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1 MAR 1945

DECLASSIFIED  
DOD DIR 5200.9

395TH FIGHTER SQUADRON  
368TH FIGHTER GROUP  
APO 141  
Strip Y-34  
Metz, France  
MARCH 1945

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Historical Clerk:

Sgt Dux H. Schneider.

Squadron Historian:

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

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DOD DIR 5200.9

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S E C R E T  
SQUADRON HISTORY  
Month of March

I. Negative

II. STRENGTH COMMISSIONED AND ENLISTED

1.	At beginning of Period:		
	OFFICERS -----	58	
	ENLISTED MEN -----	244	
2.	Net Increase:		
	OFFICERS -----	13	
	ENLISTED MEN -----	4	
3.	Net Decrease:		
	OFFICERS -----	7	
	ENLISTED MEN -----	2	
4.	At End of Period:		
	OFFICERS -----	64	
	ENLISTED MEN -----	246	

III. Negative.

IV. On 25 March 1945, 1st Lt WILLIAM J. WAYLAND was leading White Flight on an armed reconnaissance mission in the Schweinfurt area. After disposing of his flight's bombs on railroad traffic, he led his flight in search of targets of opportunity. On the Giebelstadt A/d at N 6320, he observed about 8 Me 262's parked in revetments on the field. He made two strafing passes without incident but on the third pass his aircraft was struck by AA fire which penetrated the cockpit and struck him in the foot. This injury necessitated several days' hospitalization but he was returned to full combat status two days later.

On 28 March 1945 2nd Lt THOMAS F. LAYDEN was flying wingman to Lt HAYES who was leading the Squadron on an armed reconnaissance mission east of Giessen. On all roads in this vicinity, over 500 enemy vehicles and personnel were retreating when observed. Lt HAYES went down on his first strafing pass at about 1640 hours and at this time he observed Lt LAYDEN behind him. When the Squadron reformed again, Lt LAYDEN did not respond to R/T instructions and a check up revealed his absence. The last report we have of his location was then at 1640 hours at 2,000 feet between G 8523 and H 2050, east of Giessen. He is being carried as M.I.A.

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SQUADRON HISTORY  
Month of March

V. The following Officer was awarded the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS this month:

	<u>ORDER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Captain WILLIAM J. GARRY	GO 24, USSTAF	13 Mar 45

The following Officers were awarded the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS this month:

	<u>ORDER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Captain JENSEN	GO 43, 9 A.F.	6 Mar 45
Captain NOLAN	GO 39, 9 A.F.	28 Feb 45
Captain HUFF	GO 38, 9 A.F.	28 Feb 45
Captain EARLY	GO 307, 9 A.F.	31 Dec 44
Captain IVEY	GO 44, 9 A.F.	12 Mar 45
1st Lt ALDRIDGE	GO 37, 9 A.F.	27 Feb 45
1st Lt DIMAN	GO 43, 9 A.F.	6 Mar 45
1st Lt MIDLAM	GO 44, 9 A.F.	12 Mar 45
1st Lt WILLIAMS	GO 307, 9 A.F.	31 Dec 44
2nd Lt FOLTZ	GO 37, 9 A.F.	27 Feb 45
2nd Lt MARSCH	GO 43, 9 A.F.	6 Mar 45
2nd Lt RALSTON	GO 39, 9 A.F.	28 Feb 45
2nd Lt SWINK	GO 44, 9 A.F.	12 Mar 45
2nd Lt RIFE	GO 296, 9 A.F.	17 Dec 44

The following Officers were awarded the SILVER STAR this month:

	<u>ORDER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Captain GARRY	GO 38, 9 A.F.	28 Feb 45
1st Lt MATTHEWS	GO 37, 9 A.F.	27 Feb 45
2nd Lt SMITH	GO 37, 9 A.F.	27 Feb 45

The following Officers were awarded the CROIX DE GUERRE this month:

