

SECRET

HISTORICAL REPORT
1 SEPTEMBER to 30 SEPTEMBER 1944

Information contained herein, is written in compliance with Ninth Fighter Command Memorandum Number 20-4, dated 22 December 1943. It is a resume of the activities of the 368th Fighter Group Headquarters, for the month of September, 1st to 30th, 1944.

1. ORGANIZATION

No Change.

2. STRENGTH AS OF 30TH SEPTEMBER 1944

Figures shown below are total strength for Group Headquarters and assigned squadrons.

<u>Assigned Personnel</u>	<u>Authorized Personnel</u>
Officers -----201	Officers -----181
Enlisted Men--831	Enlisted Men ----826
----- 1032	----- 1007

3. DATE OF ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM EACH STATION IN ETO:

Departed ALG 40, 2 miles west of Chartres, France, 11th September, for ALG 69, 4 miles east of Laon, France, arriving 11 September, 1944.

4. LOSSES IN ACTION:

Nil (for Group Headquarters)

5. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

Award of 16th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal:
Lt. Col. John D.W. Haesler

Award of 9th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to Air Medal:
1st Lt. Howard W. Jensen

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RECORD OF EVENTS
PAGE ONE

1 September 1944

Everyone, from Colonel Meyers on down, started the month off right by getting shots: typhus, tetanus, and what have you. Some of the boys were a little greedy, demanding (and getting) both, right after breakfast, too.

Thus fortified, we began taking on the new months work. To help on the job, we took on a new Group Operations Officer, stealing Lt. Col. Haealer, 397th Squadron CO to fill the job. Major Hendricks became the new 397th Squadron Commander.

We dispatched 83 P-47's to provide armoured column support for the 3rd Armored, and the planes ranged over the area NE of Paris as far as Luxembourg. Bombing and strafing results were generally good, when our planes could find any Jerries. An even 100 M/T's bit the dust, and Hitler lost the services of 10 tanks, including 2 Tigers.

On the theory that Mr. Goebbels had been falling down on his "Propaganda and Enlightenment" racket recently, we gave him some help by dropping 17 leaflet bombs on two missions - one to the St. Quentin area and the other to Dijon and St. Mihiel. The first mission was a combination affair, since the flight nailed a few M/T's, guns, and tanks besides dropping the leaflets.

But for most of us the big news was the possibility of trips to Paris. That possibility became a reality for a small group of officers who were selected as guinea pigs--to see if trips to Paris would work out successfully. If the great experiment worked and the "trail horses" returned intact, other officers and possibly enlisted men would follow.

So the hardy souls selected for the first invasion of Paris by the 368th set out bravely--we might even say eagerly!

Special Order #103, Supporting Document #1.

2 September 1944

Only one squadron, the 397th, got into the air today, sending 12 planes to the St. Quentin area to attack 200 plus horse-drawn vehicles. The weather was almost impossible over the target area, but an AA gun was blown sky-high, 3 staff cars clobbered, and 23 horse-drawn vehicles destroyed. One a/c was damaged by flak.

The boys began to feel the sharpness of Fall in the air--and of course they thought about football. The impromptu game looked nearly as ragged as the grass in the chateau yard, but it was probably the first grid battle the Chateau de Vauventriers had ever witnessed. Capt. Sparks, ex-Abilene (Texas) star, featured the battle.

Capt. Ernest R. Pendleton, Group Personal Equipment Officer, was appointed Executive Officer of the 395th Squadron to replace Major Weyler, who was transferred. 1st. Lt. Oswald Doria took over in Capt. Pendleton's place.

Special Orders #104, Supporting Document #2.

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3 September 1944

The talk was all of Paris--and the war itself was almost forgotten. When the officers came back with their tales of "the-most-wonderful-city-in-the-world" (and their perfume to send back home), the enlisted men became more impatient than ever. So the Powers-That-Be relented and announced this afternoon that each department should turn in a list of men to go. The drawings were made for order of departure, and the boys who drew Monday, September 4, got out their Sunday clothes--and tried to get the wrinkles out. The boys who drew September 12 were not so happy but still hopeful . . . and settled down to sweat it out.

Hundreds of men of the 368th and other units around Chartres attended the mass celebrated by Father Cleary in the magnificent Chartres Cathedral. The great building has attracted much attention since we arrived at Chartres, even though one of its greatest glories, the magnificent stained-glass windows, were removed at the beginning of the war and hidden away "for the duration".

Seventy-eight planes flew armored column cover for the 3rd Armored in the Mau-berge area today and shattered all records by accounting for 522 M/T's and vehicles. Our planes dealt the fleeing Wehrmacht a shattering blow in other respects, too, for approximately 200 men and hundreds of horses drawing army vehicles were killed when our P47's strafed the demoralized German columns.

4 September 1944

The great day arrived. The first EM who were going to Paris needed little awakening at 5 am, and they were all ready to board our weapons carrier before 6:30. About two hours later they reached their destination--the Eiffel Tower, to be assailed by swarms of Frenchmen begging for cigarettes and offering handfuls of francs in payment. They got cigarettes, though not for francs; the Parisians soon found that bottles of cognac and champagne were a more potent medium of exchange.

Then the 368th GI's scattered for a concerted attack from all directions. Each sought and found something different in Paris, but they all agreed that it deserved the title of "The Gayest City in the World". The friendliness of the city, the magnificence of its boulevards and buildings, the variety of its styles, and most important of all . . . the beauty of its women . . . completely captivated the boys. The city looked happy, gay, and normal--and you could almost forget the war for awhile. The only hazards were the bike-riding beauties; the swarm of bikes around the Arc de Triomphe was worse than Broadway and 42nd Street. And we were fascinated by the nonchalant way they hitched rides by catching ahold of trucks and coasting along.

Perhaps the most amazing thing at all about the trip was that all the boys showed up for the truck going back. For this was the first time they had been turned loose since they hit at D plus 9.

