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DDO DIR 5200.9

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
368TH FIGHTER GROUP
APO 141
Strip Y-34
METZ, FRANCE

* * *

Historical Clerk:

Sgt STEPHEN S MARKS

Squadron Historian:

THEODORE P. SKALKO,
1st Lt., Air Corps.

[REDACTED]

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SQUADRON HISTORY
Month of December.

I. Negative

II. STRENGTH COMMISSIONED and ENLISTED.

1.	At beginning of Period:	
	OFFICERS -----	62
	ENLISTED MEN -----	254
2.	Net Increase:	
	OFFICERS -----	1
	ENLISTED MEN -----	1
3.	Net Decrease:	
	OFFICERS -----	4
	ENLISTED MEN -----	5
4.	At End of Period:	
	OFFICERS -----	59
	ENLISTED MEN -----	250

III. The transfer from IX TAC to XIX TAC made necessary a change in locations. Per orders of XIX TAC, via teletype, our new location was to be the strip at Psoany (A-79). "A" Eschelon departed for this strip on the 24th of December 1944. On the 25th of December "A" Eschelon departed A-79 for A-68 at Juvincourt. The succeeding days brought the remainder of the personnel to this location. Every indication points to this being but a temporary change of station and we are anticipating another move in several days. Pursuant to G.O. # 302 dated 27 December 1944.

IV. FIRST LT JAMES J BINTER joined our Squadron but recently as a replacement pilot. A veteran of flying but new to the P-47 he was a trainee in the school conducted by the 368th Fighter Group. On 1st December about 1800 hours he was flying Number Four position in a flight led by LT HOWARD JENSEN of the 395th Fighter Squadron. LT JENSEN was leading the flight in a rat-ace and had completed an Immelman which in turn two other members of the flight completed. Halfway through this maneuver LT BINTER did not recover. His plane and body were found near Lille, France the following day.

SECOND LT JAMES W. STOWER was flying Red Flight Number Four position on a Squadron mission led by CAPTAIN BOWLEN on 4 December 1944. Returning home at approximately 1045 through an overcast the Squadron was letting down from an altitude of about 20,000 feet. At a point near P9898 East of Maschau, LT STOWER was last seen in a turn off course. He did not return to the base and no word has reached us of his whereabouts.

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On 23 December 1944, our Squadron was bounced by 50 FW 190's and Me 109's near Laecher Lake, Germany at about 12,000 feet. SECOND LT BRYCE A RALSTON was flying LT JAMES IVEY'S wing and in the course of the dog-fight called in that he was hit by enemy aircraft gunfire. LT IVEY was engaged in shooting down an enemy aircraft and as he turned to find his wingman, he saw a silver P-47 going by in flames. LT IVEY states that he saw something leave the cockpit of this airplane but did not observe a parachute opening at the time. It has been established that LT RALSTON was the pilot of this aircraft since he did not return to base but the possibility exists that he may have bailed out over enemy territory. He is being carried as M.I.A.

On 23 December 1944 in the same dog-fight, SECOND LT JOSEPH D. CIANETTI was flying Number Two position in Flap-Per Blue flight when he reported over the R/T that he was hit. He flew his aircraft back to base where it was discovered that two pieces of flak had pierced his right leg while a third fragment remained imbedded in the same leg near the thigh. At present, he is hospitalized as a result of his injuries.

On 25 December 1944, SECOND LT S. E. SWENK was flying Green Number Two position on an armed reconnaissance mission in the vicinity of St. Vith. Pulling off a target, his airplane suffered a direct hit from an enemy flak. He was seen to bail out and land safely on the ground but due to the fluid condition of this area, we have received no information as to his whereabouts. Since he did not return within the allotted time, he is being carried as M.I.A.

V. The following Officers were awarded Clusters to the Air Medal this month:

	CLUSTER	DATE
MAJOR MUMAW	17	12/12/44
CAPT. MORRICA	1	12/12/44
	2	12/18/44
1C CALDWELL	16	12/12/44
	17	12/18/44
LT CARRY	14	12/12/44
LT DAVIS	12	12/12/44
	13	12/18/44
LT IVEY	13	12/18/44
LT MASTING	13	12/18/44
LT MATTHEWS	2	12/18/44
LT McCRONE	16	12/12/44

	CLUSTER	DATE
LT MIDDAN	13	12/12/44
LT WILLIAMS	15	12/12/44
	16	12/18/44
LT ALDRIDGE	11	12/12/44
LT BERGMAN	1	12/12/44
	2	12/18/44
LT DICKS	2	12/12/44
LT FOLTZ	5	12/12/44
LT FONTNEY	Air Medal	12/12/44
	1	12/18/44
LT STABETTI	11	12/12/44
	12	12/18/44
LT HAYS	1	12/12/44
	2	12/18/44
LT JEWES	9	12/12/44
LT JOHNSON	10	12/12/44
LT RICHMAN	4	12/12/44
	5	12/18/44
LT SMITH	6	12/12/44
LT SNYDER	11	12/18/44
LT SWINK	2	12/12/44
	3	12/18/44
LT WAYLAND	8	12/18/44

General Order 289 - 291, IX Air Force authorized the following awards:

SILVER STAR -- CAPTAIN CLIFFORD L. GIBLIN.

