

SQUADRON HISTORY

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

- 1- 13 Enlisted men were promoted in accordance with par 2 SO #61 368th FB Group dtd 1 June 1944. (A copy of SO attached).
- 2- F/O Leslie G. Hansen, a new pilot was assigned and joined on June 3rd.
- 3- 2nd Lt. Gerald J. Grace, another new pilot, and Pvt. Elmer C. Wetzel were assigned from the 395th Fighter Bomber Sq., and Cpl Henry L. Weidel was trnsfd to the 395th Fighter-Bomber Sq. on June 4th.
- 4- 1st Lt. Franklin A. Dick was appointed Capt, AUS, per par. 1, SO # 153 Hq. ETOUSA, dtd 1 June 1944. PFC Tige O. Lyons and Cpl. James W. Howard were trnsfd to the 73rd Sta Compl. Sq. on June 5th. Cpl. General T. Laws and Cpl. Francis P. Galczynski were assigned from the 73rd Sta Compl Sq.
- 5- On June 3th, 1st Lt. Charles W. Romine was notified of his appointment to Capt. AUS, per par. 2 SO # 153 Hq. ETOUSA, dtd. 1 June 1944 1st Lt. George H. Petrie was assigned and joined from the 495th Ftr. Trng. Gp., and 2nd Lt. Richard W. Taylor was transferred out of the squadron.
- 6- 2nd Lt. Joseph S. Busenbark was trnsfd to the 216th Gen Hosp. on June 7th.
- 7- On June 10th, 2nd Lts Irving Ostuw and Oliver S. Ryerson were notified of their promotion to 1st Lts. in accordance with par 5, SO #153, Hq. ETOUSA, dtd 1 June 1944. 2nd Lt. Ross P. Seaton was trnsfd out and 2nd Lt. Philip D. Boose joined the sq. as the new Ordnance officer. 1st Lt. Edward Haughton, Jr MIA over Cherbourg Peninsula.
- 8- Capt. Sparks was notified of his appointment to Major AUS. AC per par 4 SO # 159, Hq, Ninth AF dtd 7 June 1944 on June 11 th.
- 9- 1st Lt. Laymon A. Rice, Jr was killed in action on June 14th.
- 10- On June 17th, Cpl Adolph R. Zanotto was assigned.
- 11- Cpl. Robert E. Sanderson was asgd to the Sq, and Pvt. Harold S. Grose was trnsfd.
- 12- Cpl Michael F. Angello was trnsfd out of the Squadron.
- 13- Lts Gamblin and Jasper were MIA on June 22nd. Lt Jasper was promoted to 1st Lt. per. Par 8, SO # 167, Hq. ETOUSA dtd 15 June 1944.
- 14- 5 new pilots were assigned on June 26th, 2nd Lts. Richard C. Cox, John B. Steward Jr., Theodore O. Taubert, Robert R. Waggoner, and Albert A. Schnedler.
- 15- 1st Lt. Jack B. Robbins- MIA on June 27th.
- 16- Sgt. Edward W. Snyder was trnsfd to the 367th Fitr Gp. on June 30th.

RESERVED

**HEADQUARTERS
389TH ENGINEER BOMBARDIER GROUP**

AGO 895, U. S. Army
1 June 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)
:
NUMBER.....61)

1. Under the provisions of AR 115-5, 30 Jun 1943 and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 395th Pztr Bombr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE PROMOTED TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TSP)
S/Sgt (756) Stewart L. Simpson 38395206

TO BE PROMOTED TO SERGEANT (SP4)
Sgt (866) Raymond J. Backer 14167087
Sgt (311) Ralph J. Petro 36411510
Sgt (747) Charles Richards 38505314
Sgt (780) John J. Jones 35711777
Sgt (750) Daniel L. Spelling 35493279
Sgt (747) Herman Birk 32466128
Sgt (750) David H. John 35366238

TO BE PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN (SP5)
Cpl (911) Carl K. Coy 32745545
Cpl (911) Carl C. Miller 17033434
Cpl (832) Alton A. Davidson 17110797
Cpl (405) Henry E. Ostrosky 13061038

TO BE PROMOTED TO MAJOR (SP7)
Pfc (405) Walter S. Blanner 31180115
Pfc (333) Joseph O. Cardwell 517 9493
Pfc (747) Joseph L. Surt 52409111
Pfc (747) George Hutchinson 35365331
Pfc (832) Donald A. Huntley 35311300

TO BE PROMOTED TO FIRST CLASS (SP6)
Pvt (847) George Simpson 51352713
Pvt (711) Charles W. Pully 33743758
Pvt (747) Peter L. Boland 12070793
Pvt (800) Herbert L. Reed 5537133

2. Under the provisions of AR 115-5, 30 Jun 1943 and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 396th Pztr Bom Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE PROMOTED TO TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TSP)
S/Sgt (747) Herbert E. Cates 37359420
S/Sgt (882) Alkibiades Harisiades 1180533

TO BE PROMOTED TO SERGEANT (SP4)
Cpl (405) Robert J. Duffy 17187038
Cpl (837) Roy L. Richard 35318598

SC 61, Hq 368th Ftr Bom Gp, 1 June 1945 (Cont'd)

TO BE COR-3RD CL (TEMP)

Pfc (405) Jerome H. C. U. Uckl	56565484
Pfc (050) Wayford B. McGaha	51729884
Pfc (747) Richard H. Pottberg	12157303
Pfc (405) Howard D. Pruett	29695627
Pfc (590) Morris Sokoloff	33054918
Pfc (405) John C. Wepfor	38332740

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (257) Fred S. Contolalla	52849728
Pvt (060) Joseph J. Povernik	52913569

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (C17) Lauri Gaute	52050755
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3. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 Jun 1945, and upon the recommendation of their Organ Comdr, the following named T, 397th Ftr Bom Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (784) Raymond H. Elrod	13130475
S/Sgt (759) Samuel Leisy	53240320

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (747) Clemen J. ante	53362617
Sgt (060) Rock L. Feliziani	59844664
Sgt (747) John E. Massie Jr	33713789
Sgt (747) Ernest L. Porroll	31109122
Sgt (685) French Stamps	34474010

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Cpl (952) Gustaf A. Brinson	11042577
Cpl (911) Frederick L. Wilson	39121195
Cpl (911) Edward R. Stanice	14157374

TO BE COR-GRAD (TEMP)

Pfc (014) Marvin I. Adams	53242724
Pfc (911) Raymond T. Barrett	32699931
Pfc (911) William E. Hogarth	35597443

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (900) Joseph J. Grobovski	32809606
Pvt (747) George T. Searo	11131241

4. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 Jun 1945, and upon the recommendation of his Organ Comdr, Pfc (405) Cyril E. Pev, 35863284, Hq 368th Ftr Bom Gp, is promoted to grad: of Corporal (Temp).

