

SQUADRON HISTORY

5. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS: Continued  
GO #9, XIX TAC continued

3rd Silver Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. George R. Davis

16th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Capt. Charles J. Kennedy, Jr. 1st Lt. Frank S. Kerchner

16th & 17th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Capt. John W. Baer

18th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Capt. Irving Ostuw Capt. Oliver S. Ryerson

In accordance with GO #13, Hq XIX TAC dtd 24 Feb. 1945, the following awards were made: (Copy of GO atchd)

Section II

AIR MEDAL

2nd Lt. Gerald H. Breuer 2nd Lt. Edwin J. Soderlund

Section III

1st Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
2nd Lt. Edwin J. Soderlund

2nd Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
2nd Lt. Harold D. Hammett

3rd Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
2nd Lt. William J. Gennoy 2nd Lt. Arthur B. Holiman

4th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
2nd Lt. David J. Boss 2nd Lt. Richard T. Schindling  
2nd Lt. William D. Dunbar

1st Silver Oak Leaf Cluster  
2nd Lt. Talbert S. Newhart 2nd Lt. George A. Myers

6th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
2nd Lt. Albert F. Brizendine 2nd Lt. Boyd E. Johnson  
2nd Lt. Earl L. Kielgass

7th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. Robert R. Waggoner

8th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. Richard C. Cox 2nd Lt. Irven F. Miller  
2nd Lt. Kenneth L. Wilcox

SQUADRON HISTORY

5. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

GQ #13, XIXTAC Continued

9th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Capt. Meredith W. Henry

11th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. George P. Ohlman      1st Lt. George W. Petrie  
1st Lt. Leslie G. Hansen

12th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. Gerald J. Grace

13th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. Harold E. Glazier      1st Lt. Henry L. Olson  
1st Lt. Robert H. Howie

14th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Capt. Jerry B. Tullis      1st Lt. Henry L. Olson

5rd Silver Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. Louis D. Hamilton      1st Lt. John M. Loeb

17th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
1st Lt. Frank S. Kerchner

18th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Maj. John W. Baer

19th Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster  
Capt. Irving Ostuw      Capt. Oliver S. Ryerson

In accordance with par. 4 SO #12, Hq. 368th Ptr. Gp, dtd  
3 Feb. 1945, 61 enlisted men were awarded Good Conduct Medals  
(Copy of SO atchd)

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
360TH FIGHTER GROUP

AFG 141, U. S. ARMY  
3 February 1945

SPECIAL ORDERS )

NUMBER 12 )

1. Cpl (405) Frank S. Stowell, 39199927, Hq 360th Ftr Gr, is placed on TDY for a period of four (4) days. On 3 Feb 1945 to Hq 100th Ftr Wg, reporting thereat to Wing Instructor Education Officer for the purpose of attending an indoctrination course. Upon completion of this TDY, EM will ret to proper sta and crjn. TDY by LT and Capt or more, 60-114 P 432-52 A 212/50425. AUTH: TTX XXI TAG (R) J324.

2. Under the provisions of AR 600-67, the following named EM, 395th Ftr Sq, having completed the required amount of serv in the Army of the United States and having demonstrated fidelity through faithful and exact performance of duty, efficiency through capacity to produce desired results, and whose behavior has been such as to deserve emulation and awarded Good Conduct Medals for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity:

T/Sgt Oscar D. Oney	6252207	S/Sgt Robert Griffith	33373026
T/Sgt Robert G. Wervalin	15063092	S/Sgt Joseph J. Hansen	32424763
T/Sgt John S. Silva	3427092	S/Sgt John H. Houlihan Jr	31226462
T/Sgt Joseph H.weeney	3398195	S/Sgt Harry L. Marshall	6253304
S/Sgt Lewis E. Brusell	3405850	S/Sgt Charles R. Mathews	13072923
S/Sgt Donald I. Carpenter	12022332	S/Sgt Daniel H. Mohr	3336623
S/Sgt Harold D. Conley	1402636	S/Sgt Allen M. Olson	3726602
S/Sgt Dominic A. Galli	12016341	S/Sgt Donald E. Reilly	12136505
S/Sgt Peter Gebrian	2022290	S/Sgt Charles H. Richards	32505614
S/Sgt Floyd D. Tects	694236	S/Sgt Edmund L. Spalding	35496279
S/Sgt Andrew Yanta	1508222	S/Sgt Joseph E. Smit	32409111
S/Sgt William Perchuk	32506271	S/Sgt Stanley Tros	36634427
S/Sgt Joseph L. Dipierno	12042315	S/Sgt Raymond T. Tucker	14162037
S/Sgt Clifford F. Dolan	32434047	S/Sgt Richard W. Weaver	35421092
S/Sgt John A. Dantes	35544777	S/Sgt Vandal Tetz	35303362
S/Sgt Sidney Goldstein	31130734	S/Sgt Philius E. R. Goulet	11053401
Sgt William E. Bowers	15063535	Sgt Edward P. Kearns	6300052
Sgt Wilbur L. Faith	15064437	Sgt Earl H. Madison	19073009
Sgt Percy L. Barley	33271311	Sgt Thomas H. Barron	32066055
Sgt Joseph Rosavage	3345375	Sgt Roy A. Cook Jr	33320903
Sgt Frank C. Darling	32192059	Sgt Fermin H. Galloway	19060250
Sgt Irvin Golub	39320062	Sgt John H. Green	39556736
Sgt Robert C. Hoffman	16119003	Sgt Albert H. Keesee	32796649
Sgt Raymond J. Lavoie	31081933	Sgt Vincent J. Mastroletto	15374303
Sgt Robert E. Massier	11035668	Sgt Conrad J. Miller	39096054
Sgt Gustav G. Mitterholzer	35672464	Sgt Robert G. Newland	16150905
Sgt Harry E. Ostrosky	13061303	Sgt David M. Palma	39297507
Sgt R. C. Pool	33223338	Sgt Ralph J. Rocanski	16110149

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R E S T R I C T E D

SO 12, H. 366th Ftr Gp, 3 Feb 45,  
Par 2 cont'd.

Sgt Theodore D. Rujiere	32731699	Sgt Dux H. Schneider	14173225
Sgt Milton A. Schwab	35666623	Sgt Samuel T. Valenza	17102350
Sgt Carl E. Varaner	31173291	Sgt John C. Welch Jr	36740002
Sgt James E. Walsh Jr	11106307	Sgt Carl E. Wooding Jr	35602763
Sgt Gilbert E. Stehlin	3500525	Cpl Cassius F. Barnes	14192023
Cpl Alva J. Goker	14109197	Cpl John Purnan	12033258
Cpl Charles A. Kotetz	32729549	Cpl Paul L. Muntley	35131600
Cpl William H. Meyer	54019770	Cpl Richard T. Mosner	15354766
Cpl Charles D. Mully Jr	3310770	Cpl Walter S. Plummer Jr	31101115
Cpl Charles T. Race	3370920	Cpl Leslie G. Rutledge	32765054
Cpl Michael Stren;	32007053	Cpl Chester E. Tria	36199366
Pfc William G. Baker	32600043	Pfc Benjamin A. Gortez	32541333
Pfc Edmund L. DeForge	3100198	Pfc Jerome De Rita	31320670
Pfc John Furberis	32300005	Pfc David J. Goldstein	33592756
Pfc Wallace G. Nelson	3110970	Pvt Vangel H. Crawford	3-327472
Pvt John H. Henry	3-49137		

3. Under the provisions of Par 1 c (4) (c), AR 345-415, as amended, Capt ERNEST R. HEDDLETON, O130240, AG, is appointed Investigating Officer to investigate and report upon all the circumstances connected with the incurrence of injuries of 21 Lt Jack E. Hase, O83004, AG, c/a 3 Feb 1945, and to determine whether injuries were incurred in line of duty or as a result of his own misconduct. Complete Report of Investigation on WD AGO Form 51 will be submitted in quintuplicate.

