

THE CLEAN UP

It was sometime early in January, 1945, that the Max Chandler crew arrived. With Lt. Chandler were Lts. Hugh O'Donnell, and Robert T. Dantzler. The enlisted men were Sgts. Sakis T. Nedder, Thomas Clark, Louis DeBlasio, Eugene L. Elliott, Thomas H. Cordes, and Robert D. Vance.

The new year opened just as the old year closed; we were on a raid. The Group dispatched 33 aircraft to take out a railway bridge on January 1st. It was at Koblenz-Lutzell. The target was bombed visually. Flak was encountered in the target area and along the Rhine river. Bombing results were excellent. Some of our aircraft received damage. Lt. Hill was flying Deputy Lead. In all, the Squadron put up seven aircraft. Records maintained by Lewis Robinson indicate that the Ray Ciesielski crew was on this mission. Also, the Edkin's crew may have been there. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones follows:

HEAVIES OUT 11TH DAY;

MONDAY ENEMY TOLL 364

With the Luftwaffe relatively quiet after its stunning setback Monday, over 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force dealt staggering blows in and around Rundstedt's salient yesterday on the 11th day of the 8th's nonstop offensive against Germany.

More than 650 Thunderbolts and Mustangs covering the heavies met little resistance from the Luftwaffe--latest counts last night listed 364 Nazi planes destroyed in Monday's big air battles--as the bombers punched at rail yards, bridges, communications centers and troop concentrations.

The bridges in the Koblenz area took another pasting as the heavies dropped loads on six structures and one Mustang Group came down to strafe the area. Three rail yards and five communications centers in the shoulder of the German salient, grouped in an arc east and south of Prum, suffered a sound shellacking. Further south, enemy troop concentrations and tanks were attacked northeast of Saarlautern. Nine bombers and two fighters failed to return.

On that day first day of the month Norm Kiefer wrote:

Last night, after I had cleaned up, I went up to the club with Maj. McAtee and a bunch of the other officers. It was around eleven o'clock when we went in and the liquor had been flowing pretty freely all night.

A little after midnight, one of the combat men who had quit, decided to tell off the world and Major McAtee. He was quite drunk and said a lot of nasty things. He also said a lot of things that I agreed with in regard to one individual case.

It was all right as long as he used his mouth, but the second that he grabbed the Major by the lapel of his blouse, some of us broke it up. McAtee is in no position to strike back even in self-defense. He has everything to lose and nothing to gain by such a move. He is also the type of man that wouldn't use his rank to punish the guy the next day.

A railway bridge at Koblenz-Lutzel was again the target on the second day of the month. The Group sent 35 ships on this January 2nd visit. There was little flak in the target area and fighter support was good. The Group sustained no battle damage. Bombing results were unobserved. Lt. Richard H. Habedank led the high right section. Nine of our crews received sortie credit. The Gene McMahon and Michel Yuspeh records show that they flew this, their last mission, on January 2. They were probably with Thomas Waters. The Ray Ciesielski crew was in combat on this date according to the Lewis Robinson record. Elwood Matter's record indicates that he was with Burns over this target.

On that second day of January the author wrote to his wife:

Do you want to do something for me? See if you can find some copies of the music for a mass in two parts. If we can get the music and work it out in time, Father will sing high mass for Easter.

The supply depot at Landau, Germany, was the center of Group's attention on January 3rd. The Group effort consisted of 23 aircraft on this tactical mission. Major Middleton was the command pilot leading the 14th Combat Wing. There was no flak or enemy aircraft. Bombing was by GEE-H with unobserved results. Lt. Firman S. Mack led the Group. There were five aircraft from the 506th in the formation.

For the third day in a row, the Lewis Robinson record shows that Ray Ciesielski crew was on a mission.

On January 3rd Norm Kiefer wrote:

We spent another day trying to get our filing cabinets straightened out. It seems that all I do is sign papers and initial orders.

Speaking of orders reminds me of something that happened. The other night before I left the office, I said, "Tell the night man to clean and sweep the office every night". The following morning there was a notice for the nightman posted. At the bottom it said, "By Order Of Lt. Kiefer". The first thought that crossed my mind was that I hadn't ordered that, but rather had asked that it be done. It was the first time that I realized that a request from me now is an order to the men. Anyhow, I somehow resented the bottom part and had it removed. Not much of an officer am I?

Many years later Norm Kiefer was to meet with Sgt. Fred Lillard in his home town in Tenn. Lillard recalled some of those papers that Norm complained of signing:

One time General Johnson came over to the 44th on an inspection tour. When he entered the barracks I had my radio playing. Now this wasn't just any radio. I had spotted it while on a trip to a communications depot and decided that I wanted that set. I then set about getting it. When the General heard the radio he admired the tone quality and asked about the reception. I showed him the number of stations that I could receive from both England and the continent. He said that was pretty nice and that he wished he had one like it. I told him, "That's no problem, I can get Kief to sign anything". I did and he got his radio.

Lest you get the wrong impression of Lillard I must point out that when it came to Air Force Regulations and the Supply side of Communications I didn't know what I was doing. Sgt. Lillard kept me out of trouble and I forgive him the extra things that I signed for.

On January 5th the Group dispatched 22 ships on a ground support raid on the marshalling yards at Neunkirchen, Germany. However, only 11 made it to the target and bombed. Errors during assembly resulted in many abortions. Also,

errors on the bomb run resulted in bombing the secondary target. Flak was moderate and fighter support excellent. Bombing results were rated as only fair. There were three crews from the 506th that received sortie credit.

For the next couple of days Ray Marner wrote:

January 5th--"Buzz's" ship caught on fire and burned pretty badly. Probably it will have to be salvaged. No one was hurt as the gas didn't explode. "Buzz" was burned a little on the face." (Note: Ray was probably referring to Charles "Buzz" Busby. The ship did not appear to have been salvaged since Webb Todd did not record the loss of a ship on this date.)

January 6th--"Dunlop came back today from Sweden. He's headed for home."

Leading the Wing, the Group launched 35 aircraft on a mission in support of our ground troops. They went out to destroy a railway junction at Landau, Germany, on January 7th. There was very little enemy opposition. GEE-H was used in the bombing and results were unobserved. Eight of our aircraft received sortie credit. Captain Clements led the 491st Bomb Group.

Clements was leading the 2nd Air Division while flying with the 491st Bomb Group. His record shows that he dropped on a Kaiserlautern rail junction using GEE-H and unobserved results. Colonel J. G. Merrell was the Command Pilot. There was no flak, no fighters and fighter support was good. The Ray Ciesielski crew went on this raid according to the Lewis Robinson record. Their target was Landau. Delmar Fox's record also shows the target to be Landau.

On January 8th there were 22 ships from the 44th on a ground support mission to Burgh Reuland, Germany. The railroad junction was to be destroyed. There was little enemy opposition and fighter coverage was good. There was heavy cloud coverage and bombing was by GEE-H with unobserved results. Lt. Firman B. Mack led the Group. There were eight ships from the 506th in the formation. Firman Mack's record also indicates that he was flying lead for the 14th Combat Wing. It appears the Burns may have been on this mission. At least, the Elwood Matter record shows that he was on a ground support mission on this date.

On January 8th Ray Marner wrote:

I went to London. I saw where a V-2 (rocket) hit some flats near Charring Cross. It must have killed people by the hundreds. They were still digging them out. We got our first real snow since we've been here. Probably 3 or 4 inches.

On that day the author wrote to his wife:

Today I believe that I achieved a major victory. Up until today, I knew that my men were working for me, but not with me. I mean by that that if I told them what to do they would do it and a good job. If, on the other hand, I didn't tell them what to do they would sit around the stove and let everything go.

Last night before I left, I told them that I probably wouldn't be down in the morning and told each one what to do in the morning. This afternoon when I walked in the work that I had assigned was done and a whole lot more to boot. I don't need to tell you how pleased I was. Of course, I didn't tell them all what I just told you. However, just before I left tonight I commented upon what a successful day it had been.

I felt all along that sooner or later I would win their confidence. All they needed was someone that would fight for them as well as with them. I haven't been afraid to fight because I knew that I had a lot of pull and backing in both the Group and Squadron.

We are still having snow flurries. It isn't quite as cold and the snow will probably start to melt soon.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

When I assumed command of the Squadron. Communications Section, the Staffing Tables showed that there were a number of promotional opportunities. I asked Sgt. Hunter why these openings existed. He assured me that it wasn't a case that we had poor quality in our personnel. It was just that they would not allow the men to be promoted. When I asked among the Officer personnel, I was advised that you had to keep these opportunities open as an incentive. McAtee told me to use my own judgment.

My judgment reminded me of my own days when I was flying as a PFC., CPL. and SGT. The Ranking Table called for a S/SGT. I told Sgt. Hunter to prepare a list of personnel

that he considered eligible for promotion. I would do the rest. I believe that the incident recorded in the letter to my wife was about the time that Hunter gave me the list. Eventually there were a number of promotions in Squadron. Communications.

On January 11th the Group was on stand down. We had been alerted earlier, but snow and rain prevented operational flying. This was a real taste of winter in England. Ice and snow covered all the roads and buildings.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

When Dick Wynes was promoted he moved from the room he shared with me to a room next to McAtee in another B.O.Q.. My new roommate was Milton Parrish. This room assignment worked out pretty well since Parrish spent a good part of the early evening hours in the Officers Club, even on the night before he was scheduled to fly. This allowed me to get some sleep before going down to wait for briefing material to come in for the next day's raid.

Inclement weather on the 12th of January resulted in a continuation of the stand down.

After a two-day lull the marshalling yards at Kaiserslautern were attacked on January 13th. There were 23 aircraft from the 44th on this mission. Flak was light and fighter support was excellent. Bombing was by GEE-H with results unobserved. Lt. Hill led the formation. Firman Mack was on this raid. According to his records he flew Group lead. Another crew on this raid belonged to Ray Ciesielski according to the Lewis Robinson record. Records maintained by Delmar Fox show that he was on this mission.

Bill Hahn remembers that there was one time in January, 1945, that Hill was flying Group lead.

On that day the Eighth Air Force sent out over 1,300 bombers. Our crew was the 1st one heading over the Channel. We were leading the Eighth Air Force.

Then there was a mission in 1945 when we spotted the first German Jet Fighter to enter the war. There were so many P-51's in the area that the German Jet came in and flew formation with our bombers in order to avoid them. I think it was a Me-209.

On January 13th Ray Marner wrote:

Lt. Edkin's crew went down on the continent. Cracked up. They got back here okay, but the ship is no good.

In a recent letter Charles Jones recalled:

We crash landed in Mair Vill, France. We were there about five days before we were picked up to come back to England.

Leading the 14th Combat Wing, on January 14th, the 44th sent 32 aircraft on a mission to attack the oil refinery at Hemmingstedt. We were the only Wing to hit this target on the Danish Peninsula. Bombing was visual. There was no enemy resistance and fighter support was excellent. There were eight aircraft from the 506th with them. Lt. Richard H. Habedank led the low squadron. Excellent hits were made by Habedank's bombardier, William E. Laughlin. The crew received a citation from the Group. Elwood Matter's record shows that he was on this mission. He may have been with Burns.

On January 14 Ray Marner wrote:

I saw a ship crack up near North Pickenham today. All crewmen must have been killed. It was a British Halifax.

The Microfilm history indicated there was nothing to report on January 16th. However, it appears that there was a raid on this date. The Group dispatched 33 aircraft to lead the 2nd Air Division on a deep penetration to the synthetic oil plant at Ruhland. Because the target could not be seen and there was not a radar equipped aircraft left in the lead, the Division turned to the secondary target at Dresden with poor results. Enemy opposition was slight and fighter support excellent. The William Smith crew was on this mission. Fred Marzolph recalls:

Probably our most famous mission was the "Colonel Snavelly Hat Caper"! We were to bomb an underground oil plant at Ruhland (near Berlin). A large part of the 2nd Air Division was taking part in the raid. As I remember, there were some B-17's among us. The secondary target was Dresden, and we were told that it was filled with 300,000 refugees. If we had to bomb it, we could do it any way that we wanted. That is we could salvo, drop at every two feet or whatever.

As luck would have it, at the target a B-17 came from nowhere and blew the whole bombing run. We had to veer away and head for Dresden. Colonel Snavely was in the lead plane over the target and the ship was hit. We watched it going down. (Note: Crew member, Robert Dubowsky reports that as they left the formation they were in a steep dive to put out the fire. They actually did not leave the ship until they reached the Rhine River.)

On the way back from this long haul of a mission, the Deputy Lead told the Group that anyone low on gas or whatever, could land when we reached checkpoint #7 at such and such time. Checkpoint #7 was the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Guess what! The whole sky emptied! That included our ship. We landed at Orly Field. Actually, many fields around Paris had guests from the 8th Air Force for many days.

Our visit lasted four days and three nights. The field didn't have room for us so we were trucked into Paris and stayed in various hotels. The enlisted men on our crew stayed at the Grand Hotel. We were told that if we left the hotel we must wear side arms. It seems that not long before, 50 German para-troopers had been captured while looking for "Ike" (General Eisenhower). It was believed that another 50 were somewhere in town.

Not having eaten since before briefing, early in the morning, we set out to find some food. In our quest for food we were gently "eased" out of several saloons. Some of them were fancy ones with chamber music. Probably they didn't think that our flying clothes, including the electric cord for the heated suit, was appropriate.

Finally we found a place that would accept 8th Air Force flyers. After a few cognacs we met an infantryman that was with a tank unit located near Dresden. What had caught our attention was the Officer's hat that he was carrying. The hat had the typical 50-mission crush of the Air Force.