OFFICIAL:

Maurice D. Powell
 MAURICE D. POWELL,
 1st Lt, AG,
 asst Adj.

By C of Col MEMBERS:

MAURICE D. POWELL,
 1st Lt, AG,
 asst Adj.

DISTRIBUTION "A"

RESTRICTED

EVENING STANDARD
WED., MAY 24, 1944
ENGLAND

A Group Shot Up 20 Trains

—TO-DAY

From PHILIP GRUNE,
Evening Standard War Reporter
A 9th AIR FORCE FIGHTER-
BOMBER BASE, Wednesday.

Enemy transport facilities in France to-day received another heavy strafing when fighter-bombers from this airfield went "down on the deck" to shoot up trains over a wide area of enemy occupied territory.

The fighters had been out to escort the B-24 Liberators which were on the Paris target. They took the heavies right to the target, and after giving cover for some time after, they left Paris and peeled off to strafe anything they could find, which might be helping the German transport system.

In the journey from Paris to the coast this group, led by Colonel Gilbert L. Meyers, of Milford, Iowa, attacked 20 trains. They claim to have destroyed 12 locomotives and seven trucks and damaged the other eight trains.

Some of the pilots saw trucks overturn, others saw locomotives explode.

One flight, led by Major Paul P. Douglas, of Paragould, Arkansas, got four locomotives.

First Party

"It is the first party we have had since we started escort work," said Captain R. W. Hendricks, of Youngtown, Ohio. "We took the bombers right to Paris and broke away when they picked up another escort."

"Then we left them and went to look for transport targets."

"I spotted my first target in the vicinity of Fleury, when a small wisp of steam was visible beneath the clouds. I dived in from about 8000 feet."

"Then Lieutenants John Lougee, of Worcester, Mass, and Alfred Fry, of Richmond, Virginia, came in to finish off the locomotive. As I pulled away I saw the engine explode like a bursting geyser."

Saw Smoke

"Then we started west along the railway road. I saw smoke and dived. It was another train drawing about 30 trucks. I was able to pump in about 200 rounds of incendiaries and armoured piercing shells."

"We looked around Rouen but saw nothing, and decided to make for the coast. Through a break in the clouds I saw another train pass into a station."

"Three of us went down and really gave it a beating."

SQUADRON HISTORY

Scrubbed Again!

The first day of the month brought with it a briefing at 0800. The mission was to be a dive-bombing of the fuel dump at Domfront. Lt. Reinthal and Lt. Col. Perego gave all the information regarding the target. Everyone went down to the line and things were all set for the take-off when we were told that the weather had not cleared well enough to start. In the afternoon, the squadron was notified that we were going to go after the same target. The briefing was held in the squadron and all the pilots had gone out to the airplanes again when word came through that the mission had been scrubbed again. The weather was still bad.

The pilots came into the S-2 section for the remainder of the afternoon. Most of them, by flights, wanted to study geography. The target dossiers were also passed around and each little group planned their own possible tactics against a particular target in the area they were studying.

Mission # 61..... Dive-Bombing.

The release had been until 1100 and then changed to 1700 on June 2nd. The day was spent in maintenance of the airplanes plus a little recreation. At 1600 we were notified that briefing would be held at 1615. The target was the same as that briefed on June 1st, the fuel dump at Domfront. Lt. Col. Perego was going to fly with the squadron. Captain Myers briefed the pilots in the squadron. The bombing results were fair. Most of the hits were observed in the NE half of the storage area and marshalling yards.

On the way home, the flights split up and went after rail targets. Capt. Myers' flight destroyed 2 locomotives between Mezidon and Caen. Lt. Benton's purple flight destroyed 1 locomotive between St. Lo and Coutances, while Lt. Jim Gamblin destroyed one about ten miles south of St. Lo. Capt. Myers went down to strafe a string of 12 freight cars near Ecouches. They landed at 2015 after which a critique was held at the Officers club.

"A" Party Packs Up.....

June 3rd we were released for training and maintenance until daybreak of the 4th. Flight Officer Leslie G. Hansen, another pilot, was assigned and joined from the 495th Fighter Training Group. "A" Party had its equipment packed and ready to put on the vehicles. At 1600 Maj. Douglas had all the men and officers assembled on the line outside of our Engineering site. He spoke to the group regarding the necessity of watching our tongues about the things that were happening around the base. The security of our type of work and the work involved was our business and nobody else's. He wished the men in "A" Party the best of luck should they have to leave in the near future and expressed his hope of all of us rejoining as soon as possible.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Mission # 62..... Dive-Bombing.

Briefing was called for 1000 on June 4th but the mission had been scrubbed just before the time came. However, at 1300 a briefing was held for a dive-bombing of bridges at Rouen. The primary target was the pair of road bridges at Rouen to be destroyed by 1000 lb bombs. The Group got to the target and bombed with good results. The southeast bridge of the pair was knocked out and the northern approach of the Northwest one was damaged. Smoke covered the whole target area.

There was a standby for another mission when the boys returned. After supper, the pilots were to be assembled at group by 1900 but when everyone started to arrive, the Group was released until daybreak so all dashed over to the Officers Club where a movie was being shown. 2nd Lt. Gerald J. Grace was assigned to the squadron from the 395th Fighter Bomber Squadron.

Sweating Out A Mission.....Three Scrubs And Then Released.

On June 5th, Lt. Col. Perego and Lt. Reinthal briefed the Group at 0715. The target for this crack against the enemy was to be the road bridge at Nantes-Gassicourt, just west of Paris. After having gone back to the line, we were notified of an hour and one-half delay but the mission was finally scrubbed because of the weather.

A second briefing was held at 1015, and this time all the available information was given about the railroad bridge at St. Germain, also west of Paris. A two hours delay came through but a scrub was finally passed on. The release was until 1500, later being changed to 1900. By 1815, the squadrons were notified that the new TOT, 2045 hours, was set and the whole Group was alerted for this mission aimed at the railroad bridge of the second briefing. A release came through until daybreak.

Lt. Franklin A. Dick, out squadron S-2 was notified this date of his promotion to Captain, which followed by a couple of weeks the news of his becoming the Daddy of a baby girl.

D-Day....H-Hour.....The Allied Landings in France, Invasion !

June 6th, 1944- a marked day for the history of the world. The much anticipated Invasion of the European Continent had taken place. The squadrons were notified that briefing was going to be held at 0330. As the men were awakened, one could hear the constant drone of airplanes above. All sorts of surmises took place on the weapons carrier as it drove through the moonlit night toward Group Headquarters.