Again today the 397th was the only squadron to see action when they sent 11 planes on an armed recon mission over the Brussels-Antwerp-Hasselt area. Again the 397th did all right for itself. They hit the marshalling yards at Louvain and accounted for two locomotives. At an airfield near Brussels, Lt. Manuel Soo destroyed a Ju-88 on the ground, by strafing, while Major Randall Hendricks blasted a Do-217. And in a strafing attack on a German column, 76 horse-drawn FA guns and 10 M/T's were destroyed.

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4 September 1944 (cont'd)

The Prefect of Chartres called on Colonel Meyers this evening and stayed to inspect the field.

5 September 1944

We were supposed to dive-bomb AA guns at Brest today, an assignment which sounded strange, since we had almost forgotten the port and thought the war was all in the opposite direction. But the weather decided the issue for us; 24 P-47's started out but were recalled by the squadron leader about a half hour out when they ran into 10/10 overcast down to the deck. The 395th jettisoned their bombs safely in a forest near Alencon, and the 396th brought theirs back to the field.

With the weather knocking out our operations for the day, we could concentrate on Paris.

But we had one other problem thrown into our laps: the problem of keeping our hair cut and our faces clean-shaven. Not that we had been "reverting to nature" since we hit France, but just to make sure that none of the boys started getting careless "Sanitation Orders" were issued, specifying, among other things, that "Hair will be cut to one inch in length". But how could we slay the Mademoiselles that way? Fortunately, no one has yet started measuring our hairs!

General Orders #5, Supporting Document #3.

6 September 1944

Moving orders came again today--and our new home will be Laon, about 80 miles NE of Paris, 30 miles north of Reims and only 40 miles from the Belgian border. The strip is east of the city, nearer the small town of Athies-sous-Laon-Athies. Col Meyers and Lt. Col. Correll left this afternoon to look the place over, and our first convoy will leave in the morning.

Now everyone is packing again, though only the original advance echelon who established our own beachhead in France will leave tomorrow morning. Though we have been expecting and looking forward to this move, it nearly broke some hearts, because it meant that trips to Paris were cancelled until further notice. The first questions asked about the new base was, "How far is it from Paris?" The second was, "How far is it from Germany?"

Our operations orders for the day assigned us to the XIX Tactical Command for Armed recon missions in the Nancy area --which turned out to include Saarbrücken, Trier, and Luxembourg. Rain showers and overcast made for poor visibility over the target area, but 36 of our P-47's got in a fair days work for us, knocking out a long train (a locomotive and 60 freight cars), starting fuel fires, and generally messing up the Fatherland. But the weather was so bad that two of our planes had a mid-air collision on the way back, forcing one P-47 to belly-in at Reims.

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7 September 1944

Although some of the boys were up until 2 a.m. loading the last truck, the air echelon were awakened again at 5 a.m.; and by 6:30 they were on their way to Laon. Major Rice's jeep, the "point" of the expedition, made record time, reaching the new field at 12:20. There is a story that this contingent will collect flying pay this month. Just 15 minutes before they arrived at Laon, the engineers working on the base combed two Germans out of the woods. The Heinies were very peaceful, however, claiming that they had been looking for a chance to surrender and showing far more interest in American cigarettes than in the war.

Capt. Marks lead the first five-vehicle convoy which also started in the rain this morning. (Why does it always rain when we move?) Tire trouble and a brief stop in Paris, plus the necessarily slower pace of a convoy, slowed this group up a little, but they too reached Laon early in the afternoon. The weather had cleared by that time and Rice's Raiders wasted no time. By nightfall they had the trucks unloaded, 12 tents put up, and a latrine dug.

We were released today, and we needed that release. Since we were moving, it was raining again, of course. The group left at Chartres had plenty of work to do, getting most of the equipment and another contingent of men ready to go the following morning.

8 September 1944

We bombed Brest today--though most of us had assumed that we would never fly missions in that part of France again. In fact, most of the group, unless they were situation-map watchers, probably assumed that Brest had been taken long since. But it seems that a strong force of Heinies had been merely bottled up there while our main forces had pushed eastward to more pressing business, the job of crossing the German border.

Now a new army in the French theater, the Ninth American Army, was going to work on the Germans who were dug in, not only in Brest itself, but in many heavy fortifications along the coast. We were given our quota of those boys-- and we took care of them. We even worked on some targets at the extreme end of the peninsula; and when our P-47's had worked them over, the pilots reported that all that remained was to have some bulldozers push the debris out into the sea. They reported that Jerry was being pushed to the water's edge in many places and that Brest itself was on fire. It was a long, long peaceful ride over our own territory out to Brest; some of our pilots enjoyed the "vacation" but for others it was just a pain-in-the-seat-of-the-pants.

We sent out 103 planes in all to Brest, and they reported a number of direct hits on some of the forts holding out, besides many guns and gun positions destroyed by our bombs. Each of the planes carried two 500 lb. bombs, and they used the 45½ tons to good effect--except for one flight which found no targets and had to jettison their bombs in the ocean.

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9 September 1944

After yesterday's Brest excursion, we got back to the main event today, and back to our old friends Bronco and Poodle who were in the old Belgium fortress-city of Liege poised for a shot at Germany ... in the vicinity of Aachen. We did all right too, because our 3rd Armored made 10 to 15 miles through country the Heinies consider their own front yard. Our own score for 81 planes was: 111 m/t's and vehicles destroyed; 2 locomotives and 6 freight cars hit; and 20 (repeat, TWENTY) tanks destroyed or damaged. But in a fairly new role for our planes, four to five hundred stubborn Heinies fell victim to our strafing, as well as a number of horses. The P47's also wrecked a number of buildings which the Germans were defending, and several guns were knocked out.

The last flight in the evening thought they had some bogies when Bronco called that they were being strafed by German planes. But they had taken by the time our P47's had jettisoned their bombs and reached the scene. Our pilots did see two Fw-190's going down, victims of Spits and P47's which had reached the scene earlier.