The Distinguished Flying Cross was awarded to the following Officers:

CAPTAIN HENRY J MAZUR
 CAPTAIN ROBERT MILLER
 1st Lt EDGAR F McCORNE
 1st Lt WILLIAM C CAMY
 1st Lt EUGENE I KESTING
 1st Lt ALEXANDER B DE LOUP
 1st Lt ALBERT H FINTINLAUS
 2nd Lt WILLIAM J WAYLAND

* * * * *

DECEMBER 1944

CURRENT EVENTS

1. The Twelfth month in the ETO for this Squadron. Little did any of us think we would stay here as long as we have for when we sent our footlockers home, we packed our overcoats and warm clothing.

The Squadron flew one mission today with LT EARLY leading. This is the first time Jim has assumed so much responsibility upon himself. The weather was not particularly favorable, nevertheless, our boys went out and clobbered up some railroad lines in enemy territory. Other than this, the mission was fairly uneventful.

In the afternoon, the weather was unsuitable for any but local flying. As a result, the trainees in the Squadron were taken up by their prospective flight leaders for formation flying, rat races and orientation. A tragic event occurred in the late afternoon when LT BINTER failed to return from one of the training missions. Flying number four position in LT JENSEN'S flight in a rat race, he went into a spin from an inversion and was last seen going into an overcast near Hills, France. Though LT JENSEN and the other members of the flight let down through the overcast, they could not find any evidence of LT BINTER. This was in fact a great disappointment for LT BINTER was a superb pilot with some 1000 hours in the war. He joined us recently as a replacement pilot and a great deal was expected of him. 'Tis a pity.

Unpleasant news of a similar nature reached us concerning Major WARNER from 9th TAC who flew about four combat missions with our Squadron. It seems that he was killed flying a cub when he crashed on take-off and his plane struck a tree. This news is rather hard to take for he was a great chap and we all grew very fond of him the short time he stayed with us. It's a funny racket this flying business and for my money regardless of what commercial companies advertise it isn't a Grandmother's pastime yet.

2. This morning LT MIDLAN and LT LE LOUP started from England for a 7-day leave at a rest home. These pilots have piled up a lot of hours and they deserve a rest.

As yet no news of LT BINTER has reached us -- we are still hoping that he was lost and may turn up yet.

Briefing at 0845 for a return trip to Booty who hasn't moved his position for a week now. Captain Mazur is in the saddle again. The weather over the base was very poor but it was supposed to be better over the target. It wasn't.

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Captain MAZUR'S flight bombed artillery positions at Oberzier while LT HUFF and his flight and LT KRSTING leading Red Flight slapped the hell out of a wooded area North of Duren. The return trip for the Squadron was a rough one and eight planes came back to base. Red Flight landed at Strip 493 due to poor weather.

In the afternoon a Pilot's meeting was held in the shack for the old boys while the trainees went to ground to continue their orientation. At 1500 we drew a release until daylight.

3. The morning broke clear and bright so a briefing was called at 0800 to resume working with Booty. Booty has not made very much progress of late so it's more or less going out to the same point and a return trip home. Another break-through would be most welcome any time now. When this mission returned, our Squadron was released for the day.

LT KENNETH SNYDER returned today from DS to the Armored Forces. His 10 day DS was stretched to about 26 days and we were beginning to sweat him out.

The afternoon was slightly on the dull side for the weather prohibited even test hops or slow time. An hour of recognition was eased in since we've acquired so many new pilots who need further ground training.

CAPTAIN CLARK, our S-2 Officer, has acquired the nickname of "Perch." Why - no one will reveal as yet but it will come out one day soon.

4. This month while not a great deal of flying weather was expected has been a surprise from the beginning. We expected to be very fortunate to have a total of five flying days throughout the month and so far we have put up a mission each day for four days.

Despite predictions of an overcast, our Squadron was airborne on it's first mission at 0923. Captain BOWLIN who is on DS to Marnite, dropped in for a visit and found himself right back in his old slot. Because of an overcast from 2,000 feet to 18,000 feet, the Squadron had to bomb through the overcast while over enemy territory. This could very easily be called a fruitless mission because a checkup on landing revealed that LT JAMES STOVER did not return with the Squadron. On the return trip from enemy territory, LT STOVER had called CAPTAIN BOWLIN to tell him that his Turbo Regulator was cutting out. Flying

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through the overcast, the Squadron let down from 20,000 feet to about 1500 feet to find that LT STOVER was not in the formation. This was at 1055 hours somewhere in the vicinity of 99898. The rest of the day brought no further word of his whereabouts so he is being carried as M.I.A. LT STOVER joined our Squadron at Chartres and he came in with a bang. His first impression upon us was far from a favorable one and we looked for further misactivities from "Peck's BAD Boy". After this poor start, "Smoky" settled down to being a good dependable pilot of whom much was expected and he was living up to all expectations. It's a poor show for my money to lose a pilot like Smoky for whatever the unseen results of the bombing may have been, it is our hope that Smoky is safe for unless the circumstances become so critical that he lost control entirely he should be alright for there isn't any question of his ability in the cockpit of an airplane. Hurry home Smokey, we are looking for you.

MAJOR SPARKS led the second mission of the day which found a M/Y for a target. A moving locomotive was spotted and at least some of the transported goods are certain not to have reached their destination. Once again the bombing had to be done through holes in the overcast.

That's that for today but the price wasn't worth it.

