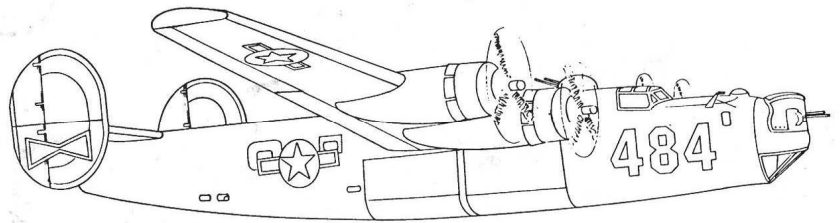

The Torretta Flyer

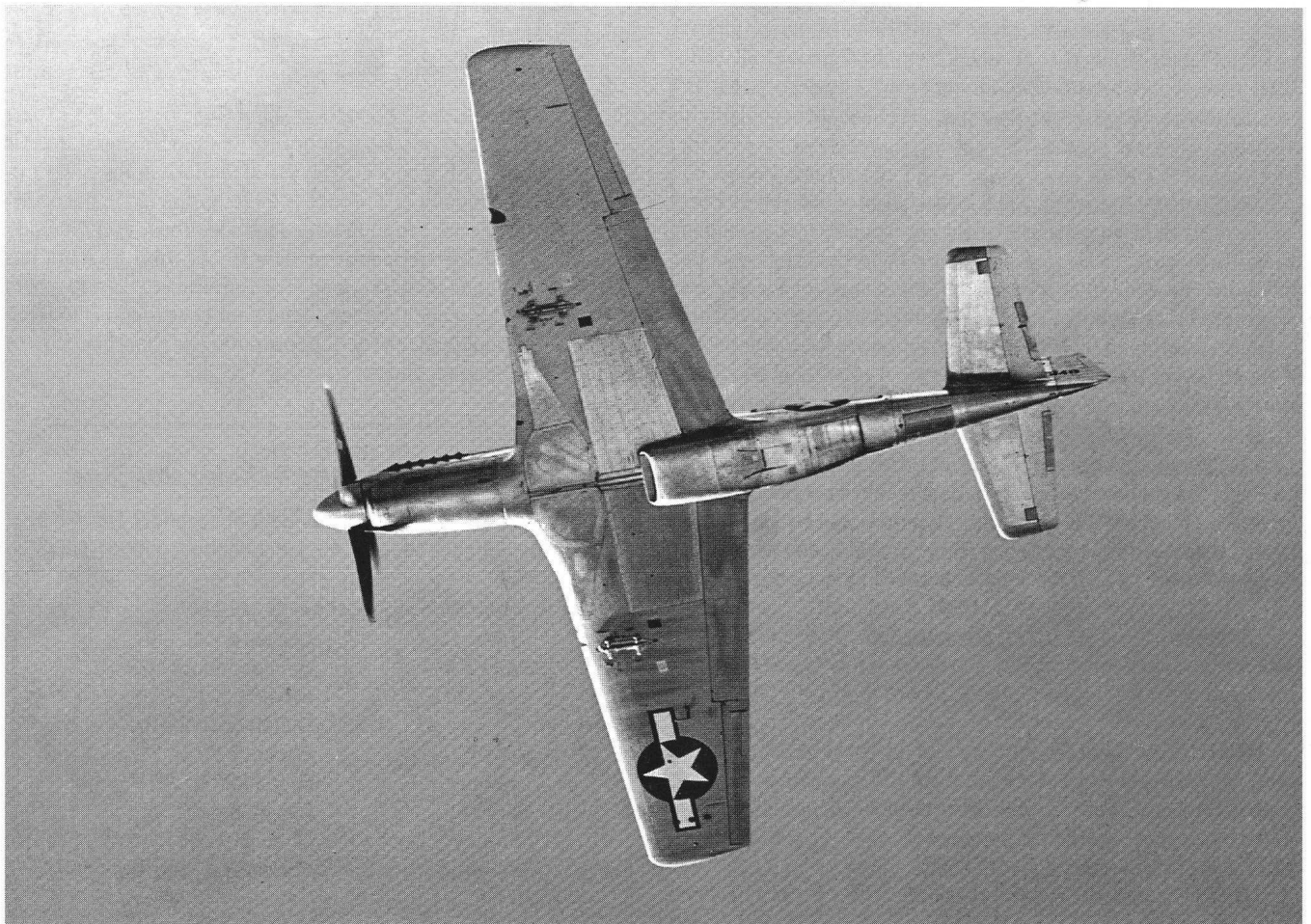


Torretta Flyer No 33

484th Bomb Group Association

Spring-Summer 1998

***The 484th Bomb Group will hold its 17th
Annual Reunion at the Tucson Hilton East Hotel.***



North American P-51, one of the aircraft types used by the XIX Tactical Air command in support of ground troops in August of 1944. See story starting on page 8.

In this Issue

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Air Gound Teamwork, Page 8
Combat Express, Page 27

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Supply Mission 11 September, 1944, Page 19
The Last Mission, Page 35
Editorial Robert Dorr page 38

What's in this Issue

The term *Combat Express* defines the theme of this issue. It was the use of the regular numbered air forces to augment delivery of ammo, bombs, and fuel to General Patton's Third Army Tactical Air Command. Patton's use of his Tactical Air Force to attack enemy ground positions during August of 1944 consumed supplies at a faster rate than could be supplied through regular channels. Some of you participated in the 484th supply missions to Bron, France during September, 1944. The three stories immediately below support the theme.

1) Air Ground Teamwork We are deviating from normal reporting of events pertaining to the activities of the 484th Bomb Group to bring you a report on Air Ground Teamwork on the Western Front. It is a story about the XIX Tactical Air Command's Air support of ground troops after the Western Allies invasion of Europe in June of 1944. We, in the 484th, think of fighter aircraft as defending the bombers from attack from the German Luftwaffe. This work shows how fighter aircraft were adopted to support ground troops. This report was discovered at Maxwell Field, Alabama. Starts on page 8.

2) Supply Mission This is the story of the 484th's first supply mission of September 11, 1944 to Bron, France in support of the Tactical Air Force employed by Patton's 3rd Army. The Patton led 3rd Army was chewing up big chunks of the German opposition by using P-47s and P-51s to hit at strong points, tanks, and guns. In doing so his tactical fighter-bombers were running out of supplies. The 484th was called upon to alleviate this condition. Story starts on page 19.

3) Combat Express This article from the December 1944 Air Force Magazine reports that medium bombers and cargo planes were also called upon to help carry munitions and fuel to the racing Third Army, sometimes even carrying the much needed supplies right to the tactical airfields themselves. Story on page 27.

Memories of Walter Chapman Story submitted by Dick Olson, son of Richard Olson. His experiences as an evadee. Starts on Page 4.

The Calvin Teel Story. Sometime before he died, Calvin Teel wrote his own story, put together from his own remembrances, flight records and crew member Ralph Christensen's diary. Submitted by Emmett Goff. Starts on page 28.

Guest Editorial. Robert Dorr, an Air Force veteran reminds us all to have greater respect for the venerable B-24 Liberator. See page 38.

Morning Reports Received

Copies of the Morning Reports of the 484th Bomb Group have been received just recently through the efforts of Orville Hommert and his wife, Katie. These reports contain personnel information, listing the comings and goings of any individual through 484th BG HQ by name, rank, MOS, and serial number. We will now be able to correct the master roster, and add new names as applicable.

Veterans Organization Notices

Freeman Army Airfield

Freeman Army Airfield, Seymour, Indiana will hold a reunion on June 7, 1998. Call Ted Jordan, or Jane Henley at 812/522/3607.

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society will hold its annual reunion in Las Vegas at the Circus-Circus Hotel and Casino September 28-30, 1998. For further information contact Alexander D Cuiczak at 714/493/7165.



Rumanian Pows

The Association of Former Prisoners of War in Rumania will meet in reunion September 8 through September 12, 1998 at the Hyatt Newporter Hotel, 1107 Jamboree Rd, Newport Beach, CA 92660. Room rate \$115.00. Call 1-800-233-1234. Max Binswanger 714-723-5015.

A Bronze B-24

A B-24 is to be modeled in bronze for placement at the Air Force Academy. Members are requested to make dollar contribution to the construction of a bronze B-24 to be erected in the courtyard of the Air Force Museum where a scale bronze B-17 already stands. The 2nd Air Division that flew B-24s from England has already contributed 2/3 of the cost. Neal Sorensen (612) 545-2696, is the project chairman. You may send your contributions to Reed Sprinkel, 825 Squadron (484th BG Bronze Project Chairman). 1026 Santiago Dr, Newport Beach, CA 92660-5728.

Contributions to the Scholarship Fund

Tabulated to date and since publication of Torretta Flyer No 32.

John	Hicks 826
<i>In the Memory of Abner O McDaniel</i>	
Robert D	Leavenworth 826
Walter W	Bondarchuk Sr 825
Walter H	Scheurs 825
H M	Hendrickson 824
Ross J	Wilson 824
Robert W	Goble 826
James C	Langdon 825
William J	Delonga 824
Harold D 1	Pressel Jr 825
Ralph	Carr 825
Frederick	D Kuhn 826
Rua L	Petty 825
David R	Ward 826
Robert M	Kelliher 765
George	Christie 765
<i>In the Memory of Seymour Jenner</i>	
Harry K	Hubertz 824
Dan	Joba 826
Lloyd C	McKenzie 825
Colin E	Dye 826
<i>In the Memory of Brother Keith Hamilton Dye</i>	

Italian Tour Planned For Spring 1999

Member John Nicolai, 827 Squadron, and his wife Lorraine are working with Brevik travel on an Italian Tour for next year. One of the highlights of the tour will be the 1999 Scholarship Awards Ceremony in Cerignola. Professor Umberto Albanese usually invites important officials from the government, the church and the press to attend. The Awards ceremony is scheduled for April 30, 1999. The two tour itineraries include the following:

1) The main ten-day tour includes Rome, Naples, Pompeii, Sorrento, Capri, Bari, Foggia, Cerignola, and places and sites in between.

2) An optional nine-day extension is planned for a visit to Northern Italy, including Verona, Florence, Padua, Venice, Pisa, Rapallo, Novaro, Lake Maggiore, Stresa, Milan, and sites and places in between.

The tentative dates are: Main Tour - April 23rd to May 2nd, 1999; Extension Tour April 23rd to May 10th, 1999.

Please contact John and Lorraine Nicolai for further information at 1143 East Coulee Road, Bismarck, ND 58501, or Telephone: 701-223-0591.

Brevik Travel International, Inc. 760-341-9795.

This Italian tour is not sponsored by the 484th Bomb Group Association. Refer all questions to Brevik Tours (760) 341-9795, or John Nicolai (701) 223-0591.



The 484th PX

484th BG Logo patch, stitched, 2 3/4 " in diameter ----- \$5.00.

B-24 three-dimensional tie tac, silver, 1 3/4 " ----- \$5.00.

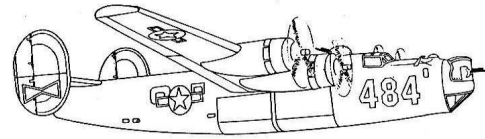
Association Pin with 484th Logo 7/8" ----- \$5.00.

Baseball Cap, red & white. side view of 484th silver B-24 on front, postage inc. --- \$12.00.

Miniature Plaque 1 3/4 " with display stand, postage inc. ----- \$25.00.

Back issues of the Torretta Flyer, Nos 13 14, 16 thru 32, postage inc. ----- \$50.00.

The Torretta Flyer



Issue #33 Spring-Summer 1998

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The Torretta Flyer is the official publication of the 484th Bomb Group Association. Normal distribution is limited to members only. Requests from nonmembers for copies should be directed to the Editor.

Contributions of stories, articles, memorabilia, and graphic materials to the Torretta Flyer are always welcome. Clean typewritten manuscripts and Microsoft Word disks are preferable. Other formats are also acceptable. Please contact the Editor for further information.

The Torretta Flyer reports primarily on the history of air warfare during WWII and the accomplishments of members of the 484th Bomb Group during WWII. From time to time the magazine will cover other subject matter related to aeronautical events as material becomes available. Readers are encouraged to submit their own stories or material from other sources.

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Associate Editor, Bea Markel

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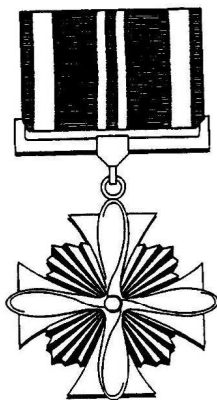
Direct all inquiries to the Editor, Torretta Flyer, 1122 Ysabel St. Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453-13, USA Phone (310) 316-3330. We can be reached via the internet at BUD484BG@AOL.com. Also, visit our web site at <http://members.aol.com/bud484bg>. Faxes can be received at prearranged times.

Member S/Sgt. James F Carney receives DFC Award Notice

Information given below was received recently by the Association for follow-up:

S/Sgt James F Carney ASN 17107876, 824 Sq. credited with 35 missions, received a DFC award notice after the war at home in May 1945. The paperwork was long hidden. Now, growing old, he says, "I would like to pass the award on to my sons".

The proposed citation



Sgt. Carney was the nose gunner on a B-24 type aircraft flying a combat mission to the vital enemy oil refinery at Odertal, Germany on 17 December 1944. Severe and adverse weather conditions were encountered enroute until the formation had passed over the Alps and approached the Vienna area. Evading the heavy flak concentrations over Vienna the formation proceeded directly to the target area. Still forty minutes from the objective, the penetration escort turned back. Target escort was to join the formation just a few minutes later.

Before the meeting could be effective, the formation was attacked by 130 enemy single engine fighters, the largest assault force thrown against our operations in four months.

The entire force was apparently coordinated by ground control, alert to the gap in our fighter protection against this particular objective. The enemy's forces were well dispersed along the entire route with reserves continually thrown into the attack. In waves of three and six abreast, they came in with suicidal aggressiveness, attacking from all angles, but mainly from five to seven o'clock in a desperate attempt to disrupt or destroy the formation. The enemy dove, reformed, and dove in renewed attacks.

Sgt. Carney, though under direct attack from a formation of six enemy planes, remained calmly at his guns and continued to pour a steady stream of fire on the assaulting ships. In spite of the fact that his position received a direct hit from enemy gunfire, he nevertheless remained at his station, and because of his gallant determination in the face of great odds, he succeeded in helping to destroy two ME-109s, and aiding in the destruction of several others.

The target was defended by extremely heavy concentration of enemy gunfire, his aircraft made a perfect bombing run and dropped its entire bomb load in the immediate target area, inflicting grave damage to this vital enemy installation.

The aircraft safely evaded further areas of heavy flak concentrations and arrived safely back at base without additional damages. The fact that this aircraft reached the target, bombed successfully, and returned to base, was due in great part to Sgt. Carney's unswerving devotion to duty and great professional skill.

Memories of Walter Chapman, 826 Squadron

During, WWII, I was a bombardier on a B-24 with the 484th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force stationed in Italy. On Friday, June 13, 1944 (my 24th combat mission in 39 days), we were on our way to Munich Germany when attacked and shot down by German ME-109 fighters. During the battle our gunners shot down three of the enemy fighters; but we sustained the loss (KIA) of our nose and ball turret gunners, loss of three engines which were set on fire (with 3-500 lb. bombs still aboard). Eight of us successfully evacuated the aircraft. Four of my crew were captured by the Germans and became POWs, while four of my crew were discovered and hidden by friendly Italians and later escaped to Yugoslavia and made contact with Tito's Partisans. The following is a digest of my 43 days as an evadee (MIA) in Italy and Yugoslavia.

When I hit the ground-after bailing out and before I was able to gather up the chute I was seized by a group of men (later I found that they were Italians and meant me no harm) who began to remove my flying outfit. While this was going on, one of them had removed his clothes and he indicated that I should put on the clothes he removed. I was then taken to a cave-like hollow, under a tree, along a river, given a small bottle of wine, 2 raw eggs, after which they departed.

I spent the balance of that day and night alone, going over my escape maps to determine the direction I should take to reach the Yugoslav border. The next morning helped by sign language I managed to get a man to take me across the river. I was asked in English: "you are one of the Americans shot-down yesterday aren't you?" This man was a South African (British Army) who had been taken POW by the Germans in Africa.

I was taken to a farmhouse where I found my navigator and crew chief. After four days in this area we were taken by truck through German occupied Italy to the Yugoslav border by Italian Partisans.

At that time, June 1944, Yugoslavia was occupied by the German Army while two groups (Yugoslav Partisans under Joseph Broz Tito) and (Croatian Partisan /Chetniks) under Mihajlovic, were waging a civil war between themselves as well as the Germans. We were told that either group was paid \$10,000 by the US for each escaping airman returned to Allied Central.

June 18, at the border through interpreters, we were put in contact with members of Tito's Partisans. We departed the Italian-Yugoslav border led by two young (16-17 years old) partisan soldiers, each armed with a submachine gun for a destination unknown to us for some forty-nine days in the future. These soldiers were replaced from time to time by others who were familiar with the territory through which we were to travel. We travelled for the most part at night and holed up during the day. The language barrier was the worst part of the experience, for these soldiers (guides) whom we could not understand were prone to get their heads together and after shouting at each other would take off running and we not knowing what they were running from, would take off after them and often we would end up back where we started.

One such retreat was preceded by a burst of machine-gun fire, another a flare being shot into the air ahead of us by Germans.

Food was always scarce and often nonexistent, (once we had no food for five days). We celebrated the end of our fast by having food on the 4th of July, 1944. We shared in the Partisan soldiers

rations of polenta (cooked corn meal) from time to time and when we arrived at a camp, we deposited a portion of our polenta in the common cook-pot.

We were badly infected by body lice and we occupied part of our resting time locating the vermin and eggs in the seams of our clothing and killing them between our thumbnails. We were never able to remove our clothes. At times, conditions, food, etc. were somewhat better for located along our escape route were

missions, groups of Allied Soldiers (American or British) with radio contact with Allied Headquarters in Italy. Their mission was to furnish information of a military nature of German troop movements, etc. We were also able to get some food (K or C rations) for the most part. At an American mission; I was able to get word to my wife who was pregnant that I was alive. At these missions we were joined by other American Airmen who had been shot down for months, some like us, for a short time. Some were wounded, one I recall, had an arm shot off at the elbow. By the time we reached our final destination, there were some 50 to 60 American Airmen along with a number of French and other nationalities, somewhat of an international brigade.

We were sworn to secrecy and were not able to talk about our experiences for some forty years and some of the details are not clear. For example the place from which we were evacuated, an airfield in the middle of a large field illuminated by flares, outlining a runway on which an American C-46 landed and flew us along with Yugoslav wounded to Bari, Italy HQ 15th Air Force and a hospital. With regard to the location of the airfield some 10 years ago, I obtained a top secret document, a copy of my interrogation upon return to Allied Control, which gave the map coordinates of the field. The airfield was close enough to a German airfield, so that one day they sent a fighter plane to strafe us, another day a light bomber that dropped a few bombs.

This digest of my experiences while being an Evadee (MIA) is written in a rather rambling fashion (Dean Smith would throw me and the story out of his-class!), and as a digest, does not include a description of many other events or feelings that we experienced during those days, prior to being returned to Allied control.. Signed Walter Chapman..

The foregoing was send in by Dick Olson, a new member of the Association, who is the son of Richard Olson (D) 826 Sq.



Photo J E White 824 Sq. Crew . Top row from left: Robert Heath-N, William R Gifford-B, Thomas F Parker-N/G, Theodore R Gressen-B/G, and James D Gunnels (D)-R/O. Bottom row: Richard A Sites-T/G, Elmer B McCully Jr-C/P, Claud E Griffin-E, Thomas Reynolds (D)-W/G, and J E White-P.



Unknown Red Cross Girl, Bill Gracey photo



Photo 1 Left: Joe Revelas, Middle: Sgt Earl R Hall, right: Unknown. Photo Revelas 826 Sq

Tentative Schedule! 1998 Reunion

484th Bomb Group Association Tucson East Hilton Tucson, Az

November 3 - 7, 1998

With approval of the membership at the last reunion, the Association has engaged the services of the Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. for the 1998 Tucson Reunion. This means that payment for the reunion events are to be made to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. and Not the Association. The Official Reunion Registration Form should be in the mail by the end of May.

Sleeping room reservations should be made directly with the hotel via phone or mail as in the past. See Page 7



The 1998 Reunion Schedule runs Tuesday, November 3, through Saturday, November 7, 1998 which is a departure from the usual Wednesday through Sunday arrangement. Please note: All times shown below are tentative.

Tuesday, November 3

2:00 PM Registration until 7:00 PM. (Tentative)
Hospitality room opens in the afternoon.

Wednesday, November 4

7:00 AM Registration until 8:00 AM
8:00 AM Tour A Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum .
Return by 1:00 PM.
12:00 Registration till 6:00 PM
2:15 PM Tour B Old Tucson Studios. Return by 6:45 PM.

Thursday, November 5

7:30 AM Registration, to 8:30 AM.
9:00 AM Tour C Tour of San Xavier, Nogales, and Tubac (Mexico tour). Return by 5:00 PM.
5:00 PM Registration continues to 6:00 PM
6:30 PM Squadron Dinners.

Friday, November 6

9:00 AM Annual Meeting until 10:00 AM
10:30 AM Board bus for Davis Monthan Air Force Base Chapel for the Memorial Service, lunch at the Officers Club, then on to Tour D Pima Air Museum. Return by 4:30 PM
6:00 PM Cash Bar and Pre-Banquet Social Hour until 7:00 PM. Registration Continues.
7:00 PM Banquet Dinner

Saturday, November 7

8:00 AM Farewells and departure breakfast.

Tour Descriptions

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Tour A Board bus for the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, selected by the New York Times "As probably the most distinctive zoo in the United States. " Being a living museum it features animals, plants and fish native to the Sonora Desert. Box lunch at Ironwood Terrace included.

Old Tucson Studios Tour B This is a western theme family attraction. One of the motion picture industries great movie locations. It was opened in 1939 for the Columbia Picture "Arizona". Over 300 productions have used this location setting.

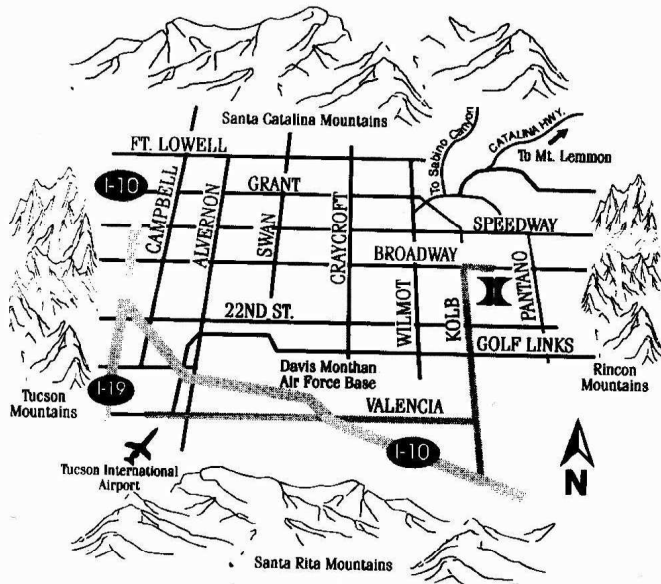
San Xavier / Nogales / Tubac Tour C Board bus and proceed to the "White Dove of the Desert" San Xavier del Bac Mission. San Xavier is considered the finest example of mission architecture in the U.S. and is still used for daily Mass by the Tohono O'odham Indians. Bus heads "South of the Border" to Nogales, in old Mexico. The landscape changes from desert to lush grasslands as we approach the border. 11:30 Lunch at the El Greco Restaurant, which provides a taste of the finest in Mexican cuisine. Choose between a Mexican combo plate, grilled chicken breast with Mexican sauce, or broiled Sea Bass. After lunch experience the vibrancy of life in Nogales, a shopper's paradise with goods of every type and where shopkeepers love to bargain (American currency only). Your tour guide will assist with your bargaining skills and show you the ropes in the colorful world of Calle Obregon. Bus stops at Tubac. This renowned artists' community is also Arizona's oldest European settlement, where ruins from the late 1600s provide the backdrop for over thirty studios and art centers.

Pima Air Museum Tour D Pima Air Museum, ranked as the third largest aviation history museum in the U.S. View models, uniforms, insignia, WWII mock-up airmen's quarters, B-24 "Liberator," Douglas "Globemaster," F-84 Shooting Star," F-100 "Super Sabre," SR-71, and Air Force One used by JFK, Eisenhower's "Columbine," and the X-15 rocket. There are over 200 planes on display .

