

PERSONAL DIARY

OF

FRANCIS BURNS

Francis Burns

Copyright June 30, 1999

NAME

ADDRESS

STATE

NAME	ADDRESS	STATE
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This is the first raid that the 303rd. Bomb. Group has been called upon to make since we have been in England or anyplace else for that matter of fact. The target is St. Nazaire. There are submarine pens there and storage supplies for the subs. These pens are of a peculiar structure, being fourteen feet in thickness and are wide at the base and narrow at the top. A direct hit is no good on them as the bomb hits the sides and explodes doing little damage. One has to get his bomb hit right in front of the doors. Our ship did not go on this raid but returning crews had some hair raising stories to tell about the anti aircraft fire over the target. It was quite thrilling to count the returning ships and see the amount of damage done to the various ships. From all accounts it really was a hot one.

Today's target is St. Nazaire. This makes the second day in a row that it has been attacked by flying fortresses. My ship L24562 went on this raid but because of my cold I did not go. I have been grounded by Capt. Henry until my cold clears up. At the present time I can hardly talk. Cant say that I envy the boys very much from the last reports but I hate to see the crew that I have been with since we formed in the States go off and leave me behind.

All the ships took off early and formed above the field about 9.00 A.M. They returned about three oclock. They really had a tough time of it today. All crew members report encountering very heavy flak. Not only was there plenty of it but it was very accurate. The target was hit heavily and several good hits were reported. The Forts were also encountered by enemy planes which attacked from the rear. Batterson a tail gunner in the Hunga Dunga claims to have shot down three and Reino in the Ship No Monkey Business also got one. One crew member in the group was injured by flak. Several of the ships bore witness of the fact that they had been through a tough scrap.

Well what do you know the target for today is once again St. Nazaire or what the boys now call Flak City. I am still on the sick list and therefore unable to go. The ship and the crew went except Hill our regular right waist gunner who is also sick. T/Sgt. Zeimer went in his place.

The results of this raid were very good according to the reports and as was proved later by the pictures taken at the time of the raid. The Flak was very heavy again and it got one of our bombers this time. This is the first ship to be lost by our group and it was out of the 359 Squadron. It was on this raid that Capt. Fulgum who was just made Group Navigator jumped out of the lead ship into that caldron of Flak. If he even made it to the ground it's a miracle. The ship in which he was riding was hit and some how or other it is understood that orders to stand by were given and that he misunderstood them to jump. Well the ship made it back to the coast and landed at a South England town. Sid Hall a ball turrett operator in the Hunga Dunga was hit in the back and his ship landed at Exeter and he was taken to the hospital there. Seems as if he will be out for a long time, some even say that he will never fly combat again. T/ Sgt. Zeimer the man who took Hills Place froze his right hand while trying to fix his gun which was likewise frozen. The temperature was 30 below. The Hunga Dunga once again was holes up. J.B. White the crew chief certainly has his hands full trying to keep this ship in the air.

The weather finally had decided to let us go on another raid. Well I finally got rid of my cold enough to get permission to make this trip. The target for today is Lille France. We are to have a fighter protection of 250 Spitfires. Looks easy as it will only take a few moments or hours. Well at last I am in on a take off. I must confess that although we are to have a Spitfire escort I am a bit uneasy as to the outcome. As in all cases of danger I say a prayer to the Blessed Mother for the protection of the crew as a whole. We take off and after what seems hours of circling we finally get into formation and start for our rendezvous with the other groups. It is really wonderful to see the way that the groups form without using any signals. After a half an hour at 20,000 the ball turret operator calls up and informs the pilot that his guns will not operate. After constantly working on the guns Carroll the ball turret operator can't do a thing with them so the pilot decides to turn back. On the way back the navigator loses his way and in the meantime I have lost my verification sheet. The pilot calls up on the interphone and asks me to get a QDM. This I try to do but I am challenged and not having the verification sheet I cannot answer. We keep flying around and the pilot decides that we must land to find out where we are. We land at a field and get our position, then we take off again. Well we finally land at our home field about an hour after the other planes which went on and completed the mission. We were given up for lost for no one had seen us leave the formation and it was thought that we were shot down. You should have seen the faces of the ground men they were as happy as larks. Two ships were lost on this raid we later found out. Oh, well I still have my first to go on and I believe that it is all for the best that we returned.

December 12, 1942

Destination ROMILLY--SUR-- SEINE

Everybody was awoken at 4A.M. today to be briefed for the target for today. Well the direction of today's flight is a little different from what we have been having. The target for today is the air depot at ROMILLY SUR SEINE. This is an important repair and supply base for the LUFTWAFFE. The target is located 75 miles South East of Paris. The takeoff time is 9.00 A.M. Our plane I24562 and its crew are not going on this trip, our pilot and co-pilot are on the sick list. We watched the planes takeoff and they looked grand in their formation.

It is now 3.00 P.M. and the planes are returning. The returns of the raid are as follows. The target at Romilly Sur Seine was closed in by clouds and as a result the ships had to bomb the secondary target which was the marshaling yards at Rouen. These yards contain supplies for the submarines. From the reports of the bombing the results were very good. The bombers ran into heavy fighter opposition. The Flak was very light. We lost one ship from our squadron. This ship was hit by flak. It is said to have been a lucky hit for there were only about six bursts of it. The crew of this were listed as follows: Pilot-Frost Co-pilot Mayes** Navigator * Phillips Bombardier Bromilee --Engineer ** Hilderbrand** Radio Op. Powers Ball Turrett ** Shaw ** Left Waiste Davis ** Right Waiste Devine-- Tail Toney Several Chutes were seen to be in the air when this ship started down. It is possible that some of these men may escape. LT. Nolans Ship THE JERSEY BOUNCE WAS also hit by flak. Both the navigator and the bombardier were hit by flak. They give themselves first aid and managed to get away their bombs and the navigator plotted his way back. Upon landing they were both taken to the hospital for treatment. One ship from the 360th Squadron. Hamill the radio operator of the Jersey Bounce had a narrow escape as a bullet from an enemy fighter came thru the side of the fuselage missing him by inches and hitting the bombay. The bag of fighters for the day was quoted as 14 Folke Wolfes. by B 17s.

December 20, 1942

Destination-- ROMMILLY**SUR--SEINE

Up we are bright and early at 4,30 A.M. to be briefed for today's target. Perhaps our ship will go today for we are scheduled. Well what do you know today's target is the same as on December 12, Yep ROMMILLY SUR SEINE The air depot again. Takeoff is for 9.00 AM. We are flying the lead ship of our squadron with Major Wurbach as our pilot and Morales as the co-pilot. The rest of the crew is the same as always. After the necessary preparations we taxie off to takeoff. At last I am really on a mission. I must confess that this being my first I feel a little uneasy especially after hearing of the difficulties that were encountered on this last run. Well some one has to win this war so let's put our all into it. We takeoff right on time. As we soar thru space it reminds one of a football game. We meet three other groups of bombers at different places at different times and the whole thing forms like a great team. It gives one a grand feeling to see so many planes behind and backing us up. We are later joined by a group of B-24s. Before we arrive at the channel we pick up an escort of Spitfire 9s and they stay with us until we arrive at Bouvey France. As they turn for home it sort of gives one a feeling of loneliness even with about seventy bombers about. Two minutes after the fighters leave us we are attacked by enemy fighters. This is the first time that I have ever seen them and I now know the value of recognition. As I look out the radio room hatch I see one of them high above the B-24 outfit that is in back of us. He dove practically straight at their formation and wigwagged his way right thru it. He got one B-24 and as it went down one could see chutes opening in the vast sky. From here on it is nothing but fight. Bullets and tracers are all over the sky. It's really a wonder that the bombers don't shoot each other out of the sky as these daring but pesty fighters bore in on them. It easily seen that the gunners have learned what it is all about. This fighting goes on until we are about five minutes from the target, then for some reason or other they leave us alone possibly because they are out of gas. When we get to the target the 305 group which is leading the parade gets all mixed up and we go over the target and begin a short slight seeing tour of France. Incidentally it is a beautiful day.

After a while we begin the run on the target after the B-24 outfit already had bombed it. They were supposed to be after us. As we make the run on the target black and white puffs of smoke appear around us. This is Flak the stuff that I have heard so much about. It's presence alone makes me want to be some place else but some how or other we keep sailing thru it and finally I hear the bombardier yell over the interphone BOMBS AWAY. Right after that the Major says let's get the hell out of here and we proceed to do so. The trip back

December 28th, 1942

ROMJILLY SUR SEINE COM'T

was pretty good the navigator kept pointing out the different places below us it began to resemble a sight seeing tour and as we passed southeast of Paris we saw that sad city and it's famous land mark the Eiffle Tower. We have only a short distance to go and then we will pick up an escort of Spitfire 9s at Bouvey France. As we approach the city of Bouvey planes are sighted directly in front of us at about 2000 yards and the navigator warns all to be carefull as they may be our escort. Well on and on they come and they are finally recognized as the wolves they are enemy planes Focke Wolves. Here we go all over again they are all over the place about fifty in all. They keep diving at our formation and the Major thru the means of evasive action keeps the squadron out of harm. The temperature at this time is 50 degrees below F. Some B17s out of the 305th Group become stragglers and are given a great deal of attention by the enemy. You begin to wonder with so many fighters throwing so much lead how those B I7s stay up. Finally one goes down. I understand that some B-24s also went down. This fight went on until we were about half way across the channel then thank God it stopped. We never did see the Spitfire escort we were susposed to pick up. A total of six bombers were lost on the whole mission The bag of enemy fighters for the day was 44 Fockle Wolves .

