

### SQUADRON HISTORY

#### MISSION # 29.... Dive Bombing.

On May 1st, briefing was called for 0750. The target for the mission was the Marshalling Yard at St. Ghislain. At 0915, the squadron was airborne, with Lt. Howie on his first operational flight. They got the target as briefed and dive bombed the marshalling yard with very good results.

#### MISSION # 30..... Dive Bombing.

At 1630, the group was briefed on another mission for the day. This, they were going to dive bomb the Arras Marshalling Yards. The squadron took-off, joined with the group and set course for the continent.

2nd Lt. Hamilton, of Louis III, as he is referred to by the rest, started down the runway but was forced off. He swerved to the right to avoid hitting a parked plane. By this time he had gained so much speed that he took-off to keep from crashing into planes parked in a dispersal area. Louis pulled up to miss a hangar, but hit it, damaging the landing gear, getting a hole in the right aileron and shearing off half of the right horizontal stabilizer and all of the right elevator. After the group was well on its way out, Louis decided he would belly land the plane on the field. When those who were on the ground heard this, the sweating out period began. Although he had poor control over the damaged aircraft, he did a swell job belly landing it in. As the airplane approached the runway, all of us who were so tense about the whole situation yelled out to Louis to take it easy, as if the voices could be heard. Just as soon as the airplane came to a halt, all the spectators rushed out to the spot to see how Louis was. It was a relief to see him get out himself and act as calmly as if there was nothing to it.

The mission was accomplished uneventfully, the results of the bombing being fair.

The confirmations of the encounters which the pilots met with on March 25th came through to the squadron, giving Maj. Douglas one probably destroyed FW-190 and one damaged FW, Capt. "Bone" Myers got himself a destroyed ME - 109, Lt. Henry, now at Group S-3, was awarded one damaged FW-190, Lt. Larsen a damaged 190 and Lt. Gamblin a damaged FW-190. The confirmation came through from IX ASC, report # 14 dtd 30 April 1944. (Copies not available)

#### MISSION # 31..... Dive Bombing.

There was an overcast in the morning of the 2nd but at 1000, group held a briefing for the dive bombing of the marshalling yards at Aulnoye. This was the first time the planes were going to carry 500 lb bombs for the attack. After the briefing the pilots rode directly to the line and by 1140 they were airborne. The bombing results were excellent, three direct hits observed on the large engine repair shop in the yards.

SE ABRON HISTORY

MISSION # 32..... Dive Bombing

By 1430, in the afternoon of the 2nd, the squadron was notified via the ops phone that briefing was to be held at 1430. After running to group to get the details, we found out that the target was the marshalling yard at Tourcoing, Roubaix. The boys had just a little rest between the two missions when this operational order came in. The results of the bombing were fair. A critique was held at group after the boys came home. It didn't take long for most of them to "hit the sack" after supper. We were finally released until noon the next day.

In two days time, there were four missions, each of which was directed at marshalling yards with the squadron playing its part in helping to disrupt and cripple the enemy's transportation facilities.

The weather on the 3rd wasn't too good to fly in. We were finally released until daybreak the following day. During the day, the men were gathered together in each department where General Spaatz's letter on the "Progress In the Air War" was read to them and discussed. They also got the opportunity to see some of the combat film showing our pilots shooting up locomotives and freight trains over Northwestern France.

AND SPAINING.....Some More Practice Aerial Cover For A Landing.

The group was to participate in another exercise on May 4th. Although it was a very cloudy day, the same type of relays as were flown towards the end of April in conjunction with the establishment of a beachhead, the squadron took-off to cover the area in the vicinity of Selsey Bill. Our boys flew two missions but were recalled at 1145 due to the weather. Then, after 1400, we were on a 15 minute alert call. The squadron was released by 1900.

MISSION # 33..... Dive Bombing

The PR missions continued. At the 0730 briefing, the squadron learned that it was top cover for the other two squadrons going down to release their bombs at the Somain Marshalling Yards. 2nd Lt. Henry L. Olson was going to fly his first operational mission with the squadron as Maj. Douglas' wing man. Olie is our "fighter pilot and congressman", as the boys put it. The squadron was up at 0907 and down at 1120 hours. The bombing results were unobserved for the most part because of the 6/10 cloud coverage over the target. Col. Myers and Maj. Perego held the critique for the entire group.

