

## SQUADRON HISTORY

MOVEMENT TO BOE AFB, RANGC ..... First Leg - 1 July 1944.

The rain continued with no let-up in sight. Throughout the early morning hours, everyone was active. At 0800, the entire Group was up and making ready. The huts were cleaned and set for the inspection before leaving Chilbolton. After a very early breakfast the Squadron dressed in full field equipment (with impregnated clothing over all), and formed in the area from which we marched over to Group to join the rest. Rain or no rain, we were finally on our way over to join the advance echelon. It was 0545 hours.

At 0615, the whole party hiked to Sullerton Junction where the train awaited. By 0730 we came to the station and boarded the train immediately. It felt good knowing that we could take our packs off and get set for at least a three hour train ride. On board, word came to us from Capt. Fendelton, who led the Group, that our stop was Dorchester. When we arrived there, the trucks were awaiting us and we immediately set out for the Marshalling Area.

When the convoy arrived at this area, we dismounted and received instructions regarding the itinerary until we would leave for the port. Tents and huts were provided for all men. In the evening, all the British currency was collected and converted to Invasion money. The whole Group received their rations and then night fell.

TO THE BOAT.....

In the morning of the 2nd, the only thing that greeted us was the continued rain. Word came through that we would leave the Marshalling Area sometime in the late afternoon. We got a partial payment in the new currency and at 1600 all went to supper. At 1700, everyone was formed in full field equipment, ready to mount the trucks. The rain didn't let up a bit. Some of the men had to ride in open 1-ton trailers all the way to Weymouth. When we arrived at the docks, the American Red Cross greeted us with hot coffee and doughnuts, helping to take the chill out of the wet day. There were two shuttle boats which took the group to the British "Queen Emma", an LSI. We were originally scheduled for another ship, but somehow ended up on this one. After getting their burks made up, the men were given sandwiches and coffee.

RAINING..... LANDING..... ARRIVAL AT THE STRIP.....

Early the next morning, July 3rd, the ship pulled out of the anchorage and met the rest of the convoy. When we arose that day and looked around, the sight of the convoy reminded many of us of the days we spent crossing the Atlantic, but this time we knew the trip would be a short one, only a matter of hours. The scene of all the ships off the beachhead as we approached was amazing. The rain had stopped and the sight of Normandy was a thrill. We knew the war was over there and it wouldn't be long before A & B party would again

SA 100.....100..... A. EVAL AT THE STRIP.. (0 1010)

be operating as a full squadron.

At 1500, the first bunch got into the LCIs and headed for the Omaha beach. This group was able to use the wharf set up, but the second wave from the Queen Mema had to beach the LSIs and the men waded through the water and set foot on the beaches of Normandy. The craft must have beached itself on a mound, for when the first man got into the water, the water was chest high. There was no other alternative so the rest just had to follow. After reassembling on the beach, we set out for Transit Site 3. There was plenty of mud to tread through all the way up the hill and then to the area where we met the first group which left the LSI. The weather broke up a little and the sun came out. Everyone rested while Capt. Pendleton went ahead to the strip to try to get us transportation. The strip was about 4 to 10 miles from our point. After deploying ourselves around the perimeter of the field, we just took it easy and waited until word came to us. By 2000, the trucks from the field arrived and we were very eager to get rolling on to the strip.

Capt. Sparks, our new group S-4, led the convey back to the Advance Landing Ground 3, our new home. In route, French people were waving, showing V with their fingers, while others looked solemnly. There was a people who had seen plenty. The roads and houses showed the marks of battle and the American soldiers were all over the place now. Along the roads we noticed the "Achtung Minen!" signs we read and heard so much about.

By 2250 we were at the strip. It felt good to be together again. All the trucks pulled up to the mesh strip where we were greeted and welcomed, then our squadron was taken to its area so that the men could be bedded down before dark. We learned that Lt. John Carter was missing in action since July 2nd. His prop had gone out and the engine failed.

INDIVIDUALS NAME, NORMANDY..... Missions # 109 and 110.

July 4th found the new arrivals digging in and getting set to fall in line with the operations. We looked our new home over. The mesh landing and taxi strips were the work of the engineers attached to the field. Our dispersal area were both west and south of the Squadron Tech Site. The orderly room and squadron supply shared the site NE of the field while the Armament, Communications and Ordnance sections were set up in the orchards just south of the Tech Site. The Engineer section was a bit more dispersed.

During the day, two missions were flown by the squadron. The first one was a dive bombing against a gun emplacement NW of St. Lo. This target was probably destroyed. On the second mission of the day the boys went after targets of opportunity, strafing a staff car and also glide-bombing a bridge west of St. Jean de Daye. Total missions to date with three flown from the strip before the full squadron got to other again, were 110. Squadron missions were 12 ship flights with critiques held at group after each.

### SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 111.....Hitting the Enemy's Strength by Dive-Bombing.

There were troop concentrations near Foret Font Gauthier. The squadron bombed with about 90 hits observed in the immediate target area. Major Douglas reported 4 road blocks and an entrenchment a few miles east of Treville. Major Proenche, AIC, made a note of this as he listened to the interpretation. The mission came down at 17:30, but bad weather ended the day. July 6th was a day of maintenance and training. Four new pilots reported in this date - 1st Lt. Robert R. Maxwell, John A. Inauss, Earl E. Dickless, and 1st Lt. Kenneth E. Wilcox.

MISSION # 112.....The gun shows in the air.

Briefing was held at 0600 at the group briefing tent on July 7th. If the mission had not been scrubbed because of bad weather, the squadron would have gone within the bomb line to hit another concentration of enemy troops. A call came through from group that briefing would be held immediately. The target - a motor transport concentration southeast of Viere. The airplanes were loaded with two 500 lb. GP bombs each and took were airborne at 0811 hours. The flights had to jettison their bombs when 6-8 FW-190's attacked Blue Flight over Foret Favevue on their way to the target. The "A" pilots were able and aggressive but the score for the squadron was, 1 FW-190 destroyed by Lt. R.L. Olson and Lt. Howie Shakin, the victory pending film assessment. 1 FW-190 damaged by Major Sparks, and 1 more FW-190 damaged by Capt. Myers and Lt. Benton.

MISSION # 113.....Dive bombing.

The critique for the first mission on the 7th was held at group and immediately after, a briefing was held for another. However it was scrubbed and at 1500 another briefing was held for a dive-bombing mission against a gun emplacement about 4-5 miles southwest of Garentan. The target was going to be marked by smoke with contact being made with the Air Support Party. The squadron got to the target and bombed it with very good results. It was well marked with smoke showing the cooperation between the ASP and our boys up in the air. They were all back by 1532.

A training flight with the new pilots went up for the first time but rain brought them right down again. A release until day-break came through about 1430. Meanwhile 3-3 and 3-5 were getting the trailers lined up parallel to each other and putting a tarpaulin over the space between the two which would act as a squadron briefing room. There was enough space left between the two Brockhouse trailers for convenient gathering of the pilots and necessary personnel.

MISSIONS # 114, 115, 116... A Landing Ground, A Gun Emplacement, and a Strong Point and Communications Center...

Briefing July 8th was held at 0600. The primary target was an enemy landing ground about 12 miles southeast of Iaval. The photo showing the dispersal areas and field which was used as the landing ground was shown and orientation on the map given. The mission was flown as briefed, but they couldn't see any activity whatsoever.

RECAP OF MISSIONS

MISSIONS # 114, 115, 116..... (Cont'd)

On the way home, Major Douglas' flight destroyed one staff car and Capt. Myers' flight destroyed a truck near Vire.

For their second mission that day, the pilots went after gun emplacements at Feventy Bocage. They bombed with excellent results. Many L/C convoys were reported within enemy territory south of the bomb-line and later confirmation brought out the fact that the most part of the movement consisted of trucks carrying evacuees displaying a white signal.

At 1800 a third briefing was held at group. This time the target was an enemy strong point and communications center. This was south of the strip and very close to the bomb line. Major Sparks led the squadron to the target and arrived over the spot as briefed. They plastered the position with very good bombing. Hits were scored in the area and on barracks. There was some small arms fire from 4 barracks type buildings and the pilots were so enthusiastic over their results that they wanted to return to the target by request.

MISSION # 117....."Jettison Babies"

The squadron took-off at 0925 hours on the 9th and was proceeding on course to the vicinity of Villers Bocage when bogies which were behaving suspiciously were sighted. Major Douglas gave the order to jettison the bombs as they broke. These bogies turned out to be Spits and Typhoons. Lt. Spencer, who was unable to jettison his bombs, carried them to the target and dropped them on the already beaten-up spot. On the way home the boys destroyed two enemy trucks.

MISSION # 118..... Armed Recon.

July 10th was a day of bad weather with no flying at all. In the evening the Aero Club started to serve doughnuts to the men. At 0545 hours, July 11th, briefing was about to begin when it was changed to 1015. Capt. Reinthal explained the need for pattern bombing in an area about 8 miles east of St. Lo, very close to the bomb-line. There was a troop concentration at this point. Just as the planes started to taxi out the mission was scrubbed.