SCORE.

Bombers Lost 6

Enemy Fighters 44

December 25, 1943

TODAY IS CHRISTMAS DAY, AND WE ARE NOT SCHEDULED FOR A RAID TODAY. IT IS REALLY SURPRISING THAT DESPITE THE FACT THAT TODAY IS A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR A RAID THAT THE GODS OF WAR ARE GOING TO TAKE OFF A DAY OF MAKING BLOODSHED. TOO BAD THAT MEN CAN'T BE THIS WAY ALL THE TIME. WELL AT LEAST IT WILL GIVE SOME THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING AT LEAST ONE MORE CHRISTMAS.

JAN 2 19 43

TARGET TODAY LORIENT FRANCE, ALSO BREST (FR)

RUGGED DAY FIVE SHIPS LOST, ONE FROM OUR SQUADRON

PILOT LT O'CONNOR, C PRUPPE, NAV. GORDON BOMB DUMONT
Eng Mulholland RAD Hughes BT. Fencher W/G Lucas
& Rabuck TG Baberson

Flak very heavy Lt ~~Hass~~ Hass ship was
saddled, Lt Oxider ship severely shot up
crew bailed out but Oxider landed
crippled ship in a field (FRANCE)

December 30, 1942

Lorient

DID NOT GO ON RAID TO LORIENT FRANCE., FLAK HEAVY
LOST TWO (2) SHIPS FROM SQUADRON

January 3, 1943

Saint Naziere

RAID ON SAINT NAZIERE FRANCE. I DID NOT GO DUE
TO HEAVY COLD LT CLARK COPILOT BEATON NAV HOFFMAN
BOMBARDIER FISIT - ENGINEER REYNOLD RADIO WILDER BALL TURBETT
BRUNETTE, HALL WHIST GUNNER, LAND TAIL GUNNER
RUBELL WAST GUNNER WING WAS ON FIRE SHIP BLEW UP

SEVEN BOMBERS SHOT DOWN THIS DAY. PLENTY OF FW190 TODAY
WITH HEAD ON ATTACKS IN FLAK AREA SOMETHING
NOT SEEN BEFORE.

JAN 4 1943

TARGET HULL ^{MARSHALL YARDS} (3) THREE SHIPS LOST FLAK MEDIUM
TO LIGHT PLENTY OF GERMAN FIGHTERS. OUR SHIP GOT
4 FIGHTERS - MILLER (ONE) BLAKE (ONE) HILL (ONE)
HINDS (ONE) THIS WAS A LONG BATTLE WITH FW190'S
ME110'S JU88'S LASTED NEAR 1 1/2 HRS. RESULTS VERY GOOD

January 13, 1943

Lille

RAID TODAY FOR LILLE FRANCE 3 SHIPS LOST
TWO (2) RAN INTO EACH OTHER. FIGHTERS ALL OVER
THE PLACE 15 ENEMY PLANES ACCOUNTED FOR AS
DESTROYED - ALL FOLK WOLVES, FLAK MODERATE
TAIL GUNNER ON #427 HAD HIS HAND FROZEN, CUT OFF
HIS OXYGEN & DIED. SHIP HAD OTHER OXYGEN PROBLEMS
WAIST GUNNER HAD FROZEN HAND BALL TURRET OPERATOR
PASSED OUT HE WAS SAVED BY THE OTHER WAIST GUNNER.

While we were on pass the group went on this raid also. Their objective was the submarine pens at these locations. Brest was a secondary target Lorient being the main spot to bomb. Lorient has been bombed several times both by the R.A.F. and the U.S. air Forces. Still it is being used to supply and repair U. Boats. After we returned from our pass we got the story from the boys who took part in it. The Flak was vey heavy according to the reports of the crews. For some reason or other our squadron got shut out of the target and as an alternative went on to Brest. They had fighter escort all the way down but not the kind that one likes to see. Yes it was an escort of german fighters who followed them and made life in general miserable with their fancy dives and murderous fire. The group lost two bombers today and one was from our squadron. These ships went down over France. The officers and enlisted men from our squadron were as follows: Pilot Lt. Oconnor Co- Pilot Lt. Ruppe, Navigator Lt. Gordon, Bombardier Lt. Dumont, Engineer- T/ Sgt. Mullendore, Radio Sgt. Hughes, Ball Turret Sgt. Fincher, Lwaist Sgt. Ducas, R. Waist Roebuck Tail Batterson. Lt. Hass the pilot of the Hunga Dunga took a ship from the 360 th squadron and flew as the pilot of the ship with the rest of the crew members of the 360 th squadron. This ship was knocked out of the air and it was later reported that Lt. Hass was killed ,the verification on this is weak so it looks as if we will have to await further confirmation. Another ship from our squadron named No Monkey Business really got shot up. Between the fighters and the flak she got several holes in her and two of her motors were shot out. She made it across the span of water between Brest and England before her third engine went out. At that time she was some where over Southern England then the Pilot gave orders for the whole crew to bail out, This included the Co-pilot. The crew lined up at the rear door of the ship and after an inspection to see if all the parachutes were right the Navigator Lt. Grant assembled the boys in order then one by one he pushed them out the door. The crew of this ship were as follows and the order in which they went out. S/ Sgt. Maxwell S/ Sgt. Saddler, Sgt. Heaps, T/ Sgt. Dasher, T/ Zeimer, Sgt. Smith, Lt. Hurlbutt Lt. Steel Lt. Grant. Lt. Oxrider landed the ship in a small patch of land after having to pass up a playing field because children were playing a game of football there. This was quite a feat for he only had one motor had no chance to manuver for he was losing altitude all the time, and the field he had to land in was so small that he could not pick his spot. Despite all this he landed the plane safely with no further damage to it. From the present reports the Army Air Forces will salvage the ship. They plan to put four new motors in her build a runway by cutting down fences and trees and some

January 23, 1943

Lorient & Brest

one of these fine days fly it out of there. Meanwhile the members of the crew were landing all over England. Smith landed in a field amongst a bunch of sheep. A farmer picked him up and later on he was turned over to the local authorities. As Maxwell jumped he lost his shoes and he landed in his bare feet. Zeimer landed in the hills and so did Saddler. These boys went to the nearest town and ran into Lts. Grant and Hurlbutt who were sipping tea in a nearby farm house. Dasher landed in a large field and as he gathered in his chute he seen a jaunting cart coming out to meet him with a girl and two boys in it. As the cart stopped near him one of young lads jumped out with a knife in his hand and said are you a Jerry if you are I'll knife you. Whereupon Dasher exclaimed that he was an American Flier, The girl in the cart told the boy to put the knife away and she questioned him further. Being fully satisfied with his story she told him to get in the cart and then she took him home. While he sipped on some hot tea and ate home made biscuits, the girl got in touch with the local authorities, who later came and picked him up. While he was waiting the lady of the house baked him a pie. All the boys returned to the squadron the next day. All in all it was some day.

January 27, 1943

Willamshaven Germany

Here it is five thirty again and we are once more awakened to attend a briefing again. I get up and go to breakfast then to the briefing room to find out where are scheduled to run to today. At six A.M. we are told that our target for today is the naval base at Williamshaven Germany. This base is located in Northwestern Germany near the Frisian Islands in the North Sea. At the present time we are informed that the Germans are using this base to supply and repair subs that are causing so much trouble out in the Atlantic. Take off is scheduled for 9 A.M. From all accounts this will be a hot one as there are approximately fifty single fighters and one hundred and ten twin engined jobs, not to mention the flak that is expected. From the briefing room the crew goes through the necessary preparations proceeding a mission. Everything is checked from the glass on the nose of the ship to the very tip of the tail. At 8.30 A.M. Lt. Morales orders the engines to be warmed up and the entire crew assumes their positions. At 850 A.M. we taxi out to the runway and 9.15 we are in the air. As we circle around and round to get information I begin to wonder if we will ever make this trip for after five abortions we should shake off that jinx that seems to be after us. Our group finally gets into formation and we go off to meet the other groups who are going on this run at different locations. We form over England and head out over the North Sea. There are four groups in all and as I look back out of the radio room and see two of them behind us it gives one a great feeling.