The Tucson Hilton East

7600 East Broadway, Tucson, AZ 85710

Phone 1-800-648-7177 or (520) 721-5600



The Tucson Hilton East Hotel welcomes the 484th Bomb Group Association November 3 thru 7, 1998. Your special group rate is \$74.00 + 9.5 % tax, and \$1.00 City Night Surcharge. Rate applies 3 days prior, and subject to availability 3 days after.

Deadline for group reservation rates is **October 4, 1998**. To insure availability of the group rate, your reservations must be received before **October 4, 1998**. Make phone reservations by using 1(800) 648-7177, or (520) 721-5600. Or return a copy of this page prior to **October 4, 1998**

1998 Hotel Reservation Form

Name _____

Room Preference _____

Address _____

_____ King _____ 2 Queens _____ Smoking _____ Non Smoking _____

City _____ State _____

Number of People _____ Other _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

Hilton requires either a one night deposit or a credit card to guarantee your reservation. Individual cancellations may be made without penalty up to 48 hours prior to arrival date.

Are you a Hilton Honors Member ? _____ Yes _____ No

Number _____

Guarantee with:

Amex _____ MC _____ Diners _____ Discover _____ Visa _____

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

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mail with your deposit to:

Tucson Hilton East
7600 East Broadway
Tucson, AZ 85710

Air-Ground! Teamwork on the Western Front

by Center for Air Force History, 1992

When the history of this war is written, one of the significant developments to be noted and discussed will be the formation and rapid growth of the air-ground tactical team. Born of resourcefulness and necessity, cradled in the African desert, the lusty infant quickly grew into a creature of bone and sinew until, when Normandy was invaded, it had become a smoothly functioning striking force of terrific power, destined to change many tactical theories theretofore accepted as axioms. This story focuses its attention upon one phase of air-ground cooperation, the drive across France of Maj. Gen. O. P. Weyland's XIX Tactical Air Command (XIX TAC) and Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army.

For 30 days this new battle team moved ahead without pause—eastward, southward, and westward. Six days after it went into operation, all Brittany had been conquered except for three beleaguered ports; 9 days later, one jaw of the Falaise-Argentan trap had been clamped shut; in another week the Seine was crossed above and below Paris; and by the end of the first month this air ground combination was fighting within 60 miles of Germany.

In the course of these incredibly rapid operations XIX TAC was called upon to carry out many assignments that no air arm had ever done before. To keep up with the advance of Third Army's forward command post, frequently 20 miles a day, XIX TAC had to move its combat headquarters five times during the 31 days of August. It was an air force that never could settle down, that always must keep trucks and vans ready to roll closer to the front, that never could permit a time lag in its operational planning and coordination.

In August, Thunderbolts and Mustangs of XIX TAC flew on five different fronts, none of which was stable. The fighters probed and disorganized with their bombs deep areas of enemy concentrations and shallow zones directly ahead of Third Army tanks; they protected the Third Army's rearward supply roads, at one time very narrow and precarious, from ground attack and sabotage aircraft; they flew almost daily against suicide garrisons which the Germans left behind encircled, sternly defended harbor cities; and finally, in a completely unorthodox move, they were given full responsibility for the protection of General Patton's long, vulnerable right flank along the Loire.

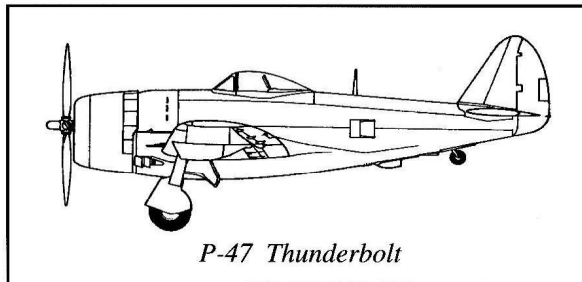
This diversity of assignment meant that the aircraft of XIX TAC had to operate simultaneously along an irregular, shifting 500 mile front ranging from Brest almost to the Rhine. Dozens of high priority missions were required on every good flying day to meet threats along the whole uneven battle line, to keep the Germans in every sector immobile and off balance, and to prevent any massing of enemy strength to oppose the Third Army.

Background of the XIX Tactical Air Command By 1 August most elements of General Weyland's command had fought the enemy for at least 5 months, and some had been in combat since December. XIX TAC joined the Third Army with a backlog of combat

experience in all three of its tactical assignments: neutralization of enemy air power; interdiction of enemy movement on roads, rails, and rivers to and from the battle zone; and close cooperation with ground forces.

General Weyland took command of XIX TAC, then one of the two components of IX Fighter Command, on 4 February 1944. His first headquarters was at Aldermaston Court, near Reading in Berkshire, from where he directed the administration and helped to plot the operations of Thunderbolts and Mustangs flying from East Anglian bases with Eighth Air Force Fortresses and Liberators. Soon after its activation XIX TAC consisted of two fighter wings, the 100th and 303rd embracing five groups of Thunderbolts and two of Mustangs.

Gradually the aircraft of IX Fighter Command shifted from long-distance escort missions, protecting the heavies against the Luftwaffe, to fighter-bomber operations against all types of enemy defensive and logistic targets in northern France, the Lowlands, and within the borders of the Reich. As invasion drew close, General Weyland's seven groups moved to advanced landing strips in Kent, a few minutes' flying time from the enemy, the better to carry out their



P-47 Thunderbolt

part in the softening of the German garrison armies in France.

In the weeks of furious air warfare before D-day, XIX TAC's operations were coordinated with those of its sister organization, IX Tactical Air Command, under Maj. Gen. Elwood R. Quesada. XIX TAC participated in the pre invasion rail and road smashing campaigns and helped to destroy bridges across the Seine, the Meuse, and the Oise to divide from each other all possible invasion sectors and to make transportation from the big German weapons and materiel factories to the Westwall difficult and perilous. To take one obvious example, the destruction of all bridges across the Seine from Paris to the sea separated the German Seventh Army in Brittany and Normandy from the enemy Fifteenth Army in the Pas de Calais.

Fighter-bomber pilots, learning their trade the hard way during April and May, returned to base each day with new techniques for sealing tunnels, blowing up bridges, blocking tracks, and derauling railway cars. They approached their targets from a dozen different angles, ranging from a horizontal, almost zero-degree bomb run, to the nearly perpendicular approach of straight dive bombing. Their record of enemy vehicles destroyed and rails severed ran into impressive figures.

From D-day to 1 August, when the First Army was the only American army operating in France, XIX TAC groups, based first in England, then in Normandy, were under operational control of IX TAC. General Weyland's airmen participated in all the close cooperation missions of those first 2 invasion months the 3, 4, and 5th missions-a-day schedule of the assault stage; the interdiction of traffic across the Loire and through the Paris-Orleans gap; the harrying of enemy movement inside Normandy and Brittany; the

concentrated 2 hour bomber and fighter-bomber attack on the pyramidal forts ringing Cherbourg; and the historic operations south of St. Lo.

On 2 July, General Weyland's field headquarters were set up at Cricqueville in Normandy. A few days later he moved to Nehou, near the secret command post of the still secret Third Army. Until 1 August, while XIX TAC's Thunderbolts and Mustangs continued to fly in cooperation with the First Army, the operations and intelligence personnel of XIX TAC and Third Army made plans for their independent air-ground campaign, to start with the activation of General Patton's forces.

Background of the Third Army The Third Army had been in Germany before. Its shoulder patch, a white "A" and red "O" on a field of blue, proclaimed months spent in the Reich after the last war as the army of occupation. From the outset, General Patton made no secret of the fact that the Third Army would again go to Germany.

He had taken command of the army in England on 26 March 1944. Until 6 July he directed a rigorous training program, emphasizing the physical fitness of his men, aircraft recognition, firing of individual and combined weapons, and familiarity with mines, minefields, and booby traps.

On 6 July General Patton established headquarters at Nehou in Normandy. Under his command were four corps, the VIII, XII, XV, and XX. When the Third Army became operational on 1 August, it had three immediate objectives: to

drive south and southwest from Avranches, to secure the area around Rennes and Fougères, and then to wheel westward to capture the peninsula of Brittany and open the Breton ports.

First Phase of the operation On 1 August, American armor and infantry were smashing forward on the impetus of the breakthrough at St. Lo. The surge of five armored columns cut the Germans to ribbons. Dozens of powerless, unequipped, and disorganized enemy units were scrambling southward and eastward to escape annihilation. Fighters of the XIX and IX TAC hunted the foe on the roads, where they moved two and three trucks abreast without discipline in planless escape; in the undergrowth in valleys and stream beds, where Panther and Tiger tanks and isolated artillery sought refuge; in bivouac areas, where Germans pitched their oblong tents for a few hours' respite in their headlong flight.

This sudden rout followed the massive air operation of 25 July, which helped to break the month-old deadlock along the base of the Cotentin peninsula. From the capture of Cherbourg until that date, Americans and Germans had fought obdurately around St. Lo, Periers, and Lessay. When the shattering aerial attack finally came, the massed weight of American heavy, medium, light, and fighter-bombers, about 3,000 strong, saturated German anti-armor defenses with thousands of small bombs, each with a lethal radius of 100 yards. After that the enemy lines were numbed, dislocated, shredded. The First Army sprang forward before the Germans could recover their balance. In a week the Army reached Avranches. Its cooperating air power stopped hundreds of tanks and vehicles along the roads, throwing into confusion seven nervously withdrawing divisions. At Avranches, on 1 August, the Third Army entered the fight.

Do not blow up any bridges General Patton's request to XIX TAC. Since long before D-day tactical aircraft had concentrated on bridge-busting, a very effective way of slowing German movement. General Patton looked at it another way. He wanted the bridges intact so that his own troops could cross the rivers without delay, without having to ford them, or to throw up pontoon bridges. He counted on swift advance and made it. Within 5 days all Brittany except Brest, St. Malo, Ile de Cézembre, and Lorient were in American hands.

The very speed of Third Army movement changed the whole character of fighter-bomber cooperation. Before the breakthrough, the highest priority assignment for Thunderbolts, Mustangs, and Lightnings had been the isolation of the battlefield from the south, east, and north. That assignment presupposed that advance would be slow and tortuous, that it was advantageous to demolish permanent road and river structures like bridges, embankments, and overpasses to stop the enemy from flooding the battle zone with troops and supplies. When General Patton started moving, he turned the interdiction job inside out. The Third Army wanted fighter-bombers

to prevent movement from, not to, the battle area. It wanted the German escape roads blocked, but it also wanted lines of communication ahead of our troops as smooth and fluid as possible.

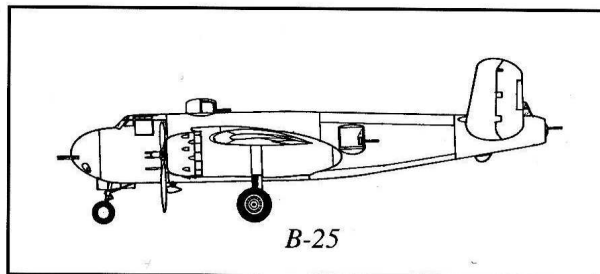
Before the big air blow of 25 July, the second highest priority assignment for air, as the First Army fought stubbornly from hill to hill and patiently stormed strong points, had been to attack enemy

defensive positions which had held out for days and might continue for weeks. Thunderbolts would plan, 24 to 48 hours in advance, to dive-bomb a stubborn machine gun position or a fort impregnable from the ground.

In XIX TAC-Third Army tactics, the second job also was reversed. There were no such things as German "strong points" in Brittany short of the great island and port fortresses. Over the open country of the peninsula the Germans rarely paused long enough to make a stand on Hill X or Ridge Y. It became impossible to plan tactical air cooperation missions a day in advance when Third Army tanks rolled ahead 20 miles a day and when aircraft had to make sure, before an attack, that the objective had not already been taken by our ground forces. It soon became clear that in cooperating with General Patton, XIX TAC would find its targets in the field, would plan as it flew.

To cut off enemy lines of retreat, to destroy German tanks and infantry in flight, to eliminate pockets of resistance and delaying action, General Weyland planned and dispatched two extremely flexible types of missions which depended heavily upon the acuteness and resourcefulness of his individual airmen.

One was armed reconnaissance. In these operations, fighter bombers armed with bombs and bullets ransack deep and shallow zones ahead of the ground forces for targets of opportunity. The field for armed reconnaissance is bounded on the inside by the bomb line, a series of marked terrain features, beyond which all territory is definitely held by the enemy. With General Patton's amazingly swift ground advance, the bomb line moved hour by hour and pilots carried area maps strapped to their legs so that they could be alerted about changes as they were made. In the campaign for Brit-



tany and after, XIX TAC armed reconnaissance missions paid juicy dividends in locating and breaking up masses of enemy strength behind the battle line, in knocking out enemy tanks and vehicles approaching or fleeing the front, and in giving the Germans no leisure to rest, regroup, or maintain secrecy of movement.

Armored-column cooperation. Before the St. Lo breakthrough, between 10 and 14 tanks in every division were equipped with the same VHF radio sets carried by the fighters. Four and eight ship flights hovered over the lead elements of armored columns, ready to attack on request, to warn the tanks of hidden opposition, to eliminate delaying actions. These flights never returned to base until new flights came to relieve them. With this airplane cover always present, and as close by as fighters escorting heavy bombers, obstacles which might have taken hours to surmount were eliminated in a few minutes. Before St. Lo, a most important precaution was taken. All American vehicles had fresh white stars painted on them, and were given cerise and yellow panels to identify them to friendly aircraft. In a war which saw American and hostile tanks deep within each others lines, these measures saved many lives.

On 1 August XIX TAC had operational control of three groups of Thunderbolts. As General Patton's tanks plunged forward south of Avranches, the first air operations order assigned two groups to cover the progress of two armored divisions. The third group was ordered to fly armed reconnaissance deep into Brittany, over the broad fields where Third Army tanks would soon strike.

The P-47's could not take off until late afternoon, but they flew 10 separate missions in the few hours remaining before darkness. The first day's bag was miscellaneous. Spotting the muzzles of AA guns in some harmless-looking hay wagons, the Thunderbolt pilots blasted them to bits. Another flight knocked out three 88 millimeter field pieces in the path of the 6th Armored Division, and a third plastered a field bristling with enemy gun positions. The armed reconnaissance aircraft cut 3 railway lines, destroyed 22 motor vehicles and 2 armored cars, and raked a busy marshaling yard and a fuel dump. Statistically, it was an inauspicious beginning for the new air cooperation arm, but that was because the planes were grounded throughout most of the day.

In the next 4 days General Patton's armored columns penetrated and secured all Brittany except the heavily fortified ports. Intermittent bad weather kept many aircraft on the ground, but XIX TAC was growing to full strength and daily new missions which materially helped the Army's progress. Two more P-47 groups and one P-51 group joined General Weyland's forces before 5 August, and after only 3 days at its camp site XIX TAC headquarters again moved nearer the battle line, this time to Beauchamps, east of Granville.

General Patton's tactics developed explosively and intricately. General Weyland had to spread his flying strength thinly, cover new and vast areas every day, make maximum use of every fighter bomber. Broadly, the air-ground warfare in the first days of August broke into three phases.

First, three Third Army columns were cutting into Brittany along parallel lines. All required constant armored-column cover during good flying hours. The spearheads in southern and central

Brittany occasionally ran into dangerous tank concentrations or the cross fire of heavy guns, often met masses of enemy troops in bivouac areas or defensive deployments. The northernmost Third Army column, Brig. Gen. Herbert L. Ernest's armored task force, soon reached the concrete pillboxes ringing St. Malo and had to face fire both from powerful ground batteries and from warships in St. Malo Harbor.

Simultaneously, XV and later XX Corps fought southeastward from Fougères, in a move which started as protection for the rear of the Brittany-bound columns and which quickly matured into an independent drive. There were reports that these swiftly moving corps might be menaced by panzer units south of the Loire; therefore General Weyland's fighters and tactical reconnaissance planes had to maintain far-flung, vigilant patrols around the flanks.

Finally, on 3 August, the enemy inaugurated serious and potentially dangerous countermeasures. He struggled to concentrate his divided forces around Rennes and St. Malo, and, more ominously, he was massing strength at Mortain for an eleventh-hour drive to cut the narrow American supply corridor at Avranches.

This threat gave General Weyland the difficult job of protecting Third Army's rearward lines of communication against breaches by enemy ground forces and desperate attacks by small units of the Luftwaffe.

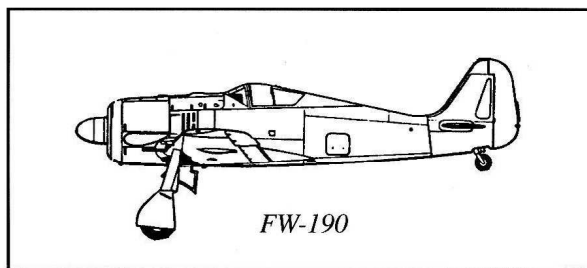
Armed column cover and armed resistance in Brittany General Patton's armored columns in Brittany were traveling so fast that frequently they outran their communications. For the Thunderbolts overhead, the bomb line was hourly

shifting westward, where the end of the peninsula juts into the Atlantic. The front was so unstable that attacks were never planned in advance; the P-47's eliminated any opposition as they found it.

Naturally the targets were scattered and miscellaneous. In the first 5 days of August, XIX TAC fighters bombed and strafed 21 German troop concentrations or bivouac areas and command headquarters, destroyed 250 motor vehicles, 12 tanks, 9 horse drawn vehicles, 4 locomotives, and 9 railway cars. The rail network in Brittany was not nearly so dense as that in Normandy, but Mustangs and Thunderbolts cut tracks in 5 places and disorganized 7 enemy fuel and supply dumps and 1 gasoline storage tank.

Although German defenses in Brittany were thin and widely separated, the aircraft of XIX TAC put 17 gun posts out of action, several at the direct request of ground forces temporarily thwarted by the enemy positions. One group of P-47's silenced eight guns one afternoon, and then flew on to destroy another which was marked off with white smoke by Third Army columns. Another afternoon, eight Thunderbolts precision-bombed and knocked out three self-propelled heavy guns directly on the line of advance into central Brittany.

German tanks in Brittany tried every ruse they could invent to escape the fighter-bombers, and occasionally they put in sudden appearances in the zone of operations. On the morning of 2 August, P-47's on armed reconnaissance along the northern coast of Brittany found a German armor assembly area and knocked out seven Tiger tanks which had been trying to conceal themselves under a smoke screen. Sometimes air cooperation requests from Third Army's G-3 for Air required immediate action and necessitated



vectoring XIX TAC Thunderbolts to the target. One such request was for an immediate attack on a group of tanks in a wood. A P-47 squadron was promptly dispatched to the wood, and its sixteen 500 pound bombs fell in thick concentration on 15 enemy tanks.

Since Luftwaffe opposition was so slight—only one daylight attack was reported in the 5 day campaign for Brittany—armored-column cover flights were often released and given permission to sweep over stretches of road up to 30 miles ahead of our lead tanks. These sweeps, free yet tied definitely to a particular armored column, brought in the heaviest bag of German motor and horse transport on the roads.

The toughest resistance encountered by armed reconnaissance patrols in Brittany was from the walled-in fortress at St. Malo; they were violently shelled by Germans deep inside concrete gun emplacements and on warships in the harbor. Third Army at once called for bomber assistance from Ninth Air Force; meanwhile Thunderbolts braved solid flak on 4 and 5 August to destroy or damage one combat ship each day. In other operations near St. Malo, fighter bombers blew up buildings loaded with explosives.

Guarding the southern and eastern flanks On 3 August the XIX TAC operations order called for cooperation with XV Corps armor and infantry, thrusting southeast from Fougères. Originally this was a reconnaissance rather than an offensive task, although the first patrols landed with reports of transport destroyed and rails cut. The XV was making such rapid headway that armed and tactical reconnaissance units had to fly as far south as Angers and as far east as Laval on the lookout for possible opposition. Tactical reconnaissance aircraft, flying in pairs for self-protection, returned with photographs of German defenses in a wide arc around the Third Army flanks, while armed reconnaissance struck closer to the Army's forward units and attacked whatever offered itself.

Later in August this aerial guard mount on the Third Army's right would turn into one of the most spectacular air cooperation achievements in history. For the time being it was in the watch-and-wait stage. Reconnaissance planes were instructed to seek out the 11th Panzer Division, which was repeatedly reported to be northward bound to hit General Patton's right flank near Rennes. The vigilant aircraft reported every movement to intelligence but, as it worked out, the 11th Panzer Division never turned up on the Third Army front, although a few elements may have been present for a time in the vicinity of Angers.

Protecting the corridor From the start the Third Army was menaced in the rear. Above Avranches, the First Army held the Cotentin peninsula; below Avranches, the Third Army was expanding in all directions. These two broad areas of American penetration were tied together only by a narrow, vulnerable corridor, crisscrossed by roads and bridges along which reinforcements were speeding southward. The enemy grouped at Mortain and attempted a powerful drive westward to Avranches and the sea, with the object of cutting the American armies in half.

From the first, General Weyland told his groups cooperating with armored columns, to make periodic sweeps backward to cover the Avranches corridor against air attack. As soon as XIX TAC got its first P-51's, they were assigned to keep a constant fighter umbrella over the Third Army rear. Enemy aircraft seldom came over the corridor during the day, but sometimes lone bombers or small formations attacked roads and bridges near Avranches by night. XIX TAC was not equipped with night fighters; hence a request for protection was forwarded to IX Air Defense Command, which put up Black Widows to drive off the harassing enemy air craft.

Second Phase The trap begins to close, 6-12 August.—Between 6 and 12 August, the trap began to close around the German Seventh Army. Rennes fell to General Patton's forces without a struggle; all Brittany was overrun except for the ports; the Third Army began an encircling movement to strike the rear of the enemy forces facing the First Army and the British near Mortain and Vire. Within a couple of days the Third secured Laval and Mayenne and was fanning out to the east and south of Le Mans. As this 6 day period ended, the Third Army's big push to trap the Germans in the Mortain-Falaise Argentan pocket was underway.

Weather was better in those 6 days, and XIX TAC flew more than 3,500 sorties, averaging almost 600 a day. On the clearest days, some groups flew as many as five separate missions daily, and many pilots put in a working day of almost 12 hours of continuous fighter-bombing. The air arm was being put to maximum use. On 7 August XIX TAC grew to its greatest stature, nine groups of fighters. Later in the week it took the wraps off its secret weapon, a picked P-47 squadron which carried and fired 5-inch rockets as well as the standard load of 500 pounds of general purpose bombs and .50-caliber machine-gun bullets.

As General Patton put more and more distance between his army and the XIX TAC flying fields in Normandy, General Weyland's headquarters came up sharply against its most vexatious problem—communications. On 7 August, Third Army moved to a new camp site near St. James, well below the Avranches corridor. As usual, XIX TAC went along. However, while General Patton's communications were made easier by keeping headquarters close to his advance units, XIX TAC's communications question was seriously complicated by moving away from the airfields in the rear. Nightly, enemy saboteurs cut the extended lines between the combat operations tent of the command and the landing strips. XIX TAC had to leave a small operating echelon behind at Beauchamps to maintain contact with the groups and to control operations.

XIX TAC never overtook Third Army headquarters during August. The Army sometimes moved 20 miles a day. As long as there were no available airfields near the front lines XIX TAC had to stay behind and send an advanced echelon up with the Third Army. General Weyland got into the habit of flying forward every other day to confer with General Patton or his chief of staff.

The enemy made XIX TAC's job as difficult as he could, but every one of his tricks was frustrated by the ingenuity of American fighter pilots. At first the Germans tried picking up our call signs broadcasting as General Ernest's task force or as the 4th Armored Division, in an effort to catch our aircraft in traps or to send them barging off on wild-goose chases. But the pilots spotted the enemy's clumsiness and unfamiliarity with our terms, challenged him to authenticate, and quickly distinguished true orders from bogus ones.

In the 6 days up to 11 August, fighter-bombers of XIX TAC took care of five separate major assignments: 1. Guarding General Patton's flank along the Loire, 2. Neutralizing enemy air power, 3. Flying armed reconnaissance, 4. Giving the ground forces close cooperation, 5. Continuing operations against Brest, Lorient, St. Malo, and the Ile de Cezembre Loire flank. Never in military history had a ground commander entrusted the defense of a flank to tactical aircraft. But early in August General Patton had only small forces available to man his southern flank along the Loire River. On the other side of the river, G-2 told him, there were enough Germans to cause a lot of trouble if they massed and made a big crossing.

General Patton asked XIX TAC to guard that right flank for

him. He said he was confident that General Weyland's aircraft could discover any danger by armed and tactical reconnaissance, and could prevent any concentration or large movement by fighter bomber attacks. Then the Third Army drove eastward, seizing the principal cities on the north bank of the Loire and leaving only small garrisons behind to hold them.

