

SQUADRON HISTORY

....."Pappy" KENNEDY Gets An Award

When the unit first arrived on the continent, a few problems in preparing the food arose. Hungry men have to be fed, and on this premise, Lt CHARLES J. KENNEDY attacked the problem of trying to keep the pilots satisfied in the stomach. "Pappy" was most sincere in his attempts at the culinary art. So well did he demonstrate his aptitude that he was immediately recognized as the pilot's cook. Because of his work, "Pappy" was presented with a citation and award which took place with a regular ceremony in front of the pilots tent over here in Normandy. Lt Col DOUGLAS had all the officers get into formation. Taking his position in front of the formation, the Colonel called C. J. KENNEDY "front and center." With all due respect, the citation was read to all by the Colonel and the award presented. Capt. DICK wrote the following and with the impressive ceremony that took place on or about June 27th, "Pappy" KENNEDY can point with pride to the award.

CITATION

Lt. CHARLES J. KENNEDY, in risking his reputation above and beyond the details of ordinary K.P., did on four separate occasions attack and bring under control the MYAI Field Range. In spite of intense air pressure, spraying gasoline, and an angry throng of hungry pilots, Lt. KENNEDY led an assault on this rugged target, and after repeated attacks, finally succeeded in obtaining enough heat to fry three and one half cold storage eggs and a slice of corned beef. In this toughest of theaters, Lt KENNEDY's coolness in emergencies and his dexterity with spoon and spatula, are a brilliant example to mess sergeants everywhere

AWARD

Stainless Steel Vegetable Dish with two Silver Spoon clusters and Field promotion to Mess Officer Senior Grade.

FROM HQ IX T A C 2700103
TO CG 70TH FTR WING AND CO'S ALL GROUPS
CO'S, *** 368TH FTR GROUP ***

CONFIDENTIAL SEND IN CLEAR AUTH: MAJ GEN E. R. QUESADA
THERE IS NO USE EXPRESSING MY APPRECIATION FOR WHAT YOU ALL HAVE
DONE THESE PAST THREE DAYS BECAUSE THE RESULTS I FEEL ARE A JUST
REWARD. A REAL BREAK THROUGH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND BY GOSH!
BY GUM! YOU HAVE ALL DONE MORE THAN YOUR SHARE. I JUST CANNOT
EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE IN WORDS AND JUST SAY A SIMPLE THANKS TO
EVERY ENLISTED MAN AND OFFICER IN THE COMBAT UNITS, SERVICE UNITS
AND AUXILIARY UNITS FOR WHAT THEY HAVE DONE. MY APPRECIATION
GOES TO EVERY MECHANIC, COOK, MP, CREW CHIEF, RADIO OPERATOR,
ARMORER, INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, WING COMMANDER, CONTROLLER, BOYS
IN THE AIRCRAFT WARNING SERVICE, VHF OPERATORS, TELEPHONE OPERATORS,
GROUP COMMANDERS, SQUADRON COMMANDERS AND TO THE BOYS WITH THE
STICK IN HIS HANDS. YOU HAVE ALL DONE A GRAND JOB.

-----QUESADA-----

A TRUE EXTRACT COPY:

/s/ HUGH L. RICE,
/t/ HUGH L. RICE,
Major, Air Corps.

" A TRUE COPY "
Murray B. Thaler
MURRAY B. THALER,
1st Lt., Air Corps.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

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Vol. 1. No. 25, August 1, 1944

'Somewhere in France...'

Capt. Joseph J. McLachlan, of Detroit, Mich., knows how it feels to be shot at not only by ack-ack in the air but also artillery and rifle fire on the ground. He experienced all three within a few hours near Marigny the other day.

McLachlan, a P-47 pilot with the Ninth Air Force, was escorting Sherman tanks when a burst of German anti-aircraft fire hit his plane. Bailing out at 2,000 feet behind the Nazi lines, he hid in a barn until American 105s flushed him out.

American patrols surrounded the barn and Sgt. Robert Kelley, of New York, spotted McLachlan and took a bead on him. After the first shot, McLachlan ran toward him and shouted: "Don't shoot again; I'm a pilot."

The Yanks brought him to division headquarters, gave him coffee and sent him back to an airstrip.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 154, 155...Ohlman Belly Lands....Flights Land at Other Strips.

Briefing was held at 0800 on Aug 1st. The squadron was to be aerial support to advancing armored units of the 3rd Armored Division driving south along the main highways. The weather cleared well enough to take-off at 0919. While over the target area, they destroyed 3 enemy trucks and damaged 8 others NE of St. Pois. Coming home towards base, the weather had socked in towards the field. Lt. Ohlman's ENGINE was cutting out and he had to belly land it near St. Germain le Gaillard, on the Cherbourg Peninsula. Lt. Col. Douglas' flight landed at strip 6 near St. Mere Eglise, while Lt. C. H. Olson's landed at number 10, near Carentan. They all returned to our field in the afternoon.

Lt. Col. Perego from Group led the 2 flights on the afternoon mission. They were airborne at 1915 and down by 2055 after strafing some enemy vehicles. The usual critique was held at Group.

MISSIONS # 156, 157, 158....Armored Column Support (Cont'd)...