4. Under the provisions of AR 600-40, the following named EM, 396th Ftr Sq, having completed the required amount of serv in the Army of the United States and having demonstrated fidelity through faithful and exact performances of duty, efficiency through capacity to produce desired results, and whose behavior has been such as to deserve emulation, are awarded good conduct medals for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity:

T/Sgt Joseph O. Ecker	34150163	S/Sgt Arnold R. Bumpers	34473653
S/Sgt Luigi Caputo	32753755	S/Sgt Frank J. Bulara	32500325
S/Sgt Dennis W. Pelvin	35400091	S/Sgt Ted Goldman	30400500
S/Sgt John F. Koenler	13000050	S/Sgt Charles E. Metzler	32174030
S/Sgt Vincent J. Olesby	34051042	S/Sgt Lewis H. Riggle	34117719
S/Sgt Allan J. Robinson	35730009	S/Sgt Joseph F. Salyo Jr	31070091
S/Sgt Elmo R. Schmidt	37450172	S/Sgt Thomas J. Sikorski	32091024
S/Sgt Robert M. Wade Jr	14001203	Sgt Henry R. Ertin	36232792
Sgt Charles L. Brimmer	36401599	Sgt Willis Gonnatt	6943066
Sgt Robert J. Duffy	12137063	Sgt Robert L. Dunn	31202149
Sgt Everett L. Easterly	10102304	Sgt Frederick W. Edwards	35511002
Sgt William D. Cherardi	32700116	Sgt William G. Hunter	31105652
Sgt Ward W. Kennedy	17000758	Sgt Andrew Mollichella	31150114
Sgt Richard H. Pottberg	12157003	Sgt Edward A. Volpel	36431636
Sgt Francis K. Frenn	11090089	Sgt Fred G. Soubert	15070414
Cpl Raymond Y. Allen	13023512	Cpl Charles F. Banks	12173539
Cpl Lloyd L. Baugman	17105704	Cpl Ross H. Bedford	39537569

R E S T R I C T E D

SO 12, Hq 360th Ftr Gp, 3 Feb 1945.  
 Par 4 cont'd.

Cpl Frank F. Drummer	33357251	Cpl Jerome H. Chojnacki	36555434
Cpl Sam Curcio	32309031	Cpl Charlie J. Demoron	15053385
Cpl Russell H. Doris	32919861	Cpl Russell C. Froeze	17152390
Cpl Edward G. Fritz	35056235	Cpl John G. Gradert	17112403
Cpl Thomas J. Griffin	32632953	Cpl Paul E. Hastings	11114564
Cpl Arthur A. Jaine	35133722	Cpl Joseph C. Lawrence	35543611
Cpl Edward Mazzeo	35701129	Cpl William J. Mcgarter	31310179
Cpl Wayford B. Megaha	34011184	Cpl James H. Moyers	12103563
Cpl Joseph J. Parnik	34011184	Cpl John G. Welfer	30330740
Cpl Jerome Weithin	34011184	Cpl Joseph Ziminski	32467214
Pfc William G. Bartley	34011184	Pfc David E. Brown	15341193
Pfc Paul Dulaney	34011184	Pfc Robert E. Fletcher	35794913
Pvt Aaron Jaffee	34011184	Pvt William E. Washburn	34732460
Pfc Jack W. Walters	34011184	(Atchd fr Hq 360th Ftr Gp)	

5. Under the provisions of AF 600-63, the following named E1, Hq 360th Ftr Gp, having completed the required course of duty in the Army of the United States and having demonstrated fidelity, honest and conscientious performance of duty, efficiency through capacity to produce desired results, and whose behavior has been such as to deserve commendation, and awarded good conduct medals for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity:

T/Sgt Donald A. Packa	3744237	S/Sgt Merrill E. Trudel	31125933
Sgt Henry S. Kernatoski	13053390	Sgt Lawrence J. Lange	36733170
Sgt Carl E. Newsome	34437135	Cpl Robert J. Baker	33290357
Cpl Leo D. Bryant Jr	30204287	Cpl Cyril F. Fey	35605234
Cpl Charles W. Hicks	10102276	Cpl Edward E. Vince	35417259
Pfc Wilbert R. Ahonen	14282990	Pfc Erasmo Garza	30030265
Pfc Donald L. Herwin	33702225	Pfc Herbert J. Marolo	14071072
Pfc Harry L. Stark	37329174	Pvt Florian Glischinski	36027273
Pvt George A. Capielo	32909669	(Atchd fr Hq 601st US Army)	

(Travel dir is pursuant to auth contained in 1st Ind, Hq US Strategic Air Forces in Europe, 2 Dec 1944, to Ltr, Hq European TC, USA, File 3004, EIM, 22 Nov 1944)

By order of Lt Col PERENC:

OFFICIAL:

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

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

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# SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

### PERSONNEL CHANGES:

1. In accordance with par 4 & 7, SO #11, Hq. #68 Ftr. Gp, dtd 1 Feb. 45, one man was reduced and 4 men were promoted to grades indicated. (Copy of SO atchd).
2. 2nd Lt. Jerome S. Thorough was transfd to 356th Ftr. Gp.
3. Capt. John W. Baer was promoted to Maj. AUS per par. 24, SO # 23, Hq. Ninth AF, dtd 23 Jan. 45.
4. On 1 Feb. status of 1st Lt. John L. Carter (MIA) was changed to (KIA), 2 July 1944.
5. 1st Lt. Louis D. Hamilton departed on the 12th, being trnsfd to the Zone of the Interior.
6. Pvt. Leo M. Devlin was trnsfd to Loire Disciplinary Training Center, Le Mans, France per par 4 SO 43, Hq. XIX TAC, dtd 16 Feb. 45.
7. 2nd Lts. Robert R. Waggoner, Richard C. Cox, and Leslie G. Hansen promoted to 1st Lieuts AUS per par 18 SO 51, Hq. Ninth AF, dtd 20 Feb. 45. 1st Lt. Jerry B. Tullis promoted to Capt. AUS per par 18 SO 51, Hq. Ninth AF, dtd 20 Feb. 45.
8. Capt. Meredith W. Henry, dy to KIA as of 21 Feb. 45.
9. Capt. Charles J. Kennedy, Jr. departed on the 22nd having been trnsfd to Zone of the Interior. 2nd Lt. James B. Philbrick promoted to 1st Lieut. AUS per par 1 SO 46, Hq. Ninth AF, dtd 15 Feb. 45.
10. 2nd Lt. Richard T. Schindling dy to MIA as of 23 Feb. 45.
11. Squadron notified that 2nd Lt. Rupert B. Maxwell's status changed from MIA to POW.

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R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 141, U. S. ARMY  
1 February 1945

SPECIAL ORDERS )  
: )  
NUMBER 11 )

1. Major HAROLD P. SPARKS, 0492726, AC, is aptd Assistant Group S-3.
2. The following named O and EM are placed on TDY for a period of three (3) days, WP fr this sta o/a 3 Feb 1945 to 16th AFG, Reims, France, for the purpose of obtaining Signal Corps parts. Upon completion of this TDY, they will ret to proper sta and orgn. TDY by MF, mil acft or rail. 60-114 P 432-02 A 212/50425. AUTH: VOOG XIX TAG.
3. 2d Lt WILLIAM T. CONDER 0386390 AC  
T/Sgt (326) Delmar G. Eicher 15863075 Hq 368th Ftr Gp  
Pfc (345) Richard G. Halberner 15 62297 1221st QM Co (Avn)
3. T/Sgt (274) Donald A. Packard 07441287, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, is placed on TDY for a period of two (2) days, WP fr this sta o/a 4 Feb 1945 to Scribe Hotel, Paris, reporting to Major O. Nichols on matters pertaining to Public Relations, 9AF. Upon completion of this TDY, WP will proceed to Hq Ninth Air Force. TDY by MF, mil acft or rail. 60-114 P 432-02 A 212/50425. AUTH: VOOG Ninth Air Force.
4. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of his Orgn Comdr, T/Sgt (759) Ernest E. Gibson, 15016947, 396th Ftr Sq, is reduced to the gr of Pvt for misconduct.
5. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of his Orgn Comdr, Pvt (345) Victor J. Rabideau, 12170446, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, is promoted to gr of Private First Class (Temp).
6. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 395th Ftr S., are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (747) Joseph L. Bosavage 33458375

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Cpl (747) William F. Hatcheson 19059359  
Cpl (747) Robert C. Haller 32372662

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (911) William D. Oruk 33593433  
Pfc (809) Sidney Grossman 32495450  
Pfc (747) Herbert N. Carp 12145495  
Pfc (060) Jonnie J. Wood 33221244

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SO 11, Hq 368th Ftr GP, 1 Feb 45.  
Par 6 cont'd.