After waiting around on an alert status, the squadron took-off at 1230 on an armed reconnaissance after they were informed that the original mission was cancelled. Flying south of the bomb-line, they rendezvoused and flew with the 495th for a while. The target of opportunity was the Varenellin Yard at Folligny which had some rolling stock in it.

Another briefing was to be held at 1915 with two railroad bridges to be knocked out. The mission was scrubbed by 1950 and they made a dash to the new Officers Club being set up in the large house west of the control tower. The group was then released at 2100 hours.

ADVANCE AND TRAINING.....

July 13th was a day of release. The new pilots got the chance to fly formations, etc. in the training area assigned for that purpose.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 119..... Armed Recce Along Loire River.... Lt. Col. Douglas.

The briefing at 0730, July 13th, presented an armed recce along the Loire River between Ancenis and Cinq Mars, two points along the railroad which paralleled the river. Capt. Leary told the three squadrons that the 800th Group went out on the 12th and had spotted what may have been a division moving into the Marshalling Yards at Ancenis. As alternate target, we were given the railroad bridge crossing the river at Cinq Mars, just west of Tours. At the same time Capt. Reinthal told the boys of his visit to the 4th Division and the enthusiasm which Maj. Gen. Barton had for our pilots capabilities and cooperation in their close support.

The mission was delayed for a few hours. The squak box relayed the message that the take-off would be at 1445 on the same mission. Just as Major Douglas was taxiing out to the strip word came through that he had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Maj Sparks immediately ran out to tell him about it but he thought it was just a little joke. The newly appointed Lieutenant Colonel continued on carrying out the mission but it was difficult to locate the railroad because of the overcast. The squadron continued southward, spotted Poitiers, north of which they found a train of approximately 25-30 cars. They proceeded to bomb same, destroying 8-10 cars. All were back at 1700 hours.

MISSION # 120..... Armed Recce... Bastille Day in France.

Another armed reconnaissance was flown on the 14th. This one was along the railroad between La Roche and Verneuil. By 11:00 the 12 P-47s were airborne. On course to the target the coverage was 4/10ths but they found a hole over Verneuil and bombed the railroad as briefed. The results were from fair to good. Capt. Henry flew with the squadron on this one.

A release came through at 1830 due to the weather. Some went to the movies, others spent the time writing letters home while Doc Cox held his hypodermic needle ready for another shot due all. At about 2015 there was a little excitement in the sky toward Garentan. The puffs from heavy flak indicated some enemy aircraft in that direction.

MISSION # 121..... Dive Bombing.

Group briefing was held at 0900 on the 15th. The target- a RM bridge on an embankment at Pantès-Gassicourt, just west of Paris. The secondary target was the marshalling yard at Alençon. No time over target was given because because the weather was not good for flying. It wasn't until 2000 hours when the weather was broken enough to accomplish the mission. The bombing results were fair.

Bill Hearst, the famous correspondent, visited the squadron this day and remained with it quite some time to get a story. He left after the boys returned and left for their usual critique at the group briefing tent. Everyone was back from group at 2300 and came to the pilots tent for some of Jerry's hot coffee which they didn't finish after the mission got back.

#### SQUADRON HISTORY

#### MISSION # 122.....10/10ths over Tar et....Targets of Opportunity...

The weather didn't appear too good the morning of July 16th. Briefing took place at 0800 and the target remained the same as the one the fellows went after yesterday - the bridge at Fontenay-Bassecourt. Since it was only damaged, higher headquarters wanted it demolished. As an alternate target, the squadrons were given the landing strip near the Evreux-Beauville airbase. The original take-off was postponed. The ceiling was too low, only 500ft. Lt. Col. Messler of the 97th was going to lead the group.

At 1630, the weather started to break up a bit. By 1700, the squadron was alerted for the mission. Take-off was scheduled for 1825. The SCR528 was all set up at the S-2-S-3 site and those who weren't on the mission came over to listen to the R/T. Since the coverage was 10/10ths over the target the squadrons proceeded toward home, looking for targets of opportunity. The controller told them to look south of the bomb-line. Our squadron came up on the marshalling yards at St. Sever Calvados. They bombed with very good results, 75% of the hits were in the target area proper. All were down at 2045 and hurried to group for critique. We had been alerted for another mission but later released until daybreak.