After an hour and a half we gain oxygen altitude and put on our masks. It certainly looks as if we are going to go through with this one. We approach the Frisian Islands and all are warned of the possibility of seeing opposition from the air. A few bursts of flak are thrown up at us from the islands but they are not near. Three minutes after this we are over Germany proper and within five minutes the aforementioned fighters show up. I must say that these fighters are vastly different from the ones that I ran into ~~in~~ my first raid. They come in and turn their bellies up to our guns and fall easy victim to many of our gunners. I don't get a shot myself as my gun becomes frozen again. As we approach our target the fighters shy away and bursts of flak begin to appear all around. The barrage is not too thick but it is right on our altitude but either too late or too soon. Soon the cheering voice of the bombardier in bombs away. As we turn away from the target we still have some flak but those pesty fighters begin to swam around

January 27, 1943

Williamshaven Germ

us again. The fight lasts for about twelve minutes and we then find ourselves out in the North Sea and on our way home. The talk over the interphone is one of cheer for so far all has gone well and it looks as if we have beaten the jinx that has been following us. All guns have fired well and the crew in general are greatly surprised at the way these German fighters have behaved. The general opinion is that we run into a bunch of novices of which several no longer exist due to some good shooting. No bombers were lost on this flight and we land at our base at two P.M. We are greeted by our ground crew and are then hustled off to the briefing room to be interrogated and get a sandwich and a cup of coffee. After the interrogation the crew returns to the plane to clean up their guns and prepare to go on another. This makes number two for me and four for the ship. The way things were going I never thought that I would get this one in but now it looks as if we are off. We have given the other planes a big handicap now watch our smoke. At the present time we are six raids behind the ships that came over with us.

February 4, 1943

Emden Germany

We are awakened at 5.30 A.M. and proceed to get dressed and go to breakfast. From there we go to the briefing room and there we find out that today's target is Emden Germany. We are after railroad yards and supplies. These yards have a tremendous capacity for haulage daily and carry a good deal for the subs. We leave the briefing room and go to the ship to install our guns. We don't wipe the oil completely off the guns for we have found out contrary to tech orders that the oil makes them fire better if a thin coat is left on them. I think that we have found the key to stop our abortions. The motors are started up at the proper time and we taxi out to the runway at 9.30 A.M. and takeoff at 9.40 A.M. We form above the field then we fly to pick up ~~the~~ the other groups at different points then we point for the wash which points out into the North Sea. We go over the wash and are now over the North Sea. We begin to climb and are forced to take oxygen. Our plan of flight is to fly to a certain spot in the North Sea then turn to our right towards Germany. Our flight takes us over the Frisian Islands where we get a few bursts of Flak.

February 13, 1943

Hamm Germany

Up bright and early for the briefing which is held at 6.00 A.M. and we are told that the target for today is Hamm Germany. The target is a large marshalling yards at Hamm. There is a tremendous amount of freight traffic over these roads daily. Since most of this traffic is supplies the target is very important. We left the briefing room and took the necessary action previous to a mission. We took off at 9.00 A.M. meet the other groups at different locations then proceed across the North Sea to Germany. As we gain altitude the clouds below become heavier. By the time we get to 20,000 ft. the clouds were so thick that it was almost impossible to see the ship in front of you. The formation became separated and B-17s were all over the sky in Germany. Lt. Dunica and our Pilot Lt. Morales decided that they had enough of this so after 15 minutes of this they peeled off from the formation. After following Lt. Dunica for a bout five minutes we finally sighted land where there should have been water. Our navigator gave the necessary directions to the pilot and we turned around and headed in the opposite direction. Lt. Dunica followed us and before long we were over water. It was a quiet day so far for no fighters could ever have gone into that soup and we were glad to get out of it. About ten minutes out of Germany we spotted a fighter and he made two passes at us. Lt. Morales and Dunica used the evasive action so well that the fighter didn't have a chance to hit us. We fired all around him but he made it for home. By this time we were going like hell our indicated air speed was 275 M.P.H. and it didn't take us too long to get home. We landed at 1.00 P.M. and went to the interrogation office and got the questioning over with. At the interrogation we found out that no B-17s were lost and that one fighter had been shot down by a ball turret man from our squadron Bob. Smith. of Indiana.

February 16, 1943

Saint Naziere France

We are call to attend a briefing at six A.M. and at the briefing we are informed that the target for today is an old friend to the group, yep, that's it St. Naziere France or commonly referred to as flak city. The crew goes through the usual actions previous to a takeoff and everything is in order as we taxi out to the runway to take off. We takeoff at 10.00 A.M. join our group above the field then fly away to meet the other groups. We join and pass over the Southern part of England out to Sea. We are now at oxygen and travel over water for about two hours before the navigator informs us of our whereabouts and to be on the look out for planes. The target is located near the sea side so we don't have much of a run on it as we come from the sea. As we approach the target we become enveloped in bursts of smoke and no one has to tell us that we are in flak. This stuff is really heavy, accurate and close. In fact too close, one can see the red bursts as the shell explodes about us. Smoke from these bursts fill the air, if it weren't for the evasion action of the group and the pilot it would be impossible for a plane to stay in the air. Bombs away is gratefully heard over the interphone for that means that we are on our way out. Our trip back is not over so much water but over a great deal of France. The area below is pretty well stocked with Anti aircraft guns for even after we are away from the main area

Flare still continues to burst about us. As I look out the radio room towards the tail I see two shells burst above us about twenty feet. We had flown between them. I am awakened from my amazement as the pilot warns all over the interphone that fighters are in the vicinity. Right at this time the interphone ceases to function and all positions are put on command. Those fighters out there are not green horns and they come in make a pass at us then go out about 2000 yards run around a bit in a circle then come in again. It is good to hear the rattattat of our guns as the fighters come in and are forced to turn out again. Their tactics finally got them results as they have crippled one bomber and are now giving him a working over. Suddenly The Spook a ship in our squadron that came over from the States peels off from our formation and goes down to help out the ship in distress. The Spook joins the crippled ship in formation as the Germans come in to attack again. It now appears as if all the Germans are concentrating on these two ships and it isn't long before The Spook is seen going down due to the confusion going on about us no one noticed if there were any parachutes out of it. By this time we are over water and it's a tough spot to do any parachuting. The entire crew of the Spook lived in the hut with us and they were a great bunch of boys let's hope they come out all right. For about ten minutes after this the fighters continue to come in again and again then they leave

February 16, 1943

Saint Naziere France.

us and we fly back to our base without any further incident. The main topic of conversation is just what happened to the Spook. The officers and men were great boys and our good friends. The compliment is as follows. Lt. Dunica, Pilot, Lt. Pacey Co-Pilot Lt. Thornton Nav. Lt. Seibal Bombardier, T/ Sgt. Tucker Eng. T/ Sgt. Holland Radio, S/ Sgt. Casio, S/ Sgt. Dew, Sgt. Harper R. Waist. S/ Sgt. Waylor Tail. We landed at our field and went to the interrogation where nothing further is added to information that we already know. After the interrogation we clean the guns then return to the barracks to wait for word of our pals.

February 26, 1943

Willamshaven Germany

We are awakened today at 7.00 A.M. go to the briefing room and find that today's target is Willamshaven Germany, a very important naval base. We go to our planes and takeoff at 9.30 A.M. assemble over the field then takeoff to meet the other groups. We meet the groups at different locations then cross the North Sea in the direction of Germany. We climb to an altitude of 25,000 ft. then turn in off the Sea to Germany and our target. Before we get to the target the fighters come up to meet us. The flak at the target is very heavy and thick. The bombing is right on the target and the results are very good. As we leave the target and Flak area the fighters bore in on us again the boys up here seem to have learnt quite a bit since we made our last raid here for they are no longer green as the paper at that time proclaimed. This time they made sure that they would have some good boys up here. As a result between the Flak and the fighters we lose seven bombers out of the raid. One was seen to blow up in the air, another crash into the sea and four chutes were seen to come out of another. Our top turrett gunner and engineer shot down a Fock Wolf. As for the fighters there were Ju 88s, Me 109s, FW 190s and Me 110s. It appears as if they threw up the entire German Airforce today the fight lasted for an hour and a half. When we got out far enough to Sea we lost the fighters and continued to our home base. Boy oh Boy this was a hot one even I got in quite a few shots a very unusual thing. Well we get to the base go to the interrogation get a mug of cocoa then retire for the night.

February 27, 1943

Brest France

We are awakened at 6.00 A.M. and go to chow then go to the briefing where we are told that today's raid is that often bombed place named Brest France. Our ship is to lead the group with Major Wuzbach as pilot. Morales is the Co-pilot and Swaffer is outranked and remains on the ground. We go from the briefing to the plane and go through the usual preparations prior to flight. Brest is a submarine base and rather heavily defended. We expect to run into plenty of fighters. The Spits are to pull some kind of a diversion raid and also a bunch of B 24s. The Major runs up the engines then we taxi out to the runway then we takeoff at 10.15 A.M. We circle over the field until we have picked up the whole group then we proceed to other spots and form behind other groups. We are the fourth group over the target and as there are only four groups going that makes us last. We go out to sea through the Southern part of England. We are gaining altitude so we don our oxygen masks. We travel over the water for an hour and a half then we approach the point where we are to go into the target. We make our turn then go over land. Suddenly bursts of flak appear around us but the barrage isn't too bad. The clouds are all around look like a difficult day for bombing. Suddenly before us the clouds open up and right there under us is our target. The bombardier shouts with delight as he fixes his sights on the target. We have a beautiful run and some good hits. As we pull off from the target and head for the sea five fighters are seen in the air at one point or another they make a few passes at some of the planes then retire to be seen no more. During the time they were in the sky however one of the planes from the groups that were in front of us has dropped from his formation and is out there by himself as our group catches up with him and passes him the Major slows down the speed of the formation to let the lame duck or disabled ship to join our formation which he does. From here on it becomes just a routine flight and we return to our base with no harm done to any ship. We go to the interrogation eat the usual sandwich then go out to clean the guns and get the ship in order for another one. Obviously the diversion raids put on by the spits and the B 24s made it an easy day for us.