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (932) Thomas F. Lynch 37329021  
Pvt (345) William E. Newton 16093320  
Pvt (590) Marlin V. Guthrie 38231848  
Pvt (590) Virgel H. Crawford 38327492  
Pvt (590) John M. Henry 36649137

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

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (750) Andrew D. Martin 34037257

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (911) William C. Edwards 37526452

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (590) Alfonso N. Catrillo 32467790  
Pvt (405) John C. Owens 19030499

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

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (747) Cecil F. Clancy 36507748  
Sgt (747) John A. Irish 32479280

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (747) Stanley Berkowitz 12148575  
Pfc (405) Charles H. O'Donnell 32712184

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (650) Joseph Greenspan 32826669

(Travel dir is pursuant to auth contained in 1st Ind, Hq US Strategic Air Forces in Europe, 2 Dec 1944, to Ltr, Hq European TO, USA, file 300.4 MEM, 22 Nov 1944)

By order of Lt Col. PEREGO:

OFFICIAL:

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

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

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R E S T R I C T E D

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# SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 340, 341.....Armed Recce.....

The month of February started off with bad weather. Waiting around at the S-2, S-3 site, a briefing was called in for 1030. When we arrived at the Group briefing room we found out that it was going to be a group mission with our Major Crisp to lead the boys east of the Rhine in the Limbourg-Geszen-Friedberg-Hofheim-Bad Schwalbach area. After S-2 gave the pertinent information, weather wasn't too optimistic. The ALO told of the advances of the First and Third Armies and also of the Russian claim of being 65 miles from Berlin and the Germans' statement saying they were 35-40 miles from their capitol. Maj. Crisp then rose to brief as to just how he wanted the mission flown. The scheduled pilots took for chow in the weapons carrier afterwards.

Back at the squadron, the boys awaited take off to be called in. Instead, a release was ordered due to the fact that the bad weather wasn't going to let up. Meanwhile, Capt. Henry had put a call for all the pilots to be down at the line at 1300 to hear a lecture by Mr.

Cotter on "Toss Bombing", the new technique for having bombs released on a dive bombing run pull out at a time when the bombs would be automatically released to follow a trajectory directly to the target. Mr. Cotter had come to the squadron from Paris to remain with us a while and give the pilots all the information on the subject. He came to the continent from the Bureau of Standards in Washington, A discussion was held later.

In the evening's mail, a letter from Capt. Dave Parrish told us how he walked into his ~~home~~ home just as the Christmas dinner was being served. During the day, Lt. Thorough left us by transfer to the VIII Fighter Command.

Briefing was held at 0745 on the 2nd for the same recce area to the east of the Rhine. Maj. Crisp was to lead the Group. The ALO told of the continuing advances by the First and Third Armies, averaging 3-5 miles gain. The Home Guard in Frankfort-on-Oder was reported to have mutinied as the Russians came closer to this important city. The weather man expected a cold front in. A take-off was called down to the squadron for each squadron to take off individually, fly across the bomblines where they were to look for targets of opportunity and return home immediately. Maj. Crisp and the squadron flew out to enemy territory, found a concrete bridge about 4 miles northeast of Kirn which they bombed with poor results. The rest of the mission was rather uneventful.

The second mission was briefed on the same recce area. This was also a Group formation led by Maj. Carbine from the 397th, with Lt. Fullis leading our squadron. Lt. Steers told the boys that the expected front was breaking up with flyable weather in the recce area. The squadron was bombed up and flying top cover for the group. They were asked to look for rail traffic which would be heading eastward towards the Russian front. They flew out on the briefed course and finally came upon the Wetzlar marshalling yards which was jammed full of rolling stock and about 5 locomotives putting up steam. The squadron got excellent hits smack into the yard. A large explosion and some fires were observed. After dropping their 500 pounders, the planes set course for home and landed.

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 340, 341.....Continued.....

In the evening, VIII Fighter Command combat film showing German jet planes, both Me-163's and Me-262's, were shown at the Group movie. There were excellent shots of combat between these fighters and American.

No Operations.....Bad Weather.....

A briefing for all squadrons was held at 0730 on February 3rd. The mission scheduled was for an attack on the Giebelstadt airdrome, about 10 miles south of Wurzburg. Capt. Reinthal told the assembled pilots about the recce plane which had flown over the airfield when 3 Me-262's took off to intercept. The airfield was definitely an active one. The boys were also briefed on the other fields in the vicinity so that they could distinguish the Giebelstadt from the others. Weather was next as the synoptic situation was given. Capt. Courtwright gave the latest ground situation with the First Army doing well in the Monschau area. The French were also doing well in the Colmar sector. The Russians were having the same type of warm weather we were having and were reported near the Oder River, north and south of Frankfurt. Capt. Henry was to lead the group. He assigned the different parts of the airfield to each squadron and briefed as to how he was going to fly the mission. Back at the squadron, we went on a 30 minute alert. The weather continued uncertain until a release came in the afternoon.

The squadron basketball team played its first game in the tournament arranged by Special Service. The team, composed of S/Sgt. Vnook-center, Sgt. E. Bennett-rt. forward, S/Sgt. "Medic" Detert-lt. forward, T/Sgt. Spigut- lt. guard, Pfc. Bartley- rt. guard, and subs Cpl. Banks and Pvt. Castle, had the 1298th MP's as opponents at the gymnasium in the Hotel Royale, Metz. Our team won with a score of 31 to 19. A pilots team composed of Lts. Loeb -rt. forward, Myers-lt. forward, Boss- rt. guard, Hunt- lt. guard, Soderlund-center, Jones- center, Ohlman- rt. forward, Dunbar-lt. forward, Newhart- rt. forward, and coached by Lt. Newhart lost to the 395th Officers 20-18.

Sunday, the 4th, brought rain and a release for the day. It was a very uneventful day. We learned that "Nippy", the greyhound-terrier had given birth to a litter of 7 over at the enlisted men's quarters. "Butch", who might have been the father of Nippy's pups, went astray early in January and hasn't been heard of since. Angus and Corky lost a buddy. The squadron basketeers played a non-league practice game with the 321st Sig. Co. Wg, losing 20-29. In the evening, the first dance at the Group Officers Club was held. The young ladies invited were from Metz. This was also the first time we heard the Group's own band. They played very well, including our own Lt. Campbell at the piano and Sgt. "Chopper" Fowler at the base fiddle. The vocalist added to the bands performance. Many of the boys were feeling pretty good, including Lt. Austin H. Carr, who can tell all the different branches of the service which he deals with regarding the problems of squadron supply. The sandwiches which were passed out were very tasty.

# SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

No Operations Continued.....

February 5th was very rainy. There was no activity to speak of. Lt. Carr left for St. Dizier with his transportation detail for XIX Tac. It was a very dull day.

MISSION # 342.....Target - Giebelstadt Airdrome...2 Me-110's strafed..

The squadron O.D. called Capt. Henry at 0600 on the 6th. Briefing was to be held at 0700. When the mission pilots arrived at group, the same scheduled mission to attack the Giebelstadt Airdrome was to be the day's operation. Capt. Reinthal added the latest information he had about flak defences and other pertinent data. The runway at our base had to be fixed before any definite take off could be given. Capt. Henry was leading the group. While waiting in the S-2, S-3 building down on the line, the take off was called in. The other two squadrons were airborne and circling the field until Capt. Henry and the rest of the Thunder Bums were cleared. Some repairs had to be made on the strip of Pearce planking before the squadron was given the O.K. Weather was expected to be about 7/10ths in the target area as the group set course with their frag clusters under each wing.

