

Harley Tuck's WW II Diary of the Air War in Europe and Stalag 17b



**Sgt. Harley Tuck, Radio Operator/ Gunner, Crew #5, 708th Bomber Sqdn,
447th Bomb Group (Heavy), 8th Army Air Force.
Rattlesden, England November 1943 - April 1944.
Stalag 17b April 1944 - liberation in June 1945.**

*This is an abbreviated version of Harley Tuck's WWII diary website that contains the complete
Diary, the combat photo section from the site, Mission Memories, his POW reminiscences and the
full Glossary content except without illustrations.*

Harley Tuck's War Diary

Introduction to the War



Training Begins!



Crew #5 Goes to England



Combat:



Dec 1943

Jan 1944

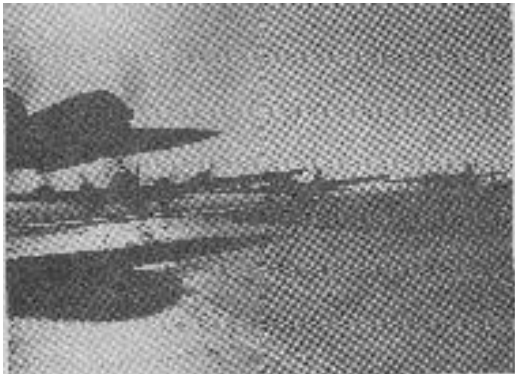
Feb 1944

Mar 1944

Apr 1944

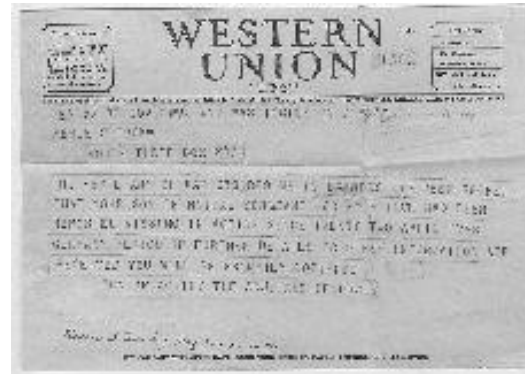
Mission Memories

(Recorded in mid '80's)



Prisoner of War

(Recorded in mid '80's)



HT's Collection of Combat Photos



Glossary

(Also accessible from the sections above)

The text of Harley Tuck's War Diary and the photos from his private collection are copyrighted material; only use of it for private noncommercial or school affiliated educational purposes is allowed without written permission.

Contact Harley Tuck Jr (arawn1900@yahoo.com) for more information.

Harley Tuck's War Diary

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my Old Man- If I could've read your lousy handwriting in the diary when I was younger and understood the significance of what I read, I'd never have thought as badly of you as I did. Thanks for giving me the little blue book.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIARY

It's a little book, looks mostly empty at first glance through the pages. About five by seven inches, maybe 1 1/2 inches thick. Its blue leather cover is a bit chafed on the corners by careless handling in a barracks in England fifty years ago. The gold gothic letters of the title 'Five Year Diary' are still clear in the upper left corner and the gold edging on the pages is mostly intact. It'd look worse except that it was packed away when its author disappeared into a Nazi prison camp. It spent the next 30 years in a cedar hope chest along with other memorabilia of that war: a Hungarian bayonet, an Air Medal with too many Oak Leaf Clusters, the Ike jacket of a skinny nineteen-year- old tech sergeant, a bundle of fading letters.

For the \$1.50 it cost, it was a pretty good deal. Inside the title page ("...in which should be recorded important events most worthy of remembrance...") are pages of generally observed American holidays (Lee's birthday, Patriot's Day, Flag Day, Lafayette Day...), variable and fixed church days, birthstones and wedding anniversaries, and the locations and colors of the American colleges. Then starts the main diary, on January 1. In the body of the diary each page is printed with five "19"'s down the left margin with four lines between each. The writer ignored these, writing around them as the activities of one day usually filled the whole page in his small, cramped script.

After Dec 31 is a section titled "Important Events" where he put the basic data of each mission up to mission # 20. This corresponds approximately to the time the aircrews recieved word that the tour of duty had been lengthened past 25 missions before they could go home. Then follow unused sections for addresses and phone numbers, Christmas cards sent and memoranda, before coming to the inside of the back cover and calendars for 1943- 1948, where some dates are marked from December 24, 1943 through Feb 1, 1944. Many of the dates are the same as mission dates, but not all.

The period covered by the diary runs from November '43 through April '44, so to read the little blue book in chronological order one must start at the end of the diary then come back around to the beginning. In this transcript the diary is presented in chronological order, and this is the reason for the writer's frequent insertions of "44" at the year markers at the top of the page as a reminder in the early months of the new year. The only other alterations of the written content of the original book is that 'Important Events' have been moved to an Appendix; and the author's reminiscences of combat and POW life which were written more recently have been added as a section at the New Year to break the narrative flow as little as possible. This extra section is text obtained from interviews done during this

project, and other writing by the author who wanted "to get this stuff down before I forgot it all". It has been incorporated into background material and appendices with only slight editing for continuity.

BACKGROUND

A lot of farm boys went to war in the 1940's, among them Harley Hamilton Tuck. Born 24 August 1924, he was raised in Yakima, Washington, a small town in America's Apple Basket. He went to school social functions with relatives of the girl he would marry after the War. He says he was a virgin til he got married, and there's no reason to disbelieve him. His family, like many of their neighbors, lived through the Great Depression on oatmeal bought cheap for livestock feed. Harley's world was limited to whatever a rural community could provide for entertainment, along with playing with his three sisters and four brothers. He always enjoyed shooting tin cans with his .22 rifle, and he had been known to take the family stove apart before he knew how to put it together again. He had few close friends, being too busy working on the large family fruit ranch.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed in December 1941 he was a sophomore in Yakima High, too young to follow his two older brothers who'd both enlisted in the Navy. The next year he tried again but was rejected for minor medical reasons. So, he joined the Army, avoiding an imminent Draft and getting a crack at his choice of training. He was happy when he got the school he wanted: radio school, Air Force branch. For one thing, flight pay was 50% added on to the base pay.

"When any of we three brothers, Grover, Tad, and I left home [to join up] Mother would not go to the bus or train station, she just quietly sat at home as we drove off. The community was pretty proud of Mom, with three stars in her window for her three sons in the armed services for the war effort. When the Post Office got the telegram that I was missing in action the postman would not deliver it as a regular letter, he came back and delivered it personally, with condolences." In Fall of 1942 his life changed dramatically.

[To the Glossary!](#)

Training Begins!

[Brief recollections of Basic Training and Radio School. Included are some of Harley's letters home which have survived the years. The names he mentions are mostly brothers and sisters though a few elder relatives and friends are named.]

Oct 42 Joined up.

"Basic Training at Shepard Field, Texas for 6 weeks. Red clay country, really sticky when on a hike during a rain!"

Nov 42- Apr 43

"Radio Operators Training Course, Scott Field, Illinois. 6 months. Challenged, worked hard at it, went to St. Louis, Mo only once or twice for weekend- very tame."

Letter home:

[set of gold wings with shield]

Air Forces Technical School

Scott Field, Illinois

Dear Lamoine an [Jen crossed out]

When the war is over we'll all enlist again

When the war is over we'll all enlist again

When the war is over we'll all enlist again

like a pigs ---- ---- ---- we will.

We were only only foolin

We were only only foolin

We were only only foolin

You gald darn rights we were.

(to the tune of Battle Hym of the Republic.)

"The guys on the right of us are a bunch of jerks

The guys on the right of us are a bunch of jerks

There always screwing up the works"

Sung when two bodies of men pass each other. Of course ahead,
to the right, to the left or behind of us could be substituted.

I've been workin on the rail road,

All the live long days.

I've been workin on the rail road,

Just to pass the time away

Can't you hear the whistle blowin

Rise up so early in the morn
Can't you hear the captain showtin
Dinnah blow your horn

Dinah won't you blow,
Dinah won't you blow
Dinah won't you blow your horn.

Some ones in the kitchen with Dinah
Some " " " " I know etc.

The second lutenant went over the top
parly voo,
The second lutenant went over the top
parly voo,
The second lutenant went over the top
He must have heard a penny drop.
Hinkey dinkey parly voo

The permanent party's a bunch of jerks
parly voo,
The permanent party's a bunch of jerks
parly voo,
The permanent party's a bunch of jerks
They always screw up the works.
Hinkey dinkey parly voo

The second luetenants been at it again
parley voo
The " " " " " "
" "
The " " " " " "
They'll win the war with a fountain pen
Hinkey dinkey parly voo.

A few of the verses for this song aren't fit to be sent thro the mails but they are well known here. Most of the songs aren't complimentary to the person sung to, but the non coms and officers are a lot of fine sports and let us sing almost anything as long as we stick to established words.

I'll send some more as soon as I collect some more.

Letter home:

Dear Mom and Dad.

Those cookies arrived in good shape and were very good. Gosh, I ate them instead of going to chow. The first home cooked cookies since you sent those a month ago. It might be hard for you to realize how good they were. Those cookies tasted better than any food I've had for a month. Grandmother Tuck sent me a New Testament and a couple good linnen hankerchiefs. They sure are nice. It sure is nice of her isn't it. We let our barracks get a bit too dirty four days ago, and as punishment we drill an hour every afternoon and G.I. the barracks. The drilling is sort of fun when we all get to cracking jokes and suddenly snapping to attention when the sargeant looks out his window from the near by barracks. When the drill master makes a mistake and scatters us all over the street we razz the heck out of him. Last night a sargeant and his girlfriend were in their car on the street we were drilling. The drill master would march us back and forth in front of them and each time order "Eyes Right" or left whatever the case would be. The girl's face got pretty darned red as we were all laughing at their disgusted looks. Those two didn't get much wooing done.

It's little things like this that keep Army life from being drudgery. Another platoon was being drilled on the same street at the same time as we were. The two groups would march toward each other and the drill masters would try to make the other say "To the rear march" first to prevent collision. Half the time we met and had a swell time getting untangled. Well, see you later

Love

Harley

Lights out

now. (8:30 PM)

Letter home:

Feb 3, 1943 Army

[AFTS stationary]

Dear Mom + Dad:

It never entered my head that I hadn't told you that those radio books arrived. I'm awfully sorry to cause you a lot of worry. They arrived about two weeks ago in good shape. They sure have come in handy. It helps more than you realize I think. Thanks a million. I'll write as soon as I get more time, but this is to let you know that the books arrived O.K. Are things getting warmer? They sure are here.

I'm feeling swell and getting a 90% average in radio theory. O.K. in code too.

Love

Harley

P.S. I get quite a few teeth filled tomorrow. None pulled thank goodness. I'll be glad when its over
H.H.T.

Letter home:

[blue winged shield]

U.S.ARMY AIR CORPS

Scott Field, Illinois

March 1, 1943 Monday

Dear Mom and Dad.

Yep, I'm rich again; to the tune of \$30. Yesterday was payday, last day of the month and the only day since last Tuesday I haven't had to report for Callenthetics. They would have paid me more but I've got a lot coming out for bonds, insurance, laundry and 17c for a mush bowl I broke. Of course next month the 17c won't be coming out of my pay. I hope.

I'll postpone some of the rumors and stuff to tell of some stuff that's been happening here lately. There's a rule on this field that we march to the chow hall whether we eat or not. After getting there any fellow is free to come back if he wishes. Up till day before yesterday half of us were going to chow ahead of time. The barracks chief was supposed to call role + report all absentees. He hadn't been. Three fellows reported in front of the barracks to be marched to chow. Those three going down the street in front of the squadron headquarters instead of the sixty that should have been aroused the Captain's what- do- you- call- it. A few minutes later a corporal sent by him came thru our barracks taking the names of all men that didn't march to chow as they were supposed to. That corporal found ben in closets, under beds and in the rafters. It must have been a riot. One of the men that he caught gave his name as Schwartz. Yesterday the Corp. was down here to get those fellows that he had caught for an hour's drill for that day + plus 6 more days. He, the corporal couldn't find any Schwartz. Despite all his threatening no one would step forward to confess to the perjury or any thing else you want to call it. It was downright funny in some ways. That corporal was mad and most of us were laughing. Just now he came up

looking for another fellow whose name isn't on the roster. According to him from now on anyone getting caught absent from Callyhoops, supper etc. is to go up and see the Capitan and let the squadron commander give out the appropriate punishments. The trouble is that this barracks has more guys out for a good time (despite definite established rules) that right now we're being watched awfully carefully.

There is one man in here that goes to school about 3 days a week. The rest of the time he reports to Sick Book so he can go to the Dispensary; make up some spot, foot, hand or something and get a bottle of pills or somethin! His foot locker is full of bottles, pills and junk. Of course no fellow with a sore leg or injury has to do daily callenthetics. He has a medical excuse every day.

But it sounds as if all this craziness is a goin' to stop because all general "pests" (I could put in a very appropriate Army name for such fellows but it would not be too good in a letter) are to report to the Captain today. Heck, those fellows should be handed a stiff punishment because it isn't much fun to live with a bunch that pull the reputation of the barracks to almost 0. Last night, just after pay day, almost every barrack hadat least one crap game goin to the "early hours". There's a rule against gambling but its mighty hard to enforce.

Many guys are completely broke today because of this little activity. The trouble of the whole thing is that about a third of all the guys in this barracks gamble and the rest of us have to listen to the noise while trying to get to sleep. To end my lecture on temperance and gambling ... Dad: there's a fellow in this barracks that is almost exactly like Vern Smith is. He's undependable. Whenthe barracks chief gives him a job to do, he does it hisown poor way if he does it at all. This guy is just aspittin' image of Vern's character. Sort of a braggart; always talking how HE does things. He'll hardly ever admit he's wrong. Well, anyway, having got toknow Vern as I did which wasn't any too well, that guy isdoing an awful lot of things for me and my friends; buthe don't know it.

It's a lot of fun trying to analyze the characters of some fellows around here.

If I pass the gunner's physical test I'm a gunner, automatically and so forth. When we graduate from gunner's school we're to be technical sargeants. There's a few other alternatives; no one can tell which one I'll get yet.

Just an hour later:

Just got back from Callenthetics. Colder than blue blazes for a while with the wind blowing; but after a while we got used to it and it wasn't so bad. The weather we had in Yakima got me used to the weather we have here. How many miles can you go each week with an "A" and "C" book? Is there enough gas for you to do what you want to?

I'm just about ready to fold up. How come Tad's home?

Alice and Mary are writing to Grover now. I suggested Alice write him and she's recieved 2 letters from him. She likes his letters and him from what she said in her last letter.

Are any of you using those two small music books that I was fooling around with when I was home? I'd sure like to learn those songs in those books if nobody is using them. (Me and my mandolyn)

Love

Harley

Letter home:

Dear Mom and Dad:

I just got thro mailing a couple photographs to you ten minutes ago. There's a big one, unframed, and a small one framed. It's just a suggestion but wouldn't it be nice to give the big one to Grandma Grover? She would like it.

Everything's O.K. here and I'm feeling fine.

Love

Harley

Letter home:

March 8, 1943 Monday 5:30 pm

Dear Mom and Dad.

So far Miss Spring hasn't been able to scare old man Winter away yet, but she'll succeed just as sure you're alive and kicking. All we students here at Scott Field have to do is wait for warm weather or graduate and try to get to some warm weather. If the wind would be inclined to be warmer the climate wouldn't be bad but as it is some mornings we get darned cool. There is a rumor going around camp that all students will be made P.F.C.'s. Just a rumor; no official or semi official word. That's enough time to devote to rumors.

I just recieved a letter from Alice. She says that the weather in Seattle is swell. How is it in Olympia?

Alice seems to have taken a liking to Grover, and Grover to Alice (comparing both of their letters). Now the squadron we belong to is on the third shift of school. Classes take up at 7:10 P.M. At 10:30 P.M. we go to the other building to work. School lets out at 1:30 A.M. Reville is at 9:00 A.M. From reville til callyhoops at 3:45 P.M. we are off duty unless payday, special movie or etc comes up.

Breakfast is at 9:30; lunch at 1:00; supper at 6. So far this shift isn't so nice because I get sleepy about 10:30 P.M. As soon as everything gets settled I think there'll be time for a nap just after chow. Some men in this barracks live on about 5 hours of sleep a night and do pretty good in school. But I need about 8 1/2 hours. The time from 1:45 till 9:00 A.M. gives about 7 hours.

To the Glossary!

Chow now. I'll try to finish after supper. It's just about 6:00 P.M. now.

1:50 A.M. No, I didn't have time to do anything after chow but grab my notebook and run for the class's meeting place about a block away. Just as I got there they started off to school. You see there isn't much time for anything.

It seems kind of funny. I've got a sneaking feeling I should be sleeping since I've been up since 9:00 AM and didn't get to bed until 2:00 AM the night before. But I'm not sleepy; just a bit tired. Tomorrow is my day off so I've got time to spare. There will be no school for us until Wednesday evening. Technically it is Tuesday morning now but to me it's still Monday night. I'm not going out tomorrow; just sleep, eat, see a show or two and in general enjoy myself.

School is getting very interesting. We don't do much studying outside school. As a rule I just temporarily forget radio till I'm going back to school. Mom, the pen that is doing all this writing is 3 months old. To begin with I paid two bucks for it in the P.X. at Sheppard Field. It's a Waterman's. This pen writes the equivalent of about four sheets of paper this size on both sides each day in one filling. One day I forgot to fill it and it wrote O.K. even then. I'm just suggesting it because I believe it's a good buy if you need a pen and want to pay about \$2.25 for one. About a week ago some fellows were caught in the barracks when they should have gone to chow, or at least as far as the chow hall as they were supposed to. The person that caught them was a red haired corporal. Nice fellow to about half of his acquaintances. One of his victims mentioned above gave his name as George A. Schwartz. Just after chow he came around to round up those men he had caught. He called off the names of the ones he wanted. Everybody that was wanted was accounted for but George A. Schwartz. He yelled a bit louder but still no G.A. Schwartz. About this time the barracks captain tells him there is no one in the barracks by that name. He gets madder and demands that the fellow who gave the name as "G.A.S." step forward. No one does. Then he promises the guilty one will go to a "restricted barracks". After this incident if he saw a strange man around the squadron area he asked him what was his barracks number. If it was 759 he'd (the Corp) ask if his name was G.A.S. I was talking to a sergeant in the Orderly Room who said that every non com that saw the Corporal would ask "Have you found George A. Schwartz yet?" Even the captain and lieutenants ask him this. To make it worse, every time we see him we just say nonchalantly, "No, we haven't seen G.A.S." He gets awful mad. You see, the standard way to take names for punishments is to get the person's name off of his dog tag or identification card. The

Corporal didn't. It is all his fault. We sure have ribbed him, but now the thing is dying away.

I'll shut up now

Love Harley

P.S. Dear Mom: Yes I got "it"

Letter home:

March 9, 1943 Dear Lois:

How is everything? O.K. I hope.

It is 3 o'clock in the morning and I'm not in bed yet. Shame on me. (maybe). But I got out of school an hour ago (more or less) so its not all my fault. School is fun, I learn a lot, but I still wish that the course was over and I had graduated. I've got 9 more weeks to go to graduate.

Let's see now; you're in the fifth grade now aren't you? Heck, you've skipped a grade somewhere, you don't belong in there. You should be in the third; it wasn't so long ago when you were in the first. Time sure passes doesn't it?

How are you coming along in school? Your teacher is nice I trust.

I'm a goin to bed in a minute now as soon as I write a letter to Roy.

Good night Lois. Love
Harley.

(over)

[written in large scrawl, as opposed to usual cramped scrawl]

Dear Roy and Jennifer:

How are you? I hope you are feeling fine. Did you get those Valentines I sent you? Gee, I wish I could see you. I haven't seen you for 3 months.

Do you play with Sweetie very much? Or is she getting lazy and fat.

Oh well, she is a good pup anyhow.

I'm going to bed now. Please write and tell me how you are and everything

Love, Your Soldier brother

Harley

Apr 43- Jun or Jul 43

"Gunnery school, Larado, Texas. 3 months, (or was it 2 months?) Went to Mexico once, no wild experiences. I remember it was rather interesting to hear the whores calling out of windows, inviting me and my friends up- we didn't take them up on the deal. We had regular 'short arm' inspections, being called out of the barracks at 4 am in our raincoats- the doctors found quite a few cases of clap."

[To the Glossary!](#)

Letter home:

[P.X. stationary, picture of an American fighter resembling a P-40 shooting down a vaguely Japanese looking plane. Caption: "It's not like other games- if your score adds up to a bunch of zero's, it's O.K."]

April 20, 1943 12 noon

Dear Mom and Dad and whole fam family:

How is the new place? Gee it must be nice to be in a place that is your own. Perfect privacy and not too many neighbors.

Doggonit: Here it is my day off and I had to get up with the rest of the barracks because of a blasted dental appointment. Now I'm glad I did it but it didn't start the day right. Those dentists have been giving me an appointment about every 3 weeks. It sure drags the torture out. The Dr. hasn't had to pull any, just fill 11 teeth. Anyway I'm over half way thro. The dentists here have, (as a majority) just graduated from Dentist College or wherever they get their training; but they surely know their business. All 1st luetenants too. Last night 4 fellows were in taking a hot shower. Some other guys threw in a few buckets of cold water on them. Of course this started a water fight (the men running around in the latrines naked.) It was gobs offun watching them. I've been in a few myself, but I don't make a steady habit of it as some guys do. It's a lot of fun on a hot day and the latrine has to be cleaned anyway before inspection.

Got a letter from Grover today. He is still very much alive and kicking. The paymaster owes him \$114 for Marches pay. He has been promoted to 2/c R.M. I think he means 2nd class radio mechanic but I'm

not sure as he hasn't said differently.

My progress in school is still satisfactory. I graduate from Scott Field in 3 weeks to the day. "Oh happy day!"

Another trick the inmates of 759 play on each other is: The barracks aren't completely finished on the inside. The rafters are still showing and there is no floor for the attic. Every once in a while when some men who usually come in drunk goes to town

[P.X. stationary, picture of three men in a hangar in front of a plane, huddled around a pair of dice. One is raking in the bills and piles of coins, the other two look angry and befuddled. Caption: "I haven't written lately- I've had to study so much to get ahead here." HT wrote behind arrows pointing to both winner and losers: 'definitely not me [arrow] or [arrow]']

we put his bed, foot locker and all his clothes up on top of the rafters. Some times when the a little too happy guys come home in the wee hours of the night they honestly think they shouldn't have poured that last one down the hatch because they are seeing things. (Maybe aren't seeing things would be more proper.) Sometimes, (to me too) fellows come in from a show or a night off and when they crawl in bed they find a handful of cracker crumbs in their wool blankets. It is a job to shake them out in the dark. And of course sometimes some one takes one side of a mattress and lifts up, rolling occupant and bedding to the floor. Of course all these pranks don't happen every night but they occur often enough to take the monotony out of Army life while we are in the barracks.

The 12th squadron is now on the second shift. School is from 12:20 to 6:40. On this shift we have 3 hours of leisure in the morning before school and every evening off. It's pretty nice seeing all the good shows that come along if you want to.

Isn't it disgraceful? I've been to St Louis Missouri only 4 times since I've been here at Scott Field. The car fare is only 40c. Heck, that town is bigger than Seattle but I've never been more than 5 blocks away from the bus station. Even at that I got lost twice.

Love

Harley

Important

[underlined with what looks like a short runway?] P.S. Please write and tell me if everything is satisfactory. Both Grover, Tad and I should change our home address on our service records and also on dog tags. Tell us when and if you decide to stay where you are for the duration.

Jul or Aug 43

"1st phase of overseas training, Moses Lake, Washington where various crew members were tried out, to see how well we could work together. We made some long flights training in radio direction finding for me, navigation, bombing simulation to check on bombardiers, and gunnery practice on a range near Moses Lake. One waist gunner had to sign a statement of charges for a Hereford cow when he kept on firing after we passed the air- to- ground gunnery targets. He just got excited and didn't want to stop! I think this was the first time the pilot gave H.E.M. a workout, flying the Fortress, buzzing the hills etc., to see what stuff he was made of. Henry E. Mamlock, the copilot, was the last crew member to join, and I think the Pilot did give him a good checkout.

Letter home:

Sgt. Harley Tuck
593 Bomb Squadron
A.A.B. Moses Lake Washington

5 Aug 43

Dear Mom and Dad:

Everybody except radiomen are studying turrets now, that is why I have time to write. I'm laying here in the tent almost enjoying myself. I've got a lot to write about but don't know where to begin. In one of the lectures this morning I met Bob Russell. You remember him don't you? The fellow that was our patrol leader + everything else while we were in the Scouts. He's a 2nd luetenant now, in fact, a bombardier in one of the B-17 crews. For pretty close to an hour we were talking over old times. Some of the guys around us probably wondered why I didn't "yes sir", "no sir" right and left, but it never entered my head + Bob probably wouldn't want me to "sir" him anyway. Bob hasn't changed much, only filled out like his dad a lot. He is almost as he was 5 years ago.