	<u>ORDER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Lt Col SPARKS	L'Ordre du Corps d'Armee Decision 341	28 Jan 45
Lt Col QUIMBY	A l'Ordre de l'Armee Decision 343	29 Jan 45

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SQUADRON HISTORY  
Month of March

V. (Cont'd)

The following Enlisted Men were awarded BRONZE STAR  
MEDALS this month:

	<u>ORDER</u>	<u>DATE</u>
S/Sgt Fetz	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Bailey	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Surat	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Gebrian	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Spalding	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Downs	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Richards	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt Hanson	GO 15, XIX TAC	2 Mar 45
S/Sgt DiPierno	GO 18, XIX TAC	13 Mar 45
S/Sgt Bafile	GO 22, XIX TAC	26 Mar 45

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CURRENT EVENTS

## S E C R E T

## Month of March

1. Briefing this morning was called for a 16 ship mission to attack a storage point at Langensebold, Germany. Capt GARRY was scheduled to lead the Squadron, but he crashed on take off. This was his third crash in a month and he keeps on walking away from them. Capt IVEY took the Squadron over and headed for the target area. The target was overcasted and all in all hardly worth the price we paid for it before it was done. Lt MATHEWS, Blue Flight leader, was bounced pulling out of his bomb-run, by a FW 190. From all reports his belly tank and his left wing were set on fire by e/a gunfire. He called in over the R/T that he was going to bail out and the last time he was seen his airplane was spinning slowly to the overcast at 4,000 feet. Here is a loss that words cannot describe. A good soldier, an excellent pilot, a grand fellow! More could be said, but to what avail? Good luck, Hugh, our best wished greetings are with you. The dogfights which ensued brought forth claims for victories for our pilots. Capt IVEY, Lt DIMAN and Lt VIECK are claiming one each FW 190 destroyed. Lt BERGMANN plucked an Me 109 and blasted it to the ground. Lt ANDRUS got a taste of a FW 190, and is claiming a damaged. The enemy came out on the short end of the stick but he got one good lick in.

Capt JENSEN took the Squadron out in the afternoon on the same mission and same target. Col DOUGLAS took over one of the flights in the Squadron to acclimate himself a little more after a rest from combat flying. The weather was plenty poor so a M/Y was found through a hole in the clouds and constituted an alternate target. The bombing results were reported as pretty good although I will wager noone knows for sure where they were. We have days like this.

2. This was some day before it ended. Up at 0500 for a briefing on four ship missions, to last all day, which they did. So it rained, so it snowed, so there was an overcast, so what? Our pilots flew ten missions, with most of them averaging three missions each. Noone asked for time and a half for overtime and noone took an hour off for lunch, I'll give you a clue.

Lt WILLIS DUFF got his first combat mission in and now he is one of the boys. I expect great things of this pilot before he hangs up his goggles for the last time.

Most of the missions were just good solid ones pounding the enemy wherever they could be found with not too many targets available. Capt "Blood and Guts" IVEY and his Black Sheep pounded some horse-drawn vehicles and really make blood flow on a certain road in Germany. Gad! what killers!

When the day ended most noone minded really because we expect tomorrow to bring the same thing. It will, I'm sure.

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3. Our Squadron really had itself a good day today. Beginning at 0715 and continuing through to 1815. It was a long day but a most profitable one to say the least. A total of ten missions were flown of which eight were bang-up missions. One aircraft suffered damage by flak and that was very minor. This, in view of the rain, snow, an overcast, limited aerial visibility speaks volumes in describing the activities of our pilots. The pilots have very little time to eat! They landed, their ships were bombed up and gassed up, giving them a chance to grab a cup of coffee and a sandwich and off they went again.

Major MAZUR took one flight up and really caused a great deal of commotion in Command by the havoc wrought by only four ships.

At night, a dance was held at the Officers' Club, featuring our Lt SMITH doubling on a sax and cornet. A good time was had by many until the champagne ran out. Everyone took it fairly easy since a big head does not go good with an early mission. Ain't it the truth!