5. Today is my wife's birthday and I can't send flowers nor candy so here's hoping she gets a letter.

LT WALLACE HILL, our Supply and Transportation Officer, has been designated as Graves Registration Officer of our Squadron. One of his first odious jobs was to go several miles SW of Lille to check on LT BINGLER whose plane crashed there. The hope that LT BINGLER landed at another field was bashed in the head with this report. So long fellow and let us hope you find yourself where all good pilots go.

Promotions came forth in our Squadron again with CAPTAIN MUNAW moving up to MAJOR MUNAW, 1st LT MILLER becoming CAPTAIN MILLER and 2nd Lt McCORNE becoming 1st Lt McCORNE. All three of these men were more than surprised to say the least. Nice going men.

CAPTAIN MILLER led the first mission of the day into enemy territory on a more or less fruitless mission. An overcast and a wind combined to prevent accurate bombing or observation. Booty designated a bridge as a target and our pilots came close -- no more.

Major MUNAW dropped into the saddle on the second mission to dust some panzer if possible. This Squadron

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is fortunate in having so many men to lead it on it's various missions. Captain JONES, Captain MILLER, Captain MAZUR, Major SPANES and Major MUMAW leave nothing to be desired in leadership.

To this point no word has reached us concerning IT JAMES "Smoky" STOWEN so he is being carried M.I.A. Plenty tough!

The mission led by Major MUMAW was another one of those assigned target propositions. Usually this kind of a target is an artillery position and is rather a hard one to find to do accurate work. Still 24x500 pound G.P. bombs aren't going to do any town any good that's for sure.

This concluded the day's activities.

6. This morning began with a 0730 briefing for a 504 Mission. This is the type of mission in which the Squadron is vectored to its target by Marmite and at the zero count drops its bombs. It's a technical deal involving speed, winds, altitudes and can become quite complicated. Captain MAZUR was designated to lead the Squadron. The weather socked in and as a result we sat around all morning on an one hour alert. Finally at 1300, the Squadron was airborne.

Pvt Charles J. Lucking was added to the roster of the S-2 Department. This brings the S-2 department up to full strength again. Lucky fellow?

The return of the Squadron from its blind-bombing mission brought NRO results. They flew to the target on vectors from Marmite I, dropped their bombs upon instructions, then performed their Recce before returning home. An interesting sidelight was an unidentified attempt to compromise the radio code. CAPTAIN MAZUR challenged the party only to receive an improper response. This is the first time that our Squadron has used the Challenge indicating that the enemy is not inactive in the field of radio either.

7. Rain all evening and this morning postponed all plans for flying so we turn for news to other sources.

Major MUMAW is running a streak of good luck. First he received a promotion then on top of that he received orders for a 30 day leave home. When it rains - it pours.

Captain MAZUR who has been a workhorse in flying missions is now our Operations Officer.

Our trainees are coming along in good shape and before

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too much time passes they should be taking their turns in flying combat missions.

At 1300 a meeting was conducted at the Group Theatre for all pilots and related Officers. The lecturer, a LT COL from 9th Air Force, discussed for several hours Radar, VHF, IFF and the problems and accomplishments thereof. The discussion was conducted on a Forum basis and a great deal of valuable information was gleaned via this route.

A return to the Pilots Snack brought news of a release from "Ops" for throughout the day the rain did not let up.

So endeth the 3rd Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor for us.

9. The Fourth year of War was ushered in this morning in a leisurely fashion. There wasn't any rush about anything for there weren't any plans for any activity.

The morning dragged by with a few test hops and a few slow-time planes airborne. The shining sun looked as if weather would permit combat flying but nothing developed until a briefing was finally set for 1300 hours.

Second Lt KENNETH PAEPER received orders to report to 9th MAC on TD. This can mean anything.

The pass-situation has been complicated by the restriction being applied to Brussels. This town has always been off-limits to the American Army but by a special agreement our group managed to spend days off there. Now the men just stay in bed or do what they please on the post until some other arrangement is made.

The Duty L.O. list has been supplemented by the addition of flight leaders to the roster making it come up once a month rather than once a week as it has for almost a year now. Don't know whose idea it was but it's a good one.

The shift in squadron personnel continues with LT HUGH MATTHEWS now leading Blue flight. LT JOSEPH WILLIAMS was offered the flight but since he feels his operational tour is near completion, he doesn't want to do anything to jeopardize his chances of going home.

The briefed mission to area cover for Medium bombers was postponed. Most of the afternoon was spent waiting - and finally this mission was scrubbed. It seems the Mediums decided not to fly today. Pilots meeting and Ground Officers meeting killed the afternoon.

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9. Last evening brought the first snow-fall in this region. We've had heavy frosts and nippy weather but this was the first time we've had the real thing. Could be a White Christmas.

This morning brought a 0800 briefing for a mission which included carrying 2 x 1000 pound bombs. This is the first time in a long time that we've had a mission of this sort scheduled. The target was to be a castle which is a familiar landmark to our pilots who have seen it many times from the air. However, all the briefing and all arrangements came to naught for a release from "Ops" until daybreak came through at 1330.

The P.M.'s Day-Room which is a source of relaxation and diversion for our men, is completed and financially in the blue. Due credit for the work and supervision must be given to LT CRITCHFIELD who has devoted much time and effort to this project. Plans for an E.M. Xmas party are well under way and a good time is expected for all. LT EUGENE SMITH is in charge of plans for another Officer's Party with but one limitation on his initiative -- that is the steak must not be tough.