The infantryman told us that he was on leave. He asked about the kind of aircraft that we flew. When we told him that we were on B-24's, he claimed that he had found the hat in a B-24 that had crashed near his unit just before he left for leave.

When we examined the hat we found the words "Eugene

Snavely" written on the sweat band. That started us to bargaining. We didn't tell him that Snavely was our Commanding Officer and that we had watched his ship go down. We did tell him that we wanted to send the hat to the next of kin. I don't remember what we paid him for it, but it didn't matter since we were living on escape money.

When we finally got back to the 44th, who should greet us as we landed, but Colonel Snavely. He had been rescued and delivered back to the base. My tail gunner and I took the hat to the Colonels' quarters the next day and left it without seeing the Colonel. We never did hear from the Colonel.

The Chandler crew may have been on this mission of January 16th. Louis DeBlasio recalls:

While flying missions we were not assigned to any one particular aircraft. We always seemed to get ships that were pretty "battle weary" and full of "flak patches". After a Berlin run we returned to base with heavy flak damage of our own. Luckily, no one was injured. Now that we were experienced combat men, we believed we were invincible. However, we were not allowed to test the feelings since we were given our first three-day pass.

On January 16 Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes hit a target south of Berlin. It was the longest flight we've ever pulled. They covered the continent almost completely by swinging way down south. It was closed in here so they landed in France. All but eight ships have reported in, including Jarvis' crew. Four ships are known to go down, including Colonel Snavely, the Group C.O. (Note: Will Lundy's works report that one aircraft was abandoned in flight and three were abandoned after landing on the continent.)

Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Can you guess where I am right now? That was a silly question! I am sitting before a big fireplace in the Queens Hotel in the city of Great Yarmouth on the East Coast of England.

It was late when we got to town so we climbed aboard the first train that was leaving the city of Norwich and here

we are.

I imagine this was a pretty nice town in peace times. It is a resort town. I can't think of any place back home that you have seen that would compare with it.

We spent the biggest share of the time right here before the fire and have seen two movies.

On January 17th the Group sent 11 ships on a mission to destroy an oil refinery at Harburg. Bombing was carried out visually with excellent results. Some of our aircraft sustained damage from intense flak. Fighter support was excellent. The 508th commitment to this effort was two ships. Lt. Lowe was the Deputy Lead.

On January 18th Ray Marner wrote:

The planes that were left here went out. One of our ships came back with 200 flak holes. Three men were wounded critically. (Will Lundy does not mention any wounded personnel at this time.)

A mosquito made a crash landing here. It broke right in two. The men in it were unhurt.

Lewis Robinson recalls:

One time we were on a raid that took us deep into Germany. Part of our fighter escort was to come out of Italy. Sure enough, here came the P-51's. What we heard on the radio was "Jive Talk" that was only understood by our nose-gunner who was from one of the southern States. Later, we were to recognize and appreciate those Tuskegee flyers.

Louis DeBlasio remembers:

On one of our earlier missions we were delayed on takeoff because of an engine problem. We were quickly assigned to another ship and transferred our weapons and other gear. After pre-flight we taxied out for takeoff. By the time we were in the air we couldn't locate our Group. Our pilot figured that he would find another B-24 group and go with them. Every time that we spotted "flares", we would head for that group only to find out that they were B-17's.

Finally we all agreed that we should abort the mission since we had wasted so much fuel flying from one group to the other. We dropped our bombs in the Channel and headed for home. Upon landing we were met by "intelligence personnel" who carted us off in separate vehicles to separate rooms for debriefing. They really interrogated each individual to confirm that we were telling the truth and had not planned the whole thing to avoid a "Hot Target".

Ray Marner wrote on January 19th:

Lt. Jarvis' crew reported in and are okay. Colonel Snavely is also all right. They bailed out in France and just got back.

Two days later, January 21st, the Group again put up a very small force (11 ships) to attack the marshaling yards at Pforzheim. The raid was originally briefed for Heilbronn. However, failure of radar equipment resulted in visual bombing of Pforzheim. There was no enemy opposition. Two 506th crews received mission credit on this date. One of those aircraft was probably flown by Burns. Elwood Matter's record indicates he was on a mission on this date.

Norman Chown recalls:

Charles Moffett and I were first assigned to the 389th Bomb Group. Just before that group returned to the States, Charley and I were involved in a chain of events which resulted in our aircraft being forced to return to base from a training mission. There was the impression that Charley and I were at fault. That was not entirely true. However, we gained the tag of "foul-ups" and were left behind. That reputation went with us when we transferred into the 506th.

Charley and I went on a three day pass to London. We didn't return on time. Our crew was on a combat mission when we returned. There was talk of a general court-martial with a charge of desertion in the face of the enemy. We were given an alternate choice of a reduction in grade. We accepted the reduction to private.

When we were given our Air Medals, the Major said we were to be made Tech. Sgts. again.

On January 24th the author wrote:

There was a Captain here today to look over the work which I have been doing. I am sort of sweating out the report to see what he thought of it all.

Speaking of Captains, did I tell you that I got bawled out for not being strict with the enlisted men? I was walking down the street with a Captain. An enlisted man (which I have known for the last two years) passed us. The enlisted man saluted. When I looked up and saw who it was, I said hello. The enlisted man also spoke and said, "Hello Norm". The Captain was highly browned off. He didn't say anything to the enlisted man, but he sure lit into me.

On January 25th Ray Marner wrote:

A total of 16 men from the Squadron (76 from the Group) went to the infantry today. Most were volunteers. Looks like more will be taken. Copain volunteered. Hated to see him go.

On January 26th Norm Kiefer wrote:

This afternoon I went on the warpath again and told off a couple of Captains. Some day I am going to get into trouble doing that.

They both had this job before I did and made a flop of it. Now this afternoon they came around to make some "constructive criticism". They wanted charts and what not. I told them that I didn't have time to worry about such things. They didn't like it the least little bit. I will probably have to do what they want in the long run, but not until I get darned good and ready.

After a week of bad weather the Group returned to combat on January 28th by sending out 28 aircraft. The target, the marshalling yards at Dortmund, Germany, was covered by haze. On the bomb run the lead bombardier was wounded and GEE-H equipment was not used. There were poor bombing results with the bombs falling 800 yards to the right of the assigned point. Flak was intense. Seven of the crews from the 506th received sortie credit.

On January 28th Ray Marner wrote:

Our planes went out today and the 66th lost two ships over the target. They collided and no one got out. A 68th

ship cracked up near the mile stretch on takeoff. I think everyone got out. Ammunition was going off like mad as the plane burned. (Note: Will Lundy's works confirm the loss of two ships in combat. However, one was a 68th ship (Corkey). The other was a 66th ship that crash landed on the continent. The 68th also lost a ship that crashed on takeoff. They encountered icing conditions. The engineer was crushed by the top turret in the accident.)

The Group had 30 ships in combat on January 29th. On this mission they attempted to hit a railway viaduct at Altenbecken, Germany. Instead, the secondary target at Hamm was bombed with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and fighter coverage excellent. The 506th furnished seven ships on this effort. The Lewis Robinson record shows that the Ray Ciesielski crew was on this ground support mission. Also, the Delmar Fox was on this mission. Finally, it is likely that Edkin's crew was on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones.

1,000 HEAVIES

DEFY ICE, FOG

HIT NAZI RAILS

Despite bitter cold, ice, fog and thick clouds which have stepped in as foes of the heavy bombers in the absence of opposition from the Luftwaffe, better than 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force, protected by approximately 650 Mustangs and Thunderbolts, yesterday hit rail facilities in an area stretching south from Hamm, northeast of the Ruhr, to Rastatt and Aachen southeast of Karlsruhe.

The blows followed Saturday raids by the 8th and RAF--the latter's 11th successive night of heavy bombing--when 800 Fortresses and Liberators shellacked Marshalling yards at Cologne, Coblenz and Ludwigshafen and bridges across the Rhine at Cologne and Bonn, and the RAF's Halifaxes and Lancasters struck at the railway center and industrial town of Hanau, ten miles east of Frankfurt.

All of the 8th's weekend bombing was accomplished by means of instruments. No enemy fighters were out either day and the rough weather obviously bothered Nazi ack-ack crews. Flak was only moderate Saturday, returning pilots

yesterday described it as meager. Temperatures upstairs hit a frigid 50 below yesterday.

Seven bombers and nine fighters out of an escort of some 550 Mustangs did not come home from Saturday's mission. Losses yesterday were nine bombers and one fighter.

On January 30th the author wrote to his wife:

Boy have I ever got a weather report to turn in tonight. This morning I went to breakfast and there were snow drifts that were knee deep in the roads. Just like home! About noon it started to melt. This evening it is sprinkling. You can guess what it is like now. Everybody had a good time throwing snowballs while it lasted.

We put in another stove in the store room today. It is a homemade one. We made it out of a barrel and it seems to work all right.

On January 31st the Group sent 30 aircraft to destroy the steel works and blast furnaces at Hallendorf, Germany. The recall signal was not sent out until the force had reached Dummer Lake (training area for German antiaircraft gunners). The base was closed in on their return so landing was carried out in Yorkshire. Sortie credit was given to eight of our Squadron personnel. The Elwood Matter notes show that on this day there was a plan A to strike at Berlin and a Plan B to hit Brunswick. The mission was recalled when they were 20 minutes from Brunswick. He probably was with Burns.

We were very pleased to report that during the month of January, 1945 we did not loose any aircraft.

It was some time late in January that the Erland J. Jacobson crew arrived. With Lt. Jacobson were Lts. Hal McCullough and Carlton Cook Jr.. The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Francis J. Raysinger, James V. Gratta, William N. Weaver, Douglas Kirk, Harry Bryant, and Milton Silberman.

During the month the following personnel were given promotions: From 1st Lt. to Captain, Richard A. Boykin, Joseph R. Bumbicka, Ogden K. Hill, Firman B. Mack, and Richard L. Wynes; From 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. William D. Edkins, Edward P. Jarvis, and Thomas P. Williams; From Private to Sgt. Chown and Moffett.

Also, the following additions, either permanent or temporary,

were made to the duty roster: Lt. George F. Brown Jr. (and crew), Lt. Milton Parrish, and Captain Elmer H. Hammer were assigned; Lt. Egan to duty from hospital, Lt. Lowe (and crew) to duty from rest home; S/Sgt F. C. Moore to duty;

Finally, the following removals from the duty roster were made: S/Sgt Niemezura to hospital as a result of Jeep accident on New Year's Eve; Assigned to the 70th Replacement Depot Lts. Henderson K. Bennett and David L. Therme, and S/Sgts. Charles J. Brown, Thomas J. Reeves, Cletus C. Clark, and Clarence W. Snyder; T/Sgt. Winn to AAF Station 528; Private Feagans to Station 572; Corporal Pedro T. Rodriguez to 496th Fighter Training Group; Lt. Sidney D. Lovitt to the 305th Bomb Group; Lt. Ryan and T/Sgt. Ihrig to the 231st Hospital; to seven day furlough T/Sgt. Wilson; Lt. Menzel to AAF Station 118; Captains John J. Horey and Carlton R. Horne reassigned; 14 enlisted men assigned to the 12th Reinforcement Depot for Infantry training; S/Sgt. Harold H. Hannon transferred; Sgt. Walter L. Jones to the 10th Replacement Depot

Private Roy L. Russel was reclassified.

During the month of January Norm Kiefer wrote the following to his wife:

"I heard a pretty good question the other day. What do you think the answer is? 'What did women do before there was war work; and who does now, what they used to do?' Now don't get mad at me!!! It was just in the paper."..."Enclosed you should find a Nazi Eagle emblem which I cut off from a German uniform down in the hills around Tunis. It is badly faded and weathered."..."So at last you received the flowers that I tried to send you for our wedding anniversary." (Note: They were ordered about two months prior to the anniversary, Oct 26th)... "The day has been pretty clear out, but rather chilly. We might be having some snow in the next few hours."..."I will close for now. My roommate doesn't feel well tonight and is in bed trying to go to sleep, but can't with the light on."..."Enclosed you will find a clipping from the Stars And Stripes. Once a week they have one of these that show the things that we will have to put up with when we get home. I will try to send a few of them. You might enjoy them."..."I went into town on the early train today. Can you guess why? I needed a bath!!! It is a whole lot warmer taking them at the Red Cross Club."..."No I never did send the second box of cigars. They didn't like the

idea of shipping them over here and then shipping them back."..."Did I tell you that Dick Wynes is now a Capt. He is now the Squadron Operations Officer. I was very glad to see him get it."..."Lt. Horne, Capt. Horey and Pooch More all left to go home today. They were all pretty old men over here. They used to fly with the RAF."..."You are wrong about that picture of me with a civilian tie. I am sorry, but I can't tell you what it is all about. You will have to wait. (Note: This was an escape picture that was taken of all combat personnel. They were dressed in clothing that was supposed to represent that available on the continent. The purpose was to have a picture that could be quickly placed on forged identity papers when you were shot down. These photos did not prove to be effective. The Germans knew what we were carrying. They even got to the point that they could tell which group you were assigned to by the tie that you were wearing in the picture. Each group had one tie and the Germans had connected that specific tie to the group identification.)

The author wrote to his wife on January 2nd:

They have been working your "Old Man" pretty hard in the last couple of days. Last night I was Convoy Officer. I had to go get a whole truck load of girls. Then at 11 o'clock I had to take them back once more. It was after 1 A.M. before I got back to the base. Now don't get excited! I was up in the cab and the girls were in the back.

This morning I was supposed to be the mail censor. However, there were enough officers there. Now, Capt. Doughton called and asked me to Base Officer of The Day today instead of the 18th. I told him that I would. Soon I will be going out to check the Guards. Then I will try to get some sleep before I go down to Group to do my regular standby-shift down there.