March 4, 1943

Home Germany

We are awakened at 8.00 A.M. to go to the briefing where we are told that the target for today is Hamm-Germany the marshalling yards that we were supposed to have hit on a previous date. The take off was at 1000 A.M. then we assembled above the field then meet the other groups at the appointed places then tookoff across the North Sea. We gradually gained altitude until we were up to 23,000 ft. At this altitude we crossed the German coast at the Frisian Islands but the clouds became so thick that the lead group turned to the right and headed for Holland our secondary target. At this time unknown to the other groups the 91 St. group went on to the original target Hamm by themselves. We crossed the Zeider Sea went over Amsterdam where we had some flak shot at us on to our target which was the docks at Rotterdam Holland. As we hit Rotterdam we were greeted by an intense barrage of Flak. and it was mighty accurate As we made our bombing run I never thought that we would ever get out of the flak it was all around us. I was relieved to hear the bombardier shout Bombs away. Right after this we were hit by Flak on our No. 2 engine. The Engine began to smoke and for a while it appears as if we will have to jump. Capt. Morales shouts for Capt. Mitchell to turn the fire extinguisher on that engine which he does. Capt. Morales keeps the engine running but slow mainly to keep the fighters which are now up in the air from picking us out as a cripple and attack us which they generally do. We also got a flak hit on the tail but nothing to worry about. Finally Capt. Morales feathered No. 2 engine. There were only four fighters in the air and the nearest that one came to us was about 1500 Yds. We returned to our base without any further trouble with the formation. When we went to the interrogation we found out that the 91st. Group went into Hamm and bombed it. They run into plenty of fighter opposition and in the process lost four bombers. Their planes were pretty well holed up when they landed. The weather in general was lousey over the continent today and I don't think that the bombing was the best in the world. Most of the planes in our group got one hole or another as a result of that accurate Flak over Rotterdam.

March-6, 1943

Lorient France

Our crew was on pass today as the group bombed Lorient France where sub pens and supplies are based. From all the accounts the raid was a big success and the target was smashed. The Flak was reported as very inaccurate. However on this raid four ~~Planes~~ were lost. Three Liberators and a Fort. The Fort belonged to our Group. As far as fighters were concerned there were only five. Can't understand how so many planes were lost. The Photographs of the raid showed that the target was hit heavily.

March 8, 1943

Rennes France

STILL ON PASS BUT GROUP WENT ON A RAID TO RENNES FRANCE
THREE PLANES ~~LOST~~ LOTS OF FIGHTERS AND LIGHT FLAK IS THE REPORT.
PLANES ATTACK FROM ALL AREAS SPITS A GREAT HELP, WAS IT GUNNERS
VIEWED SEVERAL DOG FIGHTS. LT AUSTIN HAD CLOSE CALL AS A GERMAN
PLANE OR FIGHTER HEADED DIRECTLY AT HIS PLANE, HE MADE A SHARP BLANK
TURN AND THE GERMAN FIGHTER MISSED THEM. OUR GROUP LOST NO PLANES

MARCH 10 1943 RAID ON ROUEN NO LOSSES I AM
STILL OUT ON PASS

MARCH 18 1943

STILL ON PASS TARGET TODAY WAS ARMENS FRANCE
NO PLANES LOST FLAK WAS LIGHT.

March 12, 1943

Rouen France

Today we are awakened at 7.00 A.M. to go to chow then to attend the briefing at 8.00 A.M. We are told that today's target is Rouen France. This is a railroad center and is an outlet for U Boat supplies to the Southern part of France. At the present time there are quite a bit of supplies there. We are to first make a diversion then go into the target. The diversion is to take us in the general direction of Holland then back into England then from Beachhead into our target. We takeoff at 11.00 A.M. Form above the field then pick up the other groups at previously appointed places and proceed on our diversion. We get up to oxygen and we are soon over the Channel We fly over to the coast of France and watch the Spitfire escort make crazy patterns with their vapor trails. This reminds me of a little boy thumbing his nose to antagonize his enemy. Well we do not see any enemy fighters. We have now completed our mission as far as the diversion is concerned and we are now at our turning point. Right at this moment the electric heated suit of the ball turret gunner has gone out so the pilot decides to turn back and we proceed to leave the formation and go home. We get home to our base at 12.30 P.M. and all are rather downhearted seeing that we had gone so far and not being able to complete the mission. A half an hour later the rest of the group returns from the raid. After they landed we found out that they seen no fighters and that the flak was very light. No one was hurt and all in all it was a pretty good show.

March 13, 1943

Armens France ✓

TODAYS TARGET ARMENS FRANCE GROUPS FORM + FLY
UP + DOWN ENGLISH COAST THEN MAKE A RUN FOR ARMENS FRANCE
OVERTARGET FLAK IS HEAVY BUT INACCURATE MOSTLY
BURSTING BELOW OUR GROUP FOUR FEW (GERMAN PLANES) SHOT DOWN

WE HAD ABOUT 100 SPITS WHICH KEPT MOST GERMAN PLANES

AWAY

March 18, 1943

Vergesack Germany

Van R. White the chief operations clerk awakens us at 6 A.M. to attend the briefing for today's mission. We go to the briefing and find out that the target for today is Vergesack Germany. This is a big submarine and supply base North East of Bremen. We leave the briefing and go to our ship to get everything in shipshape condition. We were told at the briefing that we could expect to run into about 75 single engine planes and about 125 twin engine jobs. We taxi out to the runway and in due turn takeoff and form over our field. After forming the group flies away to meet the other groups at various points. When all the groups finally form 120 B-17s are counted by the crew. This is the largest force that we have ever taken over any single target. We fly out over the English coast and head over the North Sea. One hour from the German coast we start to gain altitude and all are forced to don their oxygen masks. Before long we pass over the Frisian Islands and are now on our way to our target. It will take us about a half an hour to reach our target from this point. Ten minutes after we pass this point we are attacked by enemy planes. At first they circle around us without making any passes, then they start to bore in. There are all types of enemy ships in the air, Me 109s -FW 190s Me 110s and even a few Ju 88s. The navigator is heard saying over the interphone that we are at our I.P. and before long that old crew of

flak ahead is heard. Flak is hardly the word for as we go through it the smoke from the bursts in the sky reminds one of a poker dot dress. After what seems like years the bombardier shouts over the interphone Bombs Away and we are still engulfed by this never ending flak. Right after this the bomb bay doors are closed and the door to the radio room suddenly opens and into the radio room stumbled Carrol our ball turret man. At first observation he appears as if his hands are frozen. I quickly grab his oxygen line and fasten it to an outlet in the radio room, plug in the cord of his electric suit to a socket, and wrap his hands in a blanket that I had in the radio room. The pilot informs us that one of our engines is useless as far as getting power but he is going to keep it going so that the fighters wont pick on us with a feathered prop, and says that everything is O.K.. We suddenly take a sharp bank to the right and are out of the flak. As one looks back and sees the other B I7s following us going through that dotted sky, one has to stop and marvel at how in the devil they ever do it. As soon as we get out of the flak area the fighters once again bore in on us. They make pass after pass and all this time we have no ball turret. These attacks last until we pass out over the Frisian Islands and are far out to sea. It is then and only then that we begin to take account of what went on. After we get out of altitude the pilot tells us that we only have two engines as two of them went out over the target but that everything seemed o.k. and that we stood a good chance of making it. After that bit of news we find out Carrols story. It seems