~~Capt. Stator was forced to belly-land his plane at a strip north of Charleroi, but he was unharmed and near American troops.~~

Lt. Carlson's plane was hit by light flak and made a wheels-down landing with two other planes of his flight at strip A-58, east of Paris.

Lt. Col. Haesler, our Ops Chief, flew a P47 to Laon and back, reporting that the strip would be in condition so that our planes could land there after our last mission tomorrow.

The sun was bright today and the weather was beautiful . . . between rain showers, of course. But the air had a nip in it, and out of the direct sunlight it was pretty cold. So we dug out our sweaters, long-jhons, and extra jackets and thought about football.

10 September 1944

Strangely enough, today felt like Sunday at Chartres; because our headquarters area seemed empty and deserted, everything seemed quiet and Sunday-like. Some of the boys went to mass in the Chartres Cathedral and the rest just went on working as usual because IX TAC notified us that we would have to wait another day before moving, the old communications bogey holding us up. But our communications problem was no cinch back at strip A-40, either, since both teletype and telephone had been acting up for several days. We had been so sure of moving that even the pilot's bed-rolls had been sent ahead--but we went on operating.

Our P47's were back with Poodle and Bronco again, who were now only a few miles short of the German border. The missions were no cinch, since it was an hours ride out and another back; and even with belly-tanks our planes had only an hour over the recce over. Besides the flak, the Jerries were using balloons and even sending out some of their aircraft.

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11 September 1944

To break in our new field properly, the 397th squadron shot down 6 bandits in the Aachen area. They lost one plane when Capt. Talbott's P-47 crashed due to enemy action, but the pilot bailed out safely in friendly territory and came back to us the following day.

The first three missions were flown from Strip 40, and the results indicated a good mornings work. But still supporting the 3rd Armored Division and moving to our new base without any interruption in operations, the three afternoon missions had our planes taking off from Strip 40 and landing at Strip 69 after completing their missions. In the fourth mission of the day, the first scheduled to land at Laon, 12 of our P47's ran into 36 ME-109's over Eupen--and shot down six while losing one. Capt. Gibson, Lt. Bender, and Lt. Stoll each got one, and Lts. Hamilton and Hogan shared one, while Capt. Talbott got two of the bogies before his plane was shot down. The Captain suffered only slight injuries when he parachuted safely into Verviers and got back to us in short order.

Our 71 planes did a good job of preparing the way for our armor driving at the Siegfried Line. Sixteen tanks were shot up, 8 locomotives, 60 freight cars, and 70 M/T's, besides a couple of guns and 25 Helmsies . . . a pretty good bag for one day.

12 September 1944

The 368th hurled 83 dive-bombers at the Siegfried Line today, and our Bronco and Poodle broke into the vaunted Westwall. Our 500 lb bombs blasted flak guns, observation posts, tank traps and obstacles, enemy barracks, and generally cleared the way for our advancing columns. Despite rather poor weather, our P47's messed up the German rolling stock, too, blasting an even dozen locomotives and a couple of guns and freight cars. Nine tanks were shot up and 58 M/T's destroyed to complete the wreckage.

While our planes were busy working on the Reich and the boys at Laon were getting our new home in pretty good shape, the few tail-enders left at Chartres had the chateau grounds cleaned up and were awaiting transportation to Laon. We hadn't been at Chartres long enough to clutter our grounds much and had actually spent all our time there in clearing up the mess the Germans left. So our campsite was in pretty good shape, and we spent most of a very nice day taking things easy, foraging around for eggs, vegetables, and various drinkable liquids. In the midst of this activity, the owners of "our" chateau paid us a visit, looking over the premises with an eye to the necessary repairs. They told us some of the chateau's history and informed us that according to the villagers the German had tried to burn the building when they left.

13 September 1944

The weather nearly cancelled our operations today, but we got in one more crack at the Siegfried Line. Sixteen planes dropped 6 tons of bombs on German strong points and blasted two trains, destroying at least 10 cars. After that the weatherman shut us down completely.

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13 September 1944 (cont'd)

Just before noon six C-47's landed at Strip 69 with nearly all our remaining personnel and equipment. These men saw Paris in a different way, getting a true "birds-eye" view of the city. The low-flying Skytrains nearly scraped the Eifel Tower, and the men were tempted to bail out--except that they had no parachutes!

14 September 1944

Our last rear-guard elements finally got past the Paris obstacle and pulled in today. Now that we are re-united once more, we can expect further moving orders at any time.

The newcomers found us busy making use of much of the material left by the fleeing Heines. Besides the souvenirs, we have been using German gasoline in our jeeps and German equipment of many types. But some of the boys weren't too happy when the mess sergeant decided to supplement C-rations with German rations. Some found the cauliflower, asparagus, and Brussel sprouts to their liking; a few decided that the black bread was amusing, at least, but no one was pleased or amused by the blood sausage! That was going too far. The only really popular German "delicacy" was some synthetic ham, which really wasn't bad.

Our operations orders for the day put on a 60-minute alert; but the weatherman stepped in again to countermand that order.

15 September 1944

The last vehicles from Chartres had scarcely come to a full stop when we got word of a new move--to Belgium this time. The field is Le Culot, 15 miles SE of Brussels. The details are hazy yet, but the first echelon is tentatively scheduled to get underway Sunday morning.

Our first 8 planes on an early morning mission were scheduled to support the 2nd Armored, but 40 miles out the squadron leader brought the flight back because the weather was 10/10 at 800 feet. That was a fitting background for our next mission, which was something new for us; a weather recon. Four planes flew to Aachen and Trier, reporting 9 to 10/10 with a base at 1000 feet and tops at 4000 feet. Visibility was good above the clouds and $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile below.

Two more 8-plane flights went out late in the afternoon and made their bombing and strafing attacks pay dividends in the Maastricht and Aachen areas. Five tanks and five locomotives were destroyed, besides 45 freight cars and 3 M/T's. A four-story factory was destroyed and flames and explosions were seen after a woods near Maastricht was bombed.

We finally acquired a French barber, and ears began to show again after a period of retirement.

