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395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
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395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
368TH FIGHTER GROUP
APO 595
STRIP A-84
CHEVERES, BELGUIM

Historical Clerk:

S/Sgt Ernest C. Dennis

SQUADRON HISTORIAN:

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

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SQUADRON HISTORY

SEPTEMBER 1944

I. Negative.

II. STRENGTH, COMMISSIONED, ENLISTED.

1. At beginin. of period:

OFFICERS	- - - - -	56
ENLISTED MEN	- - - - -	251
2. Increases during the month:

OFFICERS	- - - - -	0
ENLISTED MEN	- - - - -	7
3. Decreases for the month:

OFFICERS	- - - - -	0
ENLISTED MEN	- - - - -	2
4. At end of period:

OFFICERS	- - - - -	56
ENLISTED MEN	- - - - -	256

III. On 26 September 1944 A Eschelon departed this strip for Le Coulet. This move is being made with Squadron Transportation facilities and as a result means breaking down personnel and equipment into smaller units for shipment. This move was made per V.O.C.O. and is to be a permanent change of station.

On 28 September 1944 personnel and equipment were dispatched to the air strip at Cheveres, A-84, per V.O.C.O. This order cancels the original order on the move to Le Coulet. The Strip 84 at Cheveres is a permanent change of station.

IV. Negative.

V. On 7 September 1944, eight pilots of our Squadron were notified to appear at Villacoublay for presentation of awards. These officers were Major Sparks, Harold P., Captain Clarence Staton, Captain Norman E. Schulte, Captain Lee R. Standifer, Captain Roy L. Bowlin, Captain Marshall E. Mumaw, Lt Richard Kik and Lt Robert M. Caldwell. They were to receive the D.F.C. Lt Richard Kik was to receive the Silver Star. Upon arrival, the ceremony was called off because General Kincaid did not appear to make the presentation. Since that time no other official word has been received as to what will take place on these awards.

HEADQUARTERS
IX TACTICAL AIR COMMAND

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 operational history, but also the informal life of the men in the Group Headquarters and Squadrons that is necessary to make the 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, AGD,
Adjutant General.

A TRUE COPY:

THEODORE F. SKALKO,
1st Lt., Air Corps,
Intelligence Officer.

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CURRENT EVENTS

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SQUADRON HISTORY
SEPTEMBER 1944

CURRENT EVENTS

1. A good flying day came into view and with that our Squadron flew three 12 ship flights and a one two ship flight. Lt Hayes and Lt Kleinklaus flew top cover to the 397th who were dropping leaflets in an area about Dijon. The three missions produced quite a few destroyed enemy vehicles and what has been unusual of late, they raised some flak. One mission alone gave a total of 44 destroyed M/T's, tanks, jeeps and armored cars. Major Sparks had himself another good day destroying four M/T's and damaging four more. The last mission of the day brought a little excitement for a check up revealed that Captain Bowlin had not returned. However all was well when it was learned that he had landed at a field near Paris for lack of gas. This is an unusual aspect for Captain Bowlin for he is an able leader and very seldom allows himself to get into trouble intentionally.

The pilots on operational leave in London returned and that brought us to full operating strength again. Group has inaugurated a pass system whereby one ground officer and four flying officers go to Paris on a twenty four hour basis. This will be a welcome change for it's been four months since the ground personnel have had so much as a day off.

All departments are in excellent working order now, living quarters are all set up and strip No. 3 is but a memory. It's amazing how rapidly moves can be made without interfering with the flying program or creating any unusual problems. As it is now we are too far away to perform close support work so we do not anticipate staying here very long. Such is service life, here today and no one knows where tomorrow.
2. The day opened with a schedule of at least three missions but a combination of factors resulted in no missions being flown. There was a very low ceiling and a high wind threatening rain all day. Our Squadron stood by all day on alert with no developments.

The Snack Bar in the Pilot's Room presided over by Corporal Farr has resulted in a good deal for the men who fly. They can eat when the mood strikes them or miss breakfast at the mess hall and still have it when they hit the line in the morning. Who's complaining?