Coming in from a break between lectures I happened to see him. I stood off about 30 feet to make sure I had the right guy, then walked up + before I got up to him he recognized me. It is sort of strange to meet a fellow that way. I have been trying to figure out if I should get transfered to his crew or not, maybe it isn't possible. I like the crew I'm assigned to very much in fact I have almost decided to stay with my bunch. Have you any advice? It is hard to figure out.

In the Evening by the Moonlight

It is only 7:15 P.M. but it is almost bedtime. All I have to do is go to the P.X. for some

shoe polish, take a shower + go to bed. There is an inspection tomorrow, we have to stand for pretty close to an hour. The inspectors are lenient tho, last week my suntan pants were almost grey with soot + dirt + the officer asked me if I didn't have another pair, "these are a bit dirty." Please write soon, sending Tad's address, + Grandma Tuck's.

Love

Harley

[To the Glossary!](#)

Sep- Nov 43

"From Moses Lake we went to Harvard, and Kearney Neb. for the last 2-3 months of training before we went overseas. Long flights to Texas, over the Gulf of Mexico, up north to Michigan, etc., getting broken in together, learning how to work together. Of course all the time I was practicing code, learning about my equipment so I could do things in a hurry if necessary.

Nov 43

"Went overseas. Left Kearney, landed at Bangor, Maine overnight- it was getting frosty and cold. We carried a load of freight going to airbases overseas in England. I remember the first time we took off with that bomb bay full of crates it sure seemed as if the plane took forever to get off, it was so heavily loaded. But of course it was like a pleasure craft compared to when it was full of bombs.

"I was busy sending in position reports all the way across the Atlantic, using the big transmitter in the radio room and the trailing wire antenna. My 300-500 ft of antenna was reeled out to carry the 2,000 miles to the ground station- to Bangor, Maine until we got over 1/2 way across, then switched to a base station in England. We flew alone, with a plane about 1 hour behind us.

"Our airbase was called Rattlesden, our ships had on the tail a white square with a black K. When we circled to land, another airbase was always in sight, a white square with an A on it, the 94th in our same 447th Bomb Group."

Air crews arriving in England at this time were part of a plan by the Allies to achieve air superiority over the European Continent preparatory to the Invasion. Up to this time English bombers had been concentrating on nighttime mass bombings. This practice was safer but far less effective than the precision daylight bombing advocated by some American Army Air Force Generals. The American Bomber Command mounted several missions in summer and fall of 1943 to prove the feasibility of the technique. The results were clear: much better accuracy was obtained with much higher loss of men and planes. The timetable for the Invasion had to be maintained, however, in order for the German war

industries to be crippled sufficiently that an invasion might be successful. Another big push was planned for February 1944, so new crews and improved planes were obtained and sent in to make up the shortages.

On November 26th, 1943 there were three Air Divisions in England, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. The third Division consisted of two bomber Wings, the 13th and the 4th. Fourth Bomber wing was made up of three Bomber groups based at airfields scattered around the southwest of England: the 94th Bomber Group at Bury St. Edmonds, the 385th at Great Ashfield, and the 447th at Rattlesden, 75 miles northeast of London as the B-17 flies. In the 708th Bomb Squadron of the 447th Group, crew #5 of the "Hi Jinx", ship #231145, joined the war.

The crew was made up of ten men, four officers and six enlisted men. Lieutenants Gilleran (T.W.G.) and Mamlock, pilot and co-pilot, 2nd Lts Lazarus and McGurer the navigator and bombardier. The rest of the crew were sergeants. Engineer McHugh (Mac), radio operator/gunner Tuck, Harris (M.D.) in the ball turret, Kealer and (Fred) Hawley were waist gunners, and Dill was tail gunner.

Few if any of the crew had ever left their home state before entering the military, certainly none of them had ever been outside the U.S.A. Now they found themselves in a country which was totally alien to them except for some of the words the natives spoke. But the English natives were nowhere as alien as the war the young men were now expected to wage. They had no concept of what to expect outside of what they'd been told in notoriously slanted training films and and what they'd learned in their experiences shooting up a cow or a paper target.

They brought with them the American values of their time: the naievete Sgt Tuck displayed in his letters, a war time mentality which stigmatized hoarding of valuable resources, and the ignorance of death common to all young warriors. The mens' awareness even had to shift to new understandings of bodily processes. Before, in life on the ground, a stuffed nose, intestinal gas or dental abcesses were merely to be lived with. Now, at altitudes of 20,000 ft. or more, they could turn into medical emergencies as liquids or gasses in blocked bodily cavities strove to expand to equalize atmospheric pressure differences. In ways as different as the men were individuals, their perceptions would all change in time.

Once 'over there' the men settled into a routine of never being sure of what was going to happen from day to day. They usually knew the night before if they were on alert, scheduled for a mission the next day. If not, they could stay up a little later and maybe carouse a bit. They were wakened in the morning at 7- 8:00, had a leisurely breakfast then went to morning roll call to get the day's work and training assignments. While in the training phase preparatory to being put on combat status, back- to- back classes were the order of the day. Especially common were practice missions, aircraft recognition classes, and equipment practice.

"There were no Link trainers [when we got there] as I remember, even for the officers and pilots. When training was needed, there were training flights. My crew was given many shit duty flights, ferrying

crews up to a B-17 modification center in Ireland. We'd fly up there and bring the crews back. Then after a few days we had to take the crews up there to fly their ships back, about a 1 1/2 hr flight.

"The planes were left up there for a few days to have the radios modified. The radios were too powerful, they'd foul up all communications in and around England due to the small air distances involved. Perhaps other changes of frequencies, etc were done too."

"We had to do so much ferrying crews we knew we were on someone's shit list. We got stuck for a ferry flight on Thanksgiving and missed the Dinner on the base. The Britishers fixed us up with a nice attempt at a Thanksgiving Dinner, but it was maddening- do you know how plain that English food can taste?"

"Of course we could take our 50 cal machine guns apart with gloves on, blindfolded as part of the training. In some of the ship positions, one cannot see exactly all the parts of the guns- ball turret, top turret or tail, for example. And with the weather about 60 degrees below 0 you need silk gloves to keep your hands from sticking to the steel parts."

When crews were not in class or on training missions, there were several diversions to choose from, all heavily utilized for lack of anything else to do. The base P.X. provided American goods, like the candy, cigarettes and liquor the soldiers were allotted each month. Movies were shown nearly every night, and canteens provided refreshments and places for social gathering. "There were the Combat Libraries, mostly with technical instructions for everything on the place, divided into the various types of equipment. All sorts of troubleshooting hints were in those libraries. For example, the transmitter we used for code could be received over long distances, especially if you tuned up the transmitter to the trailing wire antenna. Reception was good for 1,000 miles or more, depending on the weather. But it used only two of the four large tubes used for voice transmission. If the transmitter was hit, or a tube burned out, you could use one of the other two to make the transmitter work.

"The ARC library, American Red Cross library had a lot of wonderful books, mostly paperbacks. Easily borrowed, and lots of fun to read when we had time."

Then there were certain extracurricular activities...

"Memories of life on base- swiping coal from a big pile to add to our coal allotment, which never seemed to be enough to keep our 4 crew (EM only) Nissen hut warm. "All the information I provide is thru the mind and eyes of a 20 yr old virgin, still mostly afraid of girls on an intimate basis- the married ones were the ones we felt at ease talking to. Of our crew, only Keeler, married, visited around when he had the chance. The officers, I don't know, they were very discreet, and didn't stick around us enlisted men after we got to London on a pass. We EM were on our own after the first supper when we had a nice meal, paid for by the 2 - 3 winners of the poker game we usually had on the 2 hour train trip to London.

"Off base we went places as a crew, enlisted man and officers, or quite often as EM's only, visiting the many nearby museums, and quiet little towns to ride through on borrowed bikes.

"Among the men in the English armed forces, they didn't like the Yanks much. Their opinion of us,

especially the fly boys, was that we were overpaid (they were paid about 1/10 of what we were), over sexed (the girls liked the strange American accents, the rich guys), and over here (in England)."

The morning of a mission was altogether different. Crews usually had gone to bed at 7-8:00 pm, but the CQ's 3:00 am trip through the barracks was always dreaded. A rushed breakfast, usually including meat and real eggs, got wolfed down before the different crew members headed to their separate briefings. Filing past the Military Police posted at the doors of the briefing hall to maintain security, men joked or bitched or just tried to wake up. "From November when we got there, until about 1 April there was rain, rain and more rain. Fog too. If the weather would be clear when we were scheduled to return, we'd take off for a mission in the worst weather. Getting to the end of the tour alive was, of course, the primary aim of the men, but a strong secondary goal, at least for those in units with good morale, was to go home with the crew they came with. If an individual was on sick call and missed a mission, his personal count would fall behind that of the rest of his crew. If the mission was not made up by the end of the tour- assuming the whole crew made it to the end of the tour intact- the lagging crewmember would have to stay behind and fly with another ship while the rest of his buddies were on their way Stateside.

"The crew was gassing up our ship early one morning. Before they open the hand valve to let gasoline into the tank the hose has to be grounded so static electricity won't jump to the ship and start a fire. The man who was to fill the tank forgot to ground the hose first, and he started to fill the tank. There was some static, and a fire. Everybody but Mac ran off fearing a big explosion, but he walked over to a fire extinguisher nearby and put it out. His explanation: "I can't run very fast and wouldn't have gotten far enough to escape anyway, so I had to put the fire out."

"No, I don't think much was hidden from us, we took the dangerous missions along with the milk runs. Perhaps we were not told the number of B-17's shot down on the various missions, but we might miss crews in our immediate squadron.

"No one was involved in any kind of espionage, no sabotage- just a numb determination to get the mission over with. Oh yes, I do remember a kind of sabotage- one of the Captains, an Operations officer who often flew with an element leading crew (the place most likely to get shot down too) as a pilot. Many men hated his guts- very strict. Looking back on the situation, it might have been a case of focusing hostility due to stress on one officer, the man who they thought cooked up all those terrible missions. Anyway, one time he was going to go on a mission- everybody was in the plane, ready to take off. The mission was scrubbed, cancelled, and as the crew was leaving the plane, some way his parachute rip cord got caught on something, and the chute popped open in the doorway. The shroud lines were all tied in knots, so if used, the chute would not have opened. I remember nothing else about the incident.

"I only flew combat for about 5 months before being shot down, and combat situation was a rapidly changing situation. Until about 1 Jan 44 English or American pursuit ships could protect us only about 300- 400 miles out, due to the flying range of the pursuit ships. The German pursuit ships would wait just outside of range of the Allied planes, then pounce on the bombers as soon as the Allied planes had to turn back. P-47's and P-51's were common. Then for a time in Jan 44, the P-51's came equipped with

wing tanks that gave them a lot of extra range, they could escort us another 200 miles or so. But when the German planes came to attack us, the P-51's had to drop their wing tanks in order to be able to engage the German ships in combat. Since they were so far from home, they didn't have very much combat time with no wing tanks. In April, P-38's started escorting us. The number of German planes decreased- shortage of gasoline, skilled pilots, many shot down, too- it became less worrisome. The P-38's could escort us all the way to most targets-we could only see their contrails far above us, they were ready to pounce on any German ship coming close. What a comfort it was to see them above us.

"Flak came in black, red and white -- yes, it sure did. If it burst right next to you, (set to fire at a certain altitude or on contact) the center of the explosion was red, changing to black, then the puff of smoke that drifted off was white. We even got to accept the rattle of tiny fragments of flak that punctured the skin of the planes, and rattled around a little- too small to do damage. We wore flak suits- heavy interlocking pieces of metal, woven, sort of, vests, front and back, that would stop a .45 slug. Weighed about 15 lbs- they made us feel safer."

After days like that in the sky, just laying down was a blessing. After going to debriefing with the ubiquitous M.P.'s, practically nothing was done besides eating supper. No movies taken in, no poker played.

"I never wrote in my diary religiously. Most of the time I wrote after coming back from a mission as a part of the winding down process, after getting back to the barracks after supper."

COMBAT FATIGUE

"There was fear, though. When the complete crews assembled in the main briefing room about 5am or earlier after breakfast, we'd all sit down by crews, waiting for the briefing to start. The big wall map would be there on the wall, with a curtain drawn in front of it. When the mission was announced, they'd draw the curtain, and we would almost curl up inside when the red yarn leading to our target was to some target far inland, or near some targets where we knew the flak was especially bad.

"When there was a big push on critical targets, we might fly for 5 - 7 days in a row, and we got pretty tense and tired. We'd get about 1/2 cup of medicinal whiskey in our canteen cup after coming back from a mission. I was still a teetotaler at that time, I gave mine to Mac, who felt he needed it. In fact Dill the tail gunner and I both regularly gave our whiskey to Mac."

"Most of us were small time country kids, doing our duty, not thinking about getting shot down, we just knew we'd make it back ok. I guess we were 'well trained', I don't think we considered going AWOL or trying to pretend we were flak happy- we just did what we could, anything else would be letting our crew members down. I remember during some of the most frightening missions, I felt a strong feeling that we were all in it together, our fates were all bound up in doing the best we could.

Another time Mac showed what he was made of was after quite a few hard missions. Our crew was walking towards the messhall, at maybe 5am, before a mission. A man behind us started crying, screaming and firing a carbine up in the air warning others to stay away or they'd be shot. Mac walked over to him slowly, talking gently, and asked for the carbine. It was handed over meekly, and the MP's took the man to the base hospital. I heard of quite a few men coming close to mental breakdowns due to flying combat. The flight surgeon(s) watched us pretty closely, and had talked to the pilots about the condition of crew members. I suspect the officers had some special training to notice crew members coming close to the ragged edge. We'd hear of an officer or crew member not going on a mission because of an emergency medical leave, or "combat fatigue" or flak happy.

Here, then, is the Diary.

[To the Glossary!](#)

Crew #5 Goes to England

H.TUCK Sr.'s DIARY

Nov 9 1943-Apr 21 1944

Kearney Neb. November 9

1943 Took off from Harvard A.A.B. at 1330, landed at Kearney Neb. 35 minutes later. An uneventful trip, all I did was to tune in some music on the liason reciever. We were off duty all afternoon looking around camp. The fellows treat us nice here. Kearney Neb is our staging area for overseas movement. Where the heck are we going? Guesses right and left. The driver of the truck that hauls us from place to place seems surprised at the way Crew #5 gets along together, we are just a regular gang and have lots of fun.

Kearney Neb November 10

1943 Got up today at 7:45. The officers called for us at 9:00 to go to the briefing and processing building. First a show down inspection, then thru all the stalls checking our records. Got out about 2:15 P.M. to load all our bags on a truck + head for the barracks. After chow in Service Club I went to Radio Building No#1 and spent 2 hrs. taking tests on ROG's duties. I think I came out O.K. I'm to go back tomorrow morning at 8 for code + blinker check. Didn't want supper, went to the show + met Dill +

Hawley there. Went to P.X. got some pop, came home + tried on all the new equipment. Bed at 10:30

Kearney Neb. November 11

1943 Got up at 7:30 to go to the Communications to finish the tests. After being there for ten minutes I was called out to attend lectures on escape procedure. Later Maj. General Street spoke to the group commenting on our training and he wished us all the luck in the world. After the talk I went to the dentist, then back to the radio school until 1:30 P.M. At 2 the crew drew our guns, ammunition and long hunting knife. I spent the rest of the afternoon shopping around in P.X. The whole group attended a briefing at the war room at 7. They tell us, we're going to England but I don't believe it. The whole announcement is fishy. Bed at 11.

Kearney Neb. November 12 Fri

Out of bed at 9:30, breakfast in the Service Club + reported for roll call at communications. We were informed we won't be moving until at least Sunday. I exchanged my G.I. watch that was running too fast in for a good one, and worked on the "Hi Jinx" for a while this morning. The afternoon was spent reading in the library, working around the barracks, fooling around in the P.X. etc. At 7 Fred, M.D. + Dill + I went to town. Kearney about 18000 souls. First we skated for a while; was I a sight, almost falling down most of the time, then we bowled a line until 12. Got some pie + milk; came home + to bed by 1:15 A.M.

Kearney Neb. November 13 up at 10:30

Another day of inactivity, going between the P.X. library + barracks. We have worked in the ship a good share of the afternoon loading baggage. I have to stand guard over these ships tonight because I drew the lowest card. Tonight at 9 we had a good imitation physical exam, + T.W.G told us we were leaving the field tomorrow headed for our P.O.E. I've got a hunch it isn't going to be Presque Isle or some other point in Maine as we were told. Oh, well, nobody knows. While writing this I'm listening to the liaison radio receiver to a station in Montreal, Canada. Some life. The crew is glad we're leaving the field, we've been inactive so long. Bed at 10:15

Kearney Neb.-

Ft. Wayne Ind. November 14 Sun

Got up at seven, left Kearney at 8:30, headed for Syracuse N.Y. We have a lot of rations, all our baggage, and a lot of other things. I received a message from Topeka Kans., the 21st Wing ground station ordering us to stop at Ft. Wayne Ind. We landed at 3:15 PM, the second ship down. Later Capt Smith, operations officer, called a meeting + told us we'd leave tomorrow. Harris stands guard on the ship tonight. We spent the rest of the evening in the P.X.. It got dark at 5:30. It still seems as if we're heading for Syracuse + Presque Isle Maine for P.O.E. to go to England. This cross country hops are a lot of fun, but no time for play as I have to guard that frequency all the time. Tomorrow T.W.G. says he'll take us over the Niagra Falls. Bed by 8:00

Ft Wayne Ind-Bangor, Me. November 15, Mon

1943 Got up at 6 this morning. Left Fort Wayne at 9, headed for Presque Isle Maine. We didn't get to see Niagara because of the ground fog. Flew altitude for an hour to get over some bad weather. I worked pretty hard sending the position reports in. Landed at Bangor Maine at 4:00 E.W.T. had a short physical, went to the P.X. to get supper. It started to snow so the EMs went out to the ship to put all the covers on the turrets; windows and wing covers on to keep the ship from icing up. It got pretty cold out there. At 8PM Mac + I went to Operations to be briefed. Lt. Laz + I went to a separate building to be briefed. They gave us more data than we could digest, we have another one before we leave. Got lost coming back to barracks. Feeling kind of excited by prospect of going across. Bed at 11.

[To the Glossary!](#)

Bangor, Me. November 16 Tues.

Climbed out of bed at 8 this morning to go to radio school at 9. Code practice in the morning and afternoon with a little bit of procedure mixed in. An A.T.C. man is instructor, a swell fellow who knows his business. It has been snowing all day, with freezing weather, altho very nice outside. The crew, 6 of us went to the show tonight + wandered over to the P.X. afterwards. All the grub we bought was on Mac; hot dogs milk shakes + pop. I haven't been too busy tonight. Gene is guarding the ship now, my turn day after tomorrow, maybe we'll be in England by then, I hope so. If we go to England I've got about 2 months of school ahead of me, so I hope we go on to Africa or some where else; why should we use jungle hats in England? Bought a carton of candy in P.X.. The P.X. here as in Kearney is selling cartons of candy + gum to combat crews going across. Bed at 10:30

Bangor Me. November 17 Wed.

Out of bed at 700 to relieve Gene at the plane. At 9 I went to radio school until 1030 then out to the ship to get the calibrations and M.O. settings for all the frequencies I'm going to use on the way to U.K. From noon until 2:30 the enlisted men + T.W.G. sat in a booth shooting the bull. This is about the first time we had ever had such a long talk with our pilot. He told us a lot about his ideas + past life. Going thru Cadets he was as much as a G.F.U. as possible + still not wash out. Going to England as we seem to be will mean a 2 month stretch of schooling for the whole crew before any operational missions. I sort of hate to look forward to more school. Maybe we'll stay in U.K. for a week or two + go on to Italy or Africa. Saw another show, "Son of Dracula", (no good) and to bed by 11 P.M.

Bangor Me. November 18 Thurs.

Got up just in time to go to school at 9. Stayed there until 11, went to P.X. + fooled around until about 3. Hightailed it out to the barracks and slept until 5. I had supper and went out to the ship. After playing the mandolin for an hour I read for a while. Those negro guards seemed to be going round and round the ship as long as I played. They seemed to like it O.K. This camp is really pretty nice. A good P.X. non coms club, pretty good chow house with good grub. We wake up in the morning to the roar of a cannon going off and the bugle. All thro the day the bugle is blowing, it sure is pretty. I'm writing this in the ship as its my turn to guard it tonight. I've read a while by flashlight, and then hit the hay about 8 P.M.

Bangor-Gander Lake Newfoundland November 19

Fri. Harris woke me up at 6. I hightailed it over to the barracks + packed, got breakfast and went out to "Hi Jinx" with the rest of the crew at 7 AM. We took off for Gander Lake A.A.B. Newfoundland at 9:45. Things were sailing O.K. all the way. I tuned the liaison transmitter up on voice + sent in position reports and E.T.A.'s to Stevenville + Gander for the pilot. We used the trailing wire antenna, 190 ft. The range on voice is about 180 miles in poor weather, which we had. Lazarus, the navigator, got us over Gander at the exact E.T.A. Landed at about 1500 E.W.T., the pilot was briefed + was given 10 cartons of cigarettes, as cigarettes are rationed here. Newfoundland time is E.W.T.+1 1/2 hours. Actual flying time from Kearney is about 11 hrs. Half of the field is run by R.C.A.F. + the rest by the U.S. Army. After getting bunks went to chow, P.X. and canteen. Bed by 7:30.

Gander Lake November 20 Sat.

I jumped out of bed at 9:30 this morning. Went out to the ship for a while, then ate chow. At one I went to briefing and they told us about what to expect going across and all the stuff we would need to know. Dismissed about 3, went to the ship again got some stuff out of my B4 + A3 bag that I'd use going across. It is definite we won't leave tonite at 12 because of weather. I'm glad because this post is pretty nice. After supper as we were standing in line at the theater we met a Canadian soldier + got to talking to him. An interesting fellow and very nice. He's from B.C. Canada, been in Army four years. After the show we took him to the P.X. talked + got acquainted, ate a lot. In all ways he is just like any American. We went bowling after exchanging our home addresses. After bowling we parted at 1130, promising to write each other. Bed at 12.

Gander-Nutts Corner Ire. November 21 Sun

1000 gals in tokyo tanks

1100 gals in main tanks for takeoff

Got up this morning at 900 went out to the ship to relieve Gene. Read until 12 when Harris relieved me for chow. The rest of the crew came out with me at 2 + worked on the ship until 6 packing and cleaning the ship up in order to go across. We took off at 10P.M. GCT the 21st for Prestwick Ireland. The trip across was uneventful, I guarded 6500KC all the way across, switched to 4220 voice when we got near Nutt's Corner Ire. We landed at 800 GCT in the morning Nov 22. We didn't get to bed until just after noon, local time, 12 GCT, 900 local. It rains almost every day here. The countryside from the air is pretty green. We slept for 4 hours on beds with 3 cushions for mattresses, have blankets for bed covers. The blankets are rough,

11 miles from Belfast

Ireland called November 22

Nutt's Corner

Mon

but not too bad after you lie still for a while. The blankets aren't too warm, but we have 5 of them so it's not too bad. After sleeping for 4 hours I got up and went to chow. The grub here is not much to talk about, mostly meager and flavorless, but it is G.I. grub and it does fill you up. Fred + I went for a walk

as soon as the blackout started, about 6, trying to find the P.X. the British call the "Naffie". We met a small red haired English gal from London+ talked with her the rest of the evening. She talks fast + with that lingo of hers neither of us could keep up with her. I had some tea and cakes, the tea was very weak, the cakes were as if someone had forgotten the baking powder. They were an inch thick but still "flat". Beryl seemed to be pretty nice, 23 yrs, and full of common sense. Fred and I are going to take her to the show tomorrow night, at her suggestion. Bed at 11. The first night in Ireland, too.

Nutt's Corner

Tues. November 23

1943 We got up at 8 this morning at the orders of the P.A. system. A truck came up a little while later + took us out to "Hi Jinx". We stayed out there until T.W.G. came out and told us we wouldn't take off today. We didn't get back to the barracks or hut for a long time as it was raining a heck of a lot, we didn't get a ride very soon. I spent most of the afternoon playing cribbage with Fred. At 6 Fred, M.D. + I went to the "Naafi" + sat back in a corner + let some limey explain the English monetary system. He was a darned nice chap + helped us a lot. Beryl dropped in at 6:40 + we sat around talking until 8 + went to the show. M.D. and I walked Beryl back to within 100 yards of her barracks. Got back to the barracks at 10:30. Ireland isn't bad, altho its always raining it seems. I wish I could go to Belfast but no passes are issued to us + it's hard us if we are caught in town without a pass. These Irish Jails are supposed to be pretty rotten. Bed 12.