XIX TAC shifted the main weight of its armed reconnaissance southward to the Loire. Roads, railway lines, and marshaling yards on the enemy side of the river were kept under constant surveillance. Judicious dive bombing and strafing attacks dissuaded the Germans from trying to cross the Loire in force. No real threat ever developed, and by 1 September XIX TAC could look back on a new, difficult job competently taken care of, the defense of the long, sensitive right side of General Patton's eastward bound columns.

Enemy air defeats. The first major flare-up of enemy air power against the Third Army and XIX TAC began on 7 August and continued sporadically for 4 days. The Luftwaffe was defeated in nearly every large and small engagement. On the fifth day no enemy aircraft appeared. On the 7th, German aircraft suddenly became aggressive, made a last-ditch attempt to check the encirclement of Von Kluge's armies south of the Seine. Early in the morning German bombers carried out a damaging attack on an American supply column southwest of Mortain. At break of day XIX TAC aircraft took off as usual, knowing they might meet the Luftwaffe. Before dusk, 33 German planes were destroyed, 14 in the air and 19 on the ground.

First blood was drawn when the XIX TAC operations room vectored 12 Thunderbolts, which were covering an armored column, to attack the rich Luftwaffe airfield at Chartres. Veering toward the field, the fighter-bombers dropped 8 economical bombs, destroying 6 German aircraft and damaging 3 others. Then Mustangs of the pioneer 354th Group shot up 12 Me-109's and 1 Ju-88 parked on a well-camouflaged GAF airdrome 6 miles to the east. Finally, other Mustangs sweeping the Mayenne area were directed to a new course to intercept 12 aggressive Me-109's. They destroyed 5 and damaged 2.

The next day, as General Patton's leading elements began to burst open the wasp's nest of airdromes between the Loire and the Seine, the Germans flew in groups of 20 to 40 aircraft, and attacked only when they had local superiority in numbers and could count on the advantage of surprise. They tried desperately to break up the widespread rail and road wrecking tactics of the American airmen, but by the end of the day five enemy aircraft were down and armed reconnaissance was progressing more punishingly than ever. German single-engine fighters based on the superb flying fields around Paris were now forced to fight defensively to protect their bases, and the Luftwaffe had to make extraordinary efforts to put an offensive patrol into the air.

On 9 August Thunderbolts covering the XV Corps were frequently vectored off course to meet enemy fighters. "Vectored to hostile aircraft by 78th Division," reported 12 pilots of the 362nd Fighter Group. "Two Me-109's observed 1000 hours at 700 feet. One destroyed; one evaded combat. Losses: None."

Far to the east of the battle line, beyond Paris, P-51's of the 354th Group saw long rows of Ju-88's on the Reims-Champagne airfield, and flew down the muzzles of German anti-aircraft guns to machine-gun the base from 6,000 feet to the "deck." They destroyed 6 German aircraft, 2 light flak guns, and a flak tower. Nearer the fighting front, scores of American planes engaged large numbers of German aircraft in combat. Results for the day: 13 enemy planes

destroyed in the air, 6 on the ground.

German activity died down on 10 August, when only four enemy planes were shot down. On 11 August none appeared. Costly to the foe though they had been, those 4 days had been only a prelude to the defeat of the Luftwaffe in France.

Armed reconnaissance, 6-12 August. The statistical story of armed reconnaissance for this period is as follows: More than 75 locomotives, almost 1,000 freight cars, almost 1,000 motor transport vehicles, more than 125 horse-drawn vehicles, seven bridges, eight marshaling yards, eight supply, fuel, and ammunition dumps, destroyed by XIX TAC Thunderbolts and Mustangs on armed reconnaissance in 6 violent days.

From the beginning of this phase XIX TAC sent its armed reconnaissance planes far beyond Paris, far south of the Loire. The campaign had a focal point; in wide railroad reconnaissance sweeps north, east, and south of Paris the fighter-bombers sought to isolate the eastern battlefield, to strangle the rail lines entering Paris from every direction. Around Paris P-47's and P-51's spotted, bombed, strafed, and destroyed long, loaded troop trains, standing rows of loaded oil tankers, fuel dumps, and all types of transport.

One morning the 362nd Group sent out a 40 plane armed reconnaissance sweep north and east of Paris. This patrol, one of hundreds in those 6 days, returned to its landing strip after a few hours of field-day flying with this report: four 500 pound bombs dropped on enemy guns, 8 guns silenced, two 500 pound bombs dropped on marshaling yards, 40 boxcars and 1 locomotive destroyed; 8 railway cars damaged at another marshaling yard, 25 damaged at a third; 2 fragmentation clusters on a hostile airdrome; 7 miscellaneous motor transport vehicles raked and destroyed on the roads, 15 freight cars loaded with 155 millimeter German guns strafed and damaged.

That same afternoon, on its third mission of the day, this same group planted 26 bombs on 7 Tiger tanks, 16 on a marshaling yard, and, in a deck-strafing sweep, machine-gunned 2 armored cars, 2 ammunition trucks, and 1 gasoline truck.

With one group wreaking such destruction in one day it was small wonder that as the infantry and tanks advanced, they found the roads cluttered with the twisted wreckage of German trucks, half-tracks, tanks, and guns.

Closing the jaws. As the trap began to form, tank hunting was good. Squadrons covering the advance of the XV Corps' armored divisions between Laval and Mayenne found plenty of enemy armor. P-47's and P-51's entered tank battles around Mortain and Vire. When the Germans swung about at Alencon to meet the Third Army's threat to their rear, American fighter-bombers and artillery found the roads and the fields full of targets to attack.

XIX TAC's statistical record for 6-12 August: More than 150 tanks and armored cars destroyed. More than 30 field guns or mobile flak posts wiped out. Three troop concentrations scattered. One German headquarters strafed and dispersed.

Communications along the standard channel, tactical reconnaissance to ground to TAC headquarters to aircraft in the air, improved immensely, as did the simpler thick of battle communication between fighters and tanks beneath them. With swifter communications, fighter-bombers began to figure more and more prominently in tank battles and armored thrusts as they were going on. The tanks that entered Morlaix had an extremely helpful flight of Mustangs circling constantly overhead. The 78th Infantry Division asked for an air attack on a camouflaged house and tower; the doughboys watched five hits with 500 pounders tear the German

position apart. Enemy tanks stopped the Third Army momentarily northeast of Alencon. Fifteen general-purpose bombs—and the Third Army resumed its offensive.

When fighter-bombers were not right there, the ground forces knew that they could be summoned and would arrive within the hour. The Fifth Infantry Division requested bombardment of some railway gun positions which were holding up their progress near Angers. Forty minutes later, Fighter Control and Combat operations vectored a Thunderbolt squadron to the area and the enemy guns were shattered by two direct hits.

Reports of spur-of-the-moment tasks performed for the ground forces began to flood XIX TAC headquarters. From 8 Thunderbolts: "Targets assigned by Egg cup. Two direct hits with 500 pound bombs on small buildings. Completely destroyed." From 7 Mustangs: "Vectored by Grand chap Able to road. Destroyed 50 motor transport, damaged 80. Destroyed 25 horse-drawn vehicles. Killed 200 troops."

Along the boundary between the First and the Third Armies' zones of operations, aircraft of XIX TAC frequently were radioed emergency requests. One report read: "Fourteen bombs on mortar position. Target assigned by Murphy. Position destroyed." Murphy was the code name of a First Army combat command.

Perhaps the surest indication of the effectiveness the fighter bomber attacks was the unprecedented surrender of German troops to air power. One day 8 Mustangs flashed a report that they had "strafed a column of more than 100 motor transport and animal-drawn vehicles and continued until the Germans put up a white flag and our troops closed in to take them from the southwest and east."

Brest, Lorient, St. Malo, and the Ile de Cezembre. Fighter-bombers were obviously not the planes with which to storm citadels. When General Patton's divisions were stumped around the forts of Brest, Lorient, and St. Malo, and the nearby Ile de Cezembre, requests for air cooperation were transmitted to the heavy bombers of the Eighth Air Force and the mediums of the Ninth. Yet Thunderbolts and Mustangs did all they could. On 10 August 8 courageous P-47 pilots asked the Fourth Armored Division for permission to dive-bomb the marshaling yards at Lorient, the concrete walled submarine base below Brest. Told to go ahead, they flew down into intense, accurate, heavy and light flak to destroy 42 railway cars and a flak battery. Every Thunderbolt returned. Meanwhile, over Brest and St. Malo, two Mustang teams on tactical reconnaissance observed all kinds of movement and sent back radio reports to XIX TAC headquarters. These flights meant that far less time was wasted in uneventful armed reconnaissance. When the tactical reconnaissance planes found important targets, armed and bombed-up Thunderbolts and Mustangs were sent to them immediately.

Third Phase The Falaise-Argentan trap eventually netted 57,000 Germans. According to an unofficial report in mid August, "There were 2 dead Germans for every live one, and the greatest stench of all time hung over the pocket." The crucial week of 12-19 August saw the Seventh Army all but liquidated, the Fifteenth Army turned back violently when it came to help, and individual soldiers rushing pell-mell across the Seine and back to Germany without organization, chain of command, weapons, or transport.

As the week started, General Patton's XV Corps was driving northward from Alencon and the Canadian First Army southward from Falaise. The Germans in the pocket had plenty of fight left. Behind them stretched an escape channel several miles wide, and on 13 August they made their first large-scale attempt to withdraw.

That morning 37 P-47 pilots of the 36th Group found 800 to 1,000 enemy vehicles of all types milling about in the pocket west of Argentan. They could see American and British forces racing to choke off the gap. They went to work. Within an hour the Thunderbolts had blown up or burned out between 400 and 500 enemy vehicles. The fighter-bombers kept at it until they ran out of bombs and ammunition. One pilot, with empty gun chambers and bomb shackles, dropped his belly tank on 12 trucks and left them all in flames. All told, on the 13th, XIX TAC fighter-bombers destroyed or damaged more than 1,000 road and rail vehicles, 45 tanks and armored vehicles, and 12 locomotives. Inside the pocket they reduced 10 enemy delaying-action strong points to rubble.

The pocket was shrinking. The Germans inside used all their food and gasoline, and the trains and trucks coming to re supply them were stopped miles away from their destination. An 18 year old prisoner fainted while being interrogated; he and his company had no food for 4 days after fighter-bombers had smashed their field kitchen. Another prisoner, a junior officer of the 363rd Infantry Division, said: "You have bombed and strafed all the roads, causing complete congestion and heavy traffic jams. You have also destroyed most of our gasoline and oil dumps, so there is no future in continuing the fight."

With the entire German force in the trap beginning to think the same way, P-47's carried leaflet bombs besides their more lethal loads. On 14 August, 300 to 400 enemy soldiers waved a white flag when Thunderbolts of the 405th Group circled them northeast of Argentan. Fighter control was given the grid coordinates so that the nearest ground troops could pick up the prisoners.

Four days after the dismal rout of the 13th, the Germans tried another mass movement out of the pocket. Figuring that low clouds offered a reasonably good safeguard against our aircraft, they began to take to the roads two and three abreast in anything that had wheels.

A short squadron of American fighter-bombers dived dangerously low through the clouds and saw the traffic jam already under attack. They sent word back to headquarters, and soon the sky was so full of British and American fighter-bombers that they had to form up in queues to make their bomb runs. The gigantic attack kept up until after nightfall. At dawn the next day the Thunderbolts of the 36th Group spotted more than 1,000 enemy vehicles headed north, bumper to bumper. Nearer Falaise, they saw 1,000 more vehicles marked off by yellow smoke. Eagerly the pilots radioed back to base, but were told not to attack because the vehicles were in the British area of responsibility. The aircraft of XIX TAC disconsolately stuck to their own operational zone, while Typhoons, Spitfires, and Mustangs of the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force annihilated or damaged almost 3,000 German vehicles.

That day a senior staff officer of the British Second Army said that the Germans' power of resistance had been shattered.

As the aircraft of XIX TAC, IX TAC, and 2nd TAF were cornering, immobilizing, and destroying the Germans in the pocket, General Patton's tanks reached the banks of the Seine at Mantes Gassicourt and Vernon. The XV Corps immediately swung east along the river bank, closing a huge new trap around the enemy remnants which had escaped from Falaise. The enemy now fought to get to the Seine and across by ferry, barge, Pontoon bridge, and even by swimming, while XIX and IX TAC's sent implacable patrols over the river to catch the Germans in flight.

Fourth Phase The Luftwaffe goes home. Outnumbered, outfought, outmaneuvered, the Luftwaffe did what it could to frus-

trate Thunderbolts and Mustangs, but that was not enough. Pretending to be an officer of the 78th Infantry Division, one English-speaking German tried to vector some P-47's away from their targets. One Thunderbolt pilot, detecting something faintly guttural about the voice and desiring to check, asked him to sing "Mairzy Doats." That stopped the impostor cold.

Meanwhile XIX TAC aircraft were decisively beating the Luftwaffe in the air and on the ground. On 14 August, the Germans flew fewer than 100 single-engine fighter sorties, presumably because they were trying to evacuate the battered airfields around Paris. The next day they came back in patrols of 20 to 80 aircraft, piloted by aggressive but inadequately trained young men who could not even take proper evasive action. Even though our bases were all but closed in by low clouds, and even though Germans in some engagements outnumbered Mustangs by 10 to 1, the Luftwaffe took its customary lacing. Fifteen German planes were destroyed on the 15th and 13 more on the 16th.

So rapidly did the Germans evacuate some airfields that they had no time for demolition. On 17 August repairs were expedited at the big military and civilian airfield at Chateaudun, and 10 days later XIX TAC moved in and used it as a permanent base for a reconnaissance group and a refueling and rearming station for fighter-bombers.

By this time, with Allied air superiority everywhere obvious to the enemy frontline soldier, the GAF had to make a drastic and farfetched justification to keep the German infantry and armor from grumbling. A document captured at Angers, issued by the military governor of France for dissemination to troops, said, "The ground soldier in action on the invasion front feels himself depressed most of all by enemy air superiority. In spite of the numerical inferiority of our air force, there have been successes accomplished, however, which the single soldier, tied down to his narrow section of the front, cannot appreciate."

About the time this apologetic proclamation was issued, Mustangs and Thunderbolts were running into sharp combat every day. The veteran 354th Group, which had been worsting the Luftwaffe steadily over Germany and France since December 1943, always took a prominent part in air battles ranging from the front to miles behind it. The Germans tried everything—even fake dogfights, aerial equivalent of the football Statue of Liberty play. On one occasion two FW-190's with no markings and three ME-109's with faked United States markings chased each other around the sky, then all dived and strafed an American armored column.

On 25 August the GAF fighter force in France was broken. In combat over France and Germany, in strafing attacks on Luftwaffe airfields, fighter-bombers of the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces destroyed 178 German aircraft, probably destroyed 13 others, and damaged 63, making a total of 254 enemy planes permanently or temporarily put out of action. XIX TAC claimed more than one-quarter of the day's victories: 36-1-8 the air, 18 destroyed and 4 probably destroyed on the ground. All the victories in the air were won by the 354th which was active all day long in a series of single-squadron fighter sweeps against enemy airfields north and northeast of Paris. The Mustang pilots were always outnumbered, yet nearly always won. Late in the day 12 of them slashed into 45 FW's and ME's and destroyed 13 enemy fighters for a loss of 4. Another squadron blew up 13 single-engine enemy fighters on the ground at fields near Beauvais and Reims.

At dusk on 25 August, Thunderbolts and Mustangs saw enemy aircraft with belly gasoline tanks moving eastward, as their

complex of bases around Paris fell into the hands of Third Army spearheads. Within a few days the Luftwaffe was driven farther east as General Patton's advances made GAF bases along the Marne untenable. The remaining German fighter force in eastern France was compelled everywhere to decamp and to start operating from bases behind the Siegfried Line. As August ended, XIX TAC had to seek enemy aircraft on the ground, since they rarely took to the air. On 28 August, fighter bombers first destroyed 11 German aircraft by bombing and strafing a field near Neufchateau, then sighted a train carrying 113 Ju-88 fuselages and shot up every one of them.

Fifth Phase The end, when it came, was rapid. On 19 August, fighter pilots reported fires and explosions in Paris, and above and below the city, Third Army advance elements were striking out in a bold encircling move. South of Paris, the Germans tried to hold out in positions on high ground, but they were unable to check the relentless advance of the Patton eastward bound columns.

The next day pilots on armed reconnaissance saw the highways, the railway lines, and the marshaling yards behind Paris clogged with trucks, trains, and animal drawn vehicles, all hurrying toward the Reich. West of Paris, disorganized units were trying to get across the Seine any way they could. Aircraft of XIX TAC dropped delay fused bombs, set for detonation during the night, on south bank ferry slips. They exploded at the peak of the Seine crossings, in the night's darkest hours. Within Paris, the Germans announced that rioting had broken out and in a desperate order of the day they threatened to shoot any person participating in the disturbances.

The situation was extremely fluid. North of the capital, Thunderbolts gave armor and infantry the usual close cooperation against the few targets remaining. They demolished tanks, barges carrying tanks across the Seine, and isolated German machine-gun nests which sought to cover the river crossings. On 23 August, with Army spearheads more than 60 miles east of Paris, the French Second Armored Division and the First Army's Fourth Infantry Division rode into the capital to complete the official occupation.

In the east, new hunting grounds developed for the fighter-bombers, nearer and nearer the Siegfried Line. Firing rockets, dropping bombs, shooting machine guns, XIX TAC aircraft smashed cars in ammunition convoys, 105 millimeter big guns guarding the German retreat, still more motor vehicles, and every day, as enemy fuel and vehicle shortages decreased motor transport, more and more animal drawn carts and weapons. Combat operations planned a short range project in the Melun Provins area, designed to cut off the still open escape routes of Germans trapped south of the Loire. Everywhere they cut rails and blew up trains and in the south, as in the north, the enemy retreated with heavy losses and in great confusion.

Far to the west, General Weyland's aircraft helped the determined VIII Corps to smoke out the obstinate defenders of Brest. In 2 slashing days the fighter-bombers destroyed or damaged 14 enemy naval and merchant vessels in the Brest harbor, knocked out eight gun positions, and saturated a defended area that had been marked by the white smoke of fire bombs. Brest doggedly continued to hold out, but the fortress was to fall in September.

Toward the end of the month General Patton's army had crossed the Marne on a 90 mile front and was rolling toward the Aisne. Chateau-Thierry and other battlefields in the Marne-Aisne region, which had taken months to conquer in World War I, fell to the Third Army in a few hours. As August ended, 70,000 Germans had passed through Third Army prison cages, and the Patton forces had crossed

the Meuse and were fighting at the approaches to the Siegfried Line. Aircraft of XIX TAC frequently attacked targets over the German border. Except for some miscellaneous cleaning up and some extremely hard frontier fighting, the Battle of France was over and the Battle of Germany had begun.

In mid-August General Patton commended XIX TAC's cooperation with the Third Army, for which General Weyland was awarded the Bronze Star. The commendation read: *The superior efficiency and cooperation afforded this army by the forces under your command is the best example of the combined use of air and ground troops I have ever witnessed. Due to the tireless efforts of your flyers, large numbers of hostile vehicles and troop concentrations ahead of our advancing columns have been harassed or obliterated. The information passed directly to the head of the columns from the air has saved time and lives. I am voicing the opinion of all the officers and men in this army when I express to you our admiration and appreciation of your magnificent efforts.*

Highlights of Day by Day Air Operations: 1 August. On this first day of XIX TAC operations, unfavorable weather kept the fighters grounded until well into the afternoon. Armored-column cover was so arranged as to maintain eight fighter-bombers over each armored division, the eight-plane flights being relieved every hour. Planes and tanks worked closely together, talking to each other by VHF radio.

While General Patton had enjoined XIX TAC not to blow up bridges, it might have been expected that the enemy would do so in order to retard pursuit, but so headlong was the Germans' panicky withdrawal that they had no time to conduct any such demolition. Thus the leading American armor often outran its communications, and the Army's latest information on the location of its forward elements frequently came from reconnaissance or fighter-bomber pilots. To make the most of this source of information, XIX TAC pilots were instructed to include in their reports, whenever possible, the point at which the head of the column was last observed.

In 10 missions of 147 sorties, 22 tons of bombs were dropped. No enemy aircraft were encountered and no losses were sustained.

2 August. Another wing, the 100th, and two more groups, the 405th and 363rd, were placed under XIX TAC's operational control. They were most welcome additions, because the command was saddled with the twin commitment of covering armored fingers probing toward the Breton capital of Rennes and toward Brest, and of supplying protection to the Avranches bottleneck.

Although the 363rd Group was grounded by weather all day, the others could operate after about 1000, flying 23 combat missions consisting of 223 sorties and dropping 35.75 tons of bombs, representing a marked increase over the previous day's activity. There were no claims against enemy aircraft, but two planes were lost to flak.

3 August. Weather again was on the enemy's side. The air plan for the day provided cover for the XV Corps' 79th Infantry and 5th Armored Divisions, in addition to protection of bridges and roads in the Avranches Pontaubault locality and to continued cover for the three armored detachments pushing westward through Brittany. But bases were non operational most of the day, with low stratus, nimbostratus, and light showers. Only 6 missions, of 8 aircraft each, were able to take off, of which 4 were unsuccessful because of weather, all bombs being jettisoned or returned to base. The other 2 missions resulted in the destruction or damaging of 40 odd motor and horse drawn vehicles, including ammunition trucks, in the path of the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions. Total sorties were

48; tons of bombs dropped, 3.25. One aircraft was lost. Twenty-four tactical reconnaissance and two photographic reconnaissance sorties were flown.

This was the date on which, with continued Luftwaffe night attacks against Third Army troops, Ninth Air Force was requested by XIX TAC to supply night fighters.

4 August. Although only four groups were available and low ceilings over bases prevented operations until 1030, the scale of air activity rose sharply to 30 missions consisting of 424 sorties.

Activities of the day included cooperation with the 4th Armored Division, in which 15 enemy tanks were destroyed or damaged; attacks on the strong concrete pillbox defenses of St. Malo in the face of intense flak and fire from warships; and armed, tactical, and photographic reconnaissance flights along the flanks and routes of the advances and as far south as Angers and east as Laval. Some aircraft were damaged by flak, but no planes or pilots were lost and there were no claims against enemy aircraft. The four groups in action dropped 52.5 tons of bombs on the targets.

5 August. On this date the XIX TAC order of battle was raised to five groups when the 36th was placed under General Weyland's control. Only part of the day was flyable, since the wind blew low stratus clouds from the English Channel onto coastal airdromes at about 1100 and they were not clear until late afternoon. Nevertheless, 246 combat sorties and 10 successful tactical and photographic reconnaissance missions were flown. Forty-four tons of bombs were dropped, results including 58 motor vehicles, a headquarters, nine horse-drawn vehicles, and eight gun positions destroyed, plus damage to a naval vessel in St. Malo harbor.

In the first 5 days of blitz warfare, United States style, the Third Army had conquered most of Brittany, and XIX TAC fighter-bombers had flown 1,088 sorties. In the face of our patrols the Luftwaffe had put up no resistance by daylight. Losses totaled only three aircraft. Claims against ground targets for this period have been given earlier.

6 August. With the fall of Rennes and the acquisition of airfields around that city, XIX TAC fighters were not only much closer to the scene of operations but also in a locality more favored by weather than the rain pelted Normandy peninsula.

The picture had changed; the encirclement had begun. In view of this, the main weight of XIX TAC's air power was shifted to the eastern front and the Loire valley, with patrols over the danger area in the Avranches corridor.

Squadrons covering XV Corps' 78th and 90th Infantry and 5th Armored Divisions between Laval and Mayenne found the hunting good, especially in tanks. One P-47 was lost; while strafing tanks it "mushed in" and exploded.

The day's combat sorties totaled 293. There were no enemy aircraft claims, but 35.5 tons of bombs were dropped on varied targets. In addition, 26 successful tactical and photographic reconnaissance missions were flown, and B-26's of IX Bombardment Division attacked the defenses of St. Malo in response to the XIX TAC request of 4 August. "A successful day," pronounced Third Army's G-3 (Air) Section, "With attacks on all types of targets, from boats to field guns, movement east, south, and west by ground troops was greatly facilitated."

7 August. To meet its increased responsibilities, strength of XIX TAC was again augmented, with nine full groups of fighter-bombers now under its operational control. These were the 36th, 358th, 362nd 371st 405th, and 406th all equipped with P-47s and the 354th and 363rd Groups, flying P-51's. Seven of these

groups and both of the wings, the 100th and 303rd had been under the administrative control of the Command for months in the old IX Fighter Command days in England, so the basis for effective teamwork was firmly laid.

This was the day on which word was received of the GAF attack on an American supply column; it became apparent that enemy air power was becoming more aggressive. It was a day of hard fighting; when it was over, XIX TAC claims included destruction of 33 aircraft (14-1-3 in the air, 19-0-4 on the ground) for a loss of 10 planes and pilots. Sorties hit a new high, with a total of 601. Bomb tons on targets amounted to 62. Thirty-two tactical reconnaissance sorties were flown.