In the morning of the 2nd, Lts. Kerchner, Loeb and Davis found out they had been promoted to 1st Lt. Kerchner made sure he would display his new rank by painting a white bar on his forehead. The first mission for the day had Lts. Johnson and Dixon on their first operational mission with the squadron. The eight ships carried two 500 lb. bombs each. They flew around the Foret de St. Sever. Finding 2 enemy tanks and flak positions, the flights bombed the tanks with close hits. They then strafed 4 tanks and 7 trucks.

Briefing for the second mission was held at 1900. They were going to patrol the same area and might go down towards Mortain. Lt. Brizendine was going on his first operational mission with the squadron. They spotted a motor convoy just west of Mortain, destroyed three of them and damaged the rest.

On the 3rd, briefing was held at 0815 for continued armored column support. Poodle and Bronco were the controllers with whom the boys were to work. The other squadrons which had just landed reported bad weather over the target area. We stood by all morning and didn't take-off until 1510. While waiting for the better weather, some of the boys were hanging around the S-2, S-3 site, playing with the beach sand, making fortifications and discussing best methods of attack. It finally ended up with C. H. Olson and Petrie burying Capt. Dick's Scotty "Angus", up to his neck, then getting him to try to get out from under it. Lt. Col. Douglas led the two flights. They flew down to Mortain again after Poodle # 1 told them of a concentration of enemy vehicles to the east of the town. Our own troops were all concentrated to the west side of the town. Going southeast of Mortain towards Barenton, they strafed a building which resembled a silo. By 1722 all were down. The weather became unflyable after supper, bringing a release at 2050.

MISSION # 159... Some More Support....

An early briefing in the morning of August 4th was postponed until later in the day. Low clouds were still drifting in all morning. At 1400 briefing was held. Capt. Henry gave all the necessary poopnto the boys -

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 159..... (cont'd)....

an eight ship mission and rendezvousing with tanks at either St. Pois or Mortain. Maj. Kroencke told us of advance mechanized cavalry in Domfront and Mayenne, well in advance of the bomb-line. Col. Meyers was going to fly with the squadron. When the pilots returned to the squadron to wait for take-off, the weather socked in again. The planes were air-borne by 1717 and on the way to the target area. The mission contacted Poodle #1 who designated an enemy strongpoint to them. After bombing the area, the boys went down to strafe the area. After the mission was completed, we were released until daybreak.

Lt. Boose went towards the front lines to scout around for some things which might come in handy. Capt. Kessler joined him as did Lts. Cox, Taubert and Stewart with Cpl. Tossetti driving the weapons carrier.

A SCRUBWANDEFERS RETURN.....WILCOX BECOMES 2ND LT....

On August 5th, Group held a briefing at 0815 for support work. British and American tanks were going to work in the same area. Capt. Romine was going to lead the two flights. As they taxied out, word came through to stand by because of the weather. We were finally released from the mission.

While waiting around during the morning, our scouts who left yesterday afternoon returned with a truck full of German odds and ends. Lt. Smith profited by the wires which Lt. Boose picked up. From their discussions we learned that they had ended up in Rennes at the time the city was being entered by our forces. They had a very adventurous trip.

During the day Capt. Speece of the ALO section dropped in to tell us that our troops were in Mayenne. Green Flight returned from their leave in England with Major Sparks and Capt. McLachlan. They landed at strip 6 and brought back to this field with this weapons carrier.

At 1900, all officers attended a formation held in honor of F/O Wilcox's appointment to 2nd Lt. As with Lt. Hansen, Lt. Col. Douglas read the appointment with Wilcox front and center. This was followed by a very rigorous volley ball game in the area.

Lt. Col. Douglas and White Flight left on operational leave to England early August 6th. The weather continued bad and at 0700 we went on a one hour alert. While standing by, H. I. Olson brought his radio out to the site. Group had most of the new pilots over for an aircraft recognition class. During the day, we saw the bomb-line become one continuous line across the base of the Brest peninsula. At 1455 a call came over the squawk box notifying us of a three flight squadron mission which Capt. McLachlan was going to lead against an enemy troop concentration in Gothemy. When the boys got back from briefing, they hurried out to the airplanes, taxied out but were held up on the take-off. The weather was closing in rapidly so the squadron was given a stand-by. The go signal had not come and we were released at 2130.

MISSION # 160....Score - 2 Me-109's destroyed....

The morning of the 7th was a foggy one. The fog lifted with briefing set for 1230. Capt. Henry gave all the information stating the mission in support of our infantry. Capt. McLachlan was to lead. After Henry got through, Mac briefed his and Benton's flight regarding take-off,

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 160..(Cont'd).....

formations and tactics. At 1403 the planes were airborne. The two flights proceeded to the rendezvous point, contacted the controller and started down on strafing 2 vehicles when the top cover saw 35 plus bandits approaching. The squadron climbed, called for help and then orbited until some arrived. Those of us back at the strip were listening to the R/T when this happened. We even heard some shots that were being fired. Somebody witnessing the dogfight exclaimed, "Nice work P-47" which gave us advance poop on the fight.