1st Lt HOMER E. HAYES completed 105 missions today. That's a record not to be sneezed at. He looks good for another hundred these days. A real work-horse, he's done a grand job for this Squadron.

4. The Sabbath was a quiet one for the sky was overcast. On the chance that the weather would break, a briefing was held. This was all in vain, for first the rain and then snow fell to dispel any possibility of operational flying. We drew a release until 1300 hours and then another one until daybreak. 'Twas a long, quiet day.
5. This morning another briefing was held but all in vain too, for no operational flying was possible. In the afternoon, another "pre-push" briefing was held with pep talks by Major DAVIS, Major EAST and Col DOUGLAS. It now appears we are going to work with the 12th Corps until such time as the Rhine River is reached.

In the afternoon Capt JENSEN scheduled a few training flights and these he managed to get airborne. Then Group called upon us to send out a weather recce, so Capt JENSEN took Lt HOADE along as his wingman and flew the bomb line area for Ripsaw, reporting conditions as he found them. This was in the nature of an operational mission-the only one in two days.

Some more changes in the Squadron as a result of battle casualties. Lt ALDRIDGE is now leading Blue Flight, Lt WAYLAND has taken over White Flight, while Capt GARRY is now our Assistant Operations Officer, and while Lt JOHNSON took over Red Flight. We added two more pilots to the roster in

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2nd Lt LAGASSEY and 2nd Lt SHELLEM. One war sure makes for a lot of changes in one Squadron I'm here to say.

6. This morning brought another rebriefing with the same results-no combat flying. This weather is socked in to stay contrary to what our weather officer predicts. The mission pilots sweated out the mission until 1600 hours when we drew a release until daybreak.

Not withstanding the bad weather Capt JENSEN put training flights up into the air and as a result qualified the rest of our trainees for combat.

Lt HUEBERT led a group of Enlisted Men on a 7-day leave to England. A lot of us could think of other places where we could and would rather spend our leaves. Hardluck!

7. The same old story today-a briefing-an overcast-a release till 1300 hours-an hour alert- no buzz. So off into the went training flights. We've had too many days of the same kind. Four too many.

General Order 36 published awarded the Silver Star to Lt SMITH and Lt MATTHEWS, the DFC to Lt FOLTZ and Lt ALDRIDGE. We hope there are many more published before too long.

Dull day otherwise.

8. There have been too many days when our pilots could have been out there pounding the enemy but weather would not permit. As a result after each briefing, we've been sitting around sweating out a take off time which never comes. The overcast has been down to the ground and it runs pretty high so there's not much use of trying to climb through it for the same conditions exist in the target area. That's the way things run around here when there's work to be done there is too much of it and when there isn't anything to be done there's too little of it. It won't last, I'm sure.

9. A standing briefing was held in Group for another ground support mission. Take off time was hinged on "if" and Capt IVEY finally was airborne with a four ship flight. It turned out to be a weather recce since the overcast presented quite an obstacle to any support work. He and his flight dropped their bombs at the bomb disposal field south of this strip. Lt JOHNSON was scheduled to lead a paper route which never was airborne. Then Lt DIMAN took out an 8 ship mission and flew a Foxhunt which according to Lt WAYLAND was more like a Rabbit-hunt. For a day of a lot of activity, very little was actually accomplished. That's war for you.

Every pilot in our Squadron now has qualified for combat and we do not have any trainees left.

Lt ANDRUS ran up against the old proverb that is if one plays

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with fire one will be burned - he was.

10. It was back to war again today with most unfavorable weather conditions. After a lot of hustling and bustling and a lot of briefing and scrubbing at the expense of various missions, we got two missions airborne.

Capt EARLY took the 16 ship mission out over an overcast and finally found a hole over Kamberg. Under the hole there was a factory. Into the factory went 22 bombs from this Squadron and 24 bombs from the 396th Fighter Squadron; a little spring cleaning as it were. Lt KLUMPP on his first combat mission had himself quite an experience. His plane's electrical system went out and though Donald pressed the button nothing happened. A hydromatic prop is a wonderful thing, I'll give you a clue.

