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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. DIR 5200.9

HISTORICAL DATA

SQUADRON HISTORY
396TH FIGHTER SQUADRON
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

SEPTEMBER 1944

SQUADRON HISTORIAN - 1ST LT. MURRAY B. THALER
RECORDER - CPL. THOMAS J. GRIFFIN

HISTORICAL DATA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

EQUADRON HISTORY

SEPTEMBER 1944

396th FIGHTER SQUADRON

1. ORGANIZATION : In accordance with Section II, GO # 223 (Secret) Hq., Ninth Air Force, dated 14 Sept. 1944, the squadron was now authorized a total of 57 Officers, the increase due to 6 additional pilots. This brought with it an additional Captain, two 1st Lts., and three 2nd Lts., and increasing the six flights to seven. (45 pilots, 12 ground officers). (Copy of above GO not available).

2. STRENGTH :

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN
Beginning of the month	55	254
Net increase	5	0
Net decrease	2	0
Total at end of period	56	254
Total Officers and Enlisted Men	310	

3. MOVEMENT :
The squadron moved from A-40, Chartres, France to A-69, Laon-Athies, France between the dates of 7 September to 15 September, when the last contingent of personnel arrived at A-69, The advance party moved again on 26 September from A-69, Laon-Athies, France to A-89, Le Culot, Belgium but moved once more from A-89, Le Culot, Belgium to A-84, Chievres, Belgium on 29 September. (The last contingent arrived at A-84 on 5 October).

4. LOSSES IN ACTION : NIL

5. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS :
The following awards of Air Medals and clusters have been made in accordance with the sections and General Orders indicated.

In accordance with par. 3, SO # 104, Hq. 368th Fighter Group, dtd 2 September 1944, 116 Enlisted Men of this squadron were awarded Good Conduct Medals. (All names indicated on copy of SO attached).

R E S T R I C T E D
HEADQUARTERS
IX TACTICAL AIR COMMAND

APC 595, US Army
8 September 1944.

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 56)

AWARDS OF AIR MEDAL -----SECTION I.
AWARDS OF OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO AIR MEDAL -----SECTION II.

SECTION I

1. By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order No. 9158 (Bull 25, WD 1942) as amended by Executive Order No. 9242-A (Bull 49, WD 1942) and in accordance with authority delegated by the War Department and Ninth Air Force, the following named officers of the IX Tactical Air Command are awarded the AIR MEDAL, in recognition of meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight in the European Theatre of Operations, each having participated in the required number of operational sorties against the enemy, and/or having destroyed an enemy aircraft on the date indicated.

	*		*
		368TH FIGHTER GROUP	
		396TH FIGHTER SQUADRON	
ALBERT F. BRIZENDINE	O-820454	2nd Lt.	Benton Harbor, Mich.
WILLIAM G. DIXON	O-706367	2nd Lt.	Hollywood, Fla.
BOYD E. JOHNSON	O-766544	2nd Lt.	St. Paul, Minn.
JOHN R. KNAUSS	O-820510	2nd Lt.	Northampton, Penn.
IRVEN F. MILLER	O-820546	2nd Lt.	Smithfield, Penn.

SECTION II

1. By direction of the President, and in addition to the Air Medals awarded in General Orders, indicated in right column opposite each name, the following named officers of the IX Tactical Air Command are awarded the OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO THE AIR MEDAL, under the provisions of Executive Order No. 9158 (Bull 25, WD 1942) as amended by Executive Order No. 9242-A (Bull 49, WD 1942) and in accordance with authority delegated by the War Department and Ninth Air Force, in recognition of meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight in the European Theatre of Operations, each having participated in the required number of operational sorties against the enemy and/or have destroyed an enemy aircraft on the dates indicated.

	*		*
		<u>SECOND BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER</u>	
		368th FIGHTER GROUP	
		396th Fighter Squadron	
GERALD J. GRACE	O-702793	2nd Lt	Sioux Falls SD 1944 GO 31 STAC

*
FOURTH BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER

GO No. 56, Cont'd:

368TH FIGHTER GROUP
396th Fighter Squadron

GEORGE P. OHLMAN O-697055 2nd Lt Littleton Col 1944 GO 31 9TAC

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SECOND SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER

368TH FIGHTER GROUP
396th Fighter Squadron

FRANK S. KERCHNER O-305637 1st Lt Long Branch NJ 1944 GO 133 (9AF)
WALTER C. LOUGHARY O-302321 1st Lt Springfield Mass 1944 GO 100 (9AF)
IRVING OSTW O-680085 1st Lt Passaic NJ 1944 GO 133 (9AF)

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By Command of Major General QUESADA:

/s/ A. C. KINCAID,
Brig Gen, USA
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

/s/ R. J. MAYS,
/t/ R. J. MAYS,
Major, AG D,
Adjutant General.

" A TRUE EXTRACT COPY "

Murray B. Thaler
MURRAY B. THALER,
1st Lt., Air Corps.

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R E S T R I C T E D

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R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. Army
2 September 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 104)

1. 1st Lt OSWALD MORILL 07640999, AC is apptd Gp Personal Equipment Officer, vice Capt ERNEST R. RENDLETON, 01638210, AC 1st Lt.

2. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943, and upon the recommendation of his Organ Comdr, Sgt (SM) Jesse L. Castro, 39267813, 397th Ftr Sq, is reduced to the gr of Pvt for misconduct.

3. Under the provisions of AR 600-68, 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 commendation, are awarded Good Conduct Medals for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity:

Technical Sergeants

Gates, Herbert A.	37259423
Donahue, Robert C.	39169940
Harsiades, Alkibiades	12780333
Hansen, Carl A. Jr	15019739
Legere, Robert J.	11053799
Malone, William	32375557
Metcalf, Wesley J.	31115733
Selighan, Seymour W.	32323412
Spigut, Michael C.	33157507
Tampone, Garibaldi	32435052
Wilson, Sumner F.	1206387

Staff Sergeants

Trenaman, Alfred E.	32463395
Bassler, Ellis N.	32449388
Chrisman, Leland D.	37263392
Crisci, Nicholas F.	12148531
Daly, Thomas F.	12079035
Dilger, Quentin F.	37295342
Engelman, Howard J.	35684905
Everett, William H.	36535933
Fowler, Clarence N.	14333889
Gergel, Richard G.	35397743
Ghizzano, Chester A.	32464132
Gruber, Robert L.	17109311
Harkness, Keith L.	37212380
Harvell, Clarence H.	14149505

Staff Sergeants Cont'd

Henriksen, Christian F.	39545559
Hyduk, John	33322264
Kaczowka, Sigmond A.	31037044
Karolak, Clement A.	12022521
Knowlton, Orville P.	32476622
Koster, Don E.	20060729
Lanum, Joseph E. Jr	35401890
Lancaster, Kenneth B.	37237821
Lourett, William L.	12080627
Martin, Andrew D.	34027257
Morgan, Edward F.	35353579
Mueller, Rudolph O.	36113661
Murin, Edward L.	39259467
Nelson, Ellard O.	31904446
Norris, Almon B. Jr	19135675
Potter, Bufford	13035202
Rodgers, Raymond J.	33307965
Smith, Raymond W.	1335041
Stage, Richard C.	3139420
Stamper, Raymond	3448086
Upham, John A.	3066351
Vlach, George C.	35302742
Vnook, Adolph J.	12019459
Watson, Clarence A.	37175281
Wightman, Edwin C.	31166574
Winter, William E.	15099555
Wood, John C. Jr	14053200
Zidek, Stephen J.	35348455

R E S T R I C T E D

SO #104, Hq 368th Ftr Gp, dtd 2 Sept 44, Cont'd.