Armed reconnaissance missions now were reaching far beyond Paris as well as south of the Loire. Several trains and a power plant were successfully attacked as far east as Troyes and Soissons.

It was moving day, this time from the vicinity of Beauchamps to a point near St. James.

8 August To begin its second week of activity, XIX TAC struck another high peak by flying 717 sorties. Five enemy aircraft were destroyed and 11 XIX TAC planes were lost. Strafing and dropping 94.5 tons of bombs, the fighter bombers destroyed 29 locomotives, 137 freight cars, 195 motor vehicles, 10 fuel and ammunition vehicles, 16 horse drawn vehicles, 17 tanks or other armored vehicles, and 11 flak positions; damaged two locomotives, 57 freight cars, 28 motor transports and 26 armored vehicles; cut rail lines at 7 points; and attacked a troop concentration and 7 fuel dumps, 1 of which was completely destroyed. Reconnaissance planes flew 46 tactical, 1 photographic, and 6 artillery adjustment missions. The outstanding features of the day's operations were the large bag of enemy transport destroyed or damaged and the almost continuous air cover provided our ground forces. Improved communications with the 6th Reconnaissance Group facilitated the flow of information to the Army G-2 section, and in several instances information of enemy motor transport and tank concentrations was received in time to permit A-3 to order a mission.

9 August This was the busiest day since XIX TAC became operational. There were more missions (72) and more sorties (780) than on any previous day. Nineteen enemy planes were destroyed, claims being 13-2-0 in the air and 6-0-2 on the ground. Nine United States pilots and planes were lost.

All but two of the groups flew three missions. The three squadrons of the 363rd Group and the 405th and 406th Squadrons of the 371st Group flew five missions. These squadrons averaged 11 hours and 45 minutes in the air.

A rocket squadron, the 513th of the 406th Group, was now in action, and 16 five-inch rockets were launched against ground targets, in addition to 58.5 tons of general-purpose bombs and numerous rounds of .50-caliber ammunition.

Thirty-seven tactical and photographic reconnaissance sorties aided in keeping an eye on the enemy.

10 August Operations were somewhat reduced by low stratus clouds moving in from the Channel late in the afternoon. Nevertheless, 659 sorties comprising 54 missions were flown. Forty-six and one-quarter tons of high explosive were dropped on targets and four enemy planes were shot down. XIX TAC lost six aircraft and pilots. Thirty sorties were flown by tactical reconnaissance P-51's, flying chiefly over areas on the outer fringe of operations.

Targets ranged from motor transport, armored vehicles, and similar objectives to the flak-defended bastion of St. Malo, still defying Allied forces to drive them out, still responding to the

Fuehrer's express command to hold out to the last man.

One of the six casualties of this day was Col. Morton D. Magoffin, commanding the 362nd Group. Hit by flak while on a dive-bombing and strafing mission in cooperation with the XV Corps east of Le Mans, he continued to lead the squadron in its bombing run, hoping that the dive would blow out the fire in his engine. When it failed to do so, he pulled up and bailed out. The sequel to this episode did not come to light until weeks later. Colonel Magoffin fell into enemy hands and was taken to a hospital in Paris with a flak wound in his right thigh. When the enemy evacuated Paris, he hid in a closet and escaped notice. French surgeons performed a badly needed operation, and the colonel was subsequently evacuated by air to England.

11 August With the big push under way to the north and northeast to encircle German troops in the Mortain-Falaise-Argentan region, groups cooperating with the 5th Armored, 2nd French Armored, and 78th and 90th Infantry Divisions were especially busy. Combat sorties totaled 454.

One feature of the day's operations was the successful bombardment of an enemy railroad gun position which was holding up the progress of the 5th Infantry Division near Angers. Forty minutes after the request for air attack on this position was received at Combat operations, Fighter Control at 303rd Wing had vectored the 367th Squadron of the 358th Group to the target, and the position was destroyed by two direct bomb hits and four near misses.

For a loss of 4 planes, XIX TAC claimed a total of 10 locomotives, 243 railroad cars, 15 tank cars, 42 tanks and other armored vehicles, 119 motor vehicles, and 20 horse-drawn vehicles demolished or damaged. Successful attacks were made on 6 marshaling yards, 5 field gun positions, a troop concentration, a headquarters, an ammunition dump, a storage building, and an airfield, and 10 railroad lines were cut. Of 15 reconnaissance sorties flown, 10 were tactical, 3 photographic, and 2 for artillery adjustment.

12 August Despite the continued efforts of saboteurs, communications through the Avranches gap were sufficiently stable to permit the transfer of operational control to the forward echelon in the vicinity of St. James on this date. Forty-one missions, consisting of 481 sorties, were flown, and the day's toll in enemy transport and communications was gratifying. No planes were lost and there were no claims of enemy aircraft.

13 August The deadly squeeze on entrapped German forces was nearing a complete strangle. The biggest transport kill of the entire month, the 400 to 500 burned or blown-up enemy vehicles referred to earlier, occurred on this date. When P-51 pilots of the 363rd Group reported that they had flown to the edge of Paris without encountering flak, the fall of the capital, which occurred a week later, was foreshadowed. All of the day's bag in aerial combat fell to the 363rd Group which scored 12-2-1 for the loss of a single plane. Flying assault cover, 8 of these Mustangs scored 4-1-1 for 1 in an early morning fight with 12 ME-109's and FW-190's. On an evening mission, 8 pilots of the same squadron, the 382nd, sighted approximately 25 ME-109's and FW-190's strafing our troops. They destroyed 8, an average of 1 each. Another was probably destroyed and the rest were driven off. Combat sorties amounted to 718 and reconnaissance sorties to 38. Ten planes were lost, only one to enemy aircraft.

14 August With his airfields around Paris endangered and many in process of evacuation, the enemy appears to have flown fewer than 100 single engine fighter sorties on this date, chiefly in defense of ground troops. The only XIX TAC group to meet air

opposition was the 405th, giving close cooperation to the 7th Armored Division. Five P-47's and pilots were lost against claims of 4-2-1. Four of the five losses were incurred when four P-47's, pulling up from reconnaissance about 20 miles east of Dreux, were bounced from above at 3000 feet by 16 FW-190'S which came in below the four P-47's flying top cover. Three of the attackers were claimed as destroyed, plus one probable and one damaged. Seventy-nine combat missions, including 665 sorties, were flown, together with 18 reconnaissance missions involving 36 sorties.

15 August With enemy fighter activity rising sharply to a total of about 350 sorties, XIX TAC claims were 13-0-3 in the air and 2-0-7 on the ground. Five U. S. planes were lost. North of Dreux, the 406th Group's Tigertaming 513th Squadron got 4 heavy tanks and 1 light one with its 5-inch rocket projectiles. Total combat sorties were 659, and 40 tactical reconnaissance and artillery adjustment sorties were flown. An advance element of XIX TAC had leapt forward to a wooded section north of Laval.

16 August After several days of intensive operations, activity was curtailed by low stratus clouds which covered airfields in the Cherbourg peninsula from approximately 1000 to 1500 hours. Many pilots returning from early morning missions were unable to land at their own bases.

The weather definitely favored the enemy; while our bases were "socked in," his were clear. Hourly attacks by three strafing Me-109's were reported by Combat Command "A" of the 4th Armored Division at Orleans. These strafers successfully eluded our fighters, but a probable attack on our ground forces southwest of Paris was apparently prevented at 1545 when 70 plus FW-190's many carrying bombs, were engaged by eight P-51's of the 354th Group over Rambouillet Forest, 10 miles west of the capital. Two German planes were shot down and two P-51's were lost, but the enemy forces were dispersed toward the south.

Half an hour later, another patrol of 8 P-51's sighted 20 plus ME-109's south of Dreux at 11,000 feet. Orbiting in elements of 2, the squadron climbed to 14,000 feet and attacked from above. At the same instant, 60 or more ME-109's joined the combat, emerging from cloud cover to the north. In the next 15 minutes the 8 Mustangs, outnumbered 10 to 1, were busily embattled from 11,000 feet to the deck. The enemy was aggressive and apparently experienced, but he tried to turn with our aircraft. When it was all over, our pilots had destroyed 11 and damaged 2 against losses of 2 planes.

Because of the weather, only 280 combat sorties and 36 reconnaissance sorties were flown. Thirteen enemy planes were destroyed and 4 damaged. Five of ours were lost. Five tanks, 25 motor vehicles, and 55 railroad cars were demolished or damaged, 2 airfields and 2 gun positions attacked, and 3 railroad lines cut.

17 August Air opposition to XIX TAC fighters was virtually nil, despite clear weather over enemy bases and clouds over ours. St. Malo's garrison surrendered, yielding a total of 12,600 prisoners from the time the siege began.

The Third Army reported Chateaudun clear of the enemy, and immediate steps were taken to make this good airfield available to our groups, already laboring under heavy handicaps of range. Because of the speed of the American advance, the Germans had not had the opportunity to carry out such extensive demolitions as at other fields. On this day 331 combat and 56 reconnaissance sorties were flown. Two enemy planes were destroyed in combat, with no losses.

18 August Harvest time had come to the Argentan Trun pocket,

with Allied aircraft enjoying one of their biggest days of the war. The lion's share of the spoils, however, went to RAF aircraft, since the concentration of enemy vehicles was in British-assigned territory. Although denied a chance at the jackpot, XIX TAC groups accounted for 17 tanks 206 motor transport, 30 horse-drawn vehicles, 7 locomotives, and 218 railroad cars. Two troop concentrations, 1 motor transport park, 5 gun positions, and 3 marshaling yards were attacked. Combat sorties totaled 679; claims were 5-0-2 (air) and losses were 7.

19 August A cold front, moving across our bases and target areas from west to east, sharply curtailed air operations. Several successful missions were flown in the morning, but the front closed down our bases in the afternoon, then moved into the target areas. Results included destruction of 20 Seine River barges and damage to 91 more; other ground targets smashed or damaged were 18 motor vehicles, an armored vehicle, 2 locomotives, 9 railroad cars, and 2 power launches. Two gun positions were attacked and a rail line cut. There were 212 combat and 34 reconnaissance sorties.

Sharp aerial combat occurred, with 9 enemy aircraft destroyed (8 in the air) against loss of 5 planes and pilots. While strafing FW-190's on the ground near Pontoise, the 406th Group's 513th Squadron was bounced by a number of enemy fighters. When the 512th Squadron tried to help, it in turn was attacked by 30 to 40 aircraft at 8,000 feet. The enemy kept some of his aircraft above the overcast, sending them down in twos and fours to take part in the fight. Final claims were 5-0-3 in the air and 1 on the ground for loss of 5.

20 August Shortly before dark, 406th Group pilots reported the main highway from Paris to Sezanne loaded with dispersed enemy motor vehicles headed east. Marshaling yards at Joigny and Sezanne were likewise loaded. Obviously the Germans were pulling out of Paris.

Rain and low ceilings limited combat sorties to 388 and reconnaissance sorties to 36. Claims in aerial combat were 6-0-1 and losses were 3.

Eight P-47's were bounced by 12 Me-109's and 20 FW 190's at 3,000 feet about 12 miles southwest of Paris at 1545. Despite the odds of 4 to 1, the Thunderbolts destroyed 6 and damaged 1 for a loss of 2 planes. A third P-47 was lost on a later mission.

21 August All XIX TAC combat aircraft were grounded throughout the day by the worst weather of the month. A warm wave in conjunction with a cold front caused low ceilings and rain over the entire northern portion of France, restricting air operations to a single uneventful reconnaissance sortie flown along the Loire in the Angers area.

22 August Increasing vulnerability of the GAF, driven from some of its best fields to landing grounds north and northeast of Paris, was demonstrated when XIX TAC fighters destroyed 20 enemy fighters for the loss of 1. Complete claims were 16-3-1 in the air and 4-0-4 on the ground. Feature of the day was provided by the P-51's of the 354th Group. Fifteen of them, on a fighter sweep, destroyed 12 ME-109'S without loss, 8 in the air as they were taking off from a grass field 5 miles east of Epernay, and 4 on the ground by strafing. Flying 333 combat sorties, our aircraft dropped 16.75 tons of GP bombs and 26 fragmentation clusters, plus 18 leaflet bombs. Reconnaissance sorties totaled 60.

23 August With the enemy endeavoring to give increased air cooperation to his hard-pressed ground forces, especially along the Seine west of Paris, the Third Army reported that the 78th Infantry Division bridgehead in the Mantes Gassicourt sector was attacked

by rocket planes intermittently during the day. Although our air cover in the area was tripled, no rocket-firing planes were seen. Flying armed reconnaissance ahead of our columns thrusting east past Sens and Troyes, P-47's had just dropped eight 500 pound bombs on a gun position east of Joigny when Combat Command "A" of the 4th Armored Division reported it was being strafed 12 miles northeast of Sens. The remaining bombs were jettisoned, and the Thunderbolts, from 9,000 feet, bounced five ME-109's at 6,500 feet, shooting down two and probably another for no loss. In all, 463 combat and 70 reconnaissance sorties were flown, in spite of poor visibility, cloud, and showers over bases and targets during a part of the day. Claims against enemy aircraft totaled 5-4-7 for loss of two, one of which was to flak. Word was received that Paris had fallen. Another phase had come to an end.

24 August Foul weather continued to plague XIX TAC pilots, low ceilings and poor visibility over the target areas in the vicinity of Paris restricting combat activity to 12 missions of 164 sorties. The enemy also was handicapped; no German planes were seen. Rocket-firing P-47's launched 12 projectiles at 105 millimeter guns near Nantes and claimed 4 destroyed and 2 damaged. Five 88 millimeter guns also were attacked. Forty carts of an ammunition convoy were blown up, and other aircraft did a little "working on the railroad." No high explosive bombs were carried, but rockets and strafing destroyed or damaged 55 railroad cars, 2 locomotives, 68 motor vehicles, 3 tanks and armored vehicles, and 40 ammunition cars; 12 field-gun positions were attacked and 2 headquarters left burning. Twenty-nine reconnaissance sorties were flown.

25 August As was set forth in the preceding narrative section, this was a fateful day for the Luftwaffe, with both the Ninth and the Eighth Air Forces knocking German aircraft out of the sky. XIX TAC's share of the kill was 36-1-8 in the air and 18-4-0 on the ground, or 54-5-8 all told, against a loss of 8 planes and 7 pilots.

There were renewed evidences that the Luftwaffe was finding its bases in the Paris area too hot to hold, as demonstrated by the GAF fighters seen streaking eastward with belly tanks. The Germans were destroying facilities as fast as they could, in the face of the steady advance of armored forces. Flying 632 combat sorties, XIX TAC claimed the following results against ground targets, in addition to the haul in the air: 266 motor vehicles, 4 tanks, 44 locomotives, and 164 cars destroyed or damaged; 5 marshaling yards attacked and 5 lines cut; 3 field-gun positions, 4 troop concentrations, an ammunition dump, and 8 military buildings destroyed; 5 airfields attacked and 2 hangars wrecked. In anti shipping operations off Brest, 2 naval vessels were claimed as destroyed, and 3 naval and 9 merchant vessels damaged. Four P-51's flew artillery-adjustment sorties for corps artillery at Brest, noting many hits on enemy gun positions and shipping. Reconnaissance sorties totaled 64.

26 August After his heavy air losses of the previous day, the enemy avoided combat with our fighters, and the day's cash register rang up only 2 enemy aircraft destroyed and 1 damaged, all 3 on the ground. Our groups on armed reconnaissance, patrols, and armored-column cooperation flew 528 sorties. Four planes were lost. Indications were seen that if the enemy could muster sufficient numbers, he might bring jet-propelled fighters into action against XIX TAC soon. A probable Me-262 twinjet-propelled fighter was sighted on 25 August, and on the 26th contrails at 20,000 feet, traveling at an estimated speed of 500 miles per hour, were reported.

27 August With American forces now across the Marne at two points near Meaux and advancing rapidly, German fighter bases

along that historic river quickly became untenable and the remnants of the Luftwaffe in eastern France were forced to pull out.

Enemy fighters were again conspicuously absent. The only aerial combat claims were by two tactical reconnaissance P-51's, which were bounced by 12 ME-109's, one ME-109 was destroyed, one probably destroyed. Three of the Command's total losses of 8 planes for the day were suffered by the 10th Reconnaissance Group. One was shot down by small-arms fire while directing artillery at Brest, and 2 others failed to return from a mission in the Dijon region. Cooperating with ground forces at Brest, XIX TAC fighter-bombers scored at least 9 direct bomb hits on 2 gun positions, put several Napalm bombs in a target area marked by smoke, and damaged 3 merchant vessels. Considerable execution against enemy troops and transport was wrought, and railroad tracks were cut at 5 places. In all, 650 fighter-bomber and 63 reconnaissance sorties were flown.

28 August Low cloud during much of the day held operations to 196 combat and 88 reconnaissance missions. During brief periods of flyable weather, telling attacks were made on enemy units trying to escape northeastward into Germany from the Dijon-Besancon locality. In the course of these operations, 11 enemy aircraft were destroyed by bombing and strafing an airfield near Neufchateau. Claims for the day were 3-0-0 in the air and 11-0-0 on the ground, with 3 losses.

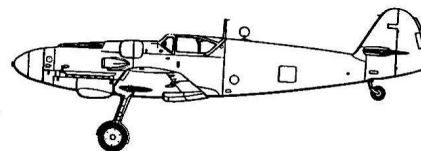
29 August Weather, completely unflyable. Only one combat mission was undertaken and no targets were attacked, the pilots being forced to return to base 30 minutes after takeoff.

30 August A cold front was sweeping over western Europe, and the resultant low ceilings and rain continued to blot out our bases and target areas. All XIX TAC operations were "scrubbed" except for two weather reconnaissance sorties. Control of XIX TAC operations now shifted far eastward from the vicinity of Lavel to a new advanced headquarters site in the Foret de Marchenoir, between Orleans on the Loire and the airfield at Chateaudun.

31 August In cooperating with the Third Army, XIX TAC flew 18 missions consisting of 313 sorties, dropping 60.75 tons of general-purpose bombs, 39 tanks of Napalm, and 16 leaflet bombs. Twenty rockets were discharged and considerable strafing was done. There were no claims against enemy aircraft and no losses.

Recapitulation During August, aircraft of XIX TAC flew a total of 12,292 fighter bomber sorties. In all, 114 aircraft were lost, but many of the pilots bailed out safely over friendly territory, or found their way back through enemy lines. Our pilots claimed 163 enemy aircraft destroyed in aerial combat and on the ground.

Ground target destroyed: 4,059 motor vehicles, 466 tanks and other armored vehicles, 598 horse-drawn vehicles, 246 locomotives, 2956 railroad cars, 155 barges and other river craft, 18 merchant vessels, 8 naval vessels. 22 gun positions, 39 marshaling yards, 11 ammunition dumps, 13 fuel supply dumps, 3 radar installations, 17 airfields, 7 headquarters, 44 troop concentrations and bivouac areas, 58 barracks and other enemy buildings, 122 rail lines. The End.



Me-109

The Supply Mission of 11 September 1944



RAF Personnel unloading munitions and gasoline drums at Bron ,France September 1944.

In the Story Teamwork we learned how the Tactical Air Force (XIX TAC) fighter-bombers assisted the ground forces in their advance toward Germany. We learned in General Patton's headlong race across France in the month of August 1944, the supporting fighter-bombers were using up supplies of gasoline, bombs, and ammunition faster than could be supplied through normal channels. The 484th Bomb Group was asked to ferry supplies to Lyon and Bron, France the following month of September.

On September 11, 1944, the first flight took place. Thirty Six B-24s from the 484th BG set out for France flying via Lido De Roma (41-44N, 12-14E) to Bron, France airdrome (45-45N, 04.55E). Two attack units were used, the first led by Col. Keese in Able 11, seconded by Maj. Brennan and Maj. Dufour in Able 12. The second attack unit was led by Maj. Paine in Dog 11, seconded by Maj. Lollar in Dog 12. Aircraft were ordered to take off at one and a half minute intervals. After landing, the aircraft were parked nose to tail, five feet apart on the taxi strip to enhance unloading. The bombs were lowered by hoist instead of toggling them one at a time. The bomb fuses were packed separately making the bombs safe. However for anyone ever hearing the dull thud of bombs falling to the ground it is disheartening at best and for the inexperienced the sound could cause feelings of great panic. The work force had to unload the aircraft quickly and without stress. Raw gasoline not handled properly can lead to sudden conflagration as happened on one occasion to the 461st Bomb Group. A picture of the fire was published in *Torretta Flyer* No# 7 in Spring 1983.

In order to conserve fuel the flight was flown at 9000 ft. Power settings for climb were: 45 inches of mercury at 2550 RPM, Cruise at 32 inches of mercury and RPM adjusted to maintain cruise speed 160 MPH. Settings for return to *Torretta* were lowered to Climb at 35 inches, 2400 RPM, Cruise at 31 inches, and RPM to fly at 155

indicated. This mission was flown in formation for mutual protection as no fighter escort was provided. The groups, 451st, 461st and 484th Bomb Groups flew the mission with a separation of 30 minutes between them, with the 484th in the lead. Loose column of waves were to be flown without the usual Air Force formations.

Arrangements were made to provide emergency landing at Istres Le Tube (43-31-30N, 6-41-50E) and St. Raphael (43-25-50N, 6-41-10E). Both fields had a 150 foot wide runway of 6000 feet in length.

50 gallon drums were carried also to off load the gasoline. The outboard tanks (Tokyo) were drained first into the drums using refueling units carried to France by the first wave, The second wave were to return the refueling units back to base. The airplane commander kept a record of off loaded stores and fuel. Each aircraft carried 12 each 500 lb. bombs, 18 each 50 gallon drums, 2 boxes of belted 50 calibre ammunition. In addition the 18 aircraft of the 451st and 36 B-24s of the 461st carried 450 gallon bomb bay tanks,

All aircraft carried complete combat crews with the exception of the bombardiers, and one crew chief and one armament specialist. To carry this load the ball turrets and the tail and waste guns were removed. Weight and balance was maintained by putting the crews forward. Crews were advised to carry bedding rolls, mess kits, lunches and warm clothes. The climate was expected to be cold.

Pilots were advised to land and brake on the concrete runway at Bron and reduce speed before reaching the overrun. The paved runway was 3500 feet in length with a gravel overrun of 2500 feet. Aircraft commanders were advised to go west of Marseilles and follow the briefed route exactly. Aircraft that could not return to base before dark were advised to stay in France. The mission was planned for nine hours.