Dull days are upon us again what with no missions, no lights, and too much inactivity. Soon will come the revolution!!!

10. It looked like a great day to begin with this morning. Briefing at 0900 for a ground-support mission to be led by CAPTAIN MILLER. One flight carried rockets for the first time into combat. At 1050 the Squadron was airborne and sallied forth into enemy territory. Results upon return were none too good for though weather and the targets selected were not too tough, the pilots had too many direct misses. Anything is better than jettisoning bombs into the Channel. Got to have better results with the rockets, that's for sure. We'll see what happens on the next mission.

Since Brussels is off-limits to American troops other arrangements have had to be made. As a result, Lille has been selected as the next site and everyone is waiting to hear first reports.

MAJOR SPARKS took the second mission of the day out with bombs and rockets again as a lethal combination. As our Squadron approached the enemy lines, Sweetstakes called in 30 plus bogies. Flying below an overcast at 1000 feet, our Squadron anticipated a bounce any second so they fired

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their rockets and jettisoned their bombs expecting to be at a terrific disadvantage in a dogfight. Our Squadron then climbed through the overcast, however, no sign of any enemy aircraft could be found at anytime. A stitch in time can frequently save time. Critique, chow, sack.

11. This morning began passes to Lille, France for the first time. The general reaction towards going there after Brussels is not good.

The one and only mission of the day was airborne at 1432 and it turned out to be a field day. Using bombs and rockets, the Squadron accounted for three tanks, guns, troops and generally clobbered the area around Mariaweller. Seascout was pleased with the effort and so indicated over the R/T. More days like this one would wreck havoc with the enemy that's for sure.

That's all for today.

12. Necessity is the mother of invention it has been frequently said. Still even this proverb can be carried to extremes. The bartenders in the States have gone to all sorts of extremes in concocting nauseating drinks but who among them ever thought to mix gin and fruit cocktail? It's been done here.

This day another new pilot was added to the roster in the person of 2nd Lt JACK MASS. A former AF 6 instructor, he has not had any fighter time at all and has to begin from scratch over here. He'll be in the hands of good instructors that's for sure. They who teach -- must also be able to learn or is it as warm on Thursday as it is in the living room.

Our Squadron flew one mission today but it was not the one originally briefed. The weather was not too good for air to ground visibility so a 564 mission was run. CAPTAIN MAZUR took the reins over on this mission and Buskirchen should have heard a lot of loud noises. This one mission was the sole substance of our day's activity.

S/Sgt HENRY C GANNAN (750) former crew chief to CAPTAIN BOYD BOWLIN, returned to duty after a short stay in the hospital due to an ear ailment. Due to his ear-trouble, the erstwhile Crew Chief has been temporarily relieved as a crew chief on the line since SGT GANNAN is unable to stay out-of-doors any length of time. SGT GANNAN has been re-assigned to work for the Electrical Department. What is the Electrical Department's gain is the Maintenance Department's loss.

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Strange as it may seem, on the same day that SGT CAMPAN returned to duty, Sergeant Louis F. Kreiner (932) of Refueling Unit Department, was transferred to the 130th General Hospital for the same "ear" ailment. "This is truly a great loss to our Squadron. Let's hope not permanently. SGT Davidson is doing a great job as substitute "Foreman."

13. Rumor has become a fact since members of our Squadron have received a clipping to the effect that CAPTAIN JAMES C. GOODWIN our first M.I.A. is on his way home. How he got to Yugoslavia and joined Tito's band and then was repatriated should make many an interesting tale.

The one and only mission of this day was another blind bombing proposition featuring LT IVEY as our Squadron Leader. The report could well read, no landmarks, no results obtainable, didn't know where we went or what we did but there was flak. Ques qu cest this flak. A reccey after the blind bombing didn't procure much except high altitude experience for some of our pilots who flew at an altitude of 26,000 feet for the first time since hitting this theatre.

At the orderly room some mail and some packages arrived creating a little pleasure. One or two days a week are about the sum total of our maildays around here. Who's complaining.

S/Sgt HAROLD D COONLEY'S (750) ingenious idea of installing a Dorsal Fin on the P-47 type aircraft was presented to higher headquarters for approval. It seems that the Dorsal Fin installed on a P-47 aircraft will prevent flat spins - - a great asset to our fighter pilots if the plan works. Anyhow, the whole Squadron is "pulling" for Coonley's idea to be approved. MAJOR SPARKS will be the test pilot if the idea is approved.

14. We awakened with a ground fog down to the ground to greet us this morning. Nevertheless, a briefing was held at 0930 for a mission with a hope that weather would break permitting operational flying.

The PX opened in the meantime so the boys ambled up, collected 5 packs of cigarettes, a toothbrush and two bars of candy.

When things happen around here they happen fast and by 1400 we had two missions airborne. LT CALDWELL, LT MCCORME and LT HAYS (without the "e") flew a 28 61 mission dropping two leaflet bombs on pinpoint targets. With the exception of the weather which was closing in rapidly, the mission was uneventful. LT FOITE failed to takeoff with

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this mission in that his airplane didn't function properly so he sat it out.

At 1330 CAPTAIN MAZUR took the Squadron in tow to work with Foundation in the E/L area. After considerable confusion, HANK finally reached a controller to work within the target area and premature Xmas gifts in the form of 500 pound bombs were dropped on Onedegger and Strauch. I guess Germany will have to be wiped out town by town before this business is done over here. I'm all for it.