The formation flew on course over a large patch of cloud after crossing the Rhine River. They left its edge when Capt. Henry looked back and saw the airfield at 6 o'clock to him, right below the edge of the cloud. They immediately turned and went down to attack. Only six of the squadron's planes were on this target. Lt. Glazier and his flight couldn't join up with the rest after coming up through the overcast so the 4 planes made sure they were in enemy territory and bombed a railroad bridge. The boys over the airfield dropped their frags but couldn't determine the exact damage done. In the north part of the field, rose colored flames were seen. Looking the place over, they noticed 2 large transports at the west end of the runway and a total of 40 plus enemy aircraft on and in the vicinity of the field. Some were parked in a nearby town. Lts. Dixon and Myers went down to strafe. Dixon got some strikes on 2 Me 110's, damaging both while Lt. Myers shot up flak positions on the south hangar. The other squadrons formed right up after the bombing and the group set course for home, landing at 1411. After the interrogation, the boys went to eat and then to the critique. That afternoon, Group Ops called in over the squawk box that Lt. Maxwell's status had been changed from MIA as of 20 October to POW. It was good news to hear.

In the evening, the basketball team played the 29th MRand R in a league game. T/Sgt. Malone played his first game with the squadron that night. It was another victory for our men - 35 to 19. Sgt. "Zeke" Richards must do a swell job of managing and coaching since the team didn't have an opportunity to practice since the tournament started. Lt. Carr returned from his transportation job that evening. The pilots had won their basketball game, too, opposing the MP's, by a score of 18-14.

# SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 343, 344...To Work With 80th Infantry Division...More  
M/Ts Hit.....

The weather and condition of the runway on the 7th prevented any operations or flying. The squadron was inspected by the XIX TAC during the day. We were released for the whole day.

At 0815 on February 8th, the squadron was briefed for air-ground coordination with the 80th Infantry Division, "Ironclad" controller. The controller's position was shown as the information was given regarding the mission. Maj. Davis, giving the sitrep on the Western Front, told of the 80th's crossing of the Our River in the vicinity of Wallendorf in order to seize the high ground on the other side of the river. The boys were asked to watch the rail movement between Trier and Bitburg. The infantry had jumped off the night before last and the ALO showed the latest front line and bomblines. A Russian bridgehead was reported northwest of Kustrin as well as being across the Oder south of Breslau.

The squadron was scheduled for a 0930 take off, Maj. Crisp leading. They flew out to the rendezvous point, but due to the overcast they proceeded eastward where they dive bombed a bridge near the town of Treis on the Moselle and the town itself. Only the western approach to the bridge received a direct hit and a fire was started in Treis. They also observed a phenomenon a few miles west of Trier when a ball of flame rose slowly and small balls of fire burst forth at about 6,000 feet.

The second mission for the day was briefed at 1015. Lt. Tullis was to lead. When they were over the briefed point, Ironclad was contacted, but the target he gave them was covered by the overcast. They went on a recce towards Bitburg when they spotted a concentration of 20 plus vehicles and others in the immediate area near Wetteldorf, about 5 miles southeast of Prum. Lt. Loeb's flight destroyed 6 and damaged 4 of them. Lt. Grace and his element spotted a halftrack and a couple of trucks which they bombed, destroying the halftrack with a direct hit and damaging the other two. Strafing the column of the vehicles, 8 more were destroyed and 12 damaged by the Thunder Bums. "Pappy" Kennedy caught a tank and got some hits into it. One of Lt. Tullis' targets blew up with a large explosion. The total for the squadron on this mission was - 17 vehicles 1 halftrack, and 1 horsedrawn vehicle destroyed, and 1 tank and 21 vehicles damaged. The squadron leader called in this target to the XIX TAC Controller and waited in the area until one of the other squadrons arrived. The light flak was intense, with 4 of the planes back with battle damage.

MISSIONS # 345.....Target of Opportunity.....

The briefing on the 9th was held at 0700. When the pilots entered the room they saw where the target was located - a railroad bridge across the Erft River, about 2 miles southeast of Neuss which is opposite Dusseldorf. The controller was the XXIX TAC. Capt. Henry was to lead the mission. Capt. Courtwright gave the latest about the different armies. The Third was still maintaining the bridgeheads across the Our River. There was no definite word as to what

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SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 345.....Continued

was happening in the British and Canadian sectors. Trying to cut the railroad bridge might be part of a plan to isolate the battlefield. The French and Americans were mopping up in the Colmar area. The weather didn't appear to be too good but there was a chance of finding the target area open enough to bomb.

The original take off was postponed until 0930 because of the engineer construction men putting the finishing touch to part of the runway. The squadron was airborne at 0909 and headed out on course. The weather was worse in the target area than had been expected. One of the XIX TAC Controllers cancelled the original mission. They flew over the area north of Laacher Lake when they saw the town of Neideroberweiler which had scattered mixed vehicles. All 24 bombs were put into the town, and then they strafed it. After this working over the town was left smoking and 2 weapons carriers type vehicles were destroyed. The results of the bombing were probably good. The planes returned home after this blow.

While on the mission was being carried out, the scheduled pilots for a second one were at group for the briefing. However, the above mission was cancelled and instead the squadron was to contact the controller when airborne. He was going to direct them. However, the weather was too bad in the afternoon. At first a weather recce was going to be sent out but this, too, was cancelled with a release following shortly. Lts. Olson and Brizendine left for England in X-bar where the pick-a-back was to be tested. Capt. Kennedy and Lt. Petrie left for England also, where they were going to ferry back airplanes to our base on the continent. In the evening, our squadron basketball team conquered the 397th officers in a tournament game scoring 45 to the opponents 25 points. Those who participated were S/Sgt. Vnook, Sgt. Bennett, S/Sgt. Detert, T/Sgt. Spigut, Pfc. Bartley, Cpl. Banks, and Pvt. Castle. This was the third straight league game won by our men.

MISSION # 346.....After Neuss Railroad Bridge.....

A release came in the morning of the 10th until noon. Word came down from group that Pappy Kennedy and Louis Hamilton were going to be returned to the U.S. Capt. Kennedy was in England and didn't know about it.

After the noon meal, a briefing was called in for 1345. The mission was to be the same one scheduled yesterday, the Neuss railroad bridge. Maj. Crisp led the squadron. Back in the squadron, the major gathered all the mission pilots to review the technicalities of the mission. The pilots went out to their planes, started engines, taxied out and took off. When they arrived in the target area, the weather was variable and prevented a good bomb run. The hits did not incur any damage to either the bridge or the railroad. After landing the boys went to critique then supper.

# SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

### MISSION # 347.....Napalm!.....

The morning briefing on the 11th was for an armed recce and sweep towards the Rhine River. The squadron was to carry the very fierce burning Napalm which gave off terrific temperature and flame. Capt. Henry led the mission. 8 airplanes carried 2 x 500 pounders each and the other 3 carried the Napalm under each wing in 108 gal. tanks. This was the first time since May 27, 1944, back in England when Lt. Col. Perego, then deputy Group Commander, had led the group on a mission with incendiary gas tanks going after an ammunition dump in the forest near Compiègne, France, that the squadron carried these tanks, but with Napalm this time. When flying in the vicinity between Rheinbach and Euskirchen, they found a factory on which they dropped the Napalm, hit and left the building burning. They also dive bombed a railroad and overpass with only possible cuts. The other general purpose bombs were aimed at vehicles in the vicinity of Hülzmulheim about 12 miles south of Euskirchen, destroying 3 and damaging 8 more.

February 12th was a day of bad weather and a release from operations. Lt. Louis D. Hamilton III departed from the squadron en route to the Zone of the Interior.

### MISSIONS # 348, 349.....Working Up North and A Newspaper Mission...

The first mission was briefed to go after the Neuss bridge again on the 13th. Lt. Tullis was leading the squadron on this one with all the planes airborne at 1235. When they approached the briefed target area, they found a solid overcast. When the squadron leader believed he was over the approximate vicinity, they dove down through the clouds hovering at 3,000 ft. When they broke out of the overcast they found themselves just east of the Rhine River. Two flights bombed a railroad bridge near Langenfeld, northwest of Neukirchen, damaging the approach to the bridge, and cutting the doubletrack railroad with their 16 x 500 pounders. The other flight bombed a factory about 2 miles northeast of Düsseldorf with excellent results, causing a large column of black smoke and cutting a high-way intersection before the squadron returned home.

