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SQ-F1-395-H1
MAY 1944

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DOD DIR 5200.9

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
369TH FIGHTER GROUP
APO 595
Station 404

49

Historical Clerk:
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2nd Lt., Air Corps

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SQUADRON HISTORY
MAY 1944

I. Negative

II. Strength, COMMISSIONED ENLISTED

1. At beginning of period

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| OFFICERS----- | 45 |
| ENLISTED MEN ----- | 264 |

2. Net increase

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| OFFICERS ----- | 3 |
| ENLISTED MEN ----- | 1 |

3. Net decrease

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| OFFICER ----- | 2 |
| ENLISTED MEN ----- | 0 |

4. At end of period

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| OFFICER ****----- | 46 |
| ENLISTED MEN ----- | 265 |

III. USAAF Station 404, Chilbolton

- IV. Captain Malcolm A. Smith, Flight Leader did not return from a Fighter Sweep into enemy territory. At or about 1030 20 May 1944 our Squadron while flying this sweep ran into a solid overcast with tops at about 39,000 feet Captain Smith's flight was broken up and he was last seen flying into the overcast near La Mans.

Lt Curt C. Doescher, Wing Man did not return from an Escort mission into enemy territory. At or about 1230 28 May 1944 our squadron was flying escort to B-17s near Drummer Lake, Germany. Lt Doescher's engine conked out at 17,000 feet and he was seen to bail out landing in a field near Fourstein. His element leader reports that he cleared his plane safely but was apparently stunned when he hit the ground because he did not rise.

V. Awards to Pilots on 8 May 1944:

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Major H. R. Quimby | Air Medal |
| Captain T.N. Montag | Air Medal |
| Captain M.A. Smith | Air Medal |
| Lt R. E. Caldwell | Air Medal |
| Lt J. W. Early | Air Medal |
| Lt C. L. Gamble | Air Medal |
| Lt H. W. Jensen | Air Medal |
| Lt Richard Kik | Air Medal |
| Lt P. E. Martin | Air Medal |
| Lt I. M. Pascal | Air Medal |
| Lt N. W. Schulte | Air Medal |
| Lt Clarence Staton | Air Medal |
| Lt R. C. Pay | Air Medal |
| Lt W. J. Garry | Air Medal |
| Lt D. H. Huff | Air Medal |
| Lt G. A. Hughes | Air Medal |
| Lt. E. L. Kesting | Air Medal |
| Lt A. H. Kleinklaus | Air Medal |
| Lt Robert Miller | Air Medal |
| Lt. J. S. Nolan | Air Medal |
| Lt J. L. Williams | Air Medal |
| Flt O. E.M. McCrone | Air Medal |

Awards to Pilots on 21 May 1944

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Captain Thomas M. Montag | Distinguished Flying Cross |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|

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SQUADRON HISTORY
May 1944

CURRENT EVENTS

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SECRETOTHER EVENTS

May 1944

1. Briefing this morning was at 0740 for a dive bombing mission on the Ghislen Marshalling Yards. Our Squadron again flew top cover. An overcast over the continent prevented any observations of interest. This is the second trip to the same target for us.
This is the start of the fifth month for us in this Theatre. So far the score is 4-3-2, our loss to the enemy was one pilot Captain James W. Goodwin. Let's hope the next four months are even more successful.
The afternoon was spent in marking personal equipment for the impending move. It was a beautiful afternoon for the start of the invasion.
The first of the month brought a number of promotions among the Enlisted Men. Orders pertaining to this matter are attached under the appropriate heading.
Our Enlisted men are still going to various schools on DS to complete their technical training. Cpl D. W. Prezewiczikowski is attending a VHF Radio & Repair school while Cpl Martin and Pfc Marazzato & Pfc DeForge are attending a waterproofing school.
2. Briefing at 1000 for a dive bombing mission on railroad yards at Auloye. To date this has been our main type of flying. The bombing results were just fair, no more, no less.
The afternoon brought on the alternate dive bombing mission that was to be the alternate target for this morning's mission, Arras. The results again were fair to good. Our Squadron flew top cover. The flak which has been negligible for some time now came up to greet our men again. It was just close enough for everyone to know that it was there.
3. We slept until nine AM this morning. There is a cheerfulness about our Squadron now since Captain Montag has been our Operations Officer. He gets a lot done in his own quite way which is something to admire. As a result the morning disappeared quickly.
In the afternoon most of us went to the Briefing room and saw various combat films on the fliers in our Group. Most of them were of ground strafing missions - Not bad at all.
The order has been cut awarding the Air Medal to most of the pilots in our Squadron with the exception of the new additions. To Major Quimby and Capt Montag have been awarded Oak Leaf Clusters to their Air Medals.
Tomorrow is the day - up at four AM.
4. We got up at 0400 AM and it was rough take off was at 0500 which meant that the pilots logged about an hour and a half of night flying. The first patrol was uneventful.
The second mission took off at 0900 and were down at 1105. We were notified that our status now is that of "Ground Alert". This means ready to take off in fifteen minutes. The weather is closing in on the patrol area and we might be grounded.
Weather closed in so the alert continued until nine PM when we were released until day break.
5. Briefing was at 0700 with take off time 0901. The target for this morning is the railroad yards at Somain. One of the few missions which has found our Chief sitting on the ground - I'll wager there won't be too many more.
We flew only the one mission today and the afternoon was spent