Rattlesden, Eng. Thanksgiving Eve and the cooks promised roast turkey tomorrow

Wed November 24

1943 I got up this morning at 8 when all the combat crews of the 447th were ordered to be ready to ship out. At 10 we were out preflighting the ship. We took off at 10:30 headed for Rattlesden, England; landed about 1:30. All the country was really beautiful that we passed over. All or most of the houses were red brick. This field is about 40 miles N.E. of London. It seems funny to be occupying a field that might be bombed in the future. This 447 Group is the only outfit on this field; we keep our own ships, it ought to be swell. The grub is swell, at least this afternoon's meal was tops. The ground echelon + stuff that is coming by boat aren't here yet. There are a lot of small towns around here, we are supposed to get passes soon. From what the fellows say that have been here a while the people's morals are very poor in surrounding towns, London included. Bed at 8:45

Burtonwood, near Liverpool

Thursday. Thanksgiving November 25

Got up this morning at 7:15 because the radioman, pilots and co-p's + navigator were supposed to be briefed at 8:30. After being briefed we took off at 11:00 after a lot of dillidallying for Burtonwood, a modification center for bombers someplace up near Liverpool. Got there at 4, but had circle around the field because of ground fog for 1 1/2 hours. Got down at 5:30. We all had hopes of getting a Thanksgiving dinner but by the time we got to the messhall we had roast beef. We were very disappointed. They then dumped us in trucks + took us 14 miles to a place to sleep. A G.I. camp between Manchester and Liverpool. Pretty good beds. Got to bed about 10 P.M. Going up we passed over a lot of beautiful country, some large old English churchyards and churches with graveyards around them. I bet some were hundreds of years old. This is my first time away from home on Thanksgiving + I'm kind of homesick. Bed at 10

[To the Glossary!](#)

Near Liverpool

Burtonwood Eng back home

November 26

The Major came around + woke us up at 8. Went over + got breakfast across the street. Poor grub. Soon afterward we got in trucks + went back to Burtonwood. It took an hour for T.W.G. to get a ship to take back to Horham. For the time being we were going to act as ferry crews. We took off at 11, landed at Horham about 25 miles south east of Rattlesden. A group of six ships were coming back from a bombing mission. All accounted for, but an ambulance was following one of them. After waiting for trucks an hour + a half we headed back for home. It took two hours before we got to the mess hall + stormed it. Nothing to eat since breakfast. Read for a while, brought diary up to date, etc. I've got to go to school tomorrow, hope it's interesting and beneficial. This English monetary system is pretty bad for me, altho I'm just beginning to see some light thru the dim overcast. Bed at 9:00

Sat.

Rattlesden November 27

Jumped out of bed at 630 in order to get breakfast before going to school. Code occupied us all morning and some of the afternoon. I got back to the barracks at 4 PM. After reading a while Capt Smith came in + put the fellows in the barracks on detail. We were out there sweeping mud off the street about as fast as the trucks tracked it on. It was sort of futile if you ask me. After chow the officers

came out + took over our job. We were put to loading cement blocks 3'x3'x2", weighing 150 lbs on a 6x6 truck. Dolan was driving + in his spare time he was making out our ration cards for gum, candy, cookies + smokes. I gave mine to Mac. Ever since we've been here we've been walking around in mud up to our ankles. It sure is hard to keep clean + I succeeded very well in getting good and dirty. The ground crew are supposed to get here two days from now. Bed at 11

Rattlesden

Sunday November 28

I happened to wake up at 7:25, just in time to get up and get dressed to get to school on time. All morning there was code classes, afternoon was spent on QDM, QTF procedure. These English instructors surely know their business. Most of them have been in the Air Force a long time as radio operators. The instructor we had this afternoon had a rank equivalent to captain, but he wasn't the least bit strict on discipline. He is really just a swell fellow. I went back to radio school at 7, then a lecture at 8. At 8:20 some captain stepped up + told us to go home. TWG, the rest of the EM's went to the Red Cross Rec Hall + drank tea + coffee for an hour and shot the bull. Then came back to barracks + am going to hit the hay. I sent a telegram home saying I'm O.K. and all that; changed my \$30 to English pounds. 8\ 11' to be exact. Bed at 10:15

Rattlesden November 29

Up at 7:35; school at 8. Same old stuff, W/T procedure, code checks until noon. Afternoon we had a talk by a couple fighter pilots that would escort us in P-47's as soon as we start our missions. They were a couple of quiet guys, they told us how they came up + where they would fly to protect us. They also asked us not to shoot at them; some B-17 crews had shot at them in the past. To help us be able to recognize P-47's we all went outside + they buzzed us + flew around + over us about 20 feet off the ground doing someplace around 350 M.P.H. A beautiful sight, a plane going directly overhead, 20 feet above you, then a second later a big roar + the plane is a mile away. After supper I went back to school at 7. Limey luey's gave us code checks + practice until 8:30. These fellows are nice instructors + sure know their stuff. Bed at 10

Rattlesden

Tues. November 30

7:15- Aircraft Identification for two periods in the morning along with code and procedure. Same classes in the afternoon. The ground crew got in this morning sometime. It sure is nice to see some of the old fellows I knew back at Harvard. The mail came in too. One of the men brought in the sack that had been laying near the orderly room for a few hours, went thru it + got all the mail for the barracks + put all the packages + stuff back in the bag + carried it back. I've got 2 packages but we'd better not take them because they've got a list of all reciever's of packages. We are supposed to get passes to London after our first mission. The ship "Hi Jinx" is supposed to be back from modification in a day or so. I'm feeling kind of lazy, the only exercisise we get is walking, it's a mile from here to the mess hall. Plenty of mud, too much in fact. It rains almost every day. 1130

[To the Glossary!](#)

Rattlesden Wednesday December 1

7:30, Same school all day. Went back at 7 for lectures on procedure, got out at 9. The lectures are interesting and toward the last became one good bull session. The two English lieutenants, the instructors, are swell fellows, good sports and a heck of a lot of fun to talk to. I got two packages from home today. One from Alice, the other from Grandmother Johnson. The one from Johnson's is a scrap book. Alice included a knife, fruit cake and some other things. It sure is nice of her. I have had no chance to get something for her. Suppose I can get something here and get it there just after Christmas. I sure hate to disappoint her. A ship, B-17 landed with one engine feathered on its way home after a raid. No one was injured + they told us a lot. B.1130

Rattlesden December 2

730 I was feeling pretty good when I got up. Didn't go to chow, straight to school. I had quite a bit of fun after school, we got off at 3:30 the first time R.O.'s got off early all this week. I came back to the barracks + played cribbage until supper, then the show afterwards. M.D., Fred + I went to the R.C. Rec Hall after the show + got some tea. I have a cold and didn't get anything besides tea. For some reason I still don't like the stuff but at least it was hot. I should write a letter to the Johnsons, Roy's + Lamoine's. Dashed off a V mail to Mom and Dad. Got some presents from Alice and the L.U. Tuck's incorporated today. It's still muddier than all heck and wading around in overshoes all day is hard work. Sent off quite a few Christmas cards. Oh yes, we'll be wearing flak suits + helmets on all our raids. B.11

Rattlesden December 3

9-45 For the first time since we've been here I got to sleep in. The bed sure felt good. Went to school at 10, took the radio equipment tests and a written test. Came out O.K. The Limey lieutenant told us we didn't have to go to school anymore as far as he was concerned. All afternoon it has been raining; Fred + I played cribbage until 4 PM, went to the Red Cross Rec Hall and got some tea. On the way back I stopped at mess hall + ate. After chow spent a quiet evening writing letters and Christmas cards. We're supposed to start practice missions soon. One gunner with 25 missions said Jerry loves to tackle new outfits. The first 4 or 5 trips over will be hardest. After that we'll sit back and sweat it out. B.10

Rattlesden

Saturday December 4

1015 Went up to finance and got my per diem money 1650 or 2\ 12' 2, approximately. Came back + played cribbage until 1215 when the whole crew went to chow. Now they are feeding us pretty good. After lunch M.D., Mac, Fred + I took our helmets, oxygen masks up to respective places to be fixed. We got back in time to get in the chow line at 4:45. After supper we went over to the theater + sat from 545 until 7. No show so we came back to the barracks. I played more cribbage, a shilling a game, lost three, won one. Fred had a lot of luck tonight. Lt. H.E.M. came in and told me I'd have to get up by 6:30 to go to Burtonwood again. We fly someone's ship up there + try to bring our ship back. Packed my field bag in preparation. B.1200

Rattlesden December 5 Sunday

6:30 This morning to go to Burtonwood. The C.Q. woke me up. I got over to the officer's barracks to walk with T.W.G., Mamlock + Laz to the mess hall. Good chow this morning. Got out to the ship we were supposed to take up to B.; Mamlock + I pulled the props thro, then T.W.G. showed up and told us the trip was cancelled. We jumped into the jeep + went back to our barracks. I played cards the rest of the day and read. A show was scheduled tonight, Fred, M.D. + I sat in the theater from 530 to 630, no show. Got more books from the rec hall. I played more cards with Fred for an hour + a half + then got ready to go to bed. I wanted to go to Burtonwood pretty bad. We haven't flown for 2 weeks + I'm getting kind of restless for something to do, especially to try some of the stuff we learned in school here. B.1030

Rattlesden December 6 Mon

Got up this morning when Mac and Dill tipped my bed over about 11:30 AM. All day I didn't do anything except play cards with Fred. Just after chow (supper) the whole crew went to the theater and sat from 530 to 745, saw "China". We then went to the Red Cross Rec Hall, got something to eat, then we got books from the R.C. library + came back to the barracks to read and play cards until 11. Lt. Mamlock came in at 9 and told me our crew couldn't fly until I completed my schooling. I was supposed to be thru 4 days ago. I'll go see about it tomorrow. Bed at 12.

Notes and stuff thoughtup from time to time: Some gunners going to Oxford for a gunnery course. Quite a few bicycles are being swiped or borrowed. It sure keeps the M.P.'s busy looking for them.

The crew is supposed to go to Burtonwood as soon as the weather is clear.

Rattlesden

Tues December 7

7:45 Got up early to go to radio school and find out what's wrong with the records. They had me down for needing a lecture that I had already had. Everything is O.K. now. Got back to the barracks at 1030 after buying my weeks rations + selling the cigarets to T.W.G. After lunch we took our helmets to the welding shop + had them altered; then to the paint shop to put "Hi Jinx" on them in yellow paint. One of the fellows does it on the side to earn a little extra cash. We are supposed to get them tomorrow. Fred + I skipped supper in order to get seats at the theater. When we got there some lecture on rubber dingies was in progress. A lot of fellows went in + got seats. Fred + I went in too. I felt sorry for that captain giving the speech, everybody filing in all the time. We saw Dianna Durbin in "First Love", a very good show. It was a modernized version of "Cinderella". Went to R.C. + got supper, tea + sandwiches, went back to barrack to read until 11.

Rattlesden

Wed December 8

9:45 Got up, went up to the paint shop to see if my helmet has been completed yet. It hadn't. After chow Fred + I washed up + showered in water almost ice cold. Went to a P.W. lecture at 3:00, after this I went to the base photo lab to have my picture taken in some English civies. They looked like some of these zoot suits some people wear. The pictures are supposed to be for enabling us to fake passports in case we are forced down in France or Germany. I think its some idea. While Fred went to Mass I went to R.C. library + read until 7:30 when F. showed up. We stuck around listened to piano music + read

until 10:30, then came back to the barracks + played 3 games of double solitaire. Mac says he and I are to go to this gunnery school at Oxford tomorrow. Bed at 1130

Sneedersham On North Sea

8th Air Force

Gunnery School

December 9 Thurs

We got up this morning at 8:40 to go to school at 9. T.W.G. pulled us out of an Aircraft Rec class to see about some flying equipment at A.C. supply at 930. Mac + I went back to the barracks + got ready. We left the field at 1:20. One of the trucks went in the ditch: we had to go back + pull him out. That delayed us an hour. There was a glider field with gliders like Wellington's; an ammo dump spread on both sides of the highway for 4 miles or so, well camouflaged. At one town the kids asked us for gum when we stopped. We gave all of it away but when we started to go some guy threw a dozen sticks on the ground + the kids, girls + boys, fought for the gum. At many places we saw groups of all kinds of tanks, mobile guns + trucks; an invasion force, I guess. We got here at 6, ate chow, then went to the show in the mess hall. I went back to barracks + got some soap + went over to the shower room. 1st shower in 3 weeks; it sure felt good. B 1015

Sneedersham

Friday December 10

Got up this morning at 7:20 to go to school without breakfast. It seems as if 2 meals a day is O.K. because I don't keep too busy; By noon I have a good appetite. From 8 to 10 we had malfunctions on 50 cal, at 10 we had skeet. I got 15 out of 22, next to the highest man with 16. I was proud because everybody ribbed me quite a bit. After lunch we met at 1:00 to shoot 50's. We didn't because some tanker directly off the beach about 4 miles had got stuck when the tide had gone out. This camp is situated on tide flats. At high tide the water comes up within 50 yds of the buildings, at low tide the water is out about 3 miles, + civilians are out on the sand digging clams. Some fellows back from combat talked to us until 3:45 when we were excused. I went back to the barracks + read until chowtime, then after eating went to the small library + read until bedtime. B:900

Sneedersham

Sat December 11

7:30 We stood around in a hut until 830 for the instructors to come. Then shot skeet until 10. I didn't do so hot. Malfunction range until noon. All afternoon we shot 50's. I shot about 200 rounds at a small wood airplane about 200 yds away that went around a track + a lot at a 10 ft sleeve towed by a British Lysander. Went to reading room just after supper + read until 8:30. Last night a couple Ju-88's came over some fields to the south of us. We could see the flak + searchlights focused on them. Today we heard that both of them were shot down. So far we have not been in actual contact with Jerry + I'm itching just a little. This place is almost directly accross the North Sea from Germany. B-900

There seems to be no public health department here in England.

Meat and milk bought outside of army camps is very likely to be diseased; the English people use it anyway.

[To the Glossary!](#)

Sneedersham

Sun December 12

Got out of bed this morning at 745 just in time to get to the skeet range before the instructors. Skeet 8-10; malfunctions 10-12; shooting 50's all afternoon. I shot about 350 rounds. It was a lot of fun but that shooting of the 50's is awfull hard on your ears, even if they are plugged up with cotton. Standing behind the firing line you can feel the concussion against your clothes + eardrums whenever guns shoot. At chow tonight the instructor that was superintending the shooting sat by me in the mess hall. He commended me as being the best shot out of the whole class. I swelled up like a balloon I guess. That's the way I felt. Read in the library from 5:15 until 9:30. Dill's class is to go back to Rattlesden by truck tonight at midnight. I hope T.W.G. has had a chance to go to Burtonwood to get 145. B 10:00

Rattlesden December 13 Mon

Got up at 11pm Dec 12 to get packed + get in trucks to go to Rattlesden. Got home at 3:30 after 2 1/2 hr trip. Went to bed and woke up at 10:30 when P,CP,N + RO's were to meet at briefing room. After a few minutes we found out nothing was going to happen so we came back. We were called out again at 1, still no soap. Fred went to gunnery school today, Gene would have gone too but he's on a practice mission with some other crew. I went up to P.X. + got my weeks rations; came back + started to get

cleaned up. A fellow came in and wanted an R.O. to go on a ferry trip. T.W.G., Mamlock, and Laz were going too but on a different ship: we got them to trade R.O.'s so I could go with T.W.G. We took the Colnel's ship to a modification center about 15 miles from here. Had chow there in the Non Coms mess, good chow too started back at 745 + got here at 9:25 after stopping at a Pub, giving some gum away to some kids + etc. B 1030

Rattlesden

Tues December 14

Got up this morning at 6, ate breakfast for the first time in 2 weeks and got to the briefing room at 6:50. At 7:30 all but P,CP,+ N's were excused to go to school. The R.O.'s sat in room 13 for an hour shooting the bull. We broke up to get back to the orderly room to get in the pay line. 15\ 13' 9d. I signed a couple of statements of charges in Kearney. We should get flying pay + Nov's pay at the end of the month. I've got a bad cold + am feeling pretty low. Night before last a Ju88 came over + we had an alert while I was at gunnery school Everybody got in the bomb shelters. The Ju88 was shot down by a mosquito + crashed about 4 miles away with a big explosion. Gene saw it all + said it was thrilling. The Ju88 was held in searchlights until downed after dropping a big bomb in Ipswich. Stayed in barracks rest of afternoon skipped supper + headed for bed about 730 to read for a while.

Rattlesden December 15

Got up just in time to get to briefing room at 8. A lot of officers got up and said a lot of nothing until 845 when all R.O.'s were told to go over to the Equip. room. We did + just sat around for an hour, then went in to the code class + heard a lecture by a 25 mission man about emergency procedure. A good lecture. At 11 all gunners with some instructors went out to a ship, wrote our names on a sheet of paper + went to chow. At 1:30 we met at the briefing room again + soon after took off on a practice mission. I got my 1st QDM's on this trip. We flew formation most of the time. On the way down thro the overcast I gave the pilot a QDM + we came home on it. With my cold my ears hurt on the way down but cleared up soon after getting on the ground. Today is the 1st time I've flown in Hi Jinx since going up to modification center; she already has 5 combat hours, not a scratch + a lot of head sets + mikes have been hooked by the group that borrowed her. B 830

Rattlesden December 16 Thurs

I crawled out of bed at 6 to go to breakfast. We had to be up at the briefing room at 7 + made it. Trucks

are hauling us from the mess halls to the briefing room now. We were told we would fly; got all our stuff out to the ship + and got her started. No. 3 engine's throttle wouldn't close so mechanics started to work on her. We got it fixed, then the flight was called off. I stayed out on the ship to work on some antennas that were broken. I worked until 12:30, got a good appetite + ate. Went to the gym with R. Chase and fooled around with the basketball for an hour, went to a class + skipped out after signing roll. Then went to the R.C. + had two cups of tea, went to show + then the barracks to get ready for bed. A lot of stuff has been swiped from the ship when she was lent out to the other group. Rudisil hooked 4 mikes, 4 headsets + saved them for us. Good old Rudy. We should get them replaced. Feeling pretty good today. B 11:30

Rattlesden

Friday December 17

6:00, meeting at the briefing room at 830. M.D. + I went out to the ship + talked to the crew chief + helpers for a while. 10-12 lectures on dinghy equipment + dinghy radio. Didn't do anything all afternoon except read and play cards. Fred got back from gunnery school at 2. Played cards + read after supper. Ping says his pilot told him we'd be doing operational missions in a week. I'd like to start soon just to get them over with. For the last 3 months ships have averaged 50 rounds a mission because of the fighter protection provided. I got a lot of pictures from the family. They sure make me homesick, but I wouldn't lose or sell them for anything. I'm over that cold now, just rarin to fly tomorrow as scheduled. Some Englishmen should see these fellows gambling; a weeks wages changing hands 10 times in 10 minutes. As a rule I stay strictly out of them, except a few penny games for amusement. to pass time. B 1030

Rattlesden

Sat December 18

7:00 in time to get breakfast and briefing at 8:30. Most officers showed up 15 minutes late. We didn't fly so we had a couple classes in the morning. Afternoon was spent washing clothes and cleaning up. About 4 all the fellows got together + mopped + really got the barracks clean. The 1st sargeant was in for a while. That guy seems to think the ground crew's life is worse than ours, air crew barracks are the dirtiest and all that. Back at Harvard he made our life miserable with inspections and G.I. parties. He's starting to do it here too. We are trying to figure something to put him in his place. One thing wrong is an old Army man should be 1st sargeant, this guy has been in for 2 years and a low I.Q. to top it off. B-10

Notes written down at spare times:

[nothing written]

Rattlesden

Sunday December 19

Got up at 7 to go to chow when T.W.G. came in and insisted we get up to march to chow. All of the combat crews had to get up and march to chow because of all the people that were late yesterday morning. Briefing at 8:30. The weather was kind of bad. We were told to come back at 11:15 for briefing again to fly. We did. A large formation of 18 ships took off + we flew for 4 hours at medium altitude. Spitfires, P-51's + P47's dove on us for a couple of hours to give us a class on aircraft rec and practice on tracking. The P-51's gave us a good time, coming pretty close at times. About 10 B-26's came up and joined the formation for a while then passed on. Later I was trying to tune up on low frequency + insulation caught on fire. Mac saw it before I did + put it out. Landed about 5:30, ate + went to the barracks and played cribbage for an hour with Fred. Maj. Lund came in + inspected the barracks + went back out pretty quick. B 9:30

Rattlesden -

Langford Lodge

Monday December 20

Woke up at 5:30, ate chow and was at the briefing room at 6:45. 18 ships took off for a practice mission at about 8 and landed about 1120. As soon as our crew came in the briefing building Capt. Richards asks us if we would like to go to Langford Lodge. P.C.P.N.+RO of our ship took off at 230 with 4 other skeleton crews in #185. Didn't do much of anything on the way up. Landed about 5:30 + trucks took us to the operations office + then to the mess hall + quarters. After dumping all extra stuff + changing to O.D.'s we, R. Chase, R. Palumbo + I got in a G.I. truck and came to town. Belfast, Ire. is a big town from what we could see. We stopped a lot of girls + talked with them or they stopped us with definite intentions to earn a little money. I met a nice girl + we walked around for an hour then she went home . R. Chase + I went to A.R.C. for a while then went to our beds, also A.R.C. B. 0115

Langford Lodge + Belfast.

Tuesday December 21

Climbed out of bed at 7:45, got dressed and went down to the R.C. building to get breakfast. Palumbo, Chase + I went up to the Grand Hotel looking for our officers. I found T.W.G. Mamlock + Laz eating up there + talked with them for a while. The 3 radiomen caught a bus for Langford Lodge at 9 that went out through Nutt's Corner to the base, about 15 miles. After getting cleaned up + eating we headed for flight control office, we were late but not as late as Maj. Rawl + 3/4 of the officers. At 1 we were told to go back to town because Engalnd was having too much bad weather. The 3 of us hit town about 3 oclock after catching a ride in the officers bus. We first got a room in the best hotel in town, then had tea, chased around for a while looking the town over, then supper. We were a bunch of wolves the rest of the night, up til about 12 when we went to bed.

Langford Lodge - Rattlesden

Wednesday December 22

A chambermaid woke us up by knocking on the door, then hollering at us at 7:45. We had breakfast in the hotel dining room. It was a very skimpy breakfast + it cost 1\2' for the 3 of us. The bus took us to the field + as usual we were late to the flying control, the rest of the EM's + officers were later. It took us until 2:30 to get everybody present and ready to go. The P,CP,N +I took "Hi Jinx" + flew her back. The magnetic compass was off a long ways, we didn't have the schedule for splashers so the navigator couldn't get bearings + fixes on them. I got QDM's all the way back; we flew some pretty bad clouds + there was a low ceiling. We landed in the dark without trouble, T.W.G. greased her in. Chase + I had to do some talking to get supper as it was after 7:45. The knife Pop made for me came. It's a beauty + a darned fine one. B- 10

[To the Glossary!](#)

Rattlesden December 23

Thursday

Managed to get out of bed at 7:30 in time to eat and get to briefing room by 8:30. After taking role we went to the theater for a lecture on ditching, then back to the briefing room for dinghy equipment, then chow. At 1:30 all R.O.'s went to room 13 to shoot the bull. About half of us are having trouble tuning

the xmitter to low frequencies on the fixed wire antenna. The instructor took us out to a ship + tuned that xmitter up O.K. but all transmitters aren't alike, some will and do but some won't. T.W.G. gave me a compass about 1/2" across, for cross country travel if we're ever forced to bail out over Germany or France. It has a luminous dial + should be very handy. This group is now operational, altho all that any planes have done is yesterday they went out and hunted for a dinghy from a plane that ditched. Went to the show tonight, the first in about 2 weeks. B 9:45

1 mission

Rattlesden December 24

Friday

The C.Q. came in this morning and told us to get on the beam, today we got our first mission. All crews were briefed at 7:30, gunners at the main briefing room at 7:30, then they went out to the ship. I had to go to a separate R.O.'s briefing. After collecting all my stuff; got out to the ship #184 to wait 45 minutes for the guns to be brought out. Took off at 12, got over the target about 3:15 dropped all bombs O.K. after going over target twice. Almost no flak even near us, no enemy fighters, a lot of P-38's escorting us were buzzing around. The target was gun emplacements from which the Germans were supposed to be able to bombard cities in England as far away as London with some sort of rockets. It is all supposed to be pretty secret; even our ground crew doesn't know what we bombed. M.P.'s are standing at all doors of the briefing building. We landed at 5:05 after an uneventful trip. B-11

Rattlesden Christmas Day December 25

Saturday

About 9 oclock some of the fellows came in and said there was a swell breakfast served, I got out of bed about 10, got cleaned up in time for lunch. We were expecting turkey and got beef stew. Played cards all afternoon after a 10 minute meeting, of all the crews in the briefing room. There was a swell turkey dinner for the evening meal. It is pretty definite that we won't fly tomorrow as it's 711 Squadron's turn to make a mission. Tonight the time is passing very slow, just because of homesickness and inactivity. I have 22\ I'll send home as soon as I get paid for this month and flying pay for last month. Just before we took off yesterday for that mission nobody was around to help us do their work: we had to work a lot longer than we should have. When we came down everybody wanted to know everything about our trip + were dying to help us. Human nature, I guess. B 10:30

Rattlesden December 26

Sun

Got up at 7, went to breakfast and got to briefing at 8:30. I had one class in the morning, from 9-11 the whole crew was out to the ship except T.W.G. practicing dinghy drill, cleaning gun receivers and all odd jobs. Spent most of the afternoon playing cards and reading and writing letters. Got to bed about 11.