In the evening a steak dinner which has become a monthly feature with us was held. LT SMITH aided and abetted by some of the recent replacements took care of the arrangements and did an excellent job of it. MAJOR SPARKS acted as M/C with considerable and able competition from Portney who brought forth hidden talents heretofore undisclosed. It was a pleasant evening all told.

Changes in Duty assignment have been made as follows:

Pfc Bell from S-3 to Transportation as Dispatcher.
Pfc Dennis from S-2 to Transportation as Driver.
Cpl Beare from Transportation to Sp S-1 as law clerk.
Pvt Lucking from Armament to Sq S-2
Cpl Huntley from Refuel Unit to S-3 (Due to a bad kidney acquired from driving heavy Refuel Unit Truck)
Pfc Goldstein from Ordnance to Refuel Unit to take Cpl Huntley's place and maybe a promotion.

15. Here we are midway through the last month of the year with not too much to look forward to. The Holiday Season is upon us but the Holiday Spirit is hard to grasp but then I suppose it's rough all over.

A briefing scheduled for 0800 was moved up to 0815 despite the fact that clouds kept moving in. If it's at all possible our Squadron will be airborne this morning and so it goes.

The Squadron was airborne at 1018 with MAJOR SPARKS at the helm on a blind bombing expedition. Shortly thereafter, LT CALDWELL took a flight of four up to drop leaflets once more. The weather, the targets, and the nature of the mission combined to make it a dull one but the flak came up today to clobber three of our ships before they got away. LT SNYDER, LT HAYS, AND LT HESTING came home with marks of battle on their planes. That's all in the nature of operationally flying for today. A sidelight here was the fact that IE SCOTT got his first combat mission under his belt and before too much time passes he too will be a veteran of the wars.

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eron of the wars.

LT HOMER HAYES returned from Paris saying he is glad to get back. Whom does he think he is kidding?

LT JAMES EARLY has been hobbling around here for over a week now with an injury to his knee but he expects to be flying anytime now.

SGT JACQUES E SMITH of the Communications Department returned from DS to Paris after a four day stay in the famous Gay City of the World. Incidentally, Paris is the home of SGT SMITH. He has often boasted that he has one jump on all the other enlisted men in the Squadron since he is drawing 20% increase in his pay for foreign service and here it is right at home.

PVT JACKSON and HARRY CARPENTER were reassigned within the Squadron to Refueling Unit Section to fill a vacancy left by SGT BREWER, who is at present temporarily transferred to the MGH General Hospital.

16. A very quiet day with no flying scheduled or any performed. At twelve o'clock a release came through eliminating any possibility of flying for the day.

More and more of our trainees are being turned out of the school on the field here and are ready to go into combat. This opens up the possibility of more of our older boys going home.

On the whole -- a pretty dull day.

S/Sgts Fish, William J. Dombos, John A. Griffith, Robert, and Mathews, all of Engineering, received the Bronze Star Medal; General Order 68, IX Tactical Air Command. T/Sgt Silva of Black Flight feels plenty proud because S/Sgts Fish, Dombos, and Griffith are all members of Black Flight -- quite a feat for one day.

17. Jerry is acting up again and there seems to be a very little we can do about it. The only mission of the day for our pilots jettisoning their bombs anticipating a fight but nothing happened. Our Squadron was the only one of the three which did not get into a fight. This happened today - the 17th of December 1944. The weather socked in again and that's all there was after that.

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S/Sgt Winnicki, Edward P of Communications Department reported to the hospital on the 16 of December to have a "10% cut of the Penis" and was discharged on the 17 of December with no "cut." Reason: Only emergency operations will be performed at hospitals in the future.

18. Jerry broke out today for fair and all hell is loose. The excitement of putting the Squadron into the air three times only to have them come back with bombs and rockets still attached prevailed all day. Command is having its yards full and for a time no telephone contact was available. All personnel are carrying weapons again for the War is coming in this direction and we could very easily contact them unless they are stopped pretty soon. The first time in a long time that enemy vehicles are out in the open again and here we sit unable to do anything about it. For a time humor had it that we would have to move nearer to the front but at present if any move takes place it will be to the rear. Now the E/L is being watched closely but no changes are taking place for we have no contact with the ground forces at present.

Pvt HUTCHINSON received his orders to transfer from this Squadron to the 64th Airdrome Squadron.

19. The fog was down to the ground this morning and it stayed so all day. Here we sit some fifty combat pilots yearning to go and yet helpless to render aid where it would be invaluable. Jerry continues to move in this direction and pretty soon it's not going to be funny.

LT LE LOUP and LT WIDMAN returned from their flak leave in England ready to pile up more combat hours.

Effective tomorrow the pass system will permit our men to spend a lay off in Ghent. However, if the War isn't stopped soon, passes will be the least of our worries.

If the weather would only let up it would be a different story but let up or no let up, something is going to have to happen soon.

Pvt GEORGE T HUTCHINSON 747 who was on the alert for transfer, transferred to the 64th A/D Squadron. S/Sgts DIPERNO and HANSON volunteered to drive Pvt HUTCHINSON to his new organization located somewhere near the front lines and to hear these two fellows tell of their trip it was quite an experience. On their return trip home, "Believe it or not," this should be one for Ripley, the fog was so dense that S/Sgts DIPERNO and HANSON actually "swear" that they went through one of the towns seven times before they were able guided about by a colored MP on duty in this particular town.