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16 September 1944

Colonel Meyers made a trip to Brussels and Louvain for a look at our new field at Le Culot. But late in the day he sent back the sad news: the British had already moved in. To make matters worse, the word got around that the field was in beautiful shape, with new brick barracks! So our move, scheduled to start tomorrow, was off for a while at least. Just to make safe, we made some preliminary plans for the move anyway, such as moving personnel of the advance echelon into the same tents and picking out the equipment which would go on the first trucks.

We sent out only 12 planes today, as escorts for B-26's on a mission to Metz. The pilots hoped they would see some action, since bandits had been appearing over Patton's columns pretty regularly. But they had no luck; while they were over Metz they heard calls over the R/ T that Jerry planes were over Cologne and Aachen! The weatherman wasn't very cooperative, either, because the Marauders had to bomb through the overcast, (with unobserved results); and our planes had to fly from 11,000 to 18,000 feet.

Oh, yes! We started the day out right with what is officially called a physical examination.

17 September 1944

Today 55 planes supported the 4th Infantry and 5th Armored in the Cologne-Koblenz-Siegen Area and made their 20 tons of bombs count, though bad visibility made things very tough. The P47's scored direct hits on marshalling yards, choke points, and factories. Nine locomotives and 18 freight cars were reduced to junk, adding to Herr Hitler's railroad problems. The flak damage was slight, even though our planes reached the edge of Happy Valley.

A lone He-111 made the mistake of showing up at deck level, and Lt. Diman of the 395th took care of him.

Father Cleary celebrated mass at the Laon Cathedral, with several hundred American soldiers attending.

We turned our clocks back during the night—or should have. While we could actually have gotten in an extra hour of sack time, the dope on the time change was so indefinite that most of us merely found out that we had time for breakfast and brushing our teeth—both!

18 September 1944

The Operations Orders from Ninth TAC released us for the day, so we can concentrate on the boys who went to Reims—"the next best thing to Paris". The boys who got the first passes were those slated to go to Paris—when our sudden moving orders broke up the schedule.

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18 September 1944 (cont'd).

It was Monday when most French stores were closed, but the boys managed to get rid of their francs, each in his own way. Some of them complained that the MP's had "cleaned up" the city a little too efficiently; but, on the whole, they liked the city, which showed practically no war damage. Champagne was plentiful at the sidewalk cafes, and we gave away parts of our K-rations to appreciative citizens, managing to struggle along on steak ourselves! Eating in a restaurant again was a real luxury. Some of us even found time to strain our necks looking over the magnificent National Cathedral, where the Kings of France were crowned for hundreds of years. A few hardy souls even climbed the winding stone stairs in the towers and claimed that the view was worth the climb.

19 September 1944

We were all set to give the 3rd Armored some help in the rough work of cutting through the Siegfried Line, but the weatherman threw all the switches against us--and we spent another day on the ground.

So this should be as good a day as any to blow our own horn. But, to be as modest as possible (under the circumstances), we'll "let the record speak for itself" and just write the following letter into this history:

HEADQUARTERS
IX TACTICAL AIR COMMAND

D-B-7

APO 595, U.S. Army,
14 August 1944.

314.7

SUBJECT: Unit History.

TO : Commanding Officer, 368th Fighter Group, APO 595, U.S. Army.
ATTN: Historical Officer.

1. The August installment of the 368th Fighter Group Unit History has been received at this Headquarters. The above history has continued to be submitted promptly and it has maintained its record of being among the best written of this Command. It not only contains a complete operational history, but also the informal life of the men in the Group Headquarters and Squadrons that is necessary to make the unit history complete.

2. The four Unit Historians are to be commended for the distinctive and excellent work they have done.

By Command of Major General QUESADA:

s/ R. J. Mays
R. J. MAYS
Major, ADG,
Adjutant General.

A TRUE COPY:

s/ M. D. Powell,
1st Lt. Air Corps
Asst Adjutant.

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20 September 1944

Colonel Meyers led the group in a 36-plane mission today that was to be part of a big show in the Aachen area. Our assignment was support for the 30th Infantry north of Aachen, but the weatherman took a hand and cancelled the whole event, including our part of it. So our planes just came home again with their bombs.

Later in the day 28 P-47's dropped 6 tons of bombs in the Cologne-Koblenz area. They destroyed 13 M/T's, but the chief excitement was furnished by one unfortunate Me410 which gave the boys some target practice before it went down and exploded on the ground. Lts. Carlson, Preston, and Kalen shared the bandit.

21 September 1944

Flying support for the 7th Corps in the Cologne-Koblenz sector, our planes got in a good days work today. Sixty-three planes were sent out and concentrated on the railroads between the Siegfried Line and the Rhine. Two large marshalling yards were pretty completely messed up and several warehouses and factories set on fire. The Westwall itself lost some of its concrete strong points when our 500 lb bombs found their targets. Moving targets didn't escape, either: we blasted 4 locomotives, 50 freight cars, and 6 tanks.

22 September 1944

Our first flight of 32 planes, with Major Sparks leading the group, went after rail lines in the Rhineland this morning. They cut seven of the eight lines assigned to them, missing one because of the weather--and the lines cut were ~~the~~ usually hit in several places. While cutting line No 2, Capt Romine of the 396th was wounded in the leg by flak, but he gave himself a morphine injection, bandaged the leg hastily, and brought his plane in. He should be back in action in a couple of weeks. Lt. Snyder of the 395th was forced to make an emergency landing at Villery, near Charleville, when his P47 was damaged; but he made a wheels-down landing and returned safely.

Lt. Col. Perego lead 31 P-47's in the second mission, a job which looked good to the boys. It was a wide fighter sweep into Germany, encompassing Dusseldorf-Cologne; and since the Luftwaffe had shown signs of coming out to fight recently, the boys were hoping for a crack at some bogies. But they must have seen us coming, because the mission was entirely uneventful and our pilots came home with nothing but the ride to their credit.

The moving rumors today centered on Belgium . . . with Brussels and Liege running about even in the betting.

