTHER JAR SHOOK THE SHIP.
IFRATIE CALLED "SIR, I THINK I'M
HIT". BEFORE I COULD ANSWER, THE
ENGINEER CALLED FROM THE TOP
TURRET "LOOK! THE WHOLE TAIL
OF THAT SHIP JUST BLEW UP!"
THAT WAS BABIN'S SHIP OLD "FLAK
SHACK", HE WAS FLYING # 3 OF
THE LEAD ELEMENT, I WAS FLY-
ING RIGHT UNDER HIM IN # 6
POSITION.

A BLACK FORM WENT PAST OUR
3 PROP - IT WAS HIS TAIL GUNNER.
STILL HOLDING HIS GUNS.

THEN A BLACK CLOUD ENVELOPED
US and A SOUND; LIKE TWO HS'S

WERE FIRED IN MY EARS,
ECHOED THROUGH THE COCKPIT. FLYING
GLASS, METAL, and INSULATION FILL-
ED THE AIR. BEING BLOWN ABOUT
BY ESCAPING OXYGEN FROM A BROK-
EN LINE. MY RIGHT HAND GLOVE
WAS RIPPED TO SHREDS and
MY HAND and ARM WERE STING-
ING LIKE A DOZEN BEES HAD
JUMPED IT. I SALVOED THE BOMBS.

THE SHIP WAS ALMOST ON
IT'S BACK NOW - HEADING DOWN--
I GLANCED AT THE ALTIMETER--
IT WAS HAZY - WE HAD LOST
8000 FT ALREADY. I PULLED BACK
ON THE STICK WITH ALL MY
STRENGTH and STARTED A 180°
TURN TOWARD FRIENDLY LINES.
I KNEW I HAD NO OXYGEN - I
COULDN'T SEE VERY WELL - I
LOOKED AT MAE FOR HELP - HE
WAS LEANING AGAINST HIS SIDE
WINDOW, EYES OPEN, WITH A
BIG GAPING HOLE TORN THROUGH
HIS FLAK HELMET. "MY GOD,

HE'S DEAD!", I THOUGHT.

WE WERE DOWN TO 13000 FT NOW. SGT. POMYKAL, THE ENGINEER WAS OUT OF HIS TURRET and WAS POINTING AT THE FEATHERING BUTTONS and HOLDING UP TWO FINGERS - I RAISED UP IN MY SEAT - NO. TWO ENGINE WAS A RAGING INFERNO, FIRE BLAZING BACK OVER THE WING, WITH 400 GAL'S OF 100 OCTANE GAS JUST WAITING TO BE SET OFF.

SUDDENLY MAR CAME TO LIFE and HIT #2 FEATHERING BUTTON - I LOOKED AT #3 ENGINE, TWO CYLINDERS WERE BLOWN FROM IT and OIL WAS BOILING OUT OF THE NACELLE. IT WASN'T BURNING - YET, SO I DIDN'T FEATHER, NOT WHILE IT WAS PUTTING OUT ANY POWER AT ALL. IT LASTED 5 MINUTES.

I LOOKED BACK AT #2 - MAR STILL HAD THE BUTTON IN BUT SHE HADN'T FEATHERED YET. THE FIRE WASN'T AS FIERCE AS IT

HAD BEEN.

NO. ONE ENGINE'S MANIFOLD PRESSURE READ BETWEEN 15" and 30" - THE NEEDLE WAS GOING CRAZY. I KNEW OUR SUPER-CHARGER WAS HIT ON IT - TO SAY THE LEAST.

I HAD RIGGED UP THE WALK AROUND BOTTLE NOW, and MY VISION WAS CLEARING UP. OXYGEN IS A WONDERFUL THING.

THE CREW WAS ALERTED TO PREPARE TO ABANDON SHIP. THEN, AS IN ANSWER TO A PRAYER, NO. ONE ENGINE'S MANIFOLD PRESSURE STEADIED ITSELF AT 28" - WE WERE DOWN TO 9000 FT NOW. LARRY HAD GIVEN US A COURSE HOME, and WITH TWO FAIRLY GOOD ENGINES, NO. ONE and NO. FOUR, WE STRUCK OUT FOR FRIENDLY LINES, 90 MILES AWAY.

WE COULDN'T HOLD OUR ALTITUDE, THOUGH WE WERE

STAGGERING ALONG AT 120 M.P.H.
and STILL LOSING 50 FT PER
MIN, WITH BOTH OUR GOOD ENGINES
WIDE OPEN.

I TOLD THE CREW TO THROW
ALL EQUIPMENT OUT - BALL TORRET,
RADIO EQUIPMENT, FLAK SUITS, AMM-
ONITION, ANYTHING THEY COULD
PULL LOOSE. IN 15 MIN. THE
SHIP WAS STRIPPED - and WE
WERE HOLDING OUR ALTITUDE AT
7000 FT. AT 120 M.P.H.

WE CALLED FOR FIGHTER
PROTECTION, and GOT A DOZEN
LITTLE FRIENDS IN A HURRY.
THEY WOULD COME UP ON OUR
WING, WITH THEIR FLAPS DOWN;
FLY ALONG A FEW SECONDS,
THEN PEEF OFF TO CHECK
A "BOGIE". THE MUSTANG PILOTS
WOULD WAIVE JUST BEFORE THEY
PEELED OFF. GREAT GUYS!

WE SAW GROUPS OF B-24'S and
B-17'S PASS US - GOING HOME -
I CALLED OUR GROUP and TOLD

THE LEADER OUR SITUATION and THAT WE WERE TRYING TO MAKE IT TO FRIENDLY LINES. HE ACKNOWLEDGED and WISHED US LUCK.

LARRY NAVIGATED US AROUND THE FLAK AREAS WE KNEW ABOUT. 8 MILES AHEAD ANOTHER B-17 WAS LIMPING HOME - WE FOLLOWED HIM. IF THEY SHOT AT HIM - WE WERE TIPPED OFF and WENT AROUND THE FLAK POSITION. WE WERE NOW HOLDING OUR ALTITUDE AT 6500 FT. and 123 M.P.H. AIR SPEED.

WE GOT TO BRUSSELS and WE DECIDED TO TRY IT FOR THE CHANNEL. AT THE CHANNEL WE WERE DOING O.K. - SO WE GAMBLED ON GETTING TO ENGLAND, and SO ON FROM ONE TOWN TO ANOTHER UNTIL WE GOT OVER THE HOME FIELD. THEY WERE SURPRISED TO SEE US BACK - "How' Soon"'s CREW CHIEF WAS VERY HAPPY. WE LANDED WITH A LEFT FLAT TIRE.

THANK GOD WE ARE BACK and ALIVE.

I STAYED IN THE HOSPITAL TONIGHT.
GOT MY HAND CLEANED OUT and
DRESSED.