Mission 11 September, 1944 Statistics

The following pilots are shown on the Pilots Flimsey, but not in the crew lists

Rank	F Name	L Name	Sq	Nose No	Form	Pos
Capt	Gerald B	Bell	824	15	Charlie	12
1/Lt	Edward P	Bird	826	54	Easy	13
2/Lt	Frederick W	Carter	824	14	Charlie	13
2/Lt	Walter A	Jehli	824	27	Charlie	23
1/Lt	Stanley V	Olson	824	17	Charlie	21
1/Lt	John J	Petrie	826	61	Easy	21
1/Lt	Joseph N	Shobe	826	55	Easy	12
1/Lt	Edward K	Williamson	824	10	Able	21
1/Lt	Donald G	Zimmerman	824	28	Able	23

A Partial list of aircraft scheduled

41-29539	42-52490	42-52775	42-94747
42-50396	42-52633	42-78289	42-95275
42-50642	42-52641	42-78327	42-95360
42-50797	42-52648	42-78494	42-95360
42-51694	42-52683	42-78515	42-95360
42-51694	42-52686	42-78515	44-40648
42-51882	42-52700	42-94738	44-41136
42-51882	42-52700	42-94746	44-41139
	44-41143		

Command Pilots, Squadron, Position, and Plane Number

Rank	F Name	L Name	Sq	Nose	Pos	Ship No
2/Lt	James J	Ahearn	825	30	Baker	13 44-41139
1/Lt	Dave C	Arnett	827	87	Fox	12 42-95360
Capt	Gerald B	Bell	824	15	Charlie	12 N/A
1/Lt	Edward P	Bird	826	54	Dog	13 44-40648
1/Lt	Edward P	Bird	826	54	Easy	13 N/A
Maj	John	Brennan	827	49	Able	12 42-78515
2/Lt	Frederick	Carter	824	14	Charlie	13 N/A
1/Lt	Harold L	Chern	824	25	Charlie	11 42-52641
2/Lt	Henry E	Dionne	825	48	Baker	23 42-50396
Maj	William H	Dowd	826	51	Dog	11 42-51882
1/Lt	William F	Gaskill	824	24	Able	22 42-51694
Capt	Marion H	Hammett	827	73	Dog	21 42-52686
1/Lt	Robert E.	Hatch Jr	827	85	Fox	13 42-95360
Capt	George H	Ingham	827	75	Fox	11 42-52700
2/Lt	Walter A	Jehli	824	27	Charlie	23 N/A
1/Lt	James T	Kuiper	827	76	Fox	23 42-52648
2/Lt	Russell E	Linkous	826	59	Easy	23 42-52490
Maj	Clarence	Lollar	826	50	Dog	12 42-52633
Maj	James P	Lyle	827	87	Fox	12 42-95360
1/Lt	Barney J	Milner	825	49	Able	12 42-78515

Capt	Billie B	Neel	825	49	Able	11 42-78327
2/Lt	James H	Oakley	827	80	Fox	21 42-78494
1/Lt	Stanley V	Olson	824	17	Charlie	21 N/A
Maj	John D	Paine	826	51	Dog	11 42-51882
	Robert A	Penny	825	39	Baker	22 42-50642
1/Lt	John J	Petrie	826	61	Easy	21 N/A
2/Lt	Amos S	Pollard	827	82	Dog	23 42-95275
1/Lt	John H	Robson Jr	826	57	Easy	22 42-94747
1/Lt	Kenneth	Rounds	827	70	Fox	22 42-52683
2/Lt	Bernard	Schacht	825	33	Baker	21 44-41136
1/Lt	Aaron	Scharf	827	75	Fox	11 42-52700
2/Lt	Howard	Steinberg	825	41	Able	13 42-50797
1/Lt	Joseph N	Shobe	826	55	Easy	12 N/A
1/Lt	Joseph N	Shobe Jr	826	55	Dog	12 44-41143
2/Lt	Eugene C	Stamm	824	24	Able	22 42-51694
Capt	Eual E	Stone	826	56	Easy	11 42-94746
2/Lt	William	Sutton	827	81	Dog	22 42-94738
1/Lt	Wayne L.	Thompkins	825	44	Baker	12 42-78289
1/Lt	Robert R	Warne	826	62	Dog	13 42-52775
Capt	John A	Whitacre	825	33	Baker	21 44-41136
1/Lt	Edward	Williamson	824	10	Able	21 N/A
1/Lt	Merle P	Yanney	824	18	Charlie	22 41-29539
	Donald	Zimmerman	824	28	Able	23 N/A

Armament Personnel Passangers

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq
Cpl	Robert E	Brown	14094218	827
Cpl	Charlie R	Cook Jr	34262263	826
Cpl	Harold E	Day	37670587	826
Cpl	Bernard N	Enos	31311699	826
Cpl	T	Frendlich		827
S/Sg	Theodore G	Garchow	36538058	825
Cpl	Linwood	Goodwin	34671730	824
Cpl	A	Klatzbach		827
Pvt	Roy	Knee	32710480	826
Sgt	Finely L	Korner	35218162	827
Cpl	George H	Lockwood	36482825	827
Sgt	Clarke S	Lyon	31346140	827
M/Sg	Loe V	Matranga	14026887	825
Pfc	Boyce	McKinney		826
Cpl	Samuel E	Meeks	30913084	484
Cpl	David	Moore		827
Cpl	Louie W	Odom	34762298	826
Cpl	A	Perhersky		825
Sgt	Louis W	Ranger	32586986	825
Cpl	Donald E	Reid	37559892	825
Cpl	Otto C	Robinson	35340501	825
Cpl	Thomas C	Shortell	32916724	826
Cpl	William E	Simmons	33557335	826
Cpl	John A	Sind	37614200	825
Cpl	Waldo E	Snow	31131166	824
Pfc	Horace E	Sweatman	34681683	825
Cpl	Donald R	Weeks	35093071	825
Pvt	Edward O	Wilson	31009660	827
Pvt	Harry	Wilson		824

Crew Chiefs on Board

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq
M/Sg	Charles O	Albone Jr	32735606	825	M/Sg	James D.	McIntyre	18052265	826
-	Arthur	Aldene	17070353	827	M/Sg	Richard H	Moon	14027076	827
M/Sg	Joseph H.	Baird	37145754	827	S/Sg	Simpson G.	Nelson	3460Á375	825
M/Sg	Chester L.	Coleman	17060707	824	M/Sg	Albert J	Piatek	33163321	824
Sgt	Henry W	Cushard Jr	15319238	826	T/Sg	-	Rosiki	N/A	827
M/Sg	Eldon L.	Dungey	39306172	825	T/Sg	Richard G.	Rudkin	12148623	827
T/Sg	Maurice B.	Gorst	39277384	825	S/Sg	Harry H	Sanders	38438771	825
M/Sg	Chester S.	Hessler	13167420	826	T/Sg	Daniel G.	Seybert	13040114	827
M/Sg	James S.	Jones, Jr.	14049188	826	Sgt	Virgil R.	Smith	35581925	825
T/Sg	Robert J.	Kopp	32316535	825	M/Sg	Robert R.	Tessalone	32466951	826
Sgt	Stanley N.	Laque	38380552	825	S/Sg	Joseph O.	Tullier, Jr.	18208526	826
T/Sg	K C	Lepley	N/A	825	S/Sg	Peter C	Vander Hoven	N/A	826
M/Sg	Harold C	Lynch	39452843,	824	-	-	Vertiak	N/A	827
S/Sg	Harry A.	Masin	12204432	827	-	-	Wilson	N/A	827
M/Sgt	Maxwell C	Mathews	N/A	826	M/Sg	James T.	Yates	18158695	826

Air Crews Assigned to the September 11, 1944 Supply Mission

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Ship No	Nose	Duty	Placr	Pilot
1/Lt	James I	Adams	N/A	825	42-50396	48	CP	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
2/Lt	James J	Ahearn	N/A	825	44-41139	30	P	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
Capt	James H	Albertassi	A801409	826	42-51882	51	N	Dog 11	Paine, John P
M/Sg	Charles O	Albone Jr	32735606	825	42-50642	39	CC	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
-	Arthur	Aldene	17070353	827	42-52683	70	CC	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
T/Sg	Coy H	Argo	34656853	826	42-52490	59	E	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
1/Lt	Dave C	Arnett	0693831	827	42-95360	87	P	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
T/Sg	Willie R	Ashurst Jr	14027134	826	42-51882	51	E	Dog 11	Paine, John P
1/Lt	Robert D	Babcock	0707762	827	42-95275	82	N	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
M/Sg	Joseph H.	Baird	37145754	827	42-95275	82	CC	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Cpl	Alexander	Bazer	32828093	827	42-78494	80	TG	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Capt	Gerald B	Bell	N/A	824	UNK	15	P	Charlie 12	Bell, Gerald B
Sgt	Robert W.	Bell	18078866	825	42-78515	49	UG	Able 12	Brennan, John T
S/Sg	William E	Biggs	18043645	826	44-40648	54	NG	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
1/Lt	Edward P	Bird	0819946	826	44-40648	54	P	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
1/Lt	Edward P	Bird	N/A	826	UNK	54	P	Easy 13	Bird, Edward P
2/Lt	C C	Birnkrantz	N/A	825	42-51851	40	N	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
Sgt	Rodney W	Blockwitz	16056684	825	44-41136	33	TG	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
T/Sg	Johnnie E	Bodine	N/A	826	42-94747	57	E	Easy 22	Robson, John H
1/Lt	Bernard J	Bossick	0814232	824	42-52641	25	N	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
1/Lt	Alexander L	Bracken Jr	0710223	825	42-78515	49	N	Able 12	Brennan, John T
S/Sg	John	Brancone	N/A	827	42-95360	85	UG	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
1/Lt	Ernie D	Brant	0712487	827	42-52648	76	N	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
Maj	John T	Brennan	37350451	827	42-78515	49	P	Able 12	Brennan, John T
Sgt	Herbert J	Brooks	32865815	827	42-78494	80	NG	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Cpl	Robert E	Brown	14094218	827	42-95360	87	Arm	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
Cpl	Robert	Buchan	N/A	826	41-28803	61	E	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
Cpl	Raymond	Bush	33129692	824	42-51694	24	NG	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
Maj	Walter C.	Cameron	0472971	824	42-78327	49	Doc	Able 11	Keese, William B
T/Sg	Ralph W	Carr	32930737	825	42-50642	39	E	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
2/Lt	Frederick W	Carter	N/A	824	UNK	14	P	Charlie 13	Carter, Frederick w

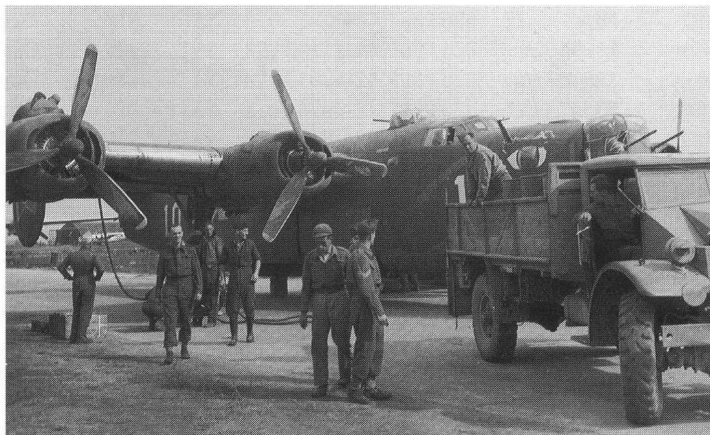
Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Ship No	Nose	Duty	Placr	Pilot
Sgt	Anthony L	Cartwright	31033949	825	42-50797	41	TG	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
Cpl	Ralph S.	Carver	34792099	826	42-94746	56	NG	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
S/Sg	Clarence E	Causey Jr	34868904	827	42-95275	82	TG	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Sgt	George A	Cebula	16136372	826	42-52633	50	TG	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
1/Lt	Harold L	Chern	0690305	824	42-52641	25	P	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
Sgt	Daniel W	Chicarella Jr	33684901	827	42-95360	85	TG	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
S/Sg	Kenneth E	Churma	39121845	826	42-52633	50	UG	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
1/Lt	Omer F.	Cignac	0699757	827	42-52683	70	CP	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
2/Lt	Raymond	Clamage	0723287	827	42-78494	80	N	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
2/Lt	J J	Clark	N/A	825	42-50396	48	N	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
M/Sg	Chester L	Coleman	17060707	824	42-51694	24	CC	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
Pfc	Arthur P	Coogan	12076593	827	42-95275	82	Med	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Cpl	Charlie R	Cook Jr	34262263	826	44-40648	54	Arm	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
S/Sg	Alwyn E	Cornett	14032377	826	42-51882	51	BG	Dog 11	Paine, John P
S/Sg	Kenneth E	Crockett	16188375	827	42-52683	70	NG	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
Sgt	Lynn P (B)	Crytzer	33703358,	825	42-50797	41	NG	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
2/Lt	Francis J.	Cummins	0713294	826	42-52490	59	CP	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
-	James D "Dick"	Cummins	0716287	825	42-50642	39	N	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
Sgt	Henry W	Cushard Jr	15319238	826	42-94746	56	CC	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
S/Sg	Chester V.	Czaplicka	16149323	826	42-52633	50	E	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
T/Sg	Henry G	Danielson	39900327	825	42-78327	49	E	Able 11	Keese, William B
1/Lt	Edwin T	Danowski	0723239	826	42-52490	59	N	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
Cpl	Conrad	Darelius	N/A	826	41-28803	61	R0	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
Cpl	Harold E	Day	37670587	826	42-52775	62	Arm	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
1/Lt	George F	Delawater	0720213	826	42-52633	50	CP	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
2/Lt	George K	Dickle	N/A	826	44-40648	54	N	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
2/Lt	Henry E	Dionne	0687560	825	42-50396	48	P	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
1/Lt	William	Dipple	0710453	826	44-41143	55	CP	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
T/Sg	Fred A.	Dodge	13045013	826	42-94746	56	E	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
1/Lt	John H	Dooley Jr	0712387	826	42-51882	51	N	Dog 11	Paine, John P
T/Sg	James E.	Douglass	13081869	826	42-52490	59	R0	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
Maj	William H	Dowd	0789149	826	42-51882	51	P	Dog 11	Paine, John P
S/Sg	William R.	Drake	33033354	825	42-78327	49	UG	Able 11	Keese, William B
1/Lt	Donald R	Dreger	N/A	824	41-29539	18	CP	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
2/Lt	Edward W	Drislane	0825126	826	44-40648	54	CP	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
M/Sg	Eldon L.	Dungey	39306172	825	44-41136	33	CC	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
S/Sg	Arthur E	Dunmire	313828431	826	42-51882	51	TG	Dog 11	Paine, John P
S/Sg	John R	Dunn	18192368	824	42-52641	25	TG	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
Capt	John H	Dunn Jr	0696072	824	42-95360	87	N	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
S/Sg	James E	Ellis II	14203051	827	42-52683	70	TG	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
Cpl	Bernard N	Enos	31311699	826	42-94746	56	Arm	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
2/Lt	Walter	Fair	N/A	826	42-94747	57	N	Easy 22	Robson, John H
T/Sg	Thomas W	Fairhurst	15130674	827	42-52686	73	R0	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
Cpl	Frank E.	Fishbaugh	39558574	827	42-78494	80	UG	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Sgt	Thomas R.	Fitzmaurice	32679322	827	42-95275	82	R0	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
1/Lt	Ray A	Foss	0710911	826	42-94747	57	CP	Easy 22	Robson, John H
Cpl	T	Frendlich	N/A	827	42-52686	73	Arm	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
2/Lt	Louis E	Friedman	0719052	825	44-41136	33	N	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
T/Sg	Robert L	Furchner	19047875	825	42-51851	40	R0	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
S/Sg	F L	Ganschaw	N/A	825	42-51851	40	TG	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
S/Sg	Theodore G	Garchow	36538058	825	42-51851	40	Arm	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
1/Lt	William F	Gaskill	0709232	824	42-51694	24	P	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
-	Donald	Gillespie	37472352	826	44-41143	55	NG	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
Cpl	Robert E	Gilley	35774305	827	42-52700	75	BG	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
1/Lt	Charles F	Gladwill	0686240	825	42-50642	39	CP	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
Cpl	Marvin C	Goldstein	11138274	827	42-95275	82	UG	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Cpl	Linwood	Goodwin	34671730	824	42-51694	24	Arm	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
T/Sg	Maurice B.	Gorst	39277384	825	42-50396	48	CC	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
S/Sg	Robert Z.	Gray	19124596	827	42-95360	87	TG	Fox 12	Lyle, James P

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Ship No	Nose	Duty	Placr	Pilot
Cpl	Chester	Hacaisz	N/A	824	41-29539	18	G	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
S/Sg	Frank M.	Hahn	33621959	824	42-52641	25	NG	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
T/Sg	Milton B	Hall	15339965	827	42-52648	76	R0	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
Capt	Marion H	Hammett	01548825	827	42-52686	73	P	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
Sgt	William	Haraby	N/A	825	44-41139	30	BG	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
Sgt	James S.	Harkey	34851484	826	44-40648	54	UG	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
2/Lt	John T	Harper	0813371	826	42-94746	56	CP	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
S/Sg	Cornelius A.	Harrington	11131626	826	42-52775	62	UG	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
Sgt	Ray S	Hartman	38466830	827	42-94738	81	NG	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
1/Lt	Robert E.	Hatch Jr	0819803	827	42-95360	85	P	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
2/Lt	Lowell P	Hayes	0709575	825	42-51851	40	CP	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
	Wayne L	Henly	16076460	827	42-95360	87	R0	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
M/Sg	Chester S.	Hessler	13167420	826	41-28803	61	CC	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
T/Sg	William H	Hiller	34648941	824	42-51694	24	E	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
S/Sg	William J	Hiser	3558160	826	44-41143	55	UG	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
Cpl	Orville E	Hommert	17134304	827	42-52686	73	TG	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
2/Lt	George E	Houraney	N/A	826	41-28803	61	CP	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
1/Lt	Fred H	House	0814230	827	42-52648	76	CP	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
Cpl	Charles D	Howard	N/A	826	41-28803	61	UG	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
Cpl	Wilford A	Hulbert	33684180	827	42-52686	73	UG	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
Capt	George H	Ingham	025954	827	42-52700	75	P	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
S/Sg	Harry	Jacoby	19125402	827	42-95360	87	TG	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
T/Sg	Michael S	Jarozewski	N/A	826	44-40648	54	E	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
2/Lt	Walter A	Jehli	N/A	824	UNK	27	P	Charlie 23	Jehli, Walter A
S/Sg	John J	Jennings	32915230	827	42-52700	75	G	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
-	John H	Johnson	N/A	824	41-29539	18	R0	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
-	Telsa I	Johnson	0712406	824	42-51694	24	N	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
1/Lt	William J	Jones	N/A	827	42-52686	73	N	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
M/Sg	James S.	Jones, Jr.	14049188	826	42-52633	50	CC	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
S/Sg	Anthony M	Kazda	13625833	827	42-52648	76	TG	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
Col	William B	Keese	N/A	484	42-78327	49	CO	Able 11	Keese, William B
S/Sg	Charles W	Killen	37347433	825	42-78289	44	NG	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	Carlton M	Killian	32739383	825	42-78515	49	R0	Able 12	Brennan, John T
Cpl	A	Klatzbach	N/A	827	42-52648	76	Arm	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
Pvt	Roy	Knee	32710480	826	41-28803	61	Arm	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
T/Sg	George E	Kolbe	16083366	826	44-41143	55	R0	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
T/Sg	Robert J.	Kopp	32316535	825	42-50797	41	CC	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
Sgt	Finely L	Korner	35218162	827	42-52683	70	Arm	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
T/Sg	August J	Kovacic	37522227	827	42-95275	82	E	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Capt	Percy H.	Kramer	0677287	825	44-41139	30	CP	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
S/Sg	Walter J	Kressin	37538991	825	42-78289	44	UG	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
1/Lt	James T	Kuiper	0761131	827	42-52648	76	P	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
-	Leslie H	Kummer Jr	0723508	827	42-52700	75	N	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
Sgt	Stanley N.	Laque	38380552	825	42-51851	40	CC	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
1/Lt	Herbert G	Larson	N/A	824	41-29539	18	N	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
Sgt	Jack	Lawless Jr	38413830	827	42-95360	85	E	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
S/Sg	David L	Leap	35709441	825	42-50396	48	NG	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
T/Sg	K C	Lepley	N/A	825	42-78515	49	CC	Able 12	Brennan, John T
T/Sg	Jerome L	Levin	34770677	825	42-51851	40	E	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
2/Lt	Isadore	Levine	0718359	827	42-95360	85	N	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
1/Lt	Yolk T	Lew	N/A	825	42-50797	41	N	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
2/Lt	Russell E	Linkous	0702296	826	42-52490	59	P	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
Cpl	George H	Lockwood	36482825	827	42-52700	75	Arm	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
Maj	Clarence L	Lollar	0429084	826	42-52633	50	P	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
Sgt	Charles E.	Lory	16146937	827	42-52648	76	NG	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
T/Sg	Perry W	Lounsbury	17097149	827	42-52686	73	E	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
S/Sg	Arre O	Lyijnen	36105231	825	42-50642	39	NG	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
Maj	James P	Lyle	0412971	827	42-95360	87	P	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
S/Sg	John J	Lyman	32217949	825	42-50642	39	TG	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Ship No	Nose	Duty	Placr	Pilot
M/Sg	Harold C	Lynch	39452843,	824	42-52641	25	CC	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
Sgt	Clarke S	Lyon	31346140	827	42-94738	81	Arm	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
1/Lt	Charles C	Maddox Jr	0569268	825	42-78289	44	CP	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	Emilio "Mel"	Marchese	13108473	825	42-50396	48	BG	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
T/Sg	Leonard B	Marshall	N/A	826	42-94747	57	R0	Easy 22	Robson, John H
S/Sg	Harold L.	Martenson	36049132,	824	42-52641	25	UG	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
S/Sg	Rudolph S	Martino	33441214	827	42-95360	85	NG	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
S/Sg	Harry A.	Masin	12204432	827	42-95360	87	CC	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
M/Sgt	Maxwell C	Mathews	N/A	826	42-52490	59	CC	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
S/Sg	Robert J.	Mathison	39461205	826	42-94746	56	TG	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
M/Sg	Loe V	Matranga	14026887	825	44-41136	33	Arm	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
M/Sg	James D.	McIntyre	18052265	826	44-40648	54	CC	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
Pfc	Boyce	McKiney	N/A	826	42-52490	59	Arm	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
Sgt	Walter E	McLellan	N/A	827	42-52648	76	E	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
T/Sg	Allen M.	McWhorter	18202585	827	42-95360	87	E	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
Cpl	Samuel E	Meeks	30913084	484	42-51882	51	Arm	Dog 11	Paine, John P
S/Sg	Paul R	Megonigal	33800054	827	42-52683	70	UG	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
1/Lt	James R	Mercer Jr	0723406	827	42-52683	70	N	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
S/Sg	William H.	Miller	34407261	825	42-78515	49	NG	Able 12	Brennan, John T
S/Sg	Alfred J	Mills	32768333	824	41-29539	18	UG	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
1/Lt	Barney J	Milner	0696858	825	42-78515	49	P	Able 12	Brennan, John T
S/Sg	Kenneth R	Monsell	33759245	826	42-94747	57	NG	Easy 22	Robson, John H
S/Sg	Guido J	Montemerlo	31440217	825	42-78327	49	NG	Able 11	Keese, William B
M/Sg	Richard H	Moon	14027076	827	42-52700	75	CC	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
Cpl	David	Moore	N/A	827	42-95360	85	Arm	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
S/Sg	William A "Bill"	Mordica	35776869	826	44-41143	55	TG	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
Sgt	Joseph F.	Murphy	33025438	827	42-78494	80	E	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Pvt	E D	Musser	N/A	825	44-41139	30	TG	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
Capt	Billie B	Neel	0677852	825	42-78327	49	P	Able 11	Keese, William B
S/Sg	Simpson G.	Nelson	3460Á375	825	44-41139	30	CC	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
Sgt	Roy A	Nichols	39294379	825	42-50396	48	E	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
Cpl	Rev John H	Nicolai	39130512	827	42-52700	75	R0	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
T/Sg	William F	Novak	6901113	827	42-52683	70	E	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
-	William J	O'Malley	N/A	825	44-41139	30	R0	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
2/Lt	James H	Oakley	0529692	827	42-78494	80	P	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Cpl	Louie W	Odom	34762298	826	44-41143	55	Arm	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
-	Relis	Oldfield	N/A	825	44-41139	30	E	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
S/Sg	Vernon A	Oldfield	12173713	825	42-50396	48	R0	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
Cpl	Donald L	Olson	39566585	824	42-51694	24	UG	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
1/Lt	Stanley V	Olson	N/A	824	UNK	17	P	Charlie 21	Olson, Staley V
T/Sg	Raymond	Orlowski	16116373	824	42-52641	25	R0	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
T/Sg	Orville A	Orsted	N/A	824	41-29539	18	E	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
2/Lt	Charles J	Osborne	0771511	827	42-94738	81	CP	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
Maj	John D	Paine	N/A	826	42-51882	51	P	Dog 11	Paine, John P
T/Sg	John E	Parker	15131228	827	42-52683	70	R0	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
T/Sg	Harold J	Parks	38465423	825	42-78289	44	E	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	Robert E	Parsons	15067852	826	42-52490	59	UG	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
2/Lt	Robert B	Pease	0722879	827	42-94738	81	N	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
Sgt	Leslie S	Pendergrass	337513005	825	44-41136	33	UG	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
-	Robert A	Penny	0549810	825	42-50642	39	P	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
Cpl	A	Perhersky	N/A	825	42-50797	41	Arm	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
S/Sg	Joseph A.	Pesola	16080496	826	42-52490	59	G	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
1/Lt	John J	Petrie	0747316	826	41-28803	61	CP	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
1/Lt	John J	Petrie	N/A	826	UNK	61	P	Easy 21	Petrie, John J
Sgt	Oran	Pettillo	N/A	827	42-52700	75	NG	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
M/Sg	Albert J	Piatek	33163321	824	41-29539	18	CC	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
2/Lt	Victor E	Pierce	0825269	826	42-52775	62	CP	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
S/Sg	Carlton F	Pinnegar	35730274	827	42-95275	82	NG	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
S/Sg	Martin A	Pizzaloto	N/A	827	42-52686	73	NG	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Ship No	Nose	Duty	Placr	Pilot
Cpl	Walter M	Pogerzelski	N/A	826	41-28803	61	NG	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
1/Lt	George L	Polasky	0759854	826	42-52775	62	N	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
2/Lt	Amos S	Pollard	0819708	827	42-95275	82	P	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Cpl	Willie	Pon	39036116	827	42-94738	81	R0	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
T/Sg	Judson D	Pratt	32203235	825	42-50642	39	R0	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
T/Sg	Marshall D	Preston	33607779	824	42-51694	24	G	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
S/Sg	Thomas J	Price Jr	N/A	826	42-94747	57	TG	Easy 22	Robson, John H
S/Sg	Andres	Quinones	39560451	825	42-51851	40	NG	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
1/Lt	Frank V	Rabinovitz	0707107	826	42-52633	50	N	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
Sgt	Louis W	Ranger	32586986	825	42-50396	48	Arm	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
Sgt	William A	Rau	36653643	827	42-52700	75	E	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
T/Sg	Lester V	Reall	33722904	825	42-78515	49	E	Able 12	Brennan, John T
T/Sg	Jessie	Redifer Jr	15332061	826	44-41143	55	E	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
S/Sg	Maurice V	Reed	35759964	826	42-52490	59	UG	Easy 23	Linkous, Russell E
S/Sg	Michael J	Regenda	33414902	825	42-78289	44	R0	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
Cpl	Donald E	Reid	37449892	825	42-78515	49	Arm	Able 12	Brennan, John T
S/Sg	Thomas G	Reimer	33277910	826	42-52775	62	NG	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
S/Sg	Gerald J	Roach	12173715	825	42-50396	48	UG	Baker 23	Dione, Henry E
Cpl	Otto C	Robinson	35340501	825	42-78289	44	Arm	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	William G	Robinson	N/A	826	42-94747	57	UG	Easy 22	Robson, John H
1/Lt	John H	Robson Jr	0706246	826	42-94747	57	P	Easy 22	Robson, John H
1/Lt	Donald S	Rogers	0771540	827	42-78494	80	CP	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
T/Sg	-	Rosiki	N/A	827	42-94738	81	CC	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
T/Sg	Glenn J.	Ross	17057425	826	42-94746	56	R0	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
1/Lt	Kenneth	Rounds	0674339	827	42-52683	70	P	Fox 22	Rounds, Kennth G
T/Sg	Richard G.	Rudkin	12148623	827	42-78494	80	CC	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Cpl	Harry C	Sadowski	36812711	827	42-94738	81	G	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
Sgt	Thomas E	Sainsbury	31050702	827	42-78494	80	R0	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
S/Sg	Harry H	Sanders	38438771	825	42-78327	49	CC	Able 11	Keese, William B
Cpl	Harold A	Saxe	38450685	824	42-51694	24	R0	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
S/Sg	Vincent J	Scarpuzza	32409296	827	42-95360	87	TG	Fox 12	Lyle, James P
2/Lt	Bernard	Schacht	0767663	825	44-41136	33	P	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
S/Sg	John T	Schafer	36166029	825	42-51851	40	UG	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
1/Lt	Aaron	Scharf	0768698	827	42-52700	75	P	Fox 11	Ingham, George H
S/Sg	George J	Scheina	32368767	826	44-40648	54	UG	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
S/Sg	Walter H	Scheurs	37651154	825	42-78515	49	E	Able 12	Brennan, John T
Sgt	G D	Schollenbarger	N/A	825	44-41136	33	NG	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
-	Walter C	Schultz	39207231	827	42-94738	81	E	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
1/Lt	Edward	Schwartz	0723183	826	44-41143	55	N	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
S/Sg	Lacy P	Scott	14102837	825	44-41136	33	E	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
T/Sg	Daniel G.	Seybert	13040114	827	42-95360	85	CC	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
S/Sg	Parker C	Shaw	11039905	827	42-52648	76	UG	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
2/Lt	Howard	Steinber	0768732	825	42-50797	41	P	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
1/Lt	Joseph N	Shobe	N/A	826	UNK	55	P	Easy 12	Stone, Eual E
1/Lt	Joseph N	Shobe Jr	01691626	826	44-41143	55	P	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
Cpl	Thomas C	Shortell	32916724	826	42-52633	50	Arm	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
Cpl	William E	Simmons	33557335	826	42-94747	57	Arm	Easy 22	Robson, John H
Cpl	John A	Sind	36614220	825	42-78327	49	Arm	Able 11	Keese, William B
Sgt	J D	Slaton	N/A	825	44-41139	30	NG	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
T/Sg	Charlie O.	Smiley	33090165	826	42-51882	51	R0	Dog 11	Paine, John P
S/Sg	Kenneth L	Smith	36657632	827	42-95360	85	R0	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
Sgt	Virgil R.	Smith	35581925	825	42-78289	44	CC	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
1/Lt	Woodrow W	Smith	0819889	827	42-95360	85	CP	Fox 13	Hatch, Robert E
2/Lt	James S	Smith III	0825314	827	42-95275	82	CP	Dog 23	Pollard, Amos S
Cpl	Waldo E	Snow	31131166	824	42-52641	25	Arm	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
2/Lt	Herman J	Solda	0825316	827	42-52686	73	CP	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
2/Lt	Eugene C	Stamm	0767414	824	42-51694	24	P	Able 22	Gaskill, William F
T/Sg	W H	Stamper	N/A	825	42-78327	49	R0	Able 11	Keese, William B
Cpl	Thomas J	Standfill	N/A	826	41-28803	61	TG	Dog 21	Petrie, John J