On February 3rd the Group sent 33 aircraft on a mission to destroy an oil refinery located four and a half miles slightly north of Magdeburg.. Bomb sight difficulties in the lead ship resulted in the Deputy Lead dropping on the marshalling yards at Magdeburg. H2X was used for sighting. Heavy flak was encountered on the way into the target. The 506th furnished eight of the attacking craft. Lt. Burns aborted when an oil leak developed.

The Ray Ciesielski crew went to Magdeburg according to records maintained by Lewis Robinson.

The William Edkins crew may have been on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

180 NAZIS
KO'D IN AIR;
OIL BOMBED

Air battles flamed anew over the Continent yesterday as more than 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts of the 8th Air Force, protecting a force of some 900 Fortresses and Liberators that plastered oil refineries and storage depots deep within the Reich, shot 149 attacking Nazi planes out of the air.

In addition, 31 enemy planes were knocked down by gunners of the heavies. Fighters shot up three more aircraft on the ground, making a grand total of 183 planes destroyed.

The bombers hit the large Hemmingstedt oil refinery near Heide, on the Danish peninsula; farther south, plastered a synthetic oil plant at Magdeburg; the Salzgitter benzol plant, and two oil storage depots, one at Derben, northeast of Magdeburg and one at Ehmén, northeast of Brunswick.

Ray Lee, Stars and Stripes writer who went along on this raid with the Liberator, Witchcraft, of the 467th Bomb Group, reported a solid wall of flak, but little fighter opposition over the target as the Lib completed its 100th mission without an abort.

On February 3rd Ray Marner wrote:

Van Wye (original 506th) came back from Russia and is here for a while. He's had some pretty good experiences. Traveled through Persia also. (Note: As the author recalls, we had a number of our ground personnel that were sent to Russia. It was expected that our ships would be taking part in a shuttle raid and the ground personnel would service the ships for their return trip. The hot story that these men brought back was that, "on the Russian Base that they just returned from, the male and female Russian Military personnel shared a common barracks and other facilities".)

On February 5th the marshalling yards at Munich was the briefed target. However, a stubborn weather front closed in and the mission was cancelled.

The 44th put up 32 aircraft and led the Wing on February 6th. The primary target was the oil refinery. However, it was cloud covered and the secondary target, the marshalling yard, was hit using H2X. Bombing results were unobserved. Flak was inaccurate and fighter support was good. Lt. Richard H. Habedank led the third squadron. In total, there were eight 506th ships on this raid. Records maintained by Elwood Matter indicate that he was on this mission. He probably was with Burns. The William Edkins crew may have been on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

KONIEV NEARS SAXONY
IN 2-PRONGED DRIVE
TO SPLIT GERMANY

The heart of Germany rocked with tremendous explosions yesterday as more than 1,300 8th Air Force heavy bombers dropped tons of high explosives and incendiaries on transportation and industrial targets in three important cities--including Dresden, still blazing from the effects of a double RAF blow the night before, and threatened by the advance, less than 70 miles away, of Red Army troops. Both the 8th Air Force and RAF attacks on Dresden were in support of one offensive of Marshal Koniev's forces, smashing toward the city in a bid to cut the Reich in two, while another drive struck north toward Berlin.

German "Achtung" reports last night indicated continuing air attacks over western Germany.

Heavies Plaster Arms Factories

Heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force, idle since last weekend's operations, thundered out yesterday in support of the Red Army salients aimed toward the heart of Germany, when more than 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators dealt solid blows to the industrial cities of Dresden, Chemnitz and Magdeburg. They dropped heavy explosives and incendiaries.

On February 6th Ray Marner wrote:

A plane blew up in midair south of here this morning while

the planes were getting in formation. No one got out. (Note: There is no record of a 44th ship lost on this date.)

Will Lundy reported in his works for February 7th:

During the early morning there was a terrific explosion out on the line. A bomb loading crew was loading one of the aircraft for an operation when one of the men turned on the main line and battery switches, and then attempted to start the auxiliary power unit located beneath the flight deck. However, the auxiliary unit was void of fuel, so the man obtained a container of fuel from his service truck and proceeded to refill this power unit. He then started the auxiliary unit running and left the bomb bay to return the container to the truck. Upon returning to the aircraft to set up the hoist, he found that there was a fire in the area of the power unit. He got some of the other members of the crew who tried to put the fire out, but it was out of control.

There were ten 500-pound bombs lined up beneath the aircraft in preparation for loading. The men succeeded in getting seven of the bombs rolled to the edge of the dispersal area before the fire became too dangerous for them to remain.

Approximately ten minutes after the fire started, there was an explosion, when two of the bombs detonated while the fire fighting unit was just moving into position. A large part of one bomb casing, three feet long and two feet wide, was hurled over 300 yards and went through a crew chief shack. This casing fragment struck and instantly killed a guard, S/Sgt. Stanley R. Ducki, though he did not have an apparent mark on him. The explosion completely destroyed the aircraft and produced a huge hole five feet deep and several yards across.

The Group dispatched 33 aircraft on February 9th. The primary target of the Rothensee Oil Refinery was cloud covered so the marshalling yards at Magdeburg were hit. This was the second time within a week that this target was selected. Bombing was carried out using H2X and the results were unobserved. Flak was accurate and fighter support was excellent. Captain George R. Insley led the high right squadron with nine aircraft participating. The Ray Ciesielski crew went to Magdeburg per the Lewis Robinson record.

Fred Marzolph recalls:

The little English laundryman, who came to the barracks weekly with the laundry, had me in a bad way after 4 weeks of looking for the laundry that I had given to him. I finally cornered him and he swore he didn't have my clothes, but we went back to his truck and found several bundles of my clothes. His excuse was that he had yelled my name "Marzipan" several times and I had not answered. I told him my name was not pronounced like the candy confection. From then on I got my clothes.

On February 11th Ray Marner wrote:

I got a letter from Copain. They are having rugged training. All the men from here will be riflemen on the western front.

An early morning raid was carried out by 33 aircraft from the 44th on the 14th of February. The primary was the oil refinery at Rothensee. However, the secondary target of the marshalling yards at Magdeburg, Germany, was hit when clouds obscured the primary. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and fairly accurate. Fighter support was excellent. There were eight aircraft from the 506th participating in this mission. Captain Firman Mack led the Group. The Delmar Fox records show that he was on this raid.

The next day, February 15th, the Group orders once again were to hit the oil refinery at Rothensee, near Magdeburg. Bombing was to be carried out through the use of H2X and results would be unobserved. There was no secondary. Flak was once again moderate and accurate. Fighter support was excellent. Captain George Insley led the low left squadron. Seven of our aircraft received sortie credit. Major McAtee was the command pilot. Lt. Ivan E. Lowe aborted. The Lewis Robinson records show the Ray Ciesielski crew went to Magdeburg. It is likely that the William Edkins crew was on this mission. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

KEY RAIL CITY
NEAR CAPITAL
IS POUNDED

The 8th Air Force fashioned another mighty blow yesterday as its part in the growing air offensive in

support of the advancing Red Army when it sent out more than 1,100 Fortresses and Liberators, covered by 450 Mustangs, to attack Dresden and Magdeburg for the second day in a row, and the key rail center of Cottbus, between Dresden and Frankfurt.

The raids followed a night in which the RAF again was out in strength, dispatching more than 1,300 planes, most of them heavy bombers, which rocked industrial Chemnitz before the rubble left by the 8th's raid Wednesday afternoon could be cleared, smashed an oil plant near Leipzig and bombed Berlin, Duisburg, Mainz, Nurnburg and Dessau.

Heavy blows by Allied air forces and the Red Army have slashed German oil production by more than four-fifths, SHAEF announced today. They warned, however, that the Wehrmacht could still muster enough fuel to launch another large scale counteroffensive. It is not expected that oil production will be sufficiently cut to prevent it from doing so.

During the past few weeks oil refineries have seemed to be our high priority. On February 16th it was the one at Salzbergen that was selected. However, there was a malfunction in GEE-H and the secondary target at Rheine was struck instead. Flak was meager. Heavy contrails were encountered in the target area. The weather at Shipdham prevented a return to base and thus all ships landed on the continent. Elwood Matter made this mission. He probably was with Burns. On this day the Ray Ciesielski crew flew their last combat mission according to the Lewis Robinson records.

Lewis Robinson remembers:

During my combat career I never got a shot at the Me-110 that destroyed the plane on our wing. However, I did share credit for one P-51 making an attack on our tail. It must have been a captured plane flown by a German. I reported the incident at interrogation and never heard about it again.

When it got time to go home, they placed us on a troop ship, *President Wilson*, out of Liverpool headed for Boston. We had no escort or convoy. We finally arrived in Boston after a five-day gale and submarine warnings, but no attacks off our East Coast. Everything I had traded for souvenirs was taken away from me in Liverpool.

I do remember the continuous chow line and a live craps game run by a new buddy of mine, Tony Giametti. Tony and I ended up at Radio Mechanics School, Truax Field, Madison, Wisc.

On February 17th the ships that had landed on the continent on yesterday's raid returned today.

On that day Ray Marner wrote:

Charley Walters came over here today. He is a 1st Lt. now. He used to work in our operations back at Pueblo.

More men are going to the infantry. Luke Holmes is going. They are taking nine men from the 506th this time.

Two more battle stars came through. That makes six. The one on the Germany Campaign is still pending and will come through soon. We have stars from the Ploesti Raid, Invasion of Sicily, Invasion of Italy, the Normandy Campaign, the Northern France Campaign and Air Offensive Over Europe.

On February 19th there was one aircraft from the Group that went into combat. Lt. Burton A. Maglitsch, from the 506th, led the 491st Bomb Group in an attack on the rail yards at Siegen. He was also leading the 14th Combat Wing.

On that same day the author wrote to his wife:

It has been five days since I last wrote to you. We have been very busy. Last Thursday we decided to take an inventory and set up a new set of books. That meant that we had two days typing to do in excess of our other work.

On Sunday morning we started to work on the inventory. It is a big job, but I think that we will be through by Friday. That is if we hold up under the pace that I have set for the boys. We are working 18 hours a day. On the days that I handle briefings, the only sleep that I have gotten is cat naps.

These boys that are working with me are certainly swell about it. Not a word of complaint, nor are they sulking around trying to find a way out of work.

For February 21st The 44th put up 32 aircraft. The attack was against the marshalling yards at Nurnburg, Germany.

Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Many of our aircraft landed on the Continent after bombing. About half of our ships received battle damage. There were seven ships from the 506th in the formation. Captain James H. Clements led the way for the Group.

Clements was leading the 2nd Air Division and flying with his regular crew except for Clement R.C. Holcomb and Murray G. Margolios. Eugene H. Snavely was Command Pilot. They were in A/C 322, Bar D. They were carrying six 500-pound RDX bombs. They were at 21,500 feet when the bombs were dropped at 1213 hours. They encountered meager, inaccurate flak in the target area and near Stuttgart on the way out. Fighter support was very good.

The Group dispatched 31 aircraft on February 22 for a raid with the primary target being Hohengandern and the secondary the Göttingen marshalling yards. A slight ground haze caused difficulty in finding the primary on time and the secondary was struck. Bombing took place at 8,000 feet under visual conditions. Bomb results were excellent. The Group received a 2nd Air Division Commendation for this operation. Flak was meager and fighter support excellent. Group personnel reported seeing smoking towns all along the route on the way in and out. Lt. Burns led the low left squadron. Sortie credit was given to eight of our crews. William Edkins probably made this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

6,000 PLANES SWOOP
DOWN TO PINPOINT
RAIL, CANAL SYSTEM

The greatest mass air assault since the Normandy invasion was loosed by more than 6,000 Allied aircraft yesterday against the entire system of German rail communications in Western Europe as planes from seven different Commands--including heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force, the 15th Air Force, and RAF Bomber Command--dropped a tremendous weight of bombs almost simultaneously on hundreds of targets throughout western Germany and northern Holland.

In weather so clear that airmen could see for 50 miles, the Allied air forces thundered through the skies to carry out the vast, long planned operation of smashing all highways, railways and canals connected with central Germany.

The 8th Air Force led the gigantic flying arsenal with more than 1,400 Liberators and Fortresses which blasted more than 24 marshalling yards over a 38,000-square mile area through the very heart of the Reich.

Confusion reigned throughout Germany as, first, German "Achtung" broadcasts reported small groups of every type of Allied aircraft penetrating over Germany at the same time--from the south and all along the West Front--until they blanketed the western part of the country. Then frantic reports began trickling through the German communications network of hundreds of cuts in railway lines from Denmark to Italy. Liberators from Maj. General William E. Kepner's 2nd Air Division struck the central third of the targeted area.

Hal Tyree recalls:

We interrupted our missions early in 1945 and were detached to Merville Air Base in Belgium. We ferried B-24's that could not make it back to England after landing on the Continent. We were in Paris for one night during Mardi Gras. When we returned to Shipdham we finished our tour on February 22, 1945.

On February 22nd Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Did you know that I have had a nickname for some time now? I didn't either, until the other night. I found out when I called the barracks for one of the boys. When the phone was answered, I heard them call the boy to the phone. He asked who wanted him. The response was "The Ball Of Fire".

Later on I started asking questions about the nickname. It seems that when I first came up here I got pretty hot under the collar at a couple of Captains and lit into them verbally. Some of the men heard me and said something about me being a ball of fire. That has been my unofficial name every since.

The Group led the 14th Combat Wing on February 23rd with 30 of our aircraft participating. This time the marshalling yards at Weimar, Germany, was the target. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. There was no flak and the fighter protection was excellent. Many of our aircraft landed at other bases in England upon return.

On February 23rd Ray Marner wrote:

The Group completed 300 missions today. There are a lot of rumors going around that we will move in April.