March 18, 1943

Vergesack -- Germany

that right in the middle of that flak area the door to the ball turret opened and the prop wash swung the turret around so that the door was facing the back of the ship. This action or momentum threw Carrol out of the turret so that his head and back were out of the turret in the air at 26,000ft. The fact that his foot was wedged in the gun mechanism and that he was able to get a grip with his left hand on some object inside the turret saved him from being tossed out of the turret completely into the air with no parachute on. He climbed back into the turret took a couple of shots at an enemy plane and tried to close the door of the turret behind him. This he couldn't do so he croched in the turret as far as he could and turned the turret so that he could come up into the plane. He turned it as far as it could go for the door being opened would let the turret only come up half way. This permitted him very little room to come up into the plane but somehow or other with no oxygen he made it. Looks like we have had everything today. We keep up with the formation and soon cross the English coast. We have two engines feathered on one side #1 And 2. Suddenly the bombardier comes dashing from the front of the ship thru the bomb bay and tells us to throw everything loose out of the ship. All the crew starts throwing belts of ammunition and expended shells and everything that is loose out of the plane in order to lighten the

plane. After this is done the pilot tells all to stand by that we may have to jump as the gasoline is running low. We pass over a field and the pilot tries to contact it on the radio but doesn't get thru to them. At this time all the crew starts to check each others parachute to make sure that all is in order. The navigator Capt. Miller and the pilot spot our field off to our right and we head for it. Planes are buzzing all around it and Capt. Morales keeps calling the tower that he must land as he has no gas to run around on. There is so much traffic on the air that he can't get through so he signals them with his light and starts to come in for a landing. He orders all the crew to assemble in the radio room and prepare for a crash landing as he believes that our left hand landing tire is flat. We make our approach to the runway then level off to land. After what seems endless moments we feel the plane hit the runway gently as though nothing was the matter then suddenly after a short roll the ship begins to shiver and shake then it does a gentle spin to the left just a bit off the runway and comes to a welcomed stop. Each and every one of the crew thanks Capt. Morales deeply for this wonderful performance then the crowd of crewmen, sightseers, newsmen and picture men begin to swarm around the plane. After several picture shots we take off for the interrogation room for a cup of coffee and a sandwich get interrogated then go to our barracks for a well earned rest.

March 28, 1943

Rouen France

At the briefing today we are told that the target for today is the marshalling yards at Rouen France. The ship was loaded with 500 pounders. The group tookoff at 1100 A.M. assembled over the field then picked up the other groups that were to be in the raid. The weather is beautiful as we climb onwards and upwards to 24,000ft. where by this time we all have on our oxygen masks. We make a diversion run in the direction of Holland return to England then make the real run for our target. We have a Spitfire escort on our diversion and half way into the target

March 31, 1943

Rotterdam Holland

The time for briefing today is 9.00 A.M. and we are told that the target for today is the docks at Rotterdam. So far the weather is lousy. We go out to the ship and go through the usual actions prior to a mission. We are supposed to take off at 11.00 A.M. but the ground haze is so bad that it is put back an hour. At 12.00 AM we taxi out and takeoff. Our position is lead ship of the last element, we circle over the fieldgaining formation. There is a heavy cloud formation above us that we will have to go through. Upon seeing this I put on my parachute and I see the lead ship disappear into the clouds. Suddenly we too are enveloped by one of nature's wonders and to airmen a constant nuisance. Visibility is about 25 to 50 yards. These clouds started at 6000 ft. and we are now at 9000 ft. At this time I heard a loud noise like a machine gun and for the life of me I was wondering who was so dumb as to be firing in this soup. Suddenly The Tail gunner S/ Sgt. Blake exclaimed over the interphone that some ship had collided with our wing ship and that it had ripped the wing ship right down the top to the tail. Both ships disappeared in the soup and Blake didn't see anyone bail out. Blake said that the ship that caused the collision just missed us by about twenty feet. If Oxrider hadn't climbed he was the left wing man he would have been hit also. Well the soup or clouds start to become lighter and

we begin to feel better. On our left a B 17 is seen heading for us. Hinds points his top turret at it and he sees the bombardier waving his hands frantically nevertheless our pilot has to make a steep turn to the right to avoid being hit. So far this has been a swell way to start out on a mission. It's bad enough to have the enemy after you but when you have to watch your own boys that's bad. Planes are all over the sky and it seems as if they will never get together. However after some time things shape up and we go on to meet our Spitfire escort. We pick up the escort and make a diversion raid towards France. Nearing the coast of France we turn around and go back to England. Upon reaching England we turn around and cross the channel to make a run on our target. As we reach the coast of Holland we run into flak which bursts around and about us but never too close to really bother us. All the crew remembers that it was at this point that one of our motors were hit before by flak. The bombays open and the bombardier shouts bombs away and both Hinds and I take pictures of the bombing through the bombay. We make a large circle over the town to skip the flak and after a long time we finally pass over the Dutch coast and start our way back. There are about six enemy fighters in the air and they make no attempts upon our group. The other groups get a little working over. It isn't too long before we pick up our Spitfire escort and they are driven away. Col.

March 31, 1943

Rotterdam Holland

Romig the leader of our group decides to get under the overcast as we head back for England. About half way across the channel we spot a convoy and in back of it a submarine which is crash diving upon seeing us. One of the planes of the group drops out of formation and goes off in that direction. He probably has some bombs as the rest of us are empty. It's a great chance hope he gets it. We return back to the base at about 2000 ft. and it is very bad for visibility. We make the field and in due turn land and are interrogated at the briefing room. When we get back to the squadron we find out that three of the boys in that collision mentioned earlier from our squadrons ship were thrown out of the ship and parachuted to safety. Two fellows from the other ship got out also. All the rest were killed as they never did get out of the planes. The ship which crashed into our ship had 20 raids to its credit and so did the whole crew. Testoni who just made combat and this was his first ride was thrown out of the plane. Where or when God only knows but he found himself floating thru space and more or less in a vain hope reached for his rip cord on his parachute and pulled it. A few moments later to his surprise he was floating downward with the parachute fully opened above him and he finally reached the ground. He wasn't even hurt. The Radio man was thrown out of the radio room in much the same manner. His Name was League. He made the same attempt as Testoni did and his chute opened. He had a few scratches nothing bad. The third man Novak who was the right waist gunner opposite Testoni was also thrown out of the ship. He doesn't remember much about the whole thing as he was hurt pretty badly. He had three or four cuts on the head and his left ankle broken and four toes of that same foot broken. His right foot was banged up but not broken. All he remembered was that he found himself floating down to earth with his parachute open above him. He landed in a field and this added to his difficulties as his chute was opened and it tried to drag him along the ground. A farmer came to his assistance released him from his chute made a splint for his leg then took him to his house where he was later picked up and brought to the hospital. All other members of the two ships were killed and there is going to be a funeral held for them in London within a day or so. No bombers were lost on this raid except for these two that cracked up.

April 4, 1943

PARIS (Renault Mfg, Co. Tanks)

We are awoken at 7.00A.M. to go to briefing at 8 A.M. At the briefing we are told that today's target is the former Renault Mfg. Co. In peace time its production was automobiles today it is used by the Germans to manufacture tanks. It has taken nine months for them to repair it after the English raid at that time. After the necessary preflight preparations we taxi out and take our place in line and eventually takeoff. The weather is not too good for it is very cloudy. The group gets above the clouds and then we form and proceed to other points to pick up the other groups going on the raid. We have B24s on this trip and it is their job to do a diversion. We also pick up a spitfire escort and proceed to the Dutch coast. We then leave the spits and the B24s and return to England where we make our turn for the French coast and a run for our target. Once we cross the channel the weather improves wonderfully and as we go onto France it is a beautiful day. We go right by Rouen scene of former visits undisturbed to our target. There right smack to the right of us is the Eiffel Tower famous landmark. Paris is right under us and at the time I begin to wonder what is going on down there. At this time the bombardier warns all that we are about to go on the bombing run I opened the radio room door leading to the bomb bay for at the time the bombs drop I have to turn on the camera which we are carrying. To my surprise one of the bombs has become loose and it is lying on top of the lowest one. First the engineer tries to inform the bombardier of what has happened but is so excited that no one can quite make him out. I find myself as bad when I see the spinner beginning to move. I grabbed the spinner with my hand to stop it and I held onto it until the bombs dropped. As the bombs dropped the target was no longer in view for it was a mass of smoke from the planes that were in front of us.

I turned on the camera and watched our bombs hit into the center of the smoky area. Immediately there was a large flame from the ground for we had hit an oil tank. There was a few bursts of flak but none were near. As we turned away from the target to go home we were attacked by fighters. Looks as if they sent up their whole airforce. There must be at least sixty fighters all around us. Today they are trying something different they are attacking us in formation sometimes four and other times in sixes. They stagger themselves but their 20 mm. shells are all around us. As this is going on the pilot suddenly shouts over the interphone for cripes sake they are dropping bombs on us. Some IO9s were about three or four thousand feet above us and sowing their bombs like corn about us. The bombs can be seen as they drop and must weigh about 100 to 200 lbs. One bomb burst close to the leader of our flight and one burst close enough to us to toss us around in the air roughly. Two B I7s were seen to go down in flames as a result of this unusual fight. Several fighters were knocked down. After fifteen minutes of this slam bang drag em out affair our spitfire escort comes

April 4, 1943

Paris (Renault Mfg.. Co.)

into view and then the fun begins. The spits really put the fws And IO9s on the run. There are several dogfights going on and ~~we~~ become spectators instead of the hunted. After ten minutes of fighting the skies are clear of enemy fighters. The spits continue to protect us and after we leave the coast of England to go inland they leave us. Boy oh boy were we glad to see them when they appeared and we owe a lot to these boys who flew them. We proceed home ward to our base and after encountering some very dirty weather which caused us to get lost for a while we arrive at our base and finally land. The ground crew as usual are ready to greet us with a smile and a warm welcome. The next step is to interrigation then to bed.