When the two flights came home we learned that Mac and "George" Benton each destroyed an Me-109. Mac had sweated out this first victory for a long time. Lt. Benton had to crash land at the base because his peto tube was broken from a mid-air collision with the Me-109. The Air Speed Indicator gave a false reading as he came down. The Me-109's jettisoned what appeared to be bombs upon approach of our planes.

MISSION # 161.....Dave Parrish Gets 1 FW-190 and 1 Me-109.

At 0915, August 8th, briefing at Group was held for support to the 3rd Armored Division near Mayenne of with the 2nd near Mortain. The ALO gave us the situation and told us of the German counterattacks in the vicinity of Mortain and how they were trying to cut through our lines to the sea in order to cut the armies. We thought of Mac's and Benton's interception yesterday and the possibility of their aborting with their bombs if they were headed to support their troops near Mortain. Maj. Sparks was to lead the squadron.

Little H. L. Olson, flying high on a test hop called in about 100 bandits over the R/T then notified Sparky of their altitude. The visibility was poor which made difficult to locate the assigned tanks. The bombs had to be jettisoned over Foret d'Andrain. When they returned to base we learned that Parrish had destroyed two enemy aircraft. Green Flight came upon the 25 enemy aircraft, chasing them towards the east. It seemed as if the Luftwaffe was up in strength this day. The pilots in the 109 bailed out when Dave's hits made it hot for him. The other E/A he destroyed was an FW-190. Col. Meyers was at the critique at which time Lt. Parrish told his story of the combat.

MISSION # 162....Continued Air Support.....

Briefing for the second mission of the day was held at 1515. Capt. Romine was to lead the two flights on the same type of mission. They went to the rendezvous points but couldn't contact the controllers. Fieldfare controller vectored the squadron to Coulans, but when they arrived no help was needed. The columns were heading for Le Mans. They then orbited and made a reconnaissance of the roads east and south out of Le Mans, on which our tanks were advancing. The flights found about 50 enemy vehicles east of Le Mans and bombed with very good results, eight to ten of them were destroyed. Strafing added 5 more destroyed and 3 damaged.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 162 (Cont'd).....

Coming home from this fruitful mission they encountered quite a bit of flak northwest of Flers. The release for the day came through right after the critique.

MISSION # 163.....Armed Reconnaissance.....

On August 9th at 0900 hours, the squadron went on a one hour alert. We were notified of a briefing to be held at 1245. Capts. Henry and Reinthal gave all the poop. It was an armed reconnaissance to be flown east of Le Mans, including the cities of Alencon, Beaumont, Mamers, Nogent and Le Mans. Major Kroencke gave the ground situation and told us of the unsuccessful attempts by the Germans counterattacking near Mortain. There was a possibility that the enemy might be withdrawing and they were to look for movements. By 1406, the eight P-47's with Capt. "Mac" leading the Thunder Bums, were all up in the air carrying two 500 lb. bombs each. The mission was flown as briefed but they didn't find any activity. All the ships bombed a suspected woods. Maj. Kroencke came over to the squadron for some hot news as to the whereabouts of the heads of some of our friendly columns and found out that they were moving south and east out of Mayenne. The squadron was put on a 30 minute alert as soon as all the ships landed.

Some civilian dignitaries were scheduled to arrive at the strip and all pilots were requested to attend a meeting at Group for the occasion. Those scheduled for the next mission stood by on the alert while the others went to Group Headquarters to await the arrival. However, they didn't come and the mission never materialized with a release finally in until daybreak tomorrow.

MISSION # 164.....In Search Of Enemy Tanks...Bounced.....

The squadron went on a thirty minute alert starting at 0700 Aug. 10. Some fog and low scud came floating in which burned as the morning passed. While standing by we were notified of the spot where Jim Gamblin was buried. It was near Champrepus, west of Villedieu. No information had come through regarding Lt. Jasper. Capt. Dick and Capt. Cox were going to go down to the spot after lunch to find out what the local inhabitants had seen.

At 1215 the squadron was notified over the ~~group~~ squawk box that we were to have an immediate take-off to an area where a big tank battle was taking shape. Twelve ships were all bombed up with 500's, all the scheduled pilots were rounded up, a quick squadron briefing was held and all the pilots rushed out to their airplanes. The whole group was going out to the target area. When the squadron arrived over the designated area, they didn't find the number of tanks which were previously reported to be in the hundreds. Smalltwig Controller vectored our squadron over to the Foret de Perseigne, east of Alencon, to recce. They bombed a possible supply dump in the forest and looked around for other targets. While flying in the area, 15 - 20 Me-109s bounced but everybody was O.K. These Jerries pressed the attack by diving through the formation from 9000 ft. to 3500 ft. All the planes were down by 1519. After the critique at Group, the squadron went back to a thirty minute alert status.

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MISSION # 165.....Delayed Fuses....

After supper that day a briefing was held at 1915 at which time we were told of a delayed fuse job. Since all the information hadn't come in yet, Lt. Newton Steers in his very witty manner, briefed on the weather for the period. The targets finally came in for the whole group. The crossroads, road junctions and roads between Mortain and Ger were the objectives for these "surprises". The take-offs were immediate. Capt. Mac was leading this mission with 12 and 6 hour delayed bombs. The flak north of the target area which was assigned with pin points to the squadron was intense. Mac had "Chuck" Romine bomb on his target because of this. The hits were observed in and around the pin-pointed roads and crossroad. It was getting dark when the boys returned and left for the critique at group after the interrogation at 2145 hours.