In the briefing room, a screen was drawn down over something which naturally aroused the curiosity in everyone. The guesses of all were beginning to materialize. Col. Meyers was the first to speak to the assembled group. His opening remarks dealt with a letter sent down from Air Chief Marshal, Sir Tafford Leigh-Mallory, telling us of the splendid work which the AEAF had done in the past and the confidence he had in the work ahead. No sooner had he completed the letter, Col. Meyers told us "Its happened". The Invasion of the Continent was in progress. Lt. Reinthal gave the full situation. Paratroopers and airborne troops had dropped on the Cherbourg Peninsula in the very early hours of the morning

SQUADRON HISTORY

D-Day.....H-Hour.....The Allied Landings In France, Invasion ! cont'

and at 0630, the first American and British forces were going to land on the beaches between Caen and a point on the east coast of the Cherbourg Peninsula. The screen was raised and before all the pilots and personnel needed at this briefing were the indicated beaches and the places for the 2 American and 3 British Divisions making the initial assault, plus the approximate area of the American airborne and paratroopers. Lt. Reinthal continued with the explanation of the shipping lanes and the aerial cover over the beachhead. Capt. Marks, the Group Communications Officer, briefed the pilots on the radio procedure to be followed and Capt. Leary explained the air-operations plus the details needed by the pilots. The show was on. Col. Meyers stepped up to the briefing platform in front of the maps and injected a few serious notes, for the day of ever increasing hard work had arrived with many more to follow. The big team of Army-Air-Navy went into action.

The 395th had the first mission of the day with a take-off at 0520 to glide-bomb a bridge on the Cherbourg Peninsula, near the "Bomb-Line", a term which all of us were going to refer to constantly. Our squadron and the 397th went to breakfast, after which we were to return to the Group briefing room to be held in readiness should a mission come in for either or both squadrons. At 0520 the alerted pilots came back and waited around for something to get them into the air. Each one wanted to be in on the show. Time passed on. Some started a private "Crap" game in the back of the room while others stretched out on the hard benches to catch a few winks of sleep. Each time Maj. Kroencke, our ALO attached to the Group from the American First Army, came in to post some late data, the boys asked about the situation. They were very much interested in the make-up of our divisions and just what sort of opposition our ground forces were to expect. In the early briefing by Lt. Reinthal, the enemy situation had been given and they wanted to know how the German divisions compared to ours. Around the room, some were discussing past missions when they had gone after the bridges along the Seine River and the possible damage done along the Loire River, thus doing their bit in helping to isolate the battlefield. One of the Group communications men brought in a radio which served the means of hearing the late news.

Mission #63.....First D-Day Mission For The Squadron. Frag. Bombs.

At 1300, briefing was held on a target in support of our ground forces. About 2½ miles SE of Isigny, in the Bois de Calette, a motor transport concentration of approximately 100 trucks was reported. Our pilots were briefed on the bomb-line and an alternate target which was an airfield west of and close to Caen where some Me 109s were reported in. The planes were loaded with 20 lb fragmentation bomb clusters and they were up at 1408 hours. The bombing was executed with good results by glide technique. Some were of the opinion that the objects hit in these woods were either dummy vehicles or wood piles, but at a later date a confirmation from the ground forces who later occupied this site stated that excellent demolition of German vehicles and men had been achieved. A job well done !

SQUADRON HISTORY

Mission # 63.... continued

The enlisted men were gathered near the S-2 trailer where the squadron briefing map was displayed and a synopsis of the first landings was given by Major Douglas and Capt. Dick.

Mission #64.....Dive-Bombing Targets In Assault Area

Briefing was held at 1730. The squadron airplanes were loaded with three 500 lb GP bombs each. The targets hit over the enemy lines were varied on fuel and ammunition dumps. There were many excellent strikes. Coming back from the mission, 6 trucks and 2 staff cars were strafed and destroyed about 6 miles south of Bayeux. They reported a motor convoy of about 80-100 trucks SE of Bayeux and a tank skirmish near Bayeux. If the pilots had been able to hold pin-points of the artillery fire long enough they would have bombed gun positions but the camouflage seemed to be excellent.

When 2130 hours rolled around, the planes returned. "Chuck" Romine had a pleasant surprise waiting for him. He was notified of his promotion to Captain, which was effective June 1st.

Missions # 65, 66, 67, 68.....Armed Patrol Over Assigned Area.

June 7th brought a full day of armed patrols over a designated area covering an area beyond the bomb line. The first briefing was held at 0445. Each squadron had an assigned area to cover in search of gun positions and enemy installations. By 0549 hours, 15 P-47's of the squadron were airborne with fragmentation clusters under each wing. The patrol was flown as briefed with the squadron going after targets of opportunity in support of our ground forces. Hits were observed along part of a motor and tank convoy on the road heading NE out of the Foret de Cerisy. Some hit an M/T convoy near Marigny. The convoy coming out of the forest seemed to be heading towards Bayeux which indicated the possible concentration of German forces within it. Lt. Carter's flight strafed about 25-30 trucks near Marigny with very good results.

The second armed patrol for the day took off at 1019 and was back to the base by 1250 hours. Lt. Col. Perego led the squadron on this mission. Bombing results were very good, most of it being concentrated near the Foret de Cerisy. Sorbo flight with Lt. Col. Perego leading, destroyed 3 trucks by bombing at the road intersection in the Foret de Cerisy. Capt. Sparks element destroyed 2 ammunition carriers about 1-2 miles N of the Cerisy Forest and left 4 trucks burning. Lt. Benton's purple flight bombed and destroyed 6 trucks near Tournieres, also about 1 mile N of Cerisy Forest. Capt. Romine's yellow flight destroyed about 20 enemy trucks.

The bomb-line had been moved and was plotted on the 1:50,000 map of the area which occupied one full side of the S-2 section. Briefing was held at 1330 to pass on any new information which might have come in. Major Douglas led the squadron on this mission which took off at 1450. Some good hits were observed on vehicles concentrations. In general, the bombing results were varied. The convoy which had been reported previously between Coutances and Marigny had been taken care of by recent strafing.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Missions # 65, 66, 67, 68, continued.

German soldiers in the characteristic black uniforms of the Tank Corps were strafed in the Foret de Cerisy. The squadron returned at 1715.

While the 3rd mission for the day was up, those in the pilots room on the line were entertained by two men from the special service branch. One played the guitar while the other sang some ditties. They were the same two who had performed for our Enlisted Men's dance.