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23 September 1944

The weather didn't let us get off the ground until late in the afternoon and then almost neutralized one of the two missions which we were able to fly. Only 9 P47's of the 12-plane flight were able to reach the target area, and the cloud coverage was so bad that even these planes had to drop their bombs on road junctions inside the Reich and let it go at that.

But Lt Col Douglas' 12 planes of the 396th Squadron found a few holes in the clouds, braved the flak of the Rhine Valley by flying at a thousand feet, and really gave the heavy river traffic between Cologne and Bonn a working over. They found the Rhine swarming with tugs and river steamers pulling barges. One large boat, four tugs, and four barges were blasted and set on fire and four more barges damaged. The pilots reported that the appearance of our planes caused many of the boats to cut their barges loose; and when they left the area, the barges were floating all over the river. That little maneuver must have held up Hitler's river traffic for a while.

In an S-3 change, 1st Lt. Howard W. Jensen was transferred to the 395th Sq and Capt Joseph McLacklan of the 396th attached to headquarters for duty will Combat Ops.

Memorandum, Supporting Document #4

24 September 1944

The weatherman really threw the book at us today, giving us wind, rain, and cold weather in large doses. But we tried, even going as far as to hold a briefing before we threw in the sponge.

Lt "Stormy" Steers took the opportunity to plaster our bulletin board with a prospectus on weather conditions in this vicinity, and the news wasn't good. The kind of weather we've been having seems to be about all we can expect at this season of the year.

The moving rumors took on a new and seasonal angle, too. We will move soon, they said, and we'll promptly "winterize" when we get there whatever that means!

25 September 1944

We had another briefing today, hopefully, though we really knew better all the time. This time we were "released until Daybreak" about noon.

That was unfortunate for the Wehrmacht, because we had intended to propagandize the Heinies a little. The leaflets we were to drop gave the Krauts some straight dope on the hopelessness of his situation and the uselessness of further resistance. The advantages of becoming prisoners of war were also extolled. We elaborated on our excellent, foo, medical service, mail service, pay for extra work, and the like. Who knows? Maybe we could have ended the war today if Old Jupiter Pluvius had let us enlighten the Wehrmacht in the Wacht-am-Rhein.

We got moving orders again late this evening . . . to Le Culot near Brussels and Louvain, presumably to replace the British who prevented us from moving there some 10 days ago. The first echelon is due to take off tomorrow.

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25th September 1944 (cont'd)

Something new--an enlisted men's dance was held, this evening in the Officers Club. Though only 10 of the 30 promised WAC's from Reims arrived, they put the dance over in great shape, with the help of 15 French girls. The boys really took a new lease on life.

26 September 1944

It was raining hard this morning, of course, to provide the proper atmosphere for moving. By noon the "air echelon" had its trucks loaded and got underway in only a light drizzle.

By late afternoon they had arrived at Le Culot--to find the British firmly entrenched on the airfield. But our outfit was allotted a small area to set up temporarily, and living tents were pitched for the night. A large fire was built, and the advance echelon ate their K-rations in the moonlight--and then went to bed.

Since a second group was scheduled to leave Laon in the morning with a large share of our equipment and more personnel, we took down more tents, including the large briefing tent, packed the S-2 trailer, took out phones, crated equipment, and packed our personal belongings ready to move. S-1, having sent their tent on ahead, moved into the quarters vacated by the Chaplain--a small shack which the Germans forgot to burn.

On the operations side, we sent out 31 planes in support of the 19th Corps in the area beyond Aachen. The damage score showed considerable variety: an airfield was bombed, a fuel dump blown up, a flak tower hit, and several factory--like buildings destroyed. One of our squadrons spotted 4-FW190's on an airfield near Bonn but did not strafe them because of the very intense flak. Later, another flight successfully bombed the airfield. Four of our planes were damaged by flak on the day's missions.

The leaflet bombs scheduled for yesterday were dropped in the Duren area, but the war still isn't over.

This evening Col Meyers came back from Le Culot and stopped any further moving. The British were still on "our" field, he reported, and had received no orders to move. So we unloaded and unpacked--but only enough to operate; for we didn't know when we might get further moving orders.

One saving feature amidst all this hullabaloo was provided by Special Services. They presented "On the Beam", a USO Camp Show featuring Freddie Lightner and Jerry Laughton.

27 September 1944

We put the briefing tent up again today at Laon, and went back to "business as usual" while awaiting further developments. A little more equipment was sent on to Belgium but no personnel.

We sent up 30 planes on air recce missions to the Cologne-Dusseldorf area and they raised assorted hell in the Fatherland. Our bombs hit marshalling yards, factories, warehouses, smelters, and road junctions. At some points fires were seen and the bombing results were generally good; at other places the results could not be observed.

SECRET

SECRET
PAGE THIRTEEN

27 September 1944 (cont'd)

For the second consecutive day, Lt Col Douglas' P47 was damaged by flak.

At Le Culot the advance echelon was up early and started clearing our area: chopping down trees and clearing debris, chiefly jagged pieces of iron which seemed to indicate that the evacuating Germans had blown up their sheet iron buildings. A little more equipment arrived, including the Red Cross setup, but no more personnel.

28 September 1944

We acquired a new field today. Instead of Le Culot we are to move to a strip near Cheivres, about 35 miles southwest of Brussels. There will be no immediate movement, however, and that gives us a chance to check up on our new home. There are plenty of good-sized cities in the vicinity, with Mons about 10 miles away and Lille a little further on.

Though we had only two missions today, both were group missions and we sent out 63 planes on air recce to the Koln area. Four barges on the Rhine were sunk, four locomotives with 26 freight cars blown up, factories and guns hit, and 8 fires started in Rhineland marshalling yards. One of our squadrons was jumped by 4 FW190's at 21,000 feet in the Koblenz area: the bandits made one pass and fled. One of our planes was damaged in the encounter but came back safely to Strip 69.

Up in Belgium our lost echelon was still working on our area, clearing it up, digging latrines, and performing other such pleasant tasks.