MISSION # 34.... Another Dive Bombing

On May 7th, another dive bombing was the mission for the day. At 0730, briefing started. The target - Namur Marshalling Yards. Maj. Perego was to lead the group and fly with our squadron. Maj. Douglas and Capt. Sparks held a squadron briefing at 0800 after which time all went out to their planes, started the engines of the Thunderbombers, and then we could all hear the cutout of each engine almost immediately.

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### MISSION # 34..... (cont'd)

The mission had been postponed four hours, finally taking-off at 1235 hours. The results were good in the SE corner of the Marshalling Yards.

### TRAINING CONTINUES.....

That afternoon, after the pilots had returned from the mission, Major Douglas, who had been away to a conference with Col. Meyers and the other two Squadron Commanders at higher headquarters, let the boys in on a mission which was pending for the group to take part in. We were to accomplish one in direct support of B-26 bombers which were to attack the Marshalling Yards at Calais - the hottest spot on the NW coast of France. Every time the pilots looked at the flak overlay on the map they always remarked how to stay away from there.

Col. Meyers, having the necessary information, briefed the group on the set-up for the mission should it come in the next day or so. The Squadrons were to dive-bomb two flak gun battery emplacements to destroy them. One was situated on the coast about three miles SE of Calais and the other 6-gun emplacement was a little more inland. The Colonel stressed the importance of timing in the whole problem. As the B-26s were going to make their bomb-run in Calais proper, our boys were to dive bomb the selected targets.

In order to practice the timing and dive bombing, there was an exercise mission to be flown in the late afternoon, with the type of formation to be used over Calais. Two squadron formations of 24 planes each were to circle the field, head out to P/V with the bombers, await the call sign and the head down to the target range near Orfordness. The 398th was to furnish eight P-47s to each of the other squadrons. All planes were to carry 100 lb. practice bombs. Take-off was at 1637, the rendezvous being made off Bradwell, on the east coast of England. From there they escorted the 26s to Orfordness at which point they left the bombers and came home to base. Our P-47s didn't bomb because the formation was too close and some were over a town. They returned by 2035.

### MISSION # 35..... Dive Bombing

Many anticipated the Calais deal to come on the 8th, but instead the target for the day was the railroad bridge just west of Sedan. The group arrived over the target a little early and bombed with fair results. As far as could be determined one hit actually penetrated one side of the bridge at the center by either Capt. McLachlan or Lt. Quilty. All were down by 1910 at Chibolton.

### PRESENTATION OF AIR MEDALS ON 8TH OF MAY BY MAJOR GENERAL GUESADA....

After supper on the 8th, all the pilots went back to the huts to dress in their blouses and pinks. A big occasion was to take place that evening at 2045. Our Commanding General of the IX Fighter Command came to Chibolton to make the presentations himself.

Each squadron detailed a platoon of enlisted men plus a platoon leader who spaced themselves about on the grassy field

## SQUADRON HISTORY

### PRESENTATION OF AWARDS (CONT'D).....

immediately in front of the Control Tower. The sun was just about to set and the whole scene took on its military aspect with the single row of officers "front and center" to accept the awards from Major General Quesada, wearing his two stars recently received. Col. Meyers wearing his eagles for the first time, accompanied Gen. Quesada to the reviewers position in front of the whole formation. Our Colors, with its guard, was centered in the platoon formations. For the background, quite some distance behind, we very appropriately had B-26s and P-47s.

Our pilots had the thrilled look about them as the ceremony proceeded. Col. Meyers received his D.F.C. and Air Medal with congratulations from the General. General Quesada went right down the line congratulating each pilot and pinning the awards to their blouses. When he approached Lt. Quilty, The Kid, he asked, "How old are you, son?" "Twenty years, Sir", was Spikes quick reply. "How did you get into this racket?" Quilty hesitated for a moment as if trying to find an answer and then answered, "I don't know, Sir." His excitement left him without words.

After the presentations, General Quesada spoke to all, telling us how good a record the group as a whole had earned for itself. Stressing everyone's job, he related how much more work we were going to have still in playing our part to defeat the enemy. Darkness had almost set in when the occasion was over and the formations broke up after the general left. The big smiles were on all the pilots' faces as they scrambled over to the truck waiting to take them back to the hutment area. The first awards to a grand bunch of fellows.