Sergeants

Aguino, Albert L.	12040005
Basch, Gustavus	14082897
Bedian, Zane	12174156
Bennett, Edmond E.	11029089
Bernstein, David C.	17039951
Blackwell, Shady	39129363
Burnham, Franklin H.	31105737
Brinson, Karlton C.	38222647
Davidson, Buford P.	36555513
Detart, Norbert M.	36815234
Dolan, Andrew J. Jr	11098825
Dooley, Thomas F.	11106656
Endicott, Alvin R.	35720453
Engle, Clayton B.	32466149
Ewin, Edward G.	36070034
Fisher, Charles H.	33235040
Fitzgerald, Robert F.	32221162
Flores, Ernie V.	39556781
Greenspan, Richard	12035870
Hirschfelt, Casper F.	35601840
Joyner, Wiley V. Jr.	34666029
Lucas, Leonard M.	36376995
McDunness, Daniel T.	31132773
McCain, Joe L.	38225699
Mei, Renato E.	39094661
Miletich, Joseph L.	17069909
Monaghan, Gerald H.	31110943
Peters, John H.	33496413
Porter, Leonard W.	32551088
Price, Richard C.	32194545
Ribbeck, Reginald H.	18026461
Richard, Roy Z.	33316598
Stephens, Arnold G.	11090660
Stone, Lloyd R.	15076071

Sergeants Cont'd

Stockford, Robert L.	31044428
Sullivan, Edward J.	31093461
Szcesuil, Frank C.	31201628
Thomas, Dominick J.	31105799
Thompson, Oswald C.	32436203
Wilson, Clayton W.	35449088
Wilhite, Jack W.	20443592
Woods, Robert W.	17071398

Corporals

Barry, Martin M.	12191052
Corcoleotes, John D.	39035496
Doyon, Rene A.	31119005
Duffy, Joseph A.	31096872
Martin, Harvey	12045363
Maurer, William E.	19087611
Michelson, George R.	37666729
Mitchell, William G.	33567094
Padgett, Leon J.	34545887
Schneider, Henry S.	39558344
Sokoloff, Morris	33054918
Steinchak, Charles E.	35514014
Sulton, Mohamed	32421986
Teague, Edgar R. Jr	37604398
Tosetti, Ambrosco J.	11033503
Tunkel, Sheldon	12203733
Wyatt, Howard F.	35652372

Privates First Class

Harrelson, Lacy R.	34604636
Silver, Joseph	31105689
Thomas, Joseph M.	32580109

Privates

Smith, Edward J.	31306467
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By order of Colonel MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:

Hugh L. Rice

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

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

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R E S T R I C T E D

SQUADRON HISTORY

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

1. On Sept. 1st, Capt. Dennis Crisp and 1st Lt. Jerry B. Tullis were asgd. and jd. the squadron as two additional pilots. Lt. Kennedy was officially back from his attached duty at Group. Two enlisted men were reduced in grade and ten were promoted to grades indicated in par. 4 and 6, SO 103, Hq. 368th Ftr. Gp., dtd 1 Sept. 1944. (Copy of SO atchd).
2. 2nd Lt. Joseph S. Busenbark asgd and jd the squadron on Sept. 3rd from the 13th RCD. Lt. Busenbark was with the squadron before his transfer to the hospital.
3. 1st Lt. David C. Parrish and 1st Lt. Robert G. Paulette were both aptd. Capt. AUS per par. 2 SO # 245, Hq. Ninth AF, dtd 1 Sept. 1944. They were notified on Sept. 8th, as was 2nd Lt. Henry L. Olson promoted to 1st Lt. AUS per par 3 of the same order. Lt. Davis was set to go on D.S. to the 2nd Armored Division.
4. On Sept. 20th, Sgt. Wilson and Cpl. Zeitlin of the Communications Section left on D.S. to the 327th Fighter Control Squadron.
5. Major Thomas J. Andrews was transferred to Hq. IX TAC on the 26th and Capt. Crisp was appointed Squadron Operations Officer.
6. 2nd Lt. Gushin was transferred to the 474th Ftr. Gp. and 1st Lt. Davis returned to squadron from DS with 2nd Armored Division, on Sept. 28th.

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS
368TH FIGHTER GROUP

APO 595, U. S. ARMY
1 September 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 103)

1. Lt Col JOHN D. W. HAESLER, 0432193, AC, is aptd Gp Operations Officer, princ duty, vice Capt MEREDITH W. HENRY, 0796688, AC, reld.
2. Capt MEREDITH W. HENRY, 0796688, AC, is aptd Assistant Gp Operations Officer, princ duty.
3. Major RANDALL W. HENDRICKS, 0441804, AC, is designated as Commanding Officer of the 397th Fighter Squadron, vice Lt Col JOHN D. W. HAESLER, 0432193, AC, trfd.
4. 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 reduced to the gr of Pvt for inefficiency:

S/Sgt (750) James B. Winfree 34117764
S/Sgt (747) Louis Zrinski 32467214

5. Under the provisions of AR 615-5, 30 June 1943 and upon the recommendation of their Orgn Comdr, the following named EM, 395th Ftr Sq, are promoted to grades as indicated:

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (911) Edward F. Thompson 33312577
S/Sgt (750) Richard B. Nartker 15117896

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (759) Keith O. Crane 39835730
Sgt (941) Andrew Vanta 15019222
Sgt (750) Clifford F. Dolan 32434647
Sgt (747) Joseph L. DiPierno 12042318
Sgt (750) William F. Fisk 32316417
Sgt (605) Marchesq Philip 33414990

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Cpl (014) David M. Palma 39297507
Cpl (941) Vincent J. Mastromatteo 15374303
Cpl (747) Theodore D. Ruggiero 32781699

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R E S T R I C T E D

SO #103, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, dtd 1 Sept 44, par 5 cont'd.

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (345) Chester E. Urie	36199366
Pfc (911) Wilfred V. Milmo	32723874
Pvt (750) Vito J. Bafils	13047083
Pfc (747) Robert E. Olson	16018123
Pfc (747) Floyd T. Nelson	39835675
Pfc (750) George F. O'Hara	12141960
Pfc (747) Wilbur L. Faith	15078487
Pfc (405) Marvin V. Milan	16018013

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (650) Nathan Dubin	33318553
Pvt (911) John Celoste	32775904
Pvt (911) Albert M. Davis	19093102
Pvt (911) Harold D. Farley	38365977
Pvt (952) Thomas E. Lynch	37329021

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

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (511) Howard J. Engelman 35634905

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (821) Alvin R. Endicott	35720453
Sgt (505) Fred Goldman	36445508

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Pvt (750) James B. Winfree 34117764

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

Pfc (911) Charles F. Banks	12172539
Pvt (747) Louis Zrinski	32467214

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (911) Howard D. Carter	39414054
Pvt (050) James A. Cobb	34657120
Pvt (911) Elmer Evans	13116725
Pvt (345) George H. Harris	36451663

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R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

SO #103, Hq 368th Fitr Gp, dtd 1 Sept 44, Cont'd.