The second mission was a 4 ship flight, carrying propaganda leaflets. The newspapermen were Lt. Loeb, and his flight. They took off, set course on their mission and dropped the barometrically fused bombs at Trier, Neuhaus, Schonecken and Wallersheim, then returned home.

### MISSION # 350, 51, 52...The Neuss Bridge Again and An Armed Recce...

The early morning briefing on February 14th took place at 0645. The squadron, led by Maj. Crisp, was to go after the bridge south east of Neuss until it was knocked out. By 0817 all 12 ships were airborne. They arrived over the bridge and dive bombed it with 4 hits on each side of the northwestern approach, and the tracks were cut at each end. The bridge was still standing, however.

The second mission was briefed at 1030. Capt. Henry was

# SECRET

## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 350, 51, 52.....Continued.....

leading, going after the same target. The 24 bombs which the 12 planes carried were aimed at the bridge. On this try they made the railroad unusable, and severed the northwestern approach, to the bridge. Half of the embankment was blown away at the southeastern approach. The bridge wasn't severed and the boys commented on the very good construction of it.

The third and last mission for the day was an armed recce to be led by Maj. Crisp. The squadron was to go on to Bingen then up along the east bank of the Rhine. Back in the squadron S-2, S-3 site, the pilots hurried to get into their flying suits, got their maps, kits and scrambled out to their airplanes. When they were in their briefed area, Ripsaw Controller tried to give the squadron a target, but when they vectored towards the grid called in, a concentration of 15 vehicles was spotted in the town of Hargesheim, just north of Bad Kreuznach. Four of these were destroyed by bombing. Debris from the buildings in the town collapsed on the M/Ts. Lt. Howie's flight strafed a little to the west of the town and added to the score 5 more vehicles, 5 horse drawn vehicles plus 10 horses and 4 Germans. When the boys landed they went to critique and then to supper.

In the evening, a dance was held for the Enlisted Men in Metz at the Hotel De Mille's gymnasium. The dance was for all units of the Ninth Air Force in this vicinity. They had a 7 piece orchestra and the local girls. Sandwiches were passed out later. The Metz girls had many and varied opinions of Jitterbugging.

MISSION 353...Armed Recce,...Hitting Enemy's Rail Transportation...

The briefing at 0645 on the 15th was for a two squadron armed recce in the Worms-Darmstadt-Germunde-Warzburg area. The 395th was to lead the mission and Lt. Tullis led our squadron. The pilots were told about the rail movements lately in the briefed area, as well as the nearby airfields, including Giebelstadt. The ALO gave the latest about Koniev's forces west of Breslau which were probably going north to meet Zhukov's men. He also gave the situation along the Western Front and the floods north of the dam area along the Roer sector. The 80th and 5th Divisions had widened their bridge-heads across the Our River.

Fog set in during briefing. The weather held up the original take off. The planes finally took off at 1237. When they were in the vicinity of Worms, the Controller tried to give them a priority target and as they proceeded to the point called in they came upon the marshalling yard at Ebenburg, south of Bad Kreuznach. Six of the ships bombed about 70 cars, destroying at least 20 cars by direct hits on the 6 made up trains. A little further north, the boys destroyed 15 more cars, and another flight got 15 more by bombing. Lts. Dixon and Schindling had battle damage to their airplanes so they returned early. At first we thought Lt. Dixon was going to belly land the ship because he had no tail wheel but he came in wheels down and everything was OK except for a flat tire. After the squadron had worked over the yards at Bad Munster and Bad K

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 353.....Continued.....

Kreuznach, they continued on with the 395th, then home. Lt. Schnedler was kidded by Frank Kerchner who called him "Wrong Way Corrigan" when he escorted Lt. Dixon to the wrong field twice.

The boys not on the mission worked with Mr. Cotter on "Toss Bombing". Lts. Howie and Hunt ferried two planes to Charleroi. The squadron basketball team played the 397th at the Hotel de Ville, losing their first game in the tournament, 33-22.

MISSIONS # 354, 355.....An Escort and Air Ground Effort....

A briefing was held at 0700 on the 16th for an air-ground effort in the VIII Corps sector, plus an armed recce. The pilots were told about the 11th pz Division possibly moving up towards Bitburg. They were to watch out for trains in their recce area. The ALO related the fact that the waters, north of the dams which the Germans had blown up, were beginning to recede. The VIII Corps was continuing its attacks, which the boys were going to cooperate with. When the pilots were back in the squadron site on the line, the mission was held up and finally scrubbed. We were standing by on an escort mission.

At about 1000, a briefing was called immediately. When we arrived at group, we saw the course indicated on the map - base to Eindhoven (the rendezvous point with a box of B-26's to escort) and then different legs to a point east of Dortmund. The 395th and 396th squadrons had a box of B-26's each, which were going to bomb in the vicinity of Unna. When at a certain point from the target for the mediums, the squadron was to dive bomb flak positions which were pinpointed for them north of Unna. After this, they were to join up with the 26's again and escort them out. There was very little time to get set for the rendezvous time had to be met.

Maj. Crisp had an accident on take off when his wing hit a pole. He couldn't go on the mission, so Lt. "Sammy" Kerchner took over the lead. When they came to the rendezvous point a little late, there were no B-26's. The squadron proceeded to the briefed area anyhow. They looked the flak positions over, and then spotted a train near Lunem which they bombed, destroying a couple of cars and Lt. Hansen's element destroyed a locomotive just south of Frondenberg and at least damaged the trestle it was on by dive bombing. The locomotive near Lunem was strafed and destroyed. The heavies were bombing the industrial area of the Ruhr while the squadron was working in the area. They saw Hamm and Dortmund getting a plastering. When they returned home from the mission, the boys congratulated Kerchner on his excellent navigating. Capt. Benton had come in just as the boys walked in from their planes. He was going to stay with us for a few days, coming down from IX TAC Combat Ops in a P-51. Capt. Benton was working with Col. Gil Meyers in A-5.

Briefing was called for another mission as the first one landed. It was to be the same one briefed on for close cooperation with the ground forces.

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 354, 355.....Continued.....

Lt. Tullis led this one. When they arrived in the VIII Corps area, they had no targets from the controller. The squadron proceeded on and came upon a marshalling yard at Densborn, southeast of Prum. There were about 150 cars in the yard. They destroyed 30 of them and damaged about 20. Three fires were started in the bombed yard. The boys did some excellent bombing here. All the planes were down at 1818.

No Operations.....

February 17th brought a 0900 hours briefing for air-ground effort with the XII Corps. If the ground controller had no targets they were to go on an armed recce. The ALO told of reports indicating that the 11th Pz Division was moving up to the Bitburg area. There was little chance for take off though. Fog had wet in and there was a low layer of clouds above. Back in the squadron we waited for further word on a take off time, but were released in the afternoon. In the day's mail, Yellow Flight received a letter from Capt. "Chuck" Romine, now a squadron C.O. in the Training Command.

The weather was again doubtful on the 18th. The same cooperation mission was scheduled with the XII Corps with an armed recce in the Trier-Stadtfeld-Cochem area. The ALO told us of the two Corps jumping off to reduce the bulge which the Germans had in our lines south of Prum in order to get the Jerries to withdraw or be encircled. This would also help in shortening our own lines. He showed the particular area the pilots would probably work in, pointing out check points and the relationship between the front and the bomblines with the use of the balopticon. This was followed with a brief sitrep on the other fronts. Maj. East told about his meeting one of the company commanders in the 4th Infantry Division, who sent out the patrol which had picked up Capt. McLachlan when he had to bail out last July 27th during the St. Lo breakthrough. This infantry captain had nothing but praises for the P-47 boys. There was no take off at all because of the weather.

In the evening, a dance was held at the officer's club with American Nurses from nearby, and local debutantes attending. It was a well organized affair with good music from our own band. The enlisted men had another dance at the Hotel de Mille, which was going to be repeated every Sunday.