#### MISSION # 123.....Dive-Bombing....Our Best Mission To Date...

At the 0930 briefing July 17th Capt. Henry told us the group was back on Air Support again. There were a few targets to go after this time, all within a concentrated area about 3 miles southwest of Periers and very close to the bomb-line. The area contained troop concentrations and vehicles in woods. The original take-off of 1100 was changed and the squadron stood by to take-off at 1230, when the weather became much better. While the pilots were up on the mission, we listened to their transmission. "Sparky" was Squad Leader on this one. "Squad Leader going down" - over the target at 1345. The three flights bombed with excellent results. Rallying the results after the mission, they destroyed one of the houses briefed on, concentrated hits in one of the woods, had near hits on the suspicious large building, and concentrated other bombs in one of the other little patches of woods. From there, the squadron went a little south to investigate a possible German traffic jam at one of the crossroads but didn't find any activity. When they landed, the boys commented that it was one of the best missions they accomplished to date.

#### MISSION # 124.....Air Support (Cont'd)....

Another briefing was held at 1045. Capt's Henry and Weinthal briefed again. It was a dive-bombing in support of our troops, after which a push was to take place. Red smoke was to indicate the targets, all of which were strong points close to our troops. Lt. Col. Douglas led the squadron. The bombing was very good and the smoke marked targets were well plastered. After this, the squadron went on a fighter sweep south toward Avranches, then back home.

The interrogation and critique brought forth the information

OPERATIONAL REPORT

MISSION 186.... (cont'd)

At 10-15 large tanks were seen on the main highway between St. Lo and Perriers. This information was passed on immediately as was an I/W convey. The A/C was right on the spot and got the dope over to Army. The mission was the first operational one for Lt. Schneider and Steward and Hubert. "Alfred" came back with a couple of holes from flak in the plane and insisted on the Purple Heart immediately.

MISSION 187, 188, 189.....Working on the British sector...Lt. Spencer, MA.

July 18th brought briefing at 0815. A road bridge just south of Caen was to be knocked out over the Orne River. The squadron took-off and proceeded to the target area. They bombed with 4 hits and 5 near misses. The area was protected with a mass of flak and Lt. Spencer was evidently hit during his bomb run. His plane was seen to go straight in. It was feared that Spence never had a chance. The flak was concentrated. Lt. Wagner and W/O Wilcox were on their first operational mission which we lost Spence.

Between missions, the pilots came over to the trailers and gathered around the bomb-line for a while. Later, there were various topics of discussion, including the possibility of a trip to the moon by some mad scientist. A call came in for an immediate briefing at 1345. The 397th had just received the poop for their mission when our boys walked into the briefing tent. The 395th and 396th had to wait for their information to come in. After close to one half hour wait, briefing was held. The target for the 396th - a road bridge over the Orne River near Herry-Marcourt, a little south of where our pilots had been this morning. Lt. Kiel was all set for his first mission. The squadron was airborne at 1559 and set course for the target. The bombing was accomplished with fair results. Due to the intense cloud coverage, it was difficult to make a good bomb run on the target. After waiting around until 0130, the squadron was released until daybreak.

MISSION 187....Escort for G-78...Rebe Daniel, Ben Lyons... G.I.'s Party.....

There was a split over at July 18th and the weather continued to be keeping the airplanes grounded. At 0900, the squadron went on a one hour alert. It was a good day to get all the pilots together, so at least a meeting was held over in the pilot's tent at which time Lt. Col. Douglas spoke to them and the latest poop read. A call came in from group for two pilots to act as escort for the G-78 which was flying a couple of Generals back to England. Lts. Ostow and Glazier took-off at 1550 after a very short briefing. They saw the G-78 on take-off but lost it immediately after. They flew the mission as briefed along with all other planes from the group and returned in time to attend the trench clear being given by Sgt. Le Vecque from group headquarters at 1800.

It was reported that the AA boys were alerted due to possible bandit activity so very few planes took-off for training or otherwise. The cloud still remained at a very low ceiling. A release came through at 1800 until daybreak.

### SQUAD MEMOIRS

As was the case with the Red Cross Club, under the supervision of Miss McLeod, the work of the club on this side of the channel was done. Miss McLeod's assistant started on the club's station and she a lived on the continent. These French women were hired to help with the doughnuts and coffee. Bobe Benile and her husband, Lt. Col. Ben Lyons, the one time popular movie stars, were the main attractions. An orchestra known as the Sky-Singers entertained. We sang and told some "pulling" jokes. Ben Lyons had a few relations, too. The entertainment lasted until 11:00.

After the show was over for the enlisted men, Lt. Col. Benile gave a little party for all the officers to help celebrate his promotion. There was plenty to drink and much noise. Everyone present was having a grand time. An air raid signal and AA fire broke it up once but it continued right after. There were quite a few who became talented singers, including Doc Cox and Lt. Grace. Grace insisted on singing "The Hat The Boys In The Back Room Will Have". We started to card him out to find out for himself. Cards were the order of the day. Capt. Romine got in a laughing mood so he and Dick decided to oppose each other. Some of the boys started to sing the French language around with as many accents as there were men speaking it. All in all, the party was a great success, thanks to F.P.