Capt JENSEN took the paper route mission out also over an overcast. With a little help from Ripsaw 5 prompt delivery was made at the appointed places.

All in all, this wasn't much of a day but that's war for you.

11. The Sabbath greeted us with an overcast which remained all day. A briefing was held to attack a target in Weisbaden, but after the briefing the Squadron was put on a 30 minute alert. This alert continued all day until about 1600 hours when we were released until daybreak.

In the afternoon a required film was shown in the area as to our relations with the enemy when we move into their country. More of these should be shown for an occasional one is not enough to serve as a reminder of what's what and why.

Not much else of interest occurred this day.

12. The usual briefing with what has been the usual result - a 30 minute alert and finally a release after an all day sweat. Too many days like this already but this has been said before too.

The afternoon brought forth some sunshine and as a result all airplanes which needed testing were put in the air and wrung out a bit.

All in all not much activity.

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13. Tuesday, not Friday. This morning briefing took place at 0600. What an early hour! So what happens? So we are re-briefed for the fourth time on the same mission scheduled for the past four days. So what happens next? We go on a 30 minute alert. This is certainly non-flying weather, even though the sun is shining. The morning dragged by with eating, gin rummy, checkers and Lt HOADES wisecracks to while away the time.

An alert flight led by Lt JOHNSON took off in search of reported bogies which upon investigation turned out to be friendly planes. Then at 1545 the regular 16 ship mission was airborne on its way to Weisbaden which had the capable leadership of Capt EARLY.

The return of the first mission brought forth the reports of excellent bombing of the primary target at Weisbaden. All but two of the bombs aimed at the target hit in the area. The two which missed didn't do badly for themselves either; one cut a railroad line while the other started a fire in the town. On the way back to base the Squadron ran across a string of goods wagons and four hung up bombs were used to excellent advantage. By all standards this was a good mission.

At a few minutes of five, Capt JENSEN took another 16 ship mission out. The Squadron was diverted from its primary target to two high priority targets and as a result brought forth another excellent mission. A report of a total of 20 some odd fires, more than accounted for some 40 goods-wagons loaded with motor transports, gasoline and supplies.

14. We began a year's combat operations with an 0500 arising to meet an 0600 briefing. The briefing resulted in a delay in take off time until 1045 since a fog set in to hinder visibility.

Capt EARLY got the go ahead signal at 0930 and took our Squadron out to do a little dive-bombing on a barracks area in Freidburg, Germany. Bombing results were first fair to middling for our pilots were carrying one M 76 500 lb bomb, incendiary, which did not seem suitable for the type of target assigned. 'Twas on the way home however that the boys had a picnic destroying by strafing 4 locomotives and damaging one other.

Colonel DOUGLAS took our Squadron out on its second mission and had himself a field day. The dive bombing was subordinated to a target of some 50 plus Me 109's and FW 190's. The Colonel destroyed three himself before he ran out of ammunition. The credits go to F/O RUSSELL from the Colonel for one of the finest wingman jobs he has ever witnessed. Our killer from 1st Lt DALE JEWKES tagged onto two Me 109's and

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damaged one and destroyed another. A fitting way to celebrate a year's combat in this theatre.

Score for the day: four for us, gooseegg for the enemy.

A little matter of interest on this mission was Lt DIMAN's incident. There he is in the sky, minding his own business just trying to find some e/a's to knock down when the Me 109 shot down by Lt JEWKES in a last desperate effort triggered his guns and shot a hole in the tire of one of his landing wheels. Lt DIMAN was highly incensed.

15. The Ides of March are upon us. This day was our bridge busting day but we didn't bust any bridges. Capt EARLY took the first mission after the bridge and cheerfully reported the target was missed. If he could have gotten it, it would have been a busted bridge for sure. Then our good Capt JENSEN went after it and he missed it too. It was not an easy target by any means but he didn't feel that was much of an excuse. The Swede was highly P.O. on his return and he seldom gets that way unless he has more than ample reason and he had.