WE BROUGHT OUR SHIP BACK,
OR IT BROUGHT US BACK, ANYWAY
YOU WANT TO SAY IT, BUT HERE'S
ALL THE DAMAGE DONE TO IT:

- ★ NO. ONE ENGINE HAD IT'S
SUPERCHARGER BLOWN OUT.
- ★ NO. TWO ENGINE BURNED COMP-
LETELY UP. NO FLIGHT INSTRUMENTS.
- ★ NO. THREE ENGINE HAD 2 CYLIN-
DERS KNOCKED OFF and 2 HOLES
IN THE PROP. NO OIL.
- ★ SIX HOLES IN THE COCKPIT, 3
THE SIZE OF BASE BALLS.
- ★ OXYGEN SYSTEM SHOT OUT ON
RIGHT SIDE. C-1 SHOT OUT.
- ★ NO BALL TURRET - NO RADIO
EQUIPMENT. NO AMMUNITION.
- ★ 39 HOLES IN THE SHIP - ONE
THROUGH THE MAIN SPAR OF
THE LEFT WING.
- ★ and A VERY SHAKEY CREW.

Mission No. 28

ROYAN, FRANCE.

14 APRIL 1945

flight time

8:00

M

MY HAND and ARM IS A LOT BETTER. I ASKED THE DOC TO RELEASE ME FROM THE HOSPITAL, and AFTER PLEADING(?) WITH OUR FLIGHT SURGEON HE CONSENTED TO LET ME GO BACK ON OPERATIONS.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO START CLEANING OUT THESE NAZI POCKETS THAT WERE BY-PASSED BY PATTON IN HIS MAD RUSH TO THE RHINE.

THE WHOLE 8th AIR FORCE WENT TO THIS TARGET TODAY-CARRYING ALL TYPES OF BOMBS, DEMOS, INCENDIARIES, and FRAGS. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BREAK UP THEIR FORTIFICATIONS THEN THE FRENCH WERE COMING IN

and mop up.

THE POSITIONS JERRIE HELD KEPT THE PORT OF BORDEAUX SEWED UP and USE LESS.

OUR COURSE LED US OVER OMAHA BEACH and THE NORMANDY INVASION STRIP. NOT FAR FROM THE BOMB CRATERED BEACH HEAD WAS A FIELD OF WHITE CROSSES, PRECIOUS GROUND THAT WILL FOREVER BE AMERICAN. OUT IN THE WATER WERE OLD LANDING BARGES, L.S.T.'S TROOP TRANSPORTS, and TANKERS. ALL WERE HALF WAY UNDER THE WATER. GRIM REMINDERS OF THE HELL THAT ONCE COVERED THIS AREA.

WE STARTED OUR CLIMB and TOOK AN I.P. 10 MILES OUT IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. FRAK WAS LIGHT. WE MADE A GOOD RUN WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS.

MY HAND WAS A LITTLE STIFF TONIGHT.

Mission No. 29
LE-VERDON, FRANCE.
15 APRIL 1945
flight time
7:30



AFTER THAT RAID ON ORANIEN-
BURG, MAC and I STARTER COLL-
ECTING FLAK SUITS and FLAK PADS.
WE HAD THEM WELL PLACED AROUND
THE COCKPIT. WE PULLED THE CUR-
TAIN ABOVE OUR HEADS and PUT A
PAD ON IT, WE PUT SOME ON
THE FLOOR and SAT ON ABOUT
SIX.

TODAY'S TARGET WAS IN THE
SAME AREA AS YESTERDAY'S, and
FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.

WE ASSEMBLED OVER PARIS -
AT THE SAME TIME THEY WERE
HAVING MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR
THE LATE PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.
A FINAL TRIBUTE TO A GREAT
MAN.

WE WERE BRIEFED NOT TO DROP

ANY BOMBS AFTER 1130, FOR AT 1135 A GROUP FROM THE 3RD DIVISION WAS COMING IN AT 8000 FT AND CLEAN UP WHAT WE MISSED.

OUR AIMING POINT WAS NAVAL GUN POSITIONS COMMANDING THE PORT ENTRANCE, WE WERE TO KNOCK THEM OUT SO THE NAVY COULD GET IN CLOSE AND WORK OVER THE SMALLER POSITIONS.

BEFORE WE COULD SEE THE TARGET WE COULD HEAR SOME JOKER IN A "MOSQUITO" GIVING A PLAY BY PLAY ACCOUNT. IT WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

"FLAK IS STARTING TO DOP..."

"GOOD HITS LEAD GROUP!"


"FLAK IS SLACKENING OFF..."

"NO MORE FLAK... GO GET 'EM YANKS!"

HE WAS A LIMIE - THE RAF. IS O.K. FOR MY MONEY.

WE COULDN'T GET RID OF A 2000 POUNDER - RACK MALFUNCTION, SO WE BROUGHT IT BACK.

Mission No. 30
PLATTLING, GER.
16 APRIL 1945
flight time
8:55

 PATTON'S 3RD ARMY IS REPORTED HAVING SURROUNDED HALLE and LEIPZIG - TWO ROUGH TARGETS I'M GLAD TO BE RID OF. THE WAR IS IN IT'S FINAL STAGE NOW - ONE OR TWO MORE MONTHS WILL FINISH IT UP.

BEAUTIFUL WEATHER FOR BOMBING TODAY. NOT A CLOUD IN THE SKY.

WE CROSSED THE RHINE AT FRANKFURT - DOWN THE "BLUE DANUBE" - TOOK OUR INTERVAL and DROPPED WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS. WE TURNED OFF THE TARGET and CAME BACK ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE DANUBE.

THE SKY AHEAD WAS FILLED WITH BLACK SPECKS, WHICH LOOKED

LIKE HUNDREDS OF FIGHTERS, AS WE GOT CLOSER, TO OUR RELIEF, IT TURNED OUT TO BE B-24 LIBS. THE FIRST and LAST TIME I EVER SAW THE 8th and THE 15th AIR FORCES IN THE AIR TOGETHER IN THE SAME TARGET AREA. THEY MUST HAVE BEEN TO MUNICH.

ON THE WAY BACK WE FLEW OVER A VERY ACTIVE PART OF THE FRONT. WE COULD SEE TANKS PARKED OUTSIDE OF A TOWN, POUNDING AWAY WITH ITS GUNS. P-51'S and P-47'S WERE HAVING A BIG TIME SHOOTING UP TRAINS. WHEN THEY HIT THE ENGINE, IT WOULD SPOUT OUT STEAM LIKE A GARDEN SPRINKLER. THE OIL CARS GO "POOFF!" - and A BIG BLACK GYSTERS OF SMOKE and OIL BLOW OUT OF THE TOP FILLER CAP.
MORE FUN!