END A. C. ....

We were released for training and maintenance July 20th. It was a nasty morning with a little better weather in the afternoon. The pilots and men were out to the planes most of the day. Rain came in the afternoon so the pilots didn't kick too much about not being able to fly that day.

It was raining in the morning on the 21st. A briefing was held at 0745 for attacking two RR bridges west of Leval. We stood by until noon, but the weather didn't break up. We were finally released until dawn of the 22nd. There was a swell steak supper that night which we savoured with much pleasure.

Very early July 22nd, we had a little excitement. A false gas alarm had started to spread about 0300 and continued throughout the early hours. Shots came raining out from all directions and it wasn't until orders came through that group on the P.A. loudspeakers that any rumors regarding a gas or ground attack were unfounded, that the gas was a firing or a spell. Every thirty minutes or so they would start again, yelling "Gas" and some giving the alarm with the British type rattler device. At about 0400, things quieted down for keeps. This alarm had spread practically all over Normandy. It was later explained by a message from higher headquarters that the alarm was the result of something exploding near the front lines and giving off a lot of smoke. This serious event had its humorous side as well. In the morning we found out that Yellow Flight had prepared to outflank the enemy if he was attempting an airborne attack. Chuck Romine rounded up his men with, "Come on, fellas, we'll outflank 'em". Blue Flight kept itself prepared as a reserve.

An overcast remained all day on the 22nd with plenty of mud from the rain which fell on the Normandy soil. Some of the combat film was shown in the early evening and the horse-racing game was played with



each excitement, especially with "C" possessing "E.I. Olson" pulling like  
back since throwing "C" dice. "Gaike" guilty returned to the squadron  
from the hospital in England, did not after his recuperation from the  
accident.

The game was still on until the 3rd of July which brought a  
release of the boys for maintenance. In the afternoon, the enlisted men  
played the officers softball. The "E" won with the score 18-7. S/3 Lt  
Letzler foul-tipped the ball which Lt. O. Olson tried to catch, but  
unfortunately he caught it in his left eye. Result - one black eye. Five  
new pilots were assigned this day, and Lt. William G. Dixon, Irvin B.  
Miller, Boyd E. Johnson, Duane W. Stevens, and Albert J. Arizidine.

Capt. In command's flight left for England on operational leave. It  
was the first time in quite a while that the boys had their blouses on  
every day for the good times.

MISSIONS 1st and 2nd... Col. Meyers' wife on a big show... postponed...  
with a finally suitable for flying...

The briefing and finally planned for 0800 was postponed until 1000.  
All pilots were in the briefing room as Col. Meyers started to speak.  
He started with a general order telling of a big  
mission about 20 miles along the front west of St. Lo. Heavy bombers  
of the VIII Air Force, all of the VIII Bombers and 12 Inter-  
bombers of the VIII Air Force, and the IX Tactical Air Command,  
plus British formations were all going to take part in the initial phase  
before the American troops - along this front. The bombers were  
to concentrate their blast in an area 10 miles with the fighter-  
bombers going in before and after the heavier and heavier to bomb close  
to the front - St. Lo area, very close to our own troops. It was a  
preliminary step to take place. As the colonel continued explaining  
our job in this, the sound of groups of airplanes were heard above.  
He continued on the special mission with the flexible bomb-lines on them.  
Col. Meyers gave the ground situation and the importance of the  
present drive in trying to cut off as many of the enemy as possible.  
The push of the colored columns and planned directions along the roads  
was fully explained, when word came through that the whole thing had  
been scrubbed and postponed indefinitely.

At 1000 a briefing was held for an immediate take-off. The pilots  
had on their flying suits and left for their planes which were marshalled  
near the strip. They were to give back the marshalling yards at  
Benville. The results were very good. On the way home, the controller  
called in enemy aircraft near St. Lo. Our boys were attacked by 7 E/A  
made up of Me-109's and Me-108's but no claims were made.

Another briefing was held at 1400. The squadron was to escort A-20's  
which were going to bomb targets in the Forest d'Ambrin, near Domfront.  
The mission was flown as briefed and uneventfully. This was the first  
operational mission for Lt. Maxwell.

MISSION 160.... Dive Bomber.... All Show starts....