For February 24th only eleven aircraft from the Group participated in a raid on the oil refinery at Misburg, Germany. Our ships were not able to find the 14th Combat Wing on assembly. They tacked on to the 2nd Combat Wing. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and accurate. Fighter support was excellent. This was the last mission for Delmar Fox. He doesn't know which crew he was with.

The Group dispatched 35 ships on February 25th. The target was the marshalling yards at Aschaffenburg, Germany. The weather was clear and the target was hit visually with excellent results. There was no flak on our formation. Some of our aircraft landed on the Continent after bombing. Captain Firman B. Mack led the Group. There were eight crews from the 506th that received sortie credit. Lt. Thomas J. McKenna aborted.

This was the first mission for the Erland J. Jacobson crew according to records maintained by William Weaver.

On February 25th Ray Marner wrote:

A lot of boys just came back from Switzerland. They really had a good time there. They brought back a lot of watches and other things. These boys were interned for a year.

A total of 22 of the Group's aircraft participated in the raid on the Pankow marshalling yards, in Berlin, on February 27th. Cloud cover was solid on the way in. Flak was meager and inaccurate. Fighter support was good. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Captain Ogden K. Hill led the Group. There were five of our aircraft in the formation.

Fred Marzolph recalls:

A visit that one of the fellows in our barracks received from his brother. It happened just after the "Battle Of The Bulge". The brother was an infantry man. He brought with him a gift/souvenir which he gave to his brother. It was a live hand grenade. Now Air Force people don't know much about grenades. Our barracks buddy pulled the pin

for some unknown reason and couldn't get it back into place. Everybody in the barracks flew that day! That is, out of the barracks and into the bomb shelter which was just outside. They immediately found themselves in about one foot of water.

Meanwhile, our buddy made his way out the back door and threw the grenade over the pond into the farmers field. Luckily, no one was hurt, but there was grumbling about wet shoes and clothing.

Major Middleton was the Command Pilot leading the 14th Combat Wing on the February 27th attack at Bitterfeld. There were 22 aircraft from the 44th on the mission. The briefed primary was the marshalling yards at Halle. Radar difficulties at the primary resulted in striking Bitterfeld which presented a better radar target for our H2X equipment. There was no flak and fighter support was excellent. Lt. Richard H. Habedank flew as Deputy Lead. Six of our aircraft received sortie credit. The Elwood Matter record shows that he flew a mission on this date. The target indicated is Halle, Germany. Matter was probably with Burns.

On February 27th Ray Marner wrote:

We entered foreign service 2 years ago today. We are having an inspection sometime this week by some Inspector Generals.

For the 10th straight day, February 28th, the Group has been in combat. There were 24 ships from the Group that participated in a raid on the marshalling yards at Seigen, Germany. Bombing was by GEE-H with unobserved results. There was no flak and fighter support was excellent. Sortie credit was given to six of our crews.

Summarizing the activities for the month of February, 1945, we find the Squadron participated in fifteen operational missions, sending a total of 104 aircraft with only nine abortions. Thirty-five enlisted men and seventeen officers completed their operational tours. For the second month in a row the Squadron did not lose a crew to enemy action. The site and living quarters were considerably improved. Fencing off the grass and a general cleanup of the grounds made quite a change.

During the month the following personnel received promotions: From 1st Lt. to Captain, Irwin C. Rada; From 2nd Lt. to 1st

Lt., Linwood Clay and Harry W. Alexander; From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt., George Joanos.

Also during the month the following additions were made to the duty roster: Crew Chief, M/Sgt. Yerke from hospital; Captain Hill, Lt. John W. Peck, and Sgt William M. Welford from sick quarters; Lts. Laurence F. Wallace, Eugene T. Cunningham, and Donald M. Schake (and crews) assigned.

Finally, the following deletions, either permanent or temporary, were made from the duty roster: Lt. Schufflebarger to Station 10 RAF; Lts. Raymond J. Ciesielski, Clyde M. Housley, and Fred W. Illgner were reassigned; T/Sgt. Stephen J. Opet transferred to replacement depot; PFC Irvine Ryke (mail orderly), S/Sgt. Charles E. Reed and Lt. Joseph C. Kodaj transferred; Lts. Jack C. Thorne and Thomas P. Williams to rest home; 1st Sgt. William Welford to sick quarters

In letters to his wife during the month of February Norm Kiefer wrote:

"No I don't remember the person that you mean when you speak of Len Stumon. I hope that you didn't go and tell him that I had forgotten! Don't ever do that. I will remember those people once more when I get back and see them again."..."I went to see a couple of old movies last night. One of them was Clark Gable in *Call Of The Wild* and the other was Jane Weathers in *You're In The Army*."

On March 1st the Group dispatched 21 ships on a mission to the marshalling yards at Ingolstadt, Germany. Capt. Benadom flew as Command Pilot with Capt. Firman B. Mack leading the Group. The objective was the rail equipment and the repair facility located there. Failure of the H2X equipment in both the lead and deputy lead ships resulted in dropping bombs on the smoke markers of the 392 Bomb Group. Bomb results were unobserved. One Me-262 made a tail attack on the low squadron. This ship passed over the squadron and passed out of the formation at eleven o'clock. There were no hits. There was no flak and fighter support was excellent. There were five ships from the 506th in the formation.

On the second day of the month, March 2nd, there were 21 aircraft from the 44th in combat. This was to be another attack on the oil refinery at Magdeburg, Germany. However, because of weather conditions over the refinery, the marshalling yard was bombed. Bombing was carried out using H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate. Five crews

from the 506th received sortie credit.

On March 2nd Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

How are you feeling this evening? Well I hope! My cold still has a good hold on me. I feel tired and sore all over. (Note: At this time the base was undergoing a flu attack.) Yes I am working tonight. I wish that I could get out of it. A little rest would do my cold a world of good. I guess that I will have to follow Maj. McAtee's example and go to the hospital for a few days.

We now have the whole outside of the office covered and the biggest share of it painted. It looks pretty nice, even though I say so myself. Last night Sgt. Lillard got a bright idea about what sort of material to use in covering the inside of the office. It is a fiber-like board that lines our ammunition boxes. That will make it rather nice inside, I hope!

The 44th was out looking for oil once again, at Magdeburg (Rothensee), on March 3rd. The Group sent 21 aircraft on this raid on the oil facility which was covered by a smoke screen. However, the refinery smoke stacks could be seen and our bombs were dropped visually. Flak in the target area was moderate and accurate. Enemy jet aircraft struck the formation ahead and four of the aircraft in that formation were lost. Our P-51 escort could not match the speed of these German aircraft. Captain Mack flew as the Deputy Lead for the Group. In total, there were six ships from the 506th on the raid. Records maintained by William Weaver indicate that the Erland Jacobson crew was on this mission.

On March 3rd Ray Marner wrote:

We were attacked tonight and early in the morning by "Jerry". There were piloted planes for the first time in nine months. "Jerry" was about for around three hours. He strafed the field and hit some planes and hangars. The boys were hitting the deck for the first time in a long while. No casualties here on the station to my knowledge. Some people in the small towns were killed.

The Group placed 24 aircraft in the air on March 4th. The objective was the tank factory at Aschaffenburg. Dense contrails and a haze over the target resulted in the abandonment of the primary. Targets of opportunity were bombed. These included the marshalling yards at Tuttlingen

and other targets at Aachen and Offenburg. Flak was encountered over the front lines and in the target area. Lt. Burns led the second squadron of the Group. Seven of our crews were credited with a raid. The Erland Jacobson crew was on this mission per records kept by William Weaver.

Again on March 4th Ray Marner reported:

"Jerry" was over again early this evening strafing the field. No one hurt here on the field.

The mission was to Harburg, Germany, on March 5th. Our eleven ships were the high right squadron for the 14th Combat Wing in this attack on the oil refinery. The bomb run was short due to crowded conditions in the target area. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. On the way to the target flak was encountered near Heligoland. Lt. Emmett J. Burns led the Group. There were three 506th ships over that target.

On that same day Norm Kiefer wrote:

We got more of the fiber squares today. Yours truly was up on the top of a ladder nailing them on the wall when the Colonel walked in. He didn't say very much of anything. Now just offhand I would take that to be a good sign. You see it was pretty dirty out in the storeroom. If the Colonel had not been pleased with the progress he would have most certainly complained about the dirty conditions.

I may be a little conceited, but I think that Maj. McAtee is very proud of the job that we are accomplishing. Last night at the Squadron meeting, he wanted to know if all of the officers had been over to see Kiefer's place of business.

The Group sent only three aircraft to attack the target at Bielefeld, Germany, on March 7th. They were to provide leadership for other groups. Will Lundy's works show that Overstreet of the 67th flew Lead and Meglitsch of the 506th flew Deputy Lead for the 491st Bomb Group. They struck the railway viaduct using GEE-H with unobserved results. There was no enemy opposition.

On March 8th the Group sent 26 aircraft on raids. They split and struck two assigned targets. One formation hit the railway center at Betzdorf. Others went with Lt. Emmett J.

Burns to fly the high right squadron with the 491st. They were on a GEE-H run on the marshalling yards at Siegen when the GEE-H trace faded. The Mickey operator took over for an H2X attack. Due to the confusion on the short run, the marshalling yards at Limburg was hit instead. There was flak in the Frankfurt area. Records maintained by Elwood Matter indicate that he was on this mission. He probably was with Burns.

Fred Marzolph recalls:

We were never shot down, but came back one time with unexploded 20-mm antiaircraft shells in our self-sealing gas tanks. There was another time that we had no hydraulic fluid because of a malfunction. All of the fluid was pumped from the plane. In order to land we had to manually lower the flaps and wheels. Parachutes were rigged on the waist gun mounts in order to slow the plane down after reaching the ground. One time we had to land at a base in southern England. This was an emergency field. The runways were about three football fields wide and three miles long. Coming in without brakes was real neat since you could coast to a stop with lots to spare. The runway was lined with bombers and fighters of all kinds.

The Group sent 37 aircraft on a return visit to the viaduct at Bielefeld on March 10th. Once again the target was cloud covered and GEE-H equipment was used with unobserved results. No enemy opposition was encountered. Lt. Burns led the second squadron. There were ten ships from the 506th present.

On March 10th Ray Warner wrote:

Two years ago tonight we were torpedoed. An unconfirmed report came on teletype that Japan was invaded. It hasn't been made public as the report came from Japan.

The Group sent about 30 aircraft to the submarine pens at Kiel, Germany, on March 11th. That is about twice the number dispatched in May, 1943, when our ships also dropped incendiaries on this target and won a Distinguished Unit Citation. There was also three times the number of friendly bombers, all B-24's, over the target and friendly fighters were there. However, they weren't needed since no enemy aircraft appeared. Flak was moderate. This time the target was cloud covered and bombing was by H2X with unobserved

results. Captain Ogden K. Hill Jr. flew as Deputy Group Lead. There were eight aircraft from the 506th in the formation. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones indicates the William Edkins crew may have been on this raid:

HEAVIES HIT U-BOAT YARDS,
CONTINUE BLITZ ON OIL, RAILS

Bombing through clouds, more than 1,200 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force attacked German submarine construction yards at Bremen, Hamburg and Kiel yesterday and spiralled down loads on eight oil refineries in the first two cities.

The raids climaxed a big week end for both the 8th and the RAF. On Saturday more than 1,350 Forts and Libs continued the drive to cut Nazi communications to the Ruhr by aiming an assault at interlocking rail lines running from the area. Three marshalling yards in and near Dortmund and other targets north and east of the Ruhr were bombed, also through the clouds.

Captain Mack led 33 ships from the Group to the marshalling yards at Wetzlar, Germany, on March 12th. Bombing was by H2X with unobserved results. Enemy opposition was nonexistent. Fighter support was good. There were nine 506th ships in the formation.

In the August 1988 issue of the 44th Logbook Firman Mack wrote:

Our mission to Wetzlar got complicated almost at once. At some point on the way to the Group forming area, the airplane suddenly filled with acrid smoke. Everyone except me was coughing and hacking and gasping, trying to put on their oxygen masks. Fortunately, I had put on my oxygen mask before we left the ground because I was usually pretty busy during form-up. After the people got their masks on, someone in the waist told me that Logan had triggered a smoke bomb accidentally while walking through the bomb bay. After a certain amount of confusion, we got the bomb bay doors open and dropped the 100-pound smoke bomb into the 10/10 cloud cover below us. I never could find out where that bomb landed. Either the people didn't know or they didn't want to tell me.

After we got rid of that bomb, the smoke cleared out of

our drafty old B-24 pretty rapidly. However, our troubles were not over. I received a call from the waist that the acid from the bomb had sprayed Logan in the face and he was unable to wear an oxygen mask. If he continued on the mission with us he would surely die of anoxia. It shouldn't happen to a nice guy like Logan. We had a little powwow in the cockpit. The guy that was riding Command Pilot that day said, "You can't go back!". I guess we already knew that because we knew that we were expendable. On the way to the target, you were working for the Government, but after you dropped your bombs, you had the luxury of working for yourself.

While I was still trying to figure out what to do about this situation, the waist called me and said "Logan wants to bail out!" I had another short powwow with the navigator who said, "If he's going to do it, he had better hurry because we are approaching the coast". I called the waist and told Logan to go ahead, but he shouldn't open his chute until he hit the clouds below us, which were at about 5,000 feet. (We were then about 13,000 feet.) The wind was behind us and if he drifted too far, he might end up in the drink. Logan said O.K. and shortly after that he bailed out. The guys in the waist said he opened his chute almost before he got out of the airplane. I think he came down somewhere around Ipswich.