[same page]

1/4/43 Some of the planes of the lower echelon were throwing out some sort of metallic powder to throw off the anti-aircraft guns controlled by radar. This trick is used when the anti-aircraft guns are shooting through an overcast and can't see much of their targets.

On every mission every crew member is given gum and chocolate to eat whenever we want to. Upon landing we have sandwiches, donuts and coffee before interrogation.

[To the Glossary!](#)

Rattlesden December 27

Mon

Raked my weary bones out of that comfortable sack at 7, limped painfully (?) down to chow and got to the theater at 8:30 the appointed time for all the yellow squadron combat crews to meet and take roll, making the latest announcements. We were ready to go out and Lt Jarrel says "----- and the radio operators have an all day schedule they are to meet. Report to Equipment room immediately." R. Chase and I did, no classes, went out to my ship just in time to see Trobaugh off in it headed for Honnington on a ferrying job. We stopped at Chase's ship + shot the bull with their crew chief; came back to the line and went to a 10 minute lecture, then chow. T.W.G. drops in barracks + says I am to go to Langford Lodge: I got all packed up then we got bogged down in the mud the trip cancelled, I went to a show and played cards with Fred until 11, Bed 1105

Rattlesden Langford Lodge December 28

Tues Out of bed by 8:10, Fred + I went directly to briefing at the theater for role call, arriving just in time. After the usual daily announcements and all, T.W.G. was told he was going to Langford Lodge as soon as possible, along with the CPN, + RO and another skeleton crew. Maj. Newmann and his crew went with us to Bolington, a field south of London, then north to Valley, Wales to pick up Lt. Huff's crew who just came in from the States. Huff had left about an hour ahead of us for Rattlesden. We took off very soon headed for Langford Lodge. Landed about 4, got cleaned up; took the 6 o'clock train for Belfast, got to talking to an old Irishman who worked on the base. The train was old + a door on the

side of each coach. Went to a show, got a bed at A.R.C. + got to bed by 12PMidnight.

Langford Lodge-Rattlesden December 29

Wednesday

Woke up this morning at 845, got up, dressed and got down to the bus station by 9. Took the bus out + got there at 10. Waited at operations until noon, went to the mess hall, ate + met T.W.G. as I was coming out. We took off at 1, I was in the engineer's position for the first time. It was really thrilling, the way T.W.G. and Mamlock worked together, checking all the instruments and controls, got the ship lined up with the runway and opened up to take off. The runway that we took off on ended about 100 ft. from the lake in Northern Ireland. At 200 ft over the lake T.W.G. banked the ship around at 60 degrees, got on course + headed for home. I listened to music over the liaison receiver all the way back, landed about 4. Played cards a while after getting something to eat in the A.R.C. Jimmy Boyd has had a few beers + feels good + got in an argument with R.J. Small.

Bed at 11:30

Rattlesden December 30

Thurs.

Got up at 715 this morning. Ate and got to the theater by 8:30 for roll call. As we were going to the theater, the ships from our group were gathering over the field headed for some target on the Ruhr river area in Germany. After roll call the E.M.'s were excused, came back to the barracks and played cards till the 1st class, 10-11 o'clock. Most of the afternoon the crew was out in the ship working on the gun receivers, getting them clean + cleaning up the ship. At 5 the fellows started coming in. Two of the ships came in with number 3 engines feathered. All were accounted for, with a couple crew members wounded by flak. They encountered no fighter opposition, just flak. Fred + I went around to some of the ships + looked for flak holes: we found some too. After chow I wrote letters + hit the hay at 8:45

3rd raid of Group

Rattlesden December 31

Friday

Lt. Jarrel came in and woke all of us up at 2:30 for a mission. We ate at 3, briefing at 4. After getting all our crap we went out to #217, a 710 ship. Our crew was an extra crew to take the place of any ship

unable to take off. Takeoff was scheduled for 7:30, we stayed in the ship until 8. All the guns were dirty, no crew chief or armorers were out there, until the last minute. Things were really a mess. At 8 am we came back to the barracks + slept until 11; got paid and ate. Terry came in and took our names at 1245 for not being at a meeting in the street. Later a luey came in when we were in bed + told us to go down to armament because Maj. Lund + Capt. Foley were going to check all barracks. We went down to armament + slept for a while + played poker until 430 when we went out to the runway + watched the planes come home from the mission. They bombed a bomber + pursuit training school in Cognac, France. "Hi Jinx" was flown by Lt. Rozmus + crew with quite a few flak holes. Both fighters + flak 1 ship lost. B-930

To the Glossary!

Saturday January 1

New Years Day

This morning I didn't get up until 9:45. Didn't do anything after lunch when we came back to the barracks and cleaned it up a bit. Briefing at 2, one crew got a 2 day pass to go to London. Mac, M.D. Fred + I went out to "Hi Jinx" to see if they had started to patch her up. They had fixed oxygen leak + interphone cables that had been cut by a piece of flak. Turkey for dinner tonight to start new year off right. After chow went to show "San Francisco" with M.D. + Fred. This last raid that the fellows went on was pretty bad; but for some reason, I'm not worried a bit about the next, the sooner the better because after 25 we can go home. Lt. McGurer told me this afternoon that we were on the alert for a mission. Since then I've heard rumors to the contrary. If they wake us up at 2:30 AM we'll know. B10

Rattlesden

Sunday January 2

Got up at 7:15 to eat chow and get to the theater for briefing which lately have turned out to be roll calls. I had a class on the camera operation at 11. It lasted 15 min. At least 3 ships in each group have cameras which start taking pictures when the first bomb that is attached to the camera switch with a string drops out. It continues for 10 minutes to get the results of the raid. It is very successful. After the missions we can see the pictures we take in the crew library. We didn't do much all afternoon except read and play cards. I heard from a good source that on the last mission one of the top turret gunners was hit on the head with a 20 m. shell. This fellow had his crash helmet on. The total results was a dented helmet and a headache. B-8

Rattlesden January 3

Monday

Fred and I jumped out of bed at 8:10, got dressed, walked a half mile to the messhall, ate a breakfast of a sort and got to the theater for roll call at 8:33. A Record? Crews 2 3 + 4 got 2 day passes to places off the base + not to London. The 1st sargeant recieved orders to have the passes made out by 9, but when the fellows showed up he said: "He didn't think it was important." These fellows were mad + didn't get off until 1:30. Maj. Lund was mad at the 1st sargeant who did the same thing with our furloughs in Harvard. He, the 1st sarge, is going to get injured during some blackout but he won't get a purple heart. for bruises. Played cribbage + 500 all afternoon; went to "China Girl" after supper with Fred, came back to barracks to find we are alerted for tomorrow. The weather is clearing up so we'll probably go. B-8:30

Rattlesden January 4

Tuesday

Lt. Dalzell woke us up at 3, ate at 3:30, briefing at 4. We gunners were told we were to bomb Kiel. We got out to the ship #207 by 5 AM and had enough time for once to get dressed in electric suit, shoes, gloves, and put the guns in. Take off at 8, leaving English coast at 10, I.P. 11:30 and bombs away at noon. We met no fighters, saw a few FW 190's + ME 109's that stayed way out of range. It was a good thing as the tail guns didn't work and the ball turret's oxygen supply had a severe leak so Harris couldn't stay in it. There was quite a bit of accurate flak. We bombed thro a partial overcast at 24000 ft. It was -52 degrees C outside. A lot of fellows suffered minor frostbite about their necks when they got down. Landed at 1500, ate donuts coffee + sandwiches served by Red Cross at the briefing room; ate supper, cleaned guns and bed about 9:30.

Rattlesden January 5

Wednesday

1944 The C.Q. came in and woke up crew 7, Small, Hess, Zesuit, Boyd, Hill and Bently at 12 midnight for a mission. We didn't get up until 7:30, briefing at 8:30. I went to school most of the morning. Our crew cleaned guns after lunch for an hour or so. All of us were pretty tired from the raid yesterday and have taken naps whenever possible. The men got back from their mission at 4. They bombed a FW

assembly plant in Bordeaux, France, meeting some fighters. Small and Zesuit got a FW 190 between them. 2 other 190's were brought down. Zulo's crew got in trouble + headed back for land as they were over water. As Crew #5 we are expecting a 2 day pass soon. Hi Jinx is getting patched up pretty fast, she'll be ready to go when we get to go. B. 9:30

Rattlesden January 6 1944

Thursday

Got up at 730 this morning, in the dark. There is no electric power on the field. Roll call at 8:30 as usual in the theater. Another crew got a 2 day pass. They seem to be forgetting crew #5 wants passes too. Went to radio school from 9 to 11:20. Lt. T.W.G. hurt his ankle when he was on a little ferrying job at Honnington yesterday. He went on sick call this morning with a sprained ankle. Lt. Mamlock was out hunting a 1st pilot in case we have to go on a mission tomorrow or in the near future. In the messhalls for breakfast and supper light was provided by candles that were swiped as soon as we were thro eating to light the barracks. The mess officer was yelling + objecting; according to Lt. Dalzell. I guess he wanted his candles. I'm going to bed early because there's nothing to do. "Hi Jinx" should be ready to fly tomorrow afternoon. B-8:30

Rattlesden January 7

Friday

Got up at 8:15, the C.Q. was late waking us up. Consequently we took our own darn time eating breakfast; walking into the theater 15 minutes late. A lot of fellows came in after our crew came in so Jarrel couldn't start the role call until about 9 o'clock. I was told to be at the equipment room at 11:30 to fly as radio op on Lagasse's crew on a practice mission to check the lead ships as they do every day. We got back down just before the fellows returning from their mission. No planes were lost, fighter protection all the way in and out. They bombed some city in the interior of Germany. After chow Harris Mac and I went to the show, after which a G.I. magician gave a pretty good show. Came back to the barracks to find out I take a mission tomorrow with some other crew. Today is the first time I've ever flown with another crew. B 9:30

[To the Glossary!](#)

Rattlesden January 8

Sat.

1944 The C.Q. came in at 5:45 to wake us up for the inspection by the colonel at 9. We got things real clean as only crew #5 is in this Barracks now, Small and crew 7 are in London now. It turned out that the lieutenant making the inspection commended the barracks on our cleanliness or something. I went to code class an hour this morning, spent the afternoon playing poker. Time seems to go very slow during periods of inactivity. Lately we've been playing cribbage, rummy, 500, and poker to pass the time away. Went to the show "Behind the Rising Sun" with Dill, came back + played some more poker until 10. We are not alerted for a raid and will get to sleep until 7:30 tomorrow. Hi Jinx is ready to go now. I didn't make that mission that was scheduled for today because of the bad weather. B11

Rattlesden January 9

Sunday

Got up at 8:30 this morning, dressed and got Fred out of bed and managed to get down to the theater on time with him. No ground school today. Everybody except Mac TWG + Laz went to Protestant church this morning at 9:30, the rest went at 11. Since we've been going on missions there's a lot of fellows going to church, and the greatest percentage are combat crew members too. Cleaned guns and worked on the interphone system of ship most of the afternoon. Played rummy with Fred and MD for an hour after supper. Read a while and hit the hay as soon as the fellows get thro playing blackjack on my bed. B-830

We are supposed to go on a 2 day pass Tuesday.

R. January 10

Mon.

I got up this morning at a quarter to seven, dragged Fred out of his sack; got down to the chow hall at seven and to the barber shop at 7:30. The shop didn't open til 8 but we got in at the first of the line. I got my hair cut and went over to briefing at the theater to tell Jarrel where Fred was. It was O.K. by him. We had a class in aircraft rec in the theater at 10 when we were told that we'd fly in the aft-noon. We had to put the guns in for the flight. We were up in the air for an hour during which time I was listening to a British radio program which featured songs like "Deep in the Heart of Texas". Pretty good. All of us did a good job cleaning our guns for the mission tomorrow. Dill came in at 9 saying that we'd go on pass tomorrow instead of going on the mission. The whole crew would rather go than let

someone else let Hi Jinx get all shot up. We'd be willing to forfeit the pass. B10

Rattlesden January 11

Tuesday

1944 We got up at 7 o'clock this morning, had roll call in the officers barracks at 8:30. Afterwards all of us went back to the barracks to get ready to go to town. I walked down to operations and got the passes. Crew #5 left at noon by G.I. truck from the mess hall. We didn't have to show our passes. We got to Stowmarket at 1230, caught a train for Ipswich after waiting 15 minutes. It took 20 minutes to go to Ipswich about 17 miles. As soon as we hit town we got beds in A.R.C. got supper there and went to a show. Mac went to a dance instead, getting to bed at 11. The trolleys in this town are as modern as anywhere, good service too. Most of the people seem pretty friendly, contrary to what most of the fellows say. The first impression of the town gives us a good impression of things. Gene + Dill went to London to spend their passes.

R. January 12

Wednesday

1944 At 8 the four of us got up and had breakfast at the A.R.C. Service Club. It wasn't a bad breakfast, stretched sausages, potatoes, bread toast butter and jam. Afterwards we went out and bought sueveniers, pilots caps and squandered money in general. I spent about \10 for a necklace, brooch and purse, but they are all well made, and very pretty. I think I'll send the brooch to Mom, purse to Lois and necklace to Alice. I guess the jewelry is pretty expensive for the Britishers but the Yanks spend their pounds like water. After lunch the four of us started walking to see the town. We went thro a park with a big pond filled with Mallard ducks + geese. Really beautiful. On the grounds was a mansion that was an art gallery and very old domestic furniture dating back to 13th century. We found another museum and went thro it in a half hour when 2 days wouldn't have been enough time. Natural history, zoology and gun collections filled most of it. A show finished up a swell day. B 11

R. January 13

Thurs.

1944 M.D. and I got up at 7, took a shower and shaved, Fred and Mac got up at 8:45. Soon afterward

we went to the A.R.C. Service Club to get breakfast. M.D. and I went off shopping while waiting for the two to finish their coffee; stopping at a jewelry store.-Met them at the train station, leaving at 1015, getting to Stowmarket at 1045 where we met the rest of the crew, including the officers back from London. After waiting a while we got a ride to the base in the mail truck. A class from 330-530, P.W. + naval ident. Charlie Harris had to ditch on the last mission when Col. Bowman + Jarrel's plane blew up. Harris and crew had a rough time: the ship broke up, sank in 30 sec. but the whole crew got into boats OK. The R.O. got an S.O.S. off, 15 min. after landing a Hudson circled, 3 hrs later they were picked up by the Limey coast patrol. All of the fellows suffered from exposure and shock. C. Harris says he's going to quit flying. B 10

R. January 14

Friday

8:20- Fred and I got to briefing just in time. Capt. Richards is squadron operations officer now, Dalzell + La Gasse assistants. They had a good ground school schedule mapped out for us when they alerted us for a mission. T.W.G. said we could clean guns until briefing at 11 when we gunners went to their ships, as too much information as to target for the day has been leaking out before the planes take off so they told just the officers the target + particulars. The officers got out when everything was ready + told us that we were an extra crew. The formation take off was at 1-2:15, we stood by in the ship until 2:30 then came back + got something to eat. It was a milk run, and for the first time we would have been in our own ship. They got back at 5:30, no flak or fighters. All combat crews are alerted tomorrow for a maximum effort, restricted to barracks. I owe 6 letters + am going to bed instead of writing. Charlie Harris is going to get a 7 day pass for rest. He deserves it. B9:00

R. January 15

Sat.

The C.Q. came in at 3:30 to wake us up for a mission this morning, ate at 3:45, briefing at 4:45. After the gunners briefing I was in with the rest of the R.O.'s getting briefed by Capt. Unitas when he recieved a call from Berry that the mission had been scrubbed. We got back in bed by 6, slept until 930 when we got up to get paid flight pay, \14 5' 6d. We had to go up to briefing room at 11 for a brief lecture by a maj. of some other sq. An electronic supercharger lecture 2.30-3.30, and poker took up all afternoon and evening. 6 pence loser, about the cheapest entertainment possible around here. It was just a friendly game among the 6 E.M. of the crew. At 7 Lt. Dalzell came in to get his radio + told us we probably would not go on a mission tomorrow because bad weather was expected. A bit of fog came up very suddenly this morning + hung on till noon. 3 more missions we get the air medal. 2 day pass the

21th. B-10

R. January 16

Sun.

7:15, Briefing at 8:30 in the theater. This was over at 8:45, Gene Dill, M.D. + I went to combat library until 9:25 when we went to church. At 10:30 after church I went up to take code in room 13, but the code instructor was skipping out. I shot the bull with a limey flight lieutenant and Al until noontime. After chow there was a short lecture at 1:30-2:00 by S-2, then I went + took code for an hour and passed 20 W.P.M. again, the first time being at Scott field last May. Some fellows flying B-26's land here from a mission 2 days ago + have been fogged in ever since. Those boys say that the grub is a hundred times better here than at their base. They don't mind their staying here at all. After chow M.D., Fred + I went to the show "Wake Island", played 2 cribbage games + hit the hay. The fellows are galloping the dominoes against the floor. B10

[To the Glossary!](#)

R. January 17 Monday

7:00 I got up good and early this morning. Some reason, Fred got up too! It was nice to sit in the mess hall for 45 minutes. Went to radio school most of the morning, code + a lecture, plus bull sessions. There was another class on zone sighting the 1st thing in the afternoon. The rest of the afternoon we read in the library + read in the barracks. Didn't do anything except read after supper. Today was another day of fog. The weather hasn't been very cold but pretty damp. No mail has come in for 4 days. We are getting pretty impatient because of the lack of mail. The B-26 boys have to go thro 50 missions, but 25 in B-17's are a lot harder. The 26's can make 2 missions a day, while one every other day is the most we can make except in emergencies. They have had anti personell bombs on the base for a month. Sort of expect the invasion to break loose in two months. B-10

R. January 18

Tuesday

7:15 Got up in time to eat, make some cocoa + heat it on a stove + take all the time in the world to

drink it. Roll call at 8:30, no ground school during the morning, a class 1:30 to 2:30, I took blinker then for an hour and went back to the barracks until chow time. At 5:30 in the officers mess Col. Harris presented the D.F.C.'s and Purple Hearts earned in the past raids. The D.F.C.'s were presented to fellows that have finished thier 25 missions were of another group. Most of the Purple Hearts were earned in the Kiel raid by frostbite. The 26's + their crew are still here. Lt. Dalzell came in a while ago, telling us that we're on alert, we'll probably fly the purple heart earner tomorrow with Lt. Bye, Dalzell's copilot. He says we might not have briefing very early but I'm going to bed early anyway. B-9:30

R. January 19

Wednesday

The C.Q. came in waking us up at 6:30 for a mission. All of crew 5 except Fred went to chow at 6:45 and stayed at the messhall until 8 when all but me went to the main briefing room. I went back to the barracks to get a scarf + to wake Fred up. He was dressing as I came in; got to breakfast at 8:35 + sat around till 9 briefing time. We were to bomb rocket installations on the coast of France. When we got out to the ship + got the guns in T.W.G. came out + told us the mission was scratched. We went to the barracks until 2 when we had to take the ship out + dump the bombs in the North Sea. We had delayed action bombs that can't be defused without going off, so we dumped them, the six regular bombs went off + made beautiful gysiers. Then T.W.G. took us down on the deck, 30 ft. + test fired the guns, 300r. per gun. Came back, ate, cleaned the guns, got thro at 830, came back to the barracks + went to bed. 9:00

R. January 20

Thursday

The C.Q. came in at 6:30 to tell us we were going on a mission. We slept until 7:30 when he came in again to get us up. Chow at 745, nothing to do until 9 when the gunners were briefed. Same lecture and target as yesterday. Same as yesterday we got the guns in and everything ready and mission was scrubbed. After chow all the E.M's went out to the ship, got it cleaned up, loaded a lot of ammo; T.W.G. turned us in as present at the afternoon classes in ground school. After dinner I went to the show alone, came back; went to the latrine and shaved + got cleaned up in general in cold water. I felt pretty good AFTERWARDS. This scrubbing of missions is getting tiresome, for us, ground crew + everybody. But, most of the time we get our chocolate bar and gum every time to soothe us. So far none of the fellows I've noticed haven't been bothered by combat as they've seen so far. Got a "V" mail letter today from Mom mailed the 9th of Jan. So far they've recieved none of my letters. B-1030

R. January 21

Friday

We got up at 7:30, briefing at 9, when they told us we were going on a mission at noon. After the usual preparations we made a no-bal raid, bombing the rocket installations on the coast of France. T.O. at 12, landing at 4:15. No flak, no fighters, we missed the target by 500 ft, hit a railroad instead, bombing at 12,000 ft. The Jerries were shooting up some sort of rockets at us; they got up to our altitude + exploded, off to one side about a mile. We saw about six of them, none coming close at all + we are not sure what they are. After landing we got away from the ship in 15 min. the record just about, got thro undressing, packing interrogation by 5:30, ate chow, went to the barracks to get mail. Mom and Alice seem not to have got any mail from me yet, the address is stil APO 9006, Tad has it tho. Tonight the Jerries are keeping the searchlights busy, we can see light from exploding bombs in distant towns but cannot hear it. The Jerries must be mad. B- 10:30

R. January 22

Sat.

We got up at 8, had breakfast and went to briefing at 9. The rest of our baggage came this morning. After roll call T.W.G. and the rest of the crew with Sgt. Honeycutt the supply sgt opened the big box with our stuff. I was glad to get the protective clothing, shoes, brand new pair from Kearney, and my new field jacket. Last night a lot of Ju 88's bombed London for the first time in a long while. 8 out of 30 were shot down. This afternoon we had a lecture on the British rescue boat. It is hooked on the belly of a Lockheed Hudson or some other plane + is dropped by parachute to a dinghy with a ditched crew. It has outboard motors, sail, warm clothing, emergency radio, rockets and food. It is 24 ft long, is self righting mahogany boat with CO2 filled bags at each end. A complete unit complete with instructions, gasoline and good wishes.

B-11 No briefing tomorrow morning.

R. January 23

Sun.

I got out of bed at 10:30 this morning, read until 11, got cleaned up and went to chow. Just after noon we were ordered to go to briefing room as soon as possible for a mission. It turned out to be a practice

mission, we didn't have to go because Lt. Mamlock was still D.N.I.F. No classes during the afternoon; spent the time in the Red Cross Rec drinking tea and eating sandwiches; sewing 8th air corp patches on my clothes. They had chicken for supper tonight; a swell meal. Crew 7 got back from London today; they say most of those Picadilli Commandoes are thicker than flies + are pretty eager to earn money. They had a swell time tho. We get our passes in four days, M.D., Fred + I plan to go Ipswich. We are not supposed to fly a mission tomorrow except as individual replacements. Briefing at 9. B-10:15

R. January 24

Mon.

Much to Crew #5's surprise, the C.Q. came in at 3:30 waking us up for a mission. Briefing at 4:15 when they told us we were going to Frankfurt to bomb chemical works and railway yards and explosive factories. We took off at 6:25 to fly high echelon for the 94th group. At takeoff we had trouble with interphone; used emergency interphone on the command modulating unit for an hour then switched back to interphone. Mac's interphone jack box was shorted out. Our composite group reached the rendezvous at 10 over the Channel; the 94's formation was very poor. The trip was cancelled as we were 40 miles in France. On the way back out ran thro some accurate flak, 2 small holes in ship. Got back to base at 12:30, after interrogation + putting up equipment went back to bed at 2 P.M. sleeping until 6 when Fred + I went to A.R.C. to get tea + sandwiches, went to clean our guns and came back to go to bed at 10:30

R. January 25

Tues.