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The transfer of PVT HUECHINSON left an opening of a job (Special Duty with Sq Det 368th Fighter Group) as mail clerk at Group Post Office. This position was filled in by PVT WILLIAM DIBNEAK of the Ordnance Department

20. The fog which has prevailed for several days has not lifted a foot as yet. LT RAJSTON has been sweating out a war weary trip to Paris and each day he arrives on the line in clean pinks only to sit around all day -- rough. The rest of the day produced nothing eventful and again the hang's heavy.

The Big Jerry push makes necessary changes in personnel functioning on our strip. The Defense Plane was put into effect again and a meeting of Ground Officers was held in the P.M. to make certain that everyone knew his part in case of enemy attack. Everyone has become slightly bloodthirsty and the possibility of an enemy attack has instilled a new spirit into the men. All I got to say to this is that I don't want any gun in my way when I start to run.

The B.M.'s Dance scheduled for this Saturday P.M. will go off unless the Sun appears as the uninvited guest. The guard has increased tremendously because of the present situation and in order to make the dance possible the Officers will pull guard duty that night. This is Democracy, isn't it?

A rumor -- word got around that the so-called "Wheels" of the organization, the Master Sergeants, a few of the Tech Sergeants and the First Sergeant were going to do "KP" on Christmas Day as their gift to the so-called "Little Man." Amazing isn't it what some people will rumor about.

21. This makes the fifth day in a row that the ground-fog has kept our Squadron on the ground. This is rough weather particularly at a time when the Ground forces could use our efforts to great advantage. The pilots of our Squadron are particularly unhappy about the whole situation but what can they do.

The general unfavorable weather conditions make for long dull and dreary days and nights.

The new harmonization plan which includes rocket installations gives SGT R.C. HOFFMAN the responsibility of co-resighting all the Squadron's planes.

Sgts' HOFFMAN, POOL, ADAMSON and Cpls' Campbell, Coker, and Narkiewicz were planning on a Xmas party but the new guard duty arrangements put a crimp in this plan.

They tell me that Cpl PEACOCK helps to while away the long hours in his barracks with music from his guitar. Music soothes the soul tis said.

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New promotions came out today and three "buzz-boys" are on the hunt for silver bars. LT ALLFICH, LT JOHNSON, and LT WIECK are the lucky trio. Nice going men.

A rumor turns into reality. This is another one for Ripley. A notice is placed on the Bulletin Board stating that the following named E.M. will be on KP Xmas Day. M/Sgts Long, Walker, Miller, Shea and Hicks. First Sgt Calderaro is also included on this list. T/Sgts Prinsley, Silva, Strausser, Habe, Hayes, Thompson, Sweeney, Smith, and McLaughlin. Some of the "Little Men" still don't believe it -- but it's the truth. In order to make the picture complete the C/Sgts listed below volunteered to be on detail with Sergeant Mays so that the little fellow could really be all to himself on Xmas Day. The following are the six (6) Staff Sergeants who volunteered; S/Sgts Davis, Shedenhelm, Murphy, Gebrlan, and Vergani.

22. No flying today of any kind for though the weather let up somewhat it was not enough. Test-hops scheduled were called off. A mission briefed was scrubbed. MAJOR SPARRS tried to get permission from Command to fly a weather heccy into the area of the German penetration -- again no buzz. And so it went all day. Some of the recent replacement pilots are going to be fortunate to get their flying time in this month.

Undaunted by all this LT BALSTON and LT HAYS went out and chopped down a tower near our Pilots Bar for firewood. These two gentlemen have certainly been providing firewood for the Pilots Room.

LT JOSEPH S. NOLAN is transferring from our Squadron to the 1st Army to act as an Air Support Officer. Joe has finished his operational tour and with prospects of going home looking very slim, decided to go afield for a promotion and a job with less danger involved -- he hopes. He'll be back with us from time to time to pick up his flying time so he's not leaving us for good. Take care of yourself - Foodles. LT GARRY stepped up and took over White Flight giving him his opportunity to earn his railroad tracks and thusly the war goes on.

The Squadron's Dance Committee makes final preparations for its dance which is to be held in our elaborately decorated mess hall on the eve of the 23 December 1944. Speaking of the mess hall, that was a swell job of decorating that the committee and the men on daily detail with Sgt Mays accomplished.

S/Sgt Demchuck and Sgt Hobbs returned from their short stay at the hospital. S.Sgt Demchuck was hospitalized for a chipped bone in the elbow received after a fall from

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the wing of his airplane; Sgt Hobbs was hospitalized for blood poisoning in his hands and arms. Both are back to full duty and well on the way to recovery.

Sgt FRANCIS READING (747) Engineering Department, who was absent sick in the hospital (38th Field Hospital) was transferred to the 130th General Hospital and dropped from the rolls. Nature of illness unknown at the present. However we do know that it is in line of duty. Since we are speaking of Line of Duty, in approximately nineteen months this organization has had only four (4) enlisted men sick in the hospital due to their own misconduct and not in line of duty. That is quite a record and our enlisted men are to be congratulated for it.