Capt. Dick and Doc Cox returned from their trip to Jim Gamblin's resting place. They brought with them the news that Jasper was possibly a Prisoner of War. From their investigations and talks with the folks around the scene where both planes were found, they learned that Jasper had parachuted out, was aided but the following day he was taken prisoner by the Germans. "Pierre" suffered injury to the back of his head, probably upon landing. It is hoped that these reports of Jasper are officially confirmed.

MISSIONS # 166, 167, 168...Fuel And Ammo Dumps...Some More Delays Dropped

The target briefed on in the morning of August 11 was a fuel and ammunition dump near Chartres in the woods at Seronces. Before completing the briefing, Maj. Kroencke gave the situation of the ground forces. After getting back to the squadron we waited around for better weather while standing by on a 30 minute alert. The squawk box sounded with a 1205 take-off. Maj. Sparks, leading the squadron, got to the target and bombed the designated areas but no immediate results were observed.

At 1330, briefing was held for the second mission. This time it was another fuel and ammunition dump at Maintenon, a little east of where the boys had gone in the morning. Take-off was scheduled for as soon as possible after the first mission came down. Capt. McLachlan was to lead this one with Romine's and Loughary's flight making up the squadron. Eight of the ships were bombed up and the other four were used as top cover. They put all their bombs in the forest briefed on and on the way home, Capt. Romine's flight found a convoy in which they destroyed a half-track, a tank and 2 vehicles by strafing.

After the critique after the second mission, we were told that there was a release until daybreak but that didn't last long for a briefing was called for at 1900. The group was going to lay some more delayed fuse bombs on roads and crossroads as the day before, between Mortain and Ger. An immediate take-off had three flights airborne at 2002, Maj. Sparks leading. Two runs had to be made on the targets because of the haze.

MISSION # 169, 170.....Close Support for Our Ground Forces...

Lt. Col. Douglas and White Flight returned to the strip on Aug. 12

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 169, 170 (Cont'd).....

from their operational leave in England. Lt. Benton and his Purple Flight got a lift to strip # 2 where they were flown to England on their leave. At 1000 hours the squadron was briefed on escorting A-20's going after an ammo dump near Les Yveteaux and an oil reserve near Les Buissons. Mac was to take the squadron, rendezvous at the first target and then take the A-20's to the second. However, as soon as the squadron was airborne, the controller scrubbed the mission.

Waiting for a mission, one came in for a take-off scheduled at 1700. It was close support with the ground forces in the vicinity of Mortain. The Germans were withdrawing and there good possibilities of catching them on the roads as they were trying to get out. The 12 ships took-off at 1703 with Mac leading. When they returned we learned of many white panels which were seen and confusion resulted as to whether or not the vehicles were friendly. Our troops were in the town of Mortain and also Le Teilleul. A heavy gun was probably destroyed by bombing while another went after a mobile 88, destroying it. One tank was left burning by strafing, while 2 other tanks were at least damaged.

At 1850, another briefing was held for the same type of mission. Maj. Sparks was to lead the squadron of 12 ships. The "Thunder Bums" were airborne at 1958 and set course for the briefed area. When they arrived, the boys did some excellent bombing. Three vehicles with red crosses, two of which were towing guns, were attacked and destroyed. Two flights bombed the town of Ger after being notified that it was entirely enemy, destroying 10-12 M/Ts. Murphy Controller vectored the squadron to a building which was being used as a German headquarters. They strafed it with excellent results. The house was left burning and enemy troops were running all over the place. At the critique, Maj. Sparks informed the boys that it was probably the last time he would be flying with the squadron because he might belong to the 395th as their C.O. starting the following morning. All wished him the best of luck at his new position. Sparky had stepped up from squadron Operations Officer to a Squadron Commander.

MISSIONS # 171 thru 176...Armored Column Support...Falaise Argentan P
Pocket Being Closed On The Hun...C.H. Olson Down...Sparky CO of 395th...
Level Bombing.....

The day started very early on the 13th. Briefing was held at 0530 for Armored Column support with the 3rd Armored Division working out of Mayenne. The fog and haze prevented the original take-off of 0630. Four ship missions were scheduled for the day. The weather cleared by 0930 and the first four squadron airplanes took-off at 1002 hours. They carried 2 frag bombs and one 500 lb. GP each. Northwest of Pre en Pail, the boys found an M/T and tank concentration which they dive-bombed with excellent results.

The second mission was airborne at 1300 hours, carrying the same load as the previous flight. There were no obvious enemy targets to a attack. The controller sent the flight to Argentan where they bombed possible enemy posts in the town and on a crossroad outside of Argentan, to the northwest where a vehicle was destroyed. Our troops were seen outside of Argentan, also heading in and out of Alencon. Two jeeps with

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 171 thru 176 (Cont'd).....

the familiar red panels were seen on the road between Argentan and Falaise, giving an indication of the gradual closing of the gap on the Germans. Lt. Col. Douglas and the flight were down by 1513.