Rank	F Name	L Name	ASN	Sq	Ship No	Nose	Duty	Placr	Pilot
S/Sg	Ernest R	Stedman	39412809	826	42-51882	51	TG	Dog 11	Paine, John P
Sgt	Robert P	Stewart	20939137	825	42-50797	41	R0	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
Capt	Eual E	Stone	0677305	826	42-94746	56	P	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
Sgt	John D.	Strey	36829677	825	42-78289	44	BG	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	Alfred G.	Strout	6143886	826	44-40648	54	R0	Dog 13	Bird, Edward P
Maj	Nathan	Sutin	0789831	825	42-78327	49	N	Able 11	Keese, William B
2/Lt	William K	Sutton	0767682	827	42-94738	81	P	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
2/Lt	Robert J	Swanson	0771150	825	42-50797	41	CP	Able 13	Steinberg, Howard
Pfc	Horace E	Sweatman	34681683,	825	42-50642	39	Arm	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
T/Sg	Charles M	Sweitzer	35571705	826	42-52633	50	E	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
-	Jobe	Taylor	N/A	825	44-41139	30	N	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
M/Sg	Robert R.	Tessalone	32466951	826	42-51882	51	CC	Dog 11	Paine, John P
S/Sg	Allan	Tewes	36836149	824	41-29539	18	TG	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
1/Lt	Wayne L.	Thompkins	01046393	825	42-78289	44	P	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	Roger V	Thusing	36739160	825	44-41136	33	R0	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
S/Sg	Joseph O.	Tullier, Jr.	18208526	826	42-94747	57	CC	Easy 22	Robson, John H
S/Sg	Richard M.	Turner	13115368	824	42-52641	25	TG	Charlie 11	Chern, Harold L
S/Sg	Jerome B	Unterberger	N/A	826	42-52633	50	R0	Dog 12	Lollar, Clarence L
S/Sg	Juan	Valdez	3462269	825	42-78327	49	TG	Able 11	Keese, William B
S/Sg	Peter C	Vander Hoven	N/A	826	42-52775	62	CC	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
-	-	Vertiak	N/A	827	42-52686	73	CC	Dog 21	Hammett, Marion H
2/Lt	Ramon A	Vitulli	N/A	826	41-28803	61	N	Dog 21	Petrie, John J
2/Lt	Carl H	Voss	0700788	826	42-94746	56	N	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
S/Sg	Cornelius L	Wakolee	37510685	826	42-94746	56	G	Easy 11	Stone, Eual E
T/Sg	Joseph G	Walter Jr	33618106	826	42-52775	62	E	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
1/Lt	Robert R	Warne	0816013	826	42-52775	62	P	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
Cpl	Donald R	Weeks	35093071	825	44-41139	30	Arm	Baker 13	Ahearn, James J
Capt	John A	Whitacre	0705464	825	44-41136	33	P	Baker 21	Whitacre, John A
2/Lt	Paul R	Willhide	0722407	825	42-78289	44	N	Baker 12	Thompkins, Wayne L
S/Sg	Jack A	Williams	18034311	825	42-50642	39	UG	Baker 22	Penny, Robert A
Capt	Paul J	Williams	N/A	825	42-51851	40	CP	Baker 11	Williams, Paul J
1/Lt	Edward K	Williamson	N/A	824	UNK	10	P	Able 21	Williamson, Edward
-	-	Wilson	N/A	827	42-52648	76	CC	Fox 23	Kuiper, James T
Pvt	Edward O	Wilson	31009660	827	42-78494	80	Arm	Fox 21	Oakley, James H
Pvt	Harry	Wilson	N/A	824	41-29539	18	Arm	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
S/Sg	Boyd	Woodall Jr	18062890	826	42-52775	62	E	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R
Cpl	Henry	Wooten	346337392	827	42-94738	81	TG	Dog 22	Sutton, William K
1/Lt	Merle P	Yanney	N/A	824	41-29539	18	P	Charlie 22	Yanney, Merle P
M/Sg	James T.	Yates	18158695	826	44-41143	55	CC	Dog 12	Shobe, Joseph M
-	Donald G	Zimmerman	N/A	824	UNK	28	P	Able 23	Gaskill, William F
T/Sg	Wesley K	Zink	36565469	826	42-52775	62	R0	Dog 13	Warne, Robert R



Defueling ship #10 Bron, France

Combat Express

Reprinted from December 1944 Air Force Magazine

The fighters called for help and the bombers came through.

Editors Note: This story tells of other organizations that were ferrying supplies to General Patton's 3rd Army. By using smaller aircraft, supplies could be delivered close to the front. In some cases aviation fuel was pumped right into the tanks of the Tactical Air Force aircraft. Tactical aircraft were fighters, and other smaller aircraft that were especially modified to attack ground targets and enemy occupied strong points.

Everything that moved, be it trains, trucks, and tanks, became prime targets of the roving P-47s and P-51s. Tactical Aircraft (TAC) aircraft airdromes would move behind the ground troops as they advanced toward Germany.

For the 12th Tactical Air Command it was a critical hour. From the day the 7th Army had stormed the beaches of southern France, the ground troops had been driving forward, never losing momentum, never being curtailed by their own insufficiencies. And with bomb and gun power they had torn the German strong points to rubble and dust, the 12th had provided the air support and led the way.

Now they had the Nazis on the run. They had to keep operating, but they needed supplies of rations, ammunition and gasoline, needed them badly.

The ground forces couldn't be called upon for aid. They were having their own headaches keeping their own units supplied. From the beachhead it was a 3 1/2-day turnaround by truck. And the roads had about reached their capacity.

So for once, instead of helping the bombers, the fighters and light attack planes called upon the bombers to help them. And help arrived without delay.

From the 15th Air Force came a fleet of B-24s. Shifted from strategic bombing missions, they were assigned to fly the gasoline and supplies from their Italian bases to bases in southern France under the direction of the Tactical Air Command men in southern and central France.

Each B-24 was fitted to carry empty gasoline drums in the rear section, unfused 500 pounders were hung in the bomb bay, while many cases of .50 caliber ammunitions and food supplies were distributed to whatever storage space was left. Each plane made the short flight with a full load of fuel in every available tank.

In tight formations they flew to airdromes that but a week before had been targets for the new occupants. Many of the crew members in the B-24s were ground men who were making their first mission to help with the unloading. They were astonished at the destruction the AAF had wrought upon the targets they passed over.

When the planes landed, the townspeople long accustomed to diving for the nearest shelter whenever the big bombers passed overhead flocked out to the airdrome like children to a circus. They watched as the aircraft turned onto the apron, and ran in a large semicircle around the field. They saw the bomb bay doors open and the bombs come down guided by careful hands. They waved and cheered as the engines revved up and the empty planes took off to return the next day with still more bombs, ammunition,

gasoline and other supplies for the fighters.

But even the efforts of the B-24s was not enough. The drive to the north was in full swing again, this time for the Belfort Gap, gateway to Germany. It was decided to add a fleet of A-20s and whatever C-47s were available; for those smaller planes could go into the forward fields where the B-24s could not land. There was such a demand for the cargo that the A-20s and C-47s often taxied to within hose distance of the combat P-47s. The ground men pumped the gasoline from one plane to another like a blood transfusion. They lifted bombs down from the bomb bay, fused them and re hung them on the P-47s.

A small indication of what the Thunderbolts did with these supplies may be gained from their score in a single day's operation. On that day they nailed 43 Locomotives, destroying 34 of them, leaving nine damaged. In addition they damaged 29 railroad cars carrying German troops and supplies to the Belfort Gap. Of the 125,000 rounds ammunition flow in one day, a P-47 fired 90,000 into enemy convoys in the Belfort Gap area. Gradually, the race to keep the fighters supplied was being won. The reserve of material was mounting with each delivery by the ingenious Combat Express. Indeed the delivery of surplus gasoline began to pose a problem, but high octane fuel could not be poured on a field, when no more storage tanks were available. A lieutenant at one field came up with the answer. Finding four wine tank cars nearby, he secured permission from French authorities to have the tank cars moved to a siding on the airfield. This done, the cars were thoroughly cleaned and 25,000 gallons of the precious fuel found storage space.

By this time the front became more stabilized, as the ground forces moved in to stand before the Belfort Gap, the moves from airdrome to airdrome became less frequent, and Brig. Gen. Gordon P Saville happily announced that his 12th Tactical Air Command was in swell shape they- had several days' supply of necessary material.

With the reestablishment of the railway lines, the emergency was over and the Combat Express made its last supply run. The B-24 went back to bombing strategic targets. The A-20s returned to flying their errands of ill-will, and the C-47s flew to meet other demands. The 7th Army was readying itself for the Battle of Belfort Gap. Thanks to their big friends and the supplies they had brought, the 12th tactical Air Force was ready to take its usual place, the place up front.

The Calvin Teel Story

Submitted By Emmett Goff

Editors Note: *The following manuscript was received unedited from Emmett Goff, and would require a complete rewrite for better understanding. Because the story was received very late after this issue was already in the final stage, there was not time for a rewrite. We present it here partially edited for our members interest and information.*

I will try to cover events that happened to me over 50 years ago at a time when I was flying combat missions as a Radio Operator Gunner with a crew of ten men that had trained together in the states and who were assigned to 825th Sq., 484th B G, 49th Wg, 15th AF in Italy.

This is a "True Story" that really happened to me a long time ago. The material for this report comes from four sources: A. My own memories, B. The diary of my fellow crew member, Ralph N. Christensen: His notes were jotted down daily soon after the experience so they could be more accurate. C. Material taken from the historical files of the 484th Bomb Group Association. D. Escape & Evasion reports that were classified Secret on 15 December 1944. I received a photocopy around 1981 or 1982 after it had been declassified. The 15th AAF at that time doctored the events that happened in the experiences of my crew after we were interviewed in Bari. If the powers that guided intelligence reports during WW II, rewrote what they thought had happened to my crew with the loss of one bomber and the death of one crew member, if they did it once, they must have done it many other times.

I was discharged from service on 24 October 1945, honorably, at Tyndall Field, Florida. One folder that I was given at that time was my Individual Flight Record, with copies of all my Base assignments and memos of promotions. The Copy of the report that we were considered MIA (Missing in Action). We were shot down after bombing targets in Graz, Austria on 11 December 1944. After I sent a copy of the MIA report to each of my crew members, Ralph Christensen sent me the material that he had kept in his diary. In time, he also sent me other records, such as the correct dates and bombing sites of our missions, and the events leading up to the combat mission to Regensburg, Germany, on 5, February 1945, and the ditching in the Adriatic Sea on our return. Two things stand out in my memory that followed the ditching. The 15th AAF lost a brand new aircraft and I lost a brand new pair of four buckle over-shoes that I had just received from my mother.

Our first combat mission that was flown by our crew was on November 6, 1944, to bomb the oil refineries in Vienna, Austria. Ralph wrote in his diary, we had no problems, a routine mission. My Individual Flight Records showed that we flew in a B-24 H, and the total flight took 6 hours and 45 minutes. Usually, we carried 500 pound GP (general purpose) bombs in racks for three bombs on each side of the cat walk in both the forward and the rear bomb bays. I don't think that we ever carried a full load of 12 each 500 pound bombs, but it was always possible. On longer missions and for higher altitudes, the bomb load might be no more than one ton to one and a half tons. If these bombs were not dropped, we were supposed to return them to the base, to be used again.

The 484th Bomb Group Headquarters was located southwest

of the city of Cerignola, Italy at the north end of parallel runways. The 825th Bomb Group was west of HQ and in separate buildings. The quarters for enlisted men were lined up in rows of six man field tents, which could hold the cots and belongings of the six air crew members. The quarters for officers were lined up and in rows using six man field tents, for the use of four officers. These tent areas were segregated as the two groups of men might fly together and possibly die together, but they couldn't break the military code that prevented social contact.

The 484th B.G. and the 461st B.G. used the same runways and after taking off on mornings for bombing missions, formed up by groups making large circles over the base. The first hour seemed to be to climb to higher elevations before starting on the several turning points on the way to the target. Once each formation started north, they continued climbing toward the bombing altitude so that they would have plenty of room to cross the 13,000 foot range of the Alps Mountain peaks.

I remember that our first bombing mission was kind of dreamy as nothing happened, at least to us. The temperature was around 20 below at altitude over the target. There were some flak bursts that appeared far below us and also off in the distance. The scenery as I viewed it from the waist window, was something you might see on Christmas cards, with snow on the mountain tops and all so very peaceful. The Danube flowed from the north west to the south east through Vienna, but at five miles up, I couldn't tell if it was blue or not.

The second mission was flown on 16 November 1944 to bomb targets in Munich, Germany. This was a seven hour and 55 minute mission. Ralph Christensen wrote that he didn't know the exact target, but we were hit by flak that damaged our oxygen supply. After the bombing run, we stayed with the formation till we were across the Alps and when the oxygen supply was used up, our crew had to return to base at a lower elevation where oxygen was not needed. Ralph wrote that after landing at our home base, and after an eight hour flight, that we had very little gas left. Ralph mentioned that four of the five days preceding our second mission, we got up early, went to briefing, and then after long waits, they canceled the mission because of bad weather. Stand downs occurred more often during the winter months. When this happened, each member of the crew would return every piece of gear that he had checked out in his name, e.g., an electric suit with gloves and booties that were wired to be plugged together; a flak jacket and helmet to wear in flak country; a parachute and harness; a Mae West life jacket; and an escape kit with maps and U.S. money; eight 5's & eight 1's. All this gear was carried from the flight line shack to our plane in a B-2 bag that carried the items that had been issued and had to fit the individual: goggles, oxygen mask, glove inserts, and flight boots. When you changed clothes in the plane, your ground clothing went into the bag, as soon as you were dressed for flight.

The third mission was on 19 November 1944 for a bombing of the Marshaling Yards at Vienna, Austria. Ralph recorded it as a routine mission with little flak and only a couple holes in the plane. My records show it was a seven hour and 10 minute round trip.

The fourth mission was on 22 November 1944 for Munich,

Germany. Our plane was flying in a tight formation only minutes away from the IP when the #3 engine supercharger went out. The pilot throttled the engine off, feathered the propeller so that it wouldn't windmill, and dropped out of formation. At this point, we turned south and headed for home. Our bomb load was dropped on the first mountain top as we recrossed the mean looking Alps. On the flight north, we had been flying into a head wind, and now as we flew with three engines, we had the help of a 70 mile an hour tail wind. This mission was a six hour and 30 minute ride that didn't count for anything. We did get the plane back. On the ride home I saw a steady flow of B-24s in diamond formations flying north to bomb targets somewhere behind us. We sent them our wishes of good luck, though they may not have known that we had used some of ours up.

The 5th mission was on 6 December 1944. We were supposed to bomb the Maribor Marshaling Yards in northern Yugoslavia. We were flying in the older model B-24 H with camouflaged paint. Painted on it's sides were "Old #45", a plane that had flown many times, but was beginning to get tired. As we approached the IP to the target, we discovered that there was a solid undercast, so, our formation leader took us in search of the alternate target. Ralph wrote that this time, the weather closed in on us and we lost our bomb group. We then headed for Italy. As we crossed the Adriatic Sea, we unloaded our bombs in deep water, and flew home. We were credited for a combat mission that lasted six hours and 15 minutes. On 7 Feb 1945, "Old #45" was shot down with another crew on board.

The 6th mission, my crew was calling this one our fifth, until we later were given credit for the fourth mission to Munich, was dated 11 December 1944. We were briefed for a target at Vienna, Austria. The lead formation approached the target site far to the right and we followed the leader. B-24 bombers are not maneuverable when heavily loaded and from the IP in over the target, they are flown straight and level. After missing our specified target, the lead ship appeared to circle out and around to make another run over the ground where some 600 to 800 flak guns were taking their toll, and try again. Somehow, someone must have figured that this was pretty dumb to stick around any longer than necessary, and after a large counter clock wise circle around and away from Vienna, we headed for Graz, Austria, which was our 5th alternate target.

We saw no fighter planes, neither theirs nor ours, but the sky was filled with flak patterns that darkened the sky under us, in front of us and all over. Vienna gunners had been getting good training with their 88mm cannons and were improving their skills. By the time that our plane banked away after the bomb run, we were hearing the sound of shrapnel ripping holes into aluminum first, coming in, and then going out. This was the mission that ended over Benkovac, Yugoslavia, less than half way home.

Again from Ralph Christensen's diary. "Monday Dec. 11, 1944, briefed for mission to Vienna, Austria. We were assigned to fly in ship #77, that had been borrowed from the 827th Bomb Squadron. This plane had just been repaired after crash landing on the Isle of Vis. We missed the target at Vienna, passed to the right because of overcast and saw a lot of flak. The lead ship ordered us to bomb the 5th alternate target Graz, Austria, Marshaling Yards, and received flak at 4 different places, one was Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Dropped bombs on Graz, caught more flak, one engine was hit, and running rough. The lead ship took us the wrong way using a lot of gas. Flak may have caused some of the loss. The engineer

Charles Shanklin transferred fuel while we planned to head for the emergency landing strip on the Isle of Vis. We dropped down to 12,000 feet, we lost two engines and the pilot Ruben Kaiser told us to prepare for crash landing. The four of us in the waist braced against the bulkhead. Yurochko, the ball turret gunner, was on the intercom when the pilot gave the order to bail out at 5,000 feet. I was the first out the bottom hatch and when I pulled the rip cord, it really gave me a jolt. I tried to turn around to count the chutes coming out of the plane, but I couldn't. In about a minute, I hit the ground, and it really come up at me fast."

Ralph's personal account continues: "I landed on my back and cut my head open in two places and split my lip. My nose bled for awhile but stopped. The area where I hit was all flat rocks. We landed about 30 miles from the Yugoslavian coast. After I landed, a group of Yugoslavia Partisans under Marshall Tito's command picked me up and helped me on with my shoes and off with my chute harness. When preparing for missions prior to the takeoff, we tied our GI shoes together through the strap handle of our parachute, so that we would have our walking shoes, if we should ever have to bail out.

"They all shook my hand, when they found out I was an American. They wore what looked like British battle dress and Nazi boots, and guns taken off of Germans they had killed.

"They pointed out where another one of the crew had landed, about 200 yards away, and took me to him. This was Lt. McKone, our navigator. They pointed up on a hill nearby where another chute came down. We both went up and found Eddie Yurochko, lying there with his neck broken and he was dead.

"The Partisans carried our chutes and harness, and took Lt. McKone and myself to a farm house about 2 miles away. They gave us some Yugoslavian wine and liquor and some brown bread. We remained there until they brought in other members of the crew. The area where the parachutes opened was in a valley on the opposite side of the mountain from where the plane had crash landed.

"The first to be brought in was Charles Shanklin, engineer, he had hurt his right hip. Next came Charles Elsesser, nose gunner, he had a sprained ankle. Next came Lt. Laster, bombardier, he had hurt his back and two Partisans were helping him. The last to arrive was Albino Frigo, tail turret gunner. "

We were fortunate to have Albino Frigo on our crew, as he was a second generation Italian, and could speak the language that he learned from his parents when he was growing up in Chicago. Many Yugoslavians spoke Italian. Charles Laster was a big man, over 6 feet tall and weighing more than 200 pounds. He was the only one with back pains and was given the only bed to sleep in the first night we spent in Benkovac. We spent the night on the floor in the Mayor's home, each of us wrapped up in old blankets. There seemed to be no heat to ward off the winter chill.