The men who have spent 24 hour passes in Paris came back with the most enthusiastic tales. From all reports Paris is what everyone was given to understand it was.

The sum total of the day's constructive activities would be put in the negligible column. However days such as this must be expected.

A party was scheduled at the Officer's club with some forty five nurses scheduled to represent the feminine angle. No Nurses so many of the boys threw a party of their own feeling not the lack of feminine companionship. Now we'll wait and see what the Sabbath has in store for us.

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3. Briefing for our Squadron was not called until 1015 with a 1130 takeoff. Captain Mumaw led the first mission which had two objectives - one a Forest east of Laon another to provide cover for Bronco and Poodle 3rd Armored Controllers operating around Mons. Carrying only two bombs they destroyed over thirty enemy vehicles and accounted for about 135 personnel. This work sounds like tactics of the Infantry rather than the Air Corps. How the enemy is destroyed makes no difference to us just so they are destroyed but quick.
- Word came through that the enlisted men are going to be trucked into Paris everyday to enjoy the sight of a lifetime. This should be a great morale boosting fact.
- Major Weiler our Executive Officer has secured his release from Group and is on his way home. He is being replaced by Captain Pendleton who had been with Group in varied capacities. We are glad to have him although we'll miss the explosions which characterized the activities of Major Weiler.
- The second mission of the day was led by Major Sparks and flew the same relative area as the Squadron did in the morning. The results of this mission was some 12 M/T's destroyed and 2 tanks damaged. At this rate the Germans will have to walk for years to come. Thus ended another day.
4. This day brought us a release for unknown reasons in the mid morning. All else appeared favorable for flying combat missions but it was not to be. However it was not a wasted flying day for the various Element and Flight Leaders used this day to acquaint the new pilots with techniques and formation flying. Too many pilots used this day to slow time their planes and otherwise give them the extra needed touch approximating perfection..
- Too this was P Day for our G.O.'s. Early this AM they were trucked into Paris to spend the day sightseeing or whatever they desired to do. Should be a great day for them.
- The liberation of Paris was especially welcome for an enlisted man of our Squadron Sgt Jacques Smith's parents and sister whom he has not seen for years made their home in Paris throughout the period of German Occupation. So to him a pass into Paris could be called a homecoming. This business of living has it's share of happiness to go along with the misery and sorrow of a life on earth.
- Sgt Dave Scheinbart one of the mess hall boys returned after a 40 day stay in a hospital in England. He has a peculiar illness which would cause Temperance Societies no end of embarrassment. His system needs alcoholic injections to prevent reoccurrent attacks of his illness. Wouldn't you know it to be the case - he doesn't touch the stuff. "We are all glad to have him back injections or no injections.
5. 1st Lt., Oswald (Dingy) Doria is now a Group wheel. In the shuffle of personnel, he found himself transferred into a position which calls for a Captaincie, much as I like him personally tis my hope the war doesn't last that long.
- This has been a day of confusion and no accomplishment except that of frustration. Our Squadron was due to hit 3 AA

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gun positions at Brest in support of the 8th Infantry. Capt Mumaw led the Squadron to a point near Alencon where they were forced to turn back because of an overcast. All bombs were jet-tisoned in a wooded area.

In the afternoon the same mission was called only to be scrubbed immediately after briefing and so it goes.

The type of mission called is seldom worth what the cost could be yet our Group will not hesitate if there's a chance of accomplishing the purpose. However when birds must walk airplanes cannot fly. We stood by alerted but no developments came before we were released.

6. A 0600 briefing for an Armed Reccy over Saarbrucken. Our squadron flew top cover while the other two squadrons concentrated on bombing and strafing. Upon their return our pilots could not give any accurate information as to results because of the weather and because of the position they flew. Major Sparks led this mission the squadron returning intact whereas the other two Squadrons were not so fortunate. The 397th has a pilot to belly in but all reports indicate the pilot escaped injury.