29 September 1944

Major Kroencke of the ALO reported a phone call on the results of our bombing this morning, so it must have been good. Major Ross, Air G-3 for the 7th Corps, in whose area the bombs were dropped, asked Lt Col Chaffin, Asst G-3 for Air of the 1st Army, to pass on the information that the bombing results were very good.

The two missions for the day were both group dive-bombing assignments. We sent out 64 planes, all carrying bombs. Our P47's dropped 128- 500 pounders on strategic points and troop concentrations in the Roetgen area. The pilots' shooting eyes must have been very sharp; all targets were hit and four guns and a number of buildings destroyed. Besides, the 7th Corps liked our dive-bombing, and they were the ones who had ordered it. That ought to be good enough.

The moving reports really got into high gear today. About noon the official story was that all moving was off indefinitely and that Chievres, as well as Le Culot, was out. But this evening the story was changed again, and we are going to Chievres. How soon we don't know.

The advance echelon at Le Culot were awakened with orders to pack personal belongings and personnel tents--and stand by for further orders. Major Rice went to Chievres to reconiter and find out what the score was. He returned in the evening with the news that we were going to Chievres. That information was received without too much enthusiasm. The boys were not happy about Le Culot, but it meant also that all their hard work of the last couple of days was wasted--and would have to be repeated at the new field.

SECRET

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PAGE FOURTEEN

30 September 1944

The "advance echelon of the advance echelon" left Le Culot for Chievres, and by evening had the new base partly set up. They were expecting the middle echelon on Sunday and the planes on Monday. This time they found the field in excellent shape, the best we had found on the Continent thus far.

Back at Le Culot was left only one truckload of equipment, Capt. Sparks, and four enlisted men. They were to go to the new field in the morning, thus ending the 368th's shortest stay at any field. The boys hadn't even been there long enough to explore the surrounding countryside and find the best places to buy eggs and potatoes!

We started packing again today at Laon, for our middle echelon is to leave ~~the first thing in the morning~~ for Chievres. Colonel Meyers left this morning, taking both his trailer and his tent, so this look definite.

Possibly the most unfortunate part of this whole affair is that today is pay-day; but since our finance clerk is with the advance echelon, we won't be paid today . . . and we have never wanted our pay more than we do now! Most of the ~~officers and men~~ ~~are down to their last "sous"~~. But then, we should be paid in Belgium money in about 10 days; and we have high hopes of finding use for our ~~pay in Belgium~~.

Our only mission today was probably the "smallest" 23 have ever had: a 2-plane weather recce to the Liege area. The planes were back in less than an hour and reported that the weather over Liege was impossible: scattered showers and cumulous clouds with base at 500 ft. and top at 9000 ft. But the mission served its purpose: we were released.

At the end of another month we are making what we hope will be our last move, though we aren't as sure of that as we used to be. These last two weeks the war front hasn't moved in Blitz fashion, and we are starting to think in terms of a winter campaign. We are enclosing our jeeps, seeking out stoves, wood, coke--and our winter underwear. But there are also signs that we may be ready to take another crack at the German lines, to pull another Bt. Lo break-thru, as the boys say.

Some "vital statistics" on our activities since we got into the war may be of interest. We have flown 8055 sorties in the ETO, 5123 since D-day. We have dropped 2242.09 tons of bombs, 1470.54 since D-day. Our dive-bombers have destroyed or damaged 493 tanks, all of them since D-day; 3399 M/T's and vehicles, all but 30 since D-day. 159 locomotives, 67 since D-day; and 671 freight cars, 586 since D-day. Though our job is armored column support and dive-bombing, not fighter support for bombers, we have taken care of our share of bandits, too. Our total is 41-5-24, and since D-day, 34-4-16.

SECRET

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. Army
1 September 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 103)

1. Lt Col JOHN D. W. HAESLER, 0432193, AC, is aptd Gp Operations Officer, princ duty, vice Capt MEREDITH W. HENRY, 0796688, AC, reld.

2. Capt MEREDITH W. HENRY, 0796688, AC, is aptd Assistant Gp Operations Officer, princ duty.

3. Major RANDALL W. HENDRICKS, 0441804, AC, is designated as Commanding Officer of the 397th Fighter Squadron, vice Lt Col JOHN D. W. HAESLER, 0432193, AC, trfd.

and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 396th Ftr Sq, are reduced to the grade of Pfc for inefficiency:

S/Sgt (750) James B. Winfree 34117764
S/Sgt (747) Louis Zrinski 32467214

5. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943 and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 395th Ftr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (911) Edward F. Thompson 33312577
S/Sgt (750) Richard B. Nartker 15117896

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (759) Keith O. Crane 39835730
Sgt (941) Andrew Vanta 15019222
Sgt (750) Clifford F. Dolan 32434647
Sgt (747) Joseph L. DiPierno 12042818
Sgt (750) William F. Fisk 32316417
Sgt (685) Marchese, Philip 33414990

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Cpl (014) David M. Palma 39297507
Cpl (941) Vincent J. Mastromatteo 15374303
Cpl (747) Theodore D. Ruggiero 32781699

CONFIDENTIAL

R E S T R I C T E D

SO #103, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, dtd 1 Sept 44, par 5 cont'd.

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (345)	Chester E. Urie	36199366
Pfc (911)	Wilfred V. Milne	32728874
Pvt (750)	Vito J. Bafilo	13047083
Pfc (747)	Robert B. Olson	16018123
Pfc (747)	Floyd T. Nelson	39835675
Pfc (750)	George F. O'Hara	12141960
Pfc (747)	Wilbur L. Faith	15078487
Pfc (405)	Marvin V. Milan	16018013

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (650)	Nathan Dabin	33312553
Pvt (911)	John Celeste	32775904
Pvt (911)	Ltbert M. Davis	19093102
Pvt (911)	Thomas P. Lynch	37329021

Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 396th Fitr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (511) Howard J. Engelman 35634905

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (821)	Alvin R. Endicott	35720453
Sgt (505)	Red Goldman	38445508

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Pvt (750) James B. Winfree 34117764

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (911)	Charles F. Banks	12172539
Pvt (747)	Louis Zrinski	32467214

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (911)	Howard D. Carter	39414054
Pvt (050)	James A. Cobb	34657120
Pvt (911)	Elmer Evans	1376725
Pvt (345)	George H. Harris	36451663

RESTRICTED

SO #103, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, dtd 1 Sept 44, Cont'd.

7. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 397th Fitr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (862) Martin M. Klein 32506469

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (911) Harold A. Haun 31129015
 Sgt (961) William F. ... 3105070
 Sgt (911) ... 32020417

TO BE ... (TEMP)

Cpl (911) ... 12037221
 Cpl (060) John M. ... 32242862
 Cpl (747) ... 12181533
 Cpl (911) Charles A. Estephen 11116320
 Cpl (911) Joseph G. Baker 32763059
 Cpl (747) William B. Murray 32349000

TO BE ... (TEMP)

lfc (809) Earl E. Barber 35389169
 lfc (941) Calvin M. Hazelbaker 35609822
 lfc (060) ... 34432639
 lfc (911) Eugene F. Miska 35057919

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (911) James I. Hackett 42030612
 Pvt (901) Daniel E. White 39411062

By order of Colonel MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

Hugh L. Rice
 HUGH L. RICE,
 Major, Air Corps,
 Adjutant.

HUGH L. RICE,
 Major, Air Corps,
 Adjutant.

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HEADQUARTERS
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. Army
2 September 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 104)

1. 1st Lt O. W. BORIA, O-640999, AG, is apptd Gp Personal Equipment Officer, vice Capt ERNEST R. FENDLETON, O-63240, AG, inf.

2. Under the provisions of AF 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of his Orgn Comdr, Sgt (G) Jesse L. Castro, 39267813, 397th Ftr Sq, is reduced to the gr of Pvt for misconduct.

3. Under the provisions of AF 600-68, the following named E-1, 396th Ftr Sq, and having demonstrated high efficiency through superior and exact performances of duty, efficiency through economy to produce desired results, and whose behavior has been such as to deserve commendation, are awarded Good Conduct Medals for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity.

Technical Sergeants

Gates, Herbert L.	37259425
Donahue, Robert L.	39169941
Harisiades, Alkibiades	12780323
Hansen, Carl L. Jr	15019737
Legere, Robert J.	11053799
Malone, William	32375807
Metcalf, Wesley J.	31115723
Seigman, Seymour W.	32323442
Spigut, Michael G.	33251507
Tarpone, Garibaldi	32405052
Nilson, Sumner F.	12053087

Staff Sergeants

Bronsman, Alfred E.	32163395
Bassler, Ellis M.	32449388
Chrisman, Leland D.	37263522
Crisci, Nicholas F.	12140531
Daly, Thomas F.	12079035
Milger, Quentin F.	37195342
Engelman, Howard J.	35684995
Ivanett, William H.	36535933
Fowler, Clarence N.	14133589
Gengel, Richard G.	35397743
Ghizzone, Charles W.	32154122
Gruber, Robert L.	17109311
Harkness, Keith I.	37212380
Harvell, Clarence H.	14149525

Staff Sergeants Cont'd

Hunsicker, Christian F.	39545559
Hyduk, John	33322264
Kaczawka, Sigmond A.	31037044
Karolak, Clement L.	11022521
Knowlton, Orville P.	31476622
Koster, Don E.	31060729
Lanum, Joseph E. Jr	35101890
Lancaster, Kenneth B.	37237821
Lourette, William L.	12080627
Martin, Andrew D.	31027257
Morgan, Edward F.	31353579
Mueller, Rudolph O.	31113661
Murin, Edward L.	31359467
Nelson, Ellard O.	31190446
Norris, Almon B. Jr	19135675
Porter, Buford	13035202
Rodgers, Raymond J.	35307965
Smith, Raymond W.	15335041
Stagg, Richard G.	32139420
Stampar, Raymond	31448086
Upham, John A.	31066351
Vlach, George C.	31302742
Vnook, Adolph J.	11019459
Watson, Clarence A.	31175231
Wightman, Edwin C.	31166574
Winter, William E.	15399555
Wood, John C. Jr	11053200
Zidek, Stephen J.	31348455

R E S T R I C T E D

SO #104, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 2 Sept 44 Cont'd.

Sergeants

Aquino, Albert L.	12040005
Basch, Gustavus	14032897
Bedian, Zane	12174156
Bennett, Edmond E.	11029089
Bernstein, David C.	17039951
Blackwell, Shady	33129363
Burnham, Franklin H.	31105737
Brinson, Karlton C.	38222647
Davidson, Buford P.	36555513
Detert, Norbert M.	36815234
Dolan, Andrew J. Jr	11098825
Dooley, Thomas F.	11106656
Engle, Clayton E.	32466449
Ewin, Edward G.	36070094
Fisher, Charles H.	32235000
Flores, Ernie V.	32556751
Hirschfeld, Casper I.	35601640
Joyner, Wiley V. Jr	34666023
Lucas, Leonard M.	36376995
McInness, Daniel T.	31132773
McCain, Joe L.	38225693
Mei, Renato E.	39094661
Miletich, Joseph L.	17069909
Monaghan, Gerald H.	31110943
Peters, John H.	33496413
Porter, Leonard W.	32551088
Price, Richard C.	32194545
Ribbeck, Reginald H.	18026461
Richard, Roy Z.	333-6598
Stephens, Arnold G.	11090660
Stone, Lloyd R.	15076071

Sergeants Cont'd

Stockford, Robert L.	31044428
Sullivan, Edward J.	31092461
Szcesuil, Frank C.	31201628
Thomas, Dominick J.	31105799
Thompson, Oswald C.	32436203
Wilson, Clayton W.	35449088
Wilhite, Jack W.	20443592
Woods, Robert W.	17071398