Got up at 7:30, ate chow and went to role call at 9 when we were told the P. C.P N. + R.O. of Crew #5 were to take a ferrying trip to Honnington at 10:30. We took ship 146, took off at 1050, me in the tail. It was a great thrill during the take off back there. We landed at Honnington 10 minutes later on the prefabricated steel runway. After checking in Leavitt + I went to chow, a poor one at that and got back to operations at 12:45; Stenvig + T.W.G. + officers showed up at 1. We took off in 095 15 minutes after Stenvig got off. On the way back I rode in the nose. After landing spent some time in the barracks, Mac, Fred + I had tea in the A.R.C. until 5:30, then I went to the show. Afterwards back at the barracks they say there is an all out alert for tomorrow. Maybe we'll go even tho we made the last mission. B-10:30

[To the Glossary!](#)

R. January 26

Wednesday

Again, much to our disgust, the C.Q. came in at 2:30, pulling us out of bed for a mission. Briefing at 3:45 where we're told our target was Frankfurt again, with a Nabal target as a secondary mission. Takeoff time was to be 7:50, start engines at 7:25. At this time they told us both missions were scrubbed, due to 7/10's cloud over the Continent. There was another briefing at 9, so we had another breakfast + went back. Practice mission, skeleton crews + we got hooked. Flew from 10 till 2, me riding all over the ship. Came down, ate a late lunch, and finished reading a book by supper time. Dashed off a letter instead of going to chow, and am going to bed early. Lt. Mamlock says the 447th has the best bombing record of all time here in England for Yanks, 708 being high squadron. If we have good record for the next two raids we'll be in for a presidential citation. B 8:00

R. January 27

Thursday

We got up at 7, and when the rest of the crew went to breakfast I went over to the washroom to shave + wash up. At 12:10 we got in a truck + headed for Stowmarket, getting there at 1. Just for a change we took a bus to Ipswich at 1:30, getting there in an hour. It was one of these tall double decker buses, we rode in the top, getting a good look of the countryside as we passed thru the two towns on the way to Ipswich. During the afternoon we walked around town got a room at the A.R.C. dormitory. Harris + I went to a show, the rest except Kealer went to a bar to get some drinks. Kealer stayed on the base in hope of getting a mission during our two day pass to catch up with us. The five of us hit the hay at 11, in clean sheets. It sure felt good.

Ipswich January 28

Friday

Got up at 7 this morning. Harris + I took a shower before going out. By the time we were ready, the rest were ready too. After looking around a bit we went into a radio shop and asked if they had a radio. The owner swore up + down he didn't have any, then casually mentioned he'd sell us one for \20. We bought it before he could talk much. That would be \3 1/3 for each man of our crew. After buying it we took it up to the A.R.C. dormitory to have them keep it for us. For the rest of the morning we went thro the

museum on High street that we just skipped thro on our last past. Fred + I went out to a golf course to spend the rest of the afternoon while the rest shopped. I had a swell time walking around and maybe learned a little about golf. In the evening the five of us went to a show. B-12:45 at the A.R.C.

Ipswich

+

Rattlesden January 29

Harris + I got up at 7:45, went down to the middle town to do a bit of final shopping: buying some wine, a pillow. We got to talking to a civilian who said the Forts had been going up all morning from 630. We got the radio and got down to the station at 9:15. Mac + the rest showed up at 10, the train left at 10:15 with us standing up. The officers of the crew were on the same train. After a 15 minute run we got to Stowmarket, went to our tea room + had tea + cakes. This time it was on Mamlock. We got rides out to camp at different times. I came out with H.E.M. + McGurer. The radio works very well. Jimmy Boyd went on the raid + says it was to Frankfurt, a milk run, some flak good fighter protection. Bombed thro clouds at 24 thous. saw smoke come thro clouds that were at 10,000. B-9. No alert as yet.

R. Bombed the city at 24000 thro clouds; with incindaries.

Returned at 430

January 30

Sunday

We were a disgusted bunch of guys at 2:30 when they woke us up for a mission. T.O. was 820, headed for Brunswick Germany. Chemical, gas, and airplane city. We flew over at 24,000 ft, sometimes as high as 27,000. Looking back I could see group after group, wing after wing behind us in waves above the clouds, P-38's zigzagging back + forth above us. Those 38's looked pretty, so pretty in fact a few FW 190's came above the clouds, saw them and changed their minds and headed home. We always had at least 30 P38's in sight, a few P47's. It wasn't cold, I didn't turn heat on until after we left the target + went up to 27,000. Throwing chaff out kept me pretty busy. Quite a bit of flak, 2 holes in our ship, Putnam turned back at the I.P.; on the way back we were the lead ship for the group as Dalzell dropped behind to no 6 position with a feathered no 2 engine. Got back at 4. Went to bed at 7:30 dead tired.

R. Putnam's crew is gone. He must have bailed out over Germany. Probably P.W. + OK

January 31

Mon

M.D. + I got up at 2:15 to go on a mission I was to go as RO for Donahue. At briefing at 4:15 we found that we were headed for Frankfurt, Ger. a pathfinder mission. I was to fly in a late B-17 G with all the radio equipment in the r. room, radio gun mounted on the hatch, waist guns mounted so that the waist guns + r. gun could be fired without opening any windows. It would have been nice + warm. After pulling the props thru the mission was scrubbed because the weather was too bad. Came back to barracks + stayed in bed from 8 till lunch time, got my rations and slept from 2-5. If we had of taken off we would have been loaded. 2700 gals, Tokyo's clear full, + 10x500 demo's; the ships would have been 200 lbs under maximum gross weight allowable for takeoff: 63000 lbs. A B-17 G can't get off the ground with more than 65000. The 63000 didn't count extra flying equip. we took along. Cleaned guns after chow. Alert for tomorrow. B-8:30

[To the Glossary!](#)

R. February 1

Tues.

Crew #5 got up at 4, had chow and got to briefing at 5:10. A mission to Frankfurt Ger. We got the guns in but hesitated before changing clothes as the weather was pretty bad. The control tower shot red rockets to tell us the mission was scrubbed. After getting our equipment ready we headed back to briefing room leaving guns in ship. We managed to get back to bed by 8:30. I slept until 12 when I got up for chow. Went out to the ship, took the guns out + read for the rest of the afternoon. Went to combat library for 2 hours after supper. We are getting tired of all these false starts, the ground crews tireder as they have to load + unload bombs. Early this morning when loading guns in the dark I ran into the tail assembly, the tail hit me across the eyebrows. Tonite it's still sore + swollen. There's always a first time. The ships radio mech let me drive an English Ford. 85 HP, a lot of soup + a lot of fun. B-10

R. February 2

Wednesday

We got up at 7:30 ate breakfast and briefing at 9 when T.W.G. was told P CP N + RO were to go on a practice mission at 10:30. There was pretty close to 42 ships in the formation, we took off at 11:15, didn't land until 3:30. During this time I rode in the tail, nose, and behind the cockpit. I worked for a while on radio just to get some practice. From fairly good sources we learn that Nobal raids are to be counted as 1/2 missions from now on if we go on any more. Ship 145 is in almost perfect condition, Rudy doesn't put her on initial because the camera doors were removed. She is about the best ship on

the field. There are quite a few metal patches on the ship's skin, it looks kind of funny. Had supper at 4, went to show at 6. B-10:30

R. Made Tech Sarge

6th Mission today

February 3

Thurs.

Crew #5 got up this morning at 2:30 for a mission. Briefing at 3:50, T.O. at 750. We took off third, flying no 3 in the lead squadron, carrying 10x500's and full Tokyo's. Left England at 10:20 headed for Wilhelmshaven, a seaport + sub base. Bombs away at 11:30 at 25000 bombing thro an overcast. We had P47's + 38's as escorts all the way. One ship in this squadron aborted + was attacked by 10 FW 190's but got home OK on 2 engines. After dropping bombs we climbed up to 32,000 ft for some reason. At this altitude bends bothered me a little in the knees + elbows. This is the highest most of us had been. No ships were lost today, we got back at 3 oclock. Cleaned guns + bed. Alert for tomorrow. B 8:10

R. 7th T.O. 840 L 1520

Mission 6 hrs on oxygen

Friday February 4

Climbed out of bed at 2:30 for a mission. T.O. at 815, left England 10:20 at 23,000 ft, flying low sq. low group. The 447th put 2 groups of ships, 42 in all, into the air, a mighty share of its job. We were carrying 625 a new B-17 G with closed waist + radio guns. It's nice + warm. Lt. Lazarus + I were flying with Lt. Donahue + his crew. We bombed Frankfurt, + did a good job too. We had 10/10 cloud until our target + about 7/10's there. From the target the group headed home + got too far north getting into Rhur valley flak area. We were hit in main + tokyo's on right wing; hydraulic system was gone too. The bombardier was injured in the leg. One engine quit so we had to come home alone. Over the Rhur we lost a couple B-17's, as there were upwards of 2000 guns shooting at us. Upon getting back to the base Laz + I were met by T.W.G., + Mac + Dill. F.T. Hawley, Harris, Gene flew with all different crews as did Lt McGurer who got a compound fracture of a leg by flak: he is over in main hospital now. Going to visit him soon. B-8:30

R-Ipswich February 5

Sat.

Got up at 8, after cleaning up the barracks for inspection, shaving and cleaning up for a trip to town. Harris + I left at 12:30 on a Quartermaster truck to Stowmarket. Taking a train to Ipswich at 2:30, we got there to do a little shopping, get something to eat at Fustman's, met the rest of the crew except Gene. We went to a show and went to bed in the A.R.C. dormitory. I hope there is some mail waiting for me at the base when I get back as there hasn't been much lately. Harris + I plan to go to Norwich + see what the town is like. All the names of the towns ending in "wich" were founded by the Romans during their time of conquest. B 12

[To the Glossary!](#)

Ipswich Hi Jinx went down today with Reed's crew February 6

Sunday

Harris + I got up at 8, fooled around all morning with Fred Dill + Mac. Caught the 12:15 train for Norwich, Dill riding as far as Stowmarket with Harris + I. Fred + Mac stayed to go to church, then go back to the base. Harris + I didn't get into Norwich until 3:30, we took a look around town, it didn't impress us. The A.R.C. wouldn't give us beds as we were too far from base. We headed back for Stowmarket darned soon. Got in S. at 7:30, couldn't get a taxi so we got something to eat in the Canteen + started walking: Harris in cowboy boots + me in new G.I. shoes. We mostly me got us on the wrong road, hiked to Rattlesden asking for directions, twice, asked at a pub after getting some lemonade + got in at 1130 covering 7 1/2 miles. Hi Jinx is gone with Reed's crew, by flak. She was a good ship. B 1200

R. February 7

Mon.

I got up at 10. Read until noon when the officers came in. All of us feel pretty rotten about losing that crew in "Hi Jinx". She was one of the best ships on the line, nothing wrong. The fellows that saw her go down say she peeled out of formation with a cockpit afire, one chute was seen. Just above the clouds the ship was leveled out, the fire out, and all fellows alive could have gotten out. Losing the ship is hard to take, but the real thing should be + is the loss of a crew. I knew the R.O. + the rest of the crew well. Lt. McGurer won't fly again as that piece of flak got him in the knee. Dr Bartos won't let us see

him until Wed. This afternoon I took code for an hour, and read in the combat library till 4. Lights went out at 6:30 + don't want to come on; writing this by flashlight. The ground crew of 145 worked terribly long hours to keep her going, + would have got a decoration for the ship has never had any trouble to cause an abortion. B- 70

R. February 8

Tues.

Up at 2:30 this morning for a mission. Breakfast at 3, briefing at 3:50. We enlisted men were briefed by light from flashlights + an improvised arc light. We flew #497 a 711 ship. Dill didn't go as his nose was causing him a lot of trouble, he was replaced by a pretty nice fellow from 709. T.O. at 8:20 with full Tokyo's, 10x500 demo bombs, six with a six hour delay. I don't know why they use delayed action bombs, all they are are big booby traps. We left England at 10:15, over the target Frankfurt at 11:45, making one run on target. Bombing from 25000. Flak was seen + heard at the coast going in and at the target. Heavy flak, from 108m.m. but inaccurate. We got 2 or 3 holes. Got back at 1500, had to wait for 1/2 hr for transportation. After interrogation we went + cleaned guns, had chow, a meeting in the orderly room on most everything. B 8:30

R. February 9 1944

Wednesday

The C.Q. came in at 310 waking us up for a mission. Chow at 3:30, briefing at 4. Headed for Brunswick. We were flying 167, Reed's old ship, not a bad one tho. T.O. 7:30, we had flown for an hour and the mission was cancelled because of weather, we found out later because by 1400 it was raining + wouldn't have let ships in. Got back to the barracks at 10, slept for an hour until T.W.G. came in to tell us we could visit Lt. McGurer in the afternoon. We left the base in a truck provided by Capt. Bartos, sq. surgeon. We were with him almost an hour when the nurse chased us away. He has cast from ankle to waist, will be in it for 5 months. He was looking pretty bad, the prospect of being in bed for six mo. then limping for life isn't pleasant. All of us felt sorry for him but tried to cheer him up by telling jokes. Got back to base at 4:30, wrote a letter after chow + hit the hay so we're alerted, even tho the weather is bad outside. B 8

R. On the way in today Jerries attacked the escort + made them drop their belly tanks so they couldn't escort us as far as planned. A new trick! February 10

Thursday

Got up at 7:30, ate chow, roll call at 9, a class from 10- 11, + one from 1:30-2:30. Read most of the afternoon. Went to a show with Fred + M.D. Yesterday #167, Reed's ship was officially given to us. Today some other crew of another squadron took her up + they went down. So far we've had two ships, and both have gone down with some other crew in them. At 8:30, Lt. Mamlock came over to tell us something while we out swiping coke. As soon as we got back H. Morris came over + told us he wanted to see us. Fred M.D. + I went over + found out ship #724 is now ours, a brand new ship too. We've been trying to get a name for her, it will definitely be named after Lt. McGurer some way or another. We take her up + give her a test tomorrow, altitude + test fire guns. They are moving Lt. McGurer to another hospital tomorrow. The fellows raided Brunswick today + somehow missed their fighter support. B 11:00

R. February 11

Friday

Jumped from bed at 6:30, had chow, and got to the briefing room with McHugh in time for briefing at 7:50, T.O. at 9:45 on a practice mission, flying no. 4 in lead sq. I didn't do much besides getting a couple QTF's and listening to music Laz had on the R. compass. On the raid yesterday the Jerries were using JU 87's and almost every kind of ship imaginable. One fort pulled out of formation when he was hit, made 2 slow rolls, a 4000 ft dive and got home, at least to a base in England. A '24 would fall apart if it did a stunt like that. In the afternoon Mac, Laz, T.W.G., Mamlock + I took our new ship up to altitude. She's a [tried twice to spell 'damned', crossed both out] good ship, not a thing wrong with her. I can tune the liason xmitter up on 213kc on fixed wire + burn all the insulation off the wires. Enclosed waist windows, extra oxygen outlets in radio room + nose + cockpit, heated suit outlets that are extra. We got down about 4:30, cleaned a gun + went to chow. Read for a while and hit the hay. B 9:00

R. February 12

Sat.

Got at 7:45, ate chow and got to theater for roll call at 9. Practice mission at 9.30. We were flying skeleton crews, Laz, T.W.G., Mamlock + I got down there to find out that we were to fly in some other ship than ours as the ground crew were changing a carburator on #1 engine. We didn't get away from the briefing room until 10:20, sat in the ship waiting for orders to takeoff or to come back until 11 when we caught trucks + came back. At 1:15 all combat crews met in the theater to be awarded Air Medals. All of the crew except Mamlock + I got them, some mistake somewhere. We'll find out. I was

scheduled for radio school but went to there instead. We didn't do much today, no alert for tomorrow as yet. A practice mission scheduled for tomorrow. B 9.45

To the Glossary!

9th Mission February 13 1944

Sun.

Got up at 8:15 this morning, just in time to get to messhall to eat. Read around the barracks until 9:30 when Lt. Dalzell said we were on alert for a mission. Went up to P.X. + got the rations, fooled around barracks until 10:30. Reported directly to ships, I had no briefing T.W.G. got my flimsy. T.O. 12:30 in 868, called "Due Back". We were carrying 12x500 demo's, six delayed action. Our bombing altitude was 12,800 bombing some target on the coast of France. The "A" group, the one we were in, didn't see any flak or fighters, "B" group ran into a lot of flak and some fighters 127 + 104 came back like sieves. We lost 2 ships, one hit by flak + went down in flames, one ditched. Somebody sent SOS's for them + we saw the launch going out on the way in. After chow cleaned guns. B 10.

February 14

8:00 The C.Q. came in at 2:30 to wake up Jimmy Boyd for a raid. He was the only one of the barracks to get up. We had been napping all night thinking we would have to go too. After 2:30 we slept like logs. Got down to theater for roll call at 9, went over to combat library until 10 when Fred + I went to the gym to get some exercise. We played basketball and used most of their equipment. Really nice. After noon there was a lecture 1:30-2:30. Came back to the barracks to play poker until supertime. Wrote letters until 9 when I went down to the shower room to get cleaned up, getting back at 10. Last night a lot of Jerries were over Ipswich and London. We could see and hear the barrage of A.A. fire put up. From this distance it looked like red lights going on + off. We could here the planes and saw 2 go down in flames, almost like a skyrocket going down instead of up. Almost everybody was out watching. B- 10:30

R. February 15 1944Tues.

8:10- Ate breakfast + got to briefing at the theater at 9. We had two classes during the morning, a lecture on tactics 10- 11, a test on aircraft rec 11-12. I had radio classes in the afternoon: an hour and a half in the trainers, using 200 kc on the liason set and working in a net. I was the grnd. sta. which kept

me pretty busy. At 3: I went out to the ship for a while + came back with Fred, Mac, + M.D. After supper cleaned my gun and helped check the rest. Had tea + cakes in A.R.C. at 7:45-815. There is a red alert on tonight. So far have seen no flak, just searchlights. T.W.G. + Laz went up to the section hospital with Doc Bartos this afternoon to visit McGurer. They say he is feeling a lot better now, joking + all. They, the doctors, used \$6000 worth of pencilin getting the two, McGurer + the navigator in shape. We probably go on a mission tomorrow. B-9

R. February 16

Gas mask day.

8:00 No important classes except a medical lecture 11-12 which lasted a half hour. It started to rain in early morning and has continued all day. Some rumors on impending movement to someplace are flying around, but there's nothing to them I hope. Wrote letters and did some sewing most of the afternoon. After supper M.D. Fred + I went over to the A.R.C. and had cakes, tea, and sandwiches. Came back to barracks at 8:30. The waist gunners are going to get cameras to take pictures of anything interesting on the next raids. The civilian workers on this base are for the most in the land army, they get regular army wages, get furloughs regularly + almost are soldiers in civilian clothes, going wherever work has to be done. Lt. Mamlock is in the hospital with a cold again. We are supposed to be alerted for a raid tomorrow, but I don't know, the weather is lovely outside, a lot of rain coming down.
B 9:30

[To the Glossary!](#)

R. Snowed all day but melted as fast as it came down. February 17 '44

Thurs.

The C.Q. came around at 4:30, waking us up for a mission. It was snowing as we went to the messhall to get our fried fresh eggs. As we sat down to eat Van Langen came in + told us the mission was scrubbed. Went back to bed until ten to 9 when we went down to the theater for roll call. A movie on combat showing pursuit ships, P47's shooting down enemy planes. 11-12 we had a lecture by a British Naval officer on the German Navy and naval recognition. He was really good. He said their are: one battleship, Tirpitz in a fjord in Norway being repaired, 2 pocket battleships, in Baltic sea, about 10000 tons, one aircraft carrier Graf Zeplin, 4 heavy cruisers 4 light cruisers, 20 destroyers + subs. There is a serious shortage of trained naval men keeping some of these ships out of commission. This officer was a very good speaker. Went to show after chow, went to A.R.C., came back to barracks at 8:30, read until

1045. No alert

B-1115.

February 18

Fri.

Slept until 745, got up, had breakfast, roll call at 9 in the theater, as usual. It started to snow at 8 this morning + has snowed all day, stopped at 6 PM. We recieved instructions to take all diaries over to S-2 section to be kept in a safe because of the confidential + secret information in them might be lost if they are stolen from barracks by civilians. I had an hours work in the Horwell trainer 900-10. Maj Newman gave us a lecture on dicipline 10-12, no classes in afternoon. Hess made some fudge. It didn't harden so he stuck it outside for 5 hrs. We are now eating the stuff on toast. It is snowing again. No alert on, probably because of the bad weather. Wrote letters all afternoon. All resistance has ended in Solomon Is. I'm getting tired of sitting around doing nothing. A few missions wouldn't be bad if not too many in a row. The ship 124 is named Dear M.O.M. for Marion O Mcgurer. B 10:15 A stand down tonight.

R. February 19 1944

Sat.

7-45, Breakfast, roll call as usual. Went down to equipment room, put my name on the roll sheet, went to photo shop + had my picture taken again. The old shots weren't big enough. Jack Fleming also took a picture of Mac, Fred, M.D. + I. He is going to give us a copy. A talk by a pilot of a pursuit, P-51 at 2 was good. He said he was diving after a FW 190 at 550 mph, which tried to roll away. The tail broke off. Some Jerries thing the ME 109 is faster than the P51. He says he just gets on his tail + waits until he is close enough to open up. Once he got a long burst at one of two ME110 rocket ships stacked one over the other by about 200 ft. He set a rocket on one wing of the lower ship on fire which blew up the wing gas tank. The blast tossed him up in line with the other ME 110, all he had to do was to pull the triggers. It's been snowing all day; on alert for tomorrow, we've been sitting around long enough. From now we'll be dropping 2000 lb bombs. This barracks are a bunch of coal hoarders. We've got 3 barracks bags of coal under our bed for future week. B- 9:00

R. February 20

Sun.

The C.Q. woke us up 145, chow at 230, briefing at 3:40. T.O. at 7:35, headed for a place 70 miles N.W. of Berlin. No fighter escort. We had full gas tanks, Tokyo's + mains. Carried 42 incendiaries. A ex tail gunner flew with us as toggelier and nose turret gunner. Seemed to be a nice guy. The course took us straight across the North Sea to Denmark, across Denmark to the Baltic Sea to the target, inland about 100 miles. We ran thro very little flak. The group ahead of us + behind us we[re] attacked by pursuits, but they didn't touch us. Bombing altitude was 12000 ft. We bombed by pathfinder method, and after passing over target there were clouds of smoke coming up thru the clouds at 7500 ft. The mission was awfully long, 10 hrs of flying at 12000 ft with no oxygen. It is hard on a guy. Landed at 5:20, ate sandwiches, had a chicken supper, went back to clean guns. Went to bed dead tired. B- 9:45

February 21

Mon.

Got up at 1030 after a good nights rest. I haven't done a thing all day, except go out and sweat in our ship; a 711 crew was flying her. They yelled like heck because the bolt studs wouldn't fit in the guns. When they got in everything was OK but half of the bombs wouldn't release, after they closed the doors 10 x 100 lb demo's dropped down on the bomb bay doors. The doors didn't break open as the<y> should have. When the<y> landed 10 hundred pound demo bombs were stacked in the radio room. They bombed an airfield in Germany. Yesterday we flew 1450 miles in 10 hours or less. In an hour more we could have landed in Newfoundland if we had have pulled a "Wrong way Corrigan stunt". A few ships were banged up today. Our ship had another hole put in her today by flak. Went to show after chow. There's an alert on tonight. Expect to go on a mission tomorrow. B- 1000

R. February 22 1944

Tues.

We got up at 3:30 AM for a mission. Briefing at 0500, takeoff 0806. We didn't get out of briefing until 545, and had a time meeting the schedule. We were heading for Schweinfurt Germany. Bombing altitude was going to be 24000, 10 x 500's. We fooled around over England until 10:45, when we climbed to 24000 ft. The planes up there had formed thousands of vapor trails; we couldn't see more than 100 yds, + couldn't form groups + wings. The group leader couldn't find the rest of the 3rd Division so we came back home. Landed at 12:30, got in chow house at 1. Almost all ships came back from the coast, the rondevous, by themselves as we lost each other going thru all the cloud banks + vapor trails on the way back home. We were glad to come back, tho, the weather has been rotten the rest of the day. Slept from 2-5, ate chow, cleaned my gun, came back to the barracks read mail + hit the hay. We're on alert tonight, as usual. Hope we get a sortie in tomorrow. B 9:45.

To the Glossary!

February 23

Wed.

We climbed out of bed at 0300 again. Briefing was at 04, supposedly but we didn't make it in time because breakfast wasn't ready in time. T.O. was scheduled for 0730, but they put it off an hour because of thick ground fog. We sat around in the tent with Rudisill + his crew shooting the bull for an hour, then they cancelled our mission altogether. We were supposed to have gone to Schweinfurt Germany to bomb the ball bearing works. From now on if a ship is disabled deep in Germany or up around Kiel we are supposed to head for Sweden or Switzerland + land instead of parachuting down + trying to hike our way home as it has been done. We would have to destroy all confidential information, IFF, + all radio equipment possible before landing. Landing in a neutral country, previous to now we would be interned for the duration, but now the Swiss + Sweds are sending us home to fight some more. It's just a recent agreement. Made a foot locker, showered, B- 845. Alert tomorrow. I hope we go, I'm tired of dressing for nothing.

February 24

Thurs

C.Q. came around at 2. Briefing at 3:15. We took off in our ship headed for Tutow, with Rostock as the secondary. After getting the group together we got the wing together as we left the English Coast headed NE across the North Sea. About 20 minutes out there was a short in the inverter circuit. When T.W.G. turned one off the other caught fire; so he had to leave them turned off, making the electronic superchargers, engine instruments and radio compass inoperative. We had to drop out and head for home. I called in to M.P./D.P. to identify myself and tell them we were coming back. Got to the base ok at 12:30. After lunch Fred + I did some chasing around doing some stuff we'd been putting off, got back to the barracks at 2:30 to find we had to go on a practice flight test hopping 868. We went up to 20000 ft, flew around a while, most of the time listening to the liason receiver. Fooled around in ball turret for a while. Came back + went to bed at 8. We're on alert as usual.