Lt. C.H. Olson led White Flight on the third mission for the day. While in the target area, "Big Olie" was hit by a barrage of light flak. He pulled up and bailed out at approximately 1500 feet. When Lt. Quilty orbited the spot where the chute had hit the ground, it had disappeared. This was another great loss to the squadron for no word has been received yet as to his whereabouts. C.H. was last seen in the vicinity of Leffard, which is just west of Falaise. On the mission, the flight bombed and probably destroyed two tanks. Lt. Olson had always demonstrated his eagerness and courage which characterizes the spirit with which the boys carried out their missions.

Capt. Romine's Yellow Flight took-off at 1741, making it the fourth mission of the day. Checking in with Poodle Controller, they found him at Carrouges. Not having any definite targets for the flight they performed a reconnaissance and came in contact with Smalltwig Controller who was with the 2nd French Armored Division. The flight spotted a Tiger Tank and destroyed it by bombing.

The fifth mission was more or less uneventful. Capt. McLachlan had to abort because of engine trouble so "Pappy" Kennedy led the flight of three. This was the first abort for Mac in 80 missions. Not finding any targets and since the controller couldn't be contacted, the flight proceeded to bomb a crossroad in the forest west of Sees where some Jerries might have been trying to get out of.

The sixth and last mission for the day was something new for the squadron. Lt. Loughary and his flight flew to St. Lo at 10,000 ft. as briefed, when they contacted the necessary controller who vectored them to a point where they were to release the 1 to 6 hour delay bombs. The mission went as planned with the boys doing this bit of straight and level bombing. The bombing took place in an area west of Falaise.

During the day Mr. Deering, one of the well-known photographers in America, visited the squadron. He took a series of photos, depicting our life here in France. Maj. Thomas J. Andrews joined the squadron this day to take the place of Maj. Sparks as squadron Operations Officer.

MISSIONS # 177, - 179.....Armed Reconnaissance...Pitching in Against The Jerries...

Briefing was held at 1115 on Aug. 14th. The day's missions were to be armed reconnaissances in a definite area between Falaise and Laigle. They were to look for targets of opportunity. The eight ship flights were to carry 1 x 500 GP and 2 frag clusters each. Lt. Col. Douglas led the first mission which was airborne at 1232. They proceeded to the recce area when Fieldfare Controller called for help at Argentan. One flight bombed a tank which was holding the column up, with one hit direct on the tank, while the other flight bombed and strafed a probable gun emplacement with excellent results near Ammeville.

Briefing for the second mission took place at 1415. Capt. Henry and Dave Reinthal briefed on the recce area and notified the boys of Capt. Montag "going in" while strafing. All knew Monty well. Lt. Courtright gave the ground situation and the squadron left for the area

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MISSIONS # 177 - 179 (Cont').....

to await take-off. Capt. McLachlan led the eight ships. They flew around the briefed area but didn't see much. They finally spotted a supply dump northwest of Gace which they bombed with good results. Kerchner strafed and damaged a tank NE of Falaise, where he found out how intense the flak was. Friendly troops were on the roads between Laigle and Argentan, south and southwest of Gace approaching the town. British troops were on the move, too, south from Caen and across the Orne River near Thury-Harcourt.

The third mission for the day had its briefing at 1730. Major Andrews led the squadron and was flying with it for the first time. In the recce area, they spotted vehicles near Notre Dame de Courson. When they came upon them they bombed and strafed with excellent results, also destroying some horse-drawn carts. When the critique was over, we learned that the group was released for training and maintenance on the 15th. The day ended with the escape gap for the Germans becoming smaller and smaller with our boys playing their part with the Ground Forces. A big team.

MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING....Spike Jones Comes to A-3...

August 15th was devoted to maintenance on the airplanes and any training scheduled. During the day, the pilots came over to the S-2, S-3 site and all sorts of discussions took place. About noon, word came over the radio regarding the Allied landings in Southern France. This great news was greeted with cheers from all who heard it broadcast. In the evening, Spike Jones and his City Slickers visited our strip. The turnout was one of the largest over here to see this USO show at the Aero Club. The show was very entertaining with some very hearty belly laughs as the troupe went through their antics. The twin girls singing with the band were very popular with the crowd as they sang some of the more popular tunes of the day. The entertainers were all at home over here at strip # 3.

Capt. Dick, Loughary and Kerchner went to the vicinity of Tessy where they looked for Bone Myers and his airplane. When they returned they brought with them the news of where the parts of his plane were and the place where he was buried.

MISSIONS # 180 - 182.....Armored Column Support....

Briefing took place at 0700 in the morning of Aug 16th. We were to be Armored Column support for the 3rd Armored Division whose rendezvous point was at Ranen. Lt. Parrish and his Green Flight were the four scheduled for this one. Capts. Henry and Reinthal briefed on the mission proper while the ALO gave the situation with the bomb-line up to Versailles. The weather wasn't too good but they expected it to clear. Back at the squadron, the wait for take-off continued until 1417, when the ships were finally airborne. Parrish and his flight found 2 tanks and destroyed them a few miles SE of Briouze. There was much enemy activity in the closing pocket. Bronco was on the move with our M/Ts behind him.