One of our alert flights got off on a scramble but nothing developed but a fast take off.

To end the day we added five new pilots in F/O BRYAN and MERRITT and Lts PONTON, KNELL and SCANLON. That probably means some of the old boys get to go home. Good deal.

16. Great day which began at 0500 hours. It's really an early hour to begin with work for the Germans can't possibly be up this early.

Since our Squadron missed the bridge twice yesterday they went out after it again today with the same results-they missed the ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~ thing. However they found two repair locomotives there with their crews and this outfit won't be repairing anything again. On the way home the flights beat up other locomotives, cars and railroad tracks.

A second mission scheduled to go to work on the same target was delayed and switched to a bridgehead patrol and finally turned out to be an armed recce mission. Capt JENSEN, Lts DIMAN, WAYLAND and JOHNSON led their flights in beating up a powerful lot of enemy tanks, trucks and assorted vehicles.

A third hurry up mission found Capt JENSEN leading the Squadron out again to patrol the bridgehead area. This turned out to be an uneventful mission but it was plenty dark when the

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pilots landed for the last time.

This was a three mission day which isn't bad at that, all things considered and some not considered.

17. Today was St Patrick's Day and though there was a lot of wearing of the green I doubt very much if a great number remembered what day it was. That's the way of our life over here.

Group "Ops" let us sleep until 0700 this morning before a briefing was called. The briefing was in vain since the weather did not clear for combat flying. However training flights were airborne and some time piled up in this manner.

All in all not much of a day but it did give our flight leaders a much needed rest.

Black flight reunited with the rest of the Squadron by returning from Paris with the usual lurid stories and dark circles under their eyes. Everyone keeps saying "One lie pour Mamma". Why, I wonder?

General Order #43 came out today awarding the DFC to Capt JENSEN, and Lts DIMAN and MARSCH. That's nice work, gentlemen, very nice.

18. This was a long hard day from beginning to end. It began at 0500 and did not let up until 0715. During that time every daylight hour was utilized.

Capt EARLY took a 16 ship mission out and knocked out the Butzbach Ordnance works. The three buildings briefed as the target were hit, burned and destroyed. This saved the possibility of a return trip. The Squadron beat up locomotives on the way home.

In the meantime Lt VIECK took a four ship leaflet mission. This paper route business we are called upon to do from time to time. Lt MASS got in his second combat mission on this trip.

Then Capt JENSEN took the 16 ship Squadron out after the Werheim military installation but an overcast prevented him locating it. As targets of opportunity he selected two factories one at Denbach and one at Ransbach. The PD mark was left on both.

Then the Squadron switched to 8 ship ground support work with the 4th Armored Division. Capt IVEY and Lt WAYLAND combined to raise a lot of havoc and having great fun horse killing in enemy held land.

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The new mission found Lt DIMAN and LT JOHNSON out beating up the enemy. On this mission tragedy struck home when Lt JOHNSON's ship was hit by flak and he was forced to bail out. He was seen to land, pick up his chute and run into the woods. The big question is whether he landed in and among friendly or enemy troops. The next few days should tell the story and our hopes are that Johnnie Comes Marching Home.

Capt JENSEN again took the last mission out which landed shortly after 1845. His and Capt EARLY's flight added to the havoc created by the earlier missions.

This was the Sabbath and a day of rest but one would have never known it around here. As a matter of fact, throughout this Squadron's history Sunday has been the day when our boys have impressed upon the enemy the need for religion. Oh! for more and better Sundays.

19. Beginning at 0500 this was a three 16 ship mission day for us. The interesting fact that none of the targets were repeats but each mission went after a different target.

Capt EARLY led the Squadron out first on the Butzbach ordnance depot and smeared the place. Even the pilots themselves were enthusiastic about the results which is saying a great deal.

Then Capt JENSEN took the Squadron out after the Wehrheim barracks area and wiped another target off the map. The accuracy of these two missions is something to comment upon. It doesn't happen every day anywhere.