I don't remember much about the mission, but when we returned to Base, our revetment was swarming with staff cars. I seem to remember that General Johnson was among those present. In the uproar someone said, "We found one of the people who bailed out, but we can't find the other two!"

It took a little while to figure that out, but it seems that someone in the formation had reported that we bailed out three people. The "two people" who were missing were Logan's pants and jacket which had been thrown out because they were smoldering from the acid.

Shortly after this mission, at a meeting which Colonel Snavelly was addressing, someone commented that Capt. Mack and his crew were to be congratulated for the way they handled the Logan incident. Colonel Snavelly said, "I don't know whether they should be congratulated or whether Capt. Mack should be court-martialed." To which I responded, "I'm right here, Sir". Colonel Snavelly and I never liked each other.

A few days later Colonel Snavelly called me into his quarters and gave me a Clark bar from his candy ration and told me that the Brass had decided to award Logan the Distinguished Flying Cross. This would tell the Germans that we were so eager to come and bomb them that our people were prepared to bail out rather than disrupt the mission.

The following press release appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*:

An 8th Air Force Station in England, April 9 (AP). Burned severely by the accidental explosion of a smoke bomb in his Liberator, Sgt. Grover Logan Jr. of Hattiesburg, Miss., bailed out over England so the plane would not have to abandon its mission to return him to its base for medical treatment.

Logan landed near a railway station in time to catch a train to a civilian hospital. An ambulance took him to an American military hospital.

Pilot Capt. Firman Mack, Chicago, Ill., said he gave permission to jump upon learning that Logan's burns were causing extreme pain but apparently were not serious. Sgt. Roger Tweksbury, of Bath N.H., the engineer who took over Logan's gun position, said "He stepped through the emergency escape hatch as nonchalantly as if he was going across the street for a pound of butter."

On March 12th the author wrote to his wife:

I can't answer your question about when and if we will come home upon the fall of Germany. They don't up and say, "Norm old boy you have been a good boy. Now you can go home when Germany turns in it's chips". There are boys here on the same field that have been here three years and there still isn't a chance for them to go home. How can I say that I will come home. You will just have to wait until I get there and then pray that I don't have to leave again.

There were 36 ships from the 44th that went to the marshalling yards at Gutersloh, Germany, on March 14th. The weather was clear and bombing was visual. Generally, the bombing results were excellent. There was no enemy opposition. Ten aircraft from the 506th received sortie credit.

A newspaper article that Charles Jones kept may have referred to this point in time:

GOOD HITS
SNARL LINES

The back breaking blitz on German railway lines, slowed up somewhat Thursday night because of bad weather, roared anew yesterday afternoon when over 1,200 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force dropped a pulverizing load of bombs on approximately 20 marshalling yards in southeastern Germany while heavy bombers of the RAF pommelled the communications center of Essen and hit a benzol plant at Geilenkirchen.

The Fortresses and Liberators, again carrying out their missions from medium altitudes of from 6,000 to 15,000 feet, blasted yards in five towns situated on rail lines radiating from the key transport center of Nurnburg, at which the 8th struck two mighty blows earlier in the week. The attack thus took the form of a mopping-up operation, in which the bombers, having paralyzed the hub of this section of German communications, reached out to disable its smaller component parts.

The complete pattern of yesterday's assault by the 8th covered an area stretching from Schweinfurt south to Nurnburg and east to the Czech border, a much more compressed area than the one hit in Thursday's savage blow.

Our Group sent 33 aircraft to lead the 14th Combat Wing to Zossen, Germany, on March 15th. The German General Staff Headquarters is located there. When our ships arrived there were heavy contrails from preceding ships. Also, the MPI area was covered with haze and smoke from exploding bombs. The MPI was changed and visual bombing was carried out. However, bombs from some of the squadrons dropped short and to the right. Meager and inaccurate flak was encountered both in the target area and at Stendal. Elwood Matter was on this mission and was probably flying with Burns.

On March 17th the marshalling yards at Munster was bombed by 25 of the Group's aircraft. Captain Clements led the Division. For bomb aiming, GEE-H was used with unobserved results. Moderate and inaccurate flak was encountered in the target area. There were six aircraft from the 506th there. James Clements was flying in aircraft #322, Bar D. Flying

with him, in addition to his usual crew, was Lt. Elmo C. Trudeau and Flight Officer Frank A. Clarvoe. Bombs were released at 1345 hours at 23,500 feet. Erland Jacobson made this raid according to the William Weaver record.

Ray Marner wrote:

"Jerry" was over again last night.

There were 33 aircraft from the 44th in the attack on the Borsig Armament Works in (Tegal) Berlin on March 18th. The objective was the manufacturing facilities for the V-2 rockets and anti-aircraft ammunition. We were carrying a new type of incendiary bomb that is practically impossible to extinguish. Weather conditions, resulting in dense contrails, hindered formation flying after the Initial Point. The 67th became separated, but the remainder of our ships in the lead and low left squadrons struck the target visually. The remainder dropped on Berlin using H2X. Strike photos showed excellent results for all. Flak was intense and fairly accurate. There were no enemy aircraft.

Louis DeBlasio believes that he was on this mission. He probably was with Max E. Chandler. DeBlasio recalls:

We had flak damage, but there were no casualties. This was my sixth mission. After our return we were given our first three-day pass.

The William Edkins crew was probably on this raid. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

1,100 HEAVIES
KEEP BLITZING
REICH'S RAILS

Carrying their relentless attack into its ninth consecutive day, more than 1,100 heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force raided Nazi rail lines yesterday for the eighth time in their new offensive, 750 Fortresses pouring it on the traffic center at Leipzig while 350 Liberators attacked the marshalling yards at Halle, 20 miles northwest of Leipzig.

The escort of 700 Thunderbolts and Mustangs continued strafing enemy airfields and rail lines yesterday, reporting destruction of more than 70 parked aircraft and damaging 44 locomotives and rail cars.

In Monday's attack on Berlin, from which 16 bombers and seven fighters are missing, the 8th may have dropped its 500-pound "Goop" bomb, an incendiary that defies all extinguishing devices, the Associated Press reported yesterday, quoting officials in Washington. USSTAF said last night it had no knowledge of the bomb being used Monday.

A Reuter dispatch from Stockholm reported huge fires started in the three railway terminals hit by the 8th, with many freight cars, loaded with food, munitions and other supplies for the Russian front, destroyed.

On March 18th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I have been wasting a lot of money in the last couple of days. To begin with, I bought a new Olive Drab colored battle jacket and some other odd and end bits of clothing. Then tonight, as per custom, I had to spend a great deal of time at the bar and buy drinks.

Of course I am taking it for granted that you noticed the change in my status. My promotion came through today and was back dated to the fifteenth of the month.

After I decided that I had spent enough money at the bar, I purchased a bottle and took off to see Jimmy Caillier and the enlisted men.

On March 19th the Group launched 33 aircraft in a strike at the jet plane assembly facility at Neuburg. We were leading the 2nd Air Division. In the area of the initial point, heavy haze was encountered and the Group was forced to drop to 1,500 feet under it. Bombing was visual with excellent results. Five of the Group's returning ships landed on the Continent. The 66th lost one ship. Captain Mack flew as Deputy Lead.

Records kept by William Weaver indicate that the Erland Jacobson crew made this raid.

The 44th sent 11 aircraft, flying the left squadron for the 14th Combat Wing, to the oil refinery at Hemmingstedt, Germany, on March 20th. The weather was good, but the target was covered with smoke. The Lead Bombardier tried to use the offset method of bombing, but the bombs fell beyond the intended striking point. Lt. Burns led the Group. There was no flak and no fighters.

On March 21st there were 35 aircraft from the 44th on a mission to clear the way for fighters that were to strafe the airfield at Achmer. Confusion at the Initial Point resulted in the lead squadron having good results, the high right squadron having fair results and the low left poor. There was no enemy opposition. There were ten aircraft from the 506th that were there.

In the afternoon of March 21st a second mission was flown. The Group, with 11 aircraft, led the 14th Combat Wing to the airfield at Essen. While on the bomb run the lead aircraft was hit by flak. Unknown to the crew the bomb sight was damaged. This was not known until it was too late to turn over the lead. The bombs were 4,000 feet east of the target. Flak was moderate and accurate in the target area. There were three crews from the 506th that received sortie credit.

The William Weaver record shows that he was in combat on this date. He probably was with Erland Jacobson. There is no indication of whether they were on the morning or afternoon shift.

A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones indicates that the William Edkins crew may have been on this raid:

PLANE PLANTS, AIRFIELDS
STRUCK BY 1,200 HEAVIES

Rumbling through ineffective enemy air opposition, more than 1,200 bombers of the 8th Air Force swung deep into eastern and southern Germany yesterday to cut Nazi air strength at its source. Liberators struck at plane plants and airfields in the south and Fortresses thundered eastward to hit at industrial objectives in Chemnitz and Leipzig areas.

The Libs, bombing from clear skies, emptied their bomb bays over a factory making jet plane parts at Baumenheim, 20 miles northeast of Augsburg, and over airfields near Ingolstadt and Ulm, both in the general area of Augsburg. The latter field is believed to be assembling jet planes.

USSTAF revealed yesterday that 25 bombers and five fighters are missing from Sunday's operations over Berlin. At the same time it announced that photographs taken during the attack showed excellently placed bombs carpeting the centrally located Schlesicher and North Station rail yards and fires burning in the Tempelhof

airdrome and marshalling yards. Libs which struck at industrial objectives in the suburban areas also achieved good results, photos showed.

Also, on March 21st the 506th had a new experience. For the first time, our Squadron Commander would carry the rank of Lt. Colonel. We were all proud to now call him Lt. Colonel McAtee.

On March 21 Ray Marner reported:

"Jerry" was over tonight. One plane made a pass at our site. I saw him coming and we all hit the ditch. He went right over us when every .50-cal. in the site opened up. We almost got him.

Captain Clements led the Division on March 22nd. The Group sent 32 ships on this mission northeast of Stuttgart. The target was an airfield at Schwabisch-Hall. Bombing results were excellent. Flak was encountered. Six of our ships, although undamaged, landed on the Continent before returning to base. James Clements was flying aircraft #644. Flying with him, in addition to his regular crew, was Major Vaughn, Capt. Dale F. Benadom and Lt. Roy W. Owen. Bombs were dropped from an altitude of 16,000 feet at 1314 hours. Charles Jones kept a newspaper article that may have referred to this raid:

8TH PUNISH LUFTWAFFE'S AIRFIELDS

In a savage blow aimed at crippling the Luftwaffe, which appeared to be forming a comeback in the past few weeks, U.S. heavy bombers and fighters yesterday thundered out to hammer airfields, many of them bases for jet-propelled fighters and fighter bombers, in northwest Germany, the Ruhr and southern Germany. The 8th had some 2,200 planes out, nearly 2,000 of which figured in the drive on airdromes, while the 15th dispatched a separate force of Liberators to lash at the Neuburg drome, jet base 50 miles north of Munich.

The bombers and fighters carried out their assault under excellent conditions--ceiling visibility was unlimited. In the greatest blow of the whole operation, approximately 1,100 bombers of the 8th and most of its 800 fighters zoomed in over nine fields in northwest Germany to wield a

three-ply blow.

First the bombers came in for their run, followed by fighters which laid fragmentation bombs on runways and other vital spots on the fields. Fighters carried out the third phase of the attack by sweeping in to strafe the dromes.

On March 22nd the author wrote:

You keep asking me if they will let us come home when the war is over with Germany. I Don't Know! If you look back over the history of this war you will find that every time there was something big going on, we were there. When the U-Boats were harassing our convoys we were chasing them and got a "blue ribbon" while doing it. When they stormed the beaches of Sicily, we were a couple of miles ahead of them. We have been on every low level that the heavies have been on. Maybe it was only supplies to the paratroopers, but we were there. Do you remember the hard position our ground troops were in at Anzio and Salerno? How long did it take them to get us down there? That was the time they called us back from leave. When they landed in France we were again pounding the beaches ahead of those troops. We are known at times as oil men. They have sent us on some of the longest raids of the war to get at the German oil. Again there was a "blue ribbon". To sum it up, we are trouble shooters. It is hard telling what our next job will be.

Thirty Group aircraft made a mission to the marshalling yards at Rheine on March 23rd. Each squadron made its own bombing run. The results were excellent for all. Flak was moderate, but accurate in the target area. Some of our ships were damaged. The Erland Jacobson crew was on this mission per records kept by William Weaver. A news article kept by Charles Jones may have described the day's events:

Heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force and the RAF again lent their crushing weight yesterday to the great tactical blitz on Nazi military and communications zones in the Ruhr. More than 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th, with cover of some 700 Mustangs, lashed out in excellent weather at nine Wehrmacht Administration and supply centers ringing Essen in the Ruhr and continued to blast enemy airfields, striking four more near Frankfurt-on-Main and Stuttgart and one at Ahlhorn, near Bremen, which had been pommelled in Wednesday's big blow.

From the south, Forts and Libs of the 15th thundered up from Italy to bomb the Ruhland oil refinery, 70 miles south of Berlin, and oil refineries and rail yards in Vienna.

Mustang fighters had the distinction of providing protection for three separate forces, for in addition to shielding the 8th and 15th, some went along to defend the RAF's Lancasters which poured 11 tonners on the bridges. Some enemy air opposition was met but no passes were made at the heavies and 8th fighters KO'd 13 in the air and shot up nine more in strafing attacks on fields in central Germany.

On March 24th the 44th, leading the 14th Combat Wing, launched 27 aircraft on a mission to drop supplies to air-borne troops that landed on the far side of the Rhine River, near Wesel, Germany. The ground troops assignment was to establish a bridgehead that was essential for Allied troops to cross the river and then move into the north German plain. Our ships were carrying 60 tons of critically needed supplies for the troopers who had been dropped earlier in the day. The crews were carefully briefed to drop supplies on previously pinpointed positions. The drop was to be made from an altitude of 100-to-200 feet. The turn from the drop zone was to begin immediately after the drop. This would minimize their time over enemy lines. The turn was estimated to take 15 minutes.