23. "We've had it," as CAPTAIN PENDLETON would say and that we have but good. Here Xmas is nearly upon us and what shouldn't happen to a dog is happening to us. We all were looking forward to a leisurely Xmas with some attempts being made to provide some sort of entertainment and at the very least, we expected a good Xmas Dinner. Now it looks as if we will be fortunate to eat at all. Here's how it all began: At midnight last night, CAPTAIN PENDLETON called a meeting of the Ground Officers at which time MAJOR SPATIS unhappily stated that we were to move out of Chievres. No, No we cried, Ah yes he sighed. Preparations and arrangements were made to have A Eschelon ready to pull out in the morning and thereafter, everyone began packing. At about 0200, everyone went to bed expecting to be called at 0400. At 0230 CAPTAIN PENDLETON called again to inform us that the move was postponed until noon -- at noon it was postponed again for a few hours. Move we must where, when and why is still pretty much of a mystery but we will find out too soon -- much too soon. At noon today, COLONEL CORRELL called off the E.M.'s dance to make certain that when the time comes to move all will be ready. Noe is someone.

Despite all this at 0700, a briefing was held and led by LT IVEY, our Squadron went out on a mission. At the completion of this mission the Squadron was to return to AOB, refuel, rearm and fly another mission then return to our strip here.

LT IVEY turned in a grand job of leading the Squadron this day. On the first mission a M/V at Mayen was hit destroying 3 locomotives, some 15 goods wagons and damaging at least fifteen others. The second mission really produced the fireworks when our twelve ship Squadron got bounced over Kruft, Germany by some 50 plus M/A. What a dog-fight. What a day. The final tally makes it the biggest day in this Squadron's history. Lt Ivey destroyed 1 FW 190, Lt Huff destroyed 1 FW 190, Lt Matthews destroyed 1 FW 190 and 2

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Me 109's, Lt Smith 2 FW 190's and damaged another, Lt Wayland destroyed 2 FW 190's and 1 Me 109. Hold your hats Lt (Wild Bill) Carry destroyed 4 FW 190's. Ain't nothing like this happened around here before. We didn't get off too easy for LT WALSTON one of our up and coming pilots did not return from this mission. LT WALSTON exhibiting marvelous ability and tenacity landed his airplane with three wounds in his right leg. LT FOLTZ made a forced landing at Loan minus a canopy and other damage to his aircraft. LT JOHNSON landed at a strip near the front with a plenty damaged aircraft. LT RUFF had himself a time getting home as well as did Lt Wayland. LT SMITH put on a show today which ranks among the finest performances of pilotage over here. With a hung up wing-bomb, he drove B/A off wingmates tails and destroyed 2 B/C in so doing.

LT WAYLAND ran out of ammo so he rammed a Me 109. This tactic is not in the books or in regulations but Bill figures anyway to get them so long as they are gotten will do. Could be! All in all it was some day that none will deny.

From all reports, LT WALSTON will not return to our strip for one P-47 was seen to go down in flames at the scene of combat. Tall, devil-may-care attitude, Bryce was carving himself a nice niche around here. He wore ribbons for participation in the Asiatic and Pacific Theatre so he was not exactly new to the army. It is our hope that one way or another he got out of the plane and that someday we'll receive good news concerning his whereabouts. Take care of yourself, fellow.

24. This morning activities began with a 0700 briefing for a mission into the break-through area. CAPTAIN MILLER led this mission which produced very little in the way of results except for knocking out a tank and peppering a few flank positions. A rush interrogator, a rush critique, a rush briefing and the Squadron went out for a second mission which was led by MAJOR SPANES. For the first time in a very long time our C.O. came back slightly browned off. Things were just generally snafued but those things happen once in a while too.

With all the planes on the ground we settled down for a quiet Xmas Eve. First came news that the move to Reims was cancelled -- we were moving to Metz. Then the move to Metz was cancelled -- we are moving to Juvincourt. One thing for sure. We are moving. Woe is us, for now we go back to the rough and ready life. Then the lights went out because of a Red alert. Then came a buzz-bomb putting along over our barracks going much too slow. As was expected, our men all ran

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out of the barracks and stood outside watching its progress and making comments such as there goes the g-----d thing. Not much was done in the way of celebrating for there wasn't anything to do. HANCO BENJES celebrated a wedding anniversary by attending a meeting in connection with the Squadron move while most of the rest of us were taking showers in anticipation of doing without this luxury for some time, and so it goes.

25. Christmas Day in Belgium. Everyone who last June expected to be home on this day has given up all hope except for a few diehards. Maybe next Christmas will be it.

This morning brought a CVLE briefing for a armed recon into the break-through area. LT WILK (little poison) led the Squadron on this little recon day package-presenting mission. This mission was delayed for some time but it was finally airborne. The Squadron went into the area of the German penetration and ran into quite a bit of activity. Flak was very heavy, German movement very pronounced and as a result of bombing and strafing a score of at least 25 destroyed M/1's was racked up. LT GARRY suffered flak damage to a wing and on his way home ran across some FW 190's strafing friendly columns. Disregarding his damage, he peeled off on them only to go into a spin as a result of the damage to his plane and in seconds found FW 190's climbing all over his tail. Fortunately, a bunch of F4U's came into the area and gave Bill a helping hand. LT GARRY sure had both hands full for a time.

LT GEORGE SWINK did not return from this mission. His plane suffered a direct hit from a 88 mm forcing him to bail out near St Vith. LT MIDLAM saw his chute open and saw him hit the ground, however, this territory is a fluid one so GEORGE may very well find himself a P.O.W. Back here, we hope not and hope that he manages to work his way back home. We'll sweat him out, we always do. A good lad, a fine pilot, plenty on the quiet side but darn likeable. "e want him back "quicklike."