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

TO BE TECHNICAL SERGEANT (TEMP)

S/Sgt (862) Martin M. Klein 32506469

TO BE STAFF SERGEANT (TEMP)

Sgt (911) Harold A. Haun 31129015
Sgt (941) William J. Merlone 31105696
Sgt (911) Michael W. Rosewick 35028447

TO BE SERGEANT (TEMP)

Cpl (911) Jose E. Alequin 12089221
Cpl (060) John H. Busch 32366862
Cpl (747) Nickolas Cordista 12181533
Cpl (911) Charles A. Estaphen 11116320
Cpl (911) Joseph G. Maher 32768059
Cpl (747) William B. Murray 32849000

TO BE CORPORAL (TEMP)

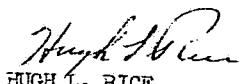
Pfc (809) Ben B. Barber 35389169
Pfc (941) Calvin M. Hazelbaker 35609822
Pfc (060) Cloghn M. Hoffner 34432689
Pfc (911) Eugene F. Miska 35057919

TO BE PRIVATE FIRST CLASS (TEMP)

Pvt (911) James F. Hackett 42080612
Pvt (901) Daniel E. White 39411062

By order of Colonel MEYERS:

OFFICIAL:


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

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

DISTRIBUTION "A"

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R E S T R I C T E D

1777

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 197, 198...Armored Column Support...Grace Comes Home..Leaflets

Briefing was held at 0745, September 1st. Capts. Henry and East gave the pertinent poop to the boys regarding the operations and Intelligence. Lt. Col. Douglas was to lead the squadron on this one. If there were no definite targets in front of our troops, the squadron was to recce a definite area. At 0909, the 12 P-47's were airborne and set out on course to the rendezvous point. The mission was uneventful with no enemy targets seen. Bronco # 2 was at Marle and friendly troops were in Hirson, the marshalling yards of which they had visited pre-invasion time, escorting B-26's on March 25th. It was on the return from this mission that day when the squadron first encountered enemy aircraft. Today, friendly troops were seen down there.

The second mission for the day had its briefing at 1345, a different type of mission. Capt. McLachlan was going to lead the squadron on a leaflet raid over four towns with the special leaflet bombs - St. Quentin Roye, Perrone and Villers, and 3 x 500 lb. bombs were to be used in support of our armored columns after the leaflets were dropped. Mac briefed the pilots on the procedure for the mission, then all returned to the squadron. The mission was accomplished as briefed with the leaflets dropped in the designated areas and then heading out to work with our ground forces. Bronco #1 at Buironfosse, asked the squadron to recce area for enemy gun positions. The boys found and destroyed an anti-tank gun, got some M/Ts strafed a tank, then came home. A mission well accomplished. Dave Parrish was hit by heavy flak SE of St. Quentin and had to return early with Pappy and Lt. Glazier as escort. When the planes landed, we were released until daybreak.

Lt. Grace, who had bellied-in his airplane about 18 miles southwest of Laon after being hit by flak yesterday, came back to the squadron as the boys were landing from the first mission. He had quite an adventure. As soon as the plane came to a halt, Jerry blew up the IFF equipment and then ran towards a nearby woods for cover. He walked about two miles in a swamp until he came to an open field where he lied down and covered himself with the weeds. In this position, he remained in this field for three hours. Grace heard voices speaking French. Knowing that they must be looking for him, he made his presence known just as they were about to flush him out of his concealment. There were about fifteen civilians plus two American soldiers. The people tried to tell Jerry that they had been looking for him since they saw his plane come down. He got this all through the motions and gestures of the Frenchmen for he didn't understand a bit of the language. In his own words regarding the feeling of being among friends, the reply was, "I felt damn happy when I saw these people with the two American fellows".

From the field where he hid, Jerry Grace and the soldiers went to the airplane, along with the Frenchmen, where he got his parachute and some odds and ends from the cockpit. They found many French civilians surrounding the plane when they arrived.

The two soldiers, who were from the 1st Infantry Division, led Lt. Grace back to the headquarters of one of the regiments where he had some chow and was later taken to the Division Headquarters via jeep. At this CP, he was given transportation to Division Rear where he stayed overnight. In the morning of Sept. 1st, Jerry didn't have any available transportation but finally caught a jeep going to an evacuation hospital

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 197, 198...Cont'd.....

where he was fortunate enough to find an ambulance going directly to Chartres - and home to the squadron. It was quite an adventure.

We got two more new pilots, Captain Dennis Crisp and 1st Lt. Jerry B. Tullis who joined us Sept. 1st.

Sweating Out A Mission.....

An early morning briefing for the 2nd was cancelled because of the weather. At 1215, a briefing was held for armored column support with the 3rd Armored Division in the vicinity of Hirson. When the pilots returned to the squadron, the take-off was delayed because the weather was closing in again. The squadron had been waiting all afternoon when Group Ops called in an 1800 hours take-off with a half hours notice. The scheduled pilots rushed out to the planes when the mission was again cancelled. The squadron was then released until the next day. By that time Loughary and his flight had returned from their visit to Gay Paree.

MISSIONS # 199 - 201...Armored Column Support...Lt. Busenbark Rejoins..

At 0645, Sept. 3rd the squadron was being briefed for an 0745 take-off. Bronco and Poodle Controllers were in the vicinity of Maubege as we noticed the bomb-line going north into Belgium. The ALO briefed the boys on the ground situation and told us of friendly troops in Valenciennes, Mons, and Cambrai. After getting all the information, Maj. Andrews held a short briefing on the technicalities of the job. The planes were over the target area by 0840, where they spotted much enemy equipment in the Faret de Mormal area. Three planes carried 500 pounders one each, which they dropped on the enemy at this point. Going down to strafe, the squadron bagged a total of 60-70 M/Ts destroyed, plus 30-40 horse-drawn carts (and 5 Germans soldiers who Ostuw made sure of). About 300 more horse-drawn carts were seen in the forest and the whole area around Bavai had as many enemy vehicles. Our troops were approaching Maubeuge while the squadron was destroying Jerry. All remarked what a good mission this was.

The second briefing was held at 1200 hours. It was to be the same type of mission, with Mac leading this show. When over the briefed area, they destroyed quite a number of M/Ts and more horse-drawn vehicles. Bronco was just north of Mons, preparing to move. Many enemy M/Ts were seen trapped southwest of Mons but our ground troops seemed to have the situation well in hand. It was critique and briefing time when this mission landed.

Before the third mission had its briefing, Mac led the critique, Lt. Col. Haesler and Capt. Reinthal briefed on the last mission for the day. The P-47s were airborne at 1802, Lt. Dave Parrish leading. In the vicinity of Nivelles, they destroyed 14 trucks by strafing and bombing and a total of 35 horse-drawn wagons were added to the score. Friendly troops had reached Brussels and the road to the south was jammed with trucks. When the planes landed, the critique was held, the boys had supper and rushed over to the chateau to "hit the sack". Lt. Busenbark, who was left in a hospital in England joined the squadron once again and came to the chateau with the rest of the pilots. His ankle had healed

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 199 - 201.....Cont'd.....

and was well on the road to recovery from that parachute jump he made on May 31st, when his radio went out and the weather was very poor. All the boys greeted him back.

SCRUBBED.....The Weather.....

The squadron went on a 30 minute alert starting at 0800 on the 4th. All were standing by all morning but no mission had come in yet. A briefing was called for at 1330 for column support in the area northeast of St. Quentin. When the pilots returned to the ready room, a standby was called in over the squak box because of the weather - no take-off. Another briefing was held at 1730 for the same type of mission but when they scrambled out to the airplanes and taxied out, the weather caused another scrub.

The first group of enlisted personnel of the squadron got their chance to see Paris and spend the day there. The truck left very early in the morning with Lt. Boose in charge. All had a swell time seeing the sights and what Paris was all about.

Sept. 5th brought another 30 minute alert in the morning. At about 1030, a briefing was held at group. The squadron was going to work with the XIX TAC on a dive bombing mission to Brest against German positions still holding out. The planes took-off, but the mission was scrubbed while in the air because of the weather. The weather continued bad all day, with the squadron being released finally.