The weather while it was poor this morning became increasingly so this afternoon. We sat by on a 60 minute alert awaiting developments. Then came the rains, no more flying for this day.

There are rumors of another move for our Group. It's really just about time as we are very comfortably settled.

7. The rumor became a fact with Captain Pendleton and several personnel departed by jeep for Laon to set up the Strip for operations. A release from "Ops" came through making it easier to pack equipment and organize personnel to make the necessary trip. The Squadron will move in three eschelons for we are forced to depend on our own transportation facilities and as a consequence the move will take a little longer. The whole day was spent packing, tearing down tents and moving enlisted men to Laon.

Throughout the whole day it rained or threatened to do so. When it cleared up for a time Captain Gamble took his new D 28 Thunderbolt up for a test hop.

The late afternoon brought reports of more promotions coming through. 2nd Lts Hughes, Huff, Kesting, Garry, Kleinklaus, Midlam, Le Loup and Williams made that difficult hurdle to 1st Lt. It's been a long sweat for some of these pilots.

Major Sparks, Captain Bowlin, Captain Schulte, Captain Staton, Captain Mumaw, Captain Standifer, Lt Caldwell and Lt Kik were all ordered to appear at Strip 42 to be decorated. Only five of the named could appear there and upon their arrival they were informed that the ceremony was postponed for lack of medals. From all indications it appears that seven of the gentlemen will receive the Distinguished Flying Cross and Lt Kik is to receive the Silver Star. Great Day!

8. It was back to work this AM with a 0645 briefing. Working with 19th Tac our pilots are scheduled to fly to Brest and attack targets there for the 29th Infantry. Captain Mumaw led the Squadron on it's first takeoff at 0803. Lt Snyder and Lt Midlam were not able to get off the ground for mechanical failures so only ten

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Airplanes took off. In the meantime another load of enlisted men and equipment left for Laon.

It was a long day before it was over starting at 0500 and ending at 2200. In that time 3 missions were flown for 19th Tac in support of the 29th Infantry. Captain Mumaw led two of the missions while Major Sparks led one. The Squadron was hampered somewhat by weather however a creditable performance was turned in. For the day's efforts, our boys knocked out a fort, pill boxes, a strong point and destroyed three gun positions. These were long flights from here to Brest and back averaging some three hours and forty five minutes each. The only pilots who didn't get to fly were the ones who complained. The last interrogation of the day had to be conducted by flashlight since the power went off.

Nights now are increasingly shorter as well as colder. Let us hope winter will find us home here it can be as cold as it wants. I'm very consistent on this one subject.

9. It was back to war again today with a vengeance. Flying Armed Peccys over Liege for poodle and Bronco brought action for our pilots. These missions have been almost as long as the ones flown to Brest.

Major Sparks led the first mission and racked up a score of some 19 enemy vehicles destroyed. Captain Clarence (Stud) Staton did not return from this mission but all turned out well. He was forced to bellyland his plane near Charleroi and was seen to step out of his plane. On this same mission Lt Hayes, Lt Ivey, and Lt McMillian picked up souvenirs from this trip.

The second mission led by Captain Mumaw and also produced good results. This mission racked up a total of 5 destroyed tanks, 10 damaged ones, in addition Lt Kik and Lt Weyland combined to knock out 19 vehicles and half a village. "Wild Betty" is in there pitching again. This was one of the few days that our Squadron called it quits at 1900.

10. The planes and pilots are scheduled to land at our new strip today however a change in orders came through so the final move will not take place until tomorrow.
- A total of three missions beginning at 0706 and ending at 2041 were flown. It was a good day and the boys really racked up a score against the enemy. Almost 50 vehicles, several locomotives an enemy headquarters and over 25 personnel were disposed of during the course of these missions.
- Lt Vianetti was forced to land at Laon due to battle damage suffered on a strafing pass. Assisted by Lt Kik who did a good job of escorting he made a good landing. These advanced strips have saved many a valuable plane and pilot.

