

RECORD UPDATE

306th Bomb Group Association

(Please complete as much of this form as you wish, and return to
Russ Strong at the reunion, or mail to Russ Strong, 5323 Cheval
Place, Charlotte, NC 28205) Little Rock 1989

Date completed December 10, 1990

LAST NAME: HALLOCK FIRST NAME: JOSEPH T. (TED) TITLE:

Street address: 2445 N.W. Irving Street Telephone: (503) 224-1711

City, state, zip: Portland, Oregon 97210

Date of Birth: Oct. 26, 1921 Wife's name: Jacklyn Louise Hallock

College(s) attended: U. of Oregon Degree(s): B.S., Year(s): 1948
Journalism

Last employment and job title: Currently, Oregon Member, Pacific Northwest
Electric Conservation & Power Planning Council

Reunions attended: (by year or location) None

Serial #: 0-751 825 Squadron: 423rd. Specialty: Bombardier

Date joined 306th: Nov., 1943??? If combat, what crew: Lt. Robert Welter's

Special duties or assignments w/306th: None. Just plain toggler

Number of missions flown: 30 Date of last mission: April ??, 1944
(Saarbrucken)

Date left 306th: April or May, 1944 Highest rank/grade with 306th: 1st Lt.
(I think)

Other 8th AF units served with: None

Top service assignments after 306th: Liaison Officer, U.S. Army Air Forces
Personnel Command, War Dept. ^{Personnel} Center 13, Fort Lewis, Wn.

USAF retirement date: August, 1945 Rank/grade: Captain

Copies of old 306th orders, either from the Group or Station 111, or any of the
squadrons or other units, will be welcomed by the secretary.

If you know of other 306th people who do not appear in the directory, please add
their names and current or former addresses to this sheet so that we may search
further for them.

HOME ADDRESS
TED HALLOCK
2445 NW IRVING
PORTLAND, OREGON 97210
MULTNOMAH COUNTY
DISTRICT 5



OREGON STATE SENATE

Jan. 17, 1983

Dear Russell....

I'm going to England in May and have some bothersome questions, so forgive me.....

1. What's the rough distance from London-Thurleigh?
2. Is there ANY remnant on the now-RAF base to see 306th. huts, etc.? (I went back in 1951 and there was everytything....I took part of mt shack roof (423rd) and recorded a radio show on the site, which BBC crew helped me do), and do you have to get some special permission to go on base and from whom and could I get it by mail?
3. I think I want to take, or send, some of my flight stuff and I'm confused. I thought there was to be a museum at Thurleigh, but apparently it's simply the memorial? And the "museum" is in Gordon and Connie Richards' hands, and who are they, how do I reach them, and is that going to be the "official" 306th collection of memorabilia in England?

I'll be very grateful for your help.

Thanks,

21 January 1983

Dear Ted:

I hope that I can satisfactorily answer your questions:

1. Its about 50 miles from London to Bedford, and then Thurleigh is another six miles out in the country.
2. At Thurleigh a year ago I found the concrete slab where my barracks had stood. There is very little of the old base left as the area is now RAE-Bedford and is the sight from which they do a lot of experimental flying. The runways are gone and a new 10,000 foot runway sits at a slightly different angle than did 240. You cannot get on the base without permission, and that is not easily obtained.
3. A museum is now being developed, but is probably a year or so away from completion. Gordon and Connie Richards are part of a growing group of Britishers who are very interested in WW II American units. Usualdy there people were children during the war, and have become greatly benamerred of the whole thing. They have uniforms and a great deal of other material that will form the nucleus of a 306th museum. They are dependa~~ble~~ and interesting people. They will give you a royal tour of the area.

Their address is 14 Pavenham Road, Oakley, Beds MK43 7 SY.
Their telephone number is 234-3357.

Let them know when you are coming and they will turn out the troops for you.

I visited the Richards a year ago, saw a number of other interested Britishers, stayed in the Richards home, and had a thoroughly delightful time with them. I expect to see them briefly again in July.

Take the time also to see the Shuttleworth Collection (flyable WW I planes) at Old Warden, and Duxford, the RAF workshops, near Cambridge.

Have a good trip,

FROM THE DESK OF
TED HALLOCK

2445 NW IRVING STREET
PORTLAND, OREGON 97210
USA
PHONE 224-1711

11/19

Ye Ed:

Two things. (1) I was profiled in New Yorker on Aug. 9, 1944. Would that piece be of interest....it's long.

(2) right after my last raid I sat down at the 423rd QM's office and typed an all-raid diary. It runs 25 or 30 pp. It's never seen the light of day. Would that be of interest somehow?

(My full legal name on the roster is Joseph T.)


Ted Hallock

23 November 1990

Joseph T. Hallock
2445 NW Irving St
Portland, OR 97210

Dear Ted:

Thanks for your note of the 19th, which arrived today.

I would be very interested in receiving copies of the two items which you mention.

Because they are lengthy, you may wish to send them along to me and let me make the copies of them. I would be happy to do so and to have them back in the mail to you the next day.

At the same time, I would understand your reluctance to let your only copies out of your sight. Therefore, I would be willing to pay for the copying, if you desire.

I look forward to receiving them, in one way or the other, for I suspect they would make excellent copy for future issues of Echoes.

All the best,

11 December 1990

Dear Ted:

I got your opus yesterday in the mail, and had an opportunity while trying to sell Christmas trees for the church today to read a good bit of it.

It is unusual because it was written in detail so soon after many of the events took place. Thus, there is a realism about it that is so often lacking when years go by before we write.

Also, there is a philosophical bent to it that enhances the whole thing.

If there is no objection from you I will plan to use it in a forthcoming issue or two or three of Echoes. First, I will plan to edit it, then have it retyped, and then edit it once again before I begin to work on it for Echoes. I want to use most of it, I do not want to kill off the writer by emasculating it, but I want to get some of the "junk" out of it and hope that I do not offend you in the process.

After I have had it retyped I'll send you a copy so that you can look at a cleaner version than one now sees.

Most combat diaries are rather perfunctory in their writing and do not really get "inside" the writer. I think this does it rather well.

I will finish reading it in its entirety first, then do some basic editing, get it retyped and then begin to work on it more seriously. It will be at least April before I use it, so you will have some time to think about it.

My opinion at this point is that it is a lot better than you think it is.

All the best,

FROM THE DESK OF
TED HALLOCK

2445 NW IRVING STREET
PORTLAND, OREGON 97210
USA
PHONE 224-1711

12/6

Dear Russell:

So embarrassing for me to re-read this that I never have...in 46 years. Reason last few pages are ~~an~~ different ^{type paper} is that my father re-typed them for some reason. I had left this with him when I got home, ~~to~~, then, Arlington, Virginia. I wrote this the night of the first day after I finished my raids, AND the next two days, sitting in the office of the Quartermaster of the 423rd, a graduate of Brown University, who had traded me, earlier, a Thompson submachine gun for 10 rolls of white toilet paper from home; I then proceeded to burn-out the gun practicing on one of the revetments, while the CO of the Group as I recall strolled by and asked if he could squeeze off 10 or 20 rounds. Col. Robinson???? All this is

~~over~~
OVER

irrelevant, like all or most reminiscences

TH

FROM THE DESK OF
TED HALLOCK

2445 NW IRVING STREET
PORTLAND, OREGON 97210
USA
PHONE 224-1711

Dec. 18

Russell: Edit away. Do whatever should be done to make it readable.

I gave away my few photos taken on the base, but if you want it, I'll look for an 8x10 taken of me and some returnees at Ft. Lewis, in the AAFPDC facility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ted Hallock', written in a cursive style.

FROM THE DESK OF
TED HALLOCK

2445 NW IRVING STREET
PORTLAND, OREGON 97210
USA
PHONE 224-1711

Russell:

Wondered if you were going to use that diary
of mine. If not, could you please mail it
back. Thanks.

TH

9 December 1991

Dear Ted:

I'm sorry that I didn't return this to you immediately.

I copied it and have done some editing work on it in preparation for use in Echoes. I'm presently thinking I'll get it into the April issue.

As with any such diary, it does need some work, and some missi~~ans~~ns do need some work, as well as omitting some.

But, I will make use of it.

I'll let you know later when it is going to run and will send along extra copies of Echoes for you.

Many thanks for the piece.

All the best,



JOSEPH THEODORE HALLOCK, who has light-blue eyes and an engaging smile and is usually called Ted, is a first lieutenant in the United States Army Air Forces. Two years ago he was an undergraduate at the University of Oregon; today he is a veteran bombardier who has completed thirty missions in a B-17 over Germany and Occupied Europe. Eighteen months ago he fainted when an Army doctor examining him pricked his finger to get a sample of blood; today he wears the Purple Heart for wounds received in a raid on Augsburg, the Air Medal with three oak-leaf clusters, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Before he got into the Air Forces, he had been rejected by the Navy and Marines because of insufficient chest expansion; he still weighs less than a hundred and thirty pounds, and this gives him an air of tempered, high-strung fragility. When he relaxes, which is not often, he looks younger than his twenty-two years, but he doesn't think of himself as being young. "Sometimes I feel as if I'd never had a chance to live at all."

PROFILE

YOUNG MAN BEHIND PLEXIGLAS

down to this: I'm a cog in one hell of a big machine. The more I think about it, and I've thought about it a lot lately, the more it looks as if I've been a cog in one thing after another since the day I was born. Whenever I get set to do what I want to do, something a whole lot bigger than me comes along and shoves me back into place. It's not especially pleasant, but there it is.

"As a matter of fact, my father had about the same deal. He'd graduated from Oregon State and was just starting in business when we got mixed up in the first World War. He joined the Navy, and from what he says I guess he disliked the war but liked his job. He'd been trained as a radio engineer, and that was the sort of work they gave him to do, so he got to be a C.P.O. and kept on working for the Navy for quite a while after the war was over. He and Mother moved around from Mare Island to Portland, down to Los Angeles and San Diego, and so on, and they seem to have had a good enough time. Like Muriel and me, they probably didn't try to figure what was going to happen to them next. I was their only child, and I was born on October twenty-fifth, 1921." Hallock shrugged. "In a way, it's funny my being born then. I was arguing about the war with a fellow the other night, and he kept telling me what Wilson should have done and what Wilson shouldn't have done. I got sore finally. Why, hell's bells, I hadn't even been born when Wilson was president! I don't give a hoot about Wilson, I told this guy, Wilson's been dead for years; it's 1944 I'm worrying about

"Naturally, I don't think about Harding and Hoover or Roosevelt. I suppose my mother had been talking about how bad things were about how the country needed. While I don't remember hear Mother and Dad what they'd had once any more—nothing like coats, just something like ever that is. It's the same and I talk about sometimes what the hell it looks like. Most of the other guys in the grew up when I did feel. We keep trying to figure was our parents had before or what our grandparents must have been something someplace, or we wouldn't much.

"Moving around the country those bad times, I had plenty with schools, and I guess I managed to learn anything California, for instance, I'd French but not Latin, and I'd have to take Latin but I finally graduated from Oregon, high school in 1933 very popular at school, partly never was in a place long know anybody well, but most I spent my time reading books tending to good jazz, which

PROFILES

YOUNG MAN BEHIND PLEXIGLASS



JOSEPH THEODORE HALLOCK, who has light-blue eyes and an engaging smile and is usually called Ted, is a first lieutenant in the United States Army Air Forces. Two years ago he was an undergraduate at the University of Oregon; today he is a veteran bombardier who has completed thirty missions in a B-17 over Germany and Occupied Europe. Eighteen months ago he fainted when an Army doctor examining him pricked his finger to get a sample of blood; today he wears the Purple Heart for wounds received in a raid on Augsburg, the Air Medal with three oak-leaf clusters, and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Before he got into the Air Forces, he had been rejected by the Navy and Marines because of insufficient chest expansion; he still weighs less than a hundred and thirty pounds, and this gives him an air of tempered, high-strung fragility. When he relaxes, which is not often, he looks younger than his twenty-two years, but he doesn't think of himself as being young. "Sometimes I feel as if I'd never had a chance to live at all," he says flatly, "but most of the time I feel as if I'd lived forever."

Hallock and his wife, Muriel, recently spent a three-week leave in New York, and I met him through friends. I took him aside one morning and talked with him for an hour or two about his part in the war. I was naturally curious to know what it felt like to complete thirty missions in a Flying Fortress, but I also saw, or thought I saw, that he was eager to speak to someone of his experiences. Apparently he considers himself typical of thousands of young men in the armed forces, and he rejects any suggestion that he has done more than was specifically demanded of him. "Whatever I tell you," he said, "boils

down to this: I'm a cog in one hell of a big machine. The more I think about it, and I've thought about it a lot lately, the more it looks as if I've been a cog in one thing after another since the day I was born. Whenever I get set to do what I want to do, something a whole lot bigger than me comes along and shoves me back into place. It's not especially pleasant, but there it is.

"As a matter of fact, my father had about the same deal. He'd graduated from Oregon State and was just starting in business when we got mixed up in the first World War. He joined the Navy, and from what he says I guess he disliked the war but liked his job. He'd been trained as a radio engineer, and that was the sort of work they gave him to do, so he got to be a C.P.O. and kept on working for the Navy for quite a while after the war was over. He and Mother moved around from Mare Island to Portland, down to Los Angeles and San Diego, and so on, and they seem to have had a good enough time. Like Muriel and me, they probably didn't try to figure what was going to happen to them next. I was their only child, and I was born on October twenty-fifth, 1921." Hallock shrugged. "In a way, it's funny my being born then. I was arguing about the war with a fellow the other night, and he kept telling me what Wilson should have done and what Wilson shouldn't have done. I got sore finally. Why, hell's bells, I hadn't even been born when Wilson was president! I don't give a hoot about Wilson, I told this guy, Wilson's been dead for years; it's 1944 I'm worrying about.

"Things must have been pretty unsettled when I was a baby, just as they've been ever since I grew up. Whatever that boom was I've heard about, I doubt if it meant anything ritzy for the Hallocks. My father helped found a company that manufactured radios—he was in on the ground floor in radio, from crystal pickup sets to those big old-fashioned jobs with all the knobs and dials—but he figured the fad wouldn't last. That was what he used to say—'Radio won't last.' Those early sets cost too much for the average guy, Dad thought, and it didn't occur to him that the prices were bound to come down someday. So he drifted into one job or another, some good and some bad, up to the time of the crash.

"Naturally, I don't remember anything about Harding and Coolidge. One of my earliest memories is of betting marbles with the kids at school about who was going to win the election, Hoover or Roosevelt. I bet on Roosevelt. I suppose my mother and father had been talking about him at home—about how bad things were and about how the country needed a change. While I don't remember good times, I'd hear Mother and Dad talking about what they'd had once and didn't have any more—nothing like yachts or fur coats, just something like security, whatever that is. It's the same thing Muriel and I talk about sometimes, wondering what the hell it looks like and tastes like. Most of the other guys in the Army who grew up when I did feel the same way. We keep trying to figure out what it was our parents had before we grew up, or what our grandparents had. There must have been something back there someplace, or we wouldn't miss it so much.

"Moving around the country during those bad times, I had plenty of trouble with schools, and I guess it's a wonder I managed to learn anything at all. In California, for instance, I'd have to take French but not Latin, and in Maryland I'd have to take Latin but not French. I finally graduated from a Portland, Oregon, high school in 1939. I wasn't very popular at school, partly because I never was in a place long enough to know anybody well, but mostly because I spent my time reading books and listening to good jazz, which can be a lonely thing to do. I was a pretty serious character in those days, and I boned up a lot on the first World War. I listened to my father talk and I read about the munitions kings and I felt sure I'd never be willing to fight in any war about anything. I delivered the commencement address when I graduated from high school, and I called it 'Cannon Fodder?' You can bet I made that question mark a big one.

"Then I began to grow confused. I was disgusted when the League of Nations gave in to Mussolini on the Ethiopian grab, and even before that, when the Spanish War broke out, I saw that that was a war the Loyalists had to fight, and I also saw that it was a war the Loyalists had to win. I was only fifteen or sixteen at the time, but I wanted them

to win more than anything else in the world. Besides, there was the Jap attack on China. Naturally, I sided with the Chinese right from the start. What it came down to was that I believed in *other people's wars* but I didn't believe in any American war. I guess I was as bad as a lot of other people in that respect, like the other kids who were brought up on Senator Nye and the Veterans of Future Wars.

"I wanted to go to Reed College, in Portland, so after I got out of high school I spent a year working as bus-boy, dishwasher, and things like that to make some money. I also got a job at a radio station, where I had charge of the record library and helped out the announcers on the night shift, and I played drums in a local band. Being on the air when the flash announcing the second World War came through, I remember the time exactly: it was 2:17 A.M., on September third, 1939. As soon as I got home that morning, I asked my father if he thought we'd ever get into the war, and he said, 'No, of course not.' But I suspected we might, and I hated the thought of it. My father had already taken the Civil Service exams for a job with the Federal Communications Commission and passed them, and at about that time he was sent to an F.C.C. job in Texas. I found out that I couldn't afford to go to Reed College unless I was able to live board-free at home, so I had to plan on going to the University of Oregon instead. My family and I got separated back there in 1940, and I've been away from them pretty steadily ever since. There were only the three of us, and we miss each other." Hallock smiled without embarrassment and said, "Damn it, we miss each other a lot."

HALLOCK and I talked about his family for a while, then got back to the war. "All the time up to Pearl Harbor, I kept trying to pretend that the war wasn't really happening," he said. "I kept telling myself that this was a different kind of war from the Chinese and Spanish wars. When my roommate at college woke me up on Sunday morning, December seventh, 1941, and told me that the Japs had attacked Pearl Harbor, I didn't believe it. It sounded like Warner Brothers stuff to me, so I went back to sleep. Later on I was listening to the André Kostelanetz program when the announcer cut in with some news flashes, and this time I believed it. I guess it's typical of me that as far as I was concerned the war start-

ed in the middle of the Coca-Cola program, 'the pause that refreshes on the air.'