MISSION # 202.....Armed Recce For The XIX TAC....Ready To Move.

On Sept. 6th, briefing was held at 0615, bright and early. The squadrons of the group were to perform an armed reconnaissance from Saarbrucken to Kaiserlautern - Trier - Arlon - then to Luxembourg. The bomb-line went into Germany near Saarbrucken. Each p-47 in the squadron was to carry 2 x 500 lb. GP's. Lt. Col. Perego, flying with the squadron was leading this group mission. At about 0800, they were setting course going in the direction of the Third Army. In the recce area, they found a marshalling yard believed to be at Trier and bombed with very good results, getting hits on the choke point and parked goods wagons.

In the afternoon, we found out that we were to move to Laon A/D (A-69). Originally it was planned to use the new base as a refueling and rearming place for the planes but later we found out that the whole group was to move there. "A" party's convoy was to leave tomorrow morning at 0600, with the rest of the squadron to follow as equipment and men were to be sent there. The release at the end of the day was until the morning of the 8th - Maintenance and training.

SQUADRON HISTORY

RELEASED FOR MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING....."A" Party Leaves....

The day of the 7th was an ordinary one used for work on the air-planes. At 0600 that morning, Major Wernli and his advance party set out for A-89, the Laon-Athies Airfield. Just a little over two weeks and the outfit was set to move closer to the troops. Some training hops were flown with the new pilots for orientation and formation flying. The packing for the move of the rest of the squadron was started, otherwise the day was more or less uneventful.

MISSIONS # 203, 4, 5...with XIX TAC In Support Of Siege On Brest....
"Captain" Parrish and "First" Lieut. H.I. Olson..

Briefing was called for 0600 hours on Sept. 8th. The group was going to work with the troops of the 29th Infantry Division who were laying siege to the city of Brest, still resisting stubbornly. Most of the briefing site was sent on ahead to Laon so the boys were briefed in the ALO's tent serving the purpose very well. The ALO gave the latest information about our ground forces to the pilots, dealing with the prisoners taken to date and a bit about the Siegfried Line. Capt. McLachlan was leading the first of the three missions for the day. The 12 ships were airborne at 0722, but Larsen had to come back immediately because of belly tank failure. All carried 2 x 500 lb. GP bombs. The bombing results were excellent. Default Controller gave the squadron the exact location of one of the forts on the outskirts of the city. All hits were observed inside of this strongpoint. Our troops were about four miles from Brest at the time. The boys were enthusiastic over the results of their bombing as they came into the personal equipment room to remove their flying gear.

At 1030, the second mission was briefed. It was just about then that Lt. Col. Douglas brought out the promotion orders for Dave Parrish, making him a Captain and promoting H.L. Olson to 1st Lieut. Right after the congratulations, the boys left for briefing. Lt. Col. Douglas led this one. When they arrived over the target area, Default marked gun positions for them which they bombed with very good results near the tip of the peninsula, then headed for home. Bob Paulette, our squadron Engineering Officer, was promoted to Captain on the same order as Parrish was listed. Bob was over at Laon with the advance party.

At 1500, the third briefing took place. Lt. Jensen and Capt. Reinthal briefed. The boys left for the line right away and waited for the planes of the previous mission to land. Chuck Romine led the squadron. Lt. Larsen, leading Purple flight, had to return to the base for the second time during the days operations - radio trouble this time. This made him feel pretty badly, since as assistant Operations Officer, Al had to get ready for all the briefing. The mission was accomplished as briefed. When they arrived over the Brest area, the 29th Infantry Controller tried to mark one of the fortified points for the Squadron. They bombed the fort with fair results while Mac's flight bombed and knocked out 2-88 MM guns which they found in a haystack. All planes returned by 2015 hours, and a quick critique was held at Group before the rush over to the mess area for chow.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 206, 7, 8....Armored Column Support With 3rd Armored....

September 9th, brought the squadron back to close support with the armored columns of the 3rd Armored Division. The first briefing was held at 0545 for the information regarding our old friends Instand, Poodle and Bronco. Maj. Andrews was to lead this mission. Our forces were in the vicinity of Liege, bringing them closer to the German frontier. If there were no definite targets, they were to recce an area to the east. The planes got to the target area at 0815 and remained until 0930 hours. It was quite successful with Capt. Romine's flight spotting about 500 German troops coming down a road between Liege and Aachen, shooting up about 75% of them. The squadron also got 15 vehicles a couple of staff cars and a locomotive while flying recce in the briefed area. Some of the boys flew over Aachen, Germany for the first time. They reported many active factories in the recce area.

At 1145, the second mission, with Lt. Col. Douglas leading, was briefed at Group. They were to go to the same area to perform the same type of mission as the previous one. When the squadron arrived in the vicinity, Instand told them to go to Verviers, a town 10-12 miles of Liege, where help was needed. Our troops were in the town as well as in Battise which is north of Verviers. The squadron went to the area where the help was needed. A house was marked with smoke as a target. The two bombs dropped came very close to the target which was then strafed and set on fire as many German soldiers were seen running out of it. It became a little too hot for them. About 45 vehicles were destroyed as well, plus a little strafing on 25-30 troops. They spotted much enemy equipment and many troops, some in black uniform. The boys were very satisfied with the mission when they came home.

Just as the planes were coming down from the mission, the third was being briefed at 1615. After the poop was given, they returned to the equipment room to get set, receiving some of the late information from the pilots who had just returned. Maj. Andrews would have led the squadron but his airplane got stuck on taxiing. Capt. Baer and Lt. Ostow both failed to take-off because of tire troubles which resulted in Bert Loughary leading the squadron of nine P-47's. He led them to the Liege area where enemy aircraft was called in over the R/T. They immediately jettisoned their belly tanks when they spotted a dogfight between the Jerries and Spits plus 47's. Two FW 190s were seen to be shot down, one Hun bailing out. Our troops were still in Verviers with Bronco #1 moving up to it. The squadron relayed messages between Instand and Bronco because Instand couldn't contact him from where he was located - another good deed played by our boys. All planes were down by 2020. At the critique, Lt. Col. Haesler told the pilots that there was a possibility of moving to the Laon field tomorrow.

During the day, some more trucks left for our new home with both equipment and men. Lt. George R. Davis went on D.S. to the 2nd Armored Division where he was to work with the air-support party. Davis got on one of the trucks heading for Laon from where he was going to try for a ride to the spot where the 2nd Armored was located.

An interesting bit was Sgt. Fisher's, one of our cooks. The convoy going through Paris on the way to A-69 stopped to see this beautiful Capitol of France. The people nearby the truck he was on approached unhesitatingly. A little girl impressed him very much so he handed her

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 206, 7, 8.....(Cont'd)

a bar of chocolate. Those who have passed through Paris know the expressions of joy which these people have shown. The little girl must have thanked him in the language which he knew nothing of. The man standing by, who was evidently her father, responded to her request in French for he raised the tot towards Sgt. Fisher whom she embraced and kissed in the way of thanks.

MISSIONS # 209, 10.....Continued Support for the 3rd Armored.....