At 0800, a briefing which had been called for 0715 was immediately  
cancelled so back to the excitement and who had been awakened. At 0900,  
we were notified that the squadron would go alert status at 1100.  
When this notification came through we saw many P-47's heading in a

### SQUADRON HISTORY

southward direction. These were followed by Liberators and B-17's of the night. The 9-hour had arrived and the big push was about to start. The mediums started passing over us later and at 1830, the squadron left for a briefing. The target was a fuel dump near Voligny. Major Sparks led the squadron but couldn't locate any fuel dump in the briefed area after buzzing and loitering around in the vicinity. As an alternate target, they dive bombed the marshalling yards at Voligny. Two German half-tracks were holding back refugees attempting to flee from the assault area near Carisy La Salle. These two half-tracks were strafed and burned by our boys. All planes were down by 1901.

The squadron waited around for another mission all day but none came through. At 1815 an alert came in for a mission but it was later decided that the other two squadrons would go. The day ended with just this one mission.

MISSIONS 131 thru 140... Direct Air Support for our Advancing Columns...

Throughout the day, the group was assigned as direct air support for the advancing columns, Combat Command A and Combat Command B of the 2nd Armored Division. It was a very busy day with the squadron flying 10 missions, each being a four ship armed patrol.

The ceiling was very low on the first mission and the flight had some difficulty in orienting themselves with a cloud at 700ft. They found two Tiger Tanks holding up one of our tank columns and dive bombed with poor results. Seeing their misses, they went down to strafe and pumped enough API into them to destroy them.

The second flight took-off at 1257. They proceeded to patrol the assigned area and contacted Gutfreid controller for a target. Not being able to find the one called in, they went south and bombed at Servanches, about 3 miles northwest of Tessy Sur Vire, with very good results on a crossroad and some houses containing soldiers. Capt. Myers went down to strafe east of Tessy Sur Vire but failed to pull out. He hit wires, a tree, tore his left wing off and his plane exploded on hit in the ground. "Bone" is a great loss to the squadron. The third flight took-off at 1300 and hit a RR bridge at Gerendes with fair results, hits also observed on approaches to the bridge. They were all down by 1514. The fourth flight was ordered by Gutfreid to demolish an enemy strong point. They got the grid coordinates and bombed the only sign of resistance, obtaining 6 out of 8 direct hits. This position might have been a gun emplacement near Le Vesnil Roman. The boys believe this to have been knocked out. The next mission brought back a score of 3 tanks and 11 trucks near St. Gilles. The sixth flight for the day was airborne at 1630. After flying the armed patrol, they were relieved and went after targets of opportunity, bombing a gun emplacement and getting near hits on a bridge at Tessy Sur Vire.

The support of the moving armored columns could be followed as we listened to the 1/1 at the S-2 - 2-3 site. The map was handy at all times to spot just where the action was taking place. The bombing results for the seventh flight were very good. Hits were concentrated

CAPT. J. J. MULLEN, P. O. BOX 100, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20540  
TO: GAMES

YCE 24 JULY 50

EVERY PART OF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN CALLED UPON FOR THE PART YOU PLAYED  
IN YOUR OPERATIONS. DUE TO SUPERIOR LEADERSHIP, AND ADMIRABLE WITNESS  
ON THE PART OF EVERYONE. THE PART OF ALL SUPPORT DEVELOPED INTO A  
BATTLE BETWEEN OUR FIGHTER PLANE AND THE ENEMY. THE SUCCESS OF THE  
DEMO STRAID TRAINING AGENCIES GREAT CREDIT ON THE PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE  
FOR TRAINING THEM TO THIS HIGH STATE OF EFFICIENCY. IT WAS NOT DUBIOUS  
THE PILOTS FOLLOWED EXPLICITLY THE INS INSTRUCTIONS OF THEIR BRIEFINGS AND  
MADE EVERY EFFORT TO POSITIVELY IDENTIFY TARGETS BEFORE ATTACKING, EVEN  
AT RISK OF PERSONAL SAFETY. THE R/T WAS OUTSTANDING FOR ITS BRIEFNESS,  
CLARITY, AND ACCURACY. YOUR WORK THIS DAY HAS BEEN A GREAT CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE FINAL VICTORY.

-----M C C A U L E Y-----

BT 262145B

THIS MESSAGE WAS ADDRESSED TO THE COMBAT BOMB OFFICERS OF THE FOLLOWING  
GROUPS: 48, 354, 355, 368, 404, and the CO of 513 Sqn. 406 Gp.

### SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSIONS 141 thru 146.... continued.

at a vehicular concentration just north of the Bois de Souilles. A fuel dump west of the target started to burn as they pulled up from the target. Lt. Col. Douglas' airplane was hit by flak. The oil pressure went to zero and he had to bail out. We held our breath until we heard over the R/V that he had landed in friendly territory at a point about 5 miles west of St. Jean de Daye. Major Sparks, Capt Cox, and Lt. Parrish set out for him immediately in a jeep. The rest of the flight continued to Villebaudon and bombed with very good results on some of the buildings. The next flight up attacked an ammunition dump and machine gun nest with very good results. The tenth and last flight up for the day hit a church steeple and strafed a gasoline truck and one bus with very good results. It was 2130 hours.

Lt. Col. Douglas had just returned to the base when Mac's flight landed. As Mac approached the colonel, who was describing his bit of experience on the map, he called out "Hey, Lucky! Glad to see ya back!" "Sure glad to be back", the colonel answered as they shook hands.

MISSIONS 141-151....Helping Our Troops Continue Their Advance.....  
Lt. Greene and Capt. McEachlan Down...Armed Patrols.

Eleven missions were flown on July 27th. The air-support furnished with four similar flights as the day before were continued. Major Sparks led the first flight for the day. They hit targets of opportunity with near misses on two tanks southwest of the Bois de Souilles. After bombing a tank, Lt. Greene was seen to pull out of his dive, climb up and then bail out near the Bois de Souilles. There was a possibility that some friendly troops may have been nearby but we were awaiting news of his safety, hoping that he got the chance to come back.

The next flight up went after a tank near Dayon but the results were undetermined. The tanks didn't move after the bombs were dropped. The third flight was up at 1810. Their bombing results were fair. Hits were observed near a gun position and on trucks. They brought back reports that truck movements in the vicinity of control were going south on secondary roads in the vicinity of Souilles. It was on the fourth flight for the day that Capt. "Mac" had to bail out. All the planes in his flight went down on four tanks at Corisy la Table. No hits were observed on the tanks. Outbreak directed the flight to guns at a certain coordinate which the men went to but couldn't find the guns. On release, they headed south and were strafing another tank when Capt. McEachlan was hit. He had to bail out. He hit the ground, gathered his chute immediately and ran for cover. Our tanks were observed about 3 fields to the east of him and it was pretty certain that he was safe. The fifth mission took care of a building that was probably housing a German team, and also a supply dump, while the sixth flight took-off at 1815, bombing a possible gun emplacement. Number seven tried to get two tanks but their bombing was only fair. The eighth mission took care of some heavy enemy vehicles and badly damaged a tank. Lt. Olson and his flight were on the ninth mission and were told by Outbreak to bomb the steeple in Villebaudon. They bombed, got near misses, then

SIJADIC WISEMAN

which admission to strafe same. They got it and lobbed in very good hits, they also reported the movement of armor and heavy vehicles which the enemy wanted to use. Lt. Strickland bombed a tank with a direct hit on the mission while Lt. Parvich's did not get another tank with a direct hit and reported vehicular movement south towards school. This was a very busy day.

MISSION 158.....Escort for B-24s...Capt. McLaughlin's command...Visit of Maj. Gen. Mesada.

A briefing was held at 0630 on the 14th for an escort for B-24s which were going to Nantes to bomb a bridge. Our boys were going to carry bombs, fuel, and dive bombs for placements before the B-24s went on their run. However, the weather was poor and the mission scrubbed. They then went on a 30 minute alert and waited for something to come in.

At 1440, we were alerted for an escort mission with B-24s to bomb a bridge west of Breux. Just as we got the call, Capt. Mac arrived in a jeep from 35th Division Headquarters. His nose and forehead were scratched up and his clothes soaked with the dirt. All the boys gave him a rousing cheer as he got out of the jeep. Mac had been through an ordeal when he found himself between two fires, enemy and friendly. As soon as he landed, he gathered up his chute and ran to a barn with it. He layed low here until it became a little too hot from the shelling. Then he ran from one bed cover to another and crawled upon any indication of enemy troops nearby. Mac got the thumbs up on his face. It was 1445 when he landed, but it wasn't until 1500 when some of our ground troops came upon him. After telling them he was an American pilot and was shot down, they were satisfied with his identification and sent him up through the lines to their higher headquarters, ending up at Division Headquarters with a chat with Maj. Gen. Barton, the Commanding General. They took care of him until this morning, then gave him transportation to our home base. Mac needed some very restful sleep after this experience right in the middle of the fight. He was very much impressed with the courage of our ground troops. General Mesada, learning of Capt. McLaughlin's evening, wanted to see him. They met and had an important talk about the whole matter. General Mesada visited the strip this date and met all the pilots at group. He explained to them how grateful he was for the excellent job they were doing in support of the ground forces. He said they were actually pulling the tanks with them as they knocked out the etc. The Germans had been routed and the execution of the whole breakthrough and push was going beautifully. Another job well done by our Thunder-bombers who call themselves the Thunder Bums in the 390th Fighter Squadron. The backs of their leather flight jackets show it in very white paint.