"Nearly everybody at college got drunk and burned his books. My roommate and I killed a bottle of kummel between us and I painted our windows with black enamel as an air-raid precaution. I spent the next two weeks scraping off the enamel with a razor. Undergraduate guards were posted on the library roof, and when the rumor got around that San Francisco had been bombed, 22-calibre rifles started showing up around the campus. Everybody else seemed to be doing something, so I wired my father that I wanted to enlist in the Signal Corps. My father wired back for me to sit tight until the Army told me what to do. In spite of him, I tried enlisting as a cadet in the Navy and Marines, but they said I had insufficient chest expansion and too few college credits. I didn't mind terribly when they turned me down. I had no real convictions about the war in Europe, and I was more or less willing to wait my turn at taking a crack at

the Japs. I'd started an orchestra at college called Ted Hallock's Band, which played at sorority and fraternity dances, and during the year I'd had an article on jazz published in *Downbeat*. I'd even made a quick trip to New York and haunted all the night clubs that had good bands. I'd had to hock my Speed Graphic camera to do it, but it was worth it. I felt I was really on my way.

"Besides all that, and a lot more important than all that, I had Muriel, back in Portland. That is, I'd fallen in love with her and I wanted to marry her, but she didn't give me much encouragement. She just wouldn't say anything when I'd ask her to marry me, and I figured that if I got into the Army I might never have a chance to see her again. I wanted time to see her. I wanted time to do a lot of things I hadn't been able to do, and every day outside the Army was worth weeks and months in terms of Muriel and jazz and



Chon
Day

"Do you have any caddies who don't grin?"

reading and ordinary living. Finally, in June, 1942, thinking I was bound to be drafted soon, I enlisted as an aviation cadet in the Army Air Forces. I was underweight the first time I took my physical, but I ate fifteen bananas, drank three quarts of milk, passed a second physical, and was sick as a pup for a couple of days afterward.

"The Air Forces told me they'd notify me when to report for training. I didn't feel like going back to college, and I was sore at Muriel because she wouldn't say she'd marry me, so I went down to Galveston to visit my mother and father. I got a job there as a pipe-fitter's apprentice—a fine fate for someone who thought of himself as a rising young authority on jazz and other fine arts. When I couldn't stand not hearing from Muriel, I returned to Portland and got a job in a record shop in a department store. Later, I set up a pitch as a disc jockey at the radio station, playing jazz records and ad-libbing from midnight to eight A.M. I managed to pick up sixty-five or seventy dollars a week, and Muriel and I had some fine times. It seemed as if for once I wasn't just a cog in something bigger than me; I was doing what I wanted to do, but of course that feeling was too good to last. I was ordered to report for duty on February second, 1943, at the A. A. F. base at Santa Ana, California, where I received my pre-flight training.

"That training was really rugged. We had two and a half months of calisthenics led by Fred Perry and Joe DiMaggio, obstacle races, drill, and studies. The saying there was that the discipline was so tough you'd be gigged if they found air under your bed. We took enough mathematics in six weeks to go from two plus two makes four to trig and calculus. I suspected that I might be washed out as pilot material, so to keep from getting a broken heart like a lot of other fellows, I applied to be sent to bombardier school. That was just good strategy on my part, but apparently the officers liked it. We—the bombardier candidates—were sent on to Deming, New Mexico. We arrived there and lined up in one hell of a sandstorm, in terrible heat, feeling a million miles from anywhere. I can still remember the C.O. yelling, as the sand blew down his throat and blinded his eyes, 'Welcome to Deming, men!'

"There were a thousand men at the base and two bars in the town, and things were about as unpleasant as that sounds. We had three months of train-

THE GOOD SWIMMER

The strongest swimmer, the first one over, comes
Wading the last few yards, and over the sands
To firmer, greener ground. And there he stands,
Clean from the water, clean in the light and air,
In his own element, with another light,
Not out of time, but his own glory and pride
Shining around him. He raises both his hands
And runs them over his hair
And down his sides, and lifts one hand again
To shield his eyes against the river's glare.

And watches the struggle, and tries to count the rest,
Heads bobbing, no two together, some halfway over,
Some more, some less, upstream and down, the gleam
Of the wet arm or breast
Fighting the current, or letting it sweep them close
To the jagged rock that lies below the stream
With deep and quiet water all around,
And some tread water till a log goes past,
Or, tired, turn over and float a little while
Themselves like driftwood, thrash again, and swim.

And he grows tired of watching. He sits down,
Gets up again, and takes a few steps nearer,
Impatient and a little scornful, calling,
"Hurry up, come on, snap out of it, you guys!"
Frowning at the river,
He sees the river, running swift and brown
Under the livid cloud, and darkness falling,
Nor will it come as any great surprise,
At least, not any great surprise to him,
That some of the weaker ones should sink and drown.

—ROLFE HUMPHRIES

ing with the Norden bomb sight at Deming. The men who had been trained before us had not even been allowed to take notes on what they learned. We could take notes, but we had to burn them as soon as we finished memorizing them. We used to take our notes out to the latrines at night after lights out and study them there. We had to learn how to strip and assemble a bomb sight, a job that became sort of a religious ritual with me. The more I found out about the bomb sight, the

more ingenious and inhuman it seemed. It was something bigger, I kept thinking, than any one man was intended to comprehend. I ended up with a conviction, which I still have, that a bombardier can't help feeling inferior to his bomb sight—at least, this bombardier can't. It's not a good feeling to have; it doesn't help you very much when you're over Germany and going into your run to realize that everything depends on your control of something you'll never fully understand, but the feeling is there.

"In July, 1943, I finished the course at Deming and got my wings as a second lieutenant. Muriel had stopped corresponding with me for the umpteenth time by then, and I had got so sore that I had written her that I would never see her again. At the last minute, though, I hopped on a train and stood up all the way back to Portland. As soon as I saw Muriel, I told her, 'You know you're going to marry me, don't you?' She said, 'Well, maybe,' which was the greatest encouragement she'd ever given me. I wasted a lot of time—three





"Captain Ziltman is a dummkopf, Captain Ziltman is a dummkopf..."

whole days—making up her mind for her, which left us only three days of my leave in which to get married and have a honeymoon. We spent our honeymoon in a hotel in Portland. Then we took a train to Ephrata, Washington, the training centre for B-17s to which I'd been ordered to report.

"Muriel stayed at a hotel in Wenatchee, several miles away. That meant that I was A.W.O.L. a good deal of the time. But I guess I learned something. I didn't like the first pilot to whom I was assigned, so the C.O. assigned me to another pilot, a fellow just my age, with whom I got along fine. It's literally a matter of life and death for everybody in the crew of a Fort to get on well; the ship just won't fly otherwise. There are ten men in a Fort crew—the pilot, co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, and six gunners, and there's more than enough responsibility to go around. The bombardier, for example, is also gunnery officer and in charge of fire control, first aid, and oxygen. Most of those jobs are theoretical in practice flights, but they can all need you at once in a hot raid.

"After a couple of months at Ephra-

ta, where we got the hang of flying a Fort, we were sent on to Rapid City, South Dakota, for some bomb practice on the target ranges there. Muriel and I felt really married for the first time in Rapid City, because we rented a bungalow and Muriel, who'd never cooked before, practiced her cooking on me. As it turned out, we lived on spaghetti most of the time. Muriel and I had a lot of scraps at Rapid City. I'd come down from a flight looking for trouble, looking for someone to pick on, and Muriel was always the easiest to hurt. That kind of irritability seems to be a characteristic of high flying. I blame it mostly on using oxygen, but, oxygen or no oxygen, there's no doubt the sky does something to you. There it is around you, and it's so damn big, and yet you have a false feeling of having mastered it. And when you come down out of it you feel like elbowing all the civilians you see into the streets that from above looked like little trickles of nothing. The difficulty is, you have to try to live in two different scales of worlds, the one up there and the one down here, and it's not a natural thing to do.

"Muriel must have understood what was going on inside me, because in spite of the way I behaved we had a good time in that cheap little bungalow. As soon as I finished the course at Rapid City, we went to Washington, so I could say goodbye to my parents. My father had been made chief of the Facility Security Division of the F.C.C. when the war broke out, and he and Mother had had to move to Washington. Later, we came up here to New York for a day or two before I went across. We spent most of our time at Nick's, in the Village, getting a last fill of good music. In November, 1943, I shipped out to England, and Muriel went back to Portland and got a job at an advertising agency there."

I ASKED Hallock a few questions about Muriel, and then he took up his story again. "Right from the start, I liked England. That helped me to stand my separation from Muriel and the fact that I was fighting in a war I'd never particularly believed in fighting. England was so much older physically and spiritually than I had expected that I felt shocked. I understood for the first

time that there were people in the world who looked the same as us but thought differently from us, and I began to wonder if the Germans were maybe as much different from the English and us as a lot of writers and politicians claimed. After a day or two in an indoctrination pool, our crew was assigned to an old and well-established operational base south of London and given our Fort, which our pilot christened Ginger. None of us ever found out why he named the ship Ginger, but it's the pilot's privilege to choose any name he likes; probably ginger was the color of his girl's hair or the name of his dog—something like that. We never painted the name on our Fort, because the Forts with names seemed to get shot up more than the ones without.

"My first raid was on December thirty-first, over Ludwigshaven. Naturally, not knowing what it was going to be like, I didn't feel scared. A little sick, maybe, but not scared. That comes later, when you begin to understand what your chances of survival are. Once we'd crossed into Germany, we spotted some flak, but it was a good long distance below us and looked pretty and not dangerous: different-colored puffs making a soft, cushiony-looking pattern under our plane. A bombardier sits right in the plexiglass nose of a Fort, so he sees everything neatly laid out in front of him, like a living-room rug. It seemed to me at first that I'd simply moved in on a wonderful show. I got over feeling sick, there was so much to watch. We made our run over the target, got our bombs away, and apparent-

ly did a good job. Maybe it was the auto-pilot and bomb sight that saw to that, but I'm sure I was cool enough on that first raid to do my job without thinking too much about it. Then, on the way home, some Focke-Wulfs showed up, armed with rockets, and I saw three B-17s in the different groups around us suddenly blow up and drop through the sky. Just simply blow up and drop through the sky. Nowadays, if you come across something awful happening, you always think, 'My God, it's just like a movie,' and that's what I thought. I had a feeling that the planes weren't really falling and burning, the men inside them weren't really dying, and everything would turn out happily in the end. Then, very quietly through the interphone, our tail gunner said, 'I'm sorry, sir, I've been hit.'

"I crawled back to him and found that he'd been wounded in the side of the head—not deeply but enough so he was bleeding pretty bad. Also, he'd got a lot of the plexiglass dust from his shattered turret in his eyes, so he was, at least for the time being, blind. The blood that would have bothered me back in California a few months before didn't bother me at all then. The Army had trained me in a given job and I went ahead and did what I was trained to do, bandaging the gunner well enough to last him back to our base. Though he was blind, he was still able to use his hands, and I ordered him to fire his guns whenever he heard from me. I figured that a few bursts every so often from his fifties would keep the Germans off our tail, and I also figured

that it would give the kid something to think about besides the fact that he'd been hit. When I got back to the nose, the pilot told me that our No. 4 engine had been shot out. Gradually we lost our place in the formation and flew nearly alone over France. That's about the most dangerous thing that can happen to a lame Fort, but the German fighters had luckily given up and we skimmed over the top of the flak all the way to the Channel.

"Our second raid was on Lille, and it was an easy one. Our third was on Frankfurt. France was the milk run, Germany the bad news. On the day of a raid we'd get up in the morning, eat breakfast, be briefed, check our equipment, crawl into the plane, maybe catch some more sleep. Then the raid, easy or tough, and we'd come back bushed, everybody sore and excited, everybody talking, hashing over the raid. Then we'd take lighted candles and write the date and place of the raid in smoke on our barracks ceiling. Maybe we wouldn't go out again for a week or ten days. Then we'd go out for four or five days in a row, taking chances, waiting for the Germans to come up and give us hell. They have a saying that nobody's afraid on his first five raids, and he's only moderately afraid on his next ten raids, but that he really sweats out all the rest of them, and that's the way it worked with me and the men I knew.

"When we started our missions, we were told that after twenty-five we would probably be sent home for a rest, so that was how we kept figuring things—so many missions accomplished, so many missions still to go. We worked it all out on a mathematical basis, or on what we pretended was a mathematical basis—how many months it would take us to finish our stint, how many missions we'd have to make over Germany proper, what our chances of getting shot down were. Then, at about the half-way mark, the number of missions we would have to make was raised from twenty-five to thirty. That was one hell of a heartbreaker. Supposedly, they changed the rules of the game because flying had got that much safer, but you couldn't make us think in terms of being safer. Those five extra raids might as well have been fifty.

"The pressure kept building up from raid to raid more than ever after that. The nearer we got to the end of the thirty missions, the narrower we made our odds on surviving. Those odds acted on different guys in different ways. One fellow I knew never once mentioned any member of his family, never



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wore a trinket, never showed us any pictures, and when he got a letter from home he read it through once and tore it up. He said he didn't trust himself to do anything else, but still it took guts. Most of the rest of us would lug a letter around and read it over and over, and show our family pictures to each other until they got cracked and dirty. There was also a difference in the way we faked our feelings. Some of the guys would say, 'Well, if I managed to get through that raid, it stands to reason they'll never get me,' but they didn't mean it. They were knocking on wood. Some of the other guys would say, 'I'm getting it this time. I'll be meeting you in Stalag Luft tonight,' but they were knocking on wood, too. We were all about equally scared all the time.

"My best friend over there was an ardent Catholic. He used to pray and go to confession and Mass whenever he could. I kept telling him, 'What's the use? The whole business is written down in a book someplace. Praying won't make any difference.' But whenever I got caught in a tight spot over Germany, I'd find myself whispering, 'God, you gotta. You gotta get me back. God, listen, you gotta.' Some of the guys prayed harder than that. They promised God a lot of stuff, like swearing off liquor and women, if He'd pull them through. I never tried to promise Him anything, because I figured that if God was really God he'd be bound to understand how men feel about liquor and women. I was lucky, anyhow, because I had something better to fall back on, and that was music. I went up to London several times between missions and visited some of those Rhythm Clubs that are scattered all over the country. I listened to good hot records and a few times I even delivered lectures on jazz. The nearest town to our base had its own Rhythm Club, and I spoke there to about a hundred and fifty people on Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong. Now and then I got a chance to play drums in a band. That helped a lot and made it seem less like a million years ago that I'd been leading Ted Hallock's Band out at Oregon."

HALLOCK got onto the subject of jazz, then abruptly switched back to his story again. "The missions went

on and on," he said, "and the pressure kept on building. Guys I knew and liked would disappear. Somebody I'd be playing ping-pong with one day would be dead the next. It began to look as if I didn't have a chance of getting through, but I tried to take it easy. The worst raid we were ever on was one over Augsburg. That was our twenty-sixth, the one after what we expected to be

our last mission. When we were briefed that morning and warned that we might be heading for trouble, I couldn't help thinking, 'By God, I'm getting rooked, I ought to be heading home to Muriel and New York and Nick's this very minute.'

"There was never any predicting which targets the Germans would come up to fight for. I was over Berlin five times, over Frankfort four times, over Saarbrücken, Hamm, Münster, Leipzig, Wilhelmshaven, and I had it both ways, easy and hard.

We had a feeling, though, that this Augsburg show was bound to be tough, and it was. We made our runs and got off our bombs in the midst of one hell of a dogfight. Our group leader was shot down and about a hundred and fifty or two hundred German fighters swarmed over us as we headed for home. Then, screaming in from someplace, a twenty-millimetre cannon shell exploded in the nose of our Fort. It shattered the plexiglass, broke my interphone and oxygen connections, and a fragment of it cut through my heated suit and flak suit. I could feel it burning into my right shoulder and arm. My first reaction was to disconnect my heated suit. I had some idea that I might get electrocuted if I didn't.

"I crawled back in the plane, wondering if anyone else needed first aid. I couldn't communicate with them, you see, with my phone dead. I found that two shells had hit in the waist of the plane, exploding the cartridge belts stored there, and that one waist gunner had been hit in the forehead and the other in the jugular vein. I thought, 'I'm wounded, but I'm the only man on the ship who can do this job right.' I placed my finger against the gunner's jugular vein, applied pressure bandages, and injected morphine into him. Then I sprinkled the other man's wound with sulfa powder. We had no plasma aboard, so there wasn't much of any-



thing else I could do. When I told the pilot that my head set had been blown off, the tail gunner thought he'd heard someone say that my head had been blown off, and he yelled that he wanted to jump. The pilot assured him that I was only wounded. Then I crawled back to the nose of the ship to handle my gun, fussing with my wounds when I could and making use of an emergency bottle of oxygen.

"The German fighters chased us for about forty-five minutes. They came so close that I could see the pilots' faces, and I fired so fast that my gun jammed. I went back to the left nose gun and fired that gun till it jammed. By that time we'd fallen behind the rest of the group, but the Germans were beginning to slack off. It was turning into a question of whether we could sneak home without having to bail out. The plane was pretty well shot up and the whole oxygen system had been cut to pieces. The pilot told us we had the choice of trying to get back to England, which would be next to impossible, or of flying to Switzerland and being interned, which would be fairly easy. He asked us what we wanted to do. I would have voted for Switzerland, but I was so busy handing out bottles of oxygen that before I had a chance to say anything the other men said, 'What the hell, let's try for England.' After a while, with the emergency oxygen running out, we had to come down to ten thousand feet, which is dangerously low. We saw four fighters dead ahead of us, somewhere over France, and we thought we were licked. After a minute or two, we discovered that they were P-47s, more beautiful than any woman who ever lived. I said, 'I think now's the time for a short prayer, men. Thanks, God, for what you've done for us.'

"When we got back to our base, I found a batch of nineteen letters waiting for me, but I couldn't read a single one of them. I just walked up and down babbling and shaking and listening to the other guys babble. I had my wounds looked at, but they weren't serious. The scars are already beginning to fade a little, and the wounds didn't hurt me much at the time. Still, I never wanted to go up again. I felt sure I couldn't go up again. On the day after the raid I didn't feel any better, and on the second day after the raid I went to my squadron commander and told him that I had better be sent up at once or I'd never be of any use to him again. So he sent me up in another plane on what he must have known would be a fairly easy raid



Gifts for Men in The Service

This is a grim year—the grimmest, perhaps, in all American history. The Christmas spirit, right now, seems incongruous. Peace on earth, goodwill towards men, festive gifts, warm greetings, seem out of place. But *are* they? Christmas *is* coming, for better or for worse... and we earnestly believe (and so do you) "for better?"