Capt J. EARLY took the last mission out and finally missed a target but it wasn't for lack of trying.

The bombing was but one part of the days work for on returning home our pilots clobbered locomotives and cars wherever they could find them. This was a good day for us but I'll wager Hitler wasn't happy about it.

20. This turned out to be another three mission day beginning at 0500 and ending at 1900 hours.

Capt EARLY took the first 16 ship mission off to blast a depot area, but didn't. A wind which was not allowed for spoiled the bombing results and the target was completely missed. The same can not be said for the town of Dietsheim, which received the misses. Hard luck!

Capt JENSEN took the second mission out to work over a depot area in Aschaffenburg and he did. Of the 7 buildings which were attacked, 4 are claimed destroyed and the other 3 damaged.

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Capt IVEY took the last mission out and was frank to admit that at best the bombing results could only be classed as fair.

The day's activities were subordinated to the return of Lt WALTER JOHNSON. While strafing enemy columns on 17 March south of Dickenscheid, his airplane was struck by flak and Lt JOHNSON was forced to bail out. He landed in territory occupied by enemy troops and played hide and seek with them for about 24 hours. When he finally thought the game was up and decided to surrender his would-be captors surrendered to him. He finally reached friendly territory with four prisoners. It's quite a story he has to tell.

21. This was quite a sizeable day when it was all over. On the very first mission Lt JETTY had himself some experience. His airplane was struck by flak just as he crossed over the Rhine, and it was all he could do to turn around and crash land in friendly lines. He had notions of bailing out but he could not open the canopy to do so and as a result had to do the next worse thing. The word best is hardly appropriate in a situation such as this. As long as he is alright nothing else matters much. On the same mission Lt DUFF returning home had himself a honey of an experience. A flak hit in his landing gear prevented a wheel from locking and after a beautiful touch down Lt DUFF had a roller coaster ride before the plane came to a stop. He walked away from it which makes it a three point landing. The mission itself was a success in that a series of hits cut tracks and strafing passes accounted for some seven locomotives which won't be choo-chooing any more.

Capt EARLY took the second mission out without much success. These things will happen to even the best of us.

The last mission was airborne with Capt JENSEN at the helm. This last one didn't succeed in doing much either in the way of bombing. Tomorrow is another day.

22. This past week has continued to be one of early risings and three mission per day.

Capt JENSEN took the morning milk route out to cut railroad lines. Results were not particularly spectacular but the bombs dropped aren't doing the enemy any good that's for sure. There might be someone who is working harder to win the war than Capt JENSEN but he's in there pitching and that's for sure.

Another work horse, Capt IVEY, went out on the second mission to add a few more touches to the rail lines with some success. On the way home these flights beat up anything they see moving.

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Col DOUGLAS, Group Deputy Commander, took the Squadron out on its last mission which was in the nature of a fighter sweep. A few targets of opportunity were found and beat up. Lt SHELLEM blew up a railroad car and found himself flying through the flames and debris he created. He wasn't scared a bit - so he says.

Capt ROBERT MILLER returned from the States to rejoin us again. He's a welcome addition anytime.

23. This morning started war work for us again in the wee hours of the morning. Capt JENSEN has been taking the early morning mission in the hopes of meeting enemy aircraft. This was the morning. Two FW 190's came breezing by unwarily and Capt JENSEN knocked one down into the Rhine River, while Lt SNYDER took on another FW 190 and destroyed it. Both of these officers have been over 100 combat missions sweating out something like this and they are very, very happy about it all. Not satisfied with this destruction Capt JENSEN led the Squadron out and beat up some more enemy locomotives for good measure before returning home. This was a dandy mission all told.

Capt IVEY took the second mission out with Col PEREGO, our Group C.O. flying his element. Working on targets of opportunity, this Squadron went to work on a marshalling yard area, leaving a scene of devastation and destruction behind it.