11. Our Squadron was scheduled to make two flights today. The first one was not airborne until 1117 coming down at 1507. The final tally for this mission showed destruction of 14 M/T's, 4 half-tracks, 3 staff cars, 2 tanks and one personnel carrier.
- The second mission of the day took off on the same sort of mission but it was scheduled to land at Strip 69 at Laon Athies.

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Before this mission took off all the planes not scheduled to fly combat were flown to our new Strip. At the same time a convoy pulled out with the remainder of pilots, enlisted men and equipment. Captain Elliott, Lt Schofield and Lt Luker were left behind to police the area and make certain that no loose equipment was left lying around.

12. The Squadron is now operating from Strip 69, Chartres now but a memory. Flying in support of Poodle the Squadron went out twice bombing and strafing. NRO was the standard for the day for they followed out the orders of the Ground Controller on one mission and on the second mission poor weather hampered observations. The boys got a good look at the Sigfried Line on the second mission and reported that it is a formidable proposition.

Those of us who arrived today were overwhelmed to find how "fat" we were. The pilots live in a house of large proportions with a tiled bathroom and washroom. The ground officers live in a separate house in the same area. A eschelon did a grand job of setting up the squadron this time and no one had any complaints. The mess and enlisted personnel are set up in tents in a spacious area which is a better deal from living in a foxhole or forest. As soon as we are really comfortable we should move again.

13. At 0700 our Squadron was alerted on a 60 minute alert basis. However the morning went by and not much of anything developed. Orders came through sending eight of our planes to Burtonwood UK to have rockets installed. The pilots are not as anxious to make this trip as might be assumed, for by going they lose out on combat time which they are all trying to pile up.

The monday meal consisted of captured enemy rations and they were fairly good. Brussel sprouts, pickled beets, asparagus and fish were a different meal than we've been accustomed to having. From all appearances the Germans were all set to stay here for some time.

No flying at all today for the weather continued to be poor. so ground activities took up time. All our equipment and personnel are here and we are all set to operate or move at any time.

14. We were supposed to be on a 60 minute alert as of 0700 this morning but the only flying which developed was Lt LeLoup's flying the cub SW of Paris.

There was a meeting at Group of the I.O'S to discuss maps and related problems in the morning.

Captain Pendleton our Executive Officer has been receiving pats on the back for the swell job of setting up he did at this new strip. Right now he's working on a deal to provide steaks for the whole squadron. A potato patch was found on the field and a detail has been out digging up potatoes every day in preparation for the big feast.

Captain Elliott and Lt Schofield the last two officers left at Chartres pulled in to fill out the roster.

15. 0545 brought a briefing to do an armed recy for the 2nd

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Armored Division. After being airborne for about half an hour, our boys had to give it up and return because of an overcast. A decent ceiling is needed for our pilots to do an effective job. For a time it looked very much as though there wasn't going to be any more flying the rest of the day.

Out of a clear sky Group "Ops" called at 1600 and ordered our planes into the air by 1630. Captain Gamble took out an 8 ship flight to so Armored Column Cover for the 2nd Armored Division. Over Sittard our Squadron ran into entrenched German tanks and before it was over racked up a score of five German tanks destroyed. The area was dense with heavy and light flak and before the show was all over Captain Gamble's plane was clobbered. He came back with hits on the wings, tail surfaces and a hit in the auxiliary tank. At one time he stated he was afraid he'd have to jump but decided he could make it back to the field. The excitement which naturally results from an incident of this sort prevailed for several hours after the return of this mission. Captain Bowlin was an unhappy individual for it was his plane which Captain Gamble was flying on this mission but so it goes.

First rumor then fact had it that our Group was to move again. Incredulous as it may seem for we've only been here five days we started to pack once more. The new location is supposed to be the A/D at Le Coulet southeast of Brussels. Happy days comes another bronze star.

16. This was a day of tension and of uncertainty throughout it's duration. At 0700 Captain Pendleton left to scour over the contemplated new location at Le Coulet. Late in the afternoon he came back with the news that it was an ideal location, barracks for all the men and officers, all told a nice set up but - the British had moved in two days before. So for a time movement orders have been postponed.