Corporals

Berry, Martin M.	12191052
Conzelmann, John E.	33035436
Doyon, René A.	31119005
Duffy, Joseph A.	31096872
Kaurer, William E.	19007621
Michelson, George E.	37664009
Mitchell, William G.	32567094
Pedgett, Leon F.	34545887
Schneider, Henry S.	39558344
Sokoloff, Morris	33054918
Stanchak, Charles E.	35514014
Sulton, Mohamed	32421986
Teague, Edgar R. Jr	37604398
Tosotti, Ambrosco J.	11033503
Tunkel, Sheldon	12203733
Wyatt, Howard F.	35652372

Privates First Class

Harrelson, Lacy R.	34604636
Silver, Joseph	1105689
Thomas, Joseph M.	12580109

Privates

Smith, Edward J.	11306467
------------------	----------

By order of Colonel MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

Hugh L. Rice
HUGH L. RICE,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

HUGH L. RICE,
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

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- 2 -

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

AFO 595, U. S. Army
4 September 1944

GENERAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 5.)

SANITARY ORDERS

1. The following provisions for the sanitation of this command are published for the information and guidance of all concerned:

- a. The unit commanders are responsible for carrying out the provisions of this order in the units and the areas occupied by them.
- b. The unit surgeon is responsible for the inspection, reporting on and the making of recommendations of all matters which affect the sanitation and the general health of this command.
- c. Water Supply: Water for all purposes will be obtained from the water point operated by the Team "B" of the 84th Service Group. All drinking and cooking water will be hauled in tanks reserved for that purpose only. Water will be frequently tested for percentage of chlorination at the point of consumption. Precautions will be taken to prevent contamination of water after sterilization. Common drinking cups will not be used. Lyster bags will be conveniently located in all unit areas.
- d. Food and Messes: The mess officer of each unit running a mess will obtain food only from quartermaster supplies. No milk or dairy products will be bought in the open market. No local vegetables will be used in this command. The unit mess officer will be responsible for the protection and storage of all food used. Preservation of food will be accomplished as described in Field Manual 21-10, Par 39. Mess kits will be washed in one can of boiling soapy water and at least two cans of boiling clear water. All other dishes, silverware, pots and pans, etc. will be washed in hot soapy water and rinsed in cold Microclean (QM issue).
- e. Waste Disposal:
 - 1. Kitchen and mess kit waste; rubbish and tin cans will be burned or buried daily. It is recommended that the several units on the base pool their efforts in the burying of these wastes. Liquid waste will be disposed of in soakage pits and grease traps and cared for as described in FM 8-40, Par. 78, 79 and 80.
 - 2. Human Waste: Deep pit latrines will be dug six to eight feet in depth. Latrine boxes of the Quartermaster type will be placed on all pits. All latrines will be enclosed. Crude oil will be sprayed bi-weekly into latrine pits. Lime will be sprinkled daily into latrine pits. Seats will be scrubbed daily with G.I. soap and water. A 2 percent Cresol solution will be used on seats bi-weekly. Latrine holes will be installed to accommodate 8 percent of the command. Each unit area will have ample urine soakage pits with troughs in various areas where men are working. A latrine orderly will be appointed who will be responsible for the proper policing of the latrines in each unit area.

TOP SECRET

General Order No. 5, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 4 Sept 1944, Cont'd.

- f. Quarters: Pyramidal tents will be left open and flaps rolled up during the day when the weather is favorable. Bedding will be aired twice a week. Head to foot, sleeping arrangements will prevail. Beds will be made and the tents will be policed daily.
- g. Insect Control: Fly traps will be placed about kitchens, garbage racks and latrines. These will be properly baited, inspected, and cleaned daily. Fly papers will be hung in mess tents and kitchens. Sand fly netting will be used where feasible in food storage containers. Insect repellants and Insecticide powder will be made available for members of this command.
- h. Personal Hygiene: Hot and cold showers will be made available daily at 1600 hours. Sufficient water for washing will be available at all times in ablution areas. Helmets may be used as wash basins. Racks to fit helmets will be constructed in ablution areas. All personnel will have clothes washed or wash them personally often enough to keep clean clothes ahead. Teeth should be brushed twice daily. Hair will be cut to one inch in length. Personnel will keep faces clean shaven.
- i. Dispensaries: Squadron dispensaries will be located in areas most easily reached by the most number of men. Dispensaries will be well marked. Sick call will be 0800 hours daily. Emergency cases will be handled at any other time necessary. Patients needing evacuation will be evacuated to the 216th Medical Dispensary (AVN).
- j. Ambulances: Ambulances will be kept at dispensaries twenty-four (24) hours a day except when covering flying on the line. Ambulances will be used only for carrying sick and wounded.
- ka. Venereal Prophylaxis: Pro stations will be set up in all dispensaries. Individual prophylactic kits will be made easily available in all orderly rooms and dispensaries.
- l. Physical Inspections: All personnel will be examined once a month for evidence of venereal disease, infestation, and communicable diseases. Dog tags will be examined at this time also.
- m. Immunizations: All personnel will be immunized according to the current regulations covering this subject for this Theater of Operations.
- n. All civilians attached to this command will comply with this order insofar as it applies to them.

Gilbert L. Meyers
 GILBERT L. MEYERS
 Colonel, Air Corps,
 Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

4
APO 595, U. S. Army
23 September 1944

MEMORANDUM:

TO : Commanding Officer, Headquarters Detachment, APO 595, US Army
395th Fighter Squadron
396th Fighter Squadron
397th Fighter Squadron

1. 1st Lt (1055) HOWARD W. JENSEN, 0687630, AC, Hq 368th Fighter Group,
is transferred to 395th Fighter Squadron.

2. Capt (1055) JOSEPH J. McLACHLAN, 0665844, AC, 396th Fighter Squadron,
is attached to Hq 368th Fighter Group for duty only.

By order of Colonel MEYERS:

s/ Hugh L. Rice
HUGH L. RICE
Major, Air Corps,
Adjutant.

Copy