MISSIONS # 356, 57, 58....Air-Ground Effort With The XII Corps...

The 1000 o'clock briefing on the 19th was for 8 ship missions flying in participation with the ground forces striking at the Germans in the XII and VIII Corps sector. As an alternate target, the squadron was given the CP of the 53rd German Pz Corps at Wissmansdorf. The armed recce area remained the same as formerly briefed. The pilots were shown the town of Wissmansdorf as they studied some check points. Capt. Reinthal told them about the definite decrease in GAF strength opposing the Third Army.

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SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 356, 57, 58.....Continued.....

The group received photos of the destruction of the Bullay bridge by the 395th, which had brought comment and commendation, and one of them was blown up on the screen to show the boys. The ALO continued with the news from all fronts, Corregidor, the bombing of Tokyo, and the landings by the Marines on Iwo Jima.

Capt. Henry was leading the formation. Back at the squadron he held a squadron briefing before meeting the 1145 scheduled take off. The squadron arrived over the battle area, contacting the corps and the 80th Infantry, but due to the weather, they had to ask XIX TAC controller for a radar controlled mission. The bombs were dropped near the Moselle some distance northeast of Trier.

Maj. Crisp led the second mission. When the squadron was in the briefed area, they were told to proceed to the target at Wissmansdorf. All 16 bombs were dropped on the town, some falling close to the probable site of the CP. Smoke and dust obscured the target as they pulled away having the place well hit.

The third mission for the day was led by Lt. Tullis. Their target was the town of Bettingen on the Prum River. After their bombing, smoke rose to 21,000 ft. All the bombs were laid into the town and high ground. The squadron then found a concentration of vehicles at the edge of the woods just west of Bitburg which they strafed, getting at least 3 to burn. Lt. Tullis' airplane was hit by the light flak in this area. He had to belly land the plane at A-97, Luxembourg.

During the day, some more "Toss Bombing" were flown with critiques by Mr. Cotter, Capt. Kennedy and Lt. Petrie returned from England. Capt. Benton went up for a hop in the afternoon. In the evening, our enlisted men's basketball team lost to the AA boys playing 3 overtime periods and losing 28-29.

MISSIONS # 359, 60....Continued Coordination with the Ground....

The 20th called for some more close work with the ground forces of the XII Corps. The squadron was to ask for targets when they were in the battle area. As an alternate target, the boys got the Salmrohr railroad bridge. The ALO related the good progress being made on the northern and southern flanks of the German bulge into the lines south of Prum. The pilots were asked to watch for transportation of oil which might be attempted to be brought to the Saarlautern area by the Germans. There was little news from the other theatres. Capt. Henry was leading the first mission, with Capt. Benton flying his element. The 8 ships took off and headed out on course. The air-ground team were together again and the 80th Infantry Division smoked an enemy command post in the town of Mulbach. The results of their dive bombing were excellent, setting the CP on fire and destroying 6 houses in the immediate vicinity. Spotting vehicles and tanks to the east of their bomb target, the boys went after them strafing and destroying 13 trucks, 3 tanks, a van and 6 horse drawn vehicles, and damaged an additional 18 trucks, 3 tanks.

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 359, 60.....Continued....1...

This was a very eventful mission. Capt. Henry set one of the tanks on fire with his 50's. He contacted Maj. Crisp over the R/T and told him where this concentration of enemy equipment was located. When they came down, they wanted to go out again after the stuff.

Maj. Crisp, leading the second mission, came to the vicinity of the above action. They found a concentration of tanks and M/Ts at Oberweis. With excellent bombing, they destroyed 3 of the tanks and at least 10 vehicles. Finding more vehicles, in the immediate area around Oberweis, they strafed and destroyed 23 more and damaged 11. 2 horse drawn carts and 3 gun positions were also added. It appeared that the Germans were starting to pull out eastward from that area.

A third mission stood by with some of the boys who had flown the first mission. Capt. Benton remarked how it reminded him of the "old days" with the squadron. However, the weather started to sock in and a release came through. Lt. Citro was all set for his first operational flight but had to wait out another day. The Thunder Bums sure gave Jerry some hell with the wonderful work done during the day. Lt. Petrie brought Lt. Tullis back to the base in the AT-6. Lt. Ohlman had to belly in on the runway when a wheel had come off on take off as he set out for the Toss Bombing range.

MISSIONS # 361, 62...Armed Recce...A Great Loss - Capt. Meredith W. Henry, KIA.....

The morning briefing at 0745 on the 21st was for an armed recce in the Koblenz-Limburg-Wetzlar-Marburg-Koblenz area. The pilots were asked to look for rail movement. Capt. Courtwright gave a brief sitrep on the ground situation and after the weather synopsis, the boys left for the squadron site on the line. Lt. Tullis was leading this first mission, and Lt. Citro was all set for his first operational flight. The 395th sent 4 of their pilots over to our squadron where Lt. Tullis briefed them, making it a 16 ship mission. After taking off, the squadron had to head eastward to get away from the bad weather. Over the general area south and west of Mainz they spotted quite a bit of rail movement. One flight bombed a train going north near Dornheim, another got a passenger train plus its locomotive, the 395th boys dive bombed a train west of Mainz, while the 4th flight bombed a small marshalling yard. The cloud cover over the alternate target - an ammunition dump just east of Koblenz, was too much to work over.

The second mission was to be the same and led by Capt. Henry. This was Lt. Sheedy's first operational. Capt. Benton was going to get some more flying time on this mission, too. They headed out on their course, getting to the ammunition dump first. All bombs were within the target area. There were no explosions, although they got 4 direct hits on the bunkers. From this point they proceeded to a point northwest of Limburg where they destroyed 4 vehicles by strafing and south of Weilburg they worked over some freight cars. Coming back, they spotted 6 enemy tanks south of Laacher Lake. Attacking this target, the squadron destroyed one of them and

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 361, 62.....Continued.....

damaged the other 5. Capt. Henry strafed and got the tank to burst into flames, the second time in two days he made a flamer out of a Jerry tank. A little south of this vicinity, the intense light flak from the airfield there got hits on Henry's plane. He immediately headed for friendly territory, with Hansen, Jones and Benton sticking with him. Henry was losing altitude as they heard him say over the R/T that it was getting too hot for him. He was believed to have attempted to bail out but the airplane, then at about 3,000 ft. nosed down with no chute being observed. The plane went down about 9 miles southeast of Bastogne.

Capt. Meredith W. Henry was killed in action! This loss of a wonderful chap was a great blow to the whole squadron. We all kept that last spark of hope in us until the next day when Lt. Col. Perego, Capt. Dick and Lt. Jones went up to the spot reported. "Hank" was found about 8 ft. from the plane. The AA boys in the vicinity took him to Wiltz and from there he was taken to the cemetery at Bastogne where he was buried with a service by an Episcopalian Chaplain. The 368th Fighter Group can point with much pride to our Henry! The sparkle that was his spirit in everything he did burns deep in all our hearts.

MISSIONS # 363, 64, 65...Maximum Effort Against Enemy Rail...Air-Ground Effort.....

The briefing at 1000 on February 22nd was for a part in the maximum effort by XIX TAC in cooperation with medium bombers going after rail targets and bridges to paralyze the enemy's transportation and communication system. Our squadron was to fly 2 simultaneous missions bombed up, and escorting A-20's and A-26's going after railroad bridges northeast of Kaiserslautern. Primarily, the fighter bomber cover was to knock out flak positions in the target area but since there was no reported defenses at the targets which the bombers were going after, the pilots were going to bomb the bridges after the bombers made their runs. Rendezvous was to be over the city of Metz. Each squadron of 8 ships were all set to take off, Maj. Crisp leading one and Lt. Davis the other, when the times were postponed one hour. Both formations of P-47's made their rendezvous, Maj. Crisp's staying with the A-20 and A-26's going after the 2 bridges about 3 miles northeast of Enkenbach, Lt. Davis' and Lt. Kerchner's flights covering those going after the more northerly one.