Lt. Henry Wilson's confirmation of his victory came through today, with one P-190 destroyed and one damaged. Capt. Bonine's flight returned from the operational leave which they spent in Norway. They all had a swell time.

RELEASED FOR TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE.....

Since the strip had to be repaired, the group was released for maintenance and training on the 20th. At 1800 we had a practice alert

## STAFF REPORT

For the whole field in order to test the defense system etc. Our Squadron continued the day with their maintenance. July 30th was still a day of release since the strip had not been repaired yet. Green Flight left on its operational leave to England, along with Major Sparks and Capt. McLachlan. As the bomb-line changed during the day, we noticed the advance of our ground forces. By the end of the day, the bomb-line was up to Avranches on the west side of the thrust. They were using great guns.

MISSION # 183.....Five Bombing.....F/O Hansen becomes 2nd Lt. Hansen...

At 0600 hours, July 31st, the squadron went on a 30 minute alert. The weather was good and the boys were very eager to get up into the blue yonder. The strip was ready for operations. It wasn't until 1415 that we were notified that briefing was scheduled for 1530. The squadron was going to bomb a fuel dump at Rennes. Lt. Col. Douglas was to lead the squadron on this one. Just after briefing, a P-47 had crashed on landing and we thought it might mean a delay in the take-off, but the strip was cleaned in time, with the mission taking-off as scheduled. They arrived over the target and made the bomb run from 9,500 ft. The results were good with a red fires started and black smoke coming up from the target area. When they returned, all went to group for the usual critique and then to supper.

F/O Hansen was appointed 2nd Lieutenant with Lt. Col. Douglas administering the oath. At 2000, Lt. Col. Douglas had all the officers present get into a formation opposite the S-2, S-3 site, called them to attention and asked Lt. Hansen to step front and center. He then read the letter of appointment and congratulated him upon his commission. The fellows then all cheered a rousing congratulation.

There were no missions scheduled for the rest of the day and we were finally released at 2145.

The month ended with the Allies pushing south, west and east from their original front along the Periers \* St. Lo road. Our army was given the closest support from the air, with our Thunderbombers working hand in hand with the ground forces. July was costly to the squadron, too, for we lost Carter, Johnny Spencer, Bone Myers and H.V. Greene - all of them helping to make this history and doing a splendid job. The pages are turning now, with the progress of the part which this squadron is playing in the war effort showing itself by the work and willingness of all concerned. The departments have their share in the whole mechanism, for we can't forget the Engineers, who are doing a good job of servicing and maintenance, the Communications boys, Ordnance and Armament, and so on down the line. "Thunder Bums" they may call themselves, but great guys all.

## SQUADRON HISTORY

NO. 1151.....Normandy..

The Nissen huts we knew so well in the U.K. are no longer the familiar sight. The type of living conditions have been altered to fit the circumstances. The proverbial "fox-holes" have become our living quarters. The well saved runways have been replaced by the landing strips laid down with meshwork by the engineers. The problem of keeping the runway as smooth as possible has been handled by these men, getting as many of the bumps out as possible. The indoors has been turned to the outdoors of Normandy.

Some of the best made "fox-holes" on the continent have been built by our men. W/Sgt. Zimmerman, for example, constructed one deluxe. Dug well and deep, with stairs leading to the "one room apartment", it was covered with metal grating in the shape of a dome and camouflaged with sod. One must feel very cozy in something like that, especially with the swell ventilation, too. The armament, ordnance, and communications men went in for elaborate affairs regarding their shelters, and proved to be quite comfortable. The water which came from faucets in England, comes from the water can over here. W/Sgt Lancaster developed an idea for a shower with the use of belly tanks and a hot water jenny which were put up near our Tech Site. Well done and appreciated it was. Home-made with the help of some of the pilots, this served very well as the outdoor "Ablutions". The old well in the area of the Tech Site served as a supply of water for the ablutions, shaving, etc., with hot being pumped into the elevated belly tanks by the jenny. The good old SIVA generator was the Electricity Co. for the evenings.

Group Special Service kept up the fine service with regard to the movies. Over here in France, Capt. Quinlan arranged for movies every night, shown twice to accommodate all who wanted to relax for a couple of hours after the day's work. Miss Flo Reed and her assistants became very busy as soon as they arrived on the strip. She quickly got herself three French ladies who aided in preparing and serving the "sinks" which "Stars and stripes" wrote about. The Agro Club again became the Enlisted Men's Rendezvous some nights during the week, before darkness set in.