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over France, the milk run, and that helped.

"That was my twenty-seventh mission. The twenty-eighth was on Berlin, and I was scared damn near to death. It was getting close to the end and my luck was bound to be running out faster and faster. The raid wasn't too bad, though, and we got back safe. The twenty-ninth mission was to Thionville, in France, and all I thought about on that run was 'One more, one more, one more.' My last mission was to Saarbrücken. One of the waist gunners was new, a young kid like the kid I'd been six months before. He wasn't a bit scared—just cocky and excited. Over Saarbrücken he was wounded in the foot by a shell, and I had to give him first aid. He acted more surprised than hurt. He had a look on his face like a child who's been cheated by grown-ups.

"That was only the beginning for him, but it was the end for me. I couldn't believe it when I got back to the base. I kept thinking, 'Maybe they'll change the rules again, maybe I won't be going home, maybe I'll be going up with that kid again, maybe I'll have another five missions, another ten, another twenty.' I kept thinking those things, but I wasn't especially bitter about them. I knew then, even when I



TO OUR READERS

The *New Yorker* is now accepting subscriptions for its Overseas Edition, which the Army and Navy have recently been distributing in limited quantities to men in the services. The Overseas Edition is printed on lightweight paper and is a miniature of the regular edition, the page size being reduced to about six by nine inches and the number of pages to twenty-eight. It contains most of the text and pictures of the regular edition but no advertisements. It is sent by first-class mail. A subscription may be entered for anyone with an Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office address. Subscriptions cannot be accepted for addresses within the United States or for prisoners of war. The rate is \$4 a year. The Overseas Edition may be sent to men in the armed forces of the other Allied Nations for \$5 a year. If a subscription is discontinued, *The New Yorker* will make a refund for the unexpired portion. A subscriber who returns to this country may either take this refund or, paper supply permitting, switch to the regular edition.

THE NEW YORKER
25 West 43rd Street
New York 18, N. Y.

was most scared, that fliers have to be expendable, that that's what Eaker and Doolittle had us trained for. That's what war is. The hell with pampering us. We're supposed to be used up. If the Army worried one way or another about our feelings, it'd never get any of us out of Santa Ana or Deming."

I ASKED Hallock how long he had to wait before he was ordered back to the States. "In just a few days," he said, "the word came through that I could go home for a three-week leave. I cabled Muriel and she met me here in New York. I must have looked a lot different to her, and acted different, but she looked and acted the same to me. She brought along whatever money she'd managed to save out of what I'd sent her, so we could shoot it all on a good time. I'd been made a first lieutenant, and I get good pay, but saving any of it is something else again. Muriel and I both figure we'd better spend it while we're here to spend it. After a couple of days in Washington with my mother and father, we settled ourselves here in New York. We've just been eating and sleeping and listening to jazz and wandering around the town in a nice daze. I don't care if things are booming, if the civilians are all pulling down big dough, if no one seems to know there's a war on. For the moment, I don't care about any other damn thing in the world except that I'm here in New York with Muriel.

"We haven't made any plans. Hell's bells, I've never been able to make any plans. As soon as my leave's up, I have to report to a rehabilitation centre in Miami, and I suppose I'll be sent on from there to another post. Frankly, I'd like to land a job somewhere on the ground. I don't care where. Even Deming sounds beautiful to me. I don't particularly want to fly again. Pilots and navigators seem to feel different about the flying end of it; they don't seem to get that feeling of never wanting to go up again. Maybe that's because they're really flying the ship. When you're only one of the hired hands, who's being carried along to do the dirty work, to drop the bombs and do the killing, you don't feel so good about it.

"As for after the war, we don't dare to think too much about that. We're not ready to settle down and have kids and all that stuff. We feel as if we'd been cheated out of a good big chunk of our lives, and we want to make it up. I want to go back to college. Damn it, I want to play drums in a band again, in

Ted Hallock's Band. I want to feel that maybe I can look two days ahead without getting scared. I want to feel good about things. You know what I mean. It seems to me that sooner or later I'm going to be entitled to say to myself, 'O.K., kid, relax. Take it easy. You and Muriel got a lifetime in front of you. Do what you damn please with it.' I want to be able to tell myself, 'Listen, Hallock, all that cannon-fodder stuff never happened. You're safe. You're fine. Things are going to be different for Muriel and you. Things are going to be great. You're not a damn little cog any more. You're on your way.'"

—BRENDAN GILL



TO PRESS ASSOCIATIONS AND NEWS-PAPERERS FROM BOB WILSON WOR PRESS

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7 UNDERESIM53///78\$34358 UNESTIMATE OF A SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF NATIONAL INCOME AT THE 1943 PRICE LEVEL. HOLD ON

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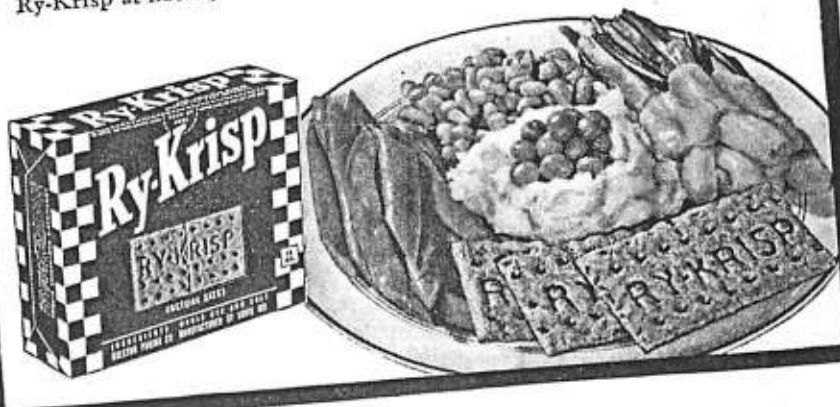
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April 25, 1944

THE SAGA OF HALLOCK

I am sitting in my room tonite. Alone. The rest are celebrating Welter's triumphal finis. All singing and it sounds good. But somehow tonite I would rather be here. Alone. And I have decided to write of how I feel and have felt. Just how it has been for all these times now past; ~~All the~~ actualities and the spiritualities; ~~All the~~ creeds I have embraced and forsaken; ~~All the~~ cold steel I have loved and loathed; ~~All the~~ death and near-death I have seen. I am going to tell no story. I shall merely relate fact. And maybe I shall be funny when I remember something that was funny. Although ~~there~~ there weren't many times when I did laugh very heartily.

The beginning ~~is usually the beginning.~~ That came on December 30, 1943. The first one. I had waited almost a month and a half for it. I had waited exactly thirty-eight days and a couple of minutes. I knew it was coming. I knew it must. I didn't want it to nevertheless. I was afraid. As we all were.

And then it was there. Welter had flown about five already as co-pilot, so that he could be seasoned when he took us all up as his crew. He was a veteran and his stories were not nice to men that were afraid. I went to the orderly room, mechanically, I did each night, except that night I was on the list. In letters that couldn't have been brighter if written with a phosphorescent pen. God it hurt. Yet it was good. I was flying with a guy ^{who} that wasn't supposed to be so sharp on formations. Di Betta, Gino DiBetta, with Wolfe as ~~explicit~~ co-pilot. I liked them both.

I went to bed. I was still the only virgin in the barracks. Clark, Munn, Tobias, Baltunas, Ebert all had three of four. I didn't know how anything was. How to relax. How to accept it so damned nonchalantly. How to be a regular fellow about it all. Because, you see, I knew inside that I wasn't of the regular fellow fibre. I was sensitive. I dramatized. I could make even death seem worse than death.

I went to bed. After setting out and re-checking at least fifteen times all the clothing I would need for the big event. The dog-tags were there, the knife, the three packs of cigarettes (I had heard that men had subsisted on tobacco alone for days while escaping); the four handkerchiefs. It all was ready. Insignia on so they could never say I was anything but Joseph Hallock. 2nd. Lt. A.C. Everything. All arranged. Except me.

I went to bed. Around ten. Knowing that I would be going in five or six hours. Yet not being able to sleep. Fitful tossing. And then at ~~gave~~ lights on. The C.Q. strutting on, calling HALLOCK, 487, WITH DI BETTA. I was going and this was no party. ~~My~~ Clothes thrown on. Asking Clark and Munn where to go to eat, what time briefing was. Trying to obtain facts so that I could at least act the veteran and not give myself wholly away. In spite of all precautions I was the first man in the mess hall and waiting at the door of the briefing room.

Having eaten a large breakfast; coffee, coffee, and a little coffee, I went to briefing. The first ~~briefing~~ briefing. This ~~xxxx~~ is what a first briefing is like. The others differ only because you can see the picture like there was a screen always in your head with that film always showing.

It's a little room. A little concrete room. Very drab. No curtains. Oh yeah, there are some heavy blue denim curtains for black-out. Also a lot of clever impressive signs scattered around the walls. Reading: "We're here to bomb". Noone know that so they had some signs made.

There are a lot of benches for the ordinary guys that fight the war to sit on. And a few easy chairs for the guys who are not ~~xxxxxx~~ ordinary, by virtue of rank to sprawl in. The ordinary guys sit in the backrows and the elite in the front line. No one can smoke. The original crowd voted for that when the grey cloud obliterated vision for the rear racks.

So they sit. Everyone with stern visage. Except those in the front. They don't have to fly. They aren't stern. Colonel Robinson; he's the C.O. of the whole outfit. He's the guy that must fill all demands from the division like a grocer. And as often. And for as many varying tastes. And for this skill-full manipulation he is decorated. But not the guys in Stalag Luft. Except by the Red Cross. But that's all not about this ~~xxxx~~ story.

Colonel Raeper; group exec officer. Colonel Williams; group ops. And the various ~~xxxxxx~~ squadron C.O.'s. Colonel "Smilin Jack" Lambert of the 423rd. (my own outfit); Colonel Regan of the 368th (Eager Beavers); Colonel ~~Rjordan~~ of the 369th (Fightin' Bitin') and Colonel Buckey of the 367th. All fairly good guys because they still have to fly. ~~xxx~~ They still have missions to do and they can look stern too, occasionally.

(Clay Pigeons)

Which is off the story again. It is first-briefing for me. In the front of the room, on the wall facing me, there is, at left, a blackboard. A lot of figures on it. None of which ~~click~~ with me at the time. But I see a lot of men taking notes from its content and figure it must be pretty essential to the whole affair. It has (I learned since) the time of start engines, taxi, take-off; Plus the number of groups, and types, of fighters in support that day, their ~~xxxx~~ points of interception and ~~xxxx~~ strength. The bombing altitude is there, with the indicated air speed to be flown over the target and the type of release. Then a complete list of times we will be over certain geographical check-points and at what altitude.

To the right of this thing that looks like a stock-exchange master marker, is obviously a map. You know that because the edges of it protrude from beneath a white projection screen that covers the target and route. Why it does I shall never know. Security I guess. Or maybe someone wants to observe reactions as that screen is rolled up each time. They tell me that the map is small scale. That means that more terrain can be shown and the intelligence man can better show us our planned route. If it was large scale it would mean a 'milk run'. Translation: France.

And, completing the picture, on the right wall there is another large blackboard with a lot of little airplanes in all colors stuck on in some sort of formation, they look like this:

Clark	→ 397
Carlson	→ 685
Welter	→ 435
Koch	→ 950
Adams	→ 567
Heap	980

and they are there to let the pilots ~~(~~know~~)~~ know what airplane they are flying and what ~~the~~ position in what squadron and group. We fly a sort of box here. With a low, lead and high squadron, and a low lead and high group.

I may as well sort of deviate again and go into the set-up as far as the whole Eighth is concerned. There are four squadrons in a group, there are two or three groups in a wing, and supposedly three or four wings in a division. In England there are three ~~divisions~~ divisions. And a division is supposed to consist of seven-hundred and fifty planes. Which it does when we leave for Germany. But not often on the return. Table of Organization

That's the paper set-up, the way we are stacked in the T.O.'s. But not in the air. We fly a low, lead and high group in each wing. And each group may have it's own aiming point on one target, or maybe even it's own target, after we have gone far enough into enemy territory together. And in a group it's as I said. Low, lead and high squadrons. The lead squadron ~~xxx~~ is the one that does the actual synchronizing, the rest of us just ride along and kick them out when the lead bombardier hangs by his heels from the bomb-bay and says "Let's go men, it's late".

Oh yeah, those multi-colored miniature planes. The blue ones stand for our squadron.

So here is briefing. All the guys are finally here. All the big shots too. Including the two Lt. Cols. who always stand in back of the room. Everyone ~~removes their hats~~ takes off his hat, all butts are out. Mess-kits clang a little but a general hush takes over. Willie steps up and says "It's a long one; deep in the heart of". Everyone laughs except me.

The map goes up. I swear ~~to god~~ nobody breaths while it rolls itself up. It's like life exposing death. Which ~~xxx~~ isn't a very apt description. Then the coughing starts and you can't hear anything. Major Bainsfather, he's the intelligence chief here, steps ~~quietly~~ quietly up on the ~~small~~ small platform and begins. Some of the older ~~xxx~~ crews know exactly what it is and where. We don't. That's, I don't.

"Gentlemen. Your target for today is one of prime importance to the German industrial machine. Think of DuPont, McKesson & Robbins, Standard Oil and you'll have a composite picture of the ~~xxxxxx~~ firm of I.G. Farben Fabricken in the world of Nazi industry. They make aniline dyes and they make gas. And synthetic rubber. ~~xxxxxx~~. It is a target that must be knocked out. Flak is moderate over the ~~target~~ and you can expect fighters. Your route in is good. The target itself is located at Ludwigshaven, just south of Mannheim. There will be PFF ships with you and weather does expect 10/10. If ~~xxx~~ so, the river adjacent to the factory will be a good landmark."

Then the screen ~~is down~~ goes down and the epidiascope goes on to flash pictures of the map with I.P and ~~xxxxxx~~ bombing run drawn in red. Tail or head wind, ~~xxxxxx~~ degree of approach and time of run are given. ~~xxxxxx~~ Finally pictures of the target are shown. It looks pretty good to me. A chemical works about three miles long on the bank of this river. And maybe five hundred feet wide. Or more. A good target.

Weather takes over after intelligence. He shows us a general condition slide of occlusions over England and the continent, then specific slides of clouds, their base, visibility and temperatures from here to the target and return.

Radio is next. He points out the ships with channel A VHF transmitting ~~crystals~~ crystals, and the ships that will monitor channel B for use with men in the

formation, and channel C for use with U.S. fighters. He gives everyone the

~~4-4-4~~
4-4-4

code words for authentication, and they are very screwy, like "nut-house" or maybe "New York", which will make all the guys cheer and then feel like hell for a couple of minutes. He tells the radio operators how to throw out the stuff they call "chaff", which consists of little pieces of paper, backed with metallic paint, used to deflect ~~the~~ Jerry's radar guns. Then he signs off.

Now it's Willie's turn. He goes over the rendezvous point and altitude. We are told we are leaving the coast at Beachy Head or King's Lynn, what altitude we will hit the French, Belgian or Dutch coast at, and all that sort of crap that I was not interested in because I was still very scared. Sheets with formation data and colors of the day and a thousand other things are passed around to squadron leaders, a few questions may be asked and then it's "Light 'em up". It's over. The ~~first~~ first briefing.

Bombardiers, navigators, gunners, radio-men and pilots all go into other small rooms for their own pre-flight critique. I am a bombardier. So I go, after asking someone, into Major Cook's office. I get a sheet of paper, a 12-C, with places for a lot of information that I don't know a damn thing about, like disc speed and trail and Initial Points and fusing. I don't know about those things because right then I am still to ~~scared~~ scared to know about anything. So I fill out this sheet ~~and~~ and then I'm through with the paper and ready for the job.

It is still like early night. Dark. I mean dark, and bitter cold. It is winter. We trudge to the drying room and get our stuff. I have been fitted for a chute the other day so that much is o.k. The boys that work there, "ole" and "pop" all help me along and are good guys about it. Finally I get together a mask, helmet, flak suit, chute, mac vest, heated suit, fur boots and a little courage.

It's a dark ride from the drying room to the dispersal area. The perimeter lights or a few flashes from line tents give it that funny glow as if you knew all the light in the world was being held in a box somewhere and would tear itself loose in a minute, screaming.

Finally we come to my ship. I can't remember the number. Since that morning DiFetta and crew have been shot down over France. It was a good air plane though. The C-10 was working like mad, the gunners were all ~~business~~ business. And I didn't have the slightest idea of what to do. So I went into the tent. They were there. It was solemn. The pilot was explaining fields of fire, what resistance he expected, and what in general would happen. I listened, did not try to impress anyone with that gold bar. I knew damn well they were all veterans. Except Soscia, I forget to mention him. He is Carlson's navigator, and it was the first one for him too.

Incidentally, all of this preparation for a mission has been the same from that time on. I have gone through the whole routine so that I won't have to repeat.

Now we're in the ship. It's start engines. A yellow-yellow flare from the tower. Then taxi. And finally, with fifteen ships lined up on the 24 runway like kids towing the mark at a race, the ~~green-green~~ green-green and we start sliding down that long black lane into an edge of sky we can't see. As you go by the tower there's a bunch of the guys you know, all of them that aren't flying that day. They shout and jump like mad men in giving you their personal go ahead and god speed. It makes you feel like you have never felt. In that instant, when you are being initiated into combat aviation, you feel as if you do belong and are doing something.

Now the ship is air borne and the mission is on. And now I start my story. My story about the times I have been against the enemy and what happened. (2)

All that has been said thus far has been sort of a preface. A general picture of what all of us must see on the first attempt. Everything I have talked about stays the same throughout the other following raids, except the fear is either gone or heightened.

Ludwigshafen. We were supposed to rendezvous with our ^{IN} squadron and group about fifteen minutes after take-off. To do that you fly the pre-determined compass headings for the required times, climbing or maintaining the S/OIP altitude till you see them, and when you do, you identify your own group from the flares that the lead ship will fire at three-minute intervals. Suffice to say, we never did find our bunch.