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taking care of equipment and general cleaning up. At night a dance at the Officers Club provided an opportunity for rest and relaxation. A crowd of civilian girls were imported from Portsmouth and a good time was had by many. The shortage of liquor is almost a serious problem -- it was this night too.

6. The Group was on release from "Ops" this day so a rest period was in order. It's strange how most of us look forward to a release from activity but when it comes we would rather be on "Ops" because time passes much more rapidly.
7. Sunday rolled around with an 0730 Briefing for a Dive-Bombing Mission on Namur. This has been a favorite target for the "Heavies." Before the pilots got to the line, take-off time was moved up to 1220. Finally the boys took off on their mission. Reports indicated that some good hits were scored though some of the pilots still have a tendency to hit farmer's fields. Could be it makes for a better target than the one scheduled.
8. Today our Squadron was Top-Cover for the Group which was hitting a bridge at Sedan. Reports indicated that there were near hits but the bridge was still standing when the Group came home. Poor show. In the evening a presentation of awards was made to the Pilots of our Group. These awards were the Air Medal and Oak Leaf Clusters and few were the pilots in our Squadron who did not share in the presentation. As a matter of fact, a lot of the boys were not taking any chances of not getting ribbons and had their own purchased well beforehand. A complete list of these awards will be found under the appropriate heading in this History.
9. Briefing at 0830 for a crack at gun installations at Calais. This is an unusual type of mission because as a rule our pilots have been briefed to stay away from this area. Today we are sticking our head into the Lion's den as it were. Most of our boys aren't nervous about the whole thing, they are just naturally quick.
Calais turned out to be the flak area for which it has been noted. The planes of Major Quimby, Lt. Kesting, and Lt. Kim brought back scares from the mission. Nothing serious.
The afternoon brought another mission of dive-bombing on a Noball target. Each squadron has been assigned its own target to be attacked after the coast has been reached. Our squadron claimed that all but two bombs hit in the woods housing the Noble target. It's difficult to score results of hits on Noball targets because you can't see what you are to hit and if you hit it, there's no way of knowing. The planes were put to bed and at 2000 we called it a day.
10. This great day in my life, my birthday opened with a bang. At 16000 the O.D. awakened all of us for a Briefing on an Escort Mission. of the deep penetration type of support for B-17's and B-24's. The Squadron took off headed for the enemy coast when the mission was scrubbed. What now? Capt. M.A. Smith had a thriller on this morning's mission. He landed at our field with a dead stick. Had the mission been flown as originally planned, smitty would be learning some other language besides English. Things like this are what keep our boys on the ball. We keep on telling our pilots to bring those planes back and they do which is nice cooperation. The second mission for the day was a dive-bombing mission on the Cambrai Marshalling Yards. Our squadron had as its assigned target a choke point. From all indications the choke point was still there after we left. Lt. Biman and Lt. Doescher flew their first combat mission this after-

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noon. They are good fellows and have moved into the Squadron nicely.

11. The mission for this day is another dive-bombing mission on Marshalling Yards at Tournai. It's been pushed up several times now so we are just sitting on it waiting for the word go.

Lt. C. Gamble had a visitor today his brother-in-law S/Sgt R. Crosby a gunner on a B-24. The Sgt. has already flown twenty missions and is sweating out the next ten.

At 1204 the Squadron took off on it's mission. It was a successful one but due to a great deal of haze a difficult one to fly. Results could not be observed because our Squadron was not in a position to observe it's own results.

After critique another Briefing for a B-26 Escort mission. The haze continued to be a flying problem in this second mission too. While the B-26's hit Mezieres our Group provided top cover. The eventful aspect of the whole mission was escorting back two B-17's which were badly shot up. One of these B-17's just made the Channel going strong on one Engine. One crew member was seen to bail out over Belgium. The flak had no eyes for anything but the "Big Friends" today.