On the chalk board the mission looked like a milk run. However, almost immediately after the drop the B-24's began to sustain hits from every type of weapon the Germans had in the field. The aircraft were especially susceptible when their bellies were exposed as they were making tight turns to get back to the Rhine.

Will Lundy's works indicate:

Sgt. Diaz was flying as left waist gunner on Lt. Pyle's aircraft, #535, Bar O. The supplies were dropped at 1314 hours at approximately 300 feet. Sgt. Diaz was standing between the open ball turret well and the bomb bay, facing the rear of the ship. He was hauling in the static lines which had been attached to the parachute-packed supplies. Sgt. Diaz was wearing a chest type parachute at the time and it is unknown in what manner, but his parachute was spilled and went out the open ball turret well. The force of the air in the open chute pulled him down into the well

and out of the plane. The Germans later reported him as dead.

We also lost Lt. Chandler's crew. He was in Aircraft #314, Bar R, *Southern Comfort III*. They were flying the number three position in the second squadron. The left wing of this craft was seen to drop down and the ship began to lose altitude. The wing tip touched the ground and the plane bounced back into the air momentarily and then nosed into the field and exploded.

Louis DeBlasio was with Chandler. Deblasio recalls:

This was the seventh mission for our entire crew. Our top turret gunner, Nedder had a habit of getting air sick while flying. On the morning of the supply run, Nedder was late getting down to our assigned ship, the bright and shiny *Southern Comfort III*. He had been with the Flight Surgeon obtaining airsickness pills. We had already loaded the upper, nose and tail turrets. We were not carrying waist guns and the Sperry Gun sights had been removed. During the briefing we were told not to fire any guns since there were paratroopers in the area. We were also told that once we made the drop, we were on our own and could head back to England by any course we wanted. There would be no formation.

They had also removed the ball turret. The supplies were to be pushed out of the of the ball turret opening as well as the bomb bay.

There was an air of excitement amongst us because of the type of mission we had been briefed for. We had also been informed that it was a "milk run". We might not even get credit for a mission.

When the ground armorer came around with "flak suits" a lot of the crews weren't taking them. I made certain that I got one for each member of our crew. However, my own crew did not feel they were required and I deposited them in the waist of the ship.

What was different about this mission was that after takeoff we were to cross the channel at about 1,000 feet. At the coast of France we were to start our descent to 500 feet. Our briefed course took us across Cologne, Germany, where we were fired upon by guns located in a church steeple. As briefed, we did not return the fire.

As we approached the Rhine River and the drop zone, the men in the waist of the ship prepared to push out the supplies. Robert Vance took his position on the left waist window and I was on the right one. Thomas Clark was by the bulkhead. He would be pushing his bundle out of the rear section of the bomb bay.

Near Wesel we could see Allied gliders that were smashed in the fields. We could also see all of the parachutes on the ground where they had been abandoned by the landing paratroopers.

By now we had dropped to 300 feet and the bailout bell rang. That was the signal to push our bundles out.

After the drop I looked out the waist window and saw a crew member from one of the ships ahead of us hit the ground. He had accidentally gotten tangled in the parachute harness of one of the bundles as he pushed it out and was dragged from the plane.

Immediately after the drop, we were chattering on the intercom system and everyone was saying, "Let's get the hell out of here".

Just as we were banking to leave the area, we were hit. The whole ship seemed to stall in mid-air and shudder. Flames were coming into the waist section from the bomb bay. I tried calling the flight deck, but the intercom system was dead. I hollered to Vance and Clark, "We've had it."

Immediately Vance and I got into the "ditching position". Clark braced himself against the right side of the bulkhead. The plane pancaked into the ground, bounced up and crashed on the second impact. It must have split in two in the bulkhead area. Both Vance and I were wearing our flak suits at the time of the crash. We were also wearing our sheepskin flying suits and boots. These tended to protect us from more injuries than we received.

Both Vance and I managed to crawl out of the wreckage moments before she blew up. Everything around us was burning and exploding. Even the little ammunition we had was exploding. I could hear Vance saying, "Pray Lou, Pray Lou". My reply was, "Let's get the hell away from here and then worry about praying".

We crashed in a cornfield. On the far end we could see a wagon which we managed to crawl under. I bandaged Vance's head which was bleeding profusely from a deep gash in his skull. He tied a bandage over my left eye which was also bleeding badly. We remained hidden for about 20 minutes and then saw civilians looking for us.

Later we found that a German Field Artillery unit was concealed in the a small nearby woods. Their gunners saw us crawl out of the wreckage. However, fearing the P-47's that were strafing the area, they did not attempt to apprehend us.

Vance and I watched the approaching civilians. Vance was incoherent due to the head wound. I was trying to get my pistol out of the holster. At the time I thought my left arm was broken. My parachute harness was over my weapon and I needed two hands to unbuckle the harness. I tried to get Vance to assist me. I never got it unfastened.

When the civilians found us they tried to talk to us, but neither Vance nor I understood German. They thought that we were Canadians. They turned us over to the German soldiers that were in the woods. One of them could speak a little English and we managed to get some first aid.

Also captured with us was a P-47 pilot whose plane had crashed in the next field. He had managed to bail out, but had a badly injured leg. We remained hidden in the woods that day and travelled only at night. The only mode of transportation was a horse and wagon. Very few gasoline driven vehicles were to be seen. If you saw one, it would most often be pulling another vehicle.

We eventually arrived in a town called Ahrlen. It had six hospitals that were full of Germans. The doctors changed our bandages. There was nothing they could do about the numerous contusions that we had sustained in the plane crash. At this point we could hardly walk.

On the eighth day of our capture, while lying in the hospital, we heard this rumbling noise. We didn't know what it was, but the Germans recognized it as Tiger Tanks. About the same time there seemed to be a lot of activity by the hospital personnel. We saw the German Chaplain collecting, from the German wounded, the weapons which they still had.

As the rumbling got louder, the P-47 pilot, Vance, and I discussed whether we should try to walk out of the hospital. We decided to give it a try. Sure enough, soon after our departure, an American Jeep from the 2nd Armored Division pulled up. It seems that they had declared this to be an "Open City" to protect the wounded in the hospitals.

Shortly thereafter we were transported to an American Field Hospital to be treated. We also got our first decent meal in eight days.

After viewing the moving picture film that Harvell took of our plane crashing and exploding, I realize that it was certainly a miracle that Vance and I survived.

With Lt. Max E. Chandler (KIA) were Flight Officer Hugh X. O'Donnell (KIA) and Lt. Robert T. Dantzler (KIA). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. Thomas H. Cordes (KIA), Sarkice (Sarkis) T. Nedder (KIA), Eugene L. Elliott (KIA), Louis J. DeBlasio (POW), Thomas W. Clark (KIA), and Robert D. Vance (POW).

Elwood Matter was on this mission. It was the second low level supply mission that he had flown. On the first one he was wounded by ground fire.

Many of the returning 44th ships had suffered battle damage. One ship had to land on one wheel. Another came in with a flat tire and an engine out. The most dramatic was two ships racing down the runway side by side after landing at the same time.

Pilots of other 506th ships that flew this mission were Kanic in A/C #158, Bar Q; Edkins in A/C #209, Bar W; McKenna in A/C 351, Bar P; Rockman in A/C #643, K; Ackerman in A/C #644, Bar A; Keys in A/C #682, G; and Wallace in A/C #883, Bar Y.

The Group sent 12 aircraft on a second mission on March 24th. The target was the airfield at Stormede. Five of those aircraft were from the 506th. They were flying low left squadron of the 14th Combat Wing. Bombing was visual and there was no enemy opposition except for a few bursts of flak at Koblenz on the way home. These few bursts did hit half the ships in the attacking force.

For a newspaper account of this days events see the next day's raid below.

On that next day, March 25th, there were 22 ships from the 44th that went to bomb the underground oil storage facility at Hitzacker, Germany. They formed two squadrons. One flew high right on the 491st, which was leading the Wing. The other flew high right on the 392nd. Heavy cloud formations, that reached 22,000 feet, compelled a course change before reaching the continent. The weather cleared and the target was attacked visually. Bombing results were excellent. Flak was encountered in the target area and along the route. Fighter support was excellent. Lt. Smith led the second squadron. It is likely that the William Edkins crew was on this mission. The following newspaper article was kept by Charles Jones:

HELPED ALLIED PARATROOPS

Having culminated its role in the Rhine crossing with blazing bomber and fighter sweeps up and down enemy territory, activities of the 8th Air Force fell off sharply yesterday as approximately 250 Liberators and 250 Mustangs and Thunderbolts attacked three underground oil storage depots near Brunswick and Hamburg.

But on Saturday, the 8th put together a mighty procession of bombers and fighters which flew 3,000 sorties in cooperation with the troops streaming across the river. The bombers, which had been devastating enemy airfields east of the Rhine for three days, plastered 16 more and dropped weapons and supplies in a daring low-level operation to paratroops immediately after they landed.

From dawn to dusk Thunderbolts and Mustangs patrolled the battle area, riddling troop concentrations, supply columns, rail yards and airfields. Only 66 Nazi fighters were met, an indication of the results of the bombers' relentless attacks on Luftwaffe fields, and 53 of these were shot down. The 8th lost 22 bombers and four fighters during the day.

Liberators which dropped supplies to the air-borne troops bore the brunt of the losses--20 out of approximately 240 which followed directly behind transports and gliders and dropped the sky-fighters some 600 tons of weapons and medical supplies from 100 feet. The Libs had to battle through an intense storm of 20-mm anti-aircraft, machine-gun and small weapons fire.

The massive operation of the 8th was split three ways.

Early in the morning, around 1,050 Forts and Libs hit 12 airfields east of the Rhine. This was followed by the mission supporting the air-borne troops. Then late in the afternoon 450 heavies struck four additional fields in the Reich, raising to 25 the total of airdromes hit by the 8th in its fierce attack on Nazi fighter bases.

At day's end the German lines were a shambles, supply lines wrecked, rails torn and twisted, airfields gutted and cratered. Long columns of enemy convoys were set aflame and riddled by fighters. An entire motorized infantry battalion was battered and routed by Mustang pilots who caught the unit as it roared along a highway near Cologne.

On March 26th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

I'll bet that you can't guess what I had to eat this noon. I went with one of my boys on a run today and he stopped at a little English cottage to pick up his laundry. I was sitting in the truck waiting when the door opened. Mrs. Godfry (the laundry lady) handed me a homemade piece of custard pie. It really tasted good.

He (the Sgt.) really has that town sewed up. The lady that runs the pub saves him a drink of Scotch (almost impossible to get over here) and the best of ale every week. (Note: This was probably Sgt. Lillard.)

Fred Marzolph remembers:

I always felt safe when we had Ernie Babek aboard at our waist guns. He could always be relied upon to spot trouble. I was usually resting on the flak mats on the floor until we left England. I became the other waist gunner after they removed the ball turrets. Whenever we were hit by fighters I had to avoid him as much as the enemy fighters. He was big and strong and would take whatever was in his way when he swung a waist gun.

Thirty-three of the Group's aircraft hit the submarine pens at Wilhelmshafen, Germany, on March 30th. They flew second group in the Wing which was leading the Division. The lead group bombed visually with excellent results for all squadrons except the high right. That squadron could not see its target and had to resort to H2X. They overshot their

target. Flak was moderate and inaccurate. Fighter support was excellent. Captain Clements led the Group. Clements flew A/C #644 with his usual crew except for Lts. Richard R. Pedersen, James H. Stevens, and Murray G. Margolies. Their bombs were away at 1330 hours from an altitude of 22,500 feet. There were no enemy aircraft in the area.

On that day Ray Marner wrote:

It is getting hard for us to bomb now. They can't keep track of the bomb line. (Note: In order to avoid bombing our troops there was an area near the known location of our troops that was not to be bombed.)

On the last day of the month, March 31st, we struck Brunswick, Germany. There were 33 ships from the 44th to lead the 14th Combat Wing. Dense clouds covered the primary target, the Hoya Ammunition storage depot. The secondary, the marshalling yards, was hit using H2X with unobserved results. Flak was moderate and inaccurate. Fighter support was good. Lt. Smith led the Squadron.

During the month the following personnel received promotions not previously mentioned: From 2nd Lt. to 1st Lt. Virgil J. Scherzberg, Henry Faingeblat, and William M. Smith; From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt. Jesus Martinez.

The following named personnel were added to the Squadron duty roster: Lt. Leonard G. Pyle (and crew) and Lt. Elmo C. Trudeau; Major McAtee and PFC J. W. Allen returned from sick quarters.

The following named personnel were either permanently or temporarily removed from the duty roster: Ten enlisted men were transferred to the 12th Reinforcement Depot for Infantry training; Lt. Thomas P. Williams transferred to the 68th Bomb Squadron; Lt. Holcomb assigned to the 70th Reinforcement Depot; Captain Wynes and Lt. Edkins to sick quarters; Lt. Jarvis and crew to rest home; Lt. Paul Betz and S/Sgt. William H. Peiffer on leave.

During the month of March Norm Kiefer mentioned the following in his letters to his wife:

"I haven't made any decisions on the subject of staying in the Army after the war. I will wait and see what they offer me and what chances I have..." "Do you know what I am going to eat before I go to bed? That is if it is

ready! Some Jello! I fixed a package of it an hour or two ago and have it on the window sill now."..."No I have never heard the Rum and Coca-cola song. I am afraid that we are a little bit behind the rest of the world in song hits. It should be over here before very long."..."I am sorry that you are disappointed about not receiving flowers for Christmas. We can't send them any more. Don't ask me why, I can't guess!"..."No, I have not heard from Gordon Horton for a number of months. The last I heard he was still in Africa."