It didn't mean anything to me at the time. I couldn't have evaluated the difference between a formation and a single ship and their relative firepower. Di Betta made a decision. One which would not be made on any ship I fly in today. He decided to go in alone until he picked up some group, maybe our own eventually. So we crossed the Channel. The first time for me, and then France. And still no formation. Until we caught two other ~~stragglers~~ stragglers and made a three-ship element out of the mess. Today that would be suicide. It should have been that day, but someone decided it would not be. I was too busy to worry. The boys in the back had started to call out the fighters and I wanted to see what they looked like. They didn't look like anything definite. Just curling contrails a mile away. Even that didn't scare me. It was all new, and you don't realize what power there is in anything you have never really seen.

So we flew that way across all of France and most of Germany. There wasn't any real activity. Too few planes for the scattered flak guns to go after. And their fighters were evidently too busy to bother with us. Finally, near the target we caught a group to our left, evidently headed for the same target as ourselves. (Oh yeah, I forgot this, the ground haze encountered at the French coast had gradually built itself up into a complete 10/10 undercast. Ground obscured) We were carrying 12 500lb. M-43s. I wondered what the other group was carrying. It would make a difference if I dropped on their synchronization with heavier bombs. But there was no way to find out.

We were on the target. Flying at about 23,000 ft. Just above the cloud ~~ceiling~~ ceiling. They (I later learned it was the 303rd group) opened their doors, meaning it was the I.P. at last. Then the flak started. Even with a solid sheet of cloud between them and us, they were still very sharp. Sent up a random barrage, preceded by two large ground rockets, evidently a fighter signal. Because, as soon as we opened our doors, the Focke-Wulfs hit us. First they ran through the group we were to drop on, on our left, firing rockets as they came through. I saw one 17 explode. Then our own top turret called one out on our tail and ~~asked~~ asked Di Betta to bump it. He did. The Jerry did not come in, especially after being given a little persuader by the tail and top. I was watching for bombs to go. The flak was really in earnest now. All of a sudden Di Betta yelled to Wolf to ~~feather~~ feather number four engine. It had been hit by flak. Then their bombs went. And what a sickening sight. They were loaded with 42 100lb incendiaries. I with ~~me~~ mine should fall short. But I dropped. All three of us in our little formation did. And got the hell out of there.

The flak was behind us. But the tail gunner had gotten a taste of it. He called me to say that he had been hit in the face and was blinded. I waited till we were out of flak range and took the walk-around to go back to him. It wasn't bad. A piece had come in through his left window, cutting him on the cheek below the left eye, but filling both his eyes with plexi-glas dust. Painful as hell.

bottle

But there was nothing I could do at the time. We had no water to wash his eyes with. I tore one of the first aid kits off the wall, put a little iodine on the cut, a small bandage and left him there. Although blind, it was better that he should stay there and be able to at least fire his guns when anyone else called fighters on the tail. He was a good soldier. He stayed there for two hours on oxygen with nothing to see with. Assuming everything was o.k. I was proud of these guys. And all like them. If it happened now I know enough to transfer a waist man back there and get the tail into the radio room. But then I didn't know anything.

So the number four was conked out. Had to make it on three. But that didn't mean anything. We did. We got back, fired our red-red over the field and had the wounded man taken off. I think he was o.k. and his eyes weren't permanently affected. I hope so. That was the end of number one. Soscia and I were no longer virgins. And we had been broken in the hard way.

Sgt bf | ← Number ² ~~Two~~ ---- No Ball, France

The second was sort of a kick. I wish now that I hadn't had it. It made me expect too much. It was what we call a "no ball". No one knows just why we call them that. Except, maybe the RAF started it. Usually it consists of some constructions, ski sights or ammo dumps that intelligence finds out about. PRU verifies its existence and occasionally the big bombers of strategic air force are given a rest and go in to get them. These are the "milk runs". There is usually little flak and most often no enemy fighter resistance.

This was a milk run. Even a thick cream run. There were two targets, ~~A~~ A and B installations. They didn't bother to tell us at briefing just what the targets were, but we sort of knew they must be rocket gun sites. They were the big stink at that time. Papers were full of it. We had two forces going after the two individual targets. ~~One was farther in than the other. That was mine, or rather ours.~~

~~Well,~~ It was a good mission for us, but not for the air offensive. Ground haze prevented our seeing the thing. God knows we tried. Went in from our I.P., which was actually on the French coast, ~~it was that close (20 miles in) three times, taking a terrific chance with the flak if there was any, and still couldn't find it. Wick led and Borysoff was deputy. The only flak we saw was clear off at nine o'clock, but that was enough to give us credit for a mission. So we got it, and I had two. And that was January 21st. You can see the time between these first few.~~

Sgt bf | ← Number Three-Frankfurt-^{DM} ~~aa~~-Main

I haven't taken any notes, so I can't remember all the things that went on ~~xxxxxxx~~ around this time. I think I was flying with Welter, though. He had done about five as co-pilot and was ready for us and we were certainly ready for him.

This was really a big target. ~~The especial favorite of the boys at the time. A city that housed many of Germany's essential Wurkee. They expected a PFF deal really, but of course briefed us on visual targets. I forget exactly what the visual target was now. Some air field or factory just west of the city's center.~~

I can remember that there was a stadium as a landmark, and some other things, a marshalling yards too. But what they really told us about was the PFF part of the thing. Why in hell they kept kixef briefing us on something we wouldn't see anyway was beyond me. Maybe for morale. I don't know.

It was the center of Frankfurt. The old medieval center, hemmed in by a wall that must have been three centuries old ~~and~~. It formed a kind of pentagon, with residential and industrial elements within its core. Bounded on the south by a distinctive bend in the river. It was a good target, if it contained what they said it did, and should have been good for the PFF men to pick up because of the river being so close.

So we went. I can't recall all the details. At that time it seemed the end of everything. The most terrific flak I had seen. And this because I was learning to respect and fear flak, not like fighters. I can remember them throwing up some 150mm stuff, the first I had ever seen. And since then I have only seen four other bursts. It is very black and as large as a thirty foot square room. They were tracking our squadron with it. And by radar. Again it was 16/10/ underneath. We dropped the bombs and beat it. No fighter trouble, or at least none that I can think of. I had three. ~~This was January 29. Eddie West flew as did Leedy and the rest of the boys. And we felt like veterans. Bowing to no one. After that raid, for months, no one knew the results of our work exactly. But it was PFF as they had planned.~~

8/1/67 | ← Number Four--Braunschweig (Brunswick)

The next day, ~~the 29th~~ ^{29 (Jan.)}. This was the beginning of an offensive directed strictly against the GAF. I was to see much of it formulate from plan stage through reality. It was to be a hard fight. It is a hard fight. It has not been won, but we have hit them where they never imagined they could be hit. The 11th of January had marked one of the most ~~flak~~ fierce aerial battles ever fought. The two Schweinfurts and Halberstadt, that was the last one. And now we were to continue. The target was an airfield that was serving as a depot and repair shop for Focke-Wulfs and Messerschmidts. From the factory to Brunswick. It was, with Oschersleben, Halberstadt, Bernberg and the rest, a vital point in German single and twin engine fighter ~~production~~ production. You see, we weren't as concerned with their bomber production at the time. Their own offensive concerned itself with bombing London and "random", and not as heavily as in 1941. We wanted to make the skies clear for ourselves and for the coming invasion (it was always 'coming').

As I remember, some divisions caught hell, but we didn't. I am speaking of fighter hell. Flak was odd. Because it was an airfield, and fairly deep within the country, they hadn't bothered to throw ~~to~~ together much of a ground defense system. ~~(later they moved there mobile units in but quick).~~

We bombed, but again it was PFF and you just don't hit pin point targets through the clouds. I never did find out the results, but think we missed. At any rate we have had to go back there several times since. (as I write this today, the 26th of April, the group has just returned from there). Flak was light. We sustained no battle damage and the crew was unhurt. So that was the fourth.

8/1/67 | ← Number Five--Wilhelmshaven

I had always read the Boy Allies books when I was a kid, and they seemed to be concerned with Lord Hastings and the British fleet and someone was always slipping through the submarine nets at Cuxhaven or Wilhelmshaven. They were places I knew. I had been on a small yacht, cutting their mine cables and destroying their fleet at one blow. I knew this port. It handled much German shipping and housed the crippled war vessels in some excellent dry docks. We were going after these places because the last vestige of the battle for the Atlantic was still being waged.

~~The target with its various Bahns and ship ways~~, is usually loaded with "sea cows" (cargo submarines) and a few odd destroyers. A good harbor. All this was our target. We were after the Tirpitz locks. ~~That was our own M.P.F.~~

Again the raid was uneventful, except some of the route took us over the North Sea. I hadn't ~~flown~~ flown over much water before and it was a thrill and a relief (since then I have ~~learned~~ learned that, excepting flak boats, they can't touch you with ack-ack and their fighters won't venture out very far from land).

Over the target it was still 10/10. I had flown over the continent five times and still hadn't seen the target, Germany or even land in some cases. Flak was good. They had much to defend. It was PFF again and we did do some damage. The PRU next day showed us that. I had earned an Air Medal. I was a big dog. I was a veteran. And I had seen nothing yet.

8/16/41 ← Number Six --- ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Frankfurt

Back again. They evidently knew we hadn't done much the time before. Or at least no Swedish travelers had reported on damage as yet. Again they thought it would be through the clouds technique. And it was. I was fated ~~to guess to never see Frankfurt. Even though I helped drop plenty of tonnage on it.~~

This was ^a also the commencement of ~~these~~ four raids in four days ⁱⁿ ~~5~~ ⁴ days. The first raid you went on. The second you accepted but with a mild protest. The third was "Can they really do this to me?" The fourth; you got out of bed muttering just to yourself "Oh no. Not really".

It was ~~a~~ a mess. Going in was o.k., except that the lead navigator made a slight mis^a calculation and took us over the north tip of the Ruhr going in, and back through the whole ~~damn~~ valley coming out. But over the target itself was where the s^a hit the fan. High clouds. We were flying as high as we could go as it was. About 24,000. Other groups started coming in at us from all angles. ~~of the compass rose.~~ The first wall of flak that we flew through was Frankfurt, we thought. The PFF men were mixed up and couldn't locate the town. We cut out to the right and found another wall of the stuff. But evidently this wasn't it either. And all this was going on with bomb-bay doors open.

Complete ~~is~~ undercast so I didn't know where we were. Then, as malfunctions plus nervousness began to take hold, bombs started dropping at random. In our squadron some joker let loose by accident and Tobias dropped on him. Then mine went. And, as fortune always had it, a clear spot beneath let me follow them down. They hit a small town and field adjacent. What a waste of money and time. Meanwhile the rest of the group was heading back toward England with bomb bay

doors open, having evidently given up the idea of ever seeing Frankfurt.

And it began to get cold. I was still a neophyte in ~~the wearing of~~^y heated clothing. I did have a suit on, but only my G.I.'s and fur boots on the feet. Consistently -34°, I ~~begin to feel~~^{felt} my feet go numb. The slipstream was coming up through the ports in the chin turret inspection plates. At first the feet hurt like hell, and that was allright because I knew that there was at least feeling.

I was getting groggy, not giving a damn. We flew and flew. Finally when we hit France it had cleared up below and we could see a gigantic airfield at 12 o'clock. And I could see their flak guns going off. Plus a few parked planes, phoneys or not, they seemed a good target. We flew over it. Got all their flak and no one dropped their bombs. I was so ~~blinded~~ mad I couldn't see. Here we were, some ships still with their bomb bays open, and no bombs out. And guys actually ~~had~~ returned with their ~~eggs~~.

(Oh yeah, I forgot the Ruhr. We flew up it's entire length with all the flak in Germany around us. And one guyz, just one, was sharp enough to realize that we were just going to fool around like this, so he dropped his bombs at hundred foot train right in the center of the heaviest flak. I hope to hell he got a battery. That was Laughlin, Tripp's toggler. He's down in Germany now. There was and is a gag about the flak over the Ruhr (Happy Valley): It is thick enough for gunners to walk from ship to ship, borrowing ammo)

We got shot up a little. It was our own ship, 505R, but we also got back. And there were no fighters.

But the big story was my foot, I guess. At least it was to me. Although I had slid around in the seat and turned the nose guns sideways to ~~balance~~ cut out the slipstream, the left one still stayed absolutely numb. The right thawed out eventually. I remembered during the time it was all going on, an article by Sir Hubert Wilkins on frostbite in the Arctic. You should take off your shoes and socks, rub the foot, put the socks on backwards and the warmth will thaw that member out. I had read it in This Week a week before. I did it. It didn't help a damn bit. But, by stamping the feet together, I did losseen up the right one. But, even after we had let down over the Channel and the ~~temperature~~ temperature had returned to ~~normal~~ normal, ~~it~~ wouldn't let go (the left one).

I knew I was frostbitten. I hoped not enough for amputation. We fired the red-red again over the field and Doc Dantzig was ready with the ambulance to take me off when we hit the taxi ~~strip~~ strip. ~~I~~ Dashed to the hospital. I was ~~soared~~ soared. He looked at it, it was a little white, but O.K. he said. So they soaked it ~~in~~ in cold water, made warmer by degrees, for about two hours, then they kept me in over nite. The Doc said I would get the Purple Heart. That was a ~~laugh~~ laugh. With guys arms ~~blown~~ blown off. I wanted it, I'll admit that. I like medals, even though they aren't worth a ~~damn~~ damn. Missed the next two raids, they were milk runs too. France again. I was sorry as hell. So I had the Purple heart/ and six raids and this was February 4th.

9/165 | ← Number Seven---Leipzig

Another spot I knew. I knew a guy who was educated at Leipzig and Heidleburg and Nuremberg. They were seats of learning. Why the hell should we go there. I didn't want to hat them, because I know by now, that, whatever

10-10-10-10-20-10

the target in a city, some bombs would hit people and buildings that you didn't really want to hit. Maybe that was sort of my private Monte Cassino in advance. There was a university. I had heard the Student Prince. I liked the Germany that was older than I was. I liked the land and didn't really want to burn it or destroy what had take so long to build. But, like Cassino, there was something there that had to be tom down, or we could not procede with our offensive.

It was another plane works ~~On the east side of the city.~~ A series of slant roofed buildings that were set aside enough from the city's heart so that we could conceivably hit it without going into the town.

That day, or rather the day before, I had been talking to a young RCAF bomb aimer forced down at our base in a Halifax. His fifth raid had been to Leipzig. Of course it was at night, but I asked him how it was. "A shaky do", he answered. Which ~~wasn't~~ meant to me, rough as a cob. The flak was heavy he said. And the night fighters were there. Which didn't help my general feeling about the whole affair.

Also, it was ~~another mission of the~~ the first of a series of raids we are now participating in; ~~nine~~ Nine hours long, ~~To show Jerry that there was nothing safe from either us or the fifteenth.~~ But six hours on oxygen I didn't look forward to. I was scared again. 15th AF.

But, oddly enough, nothing happened that hadn't happened. It was a long haul. Some five hundred miles one way. But the target was visible, for the first time to me. So was all of Germany. And we hit it. We were carrying incendiaries. And when we arrived, the group ahead had already done its job and good. The thing was afire a million places. And then our load went down and Comstock called the bombs in the center of a group of long buildings. We had done it. And I don't think any bombs went into the university section. Flak was terrific. Mostly 88 and 105, but lots of it and in barrage. Not accurate but frightening. That was the seventh and on February 20th...

Sept 68 ← Number Eight---Bernburg

This was it. After seven missions I still didn't know anything about war until Bernburg. We had started the series of four (Oh yeah, Leipzig came on a Sunday morning. We had planned a large "group screw" for that Saturday night. A large affair. Everyone stinking. The bar closes at eleven and the alert is on. So is a four-day push, Again against the Lufttraffe)

It was an airfield with a lot of parked planes on it. PRU had discovered almost seventy fighters scattered over the field. It was grass as I recall. The three divisions had targets in all the big four plane producing depots and factory centers. Which I later learned was bad. It meant that our fighter support was scattered and would be forced into area support. And that's what happened. The GAF had decided to fight and they would pick the gaps ~~target~~ for their attacks.

The route in was o.k. There was no flak. There were no fighters. We were all relaxed and ready only to sweat out another routine trip. The target was visible, though the rest of German was covered with low clouds.

We had to fly over the town of Bernburg to take a good run from the I.P.

11-11-11-11-11-11-

And there was flak in the town. The Germans are smart. They can figure in a second from what direction the winds aloft are. And they know that the attacking bombers are seeking the best tailwind possible to increase ground speed in avoiding flak. So they had our route down and knew we would be forced to go over their batteries. It was light though.

We were loaded with both H.E. and frag clusters with a few incendiaries for equal measure. We had planned to raise hell with their parked aircraft. These ships on the ground had either been flown there for modification or repairs. The incendiaries were 100 lb M-47's. Gas, latex, crude oil and a small explosive charge to scatter the stuff. It would effectively burn through cloth or wood struts or ailerons. The frags were designed in small 136 lb clusters of six to throw shrapnel around through every surface. And the demos were from the group that had a series of hangars and shops for their M.P.I. It would be a good show.

So we dropped our bombs. There was still a little snow on the ground. I could count about forty-five planes down there. There were huge brown burns on the grass from ~~knixgx~~ bombing done weeks ~~px~~ previously. Our bombs hit on the southern edge of the field and in some installations. Not ~~axxxtixx~~ exactly where we had been briefed to hit, but good enough.

We started home. The day was clean, sunny and warm. It became 10/10 again beneath as we passed through Germany on the way home. Our route was a good one, but the under-cast made it difficult for navigators and we were dependent upon IFF navigation, what little pin pointing might be done through cloud breaks, DR and G fixes when we reached France.

All of a sudden; I had been looking through a hole at a little winter ~~xxxxx~~ resort in Germany, through the glasses, Loedy called "For christ's sake there are fighters at eleven o'clock". I dropped the glasses like they were molten steel. And they came in. I had never been under direct attack. I felt sick enough to die. Yet knew I must fight to stay alive. They came in, like a horde of some rotten monsters. Sleek little planes. Grey, milky grey. They were ME-109's and they had taken us all by surprise. The whole group. They had waited in the sun for a gap in our support ~~xx~~ and now they had found it. Lining up, they patiently waited to come in one at a time.