### MISSION # 36 - Dive Bombing..... Calais

The 9th brought with it the very important mission for which the boys had practiced late on the 7th. The group was to make R/V with the bombers, escort them to the E/C where they were going to leave them and head for the AA gun emplacements. A predetermined signal was made up and at the briefed time, Col. Meyers was going to lead one of the enlarged squadrons consisting of 24 P-47s loaded with 2 x 1,000 lb GP bombs, down to the inland gun emplacement, while the other enlarged squadron was to go down to bomb the gun position at the coast.

Col. Meyers made the group complete a wide 360° orbit over the Channel after the B-26s were seen heading out. The timing was perfect for when Col. Meyers heard the signal everybody was on time and then came down to the target inland (Target G) and the other squadron going down (to Target F) along the coast. The battery at G was silenced after the first flight bombed and the other flights put the finishing touches on the guns. However, the results on target F were not very accurate. The approach was too shallow and many bombs fell outside of the target area. Our squadron got three battle-damaged planes in the attack. The flak was heavy and accurate. Another P-47 Group had similar targets in the Calais area.

### MISSION # 37..... Dive Bombing

## SQUADRON HISTORY

### MISSION # 37..... Dive Bombing

At 1500, 9 May, Group briefed on a Hoball target in the Ardres region for our Squadron, and each of the other squadrons had their own Hoball. The group was going in to the enemy coast and leaving it together although three separate courses were to be followed. The squadron bombed our assigned target with fairly good results, met with the other two in France and all proceeded home to the base.

A briefing was held at 0615 on the 10th for a deep penetration escort for Eighth Air Force heavies. The group could have escorted as deep as Yoningsfeld, Germany, had they not been recalled after taking-off.

### MISSION # 38..... Dive Bombing

May 10th didn't go by without a mission for at 1400 the boys were briefed on dive bombing the Cambrai Marshalling Yards. Our squadron was top cover for the Thunderbombers, with its Glazier and Fox flying their first operational mission after completing their schooling. The bombing of the group was from poor to fair.

### MISSION # 39..... Dive Bombing

At 1000 on May 11th, Maj. Douglas had the opportunity to lead the group and brief them on the dive bombing of the marshalling yards at Tournai. He discussed the bomb run they would make and how they would go down on the target. The planes were up at 1210, carrying 2 x 1,000 lb. bombs each. The group was probably in sight of the enemy coast when group S-3 notified the squadron that briefing for a ramrod mission would be held at 1630.

At first, when the pilots came home, there was a little doubt as to whether they had been to the right target, but the consensus of opinion, after looking at the map and photograph of the target, was that they had been at the right marshalling yard. Maj. Douglas and Col. Meyers held the critique.

### MISSION # 40..... Escort for B-26s

In the afternoon of the 11th, all the information regarding the escort of B-26s which were going to the Perieres Marshalling Yards was brought out in the briefing. The base during the entire trip was pretty thick. On the way in, our boys saw many B-17s returning from their targets over Europe. Just before the Marauders turned on their IP, Lt. Romine's flight saw a distressed straggling B-17 returning home. The flight orbited and joined the fortress to protect it. While still over France, the boys in the B-17 must have felt delighted to such an extent that they bombed 2 airdromes in France. The rest of the mission went as briefed. Lt. Romine's flight escorted the B-17 as far as the Isle of Wight where they bid "solong" and headed for home.

In the evening, we were notified that a briefing at 0315, May 12th, would be held in conjunction with an exercise which was going to be held.

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### SOME MORE TRAINING..... "Eagle Exercise"

May 12th started very early with the briefing for the "Eagle Exercise" held at 0615. Maj. Perego started on the problem which was in support of the Troop Carrier Command. The course and rendezvous was discussed, but instead of the whole group being in on the exercise only four from each squadron were to take part. Lts. Ostuw, Loeb and Ryerson flew with the Major. The rest of the pilots remained in the pilots room until about 0500 and had some breakfast which Sgt. "Hank" Bettin cooked up in his "Hashery". The boys went to the area for some more sleep before the briefing which was going to be held at 0930. A mission was being planned for the group.