The fourth and last mission for the day took off at 1915, with 500 lb GP bombs. The bombing results were excellent on the rolling stock in the marshalling yard at St. Seyer and another unidentified marshalling yard in the vicinity of Vire. A panzer convoy near Alencon was strafed. 19 more trucks were left burning or stopped and smouldering. Near hits were obtained on gun positions south of Isigny. It was a full day when this mission returned at 2215.

Missions # 69, 70, 71....Utah Beachhead Patrol. D+2 days. Commendation From General Brereton and General Quesada.

Briefing for the next days missions came very soon, at 0230, June 8th. Col. Meyers started off by reading a message from General Quesada in which he had special praise for three Fighter Groups, one of them being the 368th Fighter Group. Quoting in part the following is extracted, "It is possible if not probable that their efforts were in a large part responsible for the attack on Omaha Beach continuing. History may show that they saved the day". General Brereton's praise followed in the rest of the text. (Copy of message attached). Our boys were doing a great job to date ! Another record to point to.

The missions for the day were to be beachhead patrols, our squadron covering the Utah beach. D+2 was the day Jerry was expected to throw in his GAF. This was one of the warnings given to the pilots at the briefing. The first flight of the squadron was up at 0356. When they got back, the boys reported St. Lo still burning and a battle between our artillery and the enemies. It was too dark to determine much on the ground.

After the briefing at 0730 for the second mission of the day, Col. Meyers came over to fly with our squadron. The same area was to be patrolled. Three flights took-off instead of four as did the very early mission. The Controller notified the squadron of some enemy aircraft in the vicinity, but none were encountered. The city of Valognes and Ste Mere Eglise were on fire with smoke billowing up from them.

The third mission for the day continued the patrol over the assigned area. Vehicles were observed proceeding from Ste Mere Eglise northward to Montebourg. Others were converging on Valognes and proceeding northward to Cherbourg. Outside of these observations brought back, the mission was uneventful and the planes were down by 1620.

FROM NINTH AIR FIGHTER COMMAND

TO CG, IX AFAC
 CG, TFW
 CG, 44TH AF
 CG, 125TH AF
 CG, 303RD FW
 CG, 371, 48, 366, 308, 365, 367, 370, 363, 354, 362, 358, 30, 373
 406, 50, 404, 474, AND 405 FTR BOMBER GROUPS

ROUTINE

CONFIDENTIAL - SEND IN THE CLEAR - AUTHORITY MAJ. GENERAL HUSKAW

ADV. NINTH AIR FIGHTER COMMAND
 AIR 638, U. S. ARMY
 8 JUNE 1944

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED FROM THE COMMANDING GENERAL
 NINTH AIR FORCE AND APPLIES TO THE 365TH, 366TH, AND 368TH FTR/B SPS.
 THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH THESE GROUPS ACCEPTED AND PERFORMED THEIR MISSION REFLECTS GREAT
 CREDIT TO THEM AND I AM MOST GRATEFUL FOR THEIR EFFORTS. IT IS POSSIBLE IF NOT
 PROBABLE THAT THEIR EFFORTS WERE IN A LARGE PART RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK ON
 OMAHA BEACH CONTINUING. HISTORY MAY SHOW THAT THEY SAVED THE DAY. BOTH ON SEVENTH
 THESE GROUPS OF YOUR COMMAND FURNISHED CLOSE CONTINUOUS SUPPORT TO THE OMAHA BEACHHEAD
 AREA PERIOD THE SITUATION THERE WAS CRITICAL AND BY THE EXCELLENT ATTACKS AND CONTINUOUS
 SUPPORT RENDERED BY YOU RESTORED A DELICATE SITUATION PERIOD PLEASE PASS MY PERSONAL
 CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GROUP COMMANDERS CONCERNED FOR THEIR "HARD WORK RELEVANT"
 UNQUOTE.

----- HUSKAW -----

C o p y

IX TAC U 264 B THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM COMMANDING GENERAL NINTH AIR FORCE IS QUOTED FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND QUOTE FIGHTER BOMBER PILOTS OF YOUR COMMAND HAVE EARNED SPECIAL COMMENDATION FOR THEIR VISUAL OBSERVATIONS AND REPORTS THEREON THESE HAVE BEEN OF A VERY HIGH ORDER. THEY HAVE CONSTITUTED VALUABLE ADDITIONS TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE GROUND SITUATION AND HAVE ENABLED US TO TAKE PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST THE ENEMY. OUR EXPECTATIONS WERE GREAT. YOU HAVE JUSTIFIED THEM. KEEP IT UP. BRERETON UNQUOTE. QUESADA

EVENING STANDARD, THURSDAY JUNE 8, 1944 (ENGLAND)

They Left Their Cars; They Hid in Woods, But There Was No Escaping

From PHILIP GRUNE

ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE AIRFIELD,

Thursday.

Streams of refugees with packs on their backs are evacuating the blazing towns and villages and making towards the Allied lines.

The story is told by Thunderbolt pilots after a great strafing offensive.

They also saw miles of roads blocked by wrecked trucks and armoured vehicles, smashed marshalling yards and wrecked locomotives.

Germans leaped from stall cars and scrambled into woods, only to be strafed in their hiding places.

From dawn to darkness the Thunderbolt group had been operating behind the enemy lines, three squadrons flying 11 operations and most pilots completing three in the day.

Throughout the day the plotted areas were bombed and shot up until pilots on the last two operations came back to say they could find no more targets. The enemy's communications had been temporarily paralysed.

Major Paul Douglas, of Arkansas, leader of one of the last operations, told me he had just got back after eight hours' flying during the day.

"Broken trucks are lining miles of roadway; complete convoys have been destroyed and it seems that for the time being we have prevented the enemy from bringing up any supplies."

Gun emplacements which had been giving trouble to some sections of the beach-head have been knocked out and a great many of the A.-A. guns which gave us a hot time in the early missions to-day have been silenced.

"The beach-head now seems clear of any enemy opposition. The Allies are just piling in supplies and reinforcements."

SQUADRON HISTORY

D+3.....Grounded By the Weather

On June 9th, a briefing was held at 0300 for the same type of patrolling as the previous day. Maj. Kroencke gave our's and the enemy's ground situation. When the briefing was over we received a stand-by before the first mission was scheduled, which was changed to a five minute alert for one squadron and a 15 minute alert for the other two. This was due to the weather coming in. The alert was changed again to one-hour periods during the remainder of the day. The ceiling was very low, with some rain.

All day long, the boys came in to the S-2 section asking why they weren't being called into the air to help our buddies on the ground over in Normandy. Eager eyes scanned the bomb-line looking for recent changes, and picking them out, too. Lt. Jasper (Pierre) and Quilty (The Kid) came to inquire how the situation was "I guess things aren't bad over there otherwise they'd get hold of us", was the opinion they held. A release until daybreak came through. Lts Ostuw and Ryerson found out later in the day that they had received promotions to 1st Lieutenants.