Mission No. 31
ROSENHEIM, GER.
18 APRIL 1945
flight time
10:15



MAE IS NOW A FIRST PILOT WITH A CREW OF HIS OWN. SOPINSKI HAS COMPLETED 34 MISSIONS and IS SWEATING OUT THE REPORT FROM THE FLIGHT OFFICER BOARD BEFORE HE FLIES HIS LAST ONE. I HOPE HE GETS HIS COMMISSION.

I LED THE HIGH ELEMENT OF THE HIGH SQUADRON TODAY. MAE FLEW ON MY RIGHT WING and SANDINI ON MY LEFT.

THE TOWN OF ROSENHEIM IS LOCATED S.E. OF MUNICH and 30 MILES N.W. OF HITLER'S HANG OUT, BERCHESGADEN.

WE FLEW OVER THE ALPS FOR THE FIRST TIME - and GOT A HECTIC WELCOME.

WE WERE BUZZING ALONG

OVER THESE UGLY JAGGED PEAKS -
WHEN SMALL GRAY PUFFS APPEARED
ALL AROUND US. THIS WAS OUR
OLD FRIEND, FLAK, BUT IN A MIN-
ITURE FORM. ABOUT 75 MM. - THE
SMALLEST I'VE SEEN. WE'RE
ACCUSTOMED TO 105 and 155 MM
STUFF THAT LOOKS LIKE A HOUSE
BURNING WHEN THEY BREAK.

THE MOUNTAINS WERE 7000
FT HIGH - and WE WERE ONLY
1800 FT. THEY COULD HAVE
HIT US WITH SLING SHOTS.

WE POURED THE COAL ON
and DID THE OLD "GET THE
HELL OUTA HERE". NO ONE
WAS HIT BAD - I GOT A FEW
HOLES. I GUESS I'M WHAT IS
KNOW AS A FLAK MAGNET.

WE HIT THE POWER HOUSE
AT ROSENHEIM SQUARE IN THE
MIDDLE - and WALKED A FEW
UP THE MARSHALLING YARD FOR
GOOD MEASURE.

JUST FOUR MORE MISSIONS!

Mission No. 32
FALKENBURG, GER.
19 APRIL 1945
flight time
8:45

W

WE WERE ALL LINED UP THIS MORNING ON THE RUNWAY WAITING FOR THE "GREEN-GREEN" FROM THE TOWER, WHEN THE LEFT TIRE OF THE DEPUTY LEAD BLEW OUT. WE GOT A 15 MIN. DELAY.

WHILE WE WERE WAITING, WE HEARD AN EXPLOSION and SAW THE SKY LIGHT UP OVER AT PODDINGTON. EVERYONE KNEW WHAT IT WAS, WE HAD HEARD THESE EXPLOSIONS BEFORE. SOMETIMES YOU DON'T MAKE IT ON TAKE OFF. A FLAT TIRE WHEN YOU'RE HALFWAY DOWN THE RUNWAY, OR MAYBE YOU LOSE AN ENGINE, OR GET CAUGHT IN BAD PROP WASH. LATER YOUR WIFE OR MOTHER

RECEIVES A "REGRET TO INFORM YOU..." TELEGRAM.

YOU REALIZE YOU'RE PLAYING FOR KEEPS. YOUNG BOYS HAVE THAT OLD LOOK IN THEIR EYES OF HAVING LIVED A LIFE TIME IN A FEW WEEKS. EVERY DAY YOU OPEN THE THROTTLE YOU'RE LAYING YOUR LIFE AND 9 OTHER'S ON THE LINE, HOPING TO COME BACK WITH IT 10 HOURS LATER. SOME WIN; SOME DON'T.

THIS WAS THE LAST BOMBING THE 306th BOMB GROUP FLEW IN THE E.T.O.

OUR SQUADRON MADE 2, 360'S OVER THE TARGET, EACH TIME IT WAS THROUGH FAK. WE WERE FILLED WITH HOLES BUT WE FINALLY DROPPED and CAME HOME ALONE, THE OTHER TWO SQUADRONS DROPPED THE FIRST TIME OVER. OUR SQUADRON NAVIGATOR WASN'T TOO SHARP TODAY. THIS WAS HIS FIRST LEAD. IFRATIE FINISHED HIS TOUR TODAY.


Mission No. 33

① DUNKIRK, FRANCE ② the HAGUE ③ UTRECHT, HOLLAND.

29 APRIL 1945

flight time

4:30



THE 369th SQUADRON IS NOW OPERATING AS A SEPERATE UNIT FROM THE REST OF THE GROUP. WE HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED THE JOB OF CARRYING SUPPLIES TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS TAKEN FROM THE NAZIS and DROPPING PROPAGANDA and SURRENDER LEAFLETS ON THE RETREATING GERMAN ARMY.

WE GO IN ALONE, and NO FIGHTER ESCORT UNLESS IT'S OVER THE ENEMY LINES. NO CREDIT IS GIVEN, AS A COMBAT MISSION, UNLESS IT IS OVER ENEMY LINES.

OUR C.O., COL UPHAM, ASKED TO GO ON THE ROUHEST ONE. I FLEW CO-PILOT FOR HIM. WE TOOK "RUIV NO. 6" - DUNKIRK,

THE HAGUE and UTRECHT, HOLLAND.
LT. KESTER WAS OUR NAVIGATOR.
WE WERE CARRYING 8 "BOMBS"
LOADED WITH LEAF LETS. THEY
HAD A BAROMETRIC FUSE ON
THEM THAT WOULD EXPLODE
THE CONTAINER AT 2000 FT,
SCATTERING PAPERS OVER A
WIDE AREA.

WE DECIDED TO MAKE OUR
RUN ON DUNKIRK FROM THE WEST,
AT 25000 FT, TURN LEFT and
GO UP THE FRENCH COAST TO
OUR OTHER TWO TARGETS.

EVERYTHING WENT AS SCHEDULED.
ONLY TWO BURST OF FLAK OVER
DUNKIRK - and NONE OVER TAR-
GETS 2 and 3.

ON THE WAY BACK - A P-38
CAME OVER and FLEW FOR-
MATION WITH US.

LT. SMITH, FROM ARK., WENT
TO BREMEN TODAY - HE GOT
SHOT UP PRETTY BAD. IT'S
A REST NOT TO FLY FORMATION
FOR 8 HOURS.

UNOFFICIAL MISSION

HANNOVER, GER.

3 MAY 1945

flight time

7:00



AT LAST MY GOLDBAR HAS BEEN FROST BITTEN - ROGER! I'M A FIRST LIEUTENANT AS OF APRIL 29th.

SO WITH MY NEW SHINEY SILVER BAR and A LOAD OF THE LATEST "POOP" FOR NAZILAND. WE HEAD FOR HANNOVER GERMANY.

WE CLIMBED UP THROUGH 12000 FEET OF CLOUDS and ICE BEFORE WE FOUND SUNSHINE. AFTER WE CROSSED THE RHINE IT CLEARED UP A LITTLE. WE FOUND A HOLE IN THE CLOUDS and WENT DOWN TO 8000 FT.