At 0700 a flight of nine ships led by Captain Mumaw left for Burtonwood to have rockets installed on these airplanes. After some uncertainty they were able to take off. This trip had already been postponed several times because of poor weather.

The rest of the day the Squadron stood by on a 60 minute alert with nothing developing. Several times it looked very much as if a mission was coming forth but each time it was nipped in the bud. Finally at 1900 a release until daybreak came through. This is an unusual practice in itself because as a general rule the release seldom comes until darkness sets in. Not that it really makes any difference still there are times when an earlier release would be appreciated.

17. Today was a day of two missions. The days of 11 and 12 missions per day are gone. Now that the hours of daylight are so much shorter. However these missions are of a longer duration so it all evens up in the final analysis.

The first mission was led by Captain Gamble and was an Armed Reccy for the 30th Infantry. Sixteen more bombs were dropped to further convince Hitler of the futility of war.

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Lt Diman had an opportunity to exercise his many hours of recognition training when he ran into a He 111K. Though he got many good hits on the tail section he ran out of ammunition. This is the first time in many a moon since our Squadron has seen an enemy plane. He will be saving his ammo in the future for such an opportune occasion.

The afternoon mission led by Major Sparks was one literally in the clouds. Flying top cover to the Group they were able to hear what was going on below but due to the overcast could not see anything. A lot of the boys received an opportunity to log some instrument time on this mission.

The release from "Ops" came at 1800 bringing to an end the activities for the day. How many more must come until war is done? Makes a good question. Too good!

18. Today brought a release all day from "Ops" which was just as well for it was a gloomy overcast sky above us. At 0800 a truck took a number of our enlisted men to Reims where they were to spend the day returning at 2000. At the same time four pilots left for Paris to spend a 48 hour pass there. Since we've settled here for a time and all moving rumors have ceased a pass system for all concerned was developed by Major Sparks and Captain Pendleton. This makes for a better feeling all around.

The rest of the day was spent in the usual activities necessary to keep the Squadron ship shape.

The nickname adopted for our Squadron is "Penzer Dusters" with an appropriate characterization. This insignia has been painted on Major Spark's leather jacket and it really looks like something. Tomorrow is another day.

19. There wasn't any flying again for too many successive days. We haven't been particularly active from this strip. However one day all H - will probably bust loose again and we'll comence to earn our wages again.

The normal activities so necessary to every day squadron life was carried on as per usual. Some of our enlisted men are running into difficulties holding their stripes for their extra curricular activities. However discipline is discipline and boys will be boys.

20. The weather continued to be extremely poor but despite this handicap our Group tries to carry out all assignments. The first mission of the day resulted in a return to base with all bombs for low cloud cover prevented finding the target area. The boys had to fly this one by the seat of their pants as it were.

The second mission led by Major Sparks did an Armed Recce in the Coblenz, Cologne area. Four bombs were dropped on enemy M/T's with claims for at least two destroyed. On individual strafing Major Sparks and Lt Aldridge each claim to have damaged one piece. Targets are not plentiful any more and it seems a shame to be dropping 500 pounders on trucks, still it's a better practice than to jettison or return to

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the base with them.

When day is done and shadows fall we sit the sack. Some of the men have found outside diversions but the majority are still daving themselves for civilian life.

21. Our motto continues to be that we dust the panzers wherever they are or what ever they are. The two missions for the day resulted in the destruction of two locomotives, one village marked by artillery and one each tank barrier. Some of the Squadron have acquired the eagle eye so characteristic of our way of blasting the enemy. It just goes to show you that the habits of one's associates are easy to acquire. In this particular case it's all for the best.

The leather jackets of our Squadron are being emblazed with "Panzer Dusters" and they are a sight pretty to be hold. Life goes on in the ETO.