### MISSION # 41..... Dive Bombing

At 0930, May 12th the briefing started. The target was the railroad bridge at Namur as a primary, and the marshalling yards as a secondary. The group was going to use new tactics - a low level, glide-bombing by one flight in each squadron and if the bridge wasn't knocked out by the first squadron, the others would do the same.

When they returned from the target bombed, many were of the opinion that they had drifted south of course and bombed a bridge and marshalling yard at Givet. Major Haessler, CO of the 397th Fighter Squadron, and Col. Meyers held the critique at group, at which time some photos of the results of the bombing of Yournai on the 11th were shown.

The rest of the day was spent in training and maintenance. Some combat film of the April 18th mission to Monceau-Sur-Sambre marshalling yards, near Charleroi were shown in the S-2 section, but the film wasn't too good.

### TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE.....

From May 13th through May 19th, no operational missions were flown. It gave the squadron a little time for some recreational activity, too. On the 13th, the EM opposed the Officers in a Softball game. The Officers won with a score of 15 - 11. That day we were notified that the squadron was to fly Air Alert Exercises the next day in conjunction with the Controller who would vector them and give them instructions.

The weather in the morning of the 14th was poor, but let up in the afternoon when, about 1500, the first flight took-off to fly to Tilshed where the Controller was working with Field Artillerymen and the flights coming over to dive bomb pin-pointed targets in the vicinity. These problems reminded Lts. Benton and G.H. Olson of the "Rover Joe" problems they took part in while at Milfield. Each flight rotated with all getting to and from the target with very good results.

Early morning, about 0200 on the 15th, Jerry paid us a little visit. Some bombs were dropped near the 395th dispersal area. This was the closest that any bombs had been dropped near the group since we have been in England.

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SCRUBBED.....

At 0700, briefing was held at group on the 15th. All the pertinent information was given about the Airdrome at Bretigny which would have been pounded by 1,000 lb. bombs had the mission not been scrubbed just as the planes were taxiing out to the runways.

We were released until 1800 which gave the boys a chance to play the 397th some softball, with our squadron the victors, score - 16 - 5. The weather continued to be poor for the rest of the day, bringing a release until daybreak the 16th. Four new pilots were assigned to the squadron, 2nd Lts. John W. Strickland, George I. MacGee, George P. Ohlman, and Joseph S. Busenbark. Cpl. Michael W. Augello, who had been transferred out of the squadron to a hospital, came back to join us.

The 16th brought a briefing at 0600. Our target was the railroad bridge at Namur, which was to be destroyed even if it took three attempts. The briefing was all over when word came that it was Scrubbed! The weather again. A release came through until 1500 and then until daybreak. The rest of the day was spent in training and maintenance. Capt. Sparks showed the four new pilots around the line and gave them a very fine talk on the esprit de corps that existed in the squadron and the big team that all fitted into.

The men were given permission to rest until 0900 on the 17th because the weather continued to be pretty bad. At 1800, a British AA Liaison Officer from the IX Bomber Command came to the group to deliver a very interesting lecture on flak to the pilots. The bad weather continued on the 18th, although an alert was given for a possible mission which was cancelled by a release until 1500 the next day. Col. Meyers visited the pilots room accompanied by Col. Zemke from the 56th Fighter Group.

MISSION # 42..... Dive Bombing

The weather was a little better on May 18th. Briefing took place at 1800. The squadron was top-cover for a dive bombing mission. The group set course for the airdrome known as Cambrai-Epinoy. The cloud cover over the target area was too much to note the results of the bombing.

MISSION # 43..... Escort for Eighth Air Force Heavies.

In the morning of the 20th, the group went out as escort for B-17s bombing the Villa-Coublay Airdrome south of Paris. The mission went as briefed, making rendezvous and sticking with the bombers.

MISSION # 44..... Reconnaissance.... Lt. Larsen and the Channel.

When they returned from the escort mission on the 20th, Col. Meyers went on a reconnaissance mission over the railroad between Ghent and Termonde. Lts. Larsen and Parrish represented our squadron on this mission.

Just as the planes were making landfall in at the enemy coast, the oil pressure in Lt. Larsen's <sup>plane</sup> went down and before very long the engine cut-out. Lt. Larsen decided that the only thing to do was to

MISSION # 44.... (Cont'd)

bring the airplane down in a glide. When he was about 2-3,000 ft. over the Channel, he threw the airplane over on its back to fall out. At this moment all he could think of was to pull that cord of his parachute. Larsen landed in the chilly waters of the Channel, about 10 miles west of Dunkirk, releasing his parachute successfully, sinking to about 10 feet in the water and came up feeling sort of heavy. He inflated the dinghy right away, crawling into it to await the Air-Sea Rescue. The time was about 1830.