Missions # 72, 73, 74, 75.....Patrols Continued. A Swell Guy Is Lost,
Ed Houghton.

Another very early morning briefing came on the 10th. At 0300 the briefing started. Mission -- continued patrol of Utah Beachhead. The first mission for the squadron took off at 0350 with 16 thunderbolts forming over the field in the darkness of the pre-dawn twilight. They couldn't see much and accomplished the mission in spite of the flak shot up at them from friendly guns. Orbiting over towards the east, they noticed the Caen airdrome on fire. Capt McLachlan's red flight destroyed a truck near Bricquebec.

The second mission during the day brought with it a very good score against Jerry's motor transportation. The Germans were moving up towards Cherbourg from Valognes. Our three flights bagged a total of 30 trucks and one command car. Major Douglas' flight destroyed 4 trucks at Lessay, Captain Romine's flight destroyed eight trucks in the vicinity of St. Sauveur while Lt. Benton's flight destroyed 18 trucks along the main highway leading out of Valognes towards Cherbourg. Lt. Jim Gamblin got himself a command car outside of Valognes. Definitely quite eventful.

The third mission for the day brought our first loss in the squadron. 1st Lt. Edward Houghton, Jr. was last seen over the Cherbourg Peninsula near the small town of Le Ham. Ed went down after a ground target by himself and that was the last anyone heard from him. He was dropped from the rools as Missing In Action on the 13th but he has not been dropped from our hearts as the swell guy we knew him to be. The squadron completed its patrol between 1430 and 1530. "Kleenex" controller, who seemed to be the Air Support Party for the troops in the immediate vicinity got on the R/T and asked the squadron for help, trying to vector them to a grid point near Le Ham where a battle was taking place. When white flight saw a convoy of 7 M/Ts heading south between Montebourg and Le Ham, they identified it as enemy and destroyed 5 of them.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Missions # 72, 73, 74, 75. Continued.

The fourth mission on the 10th patrolled between 1930 and 2030 hours. They added some more trucks to the score. Blue flight destroyed 3, Green flight got 3, and purple flight got 1. "Crazy Jim" Gamblin came upon a concentration of approximately 300 enemy troops just east of La Haye du Puits and strafed them. The day ended with all the planes down by 2140.

Lt. Seaton, our newly acquired Ordnance officer was transferred to Hq. IX TAC and 2nd Lt. Philip D. Boose joined us from the 365th Fighter Bomber Group as our new Ordnance Officer. This made him the third bomb info man in charge of the section.

Mission #76, 77.....Patrol Continued. Lt. Howie Belly Lands Near a Strip.

The briefing was very short at 0245, June 11th. The first mission was up at 0349 and the patrol lasted from 0430 to 0530. They were over the Cherbourg Peninsula in the early daylight hours, covering the beachhead and part of the northern portion of the peninsula.

Lt. Col. Perego flew with the squadron on the 2nd mission. Capt Myers briefed in the squadron and asked the boys to look around for Ed's airplane if at all possible. While flying the patrol they were hampered by solid overcast between 400-2500 ft. Lt. Col. Perego's flight noticed an M/T convoy through a hole in the clouds and went down after it. The flak from the convoy hit Lt. Howie's ship in the engine which made him belly into a field just north of an unidentified strip. All pilots agreed that Lt. Howie had brought the airplane down well within the beachhead.

After the second mission, the squadron was released until 1330, going on 5 minute alert after that time. We were released until daybreak since the weather was poor. Capt. Sparks was notified of his promotion to Major at supper time that evening by Major Douglas who asked him if he could use a pair of gold oak leaves.

"A" Party Moves.....Missions # 78, 79, 80, 81....GAF Comes Up and
Capt. Romine Gets 2.

The Advance Echelon was ready to depart in the morning of the 12th. All the men in this party were set and they all departed from the base in the early afternoon. Major Wernli, our Executive Officer, was in charge of the squadron. We all wished them well and hoped to meet up with them soon.

The missions went on without pause. At 0245 Capt. Reinthal briefed. He read a report on the situation of the enemy being slow in meeting the Invasion. Major Sparks led the first mission. An unidentified twin-engine airplane came into Arcade flight of the squadron at 90 degrees, fired, then dove down dropping 2 pink flares. Some thought it might have been a Mosquito but it was too dark to be positive.

Major Douglas, leading the second mission took the flight down to strafe ground targets after the patrol was over. They strafed enemy vehicles with good results, destroying 5 trucks and 4 staff cars. The score was mounting. Captain Kessler, our adjutant called on the phone to notify us that Lt. Howie was back from France and was awaiting a ride

SQUADRON HISTORY

Mission # 78, 79, 80, 81..... continued.

home from one of the British fields. Howie walked into the pilots room at about 1300 with a German helmet for a souvenir. Each handshake brought with it, "Glad to see you back Howie!", "I'm glad to be back, fella", was the reply from this Paris, Texas boy.

The Luftwaffe came in to attack one of the flights during the third mission. The action took place over Carentan. The first attack was made from eleven o'clock to Capt. Romine's element and the second attack came in from 6 o'clock to Capt. Romine. Each wave contained 10-12 Me-109's "Chuck" evaded successfully and shot down 2 Me 109's with his wingman Lt. Glazier, doing an excellent job of covering his flight leaders' tail. Four trucks were destroyed after the patrol mission was over. Captain Romine's combat took place just before leaving the area on the way home.

The last mission for the day was completed by Capt. McLachlan's flight destroying 1 truck and 1 armored vehicle. Col. Meyers flew with the squadron on this one. They landed at 2115 with a release until 1300 the next day.

Mission # 82.....GAF Again! Claims 3-1-2 Against Jerry.

The morning of June 13th was a drizzling one. The release was changed to 1600 after which time the Group went on a 1 hour alert. The pilots were down in the pilots' room all afternoon and the men were out at their planes. Keeping them ready to go at a moments notice.

We all went to evening chow when the squadron was notified that we were alerted for a mission similar to what we've had the last few days. The poop was given to operations over the "squawk" box. The pilots were down at the line by 1825 and took-off at 1840. Waiting around at the base, Lt. Spencer returned a little early and word began to pass around that the boys were in a little fight over the continent. Spencer told the few of us on the line that Lt. Parrish's flight met up with about 16 FW 190s. He had to return early because some got on his tail, outnumbering him that he headed for a cloud and then for home because it was too late to try to rejoin. "Rain down the holler" Parrish claimed one FW 190 destroyed and probably destroyed another, "Back from the Drink" Larsen claimed one destroyed and one damaged, and our "Little Olie", Lt. H.L. Olson, claimed one destroyed and one damaged. Olie had to land at a strip in France due to oil pressure trouble and returned to home base by 2115. While getting his airplane serviced, H.L. met and spoke to General Quesada who was at this landing strip at the time.