This day 2nd Lt George Colburn, our Armament Officer, became 1st Lt George Colburn. His sweating days are over.

12. We began the day by getting up at three A.M. For my money there's nothing cute about that song "Oh I hate to get up in the morning." Briefing at 0330 A.M. One flight from each squadron participated in a Practice Mission escorting C-47's which were mocking an attack on a bridgehead at Newberry our old stamping grounds.

At 0930 the real thing again. A dive-bombing mission on two targets, a Bridge at Namur and an alternate target the Marshalling Yards same place same show. The boys came back from the mission questioning as to whether or not the proper target was attacked. None of them saw a bridge, yet a bridge was our target. The alternate target attacked was not the one briefed either. They hit a railroad yard, blew up some tank cars and railroad tracks.

At 1640 came a release until daybreak and it was most welcome. The boys have been working pretty hard and late.

13. Wing is giving us a rest as a result we didn't have to get to the line until after nine AM. The release from "Ops" which is in effect until daylight makes possible other form of activities. Some of the Pilots are on the line checking their airplanes, others are out practicing up for a softball game this afternoon. Our boys have been working hard and the rest is a welcome one.

Our Chief has a first echelon haircut: life is filled with peculiarities. Bald headed men want their remaining hair left long while those of us with a good head of hair want it all cut off.

14. Sunday was a day of rest in the real sense of the word. A Dive bombing mission was scheduled but was scrubbed.
- The rest of the day was devoted to activities the personnel wanted to indulge in. Some just slept, others found things to do. The athletically minded boys got together a softball team and beat the pants off the 397th Fighter Squadron. No longer any question of our superiority over the other two Squadrons in all activities.

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15. Last night Jerry hit this field but good, damaging some thirteen airplanes to the extent that they can't be used for this morning's mission. The whole dispersal area is littered with duds but otherwise the damage is not too extensive. Whether this was a premeditated attack or an accident as a result of jettisoning. The men have spotted what appeared to be a German photographic plane in the air over our field several times, but we all pook pooked it. Now the Jerry is bringing the war to our field. Just for that we'll blast the hell out of one of their fields.

The mission for today is to dive bomb the A/D at Bretigny. The 395th is flying top cover while the other two squadrons do the bombing. So far take-off time has been pushed up one and a half hours. Further difficulty has been experienced because of the damage done to our planes last evening. Further assessment of damage by Jerry bombers last night develops in destruction of two planes, five had to be sent to the Depot for repair, six can be repaired by our own ground crew. It appears that a total of thirteen planes were damaged. A 20 foot crata and four exploded bombs was the net result of last night's raid by Jerry.

We were released late in the afternoon after sitting around waiting for the go signal.

16. Up at five AM for briefing at seven AM. The briefing was almost over when the scheduled mission was scrubbed. Why must this happen to us? The pilots went back to the sack the "Paddlefeet" or ground officers stayed up.

Not much of anything doing all day - the weather didn't clear up. First they work on our boys a little too hard then they let them lay around a little too long.

17. The weather was still socked in so we were still on release. The morning brought a little ground school to keep up with current developments. The afternoon scheduled a lecture on flak and another on France by an English Officer. All in all it was a quiet day.

18. Again today the weather kept our pilots on the ground. This English weather is something to behold. The officers tangled in a softball game with the EM and got a good whipping. There was nice playing on both sides and the issue was not settled until the last ending.

19. The weather broke today and we were back on "Ops" with an alert at four o'clock. Take off was 1918 with the Cambrai-Epinoy A/D as the target. Scattered results were reported although our boys reported a direct hit on a hanger. The weather over the target was none too good. Back to work Again/.

20. Briefing at 0730 for an escort mission with the "BigFriends" on a raid over Paris. The weather was such that observations was extremely difficult. No action of any kind reported.

The second mission of the day was a dive bombing one at Tournai Marshalling Yards. Our boys reported that all their bombs fell on the tracks North west of the choke point.

Carrying 1000 lbs bombs is getting to be a routine matter for our group.