Lt. Dave Parrish, who stayed with Larsen all the time he was in trouble, got on a channel over the radio and kept Air-Sea Rescue informed all the time. Dave circled Lt. Larsen all the time until the British Walrus arrived at the scene to pick him up, at which time Lt. Parrish went down to buzz the rescue. The Walrus brought Lt. Larsen to Hawkinge, on the east coast of England, where he was warmed up and given dry clothes. Capt. Feary, our Group Operations Officer, flew over to Hawkinge in our C-7 to pick up Lt. Larsen. They got back to the base that evening just as the squadron was returning from a dive bombing mission.

MISSION # 45..... Dive Bombing

At 1800, the 2nd, briefing was held for the dive bombing of the manufacturing yards at Bouvrai. The group was to bomb the choke point at the S end of the target. Lt. Col. Perego was going to lead. Lt. Leintzel told the pilots to watch out for the airframe S of Lille which had quite a bit of heavy flak. By 1900, the squadron was up. Maj. Douglas had to take over the Com and from Lt. Col. Perego over the Channel and continued on instruments in and out due to the bad weather and visibility. Although no hits were on the choke point, the results were good in the manufacturing yards proper.

Lt. Larsen came to the pilots room on the line as the boys were coming in from their airplanes. Many questions were fired at him, some technical and others in a humorous tone to laugh away some of the experiences. But first - "A drink of Scotch to Lt. Larsen, back from the drink". The room was filled with conversation. In fact, they had a couple of drinks in honor of Lt. Larsen, the fellow who was rescued in one of the shortest times in the history of A/S Rescue - 45 minutes from the time he landed in the water.

The critique held at group at 1830 was an excellent one held by Maj. Douglas feeling in great spirits. He led the group and one of his boys was rescued. Lt. Col. Perego told the boys that a lighter sweep was pending for the next day.

MISSION # 46... Fighter Sweep.... Lt. Henry belly-lands.

By 01st brought the fighter sweep. IX Fighter Command was putting on a big show with a large area sweep in France, west and south west of Paris. They took-off at 0907 but recalled to take-off again at 1007.

Lt. Myerson, a returned spare, told us that Lt. Henry, from group Operations, had part of his tail gone due to an accident in mid-air. Maj. Douglas and Lt. Carter were bringing him home.



SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 46.... (Cont'd)

When they arrived over the field, one could <sup>see</sup> the portion of the vertical fin which was chewed away. Henry was going to belly land the airplane. He circled the field and finally approached the runway, bringing the plane down beautifully, sliding down the runway in a straight line. When he came over to the squadron area we learned how good a job he did bringing the plane back in the condition that it was in. His tail had brushed Capt. Sparks' prop. in a crossover, going down in a spin immediately from 11,000 to 8,500 ft. pulling out at that altitude. His wing tanks flew off and burst into flames as the boys sweated him out until they saw him pull out of that spin. Henry's level head brought him back to Chilbolton.

The mission brought 10 locomotives to the squadron's credit. Our squadron was the only which found a large enough break in the clouds to go down to strafe with excellent results. Capt. McLachlan's flight got 3 in the Le Mans area, Lt. Romine's got 2 in the Nogent area, Lt. Benton's Purple flight went after 2 in the Fresnoy area, and Capt. Sparks' flight strafed 1 electric and 2 steam locomotives. Capt. "Mac" went down so low over the locomotive that he came back with soot and debris over the plane.

MISSION # 47..... Score for B-26s.

At 1230, May 22nd, the squadron was notified of an escort mission with B-26s going to bomb the airfield at Beaumont la Risle, about 15 miles NW of Evreux. Briefing was held in the squadron S-2 section since there was only limited time before starting engines. They took-off, rendezvoused with the Marauders and were down at 1555. The squadron escorted 16 B-26s. Lt. Col. Perezgo, who led the squadron held a critique in the pilots room. Lt. Parrish destroyed a locomotive between Caen and Mezidon.