The second mission of the day to be led by (Gameleg) LT EARLY; was briefed but not airborne. Just as the pilots left the shack, "Ops" called down and said "Hold them up." They were held up too long for the weather closed and they finally didn't get off.

We move, we don't move, we move again, then it's cancelled, and so it goes. This was Christmas Day at Chievres.

A Eschelon pulled out today for Strip A-79. They bivo-

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uaced here for the night expecting to go to Metz. A change in plans found them going to A-68 at Reims instead. Christmas dinner for these boys consisted of cold meat and beans.

26. The rest of us here at Chievros have been waiting for the Squadron to take-off, then we can hightail it for A-68 too. A briefing was called but the weather socked in keeping the planes on the ground. In the meantime, trucks are shuttling back and forth between here and Reims and very little is left to transport.

Reports reach us here that A Eschelon is undergoing Strafing and bombing from the Hun. Too, one boy is supposed to have said that Valley Forge couldn't have been too rough at least those boys had hills to break the wind and cold. It must be rough all over. When it's all over -- it's funny to look back on but at times it's not funny to go through.

27. The Squadron was briefed at 0830 to fly a mission then to land at A-68. Weather delayed the take-off until 1330 when they were airborne. All other planes which weren't on the mission took off to land at A-68. LT IVBY had as his passenger in the "piggy-back" our own CAPTAIN CLARK and apparently despite all his efforts the CAPTAIN did not have to use the bucket. Better luck next time.

The rest of us arrived at A-68 well after dark to find that A Eschelon had the situation well in hand. Tents were set-up and operations continued as if no move had been made. It's cold here and rough in spots but from an operational point of view, nothing is lacking. So here we are fighting the war in France again although I'll wager if we had to move back to Belgium, no one would complain. Belgium is a nice country and if more of it was not "off-limits" we probably would have many nicer things to say about it. It's the least war-affected country we've seen and we are all sorry to leave it. When I return home and start planting grass - instead of "Keep off the Grass" signs, I'm going to put up "Off-limits" signs -- no sense in losing old habits.

28. Today celebrates a year overseas for this Group yet no one is cheering. The morale of our own Squadron is particularly high yet it is sad because of work and no entertainment or recreation is offered. We've all been restricted to the base for two weeks since moving orders were rumored and yet all seem in excellent spirits. The way we look at it -- this war can't last more than ten more years and after that -- who cares.

We are all pretty well set up here now except for the mess hall and it is anticipated that tomorrow our mess hall

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will be ready to go.

No strafing last night although everyone hoped there would be. Don't ask me why but little things like this are looked forward to.

We awakened to find a ground fog soaked the field in and it looked like an all-day situation. It was for a release came through at 1300 until daybreak. The rest of the time was spent chopping wood, improving the tent area, and getting comfortable at least for a few days. And so it goes.

29. A year of overseas duty for this Squadron was marked up with the breaking of dawn this morning.

The first mission of the day was led by LT BARRY in support of the Third Army. It was the first time in a long time when bombs were not carried and it was strictly a strafing mission. Our pilots ran across a goodly share of enemy M/T's which were left behind in flames.

The second mission found Captain Mazur at the helm but this time bombs were carried. Another convoy was located which will remain where it was hit. CAPTAIN NORRIS'S flight bombed a supply point further cutting into the enemy's reserves.

LT HUFF and LT HAYS took a C 47 ride to England to bring back several planes while LT VIBOK took himself across-country ride to Paris.

Our E.M. mess tent has been set-up and is operating while the Officers have transferred their affections from the 387th Group mess hall to the 397th mess tent. There we eat by candle-light but it isn't as romantic as it sounds.

30. Two missions were briefed and flown today which was unusual to say the least for the best we've been able to do of late has been to fly one mission per day.

The first mission went out and after finding a hole in the overcast, hit a M/Y at 14203. Results here were fair to good. The second mission of the day led by LT IVEY went out and had a field day on targets of opportunity. A summary of damage and havoc created revealed a total of some 52 M/T's destroyed and 15-20 goods wagons derailed. A banner day and a few more like this one aren't going to make Hitler feel any better.

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31. A 0700 Briefing for a mission in support of General PATTON'S Army was held this morning. MAJOR SPARKS led this mission and the flight set a good record in the number of enemy M/T's destroyed. A modest total score of some 49 M/T's was recorded which so to speak, "ain't hay." This was a good mission for any one day's work.

The news has come through that another move is not only contemplated but a reality and here we go again. Apparently Metz is going to be our next location after all.

New Year's Eve was a quiet one for preparations for the move early in the morning had to be made. I doubt that many in our Squadron saw the "Old Year Out" and the "New Year In!"

O. O. 289 and 291 came through distribution confirming the various awards to the pilots of our Squadron. CAPTAIN GAMBLE received the Silver Star. CAPTAIN MATUR, CAPTAIN WIDLER, LT KRSTING, LT MCCROPE, LT CARBY, and LT WAYLAND were awarded the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS. That's a grand way of ending any year.

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OTHER EVENTS

M. I. A.

1 December First Lt JAMES J. BINTER ----- Combat Casualty
2 December Second Lt JAMES E. STOVER ----- M. I. A.
23 December Second Lt ERYCE A. PALSTON ----- M. I. A.
25 December Second Lt GEORGE E. SWINK ----- Bailed Out