Missions # 83, 84, 85, 86....Loss of Lt. Rice...Little Olie gets another enemy aircraft.

The first mission on June 14th brought the loss to the squadron of 1st Lt. Laymon A. Rice, Jr. whose airplane developed engine failure a few minutes after take-off. He bailed out over Stockbridge from 12-1500 ft. but his chute failed. It was a blow to all of us who were very fond of L. A., Louisiana's part to the 396th.

SQUADRON HISTORY

The rest of the airplanes continued on to accomplish the patrol coming back to the base at 0740. After the patrol, the squadron strafed enemy vehicles, destroying 9 M/Ts, 3 reconnaissance cars, one staff car, and 2 tanks.

The second mission took-off at 0951 and headed out towards the assigned area over the beachhead. 12 FW 190s were encountered by the squadron. After Maj. Douglas' and Capt Romine's flights gave chase to 6 FW 190s, Lt. Parrish's spotted 4 others which appeared above the clouds layer below them. One FW-190 was hit by Lt. H.L. Olson and the pilot was seen to bail out near Alencon, claiming 1 FW 190 destroyed. 7 more trucks and one trailer were destroyed on this mission.

Eleven enemy trucks and one staff car were destroyed on the third mission of the day. Major Douglas', Capt. Myers', and Lt. Carter's flight shared in this hunt against the enemy transport facilities after the mission was accomplished for beachhead cover. The fourth and last one for the day was very uneventful with the operations ceasing at 2215 as all the planes came down.

Missions # 87, 88, 89...Close Assault Area Cover. One Mission Flown From ALG at Cardonville.

Briefing was held at 0545 on June 15th. A new area was assigned to each squadron to accomplish close assault area cover over the beachhead. Our squadron was to cover the western part which included Utah and part of the Omaha beaches. The other two squadrons were to land at advance Landing Grounds and carry out missions from there while our squadron was to return to home base at the completion of the first one.

The first mission was airborne at 0653 hours, flown as briefed but remained at 15,000 ft. most of the time. Briefing for the next squadron mission was held at Group at 1000 hours. Major Douglas briefed. He briefed on just how they would land at the Cardonville ALG at the completion of the next mission. Each pilot was to report in while the planes were being serviced and they were not to wander away from the airplane. Capt Reinthal pointed out the strip, which was 3-4 miles NE of Isigny. They would get the briefing of the later mission at the ALG, after which the squadron was to return home.

The pilots picked up extra gum and chocolates to take with them as well as recent newspapers and magazines which the boys over there would like to read. Off they went accomplished the second mission for the day and landed at the ALG at 1340 where the planes were serviced and gotten ready for the next mission. While waiting there, some of the boys tried their French on a little French boy and got a few easy lessons on how to ask questions in French. Jasper brought back one of the wooden cartridges which the Germans were using for ammunition in the coastal area. The squadron was airborne at 1700 from Cardonville, completed the third mission for the day as cover and returned to home base by 1910 hours.

There would have been a fourth mission that day, led by Maj. Sparks but they were recalled due to the weather as soon as they had made landfall out of England.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Missions # 90, 91.....Assault Area Cover (Cont'd)....Capt "Bone" Myers bellies in on ALG near Ste. Mere Eglise.

The Group had been released until 0800, June 16th, because of the weather and then remained on 1 hour alert. At 1530, briefing was held for the continued area cover. The first mission was flown as briefed. Capt "Bone" Myers had to belly land his airplane on the ALG near Ste Mere Eglise due to the oil pressure dropping down to zero. He returned to home base via G-47 almost immediately after bellying in, arriving at Chilbolton at 2015 hours. That was swell team work in getting him back to the squadron so quickly.

The second mission took off at 2054, flew an uneventful cover and returned home at 2325 with only very little twilight since there was an overcast. They made a pretty sight with the red and green wing-tip lights on as they circled the field and peeling off to approach the runway.

Missions # 92, 93, 94, 95.....Another Full Day.

The first briefing on June 17th, took place at 0530, with Capt. Leary and Capt. Reinthal giving all the latest necessary information. Eating breakfast on the line, the pilots were ready to take-off at 0659. During the patrol, many M/Ts were seen on the roads west of La Goutierre going East and South, mostly south. The bomb-line gave an indication of the advancing allied troops going westward toward Barneville and forcing the Germans to deploy and run on these roads which our boys spotted.

Before the 2nd mission for the day took-off, the squadron was briefed by Captains Henry and Reinthal who gave the pilots the procedure for landing on the ALG at Cricqueville. They were airborne at 1139 hours, accomplished the mission and then landed at the ALG briefed on. Staying there for servicing, some of the fellows learned a little more French from the inhabitants. This strip was NE of Cardonville and closer to the coast. The 12 airplanes took off again at 1725 patrolled between 1730 and 1830 at the completion of which they returned home to Chilbolton.

Major Sparks led the last mission for the day. He briefed the pilots in the Ready Room which was almost gone, since Hanks' Hashery was being torn down in case the pilots were to move over to our landing ground over on the Normandy beachhead. If the advance echelon was already set up, it was very likely for the first contingent of pilots to move over with their airplanes. Eleven P-47s took off and the mission of area cover was accomplished as briefed. By 2325, nine airplanes had landed. Lt. Robbins' and Lt. Petrie were due back. Petrie's airplane was losing oil while flying the patrol and had to land at an ALG. Lt. Robbins went with him as escort. The strip, coincidentally, was the one which our advance party was at. The pilots were interrogated by our Group S-2, Maj. Ten Eyck and the Squadron S-2, Capt. Dick. After being serviced, they both returned by 0015, meanwhile the rest of the boys were sitting around the pilots room bringing up all sorts of subjects, including artificial fertilization led by our eminent bovine connoisseur, Lt. Benton.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Missions # 92, 93, 94, 95....continued.

The 18th was a day devoted entirely to maintenance. The airplanes were being serviced to be ready for operating from our advance landing ground. "A" Party was ready to receive them.