Like stars twinkling when you couldn't see stars twinkle, the 20 mm shells started to track down our left wing. Toombs was leading the squadron. We were his deputy. He did no evasive action. And they hit him in the number three. He slid off underneath us, pecked down at about two o'clock with his three engine streaming smoke. Then he caught fire. Both wings broke off at the same time. The fuselage went spinning down, turning over and over with the sun ~~xxxxx~~ reflecting off the sides. ~~xxxxx~~ Engulfed in flames, it finally blew up and the small pieces of aluminum went fluttering down. I saw no chutes.

They were still coming. At last ~~xxxx~~ looked as though he was heading for our ship at about ~~xxxxxx~~ eleven. I told Eddie to "get the bastard". He got on the left gun and I swung the chin turret around to start tracking him. I was surprisingly cool. Not afraid. A little sore, but cool. We tracked him till he was within range for his own guns, but we never gave him a chance to point his nose directly at us for accuracy. We let him have it. Like a blast out of Hell. He did a sharp half snap roll on his side and went smoking by. We were shooting at him until he slide out of range on the left side of the ship and I told Klepper to be ready for

12-12-12-12-12-12-12p

him. The boys said later that he caught fire, peeled off and spun in. But his canopy didn't come off and he didn't explode. We couldn't see if he had crashed or not, so we couldn't say it was a definite destroyed. (at interrogation Eddie and I flipped for who would put in the claim and I won. Got a damaged from it).

It was the first time I had seen that long smooth shell called Jerry. With the stern square Maltese cross on the side of the ~~XXX~~ fuselage and the ~~swastika~~ swastika on the vertical fin. It was a thrill. They flew wonderfully. They flew so close that I could see the pilot's face above his mask. And I wondered what he was thinking. It was such a thrill that I was unable to fire at the first bandit who made a pass. I was spell bound. Like buck-fever I guess. It was wonderful. Warner Bros. will never create what I saw or felt.

The squadron was smashed as a formation. Oliver climbed to the high squadron. ~~XXXXX~~ Welter tried to take over the lead but there was no one to lead. And the 423rd. consisted of a one ship squadron. Adams had been shot up and had to peel off and hit the deck. Richards and the rest had all disappeared. We had all "bumped" it individually and had broken up the attack and ourselves. And then, just as suddenly, when the fourteenth German had run through us, it was over. All I could remember was a 109 coming in a two o'clock high, I swung the guns around to fire and I saw SIX MACHINE GUNS IN HIS WING SHOOTING AT HALLOCK. And I waited for death. Just like waiting for chow. Knowing it would come eventually. But it didn't. They were gone. They had tried and they had missed. And our forty-sevens were back and we were safe again. To take stock of ourselves. The crew checked in o.k. and we proceeded.

All was o.k. till the PFF jokers took us over the Ruhr again. Just like tip. But the ~~flak~~ flak started. It was heavy ~~and~~ and not kidding at all, and I didn't give a damn. I was tired inside. I wanted to lay down and sleep and I couldn't. I think I screamed at those bursts to do their damndest, cause they didn't scare me any more. Then they stopped. We had picked up a few holes, but were o.k. in general. Home at last. This was the eighth and it was February 22nd.

Number Nine---Frankfurt

It had become the big joke. We could try and try and try but never hit it. Always PFF and we began to lose respect for those boys as of then. This was my third time over there. I hated their flak but knew we must go until the job was done.

The trip was uneventful. After Bernburg and Leipzig it was short. Only six hours. No fighters or flak. Oh yeah, there was a little over Belgium coming in. But that was nothing.

The raid would have been just another except for the fact that I made my first mistake in nine raids. We weren't flying ~~XX~~ our own ship. Clark had just been issued 897, with those goddamn new G type door releases. So I was going to let my bombs go in train over the city's center. Came time for bombs away and they didn't go electrically. I reached for the salvo lever automatically as Poston told me they were hung up, but Welter got excited. He had never have bombs stick. He salvoed. The screws came disengaged from the doors and the

eggs fell. But the damage was done. I had never been confronted with doors that had to be wound up. I knew it would happen some day and now it had. We were at 22,000, a dangerous altitude. I was scared again. But I threw off the flak suit and started back to look at them.

Walter had called me desperately to get them closed. It was cutting down hisxxx air speed and he couldn't keep up with the formation. I had to close them somehow.

When I got back there the doors were open and the screws were down. Rods still with the screws. I had gone back without a mask in my excitement and didn't feel anything until I suddenly realized that I was about ready to go out as of then. I scrambled, fell back to the nose and grabbed Eddie's mask, put it on an emergency bottle and started back. Looked again.

Then I decided. I had never flown in one of these ships. I didn't know anything about their door mechanism. It was my fault. I closed the doors. There is only an open and closed position on this drum, no neutral. The screws came up, dropped the retrieving rods and stopped. I didn't know this. Then ~~xxxxxxx~~ I put the handle in open again, the screws went down. I left the handle this way. If the screws had been with the doors they would have stopped turning, but they weren't. So they drove straight down through the bomb bay doors and kept turning. However the limit switch on the rear screws had burned out so they stopped and didn't penetrate the doors. There I was, not having the slightest idea of what the hell to do. So I put my hand on the turning screw in front, thinking it was slip-stream that did it. The catch on the end of the screw caught my glove, and, but for god's grace, would have taken my hand with it. As it was, my glove was torn off and chopped into shreds and a little hand was taken out of my thumb. The damage was done. Pretty soon the ~~xxxxxx~~ bomb bay motor burned itself out and I told ~~WALTER WALTER~~ Walter that nothing could be done.

We made it, with open bomb bays. The ~~xxxxxxx~~ armament men chewed me out good. So did Huistra. They had never even flown their brand new plane and were highly leaked off at me for ruining it. It was fixed that night though. That was the ninth. And on March 2nd.

Number Ten----- First Berlin Attempt

We had waited for this. The Eighth had waited for it. And our own people at home had talked about it. (though later I heard that, from press bungling the people in the states had imagined that we had been over the Big B before).

It had become like any good latrine rumor. A place I thought we would never hit, because the RAF, in its sprawling manner, must have plastered everything within that city. Berlin, quit kidding jack. That's the end as far as we are concerned. Yet twice it had been briefed in our group. In fact I had been briefed for it the day before we took off on this attempt. It still was unreal. Although I was beginning to become suspicious, because Doc Little had just take over from Baker and Tokio had stamped him "Doo Much". He might, for

reasons his own, want to go over this capitol too. I was a sceptic. I didn't want to go either.

Yet, when they had briefed it again this day, I knew we were destined to make history for the Eighth. Even though I didn't particularly feel like a martyr that day. For two years we had been garnering our forces for a blow like this. The RAF had had their factories and ships in readiness for four years. They were outfitted. They knew the enemy. We were still sounding him out. It was going to be an experiment. Purely. Yet we had to do it and knew we did.

The target was, if they were giving us the straight dope, important enough to warrant us doing a precision job on it. The Erkner ball bearing works. With Swedish importations, the partial capacity of Schweinfurt, and this, the Germans could still, with a priority arrangement, secure enough of these vital bearings for the GAF at least. We must destroy it. Hitler was ~~XX~~ satisfied, in fact even a little ~~xxxx~~ smug I thought about this plant. No camouflage. No defense at all, save from Berlin's own outer ring civilian defense guns.

It was on a river, near a lake we identified as a boxing glove. A good target for even PFF stuff.

But we never got there. The route in was over the North Sea. For which we were very happy. It would take us into Germany just between Hamburg and Hanover. A good flak-less trail if followed. Everything was predicted as perfect. Except the weather.

From the Dutch coast on the clouds began to build up. We were supposed to fly at about 10,000 to stay off oxygen and conserve gas, but these cumulus forced us up. There were high cirrus, haze and high fog. We climbed ~~XXX~~ higher and higher and went further in all the time. At last I think ~~we~~ we all knew a recall was coming. But it didn't. We passed Kiel and saw their flak and about three o'clock.

We finally got the recall opposite Hamburg and forty-five minutes away from Berlin. I was a little sore, cause I knew we would just have to go back there again. But happy, cause I don't like flak even a little bit.

And then it started. It seems the whole air force didn't get the recall at the same time, and there we were, headed back to England with groups and wings still headed for the target. We lost nine airplanes that day. Without being attacked by the enemy or having his flak even touch our edges.

The classic one was the group that flew through our own. I mean through. We in the nose saw it coming and all phoned our pilots. Obviously they saw it too, but there was nothing else we could do except strap on the ~~xxxx~~ chutes. We actually flew through each other. Planes peeled off on each side, did wonderful evasive action, dived and ~~xxxx~~ climbed. We missed them. We had no formation, but we had missed them and were alive. Our waist gunners saw two ships collide and blow up. The other collisions involved three ships at the least. It was a bad day for us. And we didn't reach the target. But it was a mission. For me it meant the first cluster to that Air Medal. The initial "dingleberry" as the boys would call it. The tenth and on March 3rd.

Number Eleven---Berlin

Anti-camax. The day before, when we had been attempting to get in, our fighters, having gone across the continent, were waiting over the city for us and they stole the thunder. Papers all over the world hailed them as the first U.S. planes over Big B. But still no bombs from our planes had been

dropped on the boys. So it didn't really count (I sort of felt sad ~~for~~ for Austin J. Mack. He graduated with me. Was lead bombardier in the group that was to lead the wing and the division over there the first time . He would have been the first to get there. But some other jerk did. Some guy who promptly got the DFC for flying over there first. All we got was two fresh eggs)

This~~xxxx~~ was the time. We knew we would make it. Not that we were soers. We just felt it I guess. And we did make it. The same route. It was clear over the sea. No flak and no fighters to bother us with. About an hour after we penetrated their coast we were there. Skirted the city, but visibility was good and we could see what the RAF had done. And they had one plenty. At least, on the outskirts they had. Smashed rows of apartment houses and residential sections. Hit factories. In general created an uninhabitable mess.

We were lucky, a small curtain of clouds hung at about fifteen thousand feet just beyond our target. But it was clear. The fires had already started. Other groups has done a magnificent job. I have never seen bombing like that, and our own. ~~W~~ The run itself, from the I.P. was free from flak, except for those few random bursts that came from guns on the city's edge. Our load of HE and fire went down. We followed it all the way. Right in the center of the smoke, where the target should be, or rather used to be. There were four buildings. ~~Remxxxx~~ Three ~~inxxxx~~ a row and one to the side. All with the typical corrugated roof~~X~~ (or at least painted that way).

We swingoff and had to run through a little of the city's main flak defence. It was good . Plenty good. But didn't last too long. And then we were free. We had bombed the greatest enemy stronghold and were still intact. No fighters had suicidaly attempted to defend their inner core. It had been a myth. Like Truk. A myth. They didn't give a damn about their city anymore. It must have been a shell.

Our fighter cover was the finest I have ever seen. Although they took chances in flying as close to us as they did, they trusted us and we paid them back. No one was excited enough to fire on them and they were around us all through the trip. I was more elated after that raid than any other. They were through stopping us now. They might try and shoot down a helluva lot of us but we could always hit them the following day and one man could step into another's shoes an hour later. I didn't object to the fact that we were all robots, all figures in a GHQ ledger. We had done the job and still could react as individuals. We didn't have to accept their orders for happiness or fear or security. We had ~~knix~~ bluffed the Germans and won. Each man in the air that day had done it. The planning and advance strategy had been important; yes. But guys like us were all-important. I was happy. And it was the eleventh. On March 6th.

Number Twelve---Berlin

The drive had started. We were out to show the Germans that this sort of thing didn't happen just once for the kids at home. And we were~~N~~st just out to drop leaflets. It was no kidding. I wasn't afraid any more, none of us

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were anymore. We knew the score. A few fighters might attackxxx a division. But not all of us. They were being forced to save themselves for the defense of targets that were really important. And I was beginning to wonder if there were any of these left. In fact I began to wonder what the hell they kept fighting for.

We flew a different route, although I can't remember exactly where it did take us. We hit the center of the city, or near it. A little more ~~xxxx~~ cloud cover, though still visible to us. Flak was heavier and tracked us in almost a complete 270 turn to the right in getting off the target. The city was a mess. No fighters. Our support was good. The 12th and on March 8th.

Number Thirteen.(or twelve B)---Gesserthausen

This was the killer. Though not a man gave a damn for superstition, the thirteenth was it. To be definitely sweated out. Most of the crew were on their 13th that day. And the raid involved new territory for all of us, south-eastern Germany. Fighter strength down there was supposed to be good. They were ready in that sector for blows from both us and the 15th A.F. Lots of airfields. And one was our target.

Gesserthausen. A drome near Augsburg, (and that city would be our secondary in case of PFF) No flak over the primary, but quite a bit over the secondary. We prayed for visual bombing.

It wasn't visual. Although, as I can remember we did not bomb the secondary, but dropped on our target through a slight opening in the clouds, utilizing both PFF and visual methods. We didn't hit it though. But ~~xxxx~~ the flak wasn't bad and none of us think much of Uncle Sam during those particular moments.

On route in and out, very little flak and no fighters. I began to lose respect for the GAF, a very sad mistake.

The only thing that really marked the trip as eventful was my first glimpse of the Swiss alps, and of Switzerland itself, around 160 miles distant. They were lovely. Snow-capped, a ridge that extended as far as the eye could reach. And from our height the eye catches quite a bit of ~~xxxxxxx~~ scenery. If anything happened, it was comforting to know that we could always go there. I still didn't have enough missions to make me care particularly for home as ~~xxxx~~ against life. So Eddie planned a route there. But nothing happened. They still were enticing though. The alps I mean.

the Thirteenth was over. Nothing had happened. I came home and on March 16th.

Number ~~xxxx~~ Fourteen----Lechfield

But the job wasn't done. The Luftwaffe still existed in strength in that sector of Germany. They must be cut down to size. And their plants for production in Southern Germany must be demolished. So we were to go back there again. The next day.

Same deal, either Augsburg or Munich as secondaries. With a new drome as our primary. This time we saw it. And bombed it. Did a fair job on it, enough to end that series of blows for a few days. And say those ~~xxxxxx~~ lovely alps

again. But still nothing happened. Usual flak over the target. No enemy fighters and our support was good. Germany looked almost ~~xxxxxxx~~ serene. But of course terrain is not ~~much~~ much give-away to ~~political~~ political sentiment. The 14th on March 18th. I was a veteran. Welter was god to me. The crew ~~were~~ were good boys.

Number Fifteen-----Berlin

Had to go again for something someone forgot I guess. I don't remember much about this one except that the flak over the city was more deadly than it ever had been. Jake's waist gunner had his rear end blown off, which made me a little sick. And the group got shot up quite a bit. But we made it, bombed and got back. 15th on March 22nd. I had earned the second cluster to the Air Medal.

Number Sixteen---Munster (Hamm)

This was sort of a mess. We were briefed on an airfield, or rather an aircraft factory outside of Munster, with that city as secondary for PFF effort.

It was a short raid. All we had to worry about was missing the Ruhr. Which we did. But ~~we~~ we also missed both briefed targets and hit something equally important, and far more so, if results are ~~considered~~ considered.

The weather was undercast from the beginning. No fighter resistance, and little ~~flak~~ flak. Perhaps some on entering the coast.

Our primary was covered. The PFF boys hunted around for Munster, and, thinking they had found it, dropped their ~~load~~ load. Except it wasn't ~~Munster~~ Munster. It was Hamm. There was a little flak, not accurate, just filling the sky. We all went home thinking a few more civilians had had it. But ~~such~~ such was not the case. By accident. Purely. We had done a job that would have taken us months to do with perfect visibility and precise efforts. We had hit the bottle-neck between two marshalling yards in Hamm. The largest railroad yards in Germany, or Europe for that matter, they can handle ten thousand cars every twenty-four hours. And our bombs, dropped with a device that guarantees hitting only an area, had struck directly at this point. One cluster of six ~~5000~~ 1000 lb H.E.s had hit the track intersection as it crossed the ~~river~~ river. The rest had hit parts of ~~the~~ town and other rail ~~installations~~ installations. Chance photos, obtained by groups that followed ~~us~~ us, showed us these results. Everyone was happy. The sixteenth time I had been happy, on the 23rd of March.

Number Seventeen-----Frankfurt

Again the same target. I did not know why then, now I know we were administering the death blows to an already dying city. All our efforts had been PFF, each time we returned we thought it was because the last job had not been good enough. Yet, actually, it was to heap destruction upon destruction, so that the Germans could not repair stricken installations fast enough to maintain production (~~I~~ I learned that, among other factories in the old city, there was one producing vitally needed naval crank shafts. We had destroyed that)

18-18-18-18-18-18-18-18

So we were headed back again. It was my fourth trip over that city. And around the seventh for the group. And it was a good raid. They still threw up flak, though why I shall never know. Their fighters laid off. They must have sensed the city's value. Routes in and out were good and we weren't bothered.

Again it was PFF. 10/10, completing my record of never having seen Frankfurt.

A week ago we were told in an official intelligence report, compiled from PRU ~~XXXX~~, reports from agents within the country and from the proverbial Swedish travelers views, of just what we had done.

The Major said that whoever had written the report must have wept as he did so. And he was right. For an official release, it was the most poignant thing I had ever heard. The author must have been abroad and seen the great city. Yet I sat in the back of the room and drank it all in, with the other barbarians, because I didn't particularly give a goddamn about their culture any more than they did. They killed some good things at Munich when they burned the books. Evidently they didn't care about the old Germany. Well, if they didn't, I didn't.

We had smashed the city hall. We had burned the top off the university. We smashed their rail station. We smashed all the ~~xxxxxx~~ residential section within the old city. There was ~~xxxxxx~~ a map of that part of the city within the wall, and the map, or that part of it we had been briefed on, was red. Meaning destruction; total and partial.