Ralph wrote: "one of the Yugoslavians spoke English. He told us to wait until they could get a truck to go pick up Eddie Yurochko's body and they would then take all of us to the town with the Partisan Headquarters. We arrived at the town of Benkovac and found that Lt. Raiser, Lt. Chester Jones, co-pilot, and Calvin Teel, radio man, were there. We had crash landed 5 miles outside of town. All three of us were OK. The Partisans fed us and gave us our choice of wine, cognac, vodka or vermouth. They told us the Germans had cleared out of their area 3 weeks prior. They put us up for the night in the Mayor's house. The English speaking interpreter's name was Rudy Moscovick. He had been living and working in the United States before he returned to Yugoslavia in

1941 to fight the Nazi's. "

Rudy stayed with us for the next few days to handle our language problems and before we left him in Zara, I gave him my 45 caliber U.S. Army pistol that I had carried in a shoulder holster under my left arm. I hope he was able to put it to good use. All the extra ammo that I carried were two loaded clips that I rigged to carry under my right shoulder.

Before the truck arrived with the rest of the crew that had bailed out, I remember that we toasted Roosevelt, Stalin, and Tito, with what I understood to be straight vodka. These toasts went on over and over until I could feel no pain. No sooner would your glass be partly empty, someone would fill it again. It seemed always to be full. The only food that I remembered during these toasts were plates of fried fish that were crisp and looked like minnows with big round eyes. It was dark when the truck arrived with Eddie's body wrapped in his chute. They placed the body in a small shed and the next morning I remembered that the pilot, Ruben Kaiser, told Charles Shanklin to remove the parachute harness. Eddie Yurochko was the youngest member of our crew, having his 19th birthday the month of November. Some time later, Charles Shanklin said that removing the chute harness was the hardest thing he could remember ever having to do.

The 15th AAF Escape and Evasion Report stated: On 11 December, 1944 10 crew members were on a mission to Vienna. The plane, a B-24, was piloted by 2nd Lt. R.J. Kaiser. On the way to the target, engines nos. 1 and 3 were running rough and had to be put on Automatic rich. The IP (initial point) was reached and owing to too sharp a turn caused the formation to split up. After regrouping, the formation went on to the alternative target Graz which was bombed successfully.

Our ship remained with the formation for an hour, when owing to a fuel shortage, we left to take the shortest route home. We did not have sufficient gas to reach the Italian mainland, so Lt. Kaiser headed for Vis. Over Yugoslavia no. 3 engine started cutting out and fuel pressure fluctuated. At 11,000 feet all four engines cut out over the Benkovac area (44 03N 15 36E) owing to lack of fuel.

Lt. Kaiser saw what appeared to be a piece of smooth white terrain and circled around to land. At 3,500 feet, he was able to see that the ground was not level so ordered the crew to bail out. Seven of the crew bailed out, but as I the radio operator had left my chute in the waist and had not time to fetch it, the pilot and the co-pilot stayed with me in the plane to land it. The hydraulic system being out, Kaiser made a good belly landing and the three of us left in the plane were not injured.

Capt. J.G.K. Kennedy who was our interrogator debriefed us in the 15th AAF Headquarters in Bari, Italy. We were considered as MIA (Missing in Action.) On 11 Dec 1944 and in the report, it seemed important to tell that the crew was never in the hands of the enemy. Not once did he report that we were shot down or that the cause for having to bail out and or crash land could have been caused by heavy flak accuracy. Kennedy continued in his report; after destroying secret equipment, the pilot, co-pilot, and the radio operator (me) left the plane and were at once contacted by Partisans, who took them to Partisan Headquarters in Benkovac.

The radio operator was supposed to destroy the IFF radio (Identification Friend or Foe radio) before leaving the crashed plane in enemy territory. When the noise and dust of the grinding off of the lower half of the fuselage ended, my concern, when I realized I was still alive, was to get out of the plane as quickly as possible. It

might have been less than five minutes earlier that I stopped sending distress messages to the home base on the liaison radio and felt the open bomb bays behind me. I could see parachutes opening and knew I was in trouble. Instead of landing on flat land, when the pilot had signaled for the bail out, I hadn't heard the signal. Turning to the pilot, I told him I had to go to the waist for my chute and I took off to get it. I walked through the bomb bay focusing on the cat walk and trying not to look at the earth sliding underneath. I found my chute and hooked it in place ready to step off into space out of the rear hatch, but there was no space. The earth was close enough to be touched. The pilot had somehow gotten the plane to clear the top ridge of some mountain range and then we slammed down. I tried to get to the bulkhead but landed behind the housing to the ball turret and then the grinding of metal on rocks began and we literally slid down the face of a sloping mountain.

When the noise stopped and I tried to move, I found that the aluminum had been curled under the ball turret and around me. I expected the plane would blow up or catch fire and was afraid that I couldn't get out of my metal cage. I was able to get to the left waist window and jump out. As I circled the left wing, I could see the pilots were leaving the upper hatch, and looking back up the slope could see an aluminum trail that may have been a quarter of mile long.

Standing at the end of the left wing, what surprised me first, was seeing the pilots showing up through the upper hatch when I thought that they had bailed out. The second and most surprising thing that happened was an awareness that I was inhaling deeply on a cigarette. I had been smoking for several months. A pack of cigarettes might last a week, but it was not a habit yet. 45 years later in 1990, the habit was put aside.

The next item in the Escape Statement, the crew members who had bailed out had landed in an area of about two square miles, five miles east of Benkovac. All were picked up in small groups by Partisans and within 2 1/2 hours had joined the Pilot, copilot, and me in Benkovac.

One member of the crew who had bailed out (Cpl.E.Yurochko) landed in a pit, and was instantly killed by hitting his head on the side. How Eddie Yurochko died can only be guessed at. Ralph said, that he and Lt. McKone got to him first and that he was dead. When Charles Shanklin unwrapped the body from the shroud of the chute on the morning prior to burial, it was the last time I saw Eddie. His eyes were closed and blood showed at his nostrils and the corner of his mouth. He probably died very quickly.

At the Partisans Hq., we were well treated. Partisans gave us continuous bulletins until all crew members had arrived, they then carried all baggage and spare clothing from the plane to their Hq. After spending the night in the house of the Mayor of Benkovac where we were well cared for, all attended the funeral of Cpl. Yurochko at St. Gospa Church in the town, two Catholic Priests officiating. He was then interred in the Catholic Cemetery one mile East of the town and the grave was marked.

Eddie Yurochko was Roman Catholic and the St. Gospa was Greek Orthodox Catholic. The grave site belonged to the Mayor. One of Eddie's dog tags was placed with the body and the other marked the head of the grave. The crypt where Eddie was placed was loaned by the Mayor. It was a horizontal burial crypt in the side of an embankment with other burials below and to the side.

On the afternoon of 12 December, 1944, We were all taken in a bus to Zara (44.06N 15.15E) a three hour journey. The road although narrow was hard, and one temporary bridge was crossed

with no difficulty.

Our party embarked at once on a British Cruiser where we spent the night 12 December and on the morning of 13 December transferred to a British Destroyer which landed us at Bari, Italy the next day.

We were all well treated on both ships, in spite of over crowded conditions on the Destroyer which was carrying about 38 extra personnel, many of them escaped British POWs.

Capt. Kennedy, interrogator completed his report of the events as he saw it from our answers to his questions. He didn't see us until after we had been showered, dusted to be sure we were deloused, and given all new clothes. We spent our first night in the hospital and given a chance to relax before the debriefing on the morning of 15 December 1944.

Back in Yugoslavia before we left for Italy, Ralph Christensen must have made little notes of things that were happening in our stay in the town of Benkovac so as to keep his diary up to date. His writing follows: "Tuesday Dec 12, 1944. Got up at 6:30 AM ate breakfast of soft boiled eggs, brown bread, and strong coffee. In addition we had our choice of wine, cognac, vodka, or vermouth.

"We went out to the plane in a bus. Half the body of the plane was buried in the ground. (Ralph thought that half of the plane was buried, but it wasn't. It was just ground down from the friction of sliding down hill. Everything was piled against the bulkhead in the waist. Ralph could see the metal that had curled around me after the crash landing.) The propellers were scattered all over the field. We took out all the 50 Cal. guns and ammunition and gave them to the Partisans.

"We rode back to town and attended Yurochko's funeral. The Partisans had arranged everything. They had 6 Partisan Pallbearers, a guard of honor of 25 Partisans. The funeral services were in St. Gospa's Catholic Church with a 20 voice Choir singing in the service. Yurochko was buried in St. Gospa's Cathedral Cemetery with full military Honors. The Guard of Honor fired a volley of shots over his grave. One of Eddie's dog tags was placed on his grave. (Benkovac was a small village in 1944 that seemed to have been shelled, bombed or strafed several times. Every building had damages except the little St. Gospa Church, and it appeared untouched.)

"We went back to Partisan Headquarters and waited until they got a bus and took us to Zara, Yugoslavia on the coast. On the way we saw a few skeletons of Nazi and Italian planes which had been shot down or crashed. We arrived at Zara and got aboard a British Ack-Ack Cruiser H.M.S. Colombo. We slept in the seamans mess that was used by the Royal Marines.

(Before leaving Benkovac, we were fed from the Partisan's supply of air dropped K rations and a little meat that looked like a large rabbit when it came out of the oven. The whisper that it was roast dog caused most of us to pass it by. There were several uniformed Partisan soldiers that rode on the bus with us to Zara. One female soldier, who carried a weapon slung under her shoulder that looked like a grease gun, appeared as tough as her gun. She never smiled once. As there were no seats on the bus, the trip was spent squatting, leaning, and hanging on so as not to fall into the big hole in the middle of the floor of the bus. The only scenery that I saw during this drive was an abandoned air strip with old planes. Most of the time I watched the road through the hole in the floor.)

"Wednesday Dec 13, 1944. We ate breakfast, sausages, toast,

tea. Got our bags together and transferred to a British Destroyer HMS Bicestra to take us to Bari, Italy. We met 2 other air crew who had been shot down in Austria and taken 38 days to walk back. We also met a group of British soldiers who had been prisoners of the Germans for 3-1/2 years. The British Crew drank tea with no sugar 6 times a day. We slept on the ship. "

Ralph Christensen wrote his diary over 50 years ago. Many of his notes help trigger memories for me that I had long ago forgotten. I remember that we had a choice on the Destroyer of sleeping in a hammock or bunking on the shelf attached to the ship's hull. Most of the crew tried and failed with the hammock idea. The sailors that served me tea, pre-sweetened the water in the teapot with a dark coarse crystalline sugar. I would consider it the opposite of our refined sugar. While on board, some one taught me the basics of cribbage. Besides reading or sleeping, cribbage was a good pastime while on the ship. When we did leave Zara, the Adriatic Sea was very choppy and rough. To keep from joining those who became seasick, I helped ease my feelings of queasiness by going out on deck and watching the horizon. It helped a lot.

"Thursday December 11, 1944. The Destroyer speeded up to 24 knots, arrived at Bari, Italy at 1:30 PM. A truck came and took us to a hospital. The doctor there checked us over, dressed our cuts and bruises. They deloused us with DDT after we had stripped off all our clothes and scrubbed down with big bars of lye soap in the showers. We received all new issue of clothes, field jacket, o d shirt, tie, o d pants, cap, socks, underwear, belt, shoes, and sweater. (We stayed over night in the hospital.)

"Friday December 5, 1944. We were taken to 15th Air Force Headquarters and were interrogated by an English Captain. We reported Eddie Yurochko's death. They called for transportation back to our squadron. I helped Lt. Kaiser write a letter to Yurochko's parents. He was 19 years old when he died.

"We went to the airfield. A B-24 from our squadron came and we arrived back at our base in Cerignola, Italy, about 3:30 PM.

The above five days recorded in Ralph Christensen's diary, covers all of his notes that he sent to me. I saw and remembered some things that he did not mention that may have only happened to me. My notes are bracketed.

The names and ages of the 10 crew members:

1. Ruben J. Kaiser, age-28, b. 29 Nov 1916, d. 5 June 1990, pilot.
2. Lane S. McKone age 26, b. 9 Mar 1918, d. 29 Aug 1994, nav.
3. Chester L Jones age 25, b. 7 Mar co/pilot.
4. Charles F Elsesser age 24, b. 11 Aug 1920, d. Dec 1975 ng
5. Ralph N. Christensen, age 23, b. 11 Feb 1921, u/g.
6. Charles J. Shanklin, age 23, b. 7 July 1921, d. 30 Jun 1993, e.
7. Charles E. Laster, age 23, b. 7 Sept 1921, bomb.
8. Albino Frigo, age 21, b. 10 Dec 1923, d. ca 1991, t/g.
9. Calvin R. Teel, age 20, b. 4 Jun 1924, d. 2/11/98 r/o.
10. Edward Yurochko, age 19, b. 13 Nov 1925, d. 11 Dec 1944, b/g.

During the 484th Bomb Group Association Reunion when it was held November 1986 in San Antonio, Texas, Ruben Kaiser

and his wife, Pete, and my wife, Virginia, and I spent several days together. Ruben believed that Eddie Yurochko's body had been returned to the States, but he didn't know where. I wrote to the American Battle Monuments Commission with this question. They sent my letter to the U.S. Army Military Personnel Center and the answer that came back said that they couldn't find his remains at Benkovac cemetery

Five days after returning to 825th squadron tent city, we were sent to the Isle of Capri by 484th bomb group headquarters for a week of R & R. (Rest & Refreshment) Capri is a small island about 25 miles south southwest of Naples. The crew was there during the Christmas season. We did visit the Blue Grotto via a dingy by guides at low tide. On another day, we toured the only road around the island by Jeep. On the top of one high point were early Roman ruins and gardens. This was a week that was good for the soul and the mind.

On the 4th of January, 1945, we flew our 7th mission in plane #36 to bomb the Marshaling Yards at Trento in northern Italy where the rails went through the Brenner Pass. This was a 7 hour 15 minute flight which we flew up the middle of the Adriatic Sea and turned left to cross over Italy at the top of the boot. We returned to base over water down the west side of Italy. The 484 Statistical Summaries printed in volume #23 of the Torretta Flyer, 1992/93, had 28 aircraft in the air, one plane returned early, 52.5 tons were dropped, 2 planes lost and 10 men lost. This is probably more accurate than my memory, but in a note on the back of a picture, I wrote that we lost 7 planes. Three or four came from the 825th. What happened and why we got hit so badly was easily seen after it was too late. The formation that was in front of us was not damaged but the flak gunners fired at us at the altitude of the first formation and we were right there for them when we dropped out of the clouds over the target. Our plane lost the end of the left wing that held the Tokyo gas tank and when we landed on returning, counted up to 70 holes. The formation that followed us over the target reported no flak. The cannons had to be cooled down after the work done on us.

The 8th mission was on 19 January 1945 to Brod, Yugoslavia, to hit a railroad bridge. The mission lasted 6 hours and 30 minutes. Something was wrong with the plane we had been assigned to fly in, but rather than abort, the crew voted to follow the formation, even if we couldn't keep up. We were losing power for some reason, so we unloaded three 500 pound bombs into the Adriatic. We were almost able to catch up with the formation as they were going over the target. We were still far enough away to see that flak was thick and heavy and very dangerous for a lone plane, so instead of going over the Brod target and getting killed, we made a bigger circle around and from the back side it looked like we really walked through a wall of flak. When we crossed the Adriatic and no longer in sight of the other planes, we dropped the rest of our bomb load. The reason we agreed with the pilot to fly on this day when we shouldn't have, was that over the past two weeks we had returned to base after several times in the air. When you have to abort, none are counted as missions. When you abort, you must return your bomb load. By circling Brod, it looked to the other planes in the formation that we really caught hell, when we were actually very safe. Since they thought this and were very sympathetic, who would be dumb enough to be truthful. Ralph wrote that we had to return to base to find a 40 mile an hour cross wind to make our landing more dangerous than flying.

The 9th mission was entered into my Individual Flight Record and I thought that it was in error until Ralph's photo copy of his

diary for five pages on the mission of 5 February, 1945 came in. The first page covered "Wednesday January 31, 1945, briefed 6:45 took off 8:30 to bomb Moosebeirbaum oil refinery, #3 eng started to smoke, had to abort 2 hours from target, got back 1:15, cleaned guns, got paid, and wrote letters." The crew was credited with this mission.

The 484th Bomb Group summary for the year reported; 31 January 1945, mission was to Moosebeirbaum Oil Refinery, Austria. 39 A/C total left base, 9 A/C returned to base for emergencies, total tonnage dropped 37.5 tons, bombing by Mickey Ship, 1 plane lost, no casualties. Thus 9th combat mission. About this time I was on a high altitude flight with just a skeleton crew to test run a new engine of Old #45 and, after we landed I had two pictures taken of the five of us standing beside the ship. When the film was developed I put the date, 7 Feb 1945, when Old 45 was shot down on the back of the picture knowing that we had just checked it out OK. I still don't have the date of the test flight.

On 5 February 1945, my crew's 10th mission was the Regensburg Winter Harbor Oil Storage in Germany. The 484th BG Operational History listed this as Mission #148 and made this report: "Large amounts of oil shipped to this target from Romanian Oil fields before their capture by the Russians, making this target important. 36 B-24s reached the target, but found it cloud covered. Forty two tons of bombs were dropped by instrument and results were unobserved. Photos later showed results to have been very good. Two planes failed to return." (Bombing by instrument meant using a Mickey Ship that carried a radar scanner in the place of the ball turret.)

Ralph Christensen wrote the following in his diary: "Mon. Feb 5, 1945 briefed 5: 45 AM, supposed to bomb Regensburg, Germany. Ship #34 brand new model B-24L, flown in from the states was our ship for this mission. Took off 8:30 made all kinds of turns near the target don't know whether we went over target or not, but dropped bombs and not too much flak. We had dropped behind formation before we came to target, and just caught up before target, then headed back, started to run out of gas, so headed for Ancona, Italy to an emergency landing field. No gas in #1,#3, #4 tanks 250 gals in #2, but couldn't transfer it to other tanks as the booster pump was out. First one engine would run away and pull us to one side and then the other. We were still 30 miles out in the Adriatic. The ship hit the water a little nose low with 3 engines out. Water poured in the nose and completely filled the pilot's and radio compartment, the engineer, navigator, bombardier, and I were on the flight deck. The pilot and co-pilot went out their side windows. When the water poured in, the top turret fell on me and cut my head, hand, and knee. The water filled my lungs and stomach and I thought I was drowning. I was ready to give up and die but I managed to struggle out from under the turret. It was black as pitch under that water. I got to the surface of the water which was 6" from the top of the fuselage and I got a little air and went under again, then I saw a patch of light at the surface and I headed for it. It was the top escape hatch. I got out to the surface and got some air, managed to get out and slid off the wing into the water."

Ralph Christensen was very close to drowning and so were five others who were trying to get into the rafts and away from the sinking plane. Albino Frigo and Charles Elsesser had gotten in one raft and James Pope and I were in the other raft.

"Later the rest of the crew told me that my eyes were popping out of my head and I looked like I was almost dead, drowned that is and was so weak I couldn't pull the cord to inflate the Mae West.

I just about held on to the rope on the side of the rubber boat. I was weak and I couldn't hold on and I went under, Frigo and Elsesser grabbed me and pulled me aboard. The plane stayed afloat briefly, then broke up in 4 places and sank. I started to upchuck and couldn't stop. All ten of us were safe and I think the Lord helped us there a lot. We started to paddle toward shore, and could see the mountains. About 3:30 PM the fog started closing in. We heard a high powered launch and when it cut its engines we shot off our 45's and blew the whistles that were in the boat and we kept paddling toward shore where we heard artillery fire and we thought we were near the front lines. We saw a launch about a mile away paralleling us so we blew our whistles and waved and they finally headed toward us. At this point we didn't know whether it was British or German air sea rescue when we heard some one shout "Hey you chaps want a lift?" They took us below and dried us off and gave us dry clothes and a tot of Rum and we all felt a lot better. It was 6:15 PM when they picked us up later docking at Ancona around 11 PM. When we were still out to sea the fog that had started closed in and now on land it was even thicker. They put us up for the night in a British Casualty Station. On Friday Feb 9, 1945 a 825th ship came for us. It sure felt good to get back home again."

Ralph Christensen and I were on the same plane to the same target, but he experienced things and remembered aspects differently. On 5 February, 1945, our crew was assigned a brand new shiny B-24J that had been ferried to our base. We took it up for one training flight on the day before and found it suited us very well. It had those new car smells that old B-24s that we had been using, had lost. The crew was pretty happy with the new plane.

On the 5 Feb 1945, we got our early wake-up call. There were five noncoms living in the tent that originally included Eddie Yurochko. The replacement for Eddie was James Pope, who was a transfer from the 8th AAF in England. He was located in another tent as we had a temporary crew member living in Eddie's space, named Elman S. Sjotsvedt. He had been a survivor of a B-24 that crashed on the approach to the landing strip at Vis and had several broken bones to heal stronger before he could fly again. They wouldn't send him to the zone of the interior, as he hadn't flown but one or two missions. His knick name was Shot. When we didn't return to base the same day, he wound up playing guard to any supplies left behind. He reported when we returned how the scavenger types were surprised to find him in their way.

After an early breakfast, we went from the chow line to the S-2 Briefing shack, where we saw the route and the turning points, and what intelligence could tell us about fighters and flak guns. We hung our mess gear on pegs to be picked up later in the day when we returned. We and other crews climbed aboard trucks for the ride to the flight line.

The truck ride from 825 Squadron to the flight line covered about three miles. Everyone on our crew picked up the gear at the supply shack needed for the mission. This included a parachute and harness, flak vest and helmet, electric suit with electric boots and gloves that would plug to the suit, and also an emergency kit with maps, a compass, and money. These items were added to those in the flight bag that carried what had been personally fitted, such as the oxygen face mask, goggles, flight cap, gloves, and boots. The B-2 bag was heavier now, and after carrying all this to plane #34, the crew lined up at each engine to help the engineer pull the engines through several turns by rotating the blades by hand as far as one blade would go. This was a team effort that used the crew men who were not pilots. When this was done, each of us had our

last minute chores, like finding a relief station or latrine. When it was time to start the engines, everyone got on board, except for the engineer who was responsible for being near each engine with a fire extinguisher. Once the engines were idling, we were ready to taxi into line for take off. When our B-24 with the big #34 taxied into place at the south end of the runway, the pilot set the brakes and began revving up each engine individually and when each had been able to reach max rpm for take off, the pilot pushed the throttles to all four engines and released the brakes.

The rest of this crew became passengers once we reached the end of the taxi way. No one was allowed to stay in the nose or in a turret at takeoff or landing. Usually, we found a good place to sit down with our back against a bulkhead. Sometimes you would let the vibrations massage you and sometimes you repeated the Lord's prayer. There was no talking now as everyone was inside of himself. A fully loaded B-24 would gross about 71,000 pounds. There would be 2,700 gallons of 100 octane in the main wing tanks and for this flight, we carried one and a half tons, or possibly two tons, of 500 pound H.D. bombs. The History of the 484th Bomb Group showed that 36 aircraft took off for this mission, some ships aborted. The average load was 1.83 tons, or if the tonnage is divided by 32 planes, the average load was 2 tons.

As our ship #34 raced down the runway developing lift, the rattle of the steel mats began changing tune. It was proof that we were nearing lift off. When we were crossing the middle area where there was no matting, we had reached flying speed, but the pilot was holding the nose down and trying to get more speed. Then when we heard the matting on the other end we were afraid this meant that we would crash with all that gasoline and bombs. The plane was trying to fly and the air speed seemed right but we were not taking off.

The pilot, Lt. Kaiser, could see that he was running out of runway and had only one thing to do. He pulled the nose up and we were climbing rapidly. Once we were airborne, we then heard that the problem was an air speed indicator. This problem meant that with the air speed a variable in flight might cause more problems once we formed up and headed for altitude. After the first hour of flight, we had trouble keeping our place in the formation diamond. We would slide out to one side and then back. We couldn't slow down, but we could speed up.

We should have returned to base and tried to solve the problem on the ground, but that meant no mission count and we were getting anxious. This may explain why we felt that way. On Jan. 4, 1945, we made our first mission since returning from Benkovac after our plane was shot down. On 9 January 1945, we flew for 3 hours and 45 minutes before all aircraft was recalled on account of bad weather. On 15 January 1945, we flew with the formation for 2 hours and 20 minutes, before aborting and returning to base. On 19 January 1945, we flew for 6 hours and 30 minutes with a plane that couldn't keep up, for a target at Brod. My Individual Flight Record show that we flew on 23 January 1945, for 3 hours and 50 minutes; on 28 January 1945, for 3 hours; and on 31 January 1945, for 4 hours and 30 minutes. The crew was feeling like aborting was the only thing we could do, until we were assigned to the new B-24.