ALTHOUGH WE WERE IN ALLIED TERRITORY, P-51'S KEPT A CLOSE ESCORT UNTIL WE WENT DOWN TO FIND OUR TARGET - OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF

17.

OUR PAPERS SETTLED OVER THE TOWN LIKE SNOW FLAKES. PEOPLE RAN OUT; PICKING THEM UP and READING THE TRUTH, SOMETHING THEY HAD NOT KNOWN FOR 5 YEARS UNDER HITLER.

THE CITY OF HANNOVER IS A HORRIBLE WRECK - JUST FRAMES OF WOOD BUILDINGS STANDING, THE BRICK ONES ARE REDUCED TO DUST.

WE FOUND THE SUPER HIGHWAY BUILT BY HITLER TO TRANSPORT HIS WAR SUPPLIES ACROSS A ONCE POWERFUL EMPIRE. WE FLEW DOWN THIS AUTO-BAN THAT LEADS TO THE RHINE and THROUGH THE RHUR VALLEY. WE WERE ABOUT 100 FT. ABOVE THE GROUND.

EVERY ONE WAIVED WHITE RAUS-OR RAN FOR COVER. THEY HAD LEARNED TO FEAR THE BIG BIRDS.

ALL THE BRIDGES ALONG THE HIGHWAY HAD BEEN DESTROYED, EITHER BY THE RETREATING NAZIS

OR BY OUR OWN ADVANCING FORCES.

OUR TOUR BACK INCLUDED THE CITIES OF MINDEN, BIELFIELD, DORTMUND, ESSEN, DUSSELDORF, COLOGNE, AACHEN, JULICH, LILLE and BRUSSELS.

ALL EXCEPT THE LATTER WERE WERE SHELLS OF TOWNS. COLOGNE'S CATHEDRAL STILL STANDS, ALTHO ALL WINDOWS ARE BROKEN and SHELLS HAVE TORN HOLES IN HER WALLS.

IT WAS A THRILL BEYOND DESCRIPTION AS WE BUZZED DOWN HAPPY VALLEY. SEEING AT CLOSE RANGE OUR OLD TARGETS, and THE FLAK GUNS THAT TRIED TO DEFEND IT. THE VALLEY IS COVERED WITH PIECES OF B-17'S, B-24'S, P-51'S, C-47'S- LIKE BONES SHINING ON A DESERT. GRIM REMINDERS OF THE PRICE THAT WAS PAID, SHIPS and GALLANT CREWS THAT ONCE THUNDERED ACROSS THE BLUE, NOW GROUNDED FOREVER.

Mission No. 34
DUNKIRK, FRANCE
6 MAY 1945
Flight time
3:05



SOPINSKI FLEW HIS LAST MISSION TODAY- A SWELL ONE TO FINISH ON.

I DIDN'T GO IN LIKE I DID WITH THE COLONEL LAST TIME WE WERE HERE. THIS TIME, AFTER WE CAME IN RANGE OF DUNKIRK'S GUNS, I NEVER HELD THE SAME COURSE FOR OVER 15 SECONDS. THIS WAY THEY CAN'T AIM AT YOU, and IF YOU GET HIT, IT'S BY ACCIDENT. THE REASON?....

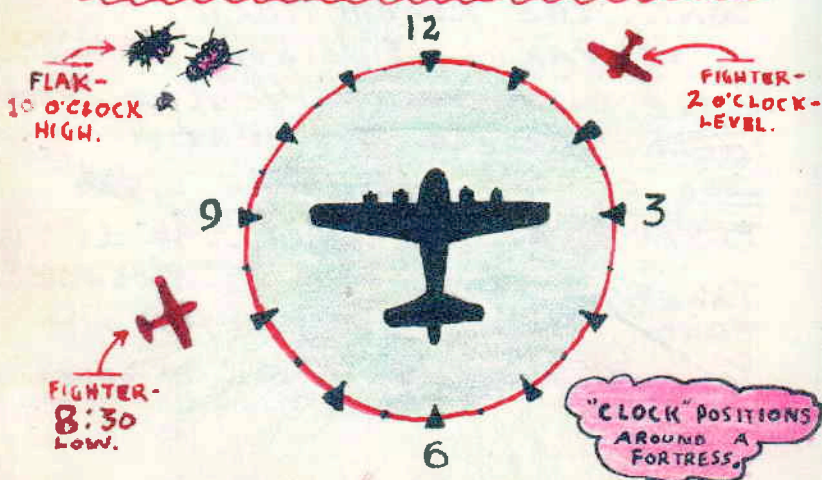
IT TAKES 5 SECONDS TO GET RANGE and YOUR SPEED. and THE SHELL TRAVELS APPROXIMATELY 1000 FT. PER SECOND. WE WERE FLYING AT 27,000 FT... SO IT TAKES A TOTAL OF 32 SECONDS FROM THE TIME THEY SPOT YOU UNTIL THE SHELL EXPLODES

AT YOUR LEVEL. THIS KIND OF EVASIVE ACTION IS IMPOSSIBLE ON THE BOMB RUN WITH A FORMATION OF 36 SHIPS, and A GROUP OF SHIPS THIS SIZE IS A MUCH BIGGER TARGET.

AFTER LEOPOLD DROPPED HIS LOAD, WE TURNED OFF TO THE LEFT and HEADED HOME - AT 195 M.P.M. MY SHORTEST MISSION SO FAR.

JUST ONE MORE TO GO. BERLIN and HAMBURG FELL TODAY.


SGT. HUNTER FINISHED HIS TOUR ALSO TODAY.



Mission No. 35
DUNKIRK, FRANCE.

7 MAY 1945

flight time
2:45



LISEC WAS MY NAVIGATOR TODAY- and WE WASTED NO TIME. STRAIGHT TO DOVER and ACROSS THE CHANNEL. CLIMBING AT 135 M.P.H. AIRSPEED.

WE ZIG-ZAGGED OUR WAY INTO DUNKIRK, WHICH WAS P.A.V.U., FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY, AT AN ALTITUDE OF 29,500. AFTER WE DROPPED, I ROLLED OVER and DIVED DOWN, LOSING 5000 FT PER MINUTE.

WE TOOK OUR COURSE TO BASE. I HELD A SLOW LET DOWN and 205 MPH ALL THE WAY. CAP'T HAAZ, OUR OPERATIONS OFFICER, LT KEARNEY and I FINISHED OUR TOUR TODAY.

THAT'S ALL BROTHER!.....

TRIBUTE

Editorial in the London "Daily Express" 26th May 1945

THERE IS SPECIAL AFFECTION IN BRITISH HEARTS FOR THE FORTRESSES and LIBERATORS OF THE U.S. EIGHTH AIR FORCE.