Chow was received at the 395th starting on the 10th for our kitchen was sent on ahead to Laon. Briefing for the day's missions was started at 0945 for the squadron. Captain McLachlan was leading the first one for the day. The rendezvous with the armored column was at Verviers and then to recce the area eastward into Germany if no definite targets were given from the ground. Flak-happy valley near Koln was pointed out so that they could orient themselves. All the pilots had come to this briefing for Lt. Col. Haesler briefed on the new field, pointing out the runways and areas. The planes took-off at 1059 and arrived in the target area, when Poodle #1 asked Mac to bomb a house pin-pointed about 4 miles east of Verviers. The bombing by the one plane was fair with a near miss. The house was then strafed as were three enemy tanks nearby. They reported our troops in the town of Limbourg. The rest of the mission was more or less uneventful.

Capt. Crisp took another convoy to our new home as word came to us that the pilots would not be leaving then. All the baggage had to be brought back to the chateau to await further word from Group. The briefing for the second mission was held at 1645. Maj. Andrews led the squadron to the vicinity of Verviers where Bronco contacted and asked them to bomb two Tiger tanks concealed next to two churches just south-east of Limbourg, which was accomplished by good bombing, very close to the designated spots. "Booty" was seen on the main highway to Aachen, going northeast past Herve. All the planes were down at 2040 hours.

At A-69, Lt. Davis got a ride to La Capelle after having stayed at Laon-Athies airfield overnight from the previous day. From there he hopped a ride to get to Phillipville where he was to contact the headquarters of the 2nd Armored Division.

MISSIONS # 211, 12...More Armored Column Support...Planes Move To Laon-Athies A-69.....

On Sept. 11th, briefing was held at 0800 for support to units of the 3rd Armored Division. Mac was going to lead the squadron to the vicinity of Verviers for rendezvous and then perform a reconnaissance east of that point if the controller had nothing for them. Mac contacted Bronco #2 who was just east of Goe. The ground troops marked an anti-tank gun which Capt. McLachlan destroyed with excellent bombing right on it. Capt. Parrish got near hits close to an artillery piece which was giving our troops some trouble. Lt. Benton added to the squadron's good work by strafing and destroying an enemy tank. The tank exploded after the continuous hits. East of Homburg, our boys noticed some important German positions. They also chased a Jerry tank down a road and finally stopped it. Just as the boys were starting to leave the area for

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 211, 12.....(Cont'd).....

home, some of our friendly columns started to move ahead again. "Little" Olie ran short of gas on the way home so he landed at the new field, beating out the squadron to the place.

At 1200, the next mission was briefed. There was no definite information as yet regarding the ships landing at A-69 after this. The mission was to be the same as previous, with Lt. Col. Douglas leading. Just before the pilots left to go out to their airplanes, word came through that they were to land at Laon-Athies field for permanent operations from there (until the next move). Meanwhile, Maj. Andrews and some of the boys that were still around at Chartres were figuring who would fly the rest of the rest of the ships up there. Naturally, some debate took place in the operations room. After settling the schedule as to who would fly and who would make the trip by truck, the seven planes from Chartres left for A-69 after the mission's planes took-off. "Spike" Quilty left for the field later by himself.

While on the second mission for the day, the boys did alright for themselves. They destroyed 3 tanks and probably destroyed 7 others. To add to the total 22 M/Ts were destroyed. There was much enemy activity in the area. After this very good job, they set course for and landed at A*69.

MISSIONS # 213, 14, 15...First Missions Direct From A-69...Flying Near Siegfried Line.....

The first mission to be flown from the new base was briefed at 0545 hours on the 12 th of September. Capt. East and Lt. Col. Haesler briefed the pilots for an armored column support with the 3rd Armored Division. Taking off at 0704, they arrived over the briefed area at 0745. Friendly troops were a couple of miles northwest of Walhorn. They bombed a railroad east of Aachen, with only one bomb actually exploding, which didn't do much good on this mission. However, the Thunder Bums made up for this poor bombing by strafing and destroying and destroying 2 trolleys, 8 locomotives, a truck and a staff car. Flying around in the area, the boys brought back the report that the factories between Duren and Aachen were all active. All the planes were down by 0937 hours, after having been over the Siegfried Line area in the vicinity where the mission was flown.

The second mission for the day was airborne at 1305. The two airplanes carrying the bombs did some excellent dive-bombing by stopping and destroying 4 tanks near Eynatten, only two or three miles from the German frontier. Through excellent strafing they destroyed 5 tanks and probably got three others. Poodle #2 was in Eynatten and the pilots suspected enemy tank concentrations in the woods and hedgerows north of the town. After this mission the boys all wanted more planes to carry bombs.

Lt. Col. Douglas led the third and last mission for the day. After contacting Poodle #1, who didn't have any targets for them, the squadron was asked to recce the area to the east of where he was dispersed. Spotting some buildings which appeared like strongpoints right on the German Frontier, they bombed them with hits in the general area of the target. Further east, the squadron caught a concentration of 40-50

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 213, 14, 15...(cont'd).....

vehicles and strafed them with very good results on a road south of the Germund Forest in Germany. About 40 were destroyed with the vehicles exploding and flames shooting high into the air. Observations showed a concrete strip about 2 miles long located NE of Grevenb~~sch~~sch. Artillery was shelling the Siegfried line east of Poodle #1.

After the mission came down, we were notified that 8 of the planes were to go to Burtonwood, England, where they were to have rockets fitted to each airplane. Maj. Andrews was to go with Lt. Loughary's Blue Flight plus Lt. Howie. They got some maps ready and called it a night for the squadron. Some of our Thunder Bums were going to become Rocketeers as well.

MISSIONS # 216....4 Ship Top Cover...Some of the Airplanes Off to Get Rocket Devices Fitted.....

At 0310, September 13 th, Lt. Col. Douglas, Maj. Andrews and Lt. Loughary's Blue Flight plus Lt. Howie, took-off with nine airplanes eight of which were to go to Burtonwood to have the rocket tubes and accessories fitted to the planes. The rest of the squadron went on a 4 ship alert to act as top cover for any group mission that might come in.

At about 1145, we were notified at the mess tent that a briefing was going to be held immediately at group. Lt. Benton and three of his pilots were the four who were going to act as cover for the 397th which had 12 airplanes bombed up for a support mission with Organ, the 4th Infantry Division, who was located in the vicinity northeast of St. Vith. Lt. Courtwright briefed on the situation of our ground troops, telling us about the patrols in Germany. The planes took off almost immediately after the pilots came back to the ready room, with Major Hendricks of the 397th leading the show. Organ didn't have any targets but asked the fighter-bombers to drop bombs on pill boxes of the Siegfried Line. They got some hits close to the line near Manderfeld. The Major then set course for a marshalling yard which he had in mind. Our four boys kept a vigil lookout but no Huns interfered.

Lt. Col. Douglas landed about the same time the flight came down. He had asked "George" Benton over the R/T to have the squadron get 8 ships ready to take-off immediately to pick up belly tanks at Boxtead, England. On the way home to A-69, he spotted and tried to chase a possible Me 210 but it got away from him in the clouds near Abbeville. All the pilots got set to take off as the rain came down and prevented the trip. A release came through with ships to be bombed up for the next day.

MISSION # 217....Armored And Infantry Support.....Caterpillar Awards..

The weather on the 14th was pretty bad in the morning, clearing a little towards the afternoon. The squadron was on a 60 minute alert with 8 ships bombed up. We waited around for a mission all day but none came in for the weather had closed in. The day ended with a release until daybreak.

Briefing was called for at 0745 on the 15th. The pilots had already eaten breakfast and the man had the planes pre-flighted when group

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 217....(Cont'd).....

called in over the squak box that it was cancelled until further notice. The weather was bad over the target area. The mission had called for work with the 2nd Armored and 30th Infantry Divisions. Status - stand-by.