Sometime in the first four days of February, the crew flew a check ride in the new plane. What ever caused the air speed indicator to malfunction, must have occurred after the training flight and before we began the run for take off speed early on the Fifth day of February. We were going to Regensburg and in order to stay with

the formation over the IP and then the target, we had to slow down. The pilot turned left into a 360 degree circle and this let us fly faster and also gave us a chance to be with the group over the target. The route to the target may have been in a valley with mobile flak guns, because they shot at us steadily. Heavy flak patterns met us and followed us across the target area. You could sense the holes due to the sounds but you couldn't see any. With bombs away, the group swung right and tried to get out of the flak guns range. Over the Alps, the engineer discovered that the booster pumps to three wing tanks were equalizing into one wing tank. He explained to the pilot that we would have to depend on gravity flow, by shutting off the boosters and going to a lower altitude, or we wouldn't get home.

The pilot dropped out of formation after we had crossed the Alps and the rest of us started sweating it out. Flak may have damaged the fuel pump on the #2 engine wing tank. The trip was the safest flying down the center of the Adriatic. It looked as though there was enough gas in one tank, if it would flow to the others by gravity, for us to get to land fall. When the engines began coughing from lack of fuel, the pilot told us in the waist to open the waist windows and throw out every thing that could reduce weight. I asked the pilot, over the intercom, if I had time to come to the front and make radio contact with the base, and he said to stay put and help with the preparations for ditching very quickly. The pilot and co-pilot were in the drivers seat and what may have been their major concern other than how to ditch and survive, were four crew members behind him who didn't know they were to ditch until it was too late. The Navigator, the Bombardier, the flight engineer, and the upper turret gunner were very soon going to get in each others way from the bottom of the flight area and a lot of cold water.

There were four of us in the back throwing every heavy object out that was loose. In the storage area over the bomb bays, the four of us braced our backs against the main bulkhead and directly overhead was the upper escape hatch. The Adriatic was salty to the taste.

There was a split second, when the engines were shut down, that there was no sound. It was very quiet. We smashed or splashed down into the Sea and the forward motion abruptly halted. Even though we had braced ourselves against the metal wall of the bulkhead, at the moment of impact we really got slammed onto it. The Adriatic was over our head until we stood up and removed the upper hatch and made our way to the right wing. On impact the rafts were triggered and both were inflating. One had to be turned over as it was upside down, and in doing this we lost the oars and kit of supplies. By the time we had this raft turned over and with Frigo and Elssesser on board, there were six crew members to pull out of the cold chilly water. Working from each raft, we got every one into the rafts, without knowing if any one was missing. Water soaked flying clothes made moving from the water over into the rafts very difficult. The Mae West life vests helped to keep heads above water, unless one side or the other failed to inflate or had a tear. We were lucky to pull, tug, push, and roll on board six men who were too weak to do it by themselves. Three were added to each raft and the four doing the tugging, pulling and rolling must have had a source of help from beyond themselves. They were totally exhausted and as weak as the others. Before I could count bodies, the plane was gone. It had disappeared and so had my new four buckle over-shoes.

We tied the rafts together and took turns with the one set of oars, hoping to row toward the shore where the setting sun outlined

a range of mountains. Everyone had on wet and cold clothes and rowing was thought as a way to keep from freezing, at least briefly.

We saw a P-38 fighter plane pass over head and figured that he was calling in our location, but later when we did reach shore, we learned that the pilot of the P-38 was also ditching. In a short time fog settled in over us and we couldn't be sure that we were going in the same direction to reach shore. We listened to the motor of a boat off in the distance and it passed us on one side and later we heard it again pass us on the other side. We figured it might be air sea rescue and hoped that they hadn't given up looking for us. The motor launch was patrolling in rectangles or squares, and making each smaller, and when they came within yelling distance, we could see their bulk in the fog. It was a British launch and they took us on board. The German air sea rescue worked the same area and we were leery for a while.

On the deck of the British high speed launch, we stripped off our wet clothes on the deck area above the motor and though we stood there naked and bare footed we felt warmer than we had been for many hours. We were given blankets and taken below deck where it got much warmer. The British sailors believed in making sure we got a shot of rum as a cure for shock and exposure. Each time one of those on deck came down to check on us, he made sure we drank a round of rum. They brought out pants, shirts, jackets and shoes for us to fit our selves into. After getting dressed in their clothing and donating our wet ones, they fed us. The only things that I kept from the clothes on the deck was my grey silk scarf and my 45 with a shoulder holster that would need cleaning and oiling. The pistol I gave to a seaman who had been pouring rum and told him to strip and clean it soon and he could keep it.

The present to the seaman was my way of saying thanks from what I considered a surety of death had we not been found. He seemed very pleased and placed the pistol in his locker. When he returned, he was carrying his present to me. It may be a British code that to accept a gift one must be returned. He presented a silver Italian sword that was so fine that I had to shake my head. I couldn't accept such a prize. The senior officer took the sword from the seaman and then handed it to Lt. Kaiser my senior officer. Neither of us said anything and I never saw the sword again, but the event of that moment I could not forget. I hope that the seaman got to keep the gun.

We spent our first night on shore at Ancona where the air sea rescue base was located. We heard that they had been searching for two other B-24 bomber crews and a fighter pilot who had ditched when they found us. My wrist watch was ruined by the salt water and quit at 3:30 PM. It was later at the 484th HQ that I put in my request for a replacement GI watch and a 45 caliber pistol that were lost in the ditching. We lived in our British clothes until GI replacements could be made.

This was my crew's third plane to crash and I had forgotten all about the first one that happened during a night landing in training at Mt. Home Air Base, Idaho, in the summer of 1944. Now my thoughts were considering that flying was very unsafe. I didn't go on another combat mission until 26 April 1945 over Spital, Austria. This was to be the last day of strategic bombing for the 15th AAF. There were no more big targets to go after. The war for us was almost over.

There had been many ditchings in the Adriatic Sea, and the one ditching of a B-24 on 5 February 1945, was the only one that all ten men survived..

The Last Mission



From top left: Joe Costick-P, Milan Hibben-CP, Ray Hert-B, and Jim Schoonover-N. Bottom Row: Clarence Young-B/T, Jack Tomick-W/G, John Johnson-N/T, Ed Wojtkowski-E, Buck Lawenowski-T/T, Herman Walitalo-R/O.

Joe Costick- 825 Sq.

Joseph Costick, a retired accountant and a former Yonkers and Nyack resident, died Saturday, Nov. 29, 1997, at Rex Health Care Center in Raleigh, N.C. He was 75. Joe Costick worked as an accountant for Burroughs Welcome & Co. in Tuckahoe. He transferred to the company's Raleigh office in 1970. He retired from the company after working for about 40 years.

He was born Oct. 28, 1922, in Brooklyn, to James and Gertrude Tomec Costick. He graduated from Spring Valley High School and attended Pace University in White Plains for two years, studying accounting and business administration.

Joe Costick was a B-24 pilot with the Army Air Corps during World War II, and flew 21 combat missions in the Mediterranean with the 825th Bombardment Squadron. He participated in raids over Vienna, the Po Valley, Linz, the Brenner - Pass, and southern Germany. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with one cluster, and the European African Middle Eastern Service Ribbon. He also was an avid chess player. He flew as a private pilot and owned his own Cessna. He also did volunteer work for the Republican Party in Yonkers.

He married Suzy Vicki at St. Ann's Catholic Church in Nyack on April 17, 1943. She died on March 25, 1971

He lived in Nyack for three years before moving to Yonkers about 1950. He moved from Yonkers to Cary, N.C. in 1970. He is survived by two daughters, Diane Johnson of Cortlandt and Jeanette

Giannelli of Mahopac; eight grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. Submitted by Jim Schoonover, crew navigator.

Charles J. Osborne 827 Sq.

Charles J. Osborne 75 died at home in his sleep in November, 1997. Mr Osborne, had been in ill health for several years.

Mr. Osborne headed the insurance/real estate firm that his father, Nelson Osborne, had begun.

Unless you knew him personally, most clients seated at his desk would not have thought of the quiet and reserved gentleman who was drawing up their policy as someone who was adventurous and particularly brave. In truth, he was both. "He had a very spirited nature," his nephew Tom Osborne said.

From the time he was a child, Mr. Osborne was an accomplished rider who owned his own horse and competed in rodeo events at Deep Hollow Ranch in Montauk. He even trained his horse to set out the second he got one leg barely up and over its back. If you did not know that before you tried to mount his horse, as his sister Eleanor Ratsep once did, you had a pretty good chance of ending up in the pasture.

Mr. Osborne also participated in rodeos at Madison Square Garden where he was not averse to try riding bulls. For a few seconds one time, he even managed to stay on a Brahmin bull.

Mr. Osborne maintained a lifelong affinity for the world of

the cowboys. He always wore cowboy boots and a 10 gallon hat, whether he walked or rode his moped to work.

Mr. Osborne, who is descended from Thomas Osborne, one of East Hampton's founders, was born at home on June 15, 1922, to Eleanor (nee Clark) and Nelson Osborne. He grew up at the family home on the corner of Main Street and Dayton Lane.

After graduating from East Hampton High School, he attended the University of Texas in Austin for 18 months. The World War II draft interrupted his studies. He served with the U.S. Army Air Corps, flying as pilot and co-pilot of B-24s out of Torretta, Italy. Two years ago, his daughter Candace and her husband, Steven Klein, flew with Mr. Osborne to Dayton, Ohio, for the bomber group's 50th anniversary.

"I knew him in a father-daughter relationship until then," his daughter said. "At that reunion, I learned about him as a man. There was so much that he had kept in, that he had not talked about.

She said that her father did not speak that much about his war experiences. Neither, it seemed, did the men with whom he served. But at that get together, the memories came back to life as the men who were in the front of the plane compared stories with the crewmen in the back. Until then, the last time Mr. Osborne saw the rear crew was the morning they boarded the bomber for what turned out to be its final mission. Robert Pease, a close friend, and a crew member said, "Charlie, as we called him, was first and foremost a pilot of a heavy bomber, the B-24 Liberator in World War II. I flew with several pilots and not one could surpass Charlie when it came to flying that rather clumsy machine. He could make it do anything he wanted it to do. He was superb.

"You should understand that there were ten of us that flew on that plane and we were a well trained crew of young men sent to Europe to do a job. We varied in age from 19 to 32, and we all survived the experience. I remember that we were, for the most part very serious. I think the situation demanded seriousness.

"One thing that stands out is the depth of the bond that developed between us. To illustrate that, we attended a reunion in 1995, six of us out of the original ten. Some of us hadn't seen one another for 50 years and we met and carried on as though no time had passed. We knew each other and we always will. I suppose that is a natural state for men who experienced what we did.

"The experiences were many. In San Francisco, shortly before we were going to fly a new plane to Europe, we spent as much time as possible in that marvelous city. We played hard and, I am sure we did some things that we shouldn't have, including drinking too much on occasion. One night the bombardier was in bad shape so Charlie and I tipped a hat check girl and checked him for a while so that we could continue our good time and when we returned to claim him, he was there just as we had left him and none the worse for the wear. I don't know who had the idea to check him, but if Charlie were here, he would claim that it was I and, since I am here, I swear it was he.

"On March 1, 1945, we were on a bombing mission. Our target was an oil refinery west of Vienna. Moosbierbaum Oil Refinery. We were over the target at 24,000 feet and had just dropped our bombs when there was a loud explosion. We had suffered a direct hit by a flak shell on the right wing. The impact shattered an



Charles Osborne 827 Sq.

engine and the oil pressure dropped so fast that we couldn't feather the propeller and the engine ran away, that is it wind milled at a terrible rate of speed.

"We were dropping like a rock and my first thought was to get the nose gunner out of the nose turret and then my second thought was as to whether or not it was time to bail out. I was the navigator and my position was in the nose of the ship. Our communication system was destroyed and I remember so clearly looking back through a maze of pipes and witnessing Charlie's feet still working the rudders. I said to myself that as long as I knew he was still trying to fly the plane, I was going to stick with him. That was a good decision. He got the ship under control.

"We knew that we had no chance of getting back to our base in Italy because of the seriousness of the damage so I gave the pilots a heading for Hungary, hoping we might get across the enemy lines and into Russian territory. We were attacked by fighters, but managed to make it to Hungary and we then landed, crashed might be a better word, in a field. It was then we discovered that five of our crew were missing. They had bailed out and were taken prisoner. They were all in the rear of the plane and because of our failed communication system, they felt the best thing to do was abandon ship. We concluded that they might have been lucky, because most of the fighter shells seemed to have hit in the rear of the plane. The rear was badly shot up.

"I think of that day and of the reassurance of Charlie's feet on the rudder pedals and I have always felt that I owe my life to him." Robert Pease gave this eulogy at the funeral. "Charlie knew of my feelings, because we had talked about it, but, typically, he wanted no credit for such a deed, he was just doing his job.

"When we had the reunion in 1995, it was a very special occasion for men who are all special and Charlie was one of those for whom we all had the highest regard.

"I won't talk about all our experiences, but while we were staying with families in a small town in Hungary, the bombardier

and I were in one house and Charlie was in another and one day we walked over to the house where Charlie was staying and when we entered, we found Charlie with wool yarn wrapped around his hands while a young girl was winding it into a ball. I tell that to illustrate that Charlie was a man of many talents and was always willing to do his part in any situation. I don't picture that as one of Charlie's typical activities, however.

"Charlie, you were a special man, as a pilot, father, husband, businessman and friend and I am privileged to have had you as a special friend. We will all miss you."

Mr. Osborne was married for 53 years to Patricia Armitage, whom he met on a blind date when she came to East Hampton. She died this past August.

In addition to his sister, Eleanor Retsap and daughter, he is survived by his stepmother, Alice Ham; his brother, Robert; his son, Peter, his daughters Melissa Osborne and Patricia Scott; six grandchildren; and one great grandchild. Submitted by Robert Pease and the Osborne family.

Calvin Reed Teel , 825 Sq.

Calvin Reed Teel 73, died February 11, 1998, at his home. He was born on June 4, 1924 to his parents Vance Zeb and Myrtle May (Mullis) Teel of Sidney, IL. He moved to Hastings 14 years ago and was a part of Christ United Methodist Church. He earned his BA Degree in Education at Illinois State in Normal, Ill., a Master's Degree from the University of Illinois in Urbana, IL., and a Special Education Degree in Counselor Education from Georgia Southern College. He retired as a school counselor from Chatham County Public Schools in Savannah, Gal, on Dec. 31, 1984, after 23.5 years. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corps having served with the 484th Bomb Group and 15th AF during World War II. He was a member of the Masonic Order, Roosevelt Lodge No. 626 in Davenport, Iowa, and a member of ASTARA. He married Virginia Selph on July 26, 1949, in Santa Fe, N.M.

He is preceded in death by his son, Kit Carson, and daughter, June Iris. Survivors include his wife, Virginia of Hastings, FL; sons, Robert of Port Charlotte, FL; John of Hastings, FL; sisters Carmen Steenbergen of Ogden, IL; Rachel Taylor of Homer, IL; Hilma Thompson and Rosalie Werts of Champaign, IL.; brothers, Gerald Teel of Urbana, IL, and Dean Teel of Flagstaff, AZ; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins. Submitted by wife Virginia Teel.

Richard S Wood 825 Sq.

Richard S Wood 72, of Aiken, SC, died Monday, April 3, 1995 at University Hospital, Augusta, GA. Native of Lansford, Pennsylvania and a graduate of Lansford High School class of 1940. Mr. Wood attended Mercersburg Academy and Pennsylvania State University. He enlisted as an aviation cadet in the U.S. Army Air Corps and served as a B-24 bomber crew member flying out of North Africa and Italy.

He was shot down after 32 missions during a raid over the oil fields of Ploesti, Rumania and subsequently spent 9 months in a Bulgarian POW camp. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with I cluster, the Air Medal with 2 clusters and the Purple Heart. He began his newspaper career in the advertising department of his hometown newspaper, The Lansford Evening Record, joined the staff of the Tamaqua, PA, Evening Courier; went on to the Allendale, PA, Call Chronical and moved to Annapolis, MD, in 1954 to work for the Capital Gazette newspaper where he retired in 1979 and moved to Aiken in 1993. Surviving are his widow, Delores Henry Wood; a daughter, Nancy Wood Hamilton and two grandchildren, Jennifer Lee Hamilton Priester and William Richard Hamilton. Submitted by wife Dolores Wood.

Richard Wood flew with crews headed by Rua Petty and Charles O Crane as shown below

Sgt	John M	Canfield	W/G
T/Sg	Jessie	Compton	E
T/Sg	James E	Conochan	R/O
1/Lt	Charles O	Crane	P
Sgt	Joao P	DeCouto	E
Pfc	Orville	Gore	G
1/Lt	Kenneth F	Kovar (D)	N
2/Lt	J P	Maxwell	
1/Lt	Thomas J	McGuire (D)	B
S/Sg	Gerald D	Patten	B/G
1/Lt	Rua L	Petty	P
S/Sg	Richard S	Wood (D)	G

Members of the 484th Bomb Group Reported Deceased

Rnk	1 Name	2 Name	Duty	Unit
	Edward	Berry (D)	PH	826
	William G	Churchwill	U/G	825
1/Lt	Quentin T	Davis	C/P	825
2/Lt	Gerald S	Fluxgold	N	826
2/Lt	Robert E	Fritts	P	825
1/Lt	Ralph B	Gilpatrick	B	824
	Robert	Haacke	N/G	824
Capt	Marion H	Hammett	P	827
1/Lt	Ralph H	Lapinsky	B	
T/Sg	Perry W	Lounsbury	E	827
T/Sg	Emanuel S	Monte	U/G	824
2/Lt	Vincent G	Myerchin	B/N	826
Cpl	Leonard A	Nucero	G	824
2/Lt	Charles J	Osborne	C/P	827
Cpl	Joseph	Pastelak	E	824
Cpl	Calvin R	Teel	R/O	825
Sgt	Clark I	Vermilyea	E	826
1/Lt	Chris	Vlachos	N	
Sgt	Louis O	Vidmar		827

Cpl	Harold C	Vincenz		825
	Richard E	Vobradz	E	824
	Albert C	Vroome	B	824
2/Lt	Frank M	Vrtacnik	C/P	824
Cpl	Peter A	Watters		825
Cpl	Millard G	Weaver	E	826
Sgt	Minton P	Weaver		827
1/Lt	William S	Weaver	P	824
Pvt	John A	Weaver, Jr.		826
Sgt	Chester O	Webb		824
Cpl	Carl W	Webber	G	826
1/Lt	George W	Wehrle	N	826
S/Sg	Stanley L	Wells	G	827
Sgt	Leonard J	Whetstone	UG	825
Sgt	Herbert F	Whitworth	R/O	825
	James A	Williams	E	825
2/Lt	Bernard	Young	C/P	827

List compiled since Torretta Flyer 32, and the 1997 Memorial Booklet

Guest Editorial

The B-24 deserves respect!

By Robert F. Dorr

Robert F. Dorr, an Air Force veteran, lives with his family in Oakton, Va. His e-mail address is RobertDorr@aol.com. The story was taken from a news clipping.

A couple of years ago, former Air Force Capt. Dolphin Overton told me his family was marketing a new food product called B-17 Steak Sauce. Overton of Smithfield, NC., is one of our nation's heroes. A 1949 West Point graduate, he endured 100 combat missions in the Korean War and became an air ace, shooting down five enemy Mig-15 jets. He left the Air Force in 1953.

Because Overton had flown the North American F-86 Sabre, I asked him why he had not named his product F-86 Steak Sauce.

"That's easy," he said with a grin. "The B-17 is the 'most recognized' airplane in the history of aviation." He is right. I was thinking about this simple truth, and about the B-17 Flying Fortress, when I mourned the loss of actor James Stewart last year. After his death, the media reminded us that Stewart, too, was an American hero. Apart from his film achievements, Stewart flew 20 combat missions in Europe from 1944 to 1945 as a squadron commander and B-17 pilot.

Stewart's service to our nation was considerable—he eventually became a brigadier general in the Air Force Reserve and boosted the service's image with movies like "Strategic Air Command." Stewart is one of my idols, both for his contributions to the Air Force and for his amiable, guy-next-door performances in movies. With regard to his B-17 combat missions, I read about them in three national magazines and heard about them on radio and television.

The media unanimously put Stewart in the cockpit of the "most recognized" plane in history—the B-17. I called the author of one of those news reports, who also happened to be an Air Force member.

"Stewart flew B-24s," I told him. The news writer's reply: "That's a matter of opinion. "But it isn't. He was wrong. The media were wrong. Also wronged were 30,000 living World War II veterans who repaired, maintained, worked on, supported and flew the other bomber, the one that is not "most recognized:" the B-24 Liberator. I know a little about aviation and can assure readers that the B-24 was a real plane flown by real people. Stewart's 445th Bomb Group at Tibenham, England, was equipped only with B-24s. As a lieutenant colonel, Stewart commanded the 700th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), also at Tibenham, which flew only B-24s. Stewart also served in other slots at locations where only B-24s were in service.

Like the famous B-17, the B-24 was a four-engined heavy bomber developed by American industry before the United States entered World War II. The B-24 was developed by Rueben Fleet's Consolidated Aircraft Co. in San Diego. The first B-24 completed its maiden flight on Jan. 29, 1940, almost five years after the prototype B-17.

A Long history

To the ordinary citizen or Air Force member, maybe it is no big deal when news stories put a pilot in the wrong plane. But it matters when the plane is the B-24. Consider this: More B-24s were built than any other military plane in US. History — 19,256, compared with 12,731 B-17s. No fighter, transport or trainer aircraft was manufactured in such numbers. A B-24 caught on the ground at Hickam Field, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941, produced the first American casualties of World War II. Liberators were manufactured by four companies — Consolidated, Douglas, Ford and North American—and at one time the Ford plant in Willow Run, Mich., was assembling a new B-24 every 53 minutes. It turned out more bombers in one day than US. industry has ever produced in the 1990s. Liberators fought in the European, Mediterranean, Pacific and China-Burma-India Theaters. From North Africa they mounted the Aug. 1, 1943, air assault on German-occupied oil refineries in Ploesti, Romania—one of the most daring raids in history. In 1957, a retired B-24 gave me occasional respite from the rigors of basic training as an enlisted airman at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. I found solitude relaxing beneath the wing of a Ford-built B-24 on Lackland's parade ground. It was the last B-24 in service before being put to rest. This same Liberator can be seen at Lackland today, after 40 more years in the elements but perhaps not much longer.

The magazine, Air Classics, tells us that this aircraft will soon be sold to a museum overseas. A spokesman at Lackland said he could not confirm the report. The Air Force's last B-24, an American treasure worthy of preservation, should be kept in this country and moved indoors.

John Strauss, Stewart's publicist in Beverly Hills, Calif.; Dr. Jacob Neuleld of the Air Force History Office in Washington, DC.; and David Menard, an expert at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, all assure me that I have placed Stewart in the right airplane.

I should add that Stewart did fly B-17s in the United States before going to England.

Photo Page



*Major General Nathan Twining CO 15th Air force from
January 1944 to May 1945*



*Bill Gracey's publicity photo for the home town
newspaper.*



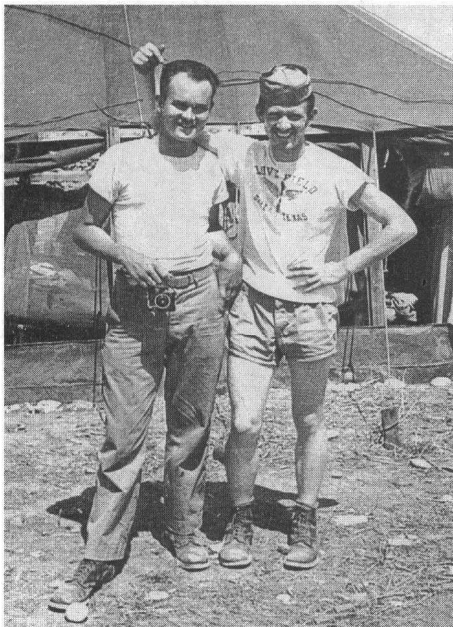
*Kenny Frick & Marvin Gurchin, gunnery trainers, are standing at extreme left and right.
Other crewmen are not identified*



Top Row from left: John Hassan-N, Richard Olson-C/P, Walter E Chapman-B, and John P Kelly-P. Bottom Row: David S Brown-E, Herbert R Stokes-T/G, Irwin Hansen (D)-N/G, Alvin T Houpt-U/G, William B Snyder-R/O, and Edwin G Rogers (D)-B/G.



George Ponty on Thomas Mersch's crew



Andrew J Beard-E (left) Eugene G La Pierre (D)-U/G



A C Wiggins Flight Crew 824th Squadron Top row from left: Frank Mathis-B/G, Ed Whitmore (D)-T/G, Robert Haacke (D)-N/G, Leroy Yearence-U/G, Fred Baldinger-E, And John Lapinsky-R/O. Bottom row: Sylvas Bader-B, Harry Gump-C/P, A C Wiggins (D)-P, and Howard Streblow-N. Submitted by John Lopinsky.

The 484th Bomb Group Association
1122 Ysabel St.
Redondo Beach, CA 90277-4453

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