April 5, 1943

Antwerp Belgium

We are briefed at 1000 AM. And we find out that our target for today is the former Ford's Plant located at Antwerp Belgium, now used by the Germans to build tanks and trucks. Our ship is leading the group today and our group is the third to go over the target. Major Wugbach is piloting our ship. We takeoff at 1,00 P.M. after taxiing to the runway. We circle the field in order to give the ships in our formation a chance to formate. We get in formation and then proceed to a predetermined location where we meet all the other groups. We proceeded towards the south east part of England and pick up a squadron of Spitfires who are to escort us on our diversion. We head toward the French coast and as we approach it we turn back to England. We travel up the English coast and then head out to sea again this time to Belgium where our target is located. We go over the Belgium coast at 26,000 feet and it is not too cold and it is also a beautiful day. At the Belgium coast we have a few bursts of flak shot up, at us but it is not very heavy and far from accurate. About ten minutes before we hit the target we are attacked by enemy fighters Focke Wolves and Me109s. As we hit our I.P. I opened the radio room door leading to the bomb bay to watch the bombs drop. Hinds our engineer is also looking out the bomb bay with a camera in his hands to get some pictures. We went over the target and the bombs didn't drop due to some mechanical failure of the bombsight. The bombardier dropped them on some other target. No Flak was seen around the target and the target itself was soundly pounded. After we left the Belgium coast our tail gunner could still see a high column of smoke. After we left the target the fighters once again came in, and kept it up until we were far out to sea. They came in the same as yesterday one after the other firing in volleys and attacking us from above with bombs. Our group is not attacked very heavily as the ones in front are. They really are taking a lot of punishment. Two bombers are seen to have gone down in flames and two others were forced down. We have our usual toll of fighters again.

April 16, 1943

Lorient France

Our squadron is not scheduled to go on this mission. Seems that so many planes are arriving with crews that each squadron now is built up to a strength of twelve planes. In the future one squadron of the group will have to sit idly by as we are to do today and watch the others takeoff. Well the group takes off at 11.00 A.M. for Lorient France to attack the submarine pens repair and supply shops there. Although I or our crew has never been there this is a tough nut to crack for down there are some good Flak shooters and those daring Yellow nosed fighters. We wait for the return of the bombers and eight out of the sixteen that took off return at 6.P M. This looks pretty bad at the time. Some time later we find out that seven of them had to land and be refueled before coming home to the base. The other ship McDonalds one from our squadron got shot up so bad that they had to leave it at a base in Southern England. I forgot to mention that this was the only ship to go from our squadron to round out the group. The returning crews reported that the Flak wasn't too bad but that the fighters were in rare form. McDonalds ship was disabled after having her two engines shot out. The crew threw everything movable out of the ship on their return over the water to England. The Engineer was trying to jettison the ball turret out of the ship when four F.W. 190s attacked them. The ball turret gunner who was in the nose at the time was helping the officers up front unload all the ammunition and guns. All the guns on the ship were thrown out with the ammunition except the top turret. The ball turret gunner jumped into the top turret at the alarm of enemy fighters and shot one down. The other three turned away and went home to their bases in France. Mc Donald SOS ed three times and the Air Sea Rescue sent a ship out to meet him but he made it back to England alright. An account of enemy ships destroyed is not our as yet.

April 17, 1943

Focke Wolfe Plant Bremen Germany

We are awakened at 6.00 A.M. today to go to chow and then to the briefing room. Looks like a long journey today seeing we are awakened so early. At the briefing we are told that the target for today is the Focke Wolfe airplane plant at Bremen Germany. Boy oh boy this will sure be a hot one to go through, from where I sit it looks like another Vergesak, for in order to get to Vergesak we had to go through Bremen and a sea of Flak. So putting two and two together you get Flak all a mode, by attacking Bremen proper say nothing of the defenses they must have around their prize pigeons hatching nest. We leave the briefing and go through the regular actions preceding a normal raid. Besides the flak to be expected there may be 75 single engine planes and anywhere from 100 to 155 twin engine jobs. Stations are at 9.00 AM Hinds and Westfall the engineer and Waist gunner are a little late but show up in time to have their guns razor sharp for today's party. Capt. Morales warms up the engines and in due time we taxi out to the runway to take off. The first plane off the ground is at (.55 A.M.) and we takeoff at 1013 A.M. We circle over the field get into formation then the group as a whole flies to meet the other groups that are to take part in today's raid. We all meet and each group fills into its allotted place. We are flying a new formation today, the first group up the second down and a new idea the third on top of all. Of course each group is in back of the other so that we will not be dropping bombs on each other. We fly out into the North Sea on what in

our opinion is a mighty mission for even if we don't live to see what we accomplished we will at least have the satisfaction of stopping the production of these pesty planes a little bit. We fly over the North Sea for an hour and a half then we come to the Frisian Islands the doorway to Germany. we pass over the Islands and fly into Germany proper. All the crew are on the alert for fighter opppsition as it may come anytime. We continue to fly for almost a half an hour then the warning that fighters are in the neighborhood. We aren't far from the targetas the first bombers of the group are beginning to feel the first effects of the falk. As we are the last ships to go over the target the leading ships are far ahead of us. After a while the top gunner Hinds exclaims Holy Cripes do we have to go through that sea of ink in front of us. As one looks in front of us all one can see is a cloud of black. As a matter of fact the leading planes can no longer be seen through it. Common sence would make one avoid it but bur objective lies somewhere in that mess of black cloud and bursting flak shells. Before one has a chance to think of just what it will be like we are in the midst of it and are surrounded by this smoke and bursts of Flak. We are doing evasive action while trying to reach a

April 17, 1943

Focke Wolfe Plant, Bremen-Germany

our objective. The bombardier is using A.F.O.E. and soon the ship levels our and we are on our final run. The seconds seem like hours before that always welcomed voice of the bombardier shouts Bombs Away. I turned on the camera at the same time and we took a sharp turn off the target to the right towards France and we are on our way home again. The groups in front of us are being attacked constantly and as soon as we emerge from the target area they start after us. There are Me. 109 FS. Ju 88s F.W. 190s and Me 110s in the air against us. The bombardiers nose gun is useless as he can only fire one shot at a time and the Right Waist Gunners gun is out due to a ruptured cartridge. My gun in the Radio Room will only shoot a few shots at a time then the cover plate opens up. I and the other positions miss several good shots due to the gun failures. They, the Germans, make several passes at us and they really do come in close, in fact too darn close at times. Several B 17s are seen out of formation and they are obviously in trouble and each time one goes out of formation the Germans really work him over. As a matter of fact they swam over a 17 like bees. Before they knock out the 17s several of them fall victims to the blazing guns of the Forts. This fight goes on for an hour with all give and take from both sides. Finally this nightmare ends and the last fighter is seen trailing us then head for home. The crew are told to remain on the alert for even though we are out over the North Sea we may be attacked again. It takes us two hours to fly over the North Sea before we sight the shores of England. The weather is a bit hazy as we return and we come in low. As a matter of fact Capt. Morales and the ships in back of him almost touch the ground they are so low. After due time we arrive over the field and land. Here we are picked up and go to the interrogation room. After the interrogation a cup of cocoa and a sandwich we take off to clean our guns and rest up for tomorrow. We lost 16 B 17s today. 6 from the 91st group and 10 from the 306th group. The total account of enemy planes has not yet been accounted for but it is believed to be fifty or so. Well thank God that's another one over with.

May 13, 1943

Mealute Airplane Factory France

Well today I am up bright and early and the early part of the day doesn't look too good for a raid. However there is a rumor that there is to be one. Sure enough we go to a briefing at 10.30 A.M. and it is told to us that the target for today is the airplane factory at Mealute France. This factory is camouflaged very well and it is turning out quite a number of planes. We are to have ten Squadrons of Spitfires and two squadrons of Thunderbolts. Well we leave the briefing room and the takeoff is scheduled for 1.30 P.M. After spending the morning getting ready we warm up the engines and then taxi out to takeoff which we proceed to do. The group climbs to 14,000 ft directly above the field through heavy clouds. We get above the clouds then don our oxygen masks. We are going to be at oxygen for four hours. Three groups form here then we proceed to go down towards London where we will pick up two other groups. After we pick up the two groups we then fly out into the channel to pull a diversion raid. We fly a triangular diversion for a half an hour and we find ourselves back over England once again. From here we head East into France and our target. As we start across the channel we pick up our escort which consists of Spitfires and Thunderbolts. We are at twenty four thousand feet and the weather is great. After awhile we reach our I.P. and are now on our run to our target. So far there is no fighters from the enemy. As we go over the target we get very little Flak and the Bombardiers get a swell run. The target is smashed as I look out the bomb bay and snap the pictures. As we leave the target we are attacked by F.W. 190's and they hit two B-17's and each of them blew up in the air. Our escort is right on their tails however and we experience very little trouble from them. I seen 15 Spits dive on one F.W. and he went down into the sea. Some other fighters are also knocked down. The weather is grand as it is only 25 below Zero today and to us that is rather warm. Well there is very little to add to this story except that Capt. Nolans ship was hit by flak and the waist gunner Sgt. Isham was hit in the leg and it left a four inch gash in his leg. We flew back across the channel and thence to our base where we landed in order then went to the briefing room had a snack was interrogated left and cleaned our guns which we had only test fired. We expect one tomorrow so it looks like an early turn-in for all.