We were notified that we were released until daybreak the 24th. Lt. Dick received word that he had become the daddy of a little girl.

It was 0630 when the men were awakened and told that briefing was to be held at 0600, May 23rd. This was a surprise because we had been released. When all arrived at the briefing room we found out that we were released from the mission so back to breakfast everyone went. Mr. Wolf, a war correspondent representing the IFA, interviewed the pilots down at the line in the pilots room. Our boys played the 395th squadron softball with the score 5 - 1 until the last inning but our squadron came through winning 8 - 5. In the evening there was an Officers Dance held at the Officers Club, with everyone seeming to have good time.

MISSION # 48..... Escort of B-24s of Eighth Air Force.

It was 0600, May 24th, when briefing started. Our group was to escort B-24s whose target was the St. Cyr Airfield SW of Paris. After another group relieved them, the squadron made a successful hunt between Abbeville and Le Troport with good results. Maj. Douglas destroyed one steam engine and one probably destroyed, plus 1 electric locomotive damaged. Capt. McLachlan and his flight destroyed 2 medium sized locomotives, 1 truck destroyed, and 4 trucks probably destroyed.

## SQUADRON HISTORY

### MISSION # 48..... (Cont'd)

Lt. G.H. Olson destroyed one large locomotive and Lt. Carter probably destroyed one truck.

### MISSION # 49..... Escort For Spitfires on First Rodeo.

After the critique at group when the boys got back from the morning mission on the 24th, Lt. Henry briefed the Operations and Intelligence Officers of the 396th and 397th on the special escort mission for some of our Navy pilots flying British Spits on a familiarization sweep making IFFI at Cabourg, to Lisieux, Evetot, and out at Pecamp. Our squadron was to furnish top cover for the 12 Spits. Maj. Douglas and Capt. Baer held the squadron briefing. They took-off at 1330 and accomplished rendezvous over Chilcolton, the rest of the mission being accomplished as planned.

That evening a party was held for the Unlisted Men of the squadron in the gymnasium. An RAF band furnished the music, plenty of beer was at hand as were the girls, and a grand time was had by all.

### MISSION # 50..... Dive Bombing

The mission on May 25th had the Thunderbombers loaded with one 1,000 lb. each. The target was the railroad bridge at Hasselt, Belgium. Col. Meyers was to fly with our squadron. Something new was tried on this mission. The squadrons took-off at 10 minute intervals. Ours was off first at 0740. Two flights made low level attacks while the other two flights acted as top cover. Col. Meyers told how important the job was.

When they reached the target, the approach was made at about 150, dropping the bombs at 50 ft. over the target. The results, however, were poor with some hits being observed on the north end of the railroad approach to the bridge. The bridge was still intact when they left. This was the first time "skip-bombing" was tried and during critique the method was discussed to try to improve it.

Having been released, the squadron flew some formation. The four new pilots had completed their O.T.U. yesterday and flew with the squadron for the first time.

### MISSION # 51..... Dive Bombing

The group was released until 1100 on the 26th for there was a very low ceiling. At 1400, briefing was held for the dive bombing of the Evreux - Fauville airdrome. The different dispersal areas and dumps were pointed out on very good pictures of the field. As an alternate target they had a railroad bridge over the Seine, near Elbeuf. Maj. Douglas held a briefing in the squadron pilots room telling the new pilots who were flying their first operational mission Lts. Strickland and Waenger, just what to do. The mission was accomplished as briefed with good bombing results on the SE dispersal area. After the critique the release was until daybreak.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 52..... Area Sweep (Controlled)

In the morning of the 27th, the group went on a 2 wing tank maximum range effort sweep over France. Lt. Col. Perego flew with the squadron. While over France, just W of Rheims, the controller vectored the group to the vicinity of L. bandits airborne about 50 miles south of Rheims check point. The group climbed to 25,000 ft. and saw the 12 bandits up about 25,000 ft. who immediately evaded combat and ran.

On the way home some flights went down to the deck to strafe. Capt. Myers' flight destroyed 3 locomotives, Lt. Parrish's flight one, and Lt. Col. Perego's probably destroyed one locomotive. Capt. McLachlan's flight met an FW-190 by surprise at very low altitude and went after him. The 190 put the coal on but Mac's flight stayed with him firing all the time but no hits were observed. Because of the gasoline problem, they had to turn for home.