22. This day brought two missions both Group rather than by individual squadrons. Eriering at 0630 for the first mission of the day Group Leader our own C.O. Major Sparks. The purpose of this mission was to cut 8 different railroad lines. Reports after the mission indicate that six of the targets are no more while two are still in good shape due to a savior of low cloud cover. Lt Snyder "had it" when his air lane was damaged so severely by Flak that he had to land at another field. However he himself escaped injury and will be back with us tomorrow.

The second Group mission of the day led by Col Perego with Captain Gamble leading our Squadron. It was an unusual mission in that it was a Fighter Sweep something our Squadron hasn't done since it became operational in this theatre. A three hour flight was uneventful in that only friendly aircraft were encountered. Darkness comes so quickly that two missions per day are about the extent of our flying unless an unusual emergency arises.

23. All day it looked as though something would happen but nothing did. Morning briefings were scrubbed for the weather would not permit flying. An afternoon briefing was called and all looked well. The briefing was completed the pilots got dressed, got their maps and started for their airplanes. Suddenly gusts of wind, rain and dark clouds obscured the horizon Captain Cowlin who was to lead our Squadron decided not to fly the mission and that was that. The service has a name for this too.

The pilots led by Captain Mumaw returned from Burtonwood with the rocket attacked airplanes with the exception of Lt Hayes who cracked u up in landing in England. "Homicide" Homer has had his share of thrills of late and this latter one was not due to any error on his part. Then to top it off Green flight took off for 5 days leave in England and officers such as Lt "Jeep" Allen who had just returned went back again. Rough War!

When we first arrived at this strip, the food was none too good and it stayed that way for some time. This situation

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WAS REMEDIED to everyone's approval. Now two other situations have arisen which are of equal importance. One no cigarettes for we are now in what is called a Communications Zone. Secondly no mail apparently for the same reason. Well if it means that we can get cigarettes and mail again by moving to a combat zone, let's move. The closer we are to the front lines the more interesting it seems to be and time passes that much more rapidly. Of late we've been sitting around too much through no fault or desire on our part. Rumor hath it that we are waiting on orders to move to Le Coulet again. That's the nice thing about rumors we have so many and of such varied types one never tires of listening to them. As yet none has started the rumor that we are going home or at least + haven't heard it as yet.

Lt Cruickshank has replaced Lt Doris as our Personal Equipment Officer. He brought a rumor straight from a Corporal that our Group was slated to be the first to be sent home. He'd better be right.

24. The rains have come to stay or so it seems. 'Tis no wonder the English are not homesick for their homelands, the climates to foreigners such as us seem to be identical. It rained in the morning, it rained in the afternoon and it rained in the evening. A briefing was called for 0645- it was scrubbed. Briefing called for a later hour - it was scrubbed. Briefing called for 1445 was held and boy did it rain - it sure did. so no mission again. Pilots can't fly when birds have to walk that's for sure.

Our EM are still getting passes into Reims and evenings they are exploring surrounding villages. Passes to Paris have ceased at least for a time, for Paris is off Limits. Where have we heard that before.

Lt Le Loup's checker game is improving daily much to Captain Clark's chagrin. Oh well the Captain will come up with a new game soon.

25. The rain had not left this morning so we remotely drew a release until noon. Usually, we just sit around and sweat rain or no rain. Those who could stayed in bed others went about their usual business.

The afternoon brought a Briefing for a bomb leaflet mission. Two flights were to drop leaflets suggesting that the enemy forces surrender and outlined the treatment of prisoners. Another flight carried 500 pounds to remind the enemy that war was still hell. However the weather did not let up forcing the mission to be scrubbed. A Release until daylight came through at 1700.

26. The field order carried a release until noon and rescheduled the mission of yesterday for the afternoon. It rained all night and partly through the morning supporting the weatherman's predictions. At noon our Squadron went on a one hour alert.