May 14, 1943

Keil Germany.

Unlike yesterday we are awakened at 6.05 A.M. and are told that there is a briefing at 6.00 A.M. One would have to be pretty good to get there on time in that case so the briefing is held up until we get there at 6.20. A.M. This is fairly fast work and all are wiping the sleepy heads from their eyes as they march into the briefing room. From where I sit I see that the target for today is someplace in Germany. To my surprise as well as everyone else there we are told that today's target is Keil Germany. Personally I thought that Keil was out of the range of a B 17. This is an important submarine base on the Baltic Sea. From all reports the Flak to be encountered will be terrific. There is a Flak belt of 20 miles in depth. Stations at 7.30 A.M. and takeoff is scheduled at 9.00 A.M. We leave the briefing and go out to our ships to get prepared for a mighty mission. No there is to be no escort as yesterday as a matter of fact this will be a rugged affair. Finally the motors are started and we go into the ship which after due time taxis out and takes off at 9.05 A.M. We form over our field at five thousand feet then we proceed to other points and pick up other groups which when finally assembled amount to six groups or about one hundred and twenty five ships. Some of these ships are B24s. We crawl up the coast of England and finally takeoff over the North Sea towards our destination. At 11.00 A.M. we gain altitude and are forced to don our oxygen masks. We cross the German coast at 11.30 A.M. and are now well on our way. A few bursts of Flak are thrown at us at this point but this is inaccurate. From here on we have to sweat out that Flak belt. Some how or other we never do hit it and at 11.55 A.M. enemy fighters are seen, which attack the last two groups. Our bombs are away on the target at 12.02 P.M. and they are right smack in the middle of it. As we turn away from the target all I can see is one big mass of smoke. The subs of which there were eight under construction and three cruisers certainly are

smashed to bits or very badly damaged. Sheds there are also one big inferno. Now there are fighters all over the place. Me 109s Fw. 190s Me 110s all take part in the fight. I seen six of them attack a B 24 which strayed from his formation and they really gave him a going over. Finally one FW 190 got in very close and the next thing to be seen was the B 24 blowing up and to top it off it also blew up the FW which was attacking it. Four chutes were seen coming out of the B 24 and some of the crew said that the Germans fired on the boys in the chutes. Fighters attack again and again some times you can even see the pilots in the attacking ships. They attack from all directions and everyone shoots up a storm. Carroll our ball turret man got a Me 109 which tried to get us from below. Blak and I put several bullets into those that attacked us from the rear. The Flak over the target is very inaccurate yet the fighters pay up for it. The firing is so hot from my position that I shoot off both antennas. When the

May 14, 1943

Keil Germany (Cont)

radio roomfires up a storm then you can see just what the others did. Two B I7's were seen going down one in a flat spin the other in a violent spin. No chutes were seen coming out of either ship. Well this lasted for an hour and then we were about fifteen minutes out to sea, (North) on our way home. The fighters left us and by that time we were at 12,000 ft. so all took off their oxygen masks and more or less relaxed but keeping our eyes peeled in the sky. Suddenly out of no where a Me IIO dove at a B I7 which was straggling behind the last group and before anyone knew it the B I7 was in the water. The ME IIO tookoff for home much to the pleasure of all and the rest of the journey homeward was one of watchful waiting one on the sky the other for the welcomed sight of land called England. After three hours we cross the coast of England and it is a great relief to all. From here on all take it easy and before long we are at our base where we land and go to interrogation.

May 15, 1943

Wilhelmshaven - Germany

Wow here it is 3.45 A.M. and we are awakened to attend a breifing at 4.30 A.M. Looks like another Germany raid. Yep when we ar e breifed we find out that the target fo~~r~~ today is the neval base at Wilhelmshaven.

May , 1943

Wilheimshaven Germany Con't.

INTERROGATION

We go to the ~~BRIEFING~~ and the boys get all the congratulations ARE BRIEFED then we return to the plane and clean the guns. At the briefing I found out that a radio operator T/Sgt. Dasher was hit by a 30 calibre shell in the chest and that he was in serious condition. Another radio operator was hit by a small piece of flak while another got some aluminum in hit heel as a result of flak. Neither of the later cases were serious. A call went out for blood donors for dasher and within ten minutes the hospital was crowded.

May 17, 1943

L orient France

Well here we are again up at six A.M. to attend another briefing. Boy we are going like hell now. We get up and go to the briefing and we are told that the target for today's Lorient. Important sub bases, slips and supplies are located here. We are to have a fighter support after we leave the coast of France. The escort will be Spit fives. We leave the briefing room and prepair our ship for the mission. We taxi out to the runway and in turn take off and form over the field, from here we proceed to pick up the other groups that are to participate in this raid. This is done and we gain altitude over the Southern part of England and are forced to don our oxygen masks. We pass out over the coast of England and are on our way. In about a half hour we are over France. Suddenly for some reason or other I happened to take my glance from the window and look at the other side of the radio room and to my surprise Carroll our ball turrett operator is sprawled out on the floor. I get up and grab him but he is out like a light. I look at his oxygen outlet and see that he didn't turn on the oxygen. I immediately turned it up to 35,000 and got some blankets and wrapped him up. Looked like he froze his hand also. After working over him for about five minutes he finally responded as he opened up his eyes. For awhile I thought we would be forced to turn back. but we keep going on. Ere long that old familiar cry of Flak to our right or left comes up and we are now within striking distance of our target. Suddenly the cry of enemy planes rings out over the interphone and all are on the alert. Planes began to appear all around us. Most of them were Focke Wolves. At one time there was an attack by 32 Fw190s on the group behind us and for awhile it looked like a fourth of July celebration with the bursts of the 20 MM. As a result of this attack two B I7s are hit badly and go down. Yet the group gets its share of fighters. Our group is attacked about six times all the attacks come from the tail. I seen one of them shot down by our group as he bore in on us. Some others were also seen to be hit and go down as they pressed home their attacks. As I looked out the hatch

I seen several other enemy planes go down. The Flak was above us sometimes as high as 28,000 ft as we were at 26,000 ft. Occasionally a close burst rackles near us and one sees the resulting puff of smoke. The bombay doors open and after a long run the bombs are away and I snap a few pictures. The fighters are still around and one B I7 is hit so bad that his # 1 and 4 engines are on fire. Two of the crew are seen to leave the ship, which a little later some how or other managed to put out the fires and get into formation, and get back to England. About five minutes from the coast we loose the fighters. At the coast of France we pick up our Spitfire escort and we sail merrily home and after crossing the Bay of Biscay we sight the coast of England and proceed homeward to our base which we reach after five hours since we took off. We finally land and go to the interrogation Room where we get coffee and doughnuts get interrogated then go to clean our guns, for another day.

May 18, 1943

Keil-- Germany

Oh my aking back here we are up again at 3.45 A.M. to attend another breifing if this keeps up we will be on the Winter schedule once again. Well we attend the breifing and much to everyones discoust we are told that the target for today is the naval base at Keil Germany. We made a visit to this smae spot a few days ago but our target for today is a different location. From all reports the raid on this base the other day was a complete success according to the R.A.F. Well we leave the breifing room and go out to the old Sky Wolf to take her on her twenty fourth mission over enemy territory. All the preflight arrangements are made and at 8.05 we taxi out to the runway and in due time takeoff and form above the field. From this point we proceed on our course and eventually pick up all the groups that are to go on this mighty mission. We leave the coast of England and are once again on our way. Our position in the formation is number four. All goes well until we are forty minutes from the German Coast. For no reason at all all our engines loose manifold pressure while we are at 17,000 ft. Capt. Morales orders Lt. Swaffer to let down the landing gear and pull out of the formation. This we did and started on our way home when for no reason at all the manifold pressure returned and the engines began to act normal once more. Capt. Morales turn The Sky Wolf around and asked the Navigator how long before the group would reach the German Coast. The navigator said a half an hour so we started out to catch them. The old baby sure did put out for we were climbing and gaining on them all the time. We finally reached one of the groups just before we hit the coast and started to form with them. From this point Capt. Morales spied our group and made for them where we tried to get into our Squadron. Planes were all over the sky and we were almost hit by the ship Yankee Doodle Dandy piloted by Lt. Oconnor, as we tried to get into the formation he decided to come down not knowing that we were there. Our vertical fin almost scrapped his ball turret. By this time we are over North West Germany and well on our way to the target. This is a new one on me for we are flying a new position to me as we are on the

right hand side of the formation all by ourselves. We reach our I.P. and instead of being the second group over the target we find that we are the second last. By this time fighters are all around us and there is a battle royal. The old flak makes its appearance and there are a few bursts that crackle right above our tail, and I can plainly see that cherry center that comes with a close one. Finally after what seems hours the bombardier opened the bomb bay doors and shouts bomb away, then closes them once again. From here on all hell breaks loose for the fighters are all over us. They seem to pick on our group especially. Most of the attacks come from the rear and the tail gunner and myself are really putting them out. After about twenty five minutes of firing the tail gunner calls over the interphone that he is all out of ammunition. As most of the others are almost out and the battle is still