A pilots' meeting was held at 1300, at which time "The Fund" was discussed. Lt. "Sammy" F.S. Kerchner was running out of francs for expenses. However, another very good reason for holding the meeting was the surprise which Lt. Col. Douglas had for the boys who had bailed out due to the circumstances at the particular time of their emergency leap. Their names, date of jump, etc were submitted to the maker of the parachutes used so that a certificate and pins could be sent to them, making each a member of the Caterpillar Club. These had arrived and the Colonel wanted to take this opportunity to make the presentations. He himself was a Caterpillar. After the meeting, all the pilots were asked to form outside the pilots' room in ranks. Lt. Col. Douglas read the letter of merit (praising the men and the manufacturing company). It was quite military as he called Capt. McLachlan, Lt. Larsen, and Lt. Busenbark in front of the formation. With great big smiles on all of them, the colonel pinned the little medals on their shirts. Everyone yelled their congratulations after this event and then jumped into the weapons carrier to go down to see Doc for a vaccination against Smallpox (again).

At 1600, group notified the squadron for an immediate briefing. The pilots rushed to group where they found out that they were to rendezvous at Maastricht with the 2nd Armored, where a crossing was reported as being attempted. The take-off was immediate, Lt. Col. Douglas leading. The eight ships were airborne at 1656 and over the target area at 1730. Cutback Controller, who may have been our own "Porky" Davis, had no definite targets so the squadron reced the area, with half of the airplanes bombed with 2 x 500 pounders. They spotted a train to the east of Eschweiler made up of 25 coaches. A direct hit was observed on the train. Going down to strafe, the boys destroyed 2 locomotives in a shed, another one plus 10 cars were done over very well, plus another locomotive. A distinctive feature was the strafing of a factory in the vicinity of 5 miles northwest of Duren, seeing explosions occur within. Our troops - Poodlw and Instand, were east and south of Aachen. When the boys came down from this mission, they had a steak supper ready for them after the critique. Dave Parrish and H.L. Olson gave a champagne party to celebrate their promotions. There was also a rumor that we would be moving soon to Belgium.

Capt. Kessler and the remainder of the men who were left for the little details at A-40, Chartres, arrived at 0400 this morning which made the whole squadron present at A-69, Laon - Athies on September 15 th 1944.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 218.....Target Area Support For Mediums.....

The squadron was notified of an immediate briefing at about 1100, Sept. 16th. Eight of our ships were to act as target area support (plus four of the 397th airplanes) for B-26's going to the vicinity of Saarbrücken. Since the weather was doubtful, the take-off was delayed until 1700. The area was changed to the vicinity of Metz, however. Capt. McLachlan was leading and Capt. Henry came over from group to fly this mission with his old outfit. The squadron flew the mission as briefed to Metz. They heard enemy aircraft called in over the R/T by Sweepstake Controller but the squadron was too far south from Aachen at the time. All the planes were down at 1914, critique was held and the end of the day was at hand.

MISSIONS # 219, 220....Support And Deep Penetration Armed Recce.

The morning of the 17th started off with changing the B-time to A time, or setting our watches back one hour. Capt. Parrish was leading the first mission for the day which was briefed at 0600. It was to be an armored column support, infantry support, and a deep penetration armed reconnaissance Köln - Coblenz - Siegen - Ople - Köln if no targets were given by the Controller. Each squadron in the group was furnishing 8 planes. Our squadron didn't carry any bombs on this first mission, flying the equivalent to top cover. The original take-off of 0726 was delayed until 0826 because of the weather. They took-off and flew a more or less uneventful mission. The 395th chased a twin engined plane northeast of Seigburg but no contact was made. Just as the boys came in from this mission, the second mission went to be briefed.

The second one for the day was the same type mission. Lt. Col. Douglas led the squadron which was bombed up this time. The visibility was very poor but they managed to find a marshalling yard to dive bomb. The planes returned early because of the poor weather.

.....Bad Weather Interferes With Operations.....

Rain was the prevalent occurrence throughout the morning of the 18th. The first group of enlisted men left by truck to go into Reims on a day's pass. We were finally released because of the bad weather as the squadron was working on maintenance and other items during the day. There wasn't much activity but everyone was interested in how well the air-borne landing was coming along up in Holland.

Briefing was to be held at 0945^{5:45} for armored column support but this was postponed indefinitely due to the weather, which continued bad all day with a release coming through at 1800. There was no flying at all from the field. Maj. Kroencke added to the interest of a dull day by coming over to the pilots room where he lectured to all on the history and make-up of the Siegfried Line. The boys were flying over that territory now and they were all interested in the information which the major had at hand with his little portable map.

MISSIONS # 221, 222...Unsuccessful Mission (Weather)...Armed Recce...

Major Andrews And Blue Flight Return.....

A very foggy and cloudy morning ushered in September 20th. Group wanted 10 airplanes bombed up and a briefing was set for 1030 hours. At the group briefing tent Capts. Henry and East gave the boys the

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 221, 222.....(Cont'd).....

outline for the operation. It was a group show with Col. Meyers leading it. The pinpoints were on the map as they were told that the group was assigned to dive bomb enemy strongpoints along the railroad running from Aachen to Geilenkirchen after heavies and mediums were through with their tasks in the immediate area. Our planes were going to work in close support with the 30th Infantry Division. Col. Meyers briefed on the formation and the different targets to be attacked by the squadrons. The squadron's 10 ships were airborne at 1156 and the group set course for the target area. Lts. Hansen and Loeb returned early with their bombs and informed us that the weather was so poor that the targets couldn't be found. The rest of the squadron landed with all their bombs making the mission tactically abortive because of the weather.

Waiting around in the afternoon, a briefing was called for at 1545. Major Sparks was to lead the group on an armed reconnaissance between Koblenz and Koln. An immediate take-off was necessary to get back to the base before sunset. They arrived over the vicinity briefly at about 1730. The four ships carrying the bombs destroyed four vehicles east of Koblenz. An Me 210 was encountered and Tropic Blue Flight of the 397th finally destroyed it after each one made a pass at him.

Just before the mission returned, Major Andrews and Blue Flight landed all fixed up with rocket gadgets. Lt. Howie was left in England to have his airplane serviced after a minor accident on take-off. The mission landed and everyone rushed to critique to get it over with because Jerry was all set with steaks for supper. Col. Meyers, Lt. COLs. Perego and Gorrel, plus the well-dressed Capt. Henry (Blouse and Pinks) were all at the exclusive supper. After the chow, "Pappy" Kennedy brought in an undisclosed secret of a case of champagne. One lesson learned from the boys was - beware of "Chug-a-lug!" inebriation follows.

MISSIONS # 223, 224.....Close Support for VII Corps.....

At 0830, Sept. 21st, a briefing was held for close support to the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions of the VII Corps, which was located in the vicinity south and southeast of Aachen. The squadron was to contact Ballard and ask for targets, but if none were given, they were to recce an area between Aachen, Cologne, along Rhine River, and in general to the east of where our troops were. Capt. Parrish led the first mission with four planes bombed up with 2 x 500 pounders each. Ballard Controller was contacted and advised the squadron to cut the rail lines north of Duren. However, the boys found a marshalling yard, believed to be Elsdorf, and bombed it with excellent results. About 50 goods wagons and one locomotive were probably destroyed.

The second mission took-off at 1603 for the same type of work with the VII Corps, Major Andrews leading. Flying around and looking for a target, they found the marshalling yards at Eschweiler. They bombed but couldn't observe all the hits. An observation disclosed a direct hit on a factory, on a roundhouse, and in the yards. Bandits were called in and it didn't take long for the sky to fill up with friendly aircraft. All were down at 1828.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 223, 224.....(Cont'd).....