We had hit ship yards, bearing plants, chemical works, small industries, naval shoppes. We had finished Frankfurt. And we were told that morning that we might as well forget about the city as a future target of opportunity. Now it had been killed. Seventeen. I went last to Frankfurt on

Number Eighteen---No Ball, France

It was a gift. I had had a pretty rough time. One of these deals with sixteen german ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ trips thrown in. I was a happy guy. It would be a milk run. Only it wasn't. And I found out that they Germans were never fools. And I learned to respect the guys in light and medium bombardment, for whom we never had had anything but gags. Their lot is rough. Flak like the flak in France is not pleasant and it kills just as good as any weapon.

The target was located a Wizernes. It was a construction. An old construction, because all ~~xxxx~~ of our no ball maps are RAF. But the PRU showed that the jerries had been working on it lately. We all had different ideas of what it was. They didn't bother to tell us at briefing just what the hell it was. I thought it was a digging for another semi-Siegfried-Maginot line. It wasn't in far. About twenty miles. But far enough to constitute a part of the second defense line the Germans had been boasting about. The other guys thought it was a rocket ski-sight. Anyway, it had been bombed before, but not good enough. So the pin point 306th went after it.

We were divided into squadrons. It was too small a target for a group cluster to work effectively. Wick led our squadron. Beach led another.

We would only be over France for about forty minutes, but that was enough. Sort of like putting your toe into cold water and then dragging it right out.

19-19-19-19-19-19-19

But we hadn't figured on the flak. We were too near St. Omar and had neglected to think about that in our excitement in getting such a good deal. Wick took at least a ten minute run. That's o.k. if he had needed it. I don't think he did, the vispility was too good. So we ran right down a valley of flak that wasn't just barrage, but was damn good, aimed predicted stuff.

We got all the stuff from St. Omar, plus a few little extras along the line. Shot the hell, out of us, and to top it all off, we missed the target. I was sick. Even I, the unpatriotic kid, could take it all; if we did the job right. I was sore at Wickxx and the whole goddamned world. We landed. Each guy knowing that the day of the milk run was over, definitely. Actually it always had been thusly, but we just didn't latch on till that day.

We were a bunch of scared kids that night. It was the 26th of M March and my eighteenth. It was a gift, but I didn't want any more like it thanks just the same old man.

Number Nineteen---La Rochelle

This was another present more or less; Not like the Xmas stocking no ball deal, but a good solid raid that pxxentzxxix presented less to look forward to distastefully than other French epics.

It seems the Germans had entrenched a couple of their young Luftwaffe kids in a primary or basic school for Focke-Wulfs down around the gorgeous Bay of Biscay district. In fact, right on a peninsula jutting into said bay. And it seems intelligence had decided that one of the ways to nip the GAF was to do just thatKxxxxz, nip it, in the bud.xest-2em-thexixzxx Got 'em in the traffic pattern, the way the XX Polish had done. In KIXKX effect of course. Actually we weren't altogether as versatile as single engined planes. We just dropped bombs.

So that was the deal. Through Western and south-western France to an I.P below the target.

~~WIKYXXIX~~ I think Philips was leading, xxix at any rate, the final results were the finest I have xxx xxx ever seen, including Berlin. There was no flak going in, and no fighters. Our support was good.

Over the bay, just before turning in to land again, Latham dropped his load, he was in trouble. And I spotted a German destroyer and gave it a few burts, which must have been effective as hell from 20,000 ft.

We turned inland and passed almost over the target. I could see it very clearly. An airfield with well defined tarmac landing strips. The group made a 360 to the right, we passed over the kxhzqyx harbor (I remember seeing eighteen ships at xchmxx anchor). Then to the target. We were using chaff, but the boys below were sighting visually and didn't need their radar. They took their time holding fire until we had flown straight and level for a minute or so. And then they picked us up, on the actual run, when we couldn't take xxixxz evasive action. It was rough for a minute. Bombs away and we could get out. But not before both Comstock and I had followed the bombs down. It was terrific. XI A cluster that completely covered the drome and hangars. No more trouble there thank you.

20-20-20-20-20-20-20-20

I felt sorry for those kids, lured, just like some of us, by those silver wings and that romance. They will never get to advanced unless the shelters were pretty good.

The trip back was o.k. No flak and no fighters. The 19th and on the 27th.

Number Twenty---Dijon

The attack was being pressed. Now German airfields within France were being discovered in action again. And they were now within our range. So it was Dijon.

We had to ~~XXXXX~~ knock out every available airfield in France that could ~~xxxxxx~~ conceivably be considered fit to bear anti-invasion aircraft. The Germans must be forced to hide their ships, putting them in places more inaccessible to themselves as well as to us. We were doing just that.

Dijon was another semi-school and operational base. We ended its usefulness. Our ~~XXXXX~~ target was a group of hangars on the north-west corner of the field. We were to circle the field and come in on it from a heading that would be the same as the ordinary course for home. In other words, there would be no swinging off the target to evade flak. Someone must have had pretty good information as to the anti-aircraft defense strength.

It turned out as they had foreseen. We swung in on the run with smoke and flame rising in a pillar from ~~xxxxxxx~~ previously dropped bombs. Other outfits had smeared the runways. Our target was still ~~viskz~~ visible, though smoke was drifting over it. It was a question of whether we could get there before visibility was totally obscured. Closer and closer, with bomb bays open, and I suddenly realized there was no flak. I was frightened again. With it there I would have felt better. It's just the waiting for it that kills you. And there wasn't any. Were they waiting for us to fly level on the final run, so they could track us and not mess around with misses. I had heard of planes floating along, their pilot's negligent enough to avoid taking evasion now and then, and suddenly one burst broke the lead ship in half. Was that what they were planning. Oh well, we were too close now to worry about that. Then I saw our aiming point. Just as it had been pictured. And the afternoon sun made it stick out like ~~xxxxx~~ I prayed it would. But it seemed years before bombs would drop. I saw to our immediate left, at about eleven o'clock, a tremendous marshalling yards. And I wondered if the lead team had decided that they didn't have long enough a run on the briefed target and were going to hit the railroad terminus. ~~X~~ I also thought that we would catch the railway flak if we didn't get the hell out of there and quick. And I-----bombs away---that ended that. We had hit and were leaving. A damned fine strike. My racks didn't work, so I had to salvo. Mine broke up their pretty little pattern by hitting a ~~XX~~ bit over and to the right, but it was o.k. as a whole. Second best bombing yet. Better than Berlin also. Some jerries slept elsewhere that ~~xxxxxxx~~ evening. They also received new airplanes the next day. Got back o.k. No flak or the other. The 20th, on March 28.

That netted the final cluster. The third to the Air Medal. I was now officially a veteran of no mean standing. They couldn't question that. Just like

21-21-21-21-21

xxix college and I was now the upper class-man. I had gone through hell to get there, but I made it. There was no hazing. We ran them through the coals with stories though. I was a big dog at last. I could hold my head up when shooting the bull. And the new men listened to me. That meant more than all their tinsel. Plus the fact that ten more would bring me home.

Pause for various stuff I forgot

The biggest thing that happened to any of us I have left out. That was the day when the rumor became a memo and we were to do 30 missions. They didn't say it was changed because the missions were becoming easier, or because we would run three a day during the invasion. They just issued a blanket memo that notified all air forces that there would no longer be any definite tour of operations. The Eighth was excluded. We were their exception. We ~~were~~ were also their strongest offensive air arm. They had to pamper us. And they were very correct. So we were let off with a five mission increase.

At first everyone came under that clause. The bitching began. A small mutiny became almost fact. The next day an addenda came out from division, saying it was up to the group commander's discretion in cutting this number down. I guess the whole deal was actually designed to keep us, the experienced men, in this air arm as long as possible.

We had until the fifteenth of March to get over sixteen missions. Men with sixteen ~~xxxxxxx~~ to eighteen did 29. 18 to 19; 28. 20 to 21; 27/ 22 to 23; 26. 24 to 25; 25/ I ended up with 15. That did me a helluva lot of good. We were all so damn mad, disillusioned and heartsick that we didn't give a damn whether we did another raid after the fifteenth. The goal we had all set for ourselves was smashed. We knew what five extra raids meant. Time and sweating and more chances. We got drunk. That's why they curtailed the news that men finished twenty-five in this theatre. The PR man, Van Norman, told me. It would give the other characters in the states, ready for combat, the set idea that they only had so much to do and could then come home. That's what we had thought. And they don't operate that way any more. It has become a fight-till-you-drop-or-they-drop-you deal. That's the story of the increase. And why it happened and how a lot, of guys stopped living again. Back to the original opus.

Number Twenty-One----Stettin

This was it too. Of course they all were it. But this carved them all for distance covered and time involved in sitting on dime. Thompson always threw the Gydinia story around (I guess that's the way they spell it) the boys went to Poland once and it took them ten hours. They never forget it. I shall never forget Stettin. Thompson has kept very quiet since we came back.

In fact we all have kept very quiet since we came back. It was another Bernberg. Only this time we were ready. It took us eleven and a half hours to run it, but maybe it was worth it.

The whole story comes back now, and vividly.

We were concerned with a new type of offensive. An offensive that could not remain a story-book feat to any of us. For ~~xxxxxxx~~ we were to strike a blow (one of a series still to be struck) that would be felt more deeply by the Germans than any yet thrown their way. The Eighth, having ~~xxxxxxx~~ cleansed the path for its own posterity, as regards the GAF, was now ready to carry on a destructive war for which it had been preparing these past months.

The machinations within the center of the Reich, and on its Polish and Czech borders, were to be destroyed by our own force, plus the fifteenth. The Russians were marching on Ploesti. The Libs from Italy had plastered these fields time and again. Baku fields were in danger from Soviet attacks. Oil. The life-line must be cut. In its entirety. It was not enough that the natural petroleum supplies be smashed and isolated, the synthetic production which ran well over a million tons yearly, must be cut off.

The job was ours. Although the target we eventually hit on this raid, was not the one briefed, nor the important secondary.

We were briefed on a gas dump near Polenz on the Polish border. It was an eleven hour ride anyway you looked at it. Carrying us over the North sea ~~hoza wayx~~, over Denmark and into the Baltic almost.

We would go in over the continent. And the Germans would fight. I think all of us knew it. The route was all right until we hit the Dummer Lake region. This was the stronghold of GAF strength in the north. They were based there, and for some reason we had never bothered their stations. (I still don't know the answer to that problem).

I was flying with Clark (this was during the eleven days that Welter and the boys had taken off for the flak home and I had decided to become the big hero and stay behind to catch up with him. I flew one raid while they were gone. This was it, on the last day of their leave.) Valenti was pointing out a huge ~~xxxx~~ square ~~xxxx~~ smoke-screen that covered Dortmund. I picked up the field glasses to catch it, just then, from the corner of my left eye. I caught the 20mm bursting below our left wing. The fighters had struck and again we were surprised. But only during the initial pass. Now we were ready.

They were Focke-Wulfs. About fifteen came in the first ~~xxxxx~~ onslaught. They queued up at ~~xxxxx~~ eleven o'clock, four at a time, in trail, peeled off and started to come through. But they must have been rookies. We saw them each tight and held our fire for them to come within good range. The boys in the lead ship were sharp as tacks too. They called each bunch off and kept calling them till they were definitely coming in. Clark did himself proud too. He kept count wherever they were.

It was Caspar on the right gun again and me on the turret and those tracers went screaming. They weren't fanatics either. The sight of that lead coming (tracers) and the discomfort ~~xx~~ at wondering just where the other four ~~xxxx~~ slugs were going was too much. They would slow roll just within range and break off their attack. It was like that practically all the way to the target. They hovered around us, about fifty of the, coming on at intervals, but not doing any real damage to our

group. I guess the high group got it though. They shot the deputy down and hosed the rest. But for once our gunners had been on the ball and kept them out.

Flak presented a problem too. Over this same afore-mentioned smoke screen we ran into a nest of heavy guns and had to do a lot of evasion to keep them guessing. Which we did.

At target time we found the primary 10/10 and we were not equipped to cope with it that day. It wasn't anything but a xxx visual job. So we had to peel off and head for Stettin. It was on the route out. A large harbor on one of the outlets to the Baltic Sea. There was oil there, and shipping.

It was all a fine set-up, except the flak wasn't quite as briefed. No, one had ever touched there before, xxx consequently intelligence thought that the Germans wouldn't be prepared for any attack. But they were wrong. The jerry had out-guessed us. He had complimented the striking power of our force to the extent of defending this sea port dearly. Something he never would have done when the eighth started its ops.

The flak was tremendous. The largest calibre guns in concentration I had seen. And very accurate. It was every man for himself and many bombs were thrown out when ships were in turns or climbs. But it had to be that way. Would have been ~~xzuaghezx szzagtezx~~ slaughter otherwise. I could see the river below and a residential and built up industrial district where our bombs hit. And a lot of domed, squat round tanks that might have had gas in them.

We peeled off to the left and headed for home. And there was still a four hour trip ahead. I was dead. Fighting off the enemy and ~~xigkzingxkhrzughx~~ sitting through that flak had almost done the trick. But we would be over water. I could take my flak suit off. And we would be off oxygen as we planned to hit the dock.

In Denmark we narrowly avoided another belt of flak that was thrown up at another group, we just sat out there and watched them experiment. I felt sad for them. but someone had to sound the enemy out. Got through there o.k. and winged home with no more trouble. I even fell asleep the last half hour before England.

Went in over the coast at 1,000. Skimmed the cliffs of Dover and christ it looked good. We had lost one ship. It was my 21st. on April 11th.

Number Twenty-Two----Oranienburg

It was one of those places that I can't pronounce. The papers obviously hailed it as another Berlin raid, but actually we weren't ~~remzrex~~ closer than seventeen miles from the city's center. Part of another offensive to keep the Luftwaffe down to its knees ("its knees" meaning a ~~rexerzrxzix~~ front line force of 10,000 planes, including trainers).

There was an assembly plant for ~~KDX~~ Messerschmidts there. It had been hit once. But we were all going there this time so as to do a thorough job and not disrupt fighter support this time.

It was a milk run. A long one, but still a milk run. The flak was light. The ~~honzx~~ bombing results were good. And there were no fighters to bother us. Same on the way back. The 22nd on April 19th.

Number Twenty-Three-----Kassel

There was a Focke-Wulf assemble plant, a rail yards and a textile plant at Kassel, Germany. I use the past tense advisedly because I don't really think they exist anymore. Our target was the plane plant. But the three were so closely situated that all would constitutdx jobs well done, if hit. They were hit. All three of them.

Our bombs went into the marshalling yards mostly I believe. That is, the groups bombs (the one we were flying with was a component). Other groups smashed the three in whole or seperately.

Their flak was good. Contrast to the tripin, there had been no interference of either type. Welter did a fine job of evading. And again it seemed every man for himself and the bombs were thrown out. But this time it was o.k because we had gone over the target the short way. (the error in bombing from altitude is course, not rate) There was a mile or target on each side of us, enough for even the sprayed out eggs to catch nicely.

No fighters on the way in or out. A good one. The 23rd. on April 19th.

Number Twenty-Four-----No Ball 100, France

Love was going to finish. Wick was going to finish. Thompson was going to finish.

The target was another unexplained construction. Shaped like three stacked rectangles. Near a forest and above a town. But no one counted on the terrific gexumdxz ground haze.

It was another good deal Except this time we weren't flippant. We^x knew what to ~~expa~~ anticipate in the way of flak. There were two forces again, Thompson was leading ours, a twelve ship force. We had two different targets. Wick led. But our force, the C bunch, would catch the fringe of St. Omar flak. The A and B would avoid it.

Still it was a gift, compared to the nine hour trips we had been having. -And I was deputy in the small group. For the first time. I had a sight and had to work out all the formulas that I had forgotten months before.

Take off was late, about four or so. We would be over France about Eighteen minutes and away from England only forty-five or so. Wick had a pint of Seagram's V.O. in his hip pocket to fortify himself through the trip I guess. He needed it. So did I for that matter. And I was just the kid.

We hit France, with an I.P. below Boulogne, turned north-east onto the run. We never did pick up the target. The ground haze was terrific. The sun had partially disappeared beneath a low cloud fringe. We couldn't see it and neither could I. I wanted to peel off and make a ~~xperatzzx~~ seperate run on something so bad I could taste it. But found out later that we couldn't hit any part of even coastal France without authorization.

Caught their flak, but not much of it. Did see another no ball that had been bombed and looking very inviting. But we flew on, with bomb bays still open, did not drop our bombs and turned on home. I was afraid we wouldn't get

credit for it because of the simplicity of it all. But we did. It was the 24th. on April 20th.

Number Twenty-Five---Hama

Jake did the trick here. He had just been selected as group leader with Williams and Beach completing the team and Love's old crew behind him. And this was to be his first effort in that line of business. Major Challfont flew as first pilot, but Jake really handled it. He was to lead the high group. Colonel Robinson the lead group.

So Jake was to take us in. I have never felt in better hands. Though I hadn't know the guy long, I learned to see that he was by far the best pilot they had in the group. Knew more about his ship and was more calm than the usual crop.

The target was ideal for us. It was what heavy bombers could successfully ~~destroy~~ destroy. A six hour trip. We were to hit Hama, the target we had accidentally ~~knocked~~ nicked on the Munster effort. Evidently the damage we had wrought that time had been repaired and the marshalling yards were operating full blast again.

So the whole air force was out after the yards. We would have aiming points from one end of the two sided rail heading to the other. Not just the bottle neck that connected the two, but the whole affair.

Again we would go over it the narrow way. Leaving course errors to take care of themselves. The route in was good, no flak and no fighters.

There was the target. Perfect visibility. But Beach's job was a difficult one. His aiming points north of the rail intersection bridge were obscured by smoke from fires started by the other groups. The wing fell back in trail to bomb and we started the run. Their flak was a disappointment compared to what we had learned to expect. Beach picked a point to the south of the B.N. and we let fly. All carrying incendiaries. We were planning to hit their roundhouses, locomotives, etc and maybe a few old houses.

Were carrying a new type of load, M-17 clusters of ~~XXX~~ one hundred thermite sticks. They really burn. 5400 degrees they say. Ten clusters that would explode and throw their bombs out at 5,000 ft. or thirty-six seconds after they left our bays.