Maj. Crisp and his eight ships flew along with the bombers to the briefed targets. One group of them bombed the very long east bridge. This one was left with a hole in the center of the span. Not seeing any attacking, the boys dive bombed the west bridge getting a couple of good hits on the west approach to it with all other strikes around the structure. A box of bombers then bombed this bridge, too, but both bridges were left standing after it was all over with a condition of "At least damaged". This mission stayed with the bombers until over Metz, then turned off to land at the base.

## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 563, 64, 65.....Continued.....

The other mission had made their rendezvous but lost their A-20's and A-23's when they got into an overcast. Joining up with others but these were headed past the briefed bridge with their own escort so the boys turned away and ended up bombing a single track railroad and supply dump at Lambrecht. They cut the railroad in one place and scored hits on the dump. Some smoke came up and the 395th passing over this spot later saw the smoke still coming up from it. On their way home and flying over this same dump, they saw an inferno with a great deal of smoke rising. Our boys must have put the match to Jerry's dump. Lts. Davis and Kerchner were notified about this as soon as we found out.

A briefing at 1515 was for air-ground coordination in the VIII Corps area. Lt. Tullis was leading the 12 airplanes which took off as soon as they were serviced from the previous mission. The 90th Inf. Div. smoked tanks as a target south of Scheidchen. Eight planes bombed and strafed here, destroying 2 tanks, damaging 3 others and destroying 5 vehicles, too. Lt. Cox lobbed a direct hit on 2 tanks, turning one upside down and the other on its side. The other 4 planes found tanks and vehicles at Holzchen, a town in the same vicinity. With their bombing and strafing they destroyed 3 ammo vehicles, one tank and damaged 4 more vehicles. This ended the day when the planes came home from this eventful mission.

Capt. Kennedy many times referred to as the oldest fighter pilot in the ETO, left us for the Zone of the Interior in the afternoon. "Pappy" was down to see us all before he left as we wished him the best of luck. His handshake was the tight grip which friendship alone knows well. This Thunder Bum shall be among our reminiscences. Lt. Philbrick found out about his promotion to First Lieutenant and invited the boys over to the club in the evening.

MISSIONS # 366 to 375...Air-Ground Effort....Lt. Schindling MIA....

At 0745 on February 23rd, all pilots were briefed on the effort being made by the XII Corps to clean out the Germans from the bulge they still held into our lines south of Prum. They were to fly 4 ship missions taking off at half-hour intervals, flying close coordination with the ground units. Later in the morning we also found out that the First and Ninth Armies had jumped off between Duren and Julich in an offensive to hit out for the Rhine.

Maj. Crisp led the first mission for the day. The XII Corps Controller worked with them and marked the town of Niehl to bomb, which they accomplished, then strafed an ammunition dump and some vehicles.

The second mission was led by Lt. Glazier whose flight was requested to bomb a command post in the north end of Burg. They also strafed the area. The next mission was a leaflet one which Lt. Kerchner and his Red Flight flew. The towns to which the "newspapers" were delivered included Niederzerf, Franzenheim, and Trier.

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 366 to 375.....Continued.....

Lt. Tullis led the 4th flight to the XII Corps. They were originally asked to go after an ammo dump but since they didn't see any signs of it, they were given 5 tanks west of Burbach. With 6 direct hits, they destroyed all of them with 2 of them blowing up and another left in flames. To finish the job they strafed all tanks. Flying a little recce, they found some enemy M/Ts and destroyed most of them.

Lt. Davis and his flight took off and when they arrived in the target area, the controller had them bomb the town of Sinspelt after which they strafed and destroyed a couple of half tracks and a tank northwest of the town.

The next flight, led by Lt. Ohlman and with Lt. Winchester on his first operational mission, found a concentration of camouflaged vehicles and rid the Germans of 13 M/Ts by bombing. A little east of the town they found armor and strafed. A tank was left burning and damaged others.

Lt. Petrie led the next mission. Since the controller they worked with couldn't mark a target, the flight got one from another squadron working in the area. It was a gun emplacement at Feuerscheid. Lt. Schindling's plane started to burn on the left side of the fuselage which may have been coming from the engine cowling. He had to bail out and the chute was seen to land about a mile north of Feuerscheid which was enemy territory at the time, south of Prum.

The 8th mission led by Lt. Howie, found an M/T concentration east of Wissmannsdorf with the aid of a P-51 recce. They bombed right into the concentration which also included some tanks. A fuel dump in a house was set on fire by Willie Dunbar's strafing pass. At another nearby spot they caught more tanks and an 88, destroying 5 tanks some vehicles and the gun.

Lt. Tullis' flight flew another mission, and the controller directed them to recce the roads west of Murlerbach where many tanks were reported. They flew up to the town and found a concentration of about 50 vehicles and tanks. With the bombing of these, they at least damaged some ten of them as they were dispersing. The flight remained in the area to show our Black Flight just where the place was. When Lt. Ohlman's flight arrived, they found another concentration in a woods east of the town and bombed it with unobserved but believed good hits.

This was the first time since strip #3 in Normandy that the squadron flew 4 ship missions in cooperation with the ground forces with a total of 10 in the day's operation, with the during which we lost Lt. Schindling one of Yellow Flight's grand fellows. Lt. Carr had gone up to Bastogne cemetery and got some more details. They about Capt. Henry's last resting place. They were very fond of each other.

MISSIONS # 376 to 382....Continued Work with XII Corps....RDX....

On the 24th, the same effort was made. A briefing was held

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## SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 376 to 382 Continued.....

at 0830 and 1030 to include all pilots. Due to weather conditions, the first flight didn't take off until 1219. All planes were carrying the new 500 pound RDX explosive bombs.

Maj. Crisp led the first one. After having contacted the 80th Inf. Div., they were asked to fly to where one of the P-51 recon planes had a target. When the flight saw the P-51, the pilot went down to show them where a concentration of 8 vehicles were on a road northeast of Schonecken. Lt. Soderlund got 2 direct hits and the 8 vehicles were destroyed. Finding other targets of opportunity in the near vicinity, they strafed and destroyed 4 halftracks, 4 M/Ts and damaged a couple of tanks.

The next flight up was Lt. Davis'. The 80th Controller directed them to bomb a possible CP at Brecht. The flight put all 8 bombs in the town, 2 buildings being set on fire. With the P-47's .50s they destroyed 11 vehicles receiving one target from the P-51 in the area.

Lt. Glazier's FLIGHT was next up. They were asked to recon the roads north of Bitburg. Near Mattenheim, they bombed and destroyed a tank and a vehicle. On the east side of Kyll River they destroyed 2 more vehicles.

The 4th flight for the day, Lt. Tullis leading, the ground controller asked them to bomb 4 tanks which were in the town of Outscheid. The result of their bombing was excellent. Hits were right in there and they destroyed the 4 tanks. Our troops were just out side of the town to the southwest. The cub flying in the vicinity told the boys that it was "damn good bombing".

Lt. Ohlman's flight followed. They bombed a tank and some vehicles then strafed some more motor transport, horse-drawn vehicles, a couple of gas trucks and tanks. Lt. Ohlman's airplane was hit by flak and he had to belly it in northeast of Diekirch near Marxburg. After putting the airplane down in the friendly territory, he got out on the wing of his ship and waved to his flight. Ohlman was back with the squadron the next day.

Lt. Grace's flight took off at 1612 and headed out to the target area. Catching a halftrack and a horse-drawn vehicle east of Wettdorf, destroying both. After strafing some vehicles they returned to base with the hour becoming late.

The last mission for the day was led by Lt. Howie. After checking 4 tanks in Mulbach with the controller, they did some excellent bombing, destroying all 4 of them. Our troops were seen in strength at a few places and the ground forces seemed to have zeroed in on the target they had bombed. This completed quite an eventful day for the squadron with 7 missions flown in the afternoon.

MISSIONS # 383 to 390....To Work With VIII Corps....

Briefing was held at 0700 on the 25th to work with the VIII Corps, north of the corps the squadron worked with the last two days. Capt. Reinthal read a congratulatory message by General Vandenberg for the excellent work done by the fighter bombers. The ALO told of the good progress being made up north across the

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SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 383 to 390.....Continued....

bridges between Puren and Julich. A bridgehead was also established across the Saar River in the vicinity of Saarburg. The former bulge south of Prum which the enemy had was consistently being reduced. The 4 ship missions were to continue. The squadron flew 8 missions in cooperation with the ground forces.