Major Andrews led the second mission after 3 postponements on the

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 180 - 182 (Cont'd)...

take-off due to the weather. They carried 500's and 260 lb. frag. bombs. Near hits were gotten of a Jerry tank. No targets were given by the controller so the flight just kept orbiting the heads of our columns. Enemy M/Ts and tanks were reported moving into Fiers from the east. Since no other targets were given the flight started home.

At 1700, group called and asked for three flights to be ready for briefing at 1715. Since there was activity in the closing noose around the trapped Germans, the group was alerted to get as many airplanes as possible in the air. Everyone was to be back at the base at 2000 because the weather would sock in about that time. Lt. Col. Douglas was leading, with "Chuck" Romine's and Capt. Mac's flight of the job too. All rushed out to their airplanes as soon as we came back to the Tech Site. When the boys came back, they accounted for 1 tank destroyed, 4 tanks damaged, 8 trucks destroyed, 1 - 88mm destroyed plus 2 vehicles damaged as well as 5 gun emplacements.

MISSIONS # 183 - 185.....Armored Column Support Continued

At 0530 on the 17th, briefing was held at group for continued support. Dave Parrish's flight was the first on the days missions. They had to wait around for the weather to become better for flying. The take-off was postponed from 0630 to 0830, then finally told to stand by until further notice. At 1548 the weather was good enough to take-off. When the flight arrived over the rendezvous point, Poodle Controller asked the boys to bomb a couple of houses on the outskirts of Fromental also a crossroad. After bombing the pinpointed houses they strafed them with very good results, putting them on fire. The columns of our troops were outside of the town waiting to enter it. This was another fine example of direct support from the air.

Lt. Loughary and his flight were briefed at 1530. The general situation and the new rendezvous point for the headquarters of the 3rd Armored Division were given. The flight had a very uneventful mission. Our troops were seen approaching Ecouche. The cloud cover was such that it was difficult to observe and since the island bomb-line had been removed, they didn't want to take a chance on hitting any of our own troops so they jettisoned the bombs in the swamp.

Mac and his flight went to briefing at 1700. When they arrived over the target area, Bronco #1 called in enemy tanks which the boys went after, destroying 1 and damaging 2 northeast of Fromental. Bronco was in Fromental. Enemy vehicles were trying to escape going east from Falaise, out of Damblainville and out of Fresne la Mere. Jerry was on the run. After the critique we were released.

Some changes were made during the day. Capt. Baer was assigned as Flight Leader of White Flight and Lt. Larsen took his place as assistant operations officer. Glazier was put in Green Flight as an element leader. Pappy Kennedy went on S.D. to Group S-3.

ALERTED....No Mission...

The squadron went on an alert status all day of the 18th. We stood by on a one hour alert. No mission came in for the squadron but the

SQUADRON HISTORY

ALERTED....No Mission (Cont'd).....

395th and 397th were on definite missions. A release came in until day-break the next day. A school system for the newer pilots was instituted to begin at 0900 every morning except Sundays.

At 0900 hours on the 19th, the squadron went on an hour's alert status. No definite briefings were held. The weather started to close in. The strip was now quite a distance from the bomb-line and the possibility of moving was discussed. Rain came in the afternoon with a release issued at 1600. It was just a day of hanging around. Towards evening, a truck load of nurses happened in on the taxi strip. Since they were lost and looking for a place which was quite a distance from the field, our boys offered their hospitality and took them over to the officer's club and then escorted them home to their area.

MISSION # 186....Delayed Fuses on The Seine...

Capt. Henry and Lt. Blagen briefed on an armed reconnaissance mission at 0850, Aug 20th. It was to be over the Seine River from Elbeuf to Vernon. They gave the delineation of the 2nd TAF and IX TAC areas and Maj. Kroencke gave the situation with the news that elements of 6 divisions were still trapped. The targets would have been barges and enemy troops but it was scrubbed due to the weather.

The squadron was notified later on to put on 6 and 12 hour delay fuses. The briefing at 1830 gave the details of the dive bombing of both sides of a ferry route across the Seine, just west of Duclair. There were to be planted to get Germans attempting to get out of Normandy. This was one of the best missions the boys had flown. All the bombs were well placed on both shores. Just as the boys were coming down from the mission, Benton and his flight returned to the strip from their leave in England.

Lt. Parrish's and Lt. Larsen's confirmation came through crediting Dave Parrish with 1 FW-190 destroyed and 1 FW-190 damaged, and Al Larsen received credit for 1 FW-190 destroyed and 1 FW-190 damaged, too.

BAD WEATHER.....Movement To Chartres Airfield...

The 21st brought rain with it all morning which prevented any flying. Capt. McLachlan and his flight left on leave in the rain. They were off to England. At 1100, a pilot's meeting was held in the group theater. Some Officers from Wing came down to the group for the purpose of lecturing to the boys. The topic was Rocket and Jet Propelled Aircraft. This talk was very interesting. It dealt with the enemy's and our capabilities regarding this type of airplane. Everyone attending the lecture was most interested in all aspects of this latest type machine. The rain continued all day and we were finally released.