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21. Briefing was at 0300 for a Fighter Sweep into Southern France. The ban on strafing was lifted so the boys yelped in anticipation. The pilots were no sooner in the air than they were recalled. They took off at 1031 to fly the same mission. Upon their return all they had to report was the difficulty encountered trying to fly through the overcast. Near collisions, lost flights, spins were the theme of today's flying. Since the Squadron landed we've all been sweating one Captain Malcolm A Smith. He's a NYR which isn't good. However we are hoping to hear from him very soon.
- Captain Marshall Mumaw returned to "Ops" today after 5 weeks DS as an instructor at Atcham. He said it's a country club there but he wasn't getting any combat flying that way. We are glad to have him back.
- Another Flight Leader Captain R/E. Bowlin is still on the inactive list, first from a stomach disorder and secondly as a result of a little motorbike spill. He should be flying in a few more days.
- We have a bunch of New Pilots assigned to our squadron who are present are in "Eskimo School". This is a training stage they have to go through before they can be classified as combat pilots. Our new boys are Lt, Aldridge Lt Snyder, Lt Vieck, F/O Rife and Lt McMilliam.
22. This morning brought no further inkling of the fate of Captain M.A. Smith. Mac a Flight Leader, a grand fellow in every sense of the word, did not return from yesterday's mission. He was last seen making a turn while flying on instruments in an overcast some 80 miles inside of enemy territory. There's not too much can be said when anything like this happens except why must it happen to nice people. Mac will be missed and it's our hope and prayer that he is safe even if it is in enemy territory.
- We are still on release until noon today. The weather is better today but then it would be today instead of yesterday.
- The return to "Ops" brought an escort mission in support of B-26's hitting targets in and about Montivillers. Take off scheduled for 1514 with the weather good for a change. The R/V was made as planned and no unusual activity of any kind was observed. Another Milk run.
23. It was up at 0600 for briefing this morning and a hurried trip to Group. We just got off the truck to find everything was scrubbed. To top it all off we were released until daybreak tomorrow morning. Some of the boys went back to the sack for a few more hours of sleep. The rest went to breakfast in masse for the first time in a long time. The usual pilot shack activities accounted for the day, censoring mail, ping pong, test hops and out to the line to work on individual planes.
24. This morning it was up at 0600 briefing for a "Big Friend" escort mission. The boys took them as far as Paris then came back beating up trains and motor vehicles. Captain Montag's flight got three, Lt Jensen had fun with his guns along with Lt George Hughes, Lt P.B. Martin claims a destroyed locomotive. These eight guns are dangerous weapons in the hands of our pilots and that's for sure.
- The afternoon brought a standby for our squadron while the other two squadrons are out on a special assignment. We are sitting around to see what gives.
- The squadron was kept alerted until seven o'clock when we were released until daybreak.

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SECRET

25. Started the day by a 0815 briefing for a dive bombing mission on a R/R bridge at Hasslet. This is an old target of ours it being among the first Marshalling Yards dive bombed by us. We were slated to fly top cover but it was later decided that two flights were to carry bombs, two were to act as top cover. To skip and delayed bombing are the tactics to be used as a substitute for divebombing.
- The Chief flew this mission today after missing the last several due to a stomach disorder. He's very seldom found on the ground if he can help it.
- A eschelon is undergoing a dry run of events to come. Luggage, equipment and men are being put through their paces this afternoon to eliminate all discrepancies or last minute hitches in operational functioning. B eschelon is sitting snugly biding their time. It won't be long now so it's rumored Rumors are what make life so much more interesting in the service - what would we do without them?
- Captain Fred J. Hama is attending an escape and evasion lecture in London... Lucky Fellow!
- The returning pilots claimed hits in, on and under the bridge. It was not completely demolished but it won't be used for a time. Our Boys claim skip bombing is not the technique to use against this type of target. The weather started to close in again so we drew a release until daybreak.
26. The release continued until 1100 when our squadron was alerted for a mission. At 1400 briefing was held for a bombing mission upon an A/D at Eureux. An alternate target was set up a bridge at Roben.
- Official word came through this day awarding the Distinguished Flying Cross to Captain Thomas N. Montag. This was done per G.O. 144 9th AF, G.O. Good Work..
- The boys came back from their mission extremely enthusiastic about the results. They claim that all but two bombs hit in the dispersal area and the target couldn't be seen for dirt, debris and smoke, Nice work.
27. Briefing at 0830 for a Fighter Sweep into the area of Reims. It could have been an eventful flight because 20 plus E/A were spotted but no fight developed. The E/A flew past our formation, were not spotted in time and disappeared. Lt Kik saw some broke into them, went into a spin and had his hands plenty full just trying to get out of the spin. When he recovered the E/A were nowhere to be seen. Life can be like that. Our boys keep hoping for a fight, but somehow it keeps eluding them. One of these days it's going to be plenty rough in that way, believe me you.
- The PM brought us a top cover job for a glide bombing mission on an ammunition dump hidden in the woods near Reims. The boys told me that bombing results were fair to good at best. On the way home they had fun shooting up two locomotives, Lt Schulte took a crack at freight cars, Lt Caldwell and Flight shot up a train, Lt Doscher destroyed a caboose, so all in all some shooting was had by all.
28. Dame rumor has it that Capt Fred J. Hama our S-2 Dept Head is being ordered elsewhere. The next few days should reveal developments in this story.
- Briefing at 0900 for an escort mission escorting B-26s who are to do a bombing job on Marshalling Yards and a bridge around Leige. Captain Montag will head our squadron. Yesterday he was going around with his head down. He hates to stay on the ground when there's flying to be done. He's happiest when he can fly.