THEIR CREWS and GROUND STAFFS HAVE BEEN OVER HERE LONGER THAN ANY OF THE U.S. FORCES. THEY ARRIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF 1942, AND ABSORBED IN THEIR GROWING STRENGTH THE GALLANT "EAGLE SQUADRONS" THAT HAD SHARED IN THE FIGHT IN THE DARKEST HOURS ALONGSIDE THE R.A.F.

THEIR FIRST INDEPENDENT BOMBING MISSION WAS ON AUGUST 17, 1942, and THEY OPERATED FROM THIS COUNTRY RIGHT TO THE END.

THEY WERE PROTAGONISTS OF DAY BOMBING. THEY WERE TRAINED and ELABORATELY EQUIPPED FOR THIS BRANCH OF AIR WAR AT A TIME WHEN IT WAS ALREADY REJECTED BY THE OTHER BELLIGERENTS.

DID YOU KNOW THAT EVEN IN 1942 THE WHOLE FUTURE OF DAY BOMBING WAS BACK IN THE MELTING-POT, FOR A MOMENT, and THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE MIGHT HAVE LEFT THIS COUNTRY AGAIN WITHOUT PUTTING IT'S THEORIES TO THE TEST?

THE CONTROVERSY LASTED UNTIL THE CASABLANCA CONFERENCE IN 1943. THERE, THE ISSUE OF DAY VERSUS NIGHT BOMBING, WAS FINALLY THRASHED OUT BY THE AIR CHIEFS OF EACH SCHOOL OF THOUGHT IN THE PRESENCE OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT and MR. CHURCHILL.

AND THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE WERE ALLOWED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE MIGHTY and BRILLIANT CONCEPTION OF AIR WAR MAPPED OUT FOR THEM.

ALL THE WORLD KNOWS NOW THEY WENT AHEAD and HOW THEIR CAMPAIGN DEVELOPED and EXTENDED OVER ALL GERMANY.

IT WAS THOROUGH, IT WAS SWIFT and REMORSELESSLY EFFICIENT. IT WAS CARRIED OUT UNFLINCHINGLY, EVEN

WHEN LOSSES WERE 60 OR MORE BOMBERS, EACH WITH A CREW OF 10, ON A SINGLE RAID.

THE MEN OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE BELIEVED IN THEIR MISSION, and THE UTTER BREAKDOWN OF THE HUGE GERMAN WAR MACHINE, WHEN THE TEST CAME, HAS PROVED NOW RIGHT THEY WERE.

THE TRIBUTE and GRATITUDE OF THE FREE WORLD GOES WITH THE VALIANT EIGHTH and THEIR BRILLIANT COMMANDER, GENERAL DOOLITTLE, AS THEY CROSS THE OCEANS AGAIN FOR NEW MISSIONS AGAINST JAPAN, THE LAST ENEMY.

FAREWELL TO THEM and GOO-SPEED IN THEIR NEW TASKS.

... "WHEN THE TOTALS ARE DRAWN, IT WILL BE FOUND THAT THE COMBINED LOSSES OF AMERICAN and BRITISH AIRMEN FROM SEPT. 3, 1939, WHEN THE AIR BATTLE TO DESTROY GERMANY BEGAN, TO V-E DAY, FAR EXCEED THE TOLL OF DEAD IN THE COMBINED AMERICAN and BRITISH LAND FORCES FROM THE INVASION OF NORMANDY TO THE END OF THE WAR IN EUROPE."

..... Readers Digest. Aug. 1945

SATAN'S
LADY

RECADILEY
COMMAND

elce
Cold
Katie

WAHOO

HISTORY

of
306 BOMB
GROUP

missing - 1783
in action

wounded - 406
in action

Bombers - 177
Lost



MISSIONS
FLOWN - 341

ZAMRO

FLAK
SHACK

Dearly
Beloved

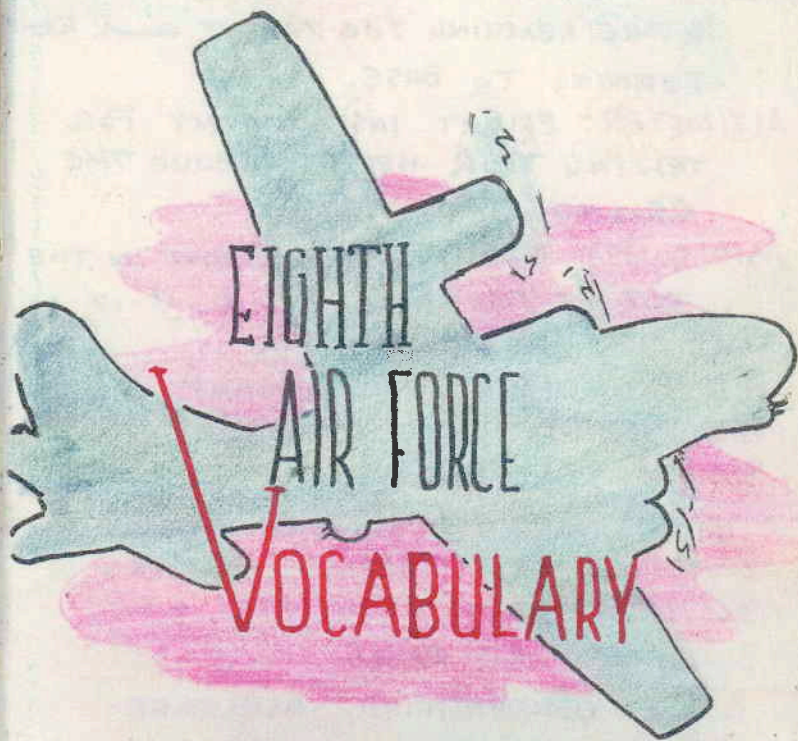
How
Soon

BOUNCING
BABY

STEADY
HEADY

FIGHTIN'
BITIN'

Low
&
Slow



EIGHTH

AIR FORCE

VOCABULARY

AIMING POINT: EXACT SPOT THE BOMBARDIER TRIES TO HIT.

ABORT: LEAVE THE BOMBER FORMATION, BEFORE REACHING THE TARGET, and RETURNING TO BASE.

ALTIMETER: FLIGHT INSTRUMENT FOR TELLING YOUR HEIGHT ABOVE THE GROUND.

ASTRODOME: PLEXI GLASS WINDOW IN THE TOP OF THE NOSE OF A B-17.

BANDITS: ENEMY FIGHTERS.

BIG 'B': BERLIN, GERMANY.

BIG FRIENDS: HEAVY BOMBERS

BOMBER STREAM: GROUPS OF BOMBERS LINED UP BEHIND EACH OTHER.

BIG GAS BIRDS: HEAVY BOMBERS

BIG IRON BIRDS: " "

BITCHING: GRIPPING.

BOGIE: UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT.