Capt. McLachlan was slated to go to group Headquarters on DS, which might be an indication that he was being considered for a possible return to the States. This was a guess but the boys were kidding him about his leaving us to go to group. Mac had the most operational hours, excluding Lt. Col. Douglas.

MISSIONS # 225, 226...Rail Cutting...Romine Hit By Flak....Fighter Sweep...Pappy and Parrish Leave For Flak Home In England

September 22nd's first briefing at 0730 brought a special assignment for the group to cut rail lines in Germany. There were eight sections of railroad to deal with. Capts. Henry and Reinthal gave all the poop on the extent of each section. Major Sparks, leading the group assigned numbers 4, 5, and 7 to our squadron. Lt. Courtwright brought us up to date with the ground information telling about Brest having finally fallen, a possible push pending, and the link-up of the airborne and ground forces up in Holland, establishing a corridor to Arnheim. Capt. Romine was to lead the squadron. They took-off second, the group formed and set course. When they arrived over the railroads, the # 2 section had not been cut yet so Chuck was asked to bomb it before they proceeded to #3. After making his run on it Chuck pulled out and was hit by light flak. A piece lodged in his right hip. Lt. Myers flying his wing, escorted Capt. Romine back to the base where Doc Cox took him to the hospital immediately. Chuck was OK but would have to remain there for the day and return to the squadron the next day. The piece of flak was left in his hip and he was taken off operations.

The rest of the mission continued as scheduled with the squadron cutting numbers 4, 5, and 7, as briefed. Chuck's hits were observed to cut #2 in one spot as well. The boys spotted a long concrete runway between sections 4 and 5.

Lt. Col. Douglas flew Pappy Kennedy and Capt. Parrish to Paris with the C-78 from which point they were going to get a hop to England. The two of them were on their way to the Flak Home near Oxford where they were going to take it easy for a week or so.

The second mission for the day was a scheduled fighter sweep. Briefing was at 1315 with Lt. Col. Perego flying with the squadron and leading the group. Henry who was also flying with the squadron outlined the area for the sweep - Aachen - Geilenkirchen - Munchen Gladbach - Ratingen - Berg Gladbach - Seigberg - Koningswinter - Euskirchen - Duren - Aachen - quite an area in Germany. It reminded the boys of the sweep they flew quite some time ago from Chilbolton, England, when they were bounced. Everyone was determined to look very hard for enemy A/C every minute of the sweep. Lt. Col. Perego and Capt. Henry came over to the squadron about an hour before take-off and sat around with the boys in the pilot's room. The pilots went out to the planes, took-off, and returned 2 hours and 55 minutes later from a very uneventful mission. After the critique, they had supper and came back to their quarters to end the day.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 227....Infantry Support...Targets Along The Rhine As Well...

On the 23rd briefing was held at 0630 hours. The squadron was to be first off on close support with the VII Corps again. Lt. Col. Douglas was leading this one. They were to contact the Corps to find out if any of the divisions needed some help. If there were none, the squadron was to recce to the east between Cologne and Honnef. The weather didn't warrant a take-off so the squadron stood-by until the afternoon when the ^{PERMITTED} a T/Omat 1448. Meanwhile, Red Flight left on leave to England.

While the mission was up, Chuck returned from the hospital with a telling limp due to his wound received yesterday. Lt. Blagen from group S-2 phoned in an interesting item. Our squadron flew the 396th group mission on Aug., 17th.

When the planes arrived over the rendezvous point with the infantry, the 9th Infantry Division marked a target for the squadron with red smoke. The bombing results were unobserved, but Seascout and Ballad Controllers both remarked that it was good bombing. Lt. Col. Douglas spoke to Porky Davis over the R/T. Lt. Davis, who was "Cutbreak" called "Serum" leader. Lt. Davis asked when he would be coming back to the squadron because he was tired. He hoped it would be soon. The squadron proceeded to the recce area and found a great deal of waterway traffic along the Rhine River, going south between Dusseldorf and Cologne. Tugs were pulling strings of 4-5 barges. They strafed tugs and barges just north of Koln, damaging at least 19 of them. They also spotted a locomotive which was being used as a trap to draw fighters down, when they would be shot at with many guns placed around this decoy.

BAD WEATHER....Lt. Howie Returns...."A" Party Leaves.....

September 24th was another day of poor weather. It rained all morning and the weather during the whole day was generally poor. There was a mission scheduled for support with the VII Corps again but not a single mission was flown all day. We were originally released until 1400 and were finally released at 1600. The rain continued the remainder of the day with Lt. Howie arriving from Grove in the bad weather.

The weather continued on the 25th. They released us at 1330 because of it and the rest of the day was very, very uneventful. However, at 2015 Capt. Kessler was around notifying those in the advance party that it was set to move out tomorrow morning at 0900. The new field was at Le Culot, about 16 miles southeast of Brussels and not too far from Louvain.

Advance Echelon Departs For New Base...USO Comes To A-69
MISSION # 228....Support For 30th Infantry Division With An Armed Recce..

The morning of the 26th was very wet. The rain continued as the advance party readied itself to leave for the field at Le Culot, which was thought to be our new home. They left at about 1130 hours all set to take the ride up through France and past the Belgian border.

In the afternoon, a briefing was held for a support mission with Brightside, the 30th Infantry Division. Four planes were bombed up with 2 x 500 lb. GP's each. All 12 planes were airborne at 1603. Brightside Controller marked a target with white smoke and the boys dive bombed

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION 228.....(Cont'd).....1.

right on it, located near Weiden about 10 miles northeast of Aachen. He reported the bombing results on the mission as very good. While flying a little recce, they spotted 3 FW 190s parked on the airdrome at Siegburg. Quite a bit of flak was thrown at them with 3 of the planes being damaged. Lt. Col. Douglas led the mission.

A U.S.O. troupe, M.C.ed by Freddie Lahn (from "Greenpernt") AND with Charles Burgess (pianist), Jerry Long (juggler), a 63 year old man who was very good, especially playing the drums and juggling at the same time, plus Dolores Anderson (singer) and Mary Ellen (dancer), came to Laon-Athies to help entertain the units stationed on or near the field. The show started at 1830 and ended about 1945. After their performance Lt. Col. Douglas invited them over to the pilot's room where a steak dinner was being prepared.

Major Andrews left the squadron earlier during the day. He was transferred to Headquarters of the IX TAC.

MISSION # 229.....A Factory Is Destroyed.....

Briefing was held for a support mission at 0930 on the 27th. The planes set course and arrived over the target area at noon. The controller didn't have any targets for the squadron, but they found a factory at Neuss which they bombed with excellent results by setting fire to it. All hits were on the factory. A job a little on the strategic side.

More personnel and equipment were ready to leave for A-89 but the move was held up because of a possible change of station for the "A" party up in Le Culot now.

MISSIONS # 230, 231...Rail Cutting....Davis Back From D.S.....

On September 28th, briefing was called for 0730. The boys were going to do a rail cutting mission of the Green System. Three sections were assigned to the squadron in the Euskirchen area. While on this job, they stopped a train, cut one section of railroad, and destroyed 2 locomotives by strafing and started some fires on a freight train.

In the afternoon, the squadron was briefed on the same type of mission and were going back after the two sections which weren't cut on the morning's mission. There was a bad haze over the target area when they arrived, but they found a marshalling yard at Eitorf which they bombed. The visibility was bad while in the area.

Lt. Davis returned to the squadron for duty from his detached service with the 2nd Armored Division. He had many stories to tell of his experiences up front with the unit he was working with. Lt. Gushin, the assistant Engineering Officer, was transferred to the 474th Fighter Group.