MISSION # 53..... Glide-bombing with incendiary tanks.

The afternoon of the 27th brought briefing at 1630. It was a special type mission this time. The planes were to carry 2 incendiary gasoline tanks each, which were to be dropped on the ammunition dump in the woods NE of Comiegne. This was Lt. Chlan's first operational mission with the squadron.

When the group got to the target, the glide-bombing was from fair to good with hits in the general area. On the way home, two flights went down to strafe the rolling stock in the railroad yard at Clermont with very good results, making a gunnery pattern with five passes, destroying many vehicles and an oil storage tank. Maj. Douglas' and Lt. Parrish's flights destroyed about 20 large vans and approximately 50 small vehicles on the flat cars. Lt. Romine's flight went after an M/T convoy of about 15 trucks, destroying 6 with 3 probables. Lt. Parrish attacked and destroyed one locomotive.

MISSION # 54..... Escort for B-26s.

At 0930, May 28th, Maj. Douglas held a briefing in the squadron. Our squadron was to escort B-26s going to bomb a bridge at Liege. The rendezvous was made east of North Foreland. Lt. Ostaw had the opportunity to lead Yellow Flight on this mission, this was also Lt. Busenbark's first operational mission. The rest of the group took-off later.

Our boys stayed with the bombers, although it was difficult to render proper escort because they weaved very much and kept making feints in different directions. The bombing was excellent on the bridge they went after.

After landing, the boys went to eat and came back to the pilots room to await a pending mission. Fearwalle, Lt. Newman lectured to them on the parachute.

MISSION # 55..... Another Escort for B-26s, but not accomplished.

Our squadron and the 597th went to rendezvous with B-26s at 1925 and take them around their target at Amiens.

SQUADRON HISTORY

MISSION # 55..... (cont'd)

The Field Order came in after the squadrons left and stated that the R/V was to have been made at 1830. The controller kept both squadrons orbiting around Beachy Head for 20 minutes and finally told them to head for the enemy coast.

Having made landfall in at the enemy coast very close to Boulogne, Lt. C.H. Olson was hit in the right wing with a heavy flak shell which burst after it had penetrated. The burst took place right over the cockpit but didn't shoot fragments at the plane. Lt. Howie returned with C.H. as escort.

Lt. Austin H. (Heaton) Garr visited the line this afternoon, telling for a ride in an airplane. Being with supply all the time, Austin wanted to get a taste of the line. Capt. Sparks "checked him out" in the cockpit of his plane to show him the Thunderbolt.

MISSION # 56..... Support for Eighth A.F. Heavies..Deepest penetration to date.

A maximum range effort mission was set for the morning of the 29th. To date, this was the deepest penetration, going to a point just east of Hanover before returning home. Originally, they were to have made rendezvous with the big friends, but not seeing any on course, continued as briefed, completing a round trip of about 1,000 miles. No enemy A/C were encountered at all.

MISSION # 57.....dive bombing.

On the afternoon of the twenty-ninth, the group went to dive bomb the airdrome at Berlin-Bastard, about 4 miles west of Torient on the West peninsula, flying down to it west of Jersey and Wernsey Islands. The mission was accomplished as briefed with very good result in the southern and south-eastern dispersal areas. They encountered a great deal of flak in the vicinity of the target.

MISSION # 58.....Escort for A-20's.

May 30 found the squadron as escort for A-20's going to bomb the Genain/Prouvy Airdrome, near Valenciennes. Col. Meyers flew with the squadron, leading the 393th and 397th. Capt. McFadden held briefing in the squadron and the mission took off. All was accomplished as briefed.

MISSION # 59..... Slide-bombing.

Lt. Col. Perego held a critique and briefing. The target for the afternoon of the 30th was a road bridge, and as secondary the group was to hit the next road bridge to the east of the primary. Major Douglas held squadron briefing to discuss the technique of slide-bombing. The squadrons took off at ten minute intervals. Because Major Douglas' radio went out, Capt. "Bone" Myers took over the lead, got to and round the target. Seeing the primary target destroyed, the squadron went down on the secondary, scoring hits on the 2nd. and 3rd. spans of the northern part. One flight attacked a railroad bridge just east of the secondary target, hitting the southern approach and causing the bridge to exist.