At 0830 on June 19th, a briefing was held at Group. Target-- a Noball near Le Hey, about 12 miles NW of Hazelbrouck in Northwestern, France. The recent Robot Plane launchings against London and Southern England had these thunderbombers ready to attack one of their launching platforms. However, Capt. Pendleton came in after the briefing and notified all that the planes were to stay on the ground until further notice. The original plan was to have Maj. Douglas lead the two squadrons to the target, bomb and then go directly to the ALG in France where they would have continued the rest of the days' operations. By 1700, they were released until daybreak. Before the release, many of the pilots were down at the pilots' room helping dismantle the snack-bar and filling the belly tanks which they were going to carry over. Some of the boys were looking all over for some French-English dictionaries to study-up on their vocabulary.

To Our Strip In France.....Continuation of the Move Across the Channel.

In the early morning of June 20th, 13 pilots flew their P-47s across the Channel to our strip at Cardonville from which we were to operate in the continuation of the Air-Support rendered. The time element would thus be cut down in getting help from the air for our ground forces. They were to be over there in France permanently from now on. Back here in Chilbolton, everyone else in "B" Party (Rear Echelon) continued packing and getting ready to wind things up over here. The pilots who remained were to ferry the rest of the airplanes over or be brought to the strip via C-47 transport. Late that afternoon, Lt. Ryerson ferried one P-47 across and came back that evening with news from the boys. Some of our jeeps in France were badly in need of spare parts. Lt. Carr immediately got in touch with the necessary people and they were gotten ready to be delivered in the morning. The airplanes which needed repair by depot were left at Chilbolton and then flown over to the strip, while those which needed depot repair were flown back to the base from the strip and then later ferried to the strip.

More Pilots and P-47s To The Strip.....

In the afternoon of the 21st, Capt. Romine, Lt. Gamblin and Lt. Glazier flew to the strip where they were to remain. Lt. Ostuw and Lt. Loughary ferried two more airplanes over and returned with two others. The squadron was notified that some enlisted men were going to fly over by C-47 the next morning.

Capt. Kessler, CO of the Rear Echelon, held a meeting after supper and discussed the rest of the program to be followed until departure. We were also to prepare for a hike June 22nd and draw up a training schedule.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Training.....Lts. Gamblin and Jasper in Mid Air Collision over France
During Combat.

at 0730, 22 June 44

A formation was held in front of the squadron orderly room and the men were marched over to Group Headquarters where Capt. Pendleton took command for the hike. We hiked a distance of about 4 miles around the base. 2 enlisted men from Engineering, T/Sgts Donahue and Hansen were flown over to the strip via C-47. The rest of the day was spent in taking care of the details.

In the afternoon, word came back from France that Lts. Gamblin and Jasper were lost by a mid-air collision with each other while going after a German plane. The Group had bagged a total of about 5 E/A, one by Maj. Douglas and one by Lt. Spike Quilty. The loss of Jim Gamblin and Jasper was a great blow.

Packing and painting of the boxes and shipping cases continued the next day. The S-2 and S-3 trailers were moved up to the squadron area. The buildings on the line were cleaned up to be turned over to the Station Complement. Cases ready for shipment were brought over to the hangar and stacked there to be loaded from one concentration point. 12 Engineer men and 2 cooks were sent to the strip by C-47, T/Sgts Moore, Cates, S/Sgts Bumpers, Harvell, Knoulton, Koster, Lanum, Morgan, Potter, Rodgers, Wightman, Cpl Maurer and Sgt. Bettin and Cpl McGaha. With these men were shipped cots, bikes, and some combat rations.

Capt Myers, Lt. Hamilton and Lt. Waegener took 3 airplanes to Burtonwood where they were going to have paddle blade props put on and then return to the base before leaving for our strip.

Visit From The Strip.....Another Hike, Training.

On the morning of the 24th, Lts Loughary, Ostuw, Howie, and Ohlman and F/O Hanson left via C-47 for France. 2 enlisted men were taken too T/Sgt Gibson and Cpl. Bour from the Engineering Dept, plus some more equipment needed over there. At noon, Capt. Romine and Lt. Benton landed from the strip. They told us that Major Douglas had gotten another Jerry. They were also looking for a transformer which would come in handy over there. "Bone", "Louis III" and Waegener came back from Burtonwood and left for France with Capt. Romine and Lt. Benton.

A formation was held in the area at 1430, marched over to Group Headquarters where we joined the rest for a hike at 1500. The distance was about 5 miles with practice gas alarm and air attacks. Capt. Pendleton simulated the air-attack with the L-4. Aircraft spotters were placed along the column to call these attacks in. A critique was held at Group S-3 to formulate definite plans for signals and procedure.

Some more classes were held on the 25th. Lt. Jasper's promotion to 1st Lieutenant came through effective the 15th of the month, but as fate had it, it came post humous to a grand fellow. Capt Baer delivered a camouflage lecture to the men at the sergeant's mess at 1300. From 1400-1600 Major Davis spoke to the squadron on First-Aid and Sanitation. The hike and tent-pitching which was scheduled at 1830 was cancelled because

SQUADRON HISTORY

Visit From The Strip....Another Hike, Training. Continued.

of rain. Five new pilots were assigned to the squadron from the 495th Fighter Training Group--2nd Lts. Richard C. Cox, Albert A. Schnedler, John B. Steward, Jr., Theodore O. Taubert and Robert R. Waggoner.

Six armorers were taken to the strip by C-47 earlier in the day--T/Sgt Metcalf, S/Sgt. Wood, Sgts. Scaglione and Peters, Cpl Eskes, and Pvt. Freeze.

June 26th was rainy practically all day. The B Echelon cases ready for the RTO were loaded and brought down to the railroad depot and put on the wagons waiting there. The C Echelon equipment was being made ready to leave.

The next day, on the 27th, three more pilots flew to the strip at Cardonville to join the advanced group. They were Lts. Petrie, Davis and Grace. That same morning, 7 more enlisted men (Engineers and Armorers) left via C-47 for the strip-- M/Sgt Ledbetter, S/Sgt Pool, Sgt. Thomas, Cpls Kordell, Oliver and Fragier, and S/Sgt Gergel. In the afternoon, 7 more men left-- S/Sgts Hyduk and Lourette, Sgts. Mei and Aquino, Cpls Fritz, P.F.C. Reno and Pvt. Carter. Classes were held in Mines and Booby Traps by one of the men from the station complement and in "Chemical Warfare" by Lt. Boose, our Ordnance Officer.

The weather during the 28th of June was rainy all day. At 1230 hours. The squadron held a formation in the area, and then marched over to Group Headquarters from which we started on a hike at 1300. Training to take-cover in case of aerial attack was continued. After the hike, a critique was held by Capt. Pendleton at which time we were notified that tomorrow morning's hike would be in full-field equipment. At 0800 on the 29th, with the weather a little better, the hike was accomplished as planned with all available personnel. Earlier in the day, at about 0545, Capt. Baer, Lt. C.H. Olson, Lts Fox and Loeb took-off and flew to the strip. Capt. Baer and Lt. Waegener returned to our home base here at Chilbolton in the late afternoon. Lts Carter and Quilty stopped over for a few minutes. Spike remained and Carter flew back to the strip.