The first mission was airborne at 0910, led by Lt. Tullis. The controller asked them to recon the roads northwest out of Bitburg. Accomplishing this they bombed and strafed 2 tanks in a small woods west of Liessen, destroying both. They probably destroyed 2 more tanks, definitely got 3 vehicles and damaged 2 others in the town of Ehlenz. In the same area they shot up some more enemy equipment.

Lt. Grace's flight was 2nd off. They worked a little further north and looked over the area east of Schönfeld. Due to cloud cover in the area the flight couldn't see a smoke marker which was being laid down on a target. However, they found a supply dump south of Millesheim with 2 vehicles which they destroyed.

Green Flight led by Lt. Glazier followed. Receiving a target from the VIII Corps Controller they proceeded north from the Bitburg area when Lt. Glazier was hit by some light flak. He turned to go home but had to belly the plane in near Mompach, on the west side of the Sauer River about 4 miles south of Echternach. A Tank Destroyer Battalion brought him back to Luxembourg where the C-47 picked him up and flew him back to the base immediately. The rest of the flight completed their mission by bombing some vehicles and buildings plus strafing the town of Scheid.

Maj. Crisp led the next 4 planes. The VIII Corps (weather was sour. The pilots were told to proceed on an alternate mission. Heading eastward, they found a concentration of 15 vehicles at Bettenfeld. The results of the bombing were very good, destroying 8 of them plus a whole block of buildings. They also spotted about 3 made up trains south of Murlenbach, calling it in to Lt. Davis' flight, which was coming up to the area. Lt. Davis' flight arrived and bombed, destroying at least 10 of the goods wagons. Lt. Ohlman's flight was told to contact Lt. Davis because the weather continued bad in the VIII Corps sector. The 4 ships bombed one of the trains south of Murlenbach, getting 2 direct hits and cut the rail at that point.

The 7th mission was led by Lt. Howie. After bombing railroad cars south of Daun and a tank and vehicles at Mehren, the flight spotted a great amount of enemy tanks and vehicles near Rittersdorf, only a couple of miles northwest of Bitburg. They strafed 3 of them and destroyed one, setting it on fire. Lt. Howie and his wingman orbited and waited until the Serum Squadron of 8 planes arrived in the area to show them where the big bag was located.

When Maj. Crisp and the 8 P-47's arrived in the vicinity, 4 of them supplemented friendly artillery fire by bombing the town of Rittersdorf which was probably full of German equipment, and the others bombed 2 tanks near the town. Maj. Crisp strafed a tank south of Liessen and set it ablaze. Lts. Newhart and Dunbar walked down a concentration of 10 vehicles in a woods, destroying

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 383 to 390.....Continued.....

4 and damaging the rest. They caught a halftrack at Bickendorf and destroyed it. The boys worked with the whole area over and when the 397th came into the area, they worked some other concentrations. After the squadron had completed their mission of close cooperation with our ground forces, friendly tanks were ready to go into Rittersdorf and our troops and vehicles were seen moving down from the hills towards the Rittersdorf area from the west. Another fine example of close cooperation between air and ground! It had the earmarks of some of the work the boys had done coming down through Normandy in front of our troops. The excitement of the pilots as they came into the S-2, S-3 site on the line showed their satisfaction in lending a helping hand to our buddies on the ground advancing on the Germans.

Earlier during the day, Lts. Kerchner, Loeb and Cox left in the group C-47 for the Riviera on a week's operational leave. Doc Cox went along for the ride. Lt. Ohlman was brought back to the base and flew a mission. Capt. Walter G. Loughary returned to the squadron from his 30 day leave in the U.S. A. The enlisted men attended the weekly dance at the Metz Hotel De Mille. Jerry Tullis was assigned as Operations Officer and found out about his promotion to Captain. Lts. Cox, Hansen, and Waggoner were promoted to 1st Lieuts on the same order.

Bad Weather....

All squadrons were briefed at the same time in the morning of the 26th. The air-ground effort was to be continued. As scheduled, the 396th and 397th were going to work with XII Corps and the 395th had the VIII Corps. Maj. East read the previous days operations by groups. The weather didn't look too good. Maj. ALO Davis didn't have the latest front lines because the teletype machine was out but told us that our troops were at least up to Rittersdorf. The First and Ninth Armies were making good progress, at one point about 15 miles from Cologne. Back in the squadron area, while awaiting a take off time, Maj. Davis called down via the squawk box that our troops were in and 2 kilometers beyond Rittersdorf. This was very good news. The weather continued bad and a release finally came in.

On the 27th, we were released until noon. Some combat film was shown in the pilot's room. Doc's film of different periods in the squadrons history was also shown, bringing back many memories. A briefing was called in for 1215. The same missions for cooperation with XII Corps were scheduled. Capt. Courtwright visited XII Corps to see Lamphood and Tolly Controllers. They told him of the excellent work our boys had accomplished on the 25th when they paved the way for the armor and infantry in their entry into Rittersdorf. The town had been full of German infantry. The cub flying around in the vicinity (the boys knew him as "By gone"), had watched their accomplishments that day and complimented. The weather was doubtful and back at the squadron a 584 mission was

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### SQUADRON HISTORY

Bad Weather.....Continued.....

called in. The scheduled pilots went out to the planes, but the mission was scrubbed as a release came in.

MISSIONS # 391, 92, 93....Air For XII Corps.....

The weather was very poor in the morning of the last day of the month. A lecture to all pilots was held at the Group Chapel by a PW interrogator who visited the Group. In the afternoon, a briefing was held at 1400. The same type of 4 ship missions were to be flown. The low clouds were dissipating and the mission would be able to take off. Maj. East gave the boys the poop and the ALO related some late facts about the First Army only 5 miles from Cologne. The Canadians and British were doing well up north. In the XII Corps sector, the 76th Infantry was trying to clean out the area between its front lines, the Kyll and Moselle Rivers. The ALO showed this priority area to the pilots with the aid of the balop-tican.

Capt. Tullis led the first mission which was airborne at 1514. The flight worked with the 76th who asked them to bomb the bridge at Kordel. Most of the bombs fell in the northern part of the town, starting a large fire and many buildings destroyed. A camouflaged gun emplacement in front of 2 friendly tanks was raked over. They saw our troops coming down the main road towards Helenenburg which appeared deserted from the air. The flight stayed in the area until Lt. Ohlman's Black Flight arrived. They, too, bombed the Kordel bridge but didn't hit it. Cloud cover prevented a good run. The third and last flight worked with a controller on the northern side of the corps who was having trouble with some enemy tanks near Sefferweich. Lt. Glazier and Green Flight found one north of the town and got a direct hit on it by bombing. Nearby they found another tank and strafed until it was destroyed. Two of the ships had bombed a supply dump northeast of Steinborn. Crates flew all over the place when the bombs struck. The hour was late and the ships returned to base.

In the evening, the enlisted men and officers got a team together to play basketball against the 371st. It was a non-league game played at the same gymnasium the other games were held.

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#### SQUADRON HISTORY

A total of 54 missions were flown by the squadron during the short month of February. The missions varied from armed recce, attacking airfields, trying to knock out a bridge near Dusseldorf, escort, and attacking trains in the Ruhr industrial region. They also included a part in the TAC's all out effort with the mediums in disrupting the enemy's rail and communication network. The armies up north jumped off in the race to the Rhine and the Group was part of the participating air in helping reduce the German bulge south of Prum, plus rendering close coordination with air strikes in front of our troops as they closed up to the Prum, then the Nims and were closing up to the Kyll River on their march eastward as the month ended. It meant the loss of Capt. Meredith W. Henry whose spirit shall always be with us and also Lt. Richard T. Schindling now MIA while sharing in the effort. "pappy" Kennedy and Louis Hamilton III were transferred to the Zone of the Interior - or the U.S.A. The month was very eventful as the tempo of the Battle For Germany increases.