MISSIONS # 232, 233.....Close Support.....Commendation.....

The early morning briefing on Sept. 29th was for a group mission working in close support with our ground forces. All of the squadron's planes were bombed up. The target was near Simmerath in the VII Corps

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS # 232, 233.....(Cont'd).....

territory. After bombing, Seascout reported excellent results, "and the ground units moved forward after the bombing" - quoted from A-2 Periodic Report No. 68, Hq. IX TAC, dated September 30, 1944.

Another group mission was scheduled in the afternoon. Capt. Baer led the squadron as they took-off at 1303. All ships were again bombed up with 2x500 lb. GP bombs each. In the vicinity of Strauch, the boys bombed a German headquarters and gun emplacements with excellent results, completing a day of close operations with our ground units.

Later in the day, a general from the Corps called the authorities who in turn, notified our group ALO about the excellent work that was accomplished by our pilots in the execution of the mission.

Red Flight returned to A-69 in the morning of Sept. 30th, via B-17. Yellow Flight hopped off on the same B-17 on their leave to England. Before taking off the pilot and some crew members came down to see our set-up and have a little conversation with some of the boys. The rest of the day was rather uneventful except for the preparation to move to Chievres where the advance party had moved to yesterday.

The month went by quickly. Keeping in mind our mobility and intentions on the continent, September had two moves for us so that we followed in the advance of our ground forces. The boys started to fly over Germany itself with sweeps, fighter-bomber missions, playing a part in hitting the Hun in the rear by executing rail cutting missions, and air-support.

During the month, the Confirmation of Victory Credits Board - Air in their Report No. 27 from the Headquarters of IX TAC, dated 29 August notified that Major Sparks, our former Operations Officer, got his credit for damaging 1 FW 190 between Laval and Le Mans, Lts. Olson and Howie shared a probably destroyed FW-190. Recapping Victory Claims to date, the squadron has on record the following:

Confirmed Air				Pending Air			
Des.	Prob.	Des.	Dm.	Des.	Prob.	Des.	Dm.
8	3		10	5	0		0

The month came to a close with the beginning of the Battle for Germany.

SQUADRON HISTORY

"A" Party Moves To A-89, Le Culot....Then Ends Up At A-84, Chievres...

The usual Rainy Moving Day came. The Enlisted Men and Officers of the advance party were all set to roll out of A-69 at 0900 hours in the morning of Sept. 26th, but orders came through to hold the convoys until definite word came from Group. Most everyone remarked how typical the day was to start for a new home as they readied themselves for the move in the rain. Finally, at 1130, the first of the squadrons vehicles - 6 jeeps - rode around the perimeter strip to get to the main highway leading to La Capelle. The route took us through Marke, Vervins, la Capelle, Avesnes, Beaumont, Charleroi, Gembloux and thence to A-89, Le Culot, about 17 miles southeast of Brussels.

When we arrived at A-89, the great surprise was the already operating field, which a British and Canadian Wing were both using. Col. Meyers and Maj. Rice had arrived at the field earlier. Meeting us inside one of the gates they notified all to wait until they returned with more definite arrangements. There seemed to be a little doubt as to whether we were to stay here. When the colonel and major returned, we were told to hold everything we had with the convoys. Taking out a photograph of the field, the colonel explained the situation and just how we would plan on setting up with each squadron to a separate area. The 365th Ptr. Gp was going to come in to this place, too and would occupy the other side of the field. However, the setting up of the "A" party had to be temporary because the Canadian Wing was in our site and their departure was indefinite. We made the best of the situation by having the men set up their tents for quarters before nightfall.

M/Sgt. Ledbetter, T/Sgts. Malone and Barret were the enlisted men heading their respective sections while Sgt. "Hank" Bettin took care of the kitchen, K and C rations a specialty. Maj. Wernli was in charge of getting the sites planned out and set for the rest of the squadron.

The following day was spent in policing the sites to be used and moving the men to the area where they would be permanently set up if we should finally remain. The Engineers were still working on the runway with the craters in it. The consensus of opinion was that the planes would not arrive before Oct 2nd. The Communications Section started laying the lines to group to be ready for the equipment when it would arrive.

Sept. 28th, rumor had it that we were not going to remain at this airfield. The advance parties were going to move out on the morning of the 29th. The rumor became a fact. The group, as well as the 365th Ptr. Gp. was going to occupy A-84, Chievres, Belgium, which was southwest of Brussels by about 45 miles. At 1030 hours, Sept. 29th, we packed our things and by 1130, the first of the convoys from Le Culot departed for Chievres. Some of the men were going to stay behind with Lt. Ward to bring down the rest of the party plus the tentage and equipment. This put our squadron on three air fields, one in France and two in Belgium.

The trip to Chievres followed the route up to Louvain, thence through the cosmopolitan capitol of Belgium, Brussels, to Hal, Enghien, Ath, and then to Chievres. Arriving at the field we were very much impressed with its good condition and construction. There was a British engineering unit, a Mosquito and a Spitfire on the field. The 365th, the Service Group, our Group and other attached units had their advance parties with the convoys lined up along the taxi and perimeter strips awaiting the return of Col. Meyers who had gone up to IX TAC for further instructions.

SQUADRON HISTORY

"A" Party Moves To A-89, Le Culot (Cont'd).....1....

When the colonel returned, the word was to set up. Here, again, the squadron got a definite area with living, working and dispersal sites. The advance, advance party unloaded the things in the site to be the men's area and the tents went up. The trucks which Lt. Carr brought up were emptied and sent to Le Culot immediately to help move some more of the equipment and men from there the next day.

On the 29th, more of the remaining "A" party arrived and things started rolling to get set for the arrival of the planes and squadron. All the sections did all the preliminary work in developing what was to turn out as a full operating squadron as soon as the airplanes would arrive. The following two days were spent in development of what was on hand in order to be prepared for the operations from this field, and on October 2nd, the planes arrived a couple of hours after a contingent of our men arrived from Laon by C-47.

Dave "Duros" Parrish and "Pappy" Kennedy Enjoy The Flak Home.....

After arriving at Paris by C-78, piloted by Lt. Col. Douglas, Capt. Parrish and Lt. Kennedy were flown to Heston, England, via General Kneer's C-47. The two of them had to spend the evening of the 22 of Sept. in London and were flown from Heston to Grove the next afternoon. The Home, Eynsham Hall, or AAF Station 567, provided transportation from the field direct to the Hall. "Duros" and "Pappy" were greeted by the House Mother, G.I. Jones, who was most pleasant and full of cheer.

They were very much impressed by the building and the grounds. The Hall was a 3 story building owned by a member of English Royalty, with massive period furniture throughout. The grounds had a private lake and gardens which in all probability were kept beautifully before the war.

Mother Jones and several Red Cross girls arranged for the day's itinerary for the boys. Badminton, Archery, Fishing, and Tennis were always on the schedule. Off the grounds, they arranged for horses and Golf. In the afternoon of the 26th, Capt. Parrish and Lt. Kennedy went to see and hear Glen Miller and his band at one of the American Hospitals. In the afternoon of the 30th, they attended Greyhound Dog races.

To rub it in to the boys when they returned to the squadron on Oct. 1st, Pappy told of a butler bringing in orange juice every morning at 0830 to be served in bed. They were issued civilian clothes for the stay, but everyone dressed formally (in Blouse) for dinner. Each table was presided over by a lady and drinks were always served in the living room. Everything was well taken care of and the two of them considered this trip a real change and felt as if they were always on their own.