Lt. Quilty met with a serious motor accident on the road to the base near Worthy Downs. His right forearm was badly cut and was taken to the 38th Station Hospital. It appeared that Spike would have to remain there for awhile until his arm would heal. Our five new pilots left for the strip in the afternoon of the 30th. Lt. Robbins was reported as MIA as of June 27th when he went down in enemy territory while on a mission over France. Plans were made to load all squadron luggage and remaining equipment by the 30th to be ready to move should orders come in for shipment of "B" party to go to France. The area was cleaned up and gotten ready for an inspection. The movement orders did come in. A meeting of all officers was held in Maj. Morrell's office at Group at 2100. A briefing was held regarding the move to the marshalling area, which was going to take place early July 1st. After the meeting, the squadron was getting set.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Visit from the Strip...Another hike, training. Continued

The month ended with the rear section of the squadron ready to move across the channel to join the rest of the squadron already operating from the strip. The squadron usually regrets the loss of those pilots who served their country well and contributed to the history of present day events.

Squadron History- Movement of Advance Echelon
to France, and June Operations on The Continent

13 June 1944; Having been alerted at 2300 hours the night previous, the A (advanced) echelon left Chibolton in two sections, the trucks, jeeps, and impedimenta departing at 0900 hours, and the personnel at 1500 hours by 12 trucks. Authority for movement was from W. G./L. C. Salisbury District. In all was accomplished with a minimum of complications since the echelon had been on a one hour alert for several weeks. The trip was uneventful but difficulty in locating our marshalling area delayed getting settled until 2300 hours. Finally, after a late supper, everyone was billeted in pyramidal tents, and slept fitfully through two purple alerts.

14 June 1944; One day's rations and our PX allowances and invasion currency were distributed to all personnel along with a partial payment in the morning. To top it off a hearty dinner, (our first in a long time) Major Benjamin, Army USA, conducted an orientation forum that covered everything from the French mentality to traffic regulations on the beachhead. We closed by reading 10 letters, one from General Meserve, and one from General Eisenhower. The remainder of the afternoon was a thorough and extremely general cleaning of the tissues and soul. Father Cleary officiated in a brief service, and the splendid showering facilities of the marshalling area were exploited to the nth degree. In fact, for the first time since our arrival in the UK, we revelled in high-pressure, needle spray that was adjustable and unvarying. Supper was magnificent, and everyone retired early, expecting the worst.

14 June 1944; We were roused just after another purple alert, and told to prepare to move out. Coffee was hurriedly downed at 0300 hours, and we entrucked for Southampton, our embarkation point. Processing entailed much waiting and shifting about, but time was well spent in sunbathing in the park, eating at the mobile GI kitchens, and napping in the trucks. Finally, at 0800 hours, we left the assembly area for IST #16, boating at 0840 hours. Blankets were issued, and everyone curled up wherever the required number of square feet was available and dry. Trusting to God and the Navy, we slept soundly through two alerts.

15 June 1944; IST #16 cast off at 0600 hours, slid down the Solent, tarried for fifteen minutes waiting to join the rest of the convoy, and then set sail for La Belle France. The day was superb, and the boys from Brooklyn compared it to the Coney Island Ferry trip. Ballons festooned our bow and stern, and, as far as the eye could reach, ISTs, LSTs, Liberty Ships, and corvettes covered a very laud channel. The only aviation in sight was covered with those stripes that are so beautiful to see through field glasses. After a very pleasant fare of C

21 June 1944; Last word in a day. The pilots were treated to some "kill" tales by all of the veterans of the campaign, and then the customary billowing of beer, wine, and appetizers and cuisine of the day went forward.

22 June 1944; Last day in the morning, but we got off on a "kill" run in the afternoon, but was as eventful as well as successful as any job we've been on in the '44. The boys back the "original" group west of Vire on on their way home, caught some fun A/C that controller called in. After knocking down two with no scratches, the Squadron set me in a slow turn over the "original-group" boys, two of our most reliable and competent boys, collided in mid-air, violently and inexplicably. No parachutes were seen, and it was a sudden and serious loss that jolted us beyond belief. The boys went out with heavy hearts to attack two strong points that were held in the savanna on Cherbourg, and did a superb job through smoke, bad weather and marvelous camouflage.

23 June 1944; The squadron got off in the afternoon to hit rolling stock near Verigny and Major Douglas got his second run in two days after completing his primary mission successfully.. Though shots in ASP procedure were beginning to grow thick and it was gradually becoming evident that the boys were really doing a great job on obscure and tiny targets.

24 June 1944; In the morning, we went up to check up again and checked a few gun emplacements that had been in the Army's hair for a couple of days. Another of our originals, Lt. Jack Robbins had an engine quit over the bomb line and successfully bailed in. He walked away and we're hoping to sick him out of a cosy branch cellar if the war will improve in that direction. In the afternoon, the boys went out and dragged up a wood that was held to contain many Jerry's and much equipment. Although results were unobserved, the Army again commended.

25 June 1944; A very vexing strong point at Cherbourg received our total and undivided attention on the morning run, and the boys returned jubilant. They were told on landing that the gun surrendered immediately after the bombing, which they described as the best they had ever done.

26 June 1944; Maintenance, training, rain, poker and general "fousing" topped off with "Gover Girl" our first cinema in France.

27 June 1944; Bad weather that shouldn't happen to a duck, and everyone rebelled at the inactivity. Some much needed maintenance work was made difficult by the wind and rain that persisted. The pilots have taken a sudden interest in the French language so a class was set up and the more necessary (?) phrases were taught.

21 June 1944; the weather finally broke in the afternoon and the boys went after another troop concentration in the forest at Port Desire. It was quite uneventful.

22 June 1944; today the boys put on a show for the remaining residents of Cherbourg, General Bradley's West Infantry, and the magazine. A fort in the harbor, the only remaining point of resistance and a block to our use of the harbor facilities, was hit by three platoons of boys led by Major Sparks and set off into complete submission with five hundred rounds.

In the afternoon he returned to the St. 10 sector to accomplish a gun emplacement. It was a run of the mill job that again earned thanks from Corps HQ.

23 June 1944; he made a vain attempt to find a pin point target in the hideous weather that persisted but two hours search led to no avail. Bombs were jettisoned in the local swamp and the first abortive mission of the month was chalked up against us.