Well, that night the BBC made special mention of a large cluster of bombs that hit south of the railcenter. They were our bombs and we were proud of their accuracy. The effective capacity of that yards was diminished greatly, if not destroyed completely.

No more trouble, and we made it back o.k. Jake had done a good job. The 25th, a DFC and on April 22.

Number Twenty-Six---Oberpauffenhafen (Munich)

This could be a story within itself. A tale about heroes. Lots happened. And many guys who were still boys became men. There have been other tough ones, but I wasn't on those, so this is still my story. A great story.

The group has lost ten planes. One of them, Ebert, went to Switzerland. I wanted to follow them so bad that I could taste it. But WA Walter didn't want to, so I am writing about it.

It was just another part of that occasionally renewed offensive to keep the JAF down. Only it was flirting with that section we had canvassed before. The section wherein the Germans had to keep themselves in readiness for sudden attacks from two fronts. And at any time.

Our primary was another drone, it's up above and I don't think I spelled it quite right. But that's it. It's down by Augsburg and Munich, and supposedly had some more parked planes on it. We expected a visual job. Although there was provision for PFF. Four other targets were listed as visual secondaries, all targets of other wings, and, in case the entire sector was socked in, we were to climb higher than the briefed 19,000 altitude and knock out Stuttgart PFF. Code words were issued for Lechfield, and three other drones as the secondaries. It was to clear that area out as far as the enemy air resistance was concerned.

All it meant to me was another eight hour trip. The Germans had been staying on the ground, rising only occasionally to defend something vital to them. Took off about nine with ETA around five.

The whole thing started off with a rotten smell when we got a little mixed up over the coastal entry and their flak had us. Behind us, when we had still not penetrated over five minutes into their territory a Metz called a 17 exploding from our group. That was one down, and the second time I had ever seen, or been near a ship that had actually had it from flak. (the other was coming back from Frankfurt. The ship broke in half but did not explode.)

From there on in till the German-French border everything seemed quiet as hell and I sat back again to sweat out a typical long trip. I was sitting back with the guns to the side when West called out fighters at two o'clock. Still I didn't do anything. I was too accustomed to having our own boys along. Yet I hadn't stopped to realize that no one had called any kind of a fighter for a half hour. Then, like a shot, Welter said, "they're going to come in from two. It looks like BAAAAA". He never did finish that sentence. The explosion cut off his words like a gigantic cleaver.

Something had gone off in the nose behind my left shoulder. Immediately I knew. I was dead. There was a terrific burning or stinging in my shoulder and forearm. I had been hit. Finally they have got me I thought. A damnable dramatist to the end.

Then I knew it was absurd, that I was very much alive, had been clipped in the shoulder by shell fragments and that it was very real. I looked around at Eddie to see if he was O.K. He was. I had been knocked forward from the seat so that it was hard to turn around. Then the blood started to run down my arm and I began to wonder just how bad I had been hit. But a million things had to be done before I found that out. I actually thought that. I was no hero. I just remembered that I had a job to do. I was the only

one who could make time and see that the crew was o.k.

First I had to check the situation at hand in the nose. I had noticed that my interphone was cut off. At first I imagined the line had been shot out for all of us and I could see what a jolly affair that would make for. Then I felt my own cord, from my helmet to the jackbox and found that it had been cut quite cleanly just about six inches from my head, but the cord from the female socket to the jack-box was still intact.

My oxygen was another problem, the needle was going down, slowly but surely and I could see there was a fast leak. Then I saw where it was, the third regulator, on the right side, was completely shot off and all our oxygen was pouring out. That meant that both the co-pilot and I would have none. And Welter was riding on the co-pilot's seat (he was leading the low squadron, therefore that position was necessary)

My throat mike was still o.k. so I asked Eddie to signal with his hands if he could hear me. I told ~~him~~ him to check the crew, he nodded he would, then pointed to a head set and I motioned for me to put it on. I had thought of that before, but it would mean that I would be forced to hold my mask ~~max~~ against my face with my hands. But I followed his suggestion and but on the set of phones. Now I could hear the men and what had happened.

The picture came complete and terrible. Their first pass had hit us with a strafing strike. A 20mm had exploded in the nose (Welter still says that it was either a cluster of incendiary .303s or an explosive 7.9) Two 20ms had entered just under the right wing, had: shot out both the interphone and oxygen in the tail turret; developed a leak in the radio oxygen but left the interphone intact; hit around four rounds of our own .50 ammox in both wooden carriers on each side of the waist and scattered cartridge case fragments, sending the bullets themselves lengthwise up through the fuselage; shot out the oxygen and interphone on the left waist position; left both intact on the right waist; cut the tail gunner's interphone, but left his oxygen; hit Klepper in left side of the neck; hit ~~McCoppin~~ McCoppin on the left side of the temple.

I got all ~~the~~ this from Poston who had attended Klepper. Klep was bleeding badly. Couldn't ~~contact~~ contact Metz, but the boys told me he was still moving around. Comstock had come out of the ball and was o.k.

But we were still at 20,000 feet and forty-five minutes from the target. There was a serious shortage of oxygen. The fighters were still attacking. To save ourselves we must keep the protection of our group's fire-power.

Even if it meant sacrificing the consciousness of our own gunners. We had three emergency bottles in the nose with around 400 lbs. West's and Sutton's (riding as co-pilot) oxygen still ~~read~~ read 250 lbs. Welter used an A-8 constant flow mask and re-filled from the valve by the top turret. Peterson could keep his supply going. Above all, those two men had to have oxygen.

And still the fighters came. I couldn't get to the waist during the time we were carrying the main attack. The first bunch to hit us were ~~Focke-Wulfs~~ Focke-Wulfs. After that they were all ME-109s with yellow noses, painted green, not the usual gray. One flew so close and so slow that I actually got his number. It was PW-106.

West and I threw everything we had at them. The goddamned chin turret wasn't any good. And, as I later found out, only the left gun was throwing lead. Eddie was wonderful on his gun. (the first explosion had kicked out, or maybe the shell had entered, the right nose window, so Eddie's gun ~~scared~~ scared hell out of me every time it went off. Sounded like their bullets coming in again). He was

in there every minute. Welter would call them off. Perhaps neither Eddie or I

Either a .303 or a frag had hit underneath the wing, entered a Tokyo and started the leak. I told him I didn't believe it was serious and he proceeded to drain the Tokyos on that ~~xx~~ side, the leak stopped.

Went back to the waist. On both sides frags from the exploding jerry shells had torn off the rear ends of the wooden ammo boxes, exploding three or four rounds and sending around five slugs up through the fuselage. Some of the cases had just exploded and the slugs had dropped out. The damndest thing I have ever seen. Klepper was sitting on the step under the left waist position. He was in a semi-state of shock. (the guys told me afterward that, when he had been hit, he fell to the waist floor with the blood spurting out of his neck and pointed out the fighters on his side while Mac used both guns, until Comstock got out of the ball)

Poston had put his fingers in the wound at first, and stopped it with a pressure bandage later. I disconnected his heated suit to cut down circulation and further stop bleeding. The air on his neck had already done almost that. I tried to half drag, carry him to the radio room, told Poston to get the electric blanket ready. We put him there and laid him out straight. He was not in any terrific pain. Therefore I didn't want to give him a sedative at first. But he soon began complaining of a terrific head-ache. He was still of normal colour, so I imagined shock had not set in. We put him prone and on a level position. I was going to give him morphine. I can remember, as I prepared to do it, how I thought of all the terrific films where the clothing had to be cut off the guy. I decided that this was my big chance to be dramatic. I got out my knife and cut his right sleeve up to the elbow. The syrette was ~~knix~~ cold, had to thaw it out in the palm of my hand. Then tried to find the fleshy part of my arm. He was so muscular that it was difficult. I injected the needle once, then had to do it again because the syrette wouldn't empty itself. Finally I managed to get most of its contents into his arm. Then I had to find some pulse. I ~~reached~~ reached for his left wrist. And Klep, the poor guy, thought I was going to dub around giving him another injection, and raised one arm feebly, in protest. I reassured him that I wasn't. Couldn't find a pulse in either arm. Finally, as the last resort, I had to strip the bandage part~~xxx~~ way off his neck and lean over him, counting the pulsations just below his jugular vein, where he had been hit.

Went back to Mac. He had been ~~but~~ on the right ~~side~~ left side of the forehead. A frag from one of our fiftys had caught him. It had knocked him away from his gun and the blood had blinded him in the left eye at first. I just took his helmet off for a moment, dusted a little sulfa on it and let it alone so that he could still use his mask.

But now the oxygen situation was acute. In the ~~wast~~ waist the right gunner could stay on his hose and the left man could use the bail-out bottle from the refill valve. I looked back at Metz. Although he couldn't talk, he was moving around occasionally and, from what Mac had said, had a complete system on one side with around 250 in it.

So I stacked them as follows: Metz; tail, Mac; on the right gun, Comstock on the left gun, Jimmy still in the radio room. He was too attend Klep occasionally. The only draw-back to all this, as we later found out, was that Poston's oxygen, and the waist system, were both slowly draining. It was imperative that, having gone this far and taken the chances of flying the complete trip, we should remain with the formation.

So we did. Everyone was getting along rather well. On the checks The waist men would check on Metz and Poston would check Klep.

So I cut back to the nose, everything seemed o.k. Klep was resting easy, his pulse had been low but was coming back, 62 and 68. He still was maintaining normal flush.

Now the goddamn problem of fixing the nose guns that had jammed on the last attack. (I forgot to mention that) The chin-turret had suddenly ceased firing during one attack and I had fallen back to the left gun, leaving Eddie to take care of the right. This limited our field of fire, cutting us out entirely from eleven to one. But we could still scare them off, they still knew what a tracer was.

When I had gone back to the left gun, it had immediately jammed. Then, having to return to the tail, I had said to hell with it. Now I had to try and find out what was wrong. So I started on the turret, taking the inspection plates off. Just then the rest of the wing had come to their target (even now I am not sure whether it was Munich or Friedrichshafen), at any rate, I looked down and saw a very luscious drome with at least 45 parked single engine fighters on it. Lake Constance (I believe) was right next to it, and Switzerland not more than ten miles away, the closest I have ever been to it. Just then Ebert peeled off and headed that way. So we flew right through a welley of the goddamnest flak I have ever seen. These bastards were really checked out. It was a target that had only been sought once, their defenses were new and good. It was a long run, and we were tracked all the way by a series of four four gun batteries. Like running the Ruhr line. They tracked us through all the evasive action we could do. But the results were terrific. They sprayed that field with their small mermite clusters and frags. We peeled off and got out of there, but not before one of the men in our lead squadron caught fire in the fuselage back of the nose and in the number two engine. He peeled off, slide down and blew up. It was hell.

Now we had a difficultly decision to make. While all this had taken place, the oxygen was almost gone in both the radio and waist positions. Poston called up, they had taken their masks off to fill the bail-outs for Klep. I told them to put their masks back on and act like sane men. We needed all the fire-power we could get and we needed it bad. Welter decided to have them send up their bail outs for Pete to fill from the Pilot's and navigator's systems. Which we did. I sent an extra full bail out I had back, with 400 lbs. and I continued holding my mask to my face using the one bail out left and having Eddie fill it.

I went back to fixing the guns. Got the plates off and the first damn thing that happened was swell. The terrific slipstream sucked almost half of West's flak maps down the vents and out of the nose. Plus one of my shoes. And a glove. Luckily it wasn't cold. (I had already unplugged my heated suit because the frags had cut several holes in it and I didn't want to be broiled by a short) The right gun had fired all its ammo (250 rounds), but the left one had fired about five and jammed. I hadn't know that before because I hadn't had time to look and find out. That's why I had missed the Germans even at point blank range. The one gun had de-synchronized the turret and made me fire to the left. I tried loading the turret, put a belt in from the extra box of ammo, and proceeded, because I was off oxygen for a while and a little happy, in loading the thing with the points the wrong way. Unloaded and finally got the belt in. Then charged the gun, unloaded and re-loaded the right gun and charged it. Then tried to fire and couldn't. I gave it up. Figured the system must have been partially shot-out and folded.

The right left nose gun proved even more a problem. I was just beginning on it when the guys called that all their oxygen was gone and they didn't know what to do. Welter realized that we were caught short. If they continued to carry

oxygen back and forth it would eventually and shortly drain West's and Sutton's system, thus forcing us out of position and keeping the vital top turret in operative. Or, we could leave the formation now, subject ourselves to fighter attacks all the way back and try to fight our way out. So he realized the time we had all waited for had come. He called, asking all men on inter-phone to tell him whether they wanted to try for home or go to Switzerland. They all answered that, if he thought he could do it they were with him. Neither West or I answered. I wanted to cut across that border so bad I could taste it. So did West I guess. But Bobbio was the boss, the gas situation was at least good, no motors were hit, we had a good chance.

But it would mean leaving the formation. We decided on home. So he called all the men up to the nose, to have them try to share the masks up there for a while, leaving their positions, so that we could still have formation cover. Poston acted the hero and refused to leave Klep till I told him to get the hell up there. Comstock meanwhile had already passed out (we were still at 20,000) Metz had oxygen, but no phones. MWE would have to rely upon him catching the fighters and would know from his fure if they were coming in.

Klep we would leave on a bail out bottle regardless of altitude. So they stumbled forward. I was still struggling with the damned left gun, and was so happy that I just sat there and looked at it until I got another whiff of oxygen. Mac and Jimmie came into the nose bleary eyed, because Mac was a gunner and I thought I might have missed something, I had him look at it, he was almost drunk and started to take the back plate off. I stopped him and decided that all of us needed some air. So I passed around my mask and bottle. Had a fight with Jimmie at first. Told him to breathe; he refused. I ordered and told him I would break him; he refused; Then I told him I would hit him in a moment if he didn't take some oxygen; he did. Then I gave Mac some. And took some myself. Told the boys to lie down in the hatch, Poston, in his stupor, thought I said "bail out" and started to, when I caught him and shoved him down. Then, realizing that I needed oxygen to think, I sat down ~~XX~~ with the mask and thought. It came to me of course like the proverbial bolt. I had had trouble with the ~~Klep~~ metal link carrier when charging. It was that, although the gun would charge, it would not pull the ammo up to fire. So it was a matter of stripping the carrier from the box and gun, which I did, although it took a long time. I had to re-draw the belt, and with one glove. Lovely job. Then had to break up the 250 belt into small ones and load the three small boxes we had. Did that and the gun fired thank god.

The fighters were gone. Although our support was still missing (found today that they had been fifty-ones and had been sucked off into a fight by a Jerry force) It seemed as though we might have a chance. They might have considered the slaughter couldn't last and had gone to find another bunch of forts. Or, and I often believe this, we may have actually beaten them off. There were a raft of Germans that blew up or bailed out. At any rate, the coast was clear. It was a three hour trip by ourselves. but Walter decided to make it, rather than have the whole crew lying unconscious in the nose with no guns active. So he left the squadron of three ships that he had been leaving, to hit the ~~six~~ deck.

Gradually sanity returned to all of us, and with it, confidence again. We were a ready team. A bunch of vets that were really sore. With our wounded man we actually wanted another fight I think. We had fare in the nose again and I felt proud as hell, like a pioneer who has made a home out of nothing. We had ammo and guts. Every man was in his position. I had Comstock go back into the ball, for, even without oxygen or radio, he had turret power, which was more important than a

single flexible gun any time. We could always signal him by knocking on the turret. Poston came back to take the other waist gun and that left us with only one, and unimportant position unoccupied, the radio gun. My turret was out too.

Metz was holding on and I got Poston to go back and tell him we were low enough to go off oxygen and that we were going to fight it back. It was then I learned that he claimed two fighters, Max one, Pete one and Comstock one. Eddie and I set that one smoking.

We were set. I went back to see Klep again. His pulse was about the same, 60, but he had turned an ashen gray, so I set his feet ~~higher~~ higher than his head to get the blood back, saw that he had another oxygen bottle all the way and talked to him. He was o.k. I told him we were going him. He seemed indifferent. I couldn't blame him.

So the vigil began again. I had to sit back of the nose seat so that I could man that gun easily. And I couldn't use the flak suit. We were on constant lookout for some sort of formation that might have been flying low. And for enemy fighters. Navigationally we were in a bad way. Eddie did a grand job. He used only his actual RAF charts, the few flak maps he had left, and a G chart. The G box was shot out somewhere. The radio compass had been blown over my head into my lap. The flux-gate was out as usual. So all Eddie had to go on was Welter's gyro pilot's compass and DR and pilotage. Our plan was for me to do pilotage and warn Eddie of any large city or airfield. These were the focal flak points. We worked well as a team. I kept the binoculars working all the time.

The trip was eerie. No fighters of any type on the sky. We skirted all prominent places and didn't catch any flak. Everything was going nicely when Pete called four fighters coming up at nine. By this time that was anti-climax and didn't mean a thing to us. I merely said to myself, it's here again, tightened the old morale belt and straightened the guns for action. Until someone said "I think they're 47s!" Immediately both Welter and I became the old cynics and warned the men not to resort to wishful thinking in recognition. But they insisted. And they were. What a beautiful sight. We were into France now, and the chances of seeing the enemy again were small. They stayed with us all the way out. And one even flew formation off our left wing, Janie was its name. We later found out who the pilot was and wrote him, he saved our lives. I am certain of that.

We still did pilotage and Eddie's ETAs were off a little, but we did hit the coast a couple of hours later. Found a group of 24s at the last minute, set out to join them, but they hit flak over the coast line so we stayed put.

Had to fly pretty much on the deck over the channel. Got home first believe it or not. Fired our flare and were home again. I was through. I didn't care about anything but kissing that ground.

I had been staying in the RR with Klep all the way over England and keeping him posted on how far we were from home. He was feeling better but still had a helluva headache and his right arm hurt from something. I still kept him on oxygen and changed his bandage. Also put a clean bandage on Mac. Metz came out of the tail looking as though he had had it definitely.