BRIEFING: OUTLINING THE BATTLE ORDER, GIVING DETAILS OF THE TARGET TO THE CREWS.

B.T.C.: BASIC TRAINING CENTER

C.A.V.U.: CEILING AND VISIBILITY UNLIMITED. GOOD WEATHER.

CEILING: HEIGHT OF CLOUDS

CHAFF: THIN METAL STRIPS USED TO CONFUSE THE RADAR EQUIPMENT OF FLAK GUNS.

CHUTE: PARACHUTE.

C.O.: COMMANDING OFFICER.

C.Q.: CHARGE OF QUARTERS.

C-1: AUTOMATIC PILOT.

DE-ICING BOOTS: RUBBER TUBES THAT COVER THE LEADING EDGES OF WINGS and TAIL THAT EXPAND and RETRACT, BREAKING THE ICE and THROWING IT OFF THE SURFACE.

DEPUTY LEAD: SECOND-IN-COMMAND OF A BOMBER FORMATION.

DIVISION: TWO OR MORE BOMBER WINGS.

FLAK: ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE.

FEATHER: STOPPING AN ENGINE BY TURNING THE PROPELLER BLADES' LEADING EDGE DIRECTLY INTO THE WIND.

FLAK BATTERY: GROUP OF FLAK GUNS

FLAK HAPPY: BATTLE FATIGUE.

FLAK HELMET: HELMET WORN BY AIRCREWS. SEE PAGE 51. MADE OF STEEL.

FLAK SUIT: CONSISTS OF A CHEST and BACK PAD MADE OF 1 INCH SQUARE STEEL PLATES SEWN TOGETHER.

FLAP JOCKEY: CO-PILOT.

FLUB-DUB: PRACTICE FORMATION FLIGHT.

FRAGS: FRAGMENTATION BOMBS.

GOOD SHOW!: LIMIE EXPRESSION MEANING "WELL DONE".

G-EQUIPMENT: INSTRUMENT NAVIGATION EQUIPMENT.

GREEN-GREEN: FLARE MEANING "TAKE OFF" OR "CLEAR TO LAND".

GROUND-POUNDER: NON-FLYING ARMY PERSONNEL.

HIGH R.P.M.: PROPS PITCHED SO AS TO TAKE A SMALL "BITE" OF AIR, THEREFORE ALLOWING THE ENGINE TO TURN OVER IT'S MAXIMUM REVOLUTIONS.

HAPPY VALLEY: THE RHUR VALLEY. SO CALLED FOR ITS ABILITY TO THROW UP FLAK.

HIT THE SACK: GO TO BED

HEAD UP: NOT THINKING; STUPID.

HEAD OUT: QUICK REACTION; ON THE BALL.

I. P.: INITIAL POINT; TURNING POINT ONTO THE BOMB RUN.

INCENDIARY BOMB: FIRE BOMB.

INTERPHONE: COMMUNICATION SYSTEM
WITHIN THE BOMBER.

JERRIE: GERMANS; NAZIS

JET: NAZI JET PROPELLED AIRCRAFT.

KNOB-TWISTER: BOMBARDIER

LIMIE: ENGLISHMAN.

LOADING LIST: LIST OF CREWS WHO ARE
TO FLY THE DAYS MISSION.

LITTLE FRIENDS: OUR FIGHTER ESCORT.

MICKEY: INSTRUMENT BOMBING EQUIPT.

MARSHALLING YARDS: FREIGHT YARDS, RAILROAD.

MILK RUN: EASY MISSION.

NICKLES: PROPAGANDA, LEAFLETS.

ON INSTRUMENTS: BLIND FLYING.

ON THE BALL: SHARP, WIDE AWAKE.

PENCIL PUSHER: NAVIGATOR.

PEEL - OFF: LEAVING FORMATION IN A
DIVING TURN.

PERIMETER TRACK: HARD SURFACE
TRACK AROUND FIELD USED FOR TAXING.

POOP: HOT INFORMATION.

POST-HOLE: BOMB AIRFIELD (X) GENERAL.

PRIMARY: FIRST OR MAIN TARGET.

PURPLE HEART CORNER: SEE PAGE 11.

RED-RED: MISSION SCRUBBED.

RAF: ROYAL AIR FORCE.

R.T.U.: REPLACEMENT TRAINING UNIT.

SACK: BED; BUNK.

SALVO: DROPPING ALL BOMBS AT ONCE.

SCARE-CROW: EXTRA LARGE FLAK BURST WHICH LOOKS LIKE A SHIP EXPLODED.

SCRUB: MISSION IS CONCEALED.

SOUP: THICK OVERCAST.

SPLIT'S: ROLLING A SHIP OVER ON IT'S BACK and DIVING DOWN, RECOVERING LIKE THE LAST HALF OF A LOOP.

TEN-TENTHS: SOLID OVERCAST OF CLOUDS.

TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY [ANY ENEMY MILITARY INSTALLATION.]

THROTTLE JOCKEY: PILOT.

TOUR: 35 MISSIONS IN COMBAT.

UNDERCAST: SOLID LAYER OF CLOUDS BELOW.

WING: TWO OR MORE BOMBER GROUPS.

ZERO-ZERO: CEILING and VISIBILITY IS LESS THAN 50 FT. BAD WEATHER.

No. 1

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

For extraordinary achievement while

performing aerial stunts at a 5000 foot

altitude on 12 January 1942

No. 2

AIR MEDAL

FOR FIVE DARTS CRESTS

For gallantry in action while

performing aerial stunts at a 5000

foot altitude on 12 January 1942

No. 3

PURPLE HEART

For gallantry in action while

performing aerial stunts at a 5000

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BURGEON GENERAL

FOR THREE BATTLE STARS

No. 4

PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

FOR BOMB GROUP

No. 1

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

"For extraordinary achievement while serving as Pilot of a B-17 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany, 10 April 1945."

No. 2

AIR MEDAL

with FIVE OAK-LEAF CLUSTERS

"For meritorious achievement while participating in sustained bomber combat operations over Germany and German occupied countries."

No. 3

PURPLE HEART

"FOR wound received in action on a bombardment mission over Germany, 10 April 1945."

No. 4

EUROPEAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

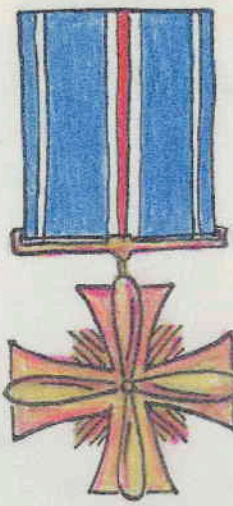
with THREE BATTLE STARS

No. 5

PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

of 306 BOMB GROUP

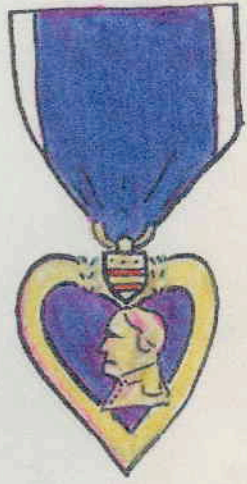
1.