R. 11th Mission. Regensburg

February 25 1944

Friday

Up at 3, briefing 4, T.O. 8:10. Left English Coast at 10:50 at 13000 ft. headed for Regensburg Germany. Ran into flak going over coast of France at target and on the way home. The leader of our group was hit by flak over Germany, 10 chutes opened then the ship blew up. A ship went down at the target + one on the way home; both shot down by fighters. The flak was very heavy at the target. When it hit the ship it sounded like gravel on a tin roof. We were attacked by 2 ME 109's, 4 FW 190's + a ME 110. The 110 shot rockets and 20 mm, the rest just 20 mm. When the rockets burst about 50 yds behind the ship they looked like flak bursts. Dill, Gene + Schneider (ball turret in Harris's plane, got in a few shots, 200 apiece. Dill damaged one. Came back at 15000 ft. We had fighter protection most of the way in, none on the way out until the French Coast. Got back at 1820, bad overcast + low ceiling. Cleaned guns, skipped supper + hit the hay at 10:00

R February 26

Sat.

Slept until 11:15 when I got up for lunch. Went out to the ship afterward. Harris gave me some togellier instruction to satisfy my curiosity. All of the crew except Lt. Gilleran + Kealer were put on D.N.I.F. last night to get some rest. Most of us put ourselves on D.N.I.F. Harris + I got back to the barracks at 3, at 330 Lt. Fisher came in + told crew 5 we would go on pass at 5. It was a heck of a rush, but Fred + I got ready on time headed for Newcastle Staffordshire. Got to Ipswich at 6, London at 9 + Crewe at 6 AM, Stoke on Trent at 7. It took us 3 hrs to find the Lower Lodge May Place The Brompton's, Newcastle Staffordshire. Didn't sleep at all during the night so am pretty sleepy. Odds + ends: Lt. Fout's crew the first crew to ditch went down today. While on a 7 day rest from ditching the RO, N, E were injured + LW killed in a train wreck. They went on a mission today and flak got them. Some parachutes were seen.

Newcastle Staffordshire February 27

Sun.

Fred and I walked into his cousin's house at 9. The cousin's name is Francis, whose husband is Eric. Eric has a munitions job + can't get relieved to join up, he wants to pretty bad. We got there in time to eat breakfast with them. We tried to keep them from it but they got some eggs + ham for us. I told them

they shouldn't give us their weeks ration of ham + eggs but they wouldn't listen to us. It was snowing all day. We sat around talking until noon when Fred's uncle Tom took us to Cousin Molly's house. One of Molly's friends + niece, a girl 19 yrs old was introduced. Good looking, shy, and nice. Almost another hearthrob. Wait + see. Stayed for 2+ half an hour, went back to Frances's house + took a two hour nap. At 6pm the whole croud came over + had tea. Alma was very quite, + didn't say much. When we walked back to Molly's she talked a lot more. We had tea + cakes + sandwiches before going to bed at 2AM in the softest bed I've ever been on.

Newcastle-

Ipswich-

R. February 28

Mon.

Molly called up at 7AM. I got up went down + got cleaned up. We had breakfast at 710, Molly walked down to the bus stop, about 1 mi, got on a bus + took us to the R.R. station to see us off. From Newcastle we went to Stafford, got on a different train + the only other other stop was Rugby. It was a fast train. We arrived in London 1330, a train for Ipswich at 1440 so we went to the Liverpool Station by subway, went up to the street level to a cafe + got lunch, even tho Molly had packed us a lunch. We went to a few shops, buying nothing. Left on time, got to Ipswich at 545 where we met T.W.G. Laz + Mamlock. We came to Stowmarket with them, caught Liberty run truck going back to the base. Even tho 4 hrs late had no trouble. The group went on a nobal raid + lost two ships by flak; on was Lt Fouts with Charlie Harris, T.Q. He's probably a PW now. If I go back to Fred's uncle's place it'll be to get to see Alma again. She thinks she'll be going into Nurse Corpse soon. B- 245

R. 12th mission February 29

Tuesday.

We had to get up at 3AM this morning to go on a mission. Briefing at 4. There wasn't much of a rush, T.O. at 715. Leaving English Coast at 10:15, I.P. at 11:33, bombing Brunswick by Pathfinder method. We bombed thru 10/10 clouds at 23000 ft. It was cold outside, about -35 C, but with the closed radio hatch and waist windows it was very warm in the ship. For most of the missions in the past there were supposed to be RAF flown P-51's protecting our withdrawal. We always called them the ghost ships, they were never there. Today they were for the first time right in there. Besides them we saw P38's, US P-51's, P47's. Best fighter protection we've ever had. We ran thru some flak, but it was innacurate. Returned at 1350, got back to barracks at 1500, slept from 1700- 2000, + read for a while. We once thought we'd have to abort as the left oxy. system had a leak + got down to 50 lbs pressure. Standown

tomorrow. B- 11

[To the Glossary!](#)

R. March 1

Wednesday

Got up at 9 this morning when the C.Q. came around and told us of a practice mission briefing at 10:30. We went there, Col Harris gave us a lecture on the length of our operational tour, which might be lengthened. At any rate 25 mission men will be kept here in U.K. for a few months longer than 90 days, as has been the custom. I don't mind being stuck over here for the duration if I don't have to go more than 25 missions. Each time we go over we are taking a big chance. The least number of chances the better. We left + came back at 12:30 after chow. A skeleton crew P,CP,N,RO, we got off at 2, came down at 4:30. All the time Lt. Laz + I were listening to music. Ate supper, read for a while, then went over to Red Cross until 8:15. Gene + Mac had to go down and clean all the guns from 5-7:30, unknown reason. We are on the alert for tomorrow. Hitting hay instead of writing a letter to folks + Alma as I should.

March 2

Thursday

Got up at 8, as it snowed during the night cancelling the alert. Ate chow + went to roll call in the theater. T.W.G. + his skeleton crew, me included, were to fly in a practice mission in the morning. We had briefing at 10 in main briefing room; I went out to the ship soon afterward. Al Minor + Fred T. Hawley went up with us for the ride. All but the pilot + copilot listened to music all the time while up. We landed at 2:30, ate a late lunch and fooled around doing chores until 5, when I came back to the barracks and read and wrote letters until 8:30, skipping supper. B- 900

Odds + ends:

Our target today was to have been Berlin. We're on alert again.

The English are using a 12000 lb bomb in some of their raids.

T.W.G. is now 1st Lt. T.W.G.! And no cigars?

#724

March 3 Friday

Climbed out of bed at 245 for a mission Ate chow and briefing at 4 A.M. After the usual briefing, got out to the ship at 445, did the usual work and took off for Berlin at 7:10 as scheduled. Flew around England until 10:15 when we headed out over the North Sea. An hour and a half out we were at 27000 ft trying to go over some bad weather ahead + we had to put on flak suits. Fred was our bombardier, Henry McCowan was L.W. Fred told us to put on flak suits, all OK'd; five minutes later we started checking in Dill didn't answer Gene went back to check him + found him unconscious, checking his oxygen + couldn't get him to. I went back + gave him artificial respiration for 1/2 hr, Fred came back to relieve me. I went up + got 2 fixes to get home on as we had 2 engines gone from mechanical failure, At 27000 ft. Later they brought Dill to the waist + gave him art. resp. until we landed at a base near Norwich. The doc took him to the hosp, T.W.G. went with him + it was too late. Went to A.R.C. had tea and went to bed at 8:30

March 4

Sat.

Didn't sleep so well. We saw two B-17's collide yesterday, it just made a big black geyser, a terrible sight. Got up at 7 for breakfast. Met T.W.G. + officers at the A.R.C. We went out to the ship, got all our gear, took the guns out, dropped all the stuff off at the Flying Control and cleaned guns at one of the arm. shops. Got thro at 1 when we ate + slept until 4. A plane was supposed to come from Rattlesden to take us back, but it snowed 2 inches during the night + the field was closed so a truck came up, with our ground crew with it. All, Rudy, Whitey, + Don Lav. It was good to see them. We loaded up and left by 5:35, got to the base at 7:05. All the fellows helped unload the stuff. All of us ate in the combat mess + went to barracks, tired. T.W.G. took Dill's death harder than the rest of us, altho we felt awful bad. The supply had already got his stuff. Were going to try to get it + send it home for him. B- 10

March 5

Sun.

Got up at 9:45 this morning. Read until noon, Harris went over to get our rations. Instead of the usual candy bars he brought a pound box of Whitman's Chocolate back. They sure are good. At 2 PM, the whole crew went over to the officers barracks to tell Doc Bartos exactly what happened when on that last mission when Dill died. Doc is a personal friend to almost everybody in the squadron, he sure hated to hear that Dill was gone. I was awarded the Air Medal this afternoon. About time. Read most of the rest of the afternoon. Just after a chicken dinner T.W.G., Mamlock, Laz + I had to ferry a crew over to Honnington so they could bring a ship back. Two British Air Cadets went with us for the ride. Got

back at 9. Everybody has to get up in the morning. B- 10:

I flew in 085

March 6

Got up at 2:45 for a mission. Briefing at 4. Our crew was not supposed to fly today but I flew with Ruzmus, Fred with Socolofsky, Harris with Pauling, Mamlock with Morley. We took off at 0807, left English coast at 1025, got to the I.P. 13010, bombs away at 1320. We bombed an airfield and final assembly plant and electrical factory on the edge of Berlin Germany. We ran thro a lot of flak. At one time when the fighter escort was missing FW 190's and ME 109's made about 3 passes before some P-51's got there + drove them away. Bob Johnson got one. The trip back was uneventful except for 15 minutes of flak. We landed at 1410. Lt. Socolofsky landed ship 227 after being hit in the bomb bay where the shell exploded. The ship theoretically should have broken in two. It flew Morse out, the roof + floor of radio room out, bomb bay doors off. We are to get credit for our first attempt to raid Berlin.

[To the Glossary!](#)

R.

March 7

We climbed out of bed at 3:45 for a mission. Had hotcakes, sausage and mush for breakfast. Briefing at 5. Just after regular briefing and my radio op's briefing the mission was cancelled. Tossing everything back, I managed to get to bed again by 6:45, slept until 10:15 when a guy comes in + says all R.O.'s are to be down to main briefing room at 10. A R.O.'s cretite [critique], just a discussion by our new radio training officer, Lt. Sparks, a graduate R.O. 25 mission man. He seems to know his stuff and appears to be a swell guy. On our 1st Berlin attempt I got a QTF at 29000 ft, which is theoretically impossible because of the arcing of RF current is up to 4 inches accross open air + thro porcelin insulation. After lunch T.W.G. Laz, Mamlock, Keeler + I depart by truck to Norwich to bring 724 back home. Get up there in 1 3/4 hrs, get back in 10 minutes. Skipped supper, wrote a letter home + hit the hay. I'm 2nd spare R.O. for tomorrow's mission so I shouldn't have to fly.

March 8

Such luxury, stayed in bed until 9, got up, fooled around doing not much until noon when T.W.G. told

me we were to test hop 724 at 1:30. Lts. Widstrom, T.W.G., Laz, + a couple bombardiers + 3 K.P.'s as T.W.G. calls groundhogs went up. We flew for 1 hr, never getting above 500 ft because of ceiling. After getting down I read for awhile, went out to briefing room to sweat Mamlock, Mac + Kealer in (they went on a raid to Berlin today). Harris + I cleaned their guns for them, I went to A.R.C + sat in the theater for 1 hr to see comics + the short subjects: a lot of fun too. We are on the alert tonight. It is funny in a way, after going on quite a few missions a guy gets so that he isn't afraid to die; he just wants to get home again awful bad, that' all. When a friend goes down + is lost, we feel pretty bad for a while, but we try to forget it soon. B-10

March 9

Got out of bed at 2:45, ready and rarin' for a mission. Briefing at 4, T.O. at 7:25. We went to altitude fairly soon. The waist + ball gunners are getting so that they can sleep from starting engines until we get to 15000 ft, which is pretty close to an hour and a half. We don't talk much on interphone during that time. I can't sleep much, just 22 minute catnaps between the hour and half hour. When we got to altitude we just tagged along behind the formation as we were an airborne spare. At mid channel we turned back + came home. I got a weather report from QMS for T.W.G. The rest of the fellows went to Berlin. They had fighter protection all the way, we lost 3 ships, 2 ditched one crash landed at Honnington. Toporofsky's crew was one of the ones that ditched. Slept the afternoon away from 1 to 5. After chow read in Crew Library until 9. Cleaned my guns and got to bed at 11.

R.

March 10

Friday

I finally got up enough energy to get out of bed at noon. Went to chow two classes in the afternoon. Afterwards shot the bull in the radio equipment shack with Joe Foster for an hour and got half a dozen donuts at the A.R.C. Clubmobile, good ones too. Cleaned up a bit instead of going to supper. I got a small package of chocolates from the folks. They are sure good. Toporofsky's crew was picked up almost immediately upon getting into life rafts. Top is a good R.O., I've always thot so, this proves it. I'm sure I'd come out O.K. if I had to do the job, but I'd be a little afraid of pulling a boner, altho I didn't last time. The R.O. is a guy that is never needed except in an emergency, but if he fails its too bad for the whole crew. If the weather is O.K. tomorrow, we'll fly, with a lot of LaGasse's crew to complete ours. Fred got a 7 day pass 2 days ago, as he was pretty badly shaken up when 227 got hit + came back.

He needed it. B-9:30

Munster
March 7
Sat. #724

They got us up at 1:30 this morning for a raid. It looked as if it was going to be scrubbed as the weather was pretty bad. Briefing at 3:00, T.O. at 6:45. We were to bomb Munster, Germany. Our target was the railroad yards in the town, as these yards are the nucleus of railroads running to the Rhur valley. Munster is about 75 miles north of "Happy" valley. Ping was ball turret, Garlock was toggelier, Miller ("Murphy") tail, and a guy named Vinton was L.W. The rest of the positions were held by our own crew. We carried 42 incendiaries, trained them out 200 ft up out at 19000 ft. It wasn't very cold. Bombed by P.F.F. The flak was heavy but inaccurate. Landed at 12:15, got back to bed at 2 after eating chow. Slept till 6, ate, cleaned guns with MacHugh, went to A.R.C. for 1 hr + hit the hay. Stand down tomorrow. B- 10:30

March 12
Sunday

We climbed out of bed at 8:10, in time to get breakfast. I didn't do anything all morning, except I did go up to the equipment room to sign for one of those heated suits, the green gaberdine cloth. They are supposed to be good. We had to go to an aircraft rec class in the afternoon. Afterwards I took code for an hour, then read in the combat library until suppertime. I worked for 2 hrs splitting a headset on my helmet, I was slowed up because the lights went out two times for half hr intervals. It is fairly definite that we fly 30 missions in a tour now, maybe coming back for a second tour after a six months rest. It seems like that would be tempting fate too much. Beautiful weather outside, raining hard. They say we're on standown because there are no bombs on the field. We're getting a good rest anyway. B 11:15

[To the Glossary!](#)

March 13

Yeah, and they surprised us. The C.Q. came in at 4 waking us up for a mission for briefing at 4:30. Our crew rushed, like heck and made it by 4:35. They sent the gunners out to the ship without briefing, I went out after being briefed. Mac flew with Widstrom, Harris flew with Hughes, I flew with Hopla. The rest of the crew, Gene stayed on the ground, Fred isn't back from pass yet. We took off at 0810 with 12x500's, for a Noyal mission. We went over the coast at 20000 ft, went over the target but didn't

drop bombs because of 10/10 cloud cover and we had no P.F.F. ships. Saw some flak, had fighter protection. We came back and landed at 1330. Very short interrogation, ate chow, cleaned my gun + slept until 6:30. B-29's are in this theater now, S-2 says. At the 18th mission we get interviewed to find out what we want to do after our tour. We're on standown, briefing at 10AM in the morning. B-10:00

T/Sgt. Harley Tuck 19192992
708 Bomb. Squadron 447 Bomb. Grp.
A.P.O. 634, c/o Postmaster
New York, N.Y.

3-13-44

Dear Folks:

I got your letter written by Mom and mailed by Pop the 22nd of February. It was a long letter and a swell one. Two of those boxes of Hershey chocolates have arrived, one addressed to the 407 Bomb Group. The candy sure is good. The box mailed the 21st of Feb. got here March 9th. The other one came yesterday.

I haven't got any suggestions as to help name that St. Bernard pup right now, maybe later. Oh, for a furlough to get a chance to see home! Instead of chewing gum, I've graduated to eating Hershey chocolates when dropping bombs, when I have the candy. It tastes better and when we get home we're not so dog tired.

I've been thro London, about a week ago. One of my crew and I had to go thru London to get to his uncles place. Of course we didn't see much of the city but what we saw was enough. Talk about Yanks being in a hurry, heck, I was bowled over a couple times, (pretty close to it anyway) by some of these Londoners in their hurry. Some guys can talk about Yanks being in a hurry, but not me. From now on I can honestly talk about these Limey's and their continual rushing. The subway system is something really fine, fast service to almost any part of town and I'd bet they can carry a heck of a lot of people in rush hours. Of course we were all mixed up and bewildered and had to ask for a lot of directions from civilians, bobbies, soldiers and everybody else. Most of the directions were good and given willingly. Other than this I can't tell you much of London. After this mess is over, I think I'd like to take over some of the work on the ranch in Yakima. And, from Tad's letters, he has something of the same idea. I'm sure that if I got back there I'd like to do all the work on the place that I could, orchard and all. It seems to me that most of us worked too much and too long of orchard work + I'm king of tired of it; but if I ever get back there I'd be glad to do any and all work.

I've got 16 missions now, really on the down hill grade.

Now I'm out of things to write about. I'll write again soon. Love Harley P.S. Please send some candy.

R. March 14

I got up at 7:20 in time to get breakfast and go to a briefing for a practice mission at 9:30. For once out of 7 crews from this squadron T.W.G. didn't have to fly. We came back to the barracks 'till noon, ate chow. I went over to Special Service to see about a correspondence course in ag + math. I've got the forms ready + I'll write to U. of Wisconsin + see if I can get an ag course from there. Wrote letters and fooled around barracks until 9. B-9:15

From a TSgt. I met on the way back from London on my pass Mar 19 who worked on Link trainer for the 3rd Division I learned that there are some B 24's in the 3rd Bomb Div + more coming in.

March 15

The C.Q. came around at 2:15 to get us out of bed. We ate chow and briefing at 3, which made us really step to get there on time. After briefings we went out to 724 and got ready. T.O. was 6:58. We were loaded with 4 100 lb. demo's, and 38 100 lb incendiaries, 400 gals in the Tokyo's, total 2100 gals. We bombed Brunswick by P.F.F. Our primary was an airfield NW of the city, but as there was a 9/10 - 10/10 cloud coverage we bombed the center of Brunswick proper at 20000 ft. There was a little flak at the coast going in, just before + at the target, mostly meager, red white + black flak. Some of the groups saw a lot of action from ME 109's + FW 190's, but our escort of P47's + P38's kept most of them out of range. Landed 1400. After briefing I cleaned my gun which was very dirty after shooting 300 rounds trying to get the hatch to pull down. It won't. London pass tomorrow.

March 16

We got up at 7:15 this morning. After breakfast we started getting ready for town. Ricco came in at 9 inspecting the barracks for Sgt. Terry. We had spent quite a bit of time cleaning up so it passed O.K. Terry had our passes ready; + seemed almost human for once by 9:30. We took the 10:20 train from Ipswich to London getting there at 2. After getting a room at the Imperial Hotel we walked around for a while getting our bearings around Picadilly Square. Harris and I went to a show together. A staff car with 4 stars on it was parked in front of a theater playing "Lifeboat" + "Tunisian Victory". It was Isenhower's. Gen Montgomery was in there with him according to the paper next morning. They wouldn't let us in until he came out so we went to another show. B-12 in a swell bed + 2 sheets.

[To the Glossary!](#)

March 17

Yesterday our group went to Augsburg Germany. They lost no ships and it wasn't too tough. I got up at 8:15, met Harris in the dining room. The cost of breakfast was included in the 13 shillings a night. Did some shopping during the morning, didn't buy anything tho. Went to two shows from 2 to 9 alone. I saw "Life Boat" + "Tunisian Victory", and "The Desert Song". I preferred the last as it was a musical based in N Africa. A good show. After 9 I went to a Cannuck Service Club + talked with a R.A.F. guy until 11. He was pretty nice + was interesting. Got to bed at 11. The fellows on the base headed for Munich but was scrubbed. There was an air raid last night that lasted about an hour. Everybody slept in the subways. B-12:00

March 18

All of us got up at 9. After breakfast Harris headed for camp; Gene Mac + I hired a taxi + saw all the places of interest in the town. Visiting Westminster Abby, House of Commons, London Tower + Bridge, St. Paul's Cathedral; saw the change of the guards at Buckingham Palace and most of the sights of the city. In the center of London there were blocks on blocks of buildings that had been blasted down in the blitz of 42. Then we went up to Oxford Square, 5 blocks off Picadilly Sq. and I did some shopping. Mac + Gene went back to Picadilly + I fooled around shopping some more. Bought some music, and headed for Liverpool St. by tube. Caught the 2:22 train, sitting with 2 ATS + 3 other girls. I had a good time all the way to Ipswich where I changed trains. In Stowmarket I met Mac + Gene. We took a taxi to the base + got to bed by 9:30 Alert

Sunday March 19 44

They broke the alert early this morning when it started to rain. Rained until 8. We got up at 9, in order to go to a meeting where they presented medals, I got an oak leaf cluster. As they've raised the tour to 30 missions I get credit for an extra mission since I had 17 on Mar 15. After awards Col. Harris + all training officers had a sort of critique with the gunners lasting until 12:15. I had a hurried meal + went out to 092 the Col's ship as Crew #5 skeleton crew was to test hop it. We went to altitude, buzzed Stowmarket; a P47 tried to break his pedo tube on our R. wing but didn't make it. For 15 min he was from 4 in to 12 in from our wing. He was a hot pilot. Landed 4, shot the bull with Joe Foster in Radio Eq. shack till 5:30, ate chow + saw the show with Fred + M.D.-"So Proudly We Hail." B- 9:30 Alerted.

March 20

I got up at 2:45 for a mission. Hotcakes for breakfast. Briefing at 4, T.O. at 7:30 for the rest of the group. We were no 1 ground spare. A ship aborted at 8:30 so we took off then to take his place. After going to splashers 5 + 6 where the group was supposed to be and hunting all over we went as far as mid channel looking for our wing but turned back when we failed. Worley is our tail gunner now, the toggelier for today was a guy named Shock. The rest of the crew was intact. Landed at 12, ate lunch and went to bed at 1. M.D. Harris is getting a bit quarrelsome, I believe it's combat fatigue. The ball turret is hard on a fellow on those long trips. Slept until 5, went to show, "Forever and a Day"; very good. Afterwards Fred + I cleaned our guns. The last bunch to use them left them dirty. Our whole group had to turn back because of bad weather. Returned at 2. They won't get credit for the mission. It's been raining this evening: Standown, B- 11:15

March 21 1944

Tuesday

After getting up at 8 we had dried eggs with burnt bacon, mush, grapefruit juice, bread, butter + coffee + spuds. Role call at 9 when I learned skeleton crew #5 had to fly a practice mission at 10. There were 6 ships, we buzzed the field at 200 ft in formation, never flying over 800 ft the 2 hrs. A P47 + P51 were flying wing to wing with us about 5 ft off the wing. The 51 had its 2 wing tanks. Landed at 12, wrote letters and washed clothes most of the afternoon. We are on alert for tomorrow and some of the fellows are saying they can't sleep a wink waiting for the C.Q. to come in. It doesn't bother me that way. Some of the B-17 crews are landing in Switzerland on deep penetrations if they know they can't make the coast on the way back. According to Maj. Newman the 447th is the hottest group in E.T.O. highest bombing record, least casualties, most enemy ships + highest venereal rate according to Col. Harris who agrees with the rest what Maj Newman says. B- 900

March 22

Got up at 300 this morning for a mission. Briefing at 4:30. We have Worley as our permanent tail gunner and a bombardier now. At the last minute we had to get a L.W. gunner and put Fred up front as bombardier, which he didn't like very much. T.O. at 0900, loaded down with incendiaries that were left in the ship from day before yesterday. We didn't leave the English coast until 10:15 heading out over the North Sea at 7000 ft altitude. After getting up by the Friesian Is. we climbed up to 20000 ft. Passed over near Kiel, and struck S.E. for Berlin. Our target was an airfield 4 miles from Berlin but 7/10

clouds made us bomb the city proper. A lot of fires were started. #9864 had left horizontal stabilizer blown off, it came back O.K. There was a lot of flak all the way in and out it seemed. Some heavy stuff too. Flak holes near LW + T.G. These incendiaries are gasoline + rubber with a charge of tetrol to spread the stuff. B-8:45 as we are alerted.