Doc Dantzig was right there with the meat wagon when we landed. Welter hit for the first available retreat and I jumped out to give Doc a summary. Obviously he could tell more in a minute than I could have, but he listened patiently. They had to stomp Klep to a carrier and dump him out the open bays. Then I decided to look at myself. The shell had flash burned me on the shoulder and forearm. And frags had cut into my back and arm. Doc said I should go to hospital so I did. Was treated and that was all. Klep had transfusion and went to Didlington and Mac

was kept there over night. That's it. The 26th on April 14th.

Number Twenty-Seven-----Avord

I was still so scared I couldn't see. The night after Ober I had talked to Doc and told him I wanted to quit. I couldn't take any more. He told me how absurd it would be to throw up a commission and a chance for home if I did. So in the morning I had changed my mind. Though I was definitely going to be a rough guy to handle from then on in.

I took some drug that night and didn't go the next day, although it was to France and I was slated with Ralph. The next day I did the same thing and missed out on a good deal to Brunswick. But the day after that I felt I had to go to get it out of my system and get over being frightened. It was a gift.

An airfield south of Paris. Another in the Metz, Chateau Duan, Nancy, La Palisse, La Rochelle run of basic, primary and advanced luftwaffe schools(I guess the hun runs his the same way) Anyway, Avord was the place where the Poles had shot down the cadets on the traffic pattern at night. It was just another school, with parked planes, barracks and hangars as targets.

Our aiming point was at the left of the field. There was to be a little flak. I was flying with Adams and we were to return that night at 10:30 after taking off at four. The first attempt at night landings, or experimenting with how late we could land. Jake led it.

The raid was uneventful. No fighters and little flak going in. The only was at the target. When we turned on the I.P. I saw a tremendous black cloud and knew that the boys were ready, but of that I wasn't afraid. Only of fighters now. The wing ahead had bombed. We were the composite high group in our 40th wing. Their aiming point was a series of hangars on the right side of the field, and it seemed that all the wall of flak was right over their side. At any rate, although they had to fly through a helluva lot of it, I saw something happen that I had seen once before, at Hamm, when the flak guns got it. Usually they are centered in a ring around engine stallation so that bombs dropped accurately will not affect them. This time the jerry stuck them too close to the field and that mixed load of HE, fire and little frags(terrific anti-personnel) did the trick. They knocked off almost all their guns. I didn't realize that until we started on our own run. We got almost to the release point before they opened fire. I'll give them credit for brains. They had waited till we had to fly straight and level before tracking us. And they did a good job. Their fire consisted of two four gun batteries. The first four bursts were bad on rate but perfect on altitude for Jake's ship. I sweated the second bursts out. It was too late to turn. They should have had him. But their second bursts were still too much in front of him. Then bombs away.

And it was lovely. We walked a group of frags at 250 foot interval across that damned field. Through a hanger and seventeen parked planes and a series of barracks. I hope we caught them eating like we did at La Palisse. Good bombing. We evaded easily. Home. The 27th. and on April 17th.

Number Twenty-Eight-----Berlin

It didn't mean a thing. Anti-climax. Strictly. They were out to kill me and I was out to kill them. May the best man win. And I still though and think I was and am the better of the two. The name didn't paralyze me. Or anyone anymore. It was just the distance. The chances were the same. Just the thought of sitting there for eight hours, five on the hose, were too much. But I was going and didn't give a damn. It was with Loedy who had just been checked out as

first pilot. A new co-pilot with one raid and a navigator with none. But the important thing, my enlisted men were with me. And I relied on them more than they shall ever know.

The target. They knew damn well what it would be. It was socked in over Germany, a PFF deal, but they threw an A and B deal up again as mental decoy. One in France was the A with 12 times 500, Berlin was B with 10 of same. Seventeen hundred for A. 2800 for B. We weren't suckers anymore though. We knew damn well what it would be. They said they would tell us on the runway with a yellow-green flare if it was B. But how the hell could they unload the bombs on the runway. I doubt if they thought they were kidding anyone.

It started off all wrong. Last minute gassing and unloading of those two extra HEs. Then minus two bail out bottles in radio and tail. Ammo loaded with points in by my two vet armorers.

A very mediocre raid. A little flak at the coast. But it was a high job, 26,500. And persistent contrails. Could see the ground over France, Germany 10/10. Leedy couldn't keep up with the boys though. He was pulling 2 1/2 100 and 1/2 inches and still couldn't keep it in there. We were number three in the first element of the high squadron. A bad place for both flak and fighters. He traded and even became a little panicky at the thought of what fighters could do to us. Our escort was good. But there were gaps.

He finally called me and told me to be ready to drop at least a few bombs to lessen weight to pick up AS. Then some joker in the 92nd, the high composite group with a B on his tail, started swinging back and forth giving us prop-wash like mad. He evidently thought he was hot as hell.

It all came to a head when he came up under his number two man in his squadron tore his own left wing tip off, slid underneath us and started rolling over, caught fire and blew up. The guy he had hit was knocked into another ship which blew up right there and pieces floated down. The ~~XXXX~~ guy himself broke in half and I had the thrill of seeing a tail float down in front of our nose. Immediately both Leedy and I thought the fighters had hit from above, even though I had seen part of the accident. He screamed to unload at least two. I set the intervalometer on two, opened the doors and trained them out. Four went. 2000lbs less. But he still couldn't do it. I realized that we were going to have to unload them all. He called and asked me what I thought, then asked the co-pilot. We all agreed. I opened the doors and salvoed. Then had a little trouble getting the doors closed. Leedy almost went insane, it was cutting his already diminished air speed down even more. Did finally though. We hit the fringe of a rail yard in a small town the navigator never identified.

Berlin itself wasn't bad. The boys trained their load out at 250. A wonderful sight, in wing formation. All PFF. Their flak looked bad from a distance, but we evidently unloaded too soon and missed most of it. Some guns did track us however. About two batteries of four. All by radar, and good, in spite of our chaff and carpet (although our own carpet had shot out on take-off).

Ran into a flak nest in France over nothing that looked important. And we achieved what the RAF has done. A percussion outfit doing nothing but blind pattern. Just the way we wiped out Frankfurt. I guess it got Grending because he blew his stack to Bairnsfather that night.

That was the 28th and on May 9th.

Number Twenty-Nine Triouville

This had been the A target the day before, when Berlin was the final alternate. Only today we were to hit another of the Luftwaffe training net's dromes. It was on the Moselle, flowing through the town. A good target. Our MPI was a cluster of barracks and hangars on the left side of the field, as we approached.

Jake was leading again. With Doc as co-pilot. And he did a good job. So did Willie. We hit flak once going in, and that was light. The ground visibility was good. I was hazy as to whether the Germans would try and stop us again. It was near where the last bunch had struck.

But wonder of wonders, when we reached the target, for the second time in my combat life, there was no flak at the primary. None at all. Beach took his time and made a lovely five minute run. And it turned out to be the best strike of the four I have already mentioned. A great cluster of bombs that obscured both our own aiming point and that of the other wing. A few went over into the river and two loads fell across, but none in the town and none early.

A good raid. Flak just as we crossed the coast and I swore at Jake then for sitting still. Later he told me it was Doc. I was surprised at a guy that had seen that much metal not being able to do better evasive action than that. So that drome became another "inoperative".

The 29th.

Number Thirty-----Saarbrücken

This was the last. Obviously there is nothing more to sweat out because I am here writing about it. But then there was, and plenty more to occasion it than just last missions excitement. I was the first man to finish thirty official missions in the group. At least I can leave one record behind me here.

Baldy was taking me. I had done the 28th with him and I trusted him, although he was strictly a T.O. pilot. Perline I didn't care for even a little bit. I guess I am scoured on navigators after flying with Eddie West. Perline sits on his dime, reads position reports from his metro flight plan, in short doesn't do a goddam thing. Eddie works like a mad man all the way over and back, and stands up too. But I would have to stomach all that.

The target was hell. The second time the group had ever gone there. Saarbrücken in the Saar basin that the Germans had taken over by popular plebiscite in 1935. The second largest industrial sector in Germany. The RAF had been handling it. It housed all the coal in the Rhineland I guess. And our reason for going there wound itself around an extenuation of the ops against the German rail centers, to make them revert to highway traffic on D day.

As was said, we had hit Rheims, Amiens, Triouville, Lille, thus breaking the vital north south link within France connecting the Germans to Spain and the low countries, but still they wanted to smash at that rail net the extended within Germany itself, to sever East, West transport facilities. It was a good plan. But the target was heavily defended. The Major could only offer that our route from the I.P. would avoid the most solid belt. That's what he said. The secondary was

Metz, an aero-engine works. God how I wanted to hit that. Their flak was moderate,

I knew that. But fate said I would sweat.

Checked out the new crew. We were flying with one of the new pilot's outfit. They were good boys. Observant as hell; and obedient. I felt as safe as I might. Checked them out on fighters, hose checks, etc.

And we were off. The route in was good. Our support was good except in various weak spots. The man called off the escort like vets and I was proud. Finally we saw the target. A terrific ground haze obscured everything unless you had a filter on your sight. I hoped the lead man would. Just as we approached the wing ahead of us started going through, and I mean through, not over. The jerry threw up a gigantic barrage box that hammered those poor bastards in. I saw two seventeens explode immediately, but, for the first time, also saw 20 chutes. And, the oddest thing that had ever happened, one lone chute high above us almost threw itself into our prop wash as we went in. A puzzle till I saw a 30 in half fluttering down.

We started in. The boys below were checked out and good. A accurate and heavy, a tracking barrage that wouldn't let us go. Bomb bays open. But no bombs away. I could see the rail yard below. Flew through it with good, but slight evasive action. And this was one time when the men of the eighth would not sacrifice themselves to go through for a hit. Closed doors and I prayed to hit Metz. The wing leader ordered another pass, the other group leaders said no and wanted to hit the secondary. The argument raged. Finally two groups hit Saar again and the other went back to France. We were one of the two.

Right after the first pass at the target, one of the waist men had called me to say the other gunner had been hit by flak. I couldn't do anything about it at the time obviously, because I wasn't sure when bombs away would come on the second pass. Now I could go back, bombing altitude was relatively safe, around 20,000 ft. I called the waist again, for, when he had called me the first time, he had been instinctive, I wasn't sure how bad he had been hit or where.

So I grabbed the old walk-around, stripped the flak chute and suit and chute harness off (like taking off my life and leaving it in the nose) and started back. Here it is, I thought, the repetition of a week ago. And, with our present formation, if the jerry hits us, we are through. The group will have had it.

Still, it was again, something that had to be done. And suddenly I felt selfish as hell. All this for me. Although there were a few thousand others involved and the fate of a target and a mission, all this for me. This boy wouldn't before he could begin to fight, and my worry because this was the last time I would have to face them. All this as I groped back through the bays to him.

He was stretched out on the waist floor. Colour was normal, and in no great pain. Evidently the impact or scare of the wound had put him in a rather passive relapse. I still didn't know where he was hit. Plugged in on his interphone to ask his buddy where the wound was. He pointed to his right foot. The flying boot was torn and a little bloody on the outside. I zipped it open to look at the incision and couldn't even see it, the heated boot and fur boot were both full of blood.

His suit had been cut off. That would be the first step, to reduce the temperature around that limb to what it was at flight level, -20 at least

First (before any first aid) there remained the problem of getting him to the radio room. This has always been our medical base (large laugh). Again it was me. An ag in the guy was large, about twice as large as I. I half carried, half dragged him through, told the ball turret to stop turning in azimuth so that we could get through. He could use his left foot and was rational enough to help himself a little so we made it. This time I stretched him out along the width of the ship, with his back on some "ingies" and his feet near the heater. I had to, he was too tall. But the cabin heat presented a problem in keeping the heat down. Even in full off the heat kept blasting. I had to finally stuff some chaff wrappers in front of the outlet to keep it cold.

Kept his heated suit off, wrapped him in blankets around the upper part of his body and wrapped the other foot. I wanted the rest of his body warm in case shock should set in. Then I set about getting the boots off. It hurt him like hell, and then it hit me that obviously pain would set in. So the morphine. After Munich they decided to give the stuff to the radio operator to keep in his flimsy. He was still in the radio room. And it was ~~xxxx~~ crowded as hell in there. So I made the typical quick change and sent him to man the chin turret, although he had never fired in before in his life. I merely prayed and new that if I got through with all that was wrong, God would have taken care of it. He strayed up. And I started the morphine gaga again.

Had to cut through his overalls but didn't feel as dramatic this time, there was ~~xxxx~~ blood all over the radio room and ~~is~~ me and the blankets. Zipped his suit up and looked for the most fleshy part of his arm. Again the rug was frozen solid and I couldn't thaw it by holding it in my hand.

And again it was a terrific chore getting the needle in. Only this time I borrowed the job even more than before. I must have injected the damn thing fully five times before I could get the stuff to flow. And he took it like a typical good guy. Didn't flinch even a little and left everything to me and God I was tired of having things left to me. Finally did get the stuff in and prayed it would hit him soon, but I still hadn't been able to get the entire syringe empty. Rolled his sleeves down and began with the foot again.

Began by putting in high on a chaff box (on the co-pilot's advice, he had been part way through me school), later put the foot up on the radioman's chair. Took off both boots and hoped the toes wouldn't freeze while I was trying to do something. It was fairly cold but I had been sweating so much for the kid and myself that I was in heat almost.

He had been hit by a large piece of flak in the frontal portion of the foot, through some small, but definitely arterial veins. The bleeding was steady venous, almost capillary, but not ~~xxxx~~ spurting. So I put a pressure bandage on the ~~xxxx~~ hole and settled back to see if it would stop. The guy was on the other oxygen system and I was on a walk around bottle, which, at best, is terrible.

The damn mask would either slip off my face when I moved around, or snarl and almost suffocate me. He wanted to talk to me, so the only thing I could do was to put the headphones on and the mike on him or vice versa, one could talk and the other could listen. He said the other wound hurt him, my god I didn't realize there might have been another wound. I hadn't taken his sock off to air in coagulating the blood. So again I unwrapped the blankets and looked at it. And there was another. A much smaller wound, and almost an incision type, on the lower inside of the foot. Put another bandage on that, but still the blood bubbled out of both of them and was completely soaking both bandages. I decided then to put another pressure bandage on for both wounds. They are rather large, I cinched them all up again as tight as I could and rewrapped the foot. But I realized then that a tourniquet was the only thing that would stop further loss of blood. He wasn't dying, although I had a strong suspicion he was at the time.

By this time, every first aid kit in the ship was scattered over the radio room, blood was on every piece of equipment and I was almost sick from it all.

Got their on so peachy tourniquet of cloth with a metal buckle. Told Balby and the co about doing it and the co recommended to loosen it every ten instead of twenty minutes. So that started. Me with the old wrist watch timing the damn thing and watching the waist gunner for both guns and I had the radio man in the nose take all oxygen checks.

In about an hour the bleeding stopped pretty well. By this time the morphine had acted and he was a little groggy, but by no means out. He was cold, so I turned on his suit again low with the boots off. The blood on the sock had crusted and stopped flowing through the bandages.

We seemed set. No fighters had attacked, and during all the above we had been closing to the french coast. I had no chute with me or flak suit. And, like it always does, the s hit the fan and there were three terrific bursts beneath the fuselage, and again the leader didn't do a damn thing. I almost screamed to navigator and pilot as to where we were and why the hell didn't we get out of wherever it was. It turned out to be Abbeville and the heart of the Calais flak. It kept us and was damn good. I could see them tracking us from the hatch window, and I could see the kids scare to death on the floor, waiting, just like me, for the one that was sent for us especially. Except that there weren't any names on those. At least in our airplane.

The coast was crossed. We had done it. And now the kids were beginning to feel it. But only a little.

The channel passed, but I began to become a little suspicious when we entered England at 13,000

I didn't want to ask Bal'y to let down an' leave. He is as I said a T.O. lad. The boy was in pain now though. I called the co an' asked him if he thought I should give him another injection. He said no, an' that we were only about 20 minutes from the base.

This was all very strange to me. Why we should have been over Englan', an' that close to our own field at that altitude, was mystery to me. The boy was in terrific pain, an' now more opiate was out of the question. It would be wrong to put him in a coma when doctors would be ready to care for him within a few minutes. But it wasn't just a matter if a few minutes, Simebo'y decided to stretch the pain an' waiting. I was safe, I hadn't even thought of that, but I was, it was all over for me, all the ungodly thoughts that didn't belong to me an' the fears I was afraid of, they were all over. But the pain for him wasn't. Why the hell couldn't he peel off an' beat them back.

At last the field. What altitude I asked the navigator. Seven thousand feet. Why the hell was it that high. It meant that the low squadron would have to peel off an' make two passes to let down an' make the pattern from that height, an' then it would be us an' it would mean 20 minutes. He didn't leave. We stayed an' I died a million times inside an' wanted to cry for the first time in my life an' all I could do was to take the kid's hand in mine an' sort of pet it like a damn fool. Finally it became too great for him an' he pulled the blanket over his head an' let go inside. I couldn't stand it.

But it was the leader's turn to get out. We were the leader of the second so got out eventually. Then Bal'y asked me if it was green green or red red for wounds. I told him the latter but he insisted it was change an' fire green green. I was too weary to give a damn although I should have.

He came into the pattern at last. I told the kid to hang on. I wanted him to taxi to the first available dispersal area, but no, not for a few seconds of pain it would have cost that boy. We passed the ambulance an' then the shock of all hit me. Doc stood by the ambulance waving his congratulations. Young, Welter an' Love had cried wolf too much. They had been told, even I hadn't laughed when they had finished. Now the results were in. The Doc had thought I was just another one kidding around with flares an' Bal'y's Green green had cinched that thought. I stuck my head out the waist window an' motioned for him to get the damn thing rolling. Then he realized something was up an' started following us down the track.

The boy was taken off. He hadn't lost much blood, had mostly been ~~scared~~ scared, he would fight again. An' I was through.

All the men in the squadron that could be there were there. Nat, all my men, the ground men, Sam, all of them. I was happy in a full way, I was still too senseless to realize just what had happened. I wanted actually to kiss the ground, but didn't even have enough strength for that.

They took all my clothes off, painted the numerals 30 on my forehead and my cheeks, my chest and then threw me in the pool.

Now I became elated all of a sudden. I went to briefing and threw their papers at them. I was finished. The first man in the whole group to do this, something I had laughed at and was afraid of.