May 18, 1943

Keil Germany Con't.

hot as the hot stove league in the Winter time Capt. Morales calmly answers that it looks like he will have to sit there and sweat it out. Sweat he did for from that point onward it seems that the Germans got wise that our tail guns were out. One Me 110 Stood out in the rear for the next fifteen minutes and everytime the pilot would manover the tail of the ship so that Hinds or I could get a shot at him he would move over right in the blind spot again. He had a few friends join him but they being a bit more adventurous came in and peeled off again with a few slugs of lead. Yet there that Me 110 still stayed out there and continued to spray slugs in our direction. I shot off an antenna again trying to get that son of a gun but he was too wise and stayed just out of our range. The right waiste gunner Hill by name shot up our stabilizer trying to get the enemy ships that came by the tail. As a result he shot up four boxes of ammunition the left waist three boxes the upper turret shot all of his up and had to borrow some from the bombardier. At this time I am firing only a few bursts as I am also running low. By this time we are off the coast of Germany and on our way home after what I believe was one of the longest trips that we have made so far. Fortunately for us the fighters take off and the skies are just full of friendly planes once again thank God. After we get down from oxygen altitude Capt. Morales informs us that from the target area on we only had three engines putting out and that one of them wasn't much good. Well once again we make that long journey across the North Sea and cross the merry shires of England and make our way home to our base. When we landed I learned that T/Sgt. Dasher radio operator on the Yankee Doodle Dandy was hit by a thirty caliber slug in the chest and penetrated his lung, another radio operator was hit by flak and both were taken to the hospital. Dasher was later taken to another hospital for an operation. At the interrogation room we were told by the ball turret gunner of the Jersey Bounce II that he couldn't understand how we were in the air with all the 20 MM cannon shells that were bursting about us. After the interrogation we are all one sad looking lot as we are all tired .

May 4/1943

Wilhelmshaven Germany

We are once again awakened early to attend the briefing for today's raid. At six A.M. we attend the briefing and find out that the target for today is once again the naval base at Wilhelmshaven Germany. Our crew goes from the briefing room out to our ship the Sky Wolf to get our gear. This is one raid that she isn't going with us and all are more or less rather disappointed, even the face of the ship looks sad. Well she has carried the crew through 24 trips over enemy held territory say nothing of our training in the States and our trip across the Atlantic, all on the original engines, now she can have a well deserved rest. We get all our gear together and put it all on a truck and go over to the 427th to take one of their planes. We find out that she has 24 missions on her also. For an old ship she is in very good condition even got some improvements. At 9 A.M. we taxi out to the runway and in turn take off. We are leading our squadron today, sort of fitting seeing that this is Capt. Morales 25th raid. After we takeoff we start to form above the field. The clouds are so low that we have to fly through them in formation which eventually splits up. After several moments we get above the clouds and we now find ourselves at 14,000 ft. We run into other delays as we head for our target. Other groups experienced the same trouble that we did and as a result by the time we form all the groups we are a half an hour late going out of England. That cloud formation is just as thick half way across the North Sea as when we started. From here on however they begin to get thinner as we approach Germany. One hour from the coast we don our oxygen masks and begin to gain altitude. We finally level off at 25,000 ft. We pass over the Frisian Islands and are now on our way to our objective. The pilot calls over the interphone that there are enemy fighters at 12 o'clock low and keep our eyes open. From here on it is nothing but attack after attack by IO9s and FW-190s with a few IJ0s thrown in. As we get into the Flak area the fighters loose some of their tenacity. The flak is wide of us but fairly accurate for height. The bombardier shouts

bombs away and closes the bombay doors and we turn out to sea. Here the fighters once again bore in on us and keep pressing their attacks. They come in so close that if one put out his hand that he could touch them. Today on their ME IO9s they seem to be using a new gun for the wing has a big bulch of flame and smoke as they fire. What ever they are firing has a bigger burst to it than the twenty milimeter. As one looks out at these enemy planes they remind one of the spitfire escort we got a look at once in a while. We finally travel far enough out to sea that we loose them and are once a gain on our way across the North Sea to home. We have to get down to three thousand feet as the visibility is poor. After that long trip across the North Sea we pass over the coast of England and before long we are at our base. As we land there are four members of the crew who are very happy as this completes their 25th mission and are thereby grounded. These are Capt. Morales. Pilot T/Sgt. Hinds Engineer S/Sgt. Hill Right Waist Gunner and S/Sgt. Blake Tail Gunner

June 11, 1943

Bremen --- Germany

The briefing for today's raid is at 10.30 A.M. Upon looking at the map in the briefing room one becomes discouraged for it is easily seen that the target for today is Bremen Germany. This the spot that we lost 16 bombers on our last raid here. Well let's hope for the best. The take off time is set for 2.40 PM Well as I stated before my regular crew with the exception of Lt. Swaffer Sgt. Carroll, Ssgt. Westfall and myself, have completed their 25 missions and are off combat and possibly on their way home. Operations officer Lt. Hungerford placed me on LCapt. Nolan's ship as radio operator. This raid is Capt. Nolan's 25th raid and his radio operator finished his 25th last week Westfall is going with Lt. Mac Donald's ship and Carroll is on a 48 hour pass. I took all my equipment out to Capt. Nolan's Ship and in general made ready for the flight. Lt. Col. Marion is to be the pilot of our ship and we are to lead all the B 17's on this raid. We take our places in the plane and are soon on our way down the taxi strip to the runway and at 2.40 P.M. we takeoff We keep circling the field and as the group finally takes shape we then proceed to other fields and pick up all the groups that are to take part in today's raid. The weather around England isn't too good as we go out to the North Sea the weather improves for the better. We travel over the North Sea for an hour and a half before we start to gain altitude then we are forced to don our oxygen masks as we go on up and up till we get to twenty five thousand feet, this is to be our bombing altitude. The Frisian Islands are seen to our right as we are about ten miles from the German Coast. There is a very high cloud formation beyond Wilhelmshaven which extends up to 30,000 ft. and far below our bombing altitude. So the Col. Decides to bomb Wilhelmshaven much to my relief. Before we hit the German coast we are attacked by German fighters of all descriptions they escort us from the Island of Alle Mullum

where we also have flak thrown up at us which is accurate for height but a little off for deflection. There are fighters all over the place, there must be about a hundred in all. Most of them are FW 190s and Me 109s. They are all over the sky. I have never seen fighters so bold in all my past experience they attack us mainly from the nose of the ships, five and six at a time. They used to attack from the nose and upon coming in at close range they would peel off. This time however some of them would peel off and others would fly right through the formation evidently trying to break our formation up. There was a smoke screen over the target but it wasn't any good for the wind kept it clear. The bombardier didn't have too much time for his bombing run for the fighters kept coming in on us. As a matter of fact he saw three of them in his bomb sight as we made our run of about 30 seconds. There was plenty of flak about the target and it was fairly accurate. This was one of those unusual occasions where the enemy fighters kept up their

June 11, 1943

Bremen -- - Germany

attack right in their own flak. After we got out of the ~~flak~~^{flak} area of the target the fighters started their gang up attacks once again coming in five and six at a time in and out of the formation. On one of these attacks a Me 109 crashed headlong into a B. 17 and both seemed to stop in mid air then drop to the earth en masse. One or two chutes were seen to come out of the 17. Another 17 was seen on fire from the cockpit to the tail and it went down. We picked up a few stragglers who were getting the works by the fighters. It's really amazing how these 17s can stand up under attacks by several fighters alone. While in formation some straggling 17s got under our formation and some how or other came up under us and almost ran into Capt. Mac Donalds ship. Capt. Mac Donald had to pull up, hard and high in order to escape from being smashed. He did a wonderful job and was soon back in formation. I forgot to mention that that before we hit the target our number 1 motor ran away and was leaking plenty of oil. Number two lost all of its power so at altitude we only had two engines. Our speed was cut down to about 140 miles. We finally got out to sea and after a three quarter of an hour fight we got rid of the pesty fighters and started on our way home. The Col. really was worried about the engines as he was going to take a ~~short~~ short cut so that we would get home sooner. He changed his mind and flew the regular course and after the usual ride back over the North Sea we finally arrived over the English coast and then got back to our base. We landed then after taking pictures we went to the briefing room. After the interrogation I congratulated Capt. Nolan, Lt. Hopper, and T. Sgt. Hively upon completing their twenty fifth mission. This is the second crew I helped to complete their twenty fifth mission.