On April 1st the author wrote:

Do you remember the last Easter we were together? That was way back in 1942. We were in St. Louis. That morning Marie (Norm's sister) found her bunny and candies in the big chair. I wonder if she found any this year. She is a pretty big girl by now and may have learned a little more about those things. That will spoil Easter and Christmas for me. I always got a big kick out of watching the kids.

Today has been the same as any other day for me, except that I wore my blouse to work and tried to make it seem different. Oh yes, we had a high mass instead of the usual low one.

A newspaper article that Charles Jones kept summarized our March activities:

MARCH RECORD MONTH FOR 8TH

Heavy bombers of the 8th Air Force were idle yesterday after rounding out their greatest month of the war on Saturday, when more than 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators, protected by 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts, attacked rail, industrial and oil targets in Germany.

During March, featured by the mighty assault that helped clear the way for the Rhine crossings, the 8th unloaded 73,000 tons of bombs on the Reich, surpassing by 15,000 tons its previous heaviest month, June of last year, when its planes dented the French coast in cooperation with the invading Allied Forces.

The heavies flew more than 28,500 sorties, bettering by 2,600 the number flown during D-Day month, until now the record month. Fighters made 16,400 sorties, topped only

by June, July, and August of last year.

The record tonnage represents nearly two tons of bombs dropped every minute during the month. It took the 8th 18 months, from mid-August 1942 to mid-February 1944, to drop its first 73,000 tons on Nazi strong points.

The 8th lost 138 bombers and 99 fighters during March, or one plane lost for every 200 sent out. At the same time, 410 enemy fighters were destroyed, 250 shot down and 129 destroyed on the ground by fighters and 31 shot down by bomber gunners.

The Group dispatched 32 aircraft on a mission to attack an airdrome at Tirstrup, Denmark, on April 2nd. Adverse weather conditions over the North Sea forced the formation to return with their bombs. No sortie credit was given.

On this same day Norm Kiefer:

I'll bet that you can't guess what I had to eat this afternoon! A piece of chocolate cake! Don't you wish that you were with me? That is right, I went out with Sgt. Lillard once again.

Whenever I have anything like that happen I will tell you about it. It seems, from some of Mom's letters, that you folks wonder how these people like and treat us.

In this case the lady brought the cake from home to give to us in the pub. There were some of her neighbors there and she didn't offer any of the cake to them. They live in a little village. It seems that where the most of the Yanks are stationed is the place that they are the most welcome.

On April 4th the Group sent 44 aircraft on this mission to a target that was 18 miles from Hamburg. The target was an airfield at Kaltenkirchen. Major Middleton was the Command Pilot leading the 14th Combat Wing. The continent was completely covered with clouds. Meager flak was encountered, but no enemy aircraft. All twelve of the 506th ships brought back their bombs. Firman Mack's records show that he flew Deputy Group Lead on this mission. A notation shows that they encountered enemy jets. Records maintained by William Weaver indicate that the Erland Jacobson crew was also on this mission. Also, the Ellwood Matter record indicates that he was in combat on this date. Elwood was credited with

damaging one Me-109. This enemy aircraft was reported, by bombers further back in our formation, to have crashed. The Edkins crew probably made this mission. A newspaper article kept by Charles Jones may have referred to this raid:

HEAVIES ROCK KIEL FOR 2ND DAY,
POUND HAMBURG AND AIRFIELDS

German naval installations were again plastered by 8th Air Force bombs yesterday. Roughly half of a force of some 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators swung in over Kiel to attack U-Boat yards there, while the remainder of the force hit submarine pens at Hamburg and lashed at airfields in northwest Germany.

It marked the second day in a row that Kiel had been hit and the third time in the last six days that the heavies poured it on Nazi naval bases. Two of the last six days, incidentally, were non-operational for the 8th.

(The London Daily Express reported Monday in a dispatch from Stockholm that it is believed there that the Germans in the last two months have been speeding experiments in launching V-weapons from ships and large U-boats, adding that a sub sunk off Bergen, Norway, in February, was believed to have been involved in such experiments.)

Approximately 850 Mustangs and Thunderbolts escorted the heavies and met determined opposition from small numbers of enemy fighters, mostly jet propelled Me-262's, which struck at formations of Liberators. The fighters knocked down 15 Jerries, 11 of them jets, and got eight more in strafing attacks on airfields, but not before some of the Libs were tumbled from the skies.

Nine bombers and four fighters failed to return from the overall operations.

The fighters slashed at the Libs singly and in groups of four and eight. A Lib tail gunner from Minneapolis, Sgt. Calvin W. Mattsson, reported that two jets zoomed at his plane from the rear, but neither showed any ability to maneuver as he and other gunners blazed away from all parts of the ship. He reported one as a probable kill.

Glenn Hall recalls:

There was less fighter opposition on my second combat

tour. They finally took the ball turrets out of the B-24's. On one of my last missions there were fighters. An Me-262 passed us up, hitting the group ahead of us. Some P-51's chased one Me-109 into our Group. The German pilot seemed to know about the ball turrets being removed. He came in under our planes. At least six tail and waist gunners were firing on it as it climbed, stalled and with its pilot slumped over, the enemy fighter went straight down.

On April 4th Ray Marner wrote:

Lots of rumors floating around. we have to start packing our excess equipment. Don Swem and some of our other fellows are going on detached service to the continent. Rumors have it that we will move to Frankfurt.

The author recalls an incident that happened when they started to pack the excess equipment:

We received written orders to remove excess headsets from all aircraft. Quite a number of Aircraft Commanders had requested an extra headset at each of their ship's stations. We were now to collect those extra sets.

I was in the office in our supply room one day and heard Sgt. Lillard say, "I'm sorry Major, but I can't do that. You will have to talk to Lt. Kiefer." Another voice said, "Well where will I find this Lt. Kiefer? I'll get this thing straightened out."

Sgt. Lillard knocked on the door and asked me to come out. As I emerged from the office I heard, "Don't you damn paddle feet have anything else to do. Now this is a direct order, put those headsets back."

I turned around and went back into the office and put on my Eisenhower jacket, with ribbons, and then returned to the supply counter. I said, "Now first Major, lets settle the paddle foot comment. I notice that you are wearing the Distinguished Unit Citation ribbon with Cluster. By what right do you wear it? I wear mine because I was present on both raids. Next, I have written 8th Air Force orders to remove those headsets, therefore they will not go back. Finally, if you are thinking of a court martial for violation of your direct order, come into the office and I will call my Commanding Officer. I flew combat with him. If you are going to Group I will go with you. I

flew combat with most of the rank up there. If you would like, I will even introduce you to the General." The Major left and we heard no more.

It was about this time that they were surveying the Air Force to determine which individuals had experience in civilian life that could be used in an Army Of Occupation. These skills included Lawyers and Judges, Public Works Operation, Local Government, Transportation, etc.. Those selected would be given training and rank according to the job assigned. I was told that my experience in communications could be used.

On April 5th the marshalling yards at Plauen, Germany, were bombed. The Group had 43 ships in the air. They were leading the 2nd Air Division. Adverse weather conditions resulted in attacking the secondary target, the transportation network at Plauen, using PFF with unobserved results. Ten aircraft from the 506th participated. Lt. George F. Brown and his crew were forced down in enemy territory.

Lt. Brown was flying A/C #158, Bar Q, *Tinker Belle*. They were last seen about 11 miles from Frankfurt at 14,000 feet. At that time they were in radio contact with our ships and reported the #1 engine to be feathered. They were making a controlled decent through clouds with the intent of reaching an airdrome in friendly territory. He had three P-51's for escort.

Will Lundy reported in his works:

No word was heard from these men until 10 days later when Lt. Barry telephoned the 44th base and asked for a plane to come and pick them up. Barry reported that they let down through the overcast to about 3,000 feet. We were over the Ruhr pocket, and they opened up on us with machine-gun and small-arms fire. Our gunners fired back and we could see the Germans running for cover. Right after that they really opened up on us.

The engineer, Howard M. Burkhart, indicated that they had lost one engine to mechanical failure before arriving at the target. We couldn't keep up with the formation. The #1 engine was feathered, #2 was on fire and Lt. Brown was wounded. Engines #3 and #4 were smoking and the radio operator, Travis E. Nash was killed by flak. The decision was made to try to land at Brussels, Belgium. We didn't

make it! Flak, along with small arms fire, got us about 60 miles east of Koln. I was busy transferring gasoline when the pilot rang the bailout signal. We all hit the silk.

George F. Brown and Travis E. Nash both had been hit in the head. Brown was hit just above the ear and he was never heard from after he parachuted. Travis went down with the plane. It crashed near Wipperfurth.

One man did not take to his parachute immediately however. He was Sgt. James E. Otto, who was busily strafing enemy troops from his nose turret position. This 19 year old gunner had not heard the bailout signal. When he turned around to look he was all alone in the Liberator except for the dead radio operator. He bailed out immediately. His chute opened at about 500 feet. He landed in a tree and was hanging in mid-air for about five minutes until a German soldier climbed up to cut his straps so that he could fall to the ground.

While Otto was immediately taken in hand by the German soldiers, his fellow crewmates were going through a series of adventures that kept them well occupied. Lt. Barry had three bullet holes put in his parachute by a German soldier. Sgt. Robert E. Sampley had been caught in a tree also. When he tried to unharness his parachute he lost his balance. Suddenly he found himself hanging upside down from a branch some twenty feet in the air. He was precariously suspended by one foot caught in the straps of his chute. Gingerly, he pulled himself upright and slid down the tree to momentary safety. Within thirty seconds he had his hands in the air and a number of bayoneted rifles pointed at him.

The fifth member of the group landed in the midst of a band of Hitler's Youth. Sgt. Ernest McAlpine, 19 years old and a tail gunner, reported that he had never thought much of that Nazi organization, but he owed them a debt of gratitude now. They kept a bunch of angry civilians away from me and brought me to the military authorities. These civilians were all for taking care of me right then and there.

All five crewmen eventually ended up in a large prison camp that had French and Russian slave laborers in it.

Lt. Barry reported that the Russians and French were

wonderful to us. They couldn't do enough for us. Some of the Frenchmen had been there for five years and when we arrived they broke out food they had been saving all that time. They gave us a party. They even told the Germans that they wouldn't work the next day.

On the morning of the ninth day, the first platoon of American soldiers, members of the 78th Division, arrived in camp. Two days later our men were in Paris. Shortly after that they were back in England.

Sgt. Burkhart said that the pilot, Lt. Brown had bailed out with the rest of the crew, but no one saw him again. No other information has been found to clear up the mystery of what happened to him. He eventually was determined to have been killed in action. It is possible that he was killed while parachuting, or was killed by civilians or soldiers while trying to avoid capture or even died from his head wound.

The other two crew members, copilot Flowers and navigator Thomas, also returned to military control--Flowers on the 18th and Thomas on the 14th.

Flying with Lt. George F. Brown Jr. (KIA) were Lts. Harl N. Flowers (Returned) and James J. Barry Jr. (Returned). Also, Flight Officer Robert S. Thomas (Returned). The enlisted personnel were Sgts. James E. Otto (Returned), Howard M. Burkhart (Returned), Travis E. Nash (KIA), Robert E. Sampley (Returned), and Earnest E. McAlpine (Returned).

Elwood Matter flew this mission.

On April 6th the oil storage facility at Stassfurt, Germany, was briefed. However, weather conditions forced the bombing of the secondary target at Halle. It was bombed using H2X with unobserved results. Captain Wynes led the Wing. Five of our aircraft received sortie credit.

The author wrote to his wife:

Do you know what I bought today? An Alarm Clock!!! For the first time in more than three years they shipped in some clocks to this field. All six of them! I waited in line for more than three-quarters of an hour. It is mostly made of cardboard, but it ticks and rings and that is the most important thing.

Twenty-two aircraft from the 44th were briefed to bombed the Krummel dynamite works on April 7th. While over Krummel the lead aircraft experienced a bomb rack problem that resulted in visually bombing the secondary target, the railway center at Newmunster, with excellent results. The high right squadron bombed the primary target, the dynamite factory. The target was covered by bomb smoke which resulted in the poor performance. Enemy aircraft were encountered. Lt. Balanic aborted. According to records maintained by Elwood Matter, he was on this mission. That record shows the target to be Duneburg, Germany.

On April 8th the Group furnished eight aircraft to fly high right squadron in the "B" group for an attack on the Ordnance Depot at Bayreuth, Germany. The visual bombing provided excellent results. There was no enemy opposition. Three 506th crews received credit for a raid.

Once again, Elwood Matter appears to have been in combat for the second day in a row.

On April 8th the author wrote:

Today I shipped a box full of junk to you. I will try to remember what all was in it. There was my Distinguished Flying Cross and a lot of Stars and Clusters. Two pairs of wings and a watch. You will find a pencil clip, two metal buttons and a tiny round piece of metal with a glass cover. Keep these pieces separate and a little distance apart. Now don't ask questions, just wait and I will show you some day. (Note: These were all compasses from my Escape Kits) There are some bars and a tin can with pieces of metal in it. (Note: These were the pieces of shrapnel that was removed from Coldiron on the May 14, 1943, raid on Kiel. The can and the shrapnel are now a part of the Ellsworth Museum collection.) Also there is a couple of necklaces, some earrings, a ring, and a little straw doll. (Note: The straw doll was purchased in South America and was kept on the aircraft wall over the gun or radio operator station when I was flying. At this moment the doll is hanging over the computer.) Also, there are two Flying Eight Ball insignia. There are three pocket folders with pictures and money from the various places that I have been. That is all that I can remember. I still have more that I will send later on.