The day was concluded as sensationally as it was begun when Capt EARLY returned from the third mission of the day. The Squadron left fires and smoke going up to about 6,000 feet in several areas and clobbered an unbelievable number of enemy freight cars, locomotives and oil storage units. Capt EARLY is using the old method of getting rid of the rats - that is burning them out.

Lt JETTY who bellied in several days ago finally returned to base just about when we were beginning to worry since no word was heard from him for several days.

24. Quite incidental to the seven missions of the day, several other pleasant events transpired. Lt McCRONE, Lt GIANETTI and Lt Col SPARKS returned from the States after a 30 day leave. Lt McCRONE and Lt GIANETTI will stay in the Squadron while Col SPARKS went to Group as Operations Officer.

Beginning with a four o'clock briefing and concluding with a 1900 interrogation a record number of sorties were flown by our Squadron as well as by Group. The eight ship missions were led in turn by the various flight leaders of the Squadron as the bridgehead was patrolled throughout the day. Since

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the airplanes did not carry bombs and strafing was not allowed the missions were in the nature of milk runs.

Lt DIMAN had the distinction of having Col PEREGO, our Group C.O. as his element leader. It's a unique situation, but "Skin" didn't capitalize on it.

Lt DICKS got to fooling around locomotives and one enemy rifleman put a hole in the canopy of his airplane. Nasty little b666666!

The weather is beautiful these days but before long a lot of us are going to pray for rain.

25. This was a rough day from beginning to end in more ways than six. It began very early in the morning but so have the other days, not making that an unusual factor in any way. However from thereon in many things happened. Trying to put up three sixteen ship missions was rough all the way. For a time the motto "Abort early and avoid the rush" seemed to prevail. The airplanes just couldn't take it for some reasons.

On the first mission Lt WAYLAND strafed the same airdrome twice when once is usually too much. A piece of flak struck him in the foot and he was not as seriously wounded as first reported but he was hospitalized. He got some Me 262's but some of the AA gunners were there to let him know that they didn't like it. Well, he'll be all right in a few days which after all is important. This flight created havoc among m/ys but targets are not as plentiful as they have been.

The second mission was a run into the same area, but no unusual occurrences except that the ships straggled back one after another until it looked like a procession of training hops.

The third mission found Capt IVEY sweating a return home with a bad prop. The bomb load was jettisoned since he was not in a position to pick targets and fly an airplane in distress so not a great deal was accomplished on this mission.

As Lt SNYDER likes to say, "I'll give you a clue" a lot of people were glad to see this day end. Me too!

26. The missions have not been getting off as early or late since a bit of an overcast has been prevailing. It gives our pilots a little rest which they can use for they certainly have been putting in a lot of time for the last week.

Lt DIMAN took the first mission at around 0800 hours and was forced to turn back after reaching the Saar River for the weather over the target area was pretty bad.

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The overcast let up in the afternoon so Capt JENSEN took the Squadron out on this trip. An assortment of mechanical failures had the pilots dropping frags from the bomb line to the Rhine River. Captain Goodness Gracious came home slightly ruffled but none the worse for all the complications. His hair has been falling out by degrees and what is left is turning grey. Sherman was right again.

Orders came through today sending Maj MAZUR, Lts DIMAN, ALDRIDGE, and JEWKES home on 30 day leaves. As a result of these orders we acquired a new C.O. in the person of Maj MARSHALL E. MUMAW. Our new C.O. is no stranger to this Squadron since he's been a member of it since it's activation and as the Squadron has progressed he, too, has kept pace with it. Congratulations, Major.

27. Inclement weather kept our Squadron on the ground all morning. Finally in the afternoon the Squadron managed to get airborne on an armed recce led by Capt JENSEN and his mission developed some interesting experiences. Lt ANDERSON developed a prop failure and just managed to make a crash landing at Trier Y 57. Lt SPRINGS is credited with an assist on this one. Lt DICKS sweated out a return to home base with the same difficulty. After all these little difficulties were ironed out Capt JENSEN reassembled the Squadron and went out again. This time he finally found a target with the aid of the two P-51 recce planes in the area. After a mutual exchange of buddy-buddy, a target of some 30 small automobiles was selected and plastered. The results of this mission made several of us unhappy since we were planning on acquiring some of these enemy vehicles for our own use in the near future. However, war is war.