March 23

Ship 154

The C.Q. came in at 1:30 getting us up for a mission. Briefing at 3. We flew 154 with an E.M. bombardier. After going out to hardstand 41 + went thru the usual preparations we took off at 6, got to altitude at 7 and left English coast at 8. headed for Brunswick. We didn't have fighter protection around, fighters, FW 190's started coming in at the groups behind us + off to one side before we really caught hell from the IP on; we had a ringside seat. One ship went down in a vertical dive, another got a direct hit in no 2 engine which caught on fire, 8 crew members bailed out, the pilot + copilot pulled the ship away from formation + then jumped. At the target we dropped 5x1328 demo's on the city of B. An oil cooler sprang a leak, T.W.G. managed to feather the engine + we came back on 3 engines, tacking onto formations when we fell behind. Had fighter protection about 30 minutes but saw plenty of FW 190's. Ball + tail got some long shots. R. at 1350. Cleaned guns + went to bed until 9, got up for a while + to bed again. Standown tomorrow.

R. March 24

Friday

The C.Q. came in at 7:15 waking us for a 9 o'clock briefing. We got up, ate chow and found out that we could have slept until 10 or 11, + we were dead tired from yesterday's mission. A practice mission was scheduled for 1045, but was cancelled because of bad weather. I was going to be lead operator too! We got back in time to go to chow. A class in aircraft rec 2:30- 3:30, Wiggiwitz, Wiggi for short Harris Fred + I took test for others. I took one for T.W.G., M.D. for Kealer + Worley the rest for themselves. Lt Gailliard is a swell guy, the S-2 officer that gave the check. Coke came in yesterday but was gone before we got to it. A week ahead of us with no coke. Some fun. Gene is going over to some field tomorrow to see a B-29. Wrote letters in combat library after chow until 10. Standown. B-1015.

[To the Glossary!](#)

R. March 25

Sat.

Crew 5 got up at 7:30, cleaned up a little bit for the Saturday inspections. We got to messhall for breakfast at 750, ate and went to briefing at 9. Afterwards the whole crew went to "Dear M.O.M." and practiced ditching procedure until 10:10 when Capt. Richards told us of a practice mission briefing at 10:45. Gene Keeler went to some other field with Don Law to see a B-29. T.O. at 12, I didn't do anything except callibrate the Xmitter on 4.M/F D/F. stations and listened to music from radio compass + liason rec; until landing. P47's + Spitfires attacked our wing formation + came in close For 45 min. I was in the ball turret tracking those ships as they came thro the formation. It was the first time we've ever seen Spits from the air. They are nice ships. Landed 1615, went to sq. operations to check on my missions, chow, shower, diary + bed. B 0800 -Alerted, nine crews from this sq. us of course.

March 26

We got up at 2:50, the C.Q. said briefing was at 3:05. After breakfast we hurried down to briefing room and got there at 3:20. The E.M.'s of this crew missed briefing because they woke us up late. After getting ready, they cancelled the mission to Leipzig. We came back + went to bed until 10:15. Briefing at 11, we took off at 12. A Noball raid on the Brest Penninsula. A lot of flak, very heavy for a while. We used chaff. It was Lt. Wiggi's 1st mission, he was expecting flak, fighters + everything. He says that flak wasn't heavy, but he'll learn different. Returned at 1700, ate cleaned guns and hit the hay. From the air we can see concentrations of trucks, tanks ammo + equipment on the roads near Dover + south coast. Small says that there are very few soldiers of any kind in London on the week days, all are out drilling + practicing invasion I guess. After our tour of duty we don't go home, we stay here in E.T.O. for future reference. B- 9:30 Alerted

March 27

We were routed out of bed at 245 this morning. Briefing at 3:45 but when we got there it was put off an hour because of the ground fog that had sprung up. After sleeping in hot news room we were briefed at 0515 for an airfield near Bordeaux, France. Getting out to the ship they made us stand by to take off until 10 when we got off. T.O. at 1012. Over the channel + Brest Penninsula we flew at 13000, going up after leaving Brest. All the way down we were in sight of French coast. Bombs away at 1350, 36 clusters of 6 frag bombs were dropped. We met very little inaccurate flak, some flak from Ger. cruiser that tossed a lot of heavy stuff up as we went over it. We didn't get back to the base until 6:30, 1st plane down, 1st to be briefed + 1st to bed. When we took off in morning the fog was just as bad as it was at 7; regular instrument take off. One ship crashed a few miles after T.O., + it blew up, loaded with demo's.

March 28

We got up at 2:45 this morning, ate chow, briefing at 4. We got out to the ship 724 hardstand #46 at 4:45 got ready for takeoff when they delayed the start engines until 10 o'clock in the morning. I spent the time burning flares, chewing the fat and listening to the radio receiver. The fog was pretty bad all morning, even at T.O. at 10. We climbed to 1700 ft on the way across the Channel + headed south for the target, an airfield in southern France. Bombs away at 1405, 10x500 lb demo's. We hit the hangars machine shops + barracks in an almost perfect bomb pattern. We had good fighter protection all the way in + out, very little medium flak at the target, not at the coast in or out. Going on oxygen at 12000 it wasn't bad, we didn't get tired. English coast back 1525, over field 1607 landing at 1630. Cleaned guns, ate supper, went to a show + hit the hay. Standdown tomorrow. B 1145

March 29

I had the sleep of my life last night. I didn't get up until 11:30 + was asleep to 10:45. That bed really felt good. One of Mac's old friends that he knew in Binghamton, N.Y. has been here yesterday + this morning. I gave him my blankets to sleep in. Nice fellow. Capt Dalzell gave Mac a 2 day pass to get to visit longer with his friend. Capt. Dalzell is a swell fellow. At 1 P.M. T.W.G. Dalzell and two other officers wanted me to drive them to town. I did, the first time in a jeep + first time to drive in E.T.O. Once I started to drive on the right hand side of the town's main drag but I reformed in a hurry. We went to Quartermaster + got some clothes. T.W.G. got 10 pr wool sox for me. Came back, wrote letters until 700 visited the officers barracks to get crew picture censored + visited them + hit the hay. All crews but crew 2 are alerted. B- 9:15

March 30

We got up at 745 this morning for chow. Pancakes + mush for breakfast. Got to the theater at 9 when Capt. Dalzell read the ground school schedule for the day. The people of our crew checked out headsets that hadn't yet afterwards, I went in and talked with Joe Foster until 10 when we, Chase Pritchett + I went in and took code checks with the rest of the R.O.'s of 708 until 11. After lunch I went back and worked with the one + only bug until 3:30 + talked. Went to crew library until 5. Pork chops for supper. T.W.G. and the rest of the crew went buzzing in 724 shooting landings, giving H.E.M. a workout. Walt Fleming went to. He's done a lot of work getting the crew pictures for us. I ought to write letters to Pop,

Alice, L.L. and Tad but there is an alert on so I won't. I'm supposed to be interviewed by operations officers to find out what I want to do after my tour. I'm having a heck of a time deciding. Maybe the interview doesn't count too much. B 9:00

March 31

The C.Q. came in at 3 waking us up for a 4AM briefing. We were briefed for a target- Ludwigshaven. Getting out to the ship at 5, just as the usual fog started setting in. In the month of Apr fog is very prevalent early in the mornings. T.O. was scheduled for 7:30 but was delayed an hour. Just as we were gunning engines for T.O. on the runway at 8:45 they cancelled the mission. After getting all equipment put away I went over + talked with Lt. Sparks, radio school-+ asked him about my chances for going back home. Not much. He believes + I do too, that my best bet is to stay with the group as instructor in radio school for 3 or more months, then go home. If I go home now I'll probably be classified and sent to another theater. I had a 5 min. interview with Capt. Dalzell at 1:45. Couldn't learn much Went to a poor show and to bed at 7:30 Alerted.

[To the Glossary!](#)

April 1

They got us up at 1:35 this morning for a mission. I was 10 minutes late for gunners briefing. Same target as yesterday. T.O. at 6:30. We were flying no. 4 in lead sq. leading wing. After leaving the English Coast at 0810, French Coast at 8:34 where Maj. Newman, leader of wing turned us back because of solid overcast just over us and we were at 15000. We'd have to be above or below clouds to prevent icing, below-flak is too accurate above the overcast was too thick, up to 25000 ft. We ran thru some flak, so we might get credit for a mission. It is fairly sure that 900 fighters have been moved into Brunswick-Frankfurt-Ludwigshaven area. We'll have a hot time there when we go. Slept from 1PM - 3. Read books that were given out by Special Service in orderly room, aviation, Post Colliers + all the magazines from home. Its really nice. Saw the show "Miracle of Morgan's Creek", very good. B 10:00. Standby.

April 2

I got up at 1145 after being awake for 15 minutes. Got up and went to chow. After chow I went to the radio equipment shack and talked with Dudley until time for an equipment check at 1:30. Fred and I

went to Photo Lab from 245 till 5, helping as much as possible when Walt Fleming developed the front view photo's of our crew. They gave us about 45 pictures for the crew and ground crew. I am going to send some home after censor puts his stamp on them. At 6PM I borrowed a bike from the next hut and got ready to go to town. Fred, M.D. + I pumped to Stowmarket + rode around all the country, going thru Rattlesden twice, MD + Fred getting beer + me ginger beer which tasted like hot + strong pop. Got back to the base at 10:30. Riding was a lot of fun, the most fun for a long time. Read until 12:00. B- 12:45 AM

April 3

Got up at 745 this morning. Ate chow and got to theater at 9. There was a fellow from 711 that went down on the Bordoux raid Dec 31. He jumped from a ship with one engine on fire, landed in a farm and near the target. The farmer gave him a suit of clothes + a beret. He started south, by train at times, mostly by foot. He was in France for 2 months, 1 month in hotels in Spain + finally got to Gibraltar + to England by C-47. His talk was very interesting. At 11 I went to radio school + took a very easy test, 1/2 of it and finished it at 1:30. I read after lunch until 2:45 when the crew went out to a ship + had pictures taken by a Public Relations cameraman. This lasted until 4:30. I went back + finished the radio test. Read after supper until 8 when Fred + I went off base on bikes to a pub. Between Fred's beer + my ginger beer we spent an hour + came back in the rain. I thought it was fun but Fred didn't. Standown tomorrow. B- 11:45

April 4

Climbed from bed this morning at 8:00. Briefing at 9. Chased around with Fred until 11 when we had an aircraft rec class. Out of 20 I missed seven. P. Poor. Read after chow until 3 when T.W.G. got a pass for me to go to Ipswich to hunt for a bicycle. I got into town by 5, hunted thru 5 cycle shops: no bikes for sale. Went to show "Kansan" + "The Angel Sisters". Pretty good. I took the 9:15 train to Stowmarket, caught a liberty truck to camp expecting an alert as it was clear outside; but its a standown. Clouding up now. Limey planes are going out tonight. When I got back to the barracks the fellows were eating egg (fresh) sandwiches, cake, coke. A real meal too. There are rumors going around to the effect that we're moving out of E.T.O. soon. I would like to after finishing my tour. We've got to get up at 8 so bed at 12.

April 5

I got up at 8:45, got to briefing just in time. Gene was absent, making T.W.G. mad because Capt. Richards chewed him. Gene got 3 hrs mud detail for being absent from a class yesterday but didn't go + do his duty. Its been raining all day off + on. Played poker from 9:30 till 12:30 lost a little but had a lot of fun. Air Sea Rescue Class at 1330 - 1400. Came back and wrote letters all afternoon. After supper Walt Fleming + I went out the back way + rode around the countryside. Stopped at a pub + had a ginger beer, Walt had a beer. Got back at 9:15. There's an alert on so we'll probably get up early. Mac is on D.N.I.F. because of a bit of sinus trouble. All of us will have trouble clearing our ears tomorrow: we always do after being on the ground for a few days. T.W.G. got the front view pictures of the crew taken at Harvard censored + I gave them to the crew who've been asking for them for the last day. B 1000

[To the Glossary!](#)

April 6

When the C.Q. came in he said that there were hotcakes for breakfast so we piled out of bed + went to the messhall to get some greasy French toast. We came back to the hut until 10 when I had an hour in the Harwell trainer. It was a lot of fun, the ground station was using a bug + was mighty hard to keep up with. Last night at midnight a P.F.F. ship was landing and hit a silver ship on the perimeter track at the end of the runway. The P.F.F. ship slammed on his brakes but skidded. He tried to ground loop it but couldn't. The P.F.F. ship cut all the vertical stab. off, left horiz. was missing 6 ft, the wing just out from no 1 engine was cut off, cutting Tokyo tanks, oxygen leaks all over, the P.F.F. ship was loaded with 500 demo's + one bombardier was injured. Miracle fire didn't start. Aircraft rec class in aft. Bike riding from 6 - 10. Rode 10 miles with Fred + Walt Fleming. B- 11. Standby so far.

The C.Q. came in at 5 to get crew 7 up. They came in at 6 when it was scrubbed. First time c. 7 got up without us.

April 7

I got up at 9:30 this morning. Read until noon. After chow got a pass intending to go to Stowmarket to hunt for a bike but due to transportation difficulties I didn't go as I had to be back by 3 for awards. Played poker from 1230 till 3:15. I recieved an oak leaf cluster. We had a long bull session with Col. Harris in regards to what we wanted to do after our tour was finished, and how we'd like to back to combat if we have to. Col believed most of us would. It seemed that the majority would like to go to

another theater with 447th if they have to go thru another tour; most fellows are really satisfied with this group but tired of E.T.O. Meeting adjourned at 5:30. After supper I read in A.R.C., combat library until 8 when I went to the show. It was a very poor movie so I walked out at 845 + came back to the barracks. T.W.G. says we won't fly in the morning. Standby now. B- 11:00

April 8

I got up at 9 this morning. Crew 7 was called at 5 A.M., and it sure was good to go back to sleep. The 1st time crew 7 got up without us and the first time we ever slept in when the rest of the group went. Cleaned up the barracks until 11:30. I had to fly at 1230 so I ate early. We, T.W.G., Mamlock, Laz + I took 104 to some field near London to pick up Col. Jumper. Five ground pounders went as passengers, most didn't even know what a headset was. 45 min trip down, waited 15 min. I got to look a Spit over, got in cockpit with permission from limey gr crew. A lot of W.A.A.F.'s work around this base. Took off with the Col., a limey wing commander + a group commander who took turns flying as co pilot, Col J was pilot. Flew around for 2 hrs, landed at 4:30. The group bombed Germany an airfield near Holland border. Wrote letters, went to A.R.C. + bed at 10:15. Crew #5 alerted.

April 9

Crew 5 got up at 3, briefing at 4. Sparkman flew as engineer as Mac has been bothered with sinus. We took off at 0800 and started to assemble but due to fog from ground to 8000 ft it was impossible. After we broke thru the fog there was only six ships in the group. Another overcast above us and bad weather ahead of us so Capt. Richards got permission to scrub mission. The group turned back. We hunted for a long time for the field but it wouldn't let us land, told us to go to Horham. We couldn't find Horham so we landed at a P-47 base 20 miles south of Ratt. at 1130. The whole crew ate in officers mess, we felt out of place. T.W.G. + Mamlock shot 5 landings in a Taylor cub. They sure looked funny feeling for the ground on landings. We took off at 3 P.M. for home, landed 20 mins later. 5 fellows bailed out in preference to crash landing with a pilot. Capt Richards crash landed at Honnington. Read from 3 to 11. Pass tomorrow.

[To the Glossary!](#)

April 10

We got up at 7:30 when the C.Q. came around to tell us we'd go on pass at noon. All of us got up, started cleaning up our selves and the barracks. Lt. Wiggie phoned up and got a command car to take the whole crew to Stowmarket. Fred and Mac came later by G.I. truck, the C. car was loaded to the hilt anyway. We took the 1120 train for London, getting there at 1315. The officers got rooms at Regent Palace, we got rooms at the Green Park Hotel, about 4 blocks west of Picadilly Sq. Not a bad place but it is composed of two or different buildings on different levels and interconnected by short arches + stairs. There were few G.I.'s in London, just combat crews and the G.I.'s based in London. I went to a show called "Tender Comrade" -Ginger Rogers; a very good show. The rest of the crew went to a dance hall, drank some, got dates and got to bed from 1 to 3 after walking home. They picked up no Picadilly flak. Bed for me at 12.

April 11

The telephone rang at 9 as Mac had left a request in the lobby to get us up at 9. Mac got up and took a bath, I got up at 9:30. We had chow at 940, tea, toast or buns, dried eggs and fried spuds. Not too bad. Gene, Don + I walked around Hyde Park, St Jame's park until about 2. Afterwards Wiggie + I went to the Regent Palace Men's Hairdresser's. I got a shave + a haircut for a half crown or 50c. After this I went to Rainbow A.R.C. and read until 6. At 6 I had an appointment with the rest of the crew in the grill room. All of us showed up. Laz + Mamlock were 1/2 hr late because they visited McGure who is feeling swell + getting around on crutches O.K. Going home soon. As T.W.G. had reserved a table, he + Wiggie brought girls so we all had a grand time. It was hard for me not to drink beer or liquor as T.W.G. was doing his darndest to get me too. On the way out I got proposals from 3 Picadilly gals. It was a strange experience. Went to another show, read in hotel lounge until 12. B 12:30

April 12

I got up at 8:30. Had breakfast with Mac and Gene. I found out then that Fred, Gene + Don shacked up last night. There were hundreds of girls trying to make easy money last night, altho the price was down to a pound because of the man shortage. From 11 to 3 I was shopping for stuff to send home. Caught the train at 320, got to Ipswich at 5, Stowmarket 6, base at 6:25 by G.I. truck- returning liberty run trucks. B. Hill came back from the hospital. Mon, and from an interview with a nurse up there, there are 80,000 professional prostitutes, registered and they have to pass inspection at health office each week; ones that don't have some sort of band attached to one leg. On top of these there are the innocent "occasional's". I wish the fellows hadn't gone out with the "flak" but its their own lives. Fred is very disgusted with himself I believe. The majority of the crew started drinking at supper + kept up most of the night. Now the fellows Gene, Don + Fred are wondering or worrying. T.W.G. + officers got 2 sheets, etc, (gloves + tie for me) for each E.M. It sure is nice of them. B 140

Almost every outfit in E.T.O. is restricted to base except combat crews. I think it's because of the pending invasion

April 13

The C.Q. came in at 5:45 AM for a mission. Briefing at 7, T.O. at 7:55 for Augsburg Germany. English coast out 12:12 at 20000 ft. A few flak bursts by Brussels Belgium, no more until target. The target was a Mess. factory and airport. We were carrying 42 inc, 20 dropped at IP because Wiggie pulled a boner. We were within sight of Switzerland on the other side of Lake Constance a few minutes before I.P. The Alps were covered with snow, very rugged + beautiful. At the target the flak was very heavy + accurate; holes in both wings + vertical stabilizer. We flew lead, of low sq. in a composite group. The 94th lead, 385 high. Very good navigation, missed most flak areas. No flak to speak of on the way back. IP at 1355 - bombs away - 1408, enemy coast out 1632. The group lost 4 ships, 5 went to Switz, 1 crash landed in S. England, killing 4 crew members. Landed 1720 B 1025

[green ink on onionskin paper]

April 13 1944 Dear Mom and Dad:

Your letter mailed Mar. 22 got here yesterday. I'm glad to hear everything's O.K. and of the new addition to the family I guess I'm an uncle two times now huh? I'd sure like to see all the little tykes around home now, there must be a flock of them when a few neighbor kids come around.

In your next letter please include the name of those folks that live across the road and their telephone number. In the far future I might drop into town and might want to get in touch with you by phone.

My crew had a pass a few days ago; we went into London and spent 2 days there. We had a grand time, slept in a swanky hotel and all that but were we glad to get back to camp and get a few decent meals to eat. Tea and rolls don't fill me up enough for breakfast. There isn't jam or very much butter even. We got back in time to get in on the next mission which was over Germany yesterday. So we got to sleep in today, I didn't get up until noon. After a mission it sure is hard to get out of bed But after 12 hours of sleep and the rest of the guys threatening to roll me out, I got up gracefully + of my own accord. There are some awful early birds in this hut, tho, or else they have to have their breakfast. Me, I can miss a meal almost anytime without anything serious happening. But to here some of these guys talk it would kill them to miss a meal, maybe it would.

How is my mail getting to you? Some of your letters get here in 2 weeks, once in a while a heck of a lot longer. The "V" mail is no faster than any of the other methods and you can write a lot more in an airmail letter.

This afternoon when the coke truck came we decided to have a fire, almost a novelty around this hut lately as we are keep too busy to keep one. We put some black powder and stuff from flares we'd picked up around here in the bottom, kindling, then coke and on top poured a lot (1/2 cup) of lighter fluid. The results-- we've never had such a good fire in such a short time with so much smoke in our lives. But it was exciting to watch too. And we've never had so much fun around here for ages.

British and American pursuit ships are always buzzing our field, sometimes within 15 feet of the runways, I guess it's to help us along in our aircraft recognition. Today my pilot took some us and returned the compliment. He did a good job too. I wish you could have seen us. The Limey's seldom see such a big ship out buzzing them and they were all eyes, we could see them from where we were.

If you get some beef cattle for me to raise, and if there is some land to raise vegetables on we'd be sitting on the top in case of a big depression after the war. Fruit for desert, but the darned beef would get tiresome. Please keep a good start for various other animals if a depression starts. Rabbit is the only unrationed meat over here besides fish. On the way to London the other day I saw 50-60 rabbits in a field. That's usually what we eat in town on passes. They are that plentiful.

I guess I'll shut up as it's getting kind of late. Write soon. Have you got that request for a 5 lb package of candy yet?

Love Harley

[To the Glossary!](#)

April 14

I got up at 1115 this morning. That sack sure was nice to stay in. On the way back from chow I stopped in officer's barracks with Fred. Mamlock tells me I'm supposed to check out R.O.'s during the afternoon's practice mission. I hurry down to briefing room and get my stuff + go out to "Butch II"; 092. T.W.G. pilot, Laz as Co pilot, me as R.O. + N. There were 2 "S" box boys and a turret specialist on board. T.O. 0200, PM buzzed a couple Limey fields, went to altitude 19000 ft for a half an hour and on the way down I asked T.W.G. for some stick time. He says O.K. I fly around for about 30 minutes. It sure is fun to have the controls for such a big baby, even if you don't know what to do with the rudder peddals throttles, prop pitch and turbo controls. We were buzzing + diving thro clouds + having a grand time in general. Landed at 430, ate supper, came back and wrote letters. Built a fire with 1/2 cup lighter fluid powder + 12 flares, a hell of a lot of smoke and burnt my blanket 4 ft away from the stove. B
11:30 Standown

April 15
Saturday

Got up at 0745 this morning, had breakfast, got to briefing at 9 at the theater with the rest of the crew. We had armament maintainance 10 -12, we signed in and came back to the barracks to clean up for inspection. After this I read until about 1:30 and there were two classes 2:30 - 4:30. It's hard for me to get down to something to do, I'm sort of restless. After supper I built a fire, and for an hour fanned it and tried to get it going. Finally the barracks got warmed up for the first time today. Donnelly day before yesterday after landing on his final mission was presented by Col. Harris a diploma entitling him to join the "Lucky Bastard's Club". It was quite a ceremony, we all got a great kick out of it. I wrote a letter to Tad and got ready for bed. There might be a mission tomorrow. Standby. B- 10:30

April 16

I climbed out of bed at 945. There was awarding of medals at 1030. Didn't get anything. After lunch I played cards most of the afternoon, went out to the hardstand on M.D.'s bike to get some oil to start the fire. Read for a while Chicken for supper. A nice meal. Played blackjack from 8 - 12 after waiting for an hour in the theater for the show but they couldn't get the equipment fixed. No we have to go six missions for an air medal. B- 12 midnight. Standown tonight.

April 17

I got up at 945 this morning, went to theater at 10 to hear of a practice mission at 1300, ground school schedule for afternoon. Went to dinner, played bridge with M.D. + Fred until 3, when we three went down and took a shower and got cleaned up. I took in a show at 6, afterwards read for a half an hour in the combat library. Came back and did some odd jobs, diary etc + hit the hay. Alert tomorrow. B-9:30

The majority of English people seem to worship money. The girls will do anything for a price. Now the price is down to shillings in London because most G.I.'s are restricted to their base, and there is a definite man shortage. Most of the G.I.'s in town live with girls for months. If a girl is a mistress to some G.I. she's not ashamed, it's a common thing here because a divorce is virtually impossible to obtain + nature is nature I guess if the customs aren't very strict as in England.

April 18

Climbed out of bed at 5 for a mission. We had hard boiled eggs that were raw, spuds sausage + mush for breakfast. Briefing at 6:15, we were spares so we got all ready + waited. Another crew came + took our ship + took off at 9:45. We piled into a truck and came back to briefing room + changed. Capt Richards came in + told us we were to go as soon as possible in 07052, a new ship "Paper Doll No 2". T.O. at 1010, caught up with composite group 1/2 hr from enemy coast. Flying no. 7 lead sq. until IP then no 5. There was a front around Berlin + the target: we circled B. for an hour + finally dropped our 6x500's incendiaries + 6x100 demo's on an innocent little town. Strewed incendiaries from one end of the town to another. Landed 1830. 3 ships hit by air to air bombing from our own ships. Capt. Dalzell is missing; flying in a P.F.F. ship. One ship landed with a 500 inc. in wing.