At 1030 this morning A Eschelon departed this field for

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Le Coulet which is to be our new strip. This move has been rumored for a month so we are glad to see it finally come. Boy we were "fat" here - we knew it couldn't last for long. From what we hear we are to share our new strip with the 365th Group to our disadvantage. It appears that by the flip of a coin they won the side with the buildings and we are to live in tents. Oh well who wants to be comfortable anyway.

S/Sgt Pedersen departed our organization this day for a Replacement Pool. He had difficulty reading and writing but he sure could run a good mess hall. His case well illustrates the proverb of "Ours is not to question why? Ours is but to do or die. It must be sheer H- to be a civilian. A natural question arises. What is a civilian?

Finally after five days of trying to get off the ground our Squadron made it this afternoon. Taking off at 1600 they returned at 1900 just as darkness set in. The only targets were two towers which cutbreak wanted knocked out. Pilots report results were pretty good. That's all for today.

27. All moving has stopped until further orders. It appears that the new location has presented a number of problems to be overcome before any future moving can take place. All news of the new strip sounds far from good.

Briefing at 0645 for the same type of mission. After a three hour flight the pilots returned with the report of no activity and very poor weather. The four bombs carried were dropped through a hole in the clouds in enemy territory.

After this mission we drew a release until daybreak. Ho hum!

28. Today was a good day in many ways. First and foremost bundles of mail came in for the first time in two weeks. This was indeed a pleasant event. Along with letters some packages came in and the goodies in these packages were more than welcome. It is amazing how much we miss those things we did without as civilians but now that we can't have them we must have them. Few of us were avid candy eaters and gum chewers but now they are on the must have list.

Briefing at 0645 for an Armed Reccy mission in the Cologne Linz Area. It was a Group mission with each Squadron having only one flight carrying bombs. Our Squadron ran into a bit of excitement. Yellow flight led by Captain Bowlin was bounced by 4 FW 190's which made one pass hit the deck and scooted for home. During this pass Lt Smith received his baptism under fire for one of the FW 190's shot a flap out on his plane. He made it back to the strip alright but he came in "hot" and had to nose over to stop. He will sit on the ground for a week mulling over it. No one else got a crack at the enemy although Lt Kik chased them as far as he could before he had to turn back. Dickie strafed a locomotive on the way home. Dick always hates to come home without destroying some enemy equipment of some sort.

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The late afternoon brought the same mission with no definite results observed. Darkness comes so suddenly that two missions per day are all that our Squadron can get in.

These days are hectic ones for Captain Pendleton. He's been up at Le Coulet setting up for the Squadron and news comes through that we are going to still a different strip. The latest information now has us going to Cheveres which does not appear to be much closer to the front than this strip here. Lt. Cruickshank hit the road with the advance information for Captain Pendleton so he won't be caught unprepared. It's a rough war from all angles.

29. The first mission of the day began at 0645 with each squadron being assigned gun positions as targets. The boys went out and did an excellent job of knocking out the ground targets for Seascout the ground controller reported results were more than satisfactory.

At noon orders came in assigning our Group to Cheveres instead of Le Coulet. As it is now we have equipment and personnel at three strips. Despite all these moves the Squadron is carrying on as if it was at full strength.

The afternoon brought another mission against strong points. Lt Snyder lost a bomb on take off causing a little excitement but no harm was done. Reports indicated knocking out one gun position and near misses on all others. In bombing a near miss is as good as a hit for concussion and fragmentation do their work here. A release at 1700 brought to an end all operation activities for the day.

Pay day is around the corner but we probably won't be paid until it's decided whether we are to receive French or Belgium Francs. We'll see.

30. Today was the usual peculiar day. Briefing for missions were scheduled and held but missions were not flown due to extremely poor weather conditions over the target area. A release from "ops" came early in the day. For the most part the flying which was done consisted of test hopping and flying Y. This plane was converted into a piggy back deal which gives the pilots an opportunity to take a passenger along. Everyone seems to be willing to partake of this treat.

In the meantime A echelon is shuttling back and forth between Le Coulet near Louvain and A-84 at Cheveres. Slowly but surely the organization is being brought together again after being scattered over three strips. No pay today.