The lone mission was the sum total of our activities for this day with the exception of a few training flights which were squeezed in.

The S-2 department acquired Lt BLAGEN from Group, which will not be hard to take.

28. The overcast of the past few days has stayed with us preventing milkman take offs. At take off at 0901 found our Squadron chasing A 26's which we were supposed to escort. Our boys finally caught them over the target area and escorted them back and forth with the mission until it was all completed. Above 3,000 feet the mission was a good one to fly but at the completion of it an overcast had to be let down through.

The second mission of the day found Lt HAYES at the helm with two of the old veterans leading flights in the persons of Capt MILLER and Lt McCORNE. They had a picnic east of Gieslen when they ran across over 500 enemy vehicles pulling

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out for the Fatherland. A claim of over 62 motor transports destroyed was recorded for this mission. Quite unexpectedly several events of a tragic nature brought the reality of war home again. Captain MILLER was hospitalized with a perforated eardrum upon the return of this mission, and Lt LAYDEN is listed as M.I.A.. He was last seen on a strafing pass and when the Squadron reformed he was not found in his proper place. No one seems to be able to account for his absence. It is a rough break at best but we are hoping to receive some news of him soon.

All in all a pretty good day had we been able to do without the one mishap.

29. Today was a very unusual day in many respects. We were awakened to the tune of "released until tomorrow" for training and maintenance. We need very little of the former but the latter could use the time without question. It should not have rained but it did which hampered our activities a bit.

A good part of the morning was spent cleaning up for an inspection to be made by Major General JONES from Washington, DC. Late in the afternoon the General arrived and made his inspection. Enough said and that ain't all.

It was a good restrul day which most of us used to advantage. A day a week such as this one permits the accomplishment of a number of little tasks which have had to be forgotten in the rush of every day flying.

30. It was a comparatively easy day today - there was only one mission in the afternoon and the rest of the time was spent sweating it out or waiting to be released for a good hot shower and a few drinks. The mission, led by Lt HAYES, was rather uneventful, as it was an escort job to mediums. The weather was pretty poor but except for losing the escortees once in a solid overcast nothing more can be said.

This is Good Friday! It brought us to the sudden realization that Easter is only the day after tomorrow - quite a surprise. It seems ages ago now that we spent last Easter in Nissen huts in dreary England.

31. Here we go again: we had our rest, so "higher headquarters" decided to arouse us at the crack of dawn. To be exact, the sun was still down when we got up, and it was 0700 when Major MUMAW took 16 ships up on a recce well into Germany. It was a good mission - beaucoup railroad activity was dislocated which shows that our C.O. has adapted himself as well to this train schedule we have started to keep as he did to all the other work he has done with the Panzer Dusters.

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The day's second mission went out without any bombs but with Lt HOMICIDE HOMER HAYES. They went up in the same area as the earlier mission, but ran into some very accurate flak - there's too much of it - which made Lt DUFF land near Mainz at Y 64. He has been having a rough time lately but he has come out smiling each time.

Lt McCRONE went up again today, leading the Squadron over the recce area, but as one of the boys remarked, there was an 11/10 cloud cover, and they couldn't do a thing. You can't get something every mission, but boy, these pilots sure will do it if it's possible.

As though that was not enough, today had two other attractions. First, Pay - and some Paris trips sure have made those francs go. And last, but certainly not least, we had an Easter Party, one at the club for the Officers and one in town for the Enlisted Men; and when you hear that you have a shrewd idea that things ended up well with everyone, I'll give you a clue.

Today also brought us two new pilots in the shape of Lts EYRICH and DARLING. They are new to France but both have spent the better part of 8 months in Iceland carrying depth charges on P-47's, so we can safely dare say that they will be very welcome additions to the Panzer Dusters.

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