2.



3.



4.



5.





*Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Woods,
retired from the Air Force on April 1, 1965.*

*The following are the Ribbons he is authorized to wear identified in
order from left to right and top to bottom.*

Distinguished Flying Cross with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters

Purple Heart

Air Medal with 9 Oak Leaf Clusters

Air Force Presidential Unit Citation

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

American Campaign Medal

European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal

World War II Victory Medal

National Defense Service Medal

Korean Service Medal

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal

Air Force Longevity Service Award with 4 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters

Armed Force Reserve Medal with 1 Bronze Hourglass

Korean Presidential Unit Citation

United Nations Service Medal

Korean War Service Medal



World War II Log Book
Written by: 1st Lt. Robert E. Woods
U. S. Air Force

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Trustee of the Robert E. Woods Trust.

Robert E. Woods

Taken while in Flight Training



Taken during WWII while flying combat



Taken July 2009



Robert E. Woods, Lt. Col., USAF, Retired

WWII: Command Pilot – B-17

35 Missions

Plus One Post VE Day Mission

DFC – Purple Heart

Korea: Aircraft Commander - SA-16
(Amphibian Aircraft) – Air Rescue Service

DFC

Vietnam: Aircraft Commander – C-124

Supply Missions into Danang



Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, 1947



Camp Stoneman, England May 5, 1950

**Steady Hedy coming from 75th Mission.
(One of planes flown by R.E. Woods during WWII)**



(One of planes flown by R.E. Woods during WWII)



R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AIR DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 557

18 May 1945

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 403 :

E X T R A C T

SECTION

AWARDS OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS-----I
AWARDS OF OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS-----II

I. Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended and pursuant to authority contained in letter, Hq Eighth Air Force, File 200.6, 23 September 1944, subject, "Awards and Decorations", the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS is awarded to the following-named Officers and Enlisted Men.

ROBERT E. WOODS, O-2059680, First Lieutenant, Air Corps, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement while serving as Pilot of a B-17 airplane on a bombing mission over Germany, 10 April 1945. Enroute to the target exceptionally accurate antiaircraft fire inflicted severe damage upon the aircraft which Lieutenant Woods was piloting. The plexiglass nose was shattered, the oxygen system was damaged, the Number One and Number Three engines were rendered inoperative and the Number Two engine caught fire intermittently. Despite these difficulties and the fact that Lieutenant Woods sustained a hand wound, he capably completed the return flight to base where a safe landing was accomplished. The courage, coolness and tenacity of purpose displayed by this officer on this occasion reflect the highest credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States. Entered military service from Tennessee.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL TURNER:

BARTLETT BEAMAN
Brigadier General, U. S. Army,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

ROBERTS P. JOHNSON, JR.,
Lieut. Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

DISTRIBUTION: "H"

A TRUE COPY *Robert E. Woods*
ROBERT E. WOODS
1st Lt. Air Corps

115th Mission — Fort Returns On One Engine

306th BOMB GROUP — The Fortress How Soon returned from its 115th mission on one engine, 10 April 1945.

Approximately ten minutes from the target — an airfield in the Oranienburg area of Germany — the bomber ran into heavy tracking anti-aircraft fire. Close concussions of flak bursts bounced the Fort, striking No. 3 and 4 engines.

The pilot, 2/Lt. Robert E. Woods, was hit in the right hand. The co-pilot, 1/Lt. John S. McDonald, was knocked out by a chunk of metal which tore through his helmet.

"When I came to, the cockpit was full of smoke, powdered glass and debris," McDonald related. "Three engines were out."

The battered Fort unloaded its bombs and went into a dive, plunging 10,000 feet before pulling out. Crewmen were alerted for the ball-out order.

Eight Mustangs suddenly appeared, four staying with the crippled bomber and four hitting the deck, silencing enemy flak batteries.

All equipment was jettisoned. The ball turret jammed. However, S/Sgt. Clarence W. Hunter, tail gunner and Sgl. Edward J. Maliszewski, radio operator, each grabbed one of the two tail guns and kept beating on the ball turret until it dropped.

"We staggered all over the sky — but made it back to base somehow," the co-pilot said. Despite one more obstacle — a flat tire — the pilot landed the Fort smoothly.

HEADQUARTERS
FIFTH AIR FORCE
APO 970

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 25)

13 January 1953

- I. AWARD OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
- II. AWARD OF AIR MEDAL

I. AWARD OF DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS - By direction of the President under the provisions of AFR 30-1A and Section VII, General Orders Number 63, Department of the Air Force, 19 September 1950, the Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to the following named officers for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on the dates indicated:

*

*

*

(FIRST OAK LEAF CLUSTER)

Captain Robert E. Woods, AC2059680, United States Air Force
3 November 1951

*

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*

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL BARCUS:

OFFICIAL:

E H. UNDERHILL
Brigadier General, USAF
Vice Commanding General

/s/t/H C PARSONS
Lt Col USAF
Asst Adj Gen

A CERTIFIED TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

Oliver F. McManus

OLIVER F. MCMANUS
2d Lt., USAF
Adjutant

By direction of the President, Captain ROBERT E. WOODS, AO 2059680, USAF has been awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross.

C-I-T-A-T-I-O-N

On 3 November 1951 CAPTAIN ROBERT E. WOODS, while flying as the aircraft commander of a rescue SA-16 Amphibian aircraft and while assigned to Flight "C" of the Third Air Rescue Squadron displayed conspicuous gallantry in action at the risk of his own life while successfully accomplishing the rescue of a downed United Nations fighter pilot. The rescue was made at a point more than 150 miles behind enemy lines. Answering the call of the distressed pilot Captain Woods flew his airplane to a point on a river bank a few miles inland in the hope that he could land his amphibian on the water and pick-up the downed pilot who had been spotted standing on the bank of the river. However, his rescue attempt was thwarted when enemy troops captured the downed pilot and scored several direct hits with small arms fire on the low circling rescue aircraft. At this moment another United Nations fighter pilot bailed out of his aircraft at a position nearby. Captain Woods located him afloat in a dinghy and successfully landed the SA-16, although the sea condition was very rough; and there had been no chance to evaluate the extent of damage caused to the aircraft by enemy gun fire. After pulling the uninjured pilot aboard the amphibian a successful take-off was accomplished. Under such sea conditions a take-off could normally be made only with jet assist, but since the enemy gun fire had damaged the JATO equipment, the takeoff was made with normal engine power which greatly increased the difficulty. After three attempts to get off the water failed the fourth was successful, and Capt. Woods returned the pilot to friendly control. The conspicuous gallantry displayed by Capt Woods voluntarily risking his life to save that of another person reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Anne Marie Ashburn

November 2002

Respect

Pausing to think about what family members have had a large impact on me made me realize how lucky I really am. I have had such supportive people in my family, with so much to teach me. It is hard to pick only one person to write about, but after long deliberation I have chosen my step-grandfather, Robert E. Woods.