The weather continued bad the next day. This brought another release until the morning of the 23rd. Lt. Boose lectured to the pilots on Squadron Ordnance. About 1400 hours we were notified that "A" party was to be ready to move to our new base at Chartres early in the morning of the 23rd. The men got to work immediately on packing and getting things ready for the move the next day.

SQUADRON HISTORY

BAD WEATHER.....Movement To Chartres Airfield...(Cont'g)....

At about 0530, "A" party lined the convoy up for the move with Major Wernli in command. They pulled out of the area at 0700. The bad weather continued with the strip out for repairs. This cancelled all flying. The rest of the squadron started packing up and getting set to move. Lt. Kielgass and a convoy of eight trucks left at 0700 for Chartres. Those who remained were working in their particular areas. The pilots came over to the S-3 trailer to chat and discuss the premature announcement of the liberation of Paris by the WFI. Three new pilots arrived and joined the squadron. They were 2nd Lts. George A. Myers, Talbert S. Newhart and Robert M. Pace who came from the 495th Ftr. Trng. Gp. We were all becoming very anxious to get to our new home in the interior, and closer to Paris.

In the morning of Aug. 24th, the squadron was briefed on an escort mission for B-26s going after fuel and ammunition dumps. However, this was scrubbed and the squadron went on a 60 minute alert. The packing continued as we waited for some trucks to get back from Chartres to load up with more equipment.

MISSIONS # 187 - 189...Operations Continue From Strip...Armored Column Support.....

August 25th was a day of operations after four days of none at all. Briefing was held at 0845 for armored column support for the 2nd Armored Division. All ships were to be bombed up with 2 x 500 lb. bombs. The first mission for the day was led by Lt. Col. Douglas. They were airborne at 1004 and headed for the rendezvous point. The squadron came upon a great concentration of vehicles and tanks, approximately 400 with about one third of them being tanks, between Gissel, across the Seine River on a newly constructed wooden bridge and up the road along the river towards Rouen. Our own troops were spotted outside of Elbeuf. Lt. Col. Douglas dive bombed the bridge and got direct hits on it. Going down to strafe the convoys, our pilots accounted for 50 mixed vehicles destroyed and 50 plus more were either probably destroyed or damaged. Lt. Benton's flight went after a Tiger Tank which was dug in and was holding up our troops on the road. Their bombing probably silenced this tank because our columns started to move afterwards. The whole mission was another good example of support.

On the second mission for the day, Maj. Andrews led the 12 ships. They proceeded to the area near the Seine and contacted Cutbreak. Cutbreak tried to mark a tank with smoke but was not successful first. Later, the tank was finally spotted and disabled by our boys' bombing. This was confirmed by Cutbreak. About 10-15 horse-drawn field pieces, possibly howitzers were strafed by Johnny Baer's White Flight, destroying about 10 of them.

Immediately after the critique which the second mission had, Group Ops informed the squadron of an immediate take-off to go after a concentration of enemy vehicles which were southwest of Rouen. The squadron bombed up and got into the 12 planes, with Chuck Romine leading. When they arrived over the target area, there was no concentration of M/Ts. As a result all planes went after targets of opportunity getting some barges on the Seine and a machine gun nest. The intensity of the flak in this area indicated how well defended the place was.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 190, 191...Some More Support...An Me-163 Is Spotted.....

At the briefing on Aug 26th, the squadron found out that it was an armored column support again. If no targets were given by the controller, the squadron was to recce an area northeast of Paris. Lt. Col. Douglas led the first mission for the day. No bombs were carried. When they arrived over the area, they saw our troops, tanks and vehicles, at Les Chapelles Bourbon moving eastward. 30-35 horse drawn vehicles were strafed with a bag of 10-15 destroyed. One lone plane, the rocket propelled type Me 163 came screaming down in the vicinity a few to the east of Paris. The squadron was flying at 8000 ft. at the time this aircraft came diving down and then pulled up and broke away, heading east.

The second mission was led by Maj. Andrews. They, too, flew to the same area, Bronco #1 contacted the squadron and vectored them to the vicinity of Santeny. Bronco was identified as being in Tesigny with tanks and vehicles behind him, moving northward. The boys saw a Tiger Tank northeast of our column and destroyed it by some very good strafing. In addition, they destroyed 4 M/Ts.

During the day much of the equipment was loaded into about 7 or 8 C-47s which were helping to move our squadron to the Chartres airfield. A number of the men who were ready were transported with the C-47s to the field. An airdrome squadron helped service the planes since our own men were few in number. The squadron's operations had not been hampered with since the help was present with everybody pitching in. At the Chartres field meanwhile, those who were there already had gotten down to the immediate task of making the well bombed airdrome ready to accept our planes for operations. They had a big job getting the different places cleaned up and set.

MOVE CONTINUED....Planes and Pilots Leave For Chartres.