Captain Firman B. Mack led the Group to the airfield at Leipheim, Germany, on April 9th. There were 28 Group

aircraft that participated in bombing the target 11 miles from Ulm. Both the Lead and Deputy Lead of the high right squadron aborted, but all remaining aircraft bombed by squadron. Bombing was visual with excellent results. There was no opposition. Six of the 506th crews were credited with a raid.

Parchim, Germany, was the target selected for the next day, April 10th. There were 33 ships from the 44th leading the Wing to the airfield which is located 25 miles southeast of Schwerin. Bombing was visual, by squadron. The lead and high right squadrons had excellent results. The bombardier in the lead aircraft for the low left squadron cocked the trigger on his bomb sight while making a preliminary run. When the lines crossed, the bombs were away and fell seven miles short of the target. There was no enemy opposition. Sortie credit was given to eight of our crews. The Erland Jacobson crew was on this raid according to records maintained by William Weaver.

On April 10th Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

Jack (Edwards) was here yesterday. Colonel McAtee and I took a flight to Paris and when we returned Jack was waiting for us. We took him home last night. He still wants to come back to the Group.

As the author recalls it was on this flight to Paris that I blasted the Paris control tower with our radio transmission.:

Once again, I was flying as radio operator/engineer. When it came time to contact the Paris tower our command radio was out. Since the Germans did have some B-24's that could be flown, we did not want to take the chance of being shot at because we did not contact the tower. I lowered the trailing wire antenna and tuned in the tower. As close as we were, any transmission was bound to be on the high volume side. When McAtee spoke into the microphone his words apparently lifted the headsets off the operators heads. When we were parked, a Jeep approached with a 2nd Lt. He wanted to talk with the radio operator. He was rather surprised to find that the "radio operator" outranked him. The chewing out that he had intended to give ended up with a, "Please don't do that again."

Another good sized raid, 40 aircraft, was mounted on April 11th when the 44th went to the marshalling yards at

Neumarket, Germany. The bomb run was visual. Bombing results for the high right squadron were short because of a malfunction in the telescope motor on the bomb sight. The low left squadron salvoed their bombs on a second run when the bombs would not drop electrically on the first run. There was no enemy opposition. Lt. Acker led the eleven Squadron ships that participated. This mission was flown by the Erland Jacobson crew according to the William Weaver record.

On this date Ray Marner recorded:

President Roosevelt died today.

Norm Kiefer wrote:

I must be getting very hard to get along with. Why? Well, I had another scrap with a certain Captain today. It seemed that he had been challenged to a ball game. During the noon hour he came to the supply room and told the biggest share of my men that he wanted them to play ball in the afternoon.

When I got back and they were gone, I got on the phone and asked him if the war was over. If so, I hadn't heard about it. He then told me about the challenge. I retorted that I understood that the Germans were the real challenge. He then decided that he only wanted enough men to play the ball game. I contended that if we were going to give seven men the afternoon off to play ball, we should give the rest of the men off to watch the game or do as they wanted. Well, he still wanted the men and asked me to also play. I refused on the grounds that I had worked all night and still hadn't been to bed. If it was going to be declared a Holiday, I was going to bed. The result was that he got his men, the rest of the men were free and I went to bed.

On April 14th the Group sent 33 aircraft on a mission to attack a pocket of Nazi soldiers that have been isolated at the Gironde Estuary; near Bordeaux, France. These pockets have refused to surrender and have spent their time building defenses in the area using supplies brought to them by submarines and air lifts. As these sources of supplies were cut off, the Germans began to raid neighboring villages. Our ships were second in the Wing bomber stream. However, they assumed the lead at the Division assembly line. Our drop point was at Fort De Royan. The 1,000 and 2,000-pound bombs

were dropped with excellent results. Seven of our crews received sortie credit.

The William Weaver record shows that he flew a mission on April 13th. I could find no reference to a raid on that date. Therefore, I have assumed that the raid was actually on the 14th.

On April 14th Ray Marner wrote:

I got a letter from Copain. He's in Germany and seems to like it. (Note: Copain was one of our enlisted men that transferred to the infantry.)

On April 15th, for the second day in a row, the Royan area was attacked. The Group sent 33 aircraft on this second visit. This time they were carrying Napalm Jelly bombs that were being used for the first time in this theater. The first three squadrons, of ten aircraft, were carrying Napalm in wing tip fuel tanks, used on our fighters. The fourth squadron, consisting of four ships, dropped incendiary bombs. Two squadrons could not pick up their aiming point on target #7 because of smoke. As an alternative, they dropped on target #1 which had not been hit. They achieved good results. The remaining ships dropped on target #7 with a pattern in the briefed area. Bombing results were rated as good. Flak was meager. Captain Clements led the Group. Eight ships from the 506th were in the formation.

Clements was flying in aircraft #322, D. In addition to his regular crew, he had Lt. Stanley Prawdzik, Capt. J. M. Smith and Major Vaughn with him.

Other 506th crews that took part in this raid were Jacobson in A/C #351, Bar P; Edkins in A/C #500, Bar S; Parrish in A/C #535, O; Bielinski in A/C #682, Bar G; McKenna; Jarvis in A/C #691, Bar F, and Thorne in A/C #748, Bar J.

Charles Jones kept a newspaper article regarding this raid:

HEAVIES THROW
FIRE TO FREE
BORDEAUX

Using a new type of fire bomb for the first time, as well as thousands of tons of high explosives, 8th Air Force Fortresses and Liberators flew more than 2,450 sorties Saturday and Sunday in the drive to wipe out

German pockets of resistance in the Gironde area and free the big French port of Bordeaux.

Many of the 1,300 bombers taking part in yesterday's clear weather assault were loaded with tanks which exploded on impact, igniting incendiary material and splashing the flaming contents over an area of approximately 60 square yards.

Tanks containing more than 460,000 gallons of this liquid were showered on the target areas in the vicinity of Royan on the east side of the Gironde estuary in an assault coordinated with movements of French ground forces.

In addition to the new fire bomb, more than six thousand 100-lb. incendiaries were dropped in the same areas. Large coastal guns on both sides of the estuary were attacked with nearly a thousand 1,000-lb. and 2,000-lb. high explosive bombs.

There was no enemy air opposition and, as in Saturday's mission, in which 1,150 B-17's and B-24's struck at defended areas with about 3,500 tons of demolition bombs; the bombers were unescorted.

Norm Kiefer remembers:

I was on briefing duty for this raid. During the preparation of briefing material, I noted a statement that the Napalm would not only burn anything that it touched, but would also burn the oxygen out of the air. It was expected that all personnel in the area would suffocate even if they were not touched by the inflammable material.

On April 15th Ray Marner wrote:

Colonel Smith is now Group Commanding Officer. Colonel Snaveley went to 14th Wing.

Colonel McAtee was the Command Pilot on a mission to Rosenheim, Germany, on April 16th. The Group sent 33 aircraft to lead the 14th Combat Wing on this raid. Weather ships reported the primary and secondary targets were covered. Our formation then struck the marshalling yards at Landshut. A visual run was attempted, but our lead and high right squadrons were cut off by B-17's and had to abandon their run and hold their bombs. The first squadron salvoed

their bombs. The second squadron jettisoned their bombs. The low left squadron had sufficient time to move their aiming point and bombed visually with excellent results. Flak was moderate and accurate. Eight ships from the 506th received credit for a mission.

Crews from the 506th that made this mission included Wallace in A/C #209, Bar W; Friedel in A/C #351, Bar P; Mosher in A/C #643, Bar K; Thorne in A/C #682, Bar G; Keys in A/C #691, Bar F; and Scherzberg in A/C #748, Bar J.

Softball practice was the most dangerous mission carried out on April 17th.

The Group sent 30 ships, leading the 14th Combat Wing and the 2nd Air Division, on a mission to Passau, Germany on April 18th. The primary target was covered with clouds so the secondary, the marshalling yards, was hit with visual bombing by squadrons. The bombing pattern was excellent and on target. There was no enemy opposition. Captain Clements was Deputy Group Lead. Clements was flying aircraft #322, D. In addition to his regular crew he had Flight Officer Joseph M. Dudek, Lt. C. L. Frimstad, and Major C. Hughes with him.

Other 506 crews that took part in this raid were Pyle in A/C #209, Bar W; Parrish in A/C #351, Bar P; Cunningham in A/C #500 Bar S; Jacobson in A/C #643, Bar K; Bielinski in A/C #682, Bar G; Jarvis in A/C #691, Bar F; and Edkins in A/C #748, Bar J.

A newspaper article that was kept by Charles Jones read:

HEAVIES BOMB RAIL TARGETS

While fighters of the 8th Air Force had a lean day in continuing their drive on Nazi airfields--early reports last night showed only one plane destroyed on the ground--more than 750 Fortresses and Liberators again swung deep into western Czechoslovakia and southern Germany yesterday to bomb marshalling yards in seven localities ahead of the advancing Third Army.

Approximately 600 Thunderbolts and Mustangs went along to cover the heavies and blast fields in the same areas. Whether the Luftwaffe had withdrawn its planes from these fields or had lost what it had in the area was not disclosed. But some enemy aircraft did appear during the

long mission and fighters shot down three.

The marshalling yards attacked, mostly in small localities, were near Prague, Pilsen, and Regensburg. Weather was generally clear.

Four bombers and one fighter are missing.

For April 18th Ray Marner reported:

McAlpine, Otto, Burkhardt, Sampley, and Lt. Barry and Flight Officer Flowers of Brown's crew came back today. Nash was killed. These fellows were POW's for 12 days and were liberated later. Flowers hid out for quite some time. They were in the Ruhr Pocket when they parachuted.

The author recalls an original 506th combat man was among those that returned about this time. Richard Tuttle, who had been shot down on October 1st, 1943, came back to the base. He was surprised not only to find me still around, but also as an officer. Richard was a rather tall boy. His height was now exaggerated by his thin condition. He had no hard feelings at that time for the Germans. He said, "They not only didn't have any food to give us; they didn't have any for themselves." I must say that he was only too happy to go with me to eat at the Combat Officers Club. He looked around and said that it was more than he was used to.

On April 19th the railroad junction at Schwandorf, Germany, was briefed. However, the mission was scrubbed before takeoff.

On this date Ray Marner wrote:

Vance of Chandler's crew came back. He and DeBlasio were hurt. The rest of the crew was killed. They crashed and exploded.

The Group dispatched 30 aircraft on a raid to Irlaching (Schwandorf), Germany, on April 20th. At the Initial Point the Group assumed the lead. The railroad junction was hit with visual bombing. Bombing results were excellent. There was no enemy opposition. Captain Burns led the Squadron.

Flying for the 506th on this date were Wallace in A/C #209, Bar W; Bakanic in A/C #351, Bar P; Bieliniski in A/C #500, Bar S; Mosher in A/C #643, Bar K; Burns in A/C #644, Bar A; Friedel in A/C #682, Bar G; Keys in A/C #691, Bar F; and

Scharzberg in A/C #748, Bar J.

On April 20th Ray Marner wrote:

Danny Bitzel came back here on furlough. He is stationed in Brussels and Paris. He has a good deal.

On April 21st softball practice was top priority. The Squadron's first game is scheduled for May 12th against the 12th Communications Section.

On April 22, 23, and 24 there were no missions.

The next time we were in combat was April 25th. There were 30 Group aircraft attacking the marshalling yards at Hallein, Germany. Bombing was visual with good results. Flak was moderate and accurate from Bertsgaden and Saltzburg. Seven 506th crews were credited with a mission. The Firman Mack record shows that he flew Deputy Group Lead on this date. This was his 30th mission and the completion of a tour for this crew. By this time, Wayne H. Dickerson had replaced Clarence Fuss and Wendell C. Swartz replaced Jack L. Addis. Major Hurley may have been aboard the ship with Mack.

This also proved to be the last combat mission that the Group was to fly.

Other 506th crews that flew this last mission were Jacobson in A/C #351, Bar P; Bielinski in A/C #500, Bar S; Wallace in A/C #524, Bar L; Parrish in A/C #535, Bar O; Pyle in A/C 691, Bar F; and Thorne in A/C #748, Bar J.

For the remainder of the month Squadron personnel engaged in site cleanup, routine duties, rest, and softball practice. All personnel were in good spirits since the rumors indicated that we were going home.

About this time Ray Marner wrote:

Lou was transferred to Eccles Road. Six men were transferred to the 453rd to go home and then to the Pacific. They sent us replacements. We are having crates made here for our equipment.

During the month the following named personnel were promoted: From Flight Officer to 2nd Lt., Gerand J. Gross.

Additional personnel changes included the return to the duty

roster of Lt. John J. Ryan from sick quarters.

Also, during the month the following, either permanent or temporary, deletions were made to the duty roster: To the 70th Replacement Depot, Lt. Fuss, T/Sgt. Odie D. Hill Jr., and William T. Emmart; To rest home, Lts. Burns, Hare, Jarvis, and Pedersen (and crews); To temporary duty at Highgate, Lt. Betz; and to leave, Lts. William E. Laughlin, Paul Betz and S/Sgt. William H. Peiffer.

During the month of April Norm Kiefer wrote to his wife:

"Did I tell you that Father Harshaw has gone home? His mother was pretty sick and he obtained leave to return."..."Oh yes, did I tell you that I heard the *Rum And Coca-cola* song the other night? I really didn't think much of it. Remember, you asked me about it some time ago."..."Gee, it seems funny! It is now nine o'clock and it is just getting dark outside. I can hear some of the boys playing volley ball. In the morning when I wake up, it will be broad daylight once more. These days never end over here."