GrandBob, as my sister, cousin and I like to call him, is relatively new to our family. He married my grandmother on my father's side in 1992, but he feels like he has been there forever. He looks forward to every time we visit their home in Titusville, Florida, and cries when we leave. He is very religious, loves to travel, and constantly makes friends with everyone around him, always stopping to talk.

GrandBob has been through a lot in his life. Although he has a major stroke, he has worked hard to recuperate and has gone through therapy to retrieve the ability to use his left side of his body. My grandmother, showing her incredible patience and love, is very supportive of him and takes him around in his wheelchair. More importantly, however, he was a command pilot of a B-17 Bomber for the United States Air Force during World War II. GrandBob is always willing to tell my family experiences he had during his 35 missions over Germany. When asked about them, his eyes light up and he sets off in detail describing his missions. Through these experiences I can tell he still has that charisma in him that he had when he was a 23 year old pilot. He kept a diary of his missions complete with drawings, a copy of which I am now a proud owner of. His work in the Fightin' Bitin', 369th squadron has made me respect him very much and has made

Bob Woods rolled out of his sack at 0200 hours that morning, pulled on his flying suit, quickly ate his three hotcakes and headed over to his plane, a B-17 bomber named *How Soon?*

“We always wondered how soon we would get our missions done and come home,” Woods said.

After he checked the emergency walk-around oxygen bottles, his ten-member crew boarded the 75 foot Boeing Fortress and the 306th bomb group was on their way to Oranienburg, Germany for mission number 27, a run to bomb Berlin’s key factories and train stations.

“Hitler said that nobody could do it [bomb Berlin] and so we did,” Woods said.

However routine the start, that day- April 10, 1945- was unlike his previous 26 missions he had flown for the U.S. Air Force. Four hours later at 2800 feet, Woods received a scare that would change his life forever and earn him one of the most valued metals for Veterans- a purple heart.

Woods, 23 years old, had been in the Air Force for two years already. However, these years of experience didn’t help Bob for the emotions that he was about to encounter.

Woods, the pilot of the plane, opened the throttles, and as the plane rose up through the fog a cold chill came over him. Woods shook it off, and looked ahead of him. Everything had been going fine. The crew started their usual checklist: “Tail ok,” “waist ok,” “ball ok,” “radio ok...” until they had covered the entire plane. He couldn’t locate where his uneasiness was coming from.

The plane broke through the clouds, the sun shone brightly around them. Woods thought that the circling ships in the distance glistened like diamond dust floating in the air-the first time he had ever thought of them that way. The clouds started clearing, and finally completely disappeared.

Woods saw Brussels come into his line of vision over the wing tip- then the Rhine river. He recalled that Cologne had been taken a couple weeks ago.

“Jerrie had been forced back from his beloved Rhine and now his very existence was at stake-he had gambled, and now he was losing the hard way,” Woods wrote in his journal entry that night.

He was beyond Whittenburg, approaching the Elbe River when things started to happen. The ‘Flying Fortress’ was still climbing higher into the sky when it jumped, and a loud series of thumps rang throughout her insides. Bob called back to the gunners to stop testing their guns. They called back up to the cockpit “Sir, we aren’t firing, it’s flack, and close too!”

Woods felt another round hit his ship. Crew member Ifratie called to him- “Sir, I think I’m hit.” Before he could reply, the Engineer called out “Look! The whole tail of that ship just blew up!” Woods turned to look as a black figure went past his propeller- it was another plane’s tail gunner still holding his guns.

Suddenly Woods saw the smoke, which began to fill the cabin. There was a loud echoing noise, like two 45’s had just been fired in his ears. Bits of glass, metal and insulation filled the air, mixed around by the broken line releasing oxygen. His right hand glove was ripped to shreds, and his hand and arm were stinging like a dozen bees had jumped it. Woods salvoed (released) all of the remaining bombs.

The plane was losing altitude quickly. Woods pulled back on the stick hard and started a half-turn, back toward friendly lines. His sight blurred, and Woods knew that he didn’t have any oxygen. Woods looked over at his co-pilot for help and saw a gaping hole torn through Mac’s flack helmet. The chilling thought came to mind- “he must be dead.”

The plane continued to lose altitude. Woods saw Sgt. Pomykal, the engineer, pointing at the feathering buttons and holding up two fingers- the number two engine was on fire. At that moment Mac came to life, and pushed the feathering button. The number three engine had also broken, oil spilling out of it. Number one’s engine’s pressure was all over the board, Bob saw, and he knew that it too had been hit.

Since Bob had hooked up the oxygen walk-around bottle that morning his vision began to clear up. “Oxygen is a wonderful thing,” thought Woods.

Bob told his crew to be ready to abandon ship. Suddenly number one’s engine steadied and they headed for home. With a declining altitude, Woods ordered his crew to

throw off anything that wasn't nailed down. Radio equipment, guns, ammunition, flack suits were all thrown out. Fighter backup was requested, and an escort was sent. The ship was holding steady now, so Woods made the decision to fly on into Brussels, then into the channel, then to England, a three-hour trip.

He landed the plane safely with a left flat tire, three broken engines, six holes in the cockpit, a shot oxygen system, loss of equipment, and 39 holes in the ship.

Woods later received a distinguished flying cross and a purple heart for his work that day, and is now thankful for the safety he had on that fateful day.

"In the Air Corp they say that when you start flying your missions you are allowed so much luck. When you use up this given amount of luck you don't come back," Woods wrote. "[That day] I think Mac, I, and the rest of the crew used up our account, and overdrew about a dozen four-leaf clovers worth of that luck."

Today, Woods is "so thankful; to be alive," and hopes that "we don't have to have another war." Woods, as well as countless other WWII veterans, wants U.S. diplomats to do a better job preventing war, so young men don't fight old men's wars.

***306th Bombardment Group
First Over Germany***



***World War II
1942 - 1945***

Hi, Virginia & Charles,

Thank you for asking for a copy of Bob's Log Book. Each time I make one it reminds me what a "special" guy I married.

I included in the back of the Book extra pictures, copies of citations and two short stories that our Grand Daughter, Anne Marie, wrote about Bob. I thought you might enjoy reading what a young lady thought and wrote about him.

Please tell your beautiful daughter – thanks for keeping Bob and Charles's memories for us and I'll try and make him available anytime she or anyone else may want to call him.

His health isn't the best, but just like WWII he is a fighter.

Love to you both,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pat".



Robert E Woods
3416 Worsham Pl
Titusville, FL
32780-5208