The squadron went on the alert early Sunday morning on the 27th. Practically everything was in the open except our quarters, anticipating the possibility of moving to our new home. Later in the day we were told that if a mission hadn't come through by 1630 or 1700, the pilots and planes would go to Chartres. This meant that most of the few remaining men would also leave. At 1600 a briefing by Lt. Col. Douglas was held at Group at which time he briefed the squadron pilots on the Chartres airfield, formation in the air and approach to the field before they would land. It was definite now that we would be catching up to "A" party. The planes took off at 1700 from strip #3 and arrived at Chartres about 1745.

As soon as the planes took off, everything else was packed up and loaded on trucks to make a convoy. Capt. McLachlan and his flight had returned from leave so Mac was the Convoy Commander. We started out at 1800. The trip took the convoy through Bayeaux, Caen, Falaise, Argentan, Sees, Alencon, Nogent le Rotrou and finally to Chartres. We put up for the night right outside of Argentan and continued the march at 0700 the next morning. This was a very interesting trip, going through the important towns in the original push south and east. The first convoys came through St. Lo, Isigny, Vire, Mortain, Domfront, Alencon and followed the same route from there to Chartres.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MOVE CONTINUED.....

At first the men were living in the barracks at the southwest end of the field but due to the battered condition it was in from the bombing by our Air Force, the rain leaked through and they moved to tents on the north side near the primitier strip.

Capt. Dick located a chateau outside of San Prest and after it was approved by group, most of the rooms were cleaned up and were used for quarters after being rented. The boys cleaned up the place themselves and made it more livable, getting rid of the dirt which the Germans had left.

MISSIONS # 192-194....Armored Column Support...Loss Of Stewart...

A 0600 hour briefing was held at the Chartres airfield for the first mission to be flown from this base. The squadron was airborne at 0722 and over the target at approximately 0800 hours. The squadron proceeded to Meaux and were told by Poodle that he had no targets for them but to recce the area north of him. Four out of the eleven planes carried a 500 pounder each. Going down to strafe near Betz, Lt. John B. Stewart, Jr. hit a tree and crashed. This made a total of eleven boys lost from the squadron. John had a swell spirit, and although he was one of the newer pilots, he welded into the family readily. The results of the mission showed 20 trucks destroyed in the Betz area.

The second mission for the day took off at 1320. They flew around in the Villers Cotterets and Soissons areas. A nice score was rolled up for this mission - They got a direct hit on 3 mobile AA guns about 4 miles south of Villers Cotterets. They also destroyed 17 trucks, damaged a tank, and destroyed a gas dump all in an area north of Villers.

The last mission came down at 2133. They reported our troops entering Soissons. The Germans were carrying out extensive demolition at Laen/Chambry airdrome. The boys found an excellent target and destroyed 90-100 vehicles on the road west of Laon. 20-35 more were at least damaged.

In the morning of Aug. 29th, the squadron was standing by should a mission come in. The morning was wet with the rain and at 1400 we were released because of the bad weather. The bad weather was with us all day on the 30th too, with some more rain.

MISSIONS # 195, 196....Armored Column Support...Grace Down But OK...

Mac Drifts Over Toward Belgium.

The work for the day was to be armored column support for the 3rd Armored Division. Briefing was held at about 1115 with the squadron being airborne at 1245. Lt. Grace's plane was hit by flak and had to belly in the vicinity of Vauxaillon, about 10-12 miles southwest of Laon. Grace was O.K. when he got out of his plane for he ran to hide immediately. His position in relation to the bomblines and the advance of our troops led us to believe that he was in friendly territory. This was substantiated by his return the next day. The rest of the squadron landed telling of their strafing of scattered targets of opportunity in the area. Friendly troops were moving out of Laon and up towards Crecy.

Capt. McLachlan led the other mission for the day. There was quite a shift in the bomb-line with a reconnaissance area taking in part of

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 195, 196..(Cont'd)....

Belgium and Luxembourg. Going out, the squadron, made up of 7 P-47s carrying 1 x 500 lb. bomb each, mistakenly navigated too far away from Bronco or Poodle. They ended up near Neufchateau, Belgium where they found a convoy of about 50 M/Ts, destroying 25-30 trucks. On the way home, the boys saw large fires and explosions in the south end of Verdun. Our troops were on the move, approaching Mezieres.

Another month has gone on its way in France. From the Operations Cobra, we saw the breakthrough which started at the end of last month take its large proportions, cut the Brest peninsula, and then swing east to gain more momentum. Our boys continued their fine job escort-tanks with such excellent close support, it was a big team. The squadron lost C. H. OLSON and JOHNNY STEWART in the fight to crush the Hun. They were of fine caliber. Big OLIE was MIA during one of the days when the Falaise-Argentan Gap was being closed to cut off Germans in a trap as he rendered close support from the air to our ground troops. STEWART crashed as he was one of the squadron which was escorting and supporting our ground boys in their move north from Meaux towards Soissons.

To continue with the merits of the squadron, the following confirmations came through from IX TAC.

June 22 - Lt Col DOUGLAS - 1 Me 109 destroyed.
June 23 - Lt Col DOUGLAS - 1 FW 190 destroyed.
June 22 - Lieut. QUILTY - 1 Me 109 destroyed.
July 7 - Capt. MYERS - 1 FW 190 damaged.
July 7 - Lieut. BENTON - 1 FW 190 damaged.