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28. An epidemic of dirty upper lips has struck our field. It's a stage in manhood we all have to pass through, some of us are doing it the hard way. The pilots returned from the mission reporting a milk run so to speak. They did come back with interesting continental observations which may lead to further dive bombing efforts on our part. Nothing new on our status at present and a prevalent haze over the Channel and Continent may prevent further flights. Stand By!
- Just about the time everyone was about ready to go to chow our squadron was alerted for an escort mission to A-20s who were going to bomb a no-ball target near Abbeville. Our boys were at R/V on time saw a bunch of A-20s going 60 degrees from their course, picked them up and after going about 25 or 30 miles finally decided they were the wrong box and made a turn to make landfall in on course. Here the A-20 were picked up coming off the target and were escorted back to landfall in. From there our boys came home reporting another milk run.
29. Today should be a big day in more ways than sex. Our Group is escorting B-17s into Germany. They will leave them at Dumer Lake which should produce some action as some historic air battles have taken place in this area. We'll see.
- Only three of our boys were able to make this field upon returning from the above mission. One flight landed at Chippenmenger, one at Seething, three at Greenham Commons.
- What a lousy dirty luck! Lt Curt C. Doescher a recent replacement was forced to bail out over enemy territory at 1215 P.M. His engine conked out at 17,000 feet, he glided down to 2,500 and bailed out. He cleared the plane safely but upon hitting the ground was apparently stunned because he was not seen to rise. The nearest town on the map where he was last seen is Furstein. Tall, blonde, soft spoken, quiet boy, new to us maybe but already a part of family. Happy landings fellow we hate to see you sit out the rest of this war.
- The boys were no sooner down than they had to go to briefing again for a dive bombing mission on an A/D on the Brest peninsula. This being a pilot is not all glory and medals believe me you.
- Take off was at 1745. Upon their return the boys reported this run to be the heaviest flak area yet encountered. A new boy F/O Rife was christened with a 50 caliber M.G. heller found in his horizontal stabilizer. Some of the boys really earned their flying pay as of this day inasmuch as they flew both missions. So it goes.
- Pat O' My Heart, Lt George A. Hughes plane is no more.
30. Briefing was at 0815 for an escort mission to B-26s bombing an A/D at Nogent. Results were not observed due to haze and height of cover provided. On the return trip Major Quimby and Lt Huff destroyed a locomotive S.W. of Chartes. Nothing of any interest other than that above incident occurred.
- It was learned today that Sgt Best of the Communications Dept was informed that his wife gave birth to a baby daughter. Looks like a case of absentee ownership again.
- The FM brought another dive bombing mission for our "Buzz Bombers". The primary target selected is a road bridge, the secondary target a R/R bridge in the region of Elbeuf.
- This again was one of the most successful dive bombing missions yet flown. Both targets were completely bombed out of commission. Our Squadron came through in good shape although one of the other Squadrons lost a pilot to Flak.
- Confirmations came through from the 9th AF today. Capt Bowlin, Capt

Montag, Capt Mazur were credited with one each E/A destroyed. Major Quimby, Lt St ton, Lt Kik each got a dam ged. Score - 395th Fighter Bomber Squadron VS German Air Force is definitely in our favor. Monty has 3 E/A, Hank 1, Bowlin 1. We have lost to them for other reasons than combat, Capt Goodwin, Capt Smith, Lt oescher

31. Payday started with another 0800 briefing. Takeoff at 0935 to escort "Big Friends" over various targets on the continent. After flying some 25 miles into enemy territory the mission was aborted. The afternoon brought an alert for a dive bombing mission, but the weather is definitely closing in. It Did!
So ends another month in the ET. Let us hope we dont h ve too many more here.