April 19

Got up at 1:25 AM this morning for a mission. We had eggs bacon hotcakes butter syrup + mush A swell breakfast. Briefing at 2:45, T.O. at 6:30. After taking off with a severe crosswind and crossing from one side to another on the runway we got off in 866 with a lot of trouble. Everything went as usual until 8 when no#1 engine lost an oil ring + started throwing oil. T.W.G. dropped out of formation feathered engine + went over field to get permission to drop bombs in ocean. We dropped all of them, one exploded even tho it was unarmed. Came back, slept all afternoon, went to "Jane Eyre" show + bed. Standby so far. B 9:15.

April 20

I got up at 0825 this nice bright morning. We were put on alert at 0800. Read and cleaned up until noon, had chow. Gunners briefing at 12:30. After getting equipment we went out to the ship 724 and fooled around until 1635 when we took off. I listened to C.B.S. or N.B.C. programs from New York City. It's nice to hear Yanks talk + music. It came in very clear with plenty of volume. We bombed Noyal target no 74 with 12x500's. The bombs we dropped today are some especially powerful. We had good fighter protection, heavy accurate flak for a few minutes, minor damage. Bombed from 19,500 ft. Came back + landed at 2115. Lt. Laz didn't go, Wiggie was navigator, Harris toggelier, some guy for ball turret. Cleaned guns, ate chow, hit the hay 11:30. Alerted.

April 21

We got up at 730, went to chow and were told to be in the area for further developments. Briefing at 1030 for gunners. While I was in radio briefing in navigators briefing room there was a big explosion that shook the whole building and dropped several bricks to the floor. Going to the window there was a big column of smoke out by hardstand 12. T.O. at 1400, flying no 6, low sq. low group. Just as we caught up to the group the mission was cancelled. T.W.G. headed for the field and we were the 2nd ones to land. at 16:30. After that big explosion the moral dropped 99%. It was awful. From appearances, the gasoline caught on fire while refueling. Some of 100 lb bombs didn't explode. It killed 14 men. One guy was standing under wing when the ship exploded, it tossed him into a ditch 25 ft away + broke his leg. He's almost O.K. We were to bomb a synthetic gasoline factory near Leipzig G. Went to show "Song of Bernadette". B- 10:00

[To the Glossary!](#)

Mission Memories

Our group received recall orders, after climbing to 27,000 ft trying to get up over some bad weather. Two wings got the recall order, and in order to come back, for some fool reason they turned into each other. Two of the big fortresses right behind us collided, and Dill had a ringside seat for the accident. On that mission two engines on the same side had to be shut down, one with a run away governor, the other having lost oil pressure. The flying forts can fly on two engines, if both of the props are feathered and one engine on each side is operative. So with one engine gone, and the other engine on that side feathered the ship could not fly for long. It kept losing altitude, even after we tossed all nonessential items overboard. Dropped our bombs into the North Sea, still losing altitude. That was when Dill did not answer the crew check. Gene Kealer went back to give him artificial respiration, then I did. I was called up front to give position reports to the home base, since our ship might not make it back to England and we might have to ditch. The navigator could not tell us if we would make it back to the nearest base or not. It was a time of testing for me, the first time my work as a radio operator was of deadly importance to us. If I could get in contact with the home base and send position reports, the British air sea rescue boats might be close to us when we ditched in the ocean. After several position reports, it was just a matter of waiting and hoping. Then the ball turret gunner told us that a PBV was down below us, trying to keep up. Its 90 to 100 mile an hour top speed just about matched our 100 mile an hour limping along with two engines out. About the time we got low enough to see the waves lapping in the wind below us, our altitude was about 50 ft. When we arrived at the shore of England, there was an airbase right there for us to land on. Looking back on this trying time, the pilot of course headed the plane to this airbase, since we could have gone no further anyway, and had asked for landing priority and everything was cleared to let us land. The crew stayed at that airbase for a day or so, while our crewchief from Rattlesden and other mechanics came with two new engines, and installed them.

[To the Glossary!](#)

Another time we had a sort of exciting time. We took off for a mission, the weather turned bad, and we were recalled. There was a solid bank of clouds below us when we were flying around, trying to find a way to land thru the clouds. We must have flown around for some time, finally the pilot found a hole in the clouds, a small hole. We had already dumped the bomb load into the North Sea, so the ship wasn't too heavy. He tipped the plane on one wing, spiraled down thru the hole and came out under the clouds with maybe a 1000 ft ceiling. There was a small pursuit plane airbase used by the British. Of course, a big B17 had never landed on the field before, just pursuit planes. The runway was about 3,000 ft to 4,500 ft long. B17 runways are 8,000ft long or more. After a circle around the area, TWG came in to land. When the big ship touched down the main landing gear was about 10 ft from the end of the runway and the tail touched down in the grass before the cement began. The brakes were applied as soon as all the wheels were on the ground, and when we got to the end of the runway we were still going about 35 miles an hour. We sort of skidded around the corner along the perimeter track to a slow lumbering crawl to where we were told to park the ship. We had a pleasant evening and night with the

British airmen. Next morning after gassing up on British fuel, we got ready to take off at the extreme end of the runway. At full throttles and full brakes until the engines were really screaming, we jumped ahead when the brakes were released. We had about 10 ft elevation when the far end of the runway slipped below us. We were back home to Rattlesden in short order, happy to be back.

If the radio operator was on the ball, ditching in the North Sea could be a casual affair. One of the crews in our Nissen hut had ditched three times, and usually had stepped off the wing of the B-17 directly into the air sea rescue boat. When picked up by air sea rescue the men would be given nice warm socks and a woolen sweater which were the envy of the guys in the Nissen hut.

At that time, the B-17 was perhaps the best ship to ditch in, if you had to ditch. If there were no big holes in the main gas tanks from 20mm cannon shells or flak damage, the B-17 would stay afloat for a half hour or so, especially if the main gas tanks were almost empty. But B-17's usually stayed afloat until all the crew got out into rubber rafts or the air sea rescue boats. The other heavy bomber, the B-24, had its fuselage below the main wing. Ditching this ship was an entirely different matter. It was dangerous because it broke up more often, and often only about half of the crew could be saved.

Looking back on many of my experiences in England flying combat, we seemed to never have faced up to the odds of dying. It was sort of a psychological defense to not think about it. Our ships were almost never actually fired on by German pursuit ships. One of the two ships I was on had one bullet hole in it, though. On a bomb run the bomb bays were open and a Me 210 came up thru the clouds just below us. He was surprised and fired a burst of 20mm cannon at us. We got one hole in the bomb bay, from the inside out.

Many times we had "ring side seats" watching groups or wings near us being attacked by fighters. We used to count the parachutes that would open after a big B-17 was hit seriously and began to go down. Of course, if it was in a spin and going straight down the centrifugal force would keep most of the crew from saving themselves. Sometimes only one or two would get out. Anti aircraft fire was another matter. On some missions, it would burst at an altitude several thousand feet below us, other times it would burst among the formations. Sometimes shrapnel would sound like gravel on a tin roof as it would hit the non-vital areas of the ship. The gas tanks were self sealing, and they could seal themselves if the holes from flak or cannon fire were not too big. A hole of 2" dia. might seal itself but still leak a little. Many times our ship would come back home leaking fuel like a sieve. We'd land and pull off the runway as soon as we could, and walk away from it, or run, fearing that it might catch on fire.

One time the left waist gunner, Fred Hawley, went as a toggelier on another ship. Over the target area, the plane was hit near the end of the bomb bays with a direct burst from the standard 88mm flak cannon. All the beams around the bomb bays were broken. Only the stringers along the top of the fuselage were intact. The radio room floor was gone-the radio operator was the only person killed. The plane came back with the ball turret guns locked in down position, luckily too, that way the ball gunner could get out. When the plane landed, it would have sagged to the runway, broken in the middle if it had not been for the ball turret being ground off as the ship landed. Oh yes, a 500 lb bomb had been tossed off the bomb racks out thru the side of the bomb bays by the blast, but it didn't go off. No other

ship except a B-17 could have come back with such damage.

Prison Camp

Looking back on my experiences of 43-45, I'm not sure I remember correctly all what happened, but my feelings are still vivid. This next chapter is related to prison camp experiences.

The day I was shot down, the mission was a short one. We didn't take off until 1pm or so. We were supposed to bomb railroads at the north end of the Ruhr valley. Everything went normally until after bombs were dropped, then a burst went off just under the nose of the ship punching holes in the plexiglass nose. We had time for a crew check, and there were instruments from the panel on the pilots lap, I remember. Then another few seconds, and a blast from an 88 went thru our right wing punching a big hole. Luckily the round exploded a few hundred feet above us- not on contact as it was designed to do. We had time for another crew check, all were ok. Then a few seconds later, a third blast in the fuel streaming out below us set us on fire. The abandon ship bell rang, the pilot pulled out from the formation, and he held the ship steady while we all got out. Then the ship went on automatic pilot, and he got out too. When I left, I hooked on my chest chute to the chute harness I wore all the time, ran back to the waist door and dove out. I must have pulled the ripcord immediately, since when I came to I was floating down, with a genuine birdseye view of everything below. It seemed like an eternity floating down. I could see a man on a bicycle pedaling along the country road below me, trying to be close to where I would land. Just before I landed, I heard a machine gun blast. I looked up and there were a few holes in the parachute canopy. Bitter people! Didn't blame them.

[Twenty- five or so years after the war, Harley was an agricultural missionary in Thailand where he met a German dairy expert. After several months they got to know each other well enough to broach the subject of what they each had done during the war. It turned out that the German man had been an anti-aircraft gunner on an 88mm gun stationed outside Hamm, Germany from the fall of 1943 through summer of 1944...]

All of the crew were picked up over an area about 20 miles long. We all were collected in a jail, put aboard trucks that took us to a railroad center. Several times the guards protected us against angry civilians. During that first night, I noticed that we were riding in a Model A Ford Truck with a big tank on the left side of it where some kind of gas was produced from charcoal or burning wood to power the engine with.

A few days later, we were in an interrogation center near Frankfurt-on-the-Marne. Then after a few more days in cattle cars we were in our permanent camp about 4 km above Krems, Austria. The officers went to a prison camp in Northern Germany someplace. It was weeks after being captured before I stopped hoping that it was all a dream, and that I'd wake up back in Rattlesden.

It might have been about 1 May when we enlisted men arrived at the prison camp near Krems, Austria, about 35 km west of Vienna, on the Danube River. In this prison camp were about 4,200 American non-commissioned officers. In each of 3 or 4 large compounds there were four barracks, each end of which had bunks for 150 men, with a washroom in the middle. At night when we could not go outside, we

used some of the washroom drains for urinals. On the south side of us were other compounds of Polish, French and other nationalities. Often a man from a nearby compound would begin talking to us in some foreign language. In short order some of our group would come who could understand him, be it Czech, Polish, French, Russian or whatever. This emphasized what a mixture of cultures were in our American group of prisoners of war.

Some of the barrack spaces were not used for living space. We had one of the barrack halves for holding classes. Skilled men who had been teachers or instructors in civilian life taught classes. We even had one superintendent of schools teaching. To keep me busy, and probably more healthy emotionally, I went to classes most of the time, every morning, 6 days a week.

I took classes in practical home wiring, Spanish, German, and other subjects. Afternoon and evenings I walked, played bridge, attended musicals and went to some of the Broadway plays put on by the group of actors (occupying their own half of a barracks), and got into all kinds of discussion groups. My time in prison was a time of generally good morale, and I gained much from the many discussions which were common. Religion, philosophy of life, how to get along with others and the purpose of life were a few of the topics I gained much from. It was during this time that I decided I wanted to go to University, probably since the men I respected were university students or graduates.

My main hobby at that time was playing Bridge: I did become one of the most desirable partners to play with. We had a library of books provided by YMCA of Switzerland, which had about 2-3,000 books. I think while in prison camp I read most of the classics like Dickens, Shakespeare, etc. So many other men wanted to check books out that we could only have them for about 4 days, so we had to read them quickly. I used one of the 2 post cards given to me each month to write home, the other to write to YMCA and request books on agriculture. When I finished reading them, I donated them to the library, as everybody else did. Musical, musical instruments and printed plays also came from Switzerland. So we had plenty to do, if we wanted to keep busy. Looking back on some of the men and how they got thru the time in prison camp, I think playing cards and smoking wasn't too good for them, especially all day and every day. At that time, I also sang in the protestant choir in church. It was conducted by a Catholic Priest who followed the army manual for Protestant services. Our choir sang the "Haleluia Chorus" Christmas Eve and was broadcast over the speakers we had in each of the barracks by then.

To the Glossary!

As POWs, we got the equivalent of a German non-commissioned officer's monthly salary (on paper, anyway) with which we could rent a projector and certain movies from the Germans, buy supplies for putting on stage plays, pens and pencils and paper, and many other things we thought were important. Some things' availability was restricted, because they couldn't be anything which the guards thought might be used in a war-like way. Also, the war the Germans were conducting made a lot of supplies scarce.

Most of the weeks we got a Red Cross food parcel. I think that the Germans might have put the railroad cars carrying our food parcels to the various camps and bearing the Red Cross in the middle of railroad cars carrying strategic goods, since sometimes we received food parcels with slight shrapnel damage.

The Germans probably used the parcels that were damaged more severely.

Many of the items in it were from the US Army Food stores, sent with the help of the US Army. Each food parcel was about two times the volume of a shoe box. We'd line up by barracks, generally on Saturday, and receive our parcel. The Germans would stab each canned item with a bayonet so it would spoil soon, in order to prevent us from saving up food to escape. The contents were ideal: dried milk, semi sweet chocolate bar, some sugar, liver paste, spam, cheese, whole wheat crackers and a few other items such as 6 packs of cigarettes. I always traded my cigarettes for another package of cheese. Our medium of exchange was usually packs of cigarets. We maintained health with these food parcels and with the hot water and raw vegetables that were provided by the Germans. Our daily ration of bread was very black, and tasted sour when we first got to the prison camp. I got to like the taste pretty quickly. Perhaps once a week we did get a very small ration of meat, about 30 grams. Often it was about the size of a tablespoon or so. In time I got very hungry for meat, and caught myself looking with anticipation at a cat wandering by but some other man got to it first.

Some of the men had strong scissors which we used for tin snips to cut up some of the larger cans in the food parcels. With the beads cut off the top and bottom, the tin was flattened out and crimped together with others so we could make little stoves for heating our coffee and milk. Usually we'd have two little compartments on each side of a simple oven so we could "bake" cakes made of shredded chocolate, cracker crumbs, milk powder and sugar. We always shared food preparation with a friend- I shared with Mac, the former flight engineer of our crew. With careful use and sharing with others, the cardboard that the food parcels came in was enough fuel to cook or heat our food for one week.

All of us enjoyed making problems for our guards, who were Austrians (mostly men too old to be soldiers on active duty). When someone was returned from trying to escape and was sentenced to 21 days in solitary and bread and water, we felt that the sentence was too severe. All of us would get orders from the camp commander of the POWs to pull a slowdown. We would not get up to go out to roll call in the morning. Our kind old Austrian guard would have to wake each of us up and escort us out to the open place for roll call- 150 of us! Of course after too much provocation, he'd draw his pistol, and then we would not cause any more trouble, since he was MAD. But that only happened when too many of us had to be escorted out to the area for roll call, and then some would duck back into the barracks and jump into bed when he was occupied escorting others out.

One time during the summer an American POW - we never learned his name- in a camp up in Germany was just doing his duty as he saw it: he was forever escaping. After many near successes, his biggest problem was getting across national borders, where he was always caught. The Germans probably admired him, since they admired those who did their duty as soldiers, no matter what. The Jerries decided to move him to a prison camp in Bulgaria, far from any national borders he could cross to freedom. He and three guards were on the train coming through Krems, and they had no money to buy a noon meal for him or themselves. They decided to come to our camp to get a meal. The American was escorted into a barracks, and was given something to eat. He got up to leave with his guards, and at the door, said, "Just a second, I forgot my jacket" and went back in, and was never seen again.

The guards were frantic and furious. Within an hour the POW Camp commander, a German, had us all

out in the field for identity checks, comparing our POW dog tags with our pictures on their records. While we were all out in the field, other guards checked the latrines and the attics of the barracks. Even in the middle of all this we still gave the guards problems. Once when they paused for lunch they left several hammers and a ladder, which promptly disappeared. The ladder was reduced to splinters suitable for our little stoves in about 10 minutes

The next day things got more exciting: the Gestapo showed up, very business like, with the skull and crossbones on their lapels. We didn't fool around at all, we followed instructions and kept quiet unless spoken to. Inspections and searches went on for three days, but the man was never found. As far as I know, the end result of the search was two dead police dogs that were brought to smell out the missing man, fierce dogs, trained to kill. They got into a fight and were so badly injured they died.

I never took an active part in all these activities, I was just a bystander who enjoyed watching who did what to who. I would participate in some activities, if I had enough company. I did on occasion join groups of men who would sit leaning on a post. One of the men would be working a saw behind his back until the post would barely stand up. Then during the change of guards, he'd give it a little nudge, and carry it into the barracks to be splintered up for fuel for cooking.

Besides "borrowing" anything we could get our hands on, for a while we got supplies thru the mail and care packages, especially from the Swiss YMCA. The guards always suspected the British prisoners of receiving things they shouldn't have, so they went thru all the things the Englishmen got very carefully. The Americans didn't have that reputation at first so for a long time we were getting things like cameras, tools, special foods and other things useful for escape attempts.

In the year or so I was in POW camp, the only people killed were those who went stir crazy, and were not responsible for their actions. There was a warning wire about 8 ft from the fence, and if a person crossed the warning wire, he could be shot, according to the rules of the camp. Some were. The elected camp leaders would complain to the Red Cross officials who came to check on our conditions every 6 months or so. The complaints were often limited to the fact that the Germans forced the non-commissioned officers to work, which was against the Geneva Convention. Of course this was related to the Germans finding tunnels that someone had dug trying to escape. The Germans would force the first men they could find, at gun point, to fill up the tunnels.

We had regular news from radios hidden from our guards. The POWs in the compound next to us, Polish and other nationalities, would go out on work parties, working for the nearby farmers whose products were needed for the war effort. They would be given, or they would steal, old radios which when tossed across the fence to us were worth quite a few cigarettes. The more skilled radio men in our camp would use the parts to make radios to get the news. Where they hid the radios, I don't know, but we had the news every day. One of the POWs would come around every day and read the latest news while a lookout would warn us if a guard was coming. Every month or so, we would have to go out to the roll call area, and the guards would go through everything in our barracks looking for the radios, or perhaps just making it a little miserable for us. After the Invasion started, D-Day, in June 44, the news was more exciting. About 6 months after the invasion, we had a big map on the wall with a red string where our news sources said the Allied troops were, and a blue string where the German broadcasters

said we were. The guards would come up and look at the map and walk away shaking their heads. In early April 45, the Russian army was getting close to Vienna. Our guards knew from rumors that if the Russians took over a German POW camp, the guards would all be shot and the prisoners would be turned loose to find their own way to friendly armies. We were told to take only the barest essentials, a few extra clothes, perhaps butter (since for its weight it had the most calories) and be ready to march out to the West. We walked 180 km in about 20 days, sleeping in farmers' big barns at night. We stole any food we could lay our hands on, including wandering piglets, onions hanging drying in the barn rafters, loose chickens etc. One night, or late evening, I crawled into a farm house basement to liberate some potatoes. They sure tasted good raw, or baked in the coals of a fire that night. One time, for several days all I had was dandelion greens, boiled. Better than nothing. During this hike, the Red Cross officials did not know exactly where we were. We did not get food parcels often and it was hard to walk without enough food. But in spite of everything, we had more food than our guards had to eat. One time we received half of a French Red Cross food parcel- honey cake, marmalade, and other rich foods.

[To the Glossary!](#)

The large number of POWs were kept in groups of 300. We must have really raised havoc with the farmers in whose barns we stayed each night. We kept to the back roads, climbed many hills and went thru many picturesque villages. 4-5 times we passed German refugees who were fleeing from the American Army coming from the west. First there would be a big army truck, often a Studebaker truck probably liberated from the Russian army, or perhaps captured from the Allies. Then a nice car loaded down with personal belongings, then a smaller car, loaded too. A wagon might be next, then a small cart, and several times the long train of vehicles, all being towed by the army truck at the head of the caravan would be ended by a loaded baby carriage, taking advantage of the free tow. You could hear the army truck coming, roaring along in low range up a hill pulling all those vehicles behind it. Yes, we found some interesting piles when they went down hill, since some didn't have brakes. To avoid trouble when we came to Lintz, Austria, we had to get up and start hiking early in the morning to get thru the town before many of the citizens got up. After 18 days of hiking, we finally stopped in a big woods, where the Inn River and the Danube meet. We might have been camped there for 5-6 days. We had to make our own shelter to keep the rain off, peeling bark off small trees to make shingles to lay on a frame over us. We had one blanket each, and by doubling up and putting pine needle mats under us, we didn't do too badly.

One morning about 8am when we were just beginning to stir, we heard a clankedy clank and a tank with a big white star on its side came into the woods. We could see the periscope looking around. Then a hatch opened, a helmet came up, and we heard the GI ask, "What the hell you guys doing here?" It was one of the lead tanks of Patton's Tank Battalion. A couple of days, really hard to take came next. Then Army trucks came to take us to a German air base nearby, where old faithful C 47's took us to a field hospital near Cherbourg, France, for physical check ups. We got a lot of nice food and snacks, since our bodies couldn't take much for each meal.

T/Sgt. Harley H. Tuck
Route 7 Box 170
Olympia Washington

Dear Folks: May 12, 1945

I'm now in La Harve, France, or anyway, in a P.O.W. center near that city. I've been here for 2 1/2 days, doing not a thing except eating and sleeping. All of us ex-Kreiggies (ex P.O.W.'s from German word Kriegsgefangenen meaning prisoner of war) are eating to our hearts content, often I'm not hungry when going up to the messhall but it looks good so in I go. The food is plain, no spices, but very good and almost every meal I have trouble packing what little the K.P.'s give me. It is, I bet, hard for you to believe how good we feel to be back on G.I. grub again.

Almost all the returning ex- P.O.W's are going through this base. As soon as my group recieves clothes, a shot in the arm, and some paper work completed, we will come home on the first returning convoy available. In short order, so the officers here tell us, we are shipped from New York to the nearest Army base near home, Ft. Lewis in my case, from where we get 60 day furloughs. It sounds too good to be true. That is the reason our return address is our home address.

As you probably thought after reading my letter from Branau, I was feeling kind of rough. Eating concentrated "K" + "C" rations for 4 days after the black bread + Jerry soup + Red Cross food parcels of a year, was mighty hard on digestive systems, + I was half sick at the time. We flew from an airfield near Branau (which

is Hitler's birth place on the	160	
Inn River on the boundary between	3	
Austria and Germany)	----	160 MPH
in C-47's 25 men to the ship.		480

None of us got air sick, it's a wonder I believe. It took 3 hrs to get here, about 480 miles. The best deal of all was we got hot coffee and donuts just after getting out, before leaving the airfield. On the base here, I've met my (ex) operations officer who went down 4 days before my crew did, + the old buddy of Lt. Gilleran, my pilot. He is a swell fellow, Captain bars + all. The night we got here my engineer + I saw him walk by + after flagging him down, he recognized us + brought us up to date on all the news. My pilot hasn't come in camp yet, but I've been to visit the navigator, Lt. Lazarus, + haven't found Bomb. + Co pilot, but they are in camp someplace.

After talking to some of the P.O.W.'s here, my tale of woe: 18 days march of +-200 miles, sleeping outside most of the time, in barns several nights, 1/10 loaf black bread + thin barley soup every other day or so, 1 French Red Cross parcel after about 10 days march etc etc far into the night, is a picnic. Compared to some of the men's trips. One outfit marched for 90 days, from a camp on the Baltic to Munich, zig zagging west + east as the doings on the western + eastern fronts progressed. The Jerries

marched them at night. Such is life. It did my heart good to see some of the Jerries that had guarded us on our march working on a pontoon bridge under G.I. supervision, before leaving Branau.

It's 8 P.M.- just got back from a trip to the mess hall, got 1/2 canteen cup of apple sauce + a hunk of bread + jam. The only thing wrong with this grub here is that there isn't enough fruit- just wait till I get back home. If I can't get enough fruit, I'll plant bearing trees in the front yard.

Oh, yes, if I get a discharge soon, I'll head for the agriculture school in Pullman + take a course specilaizing in fruit raizing + any other sideline like beef cattle hogs etc. that would come in handy. Under G.I. Bill of Rights, the government will pay tuition + expenses for a veteran's education to the tune of \$500 a year for tuition + school expenses, \$50 a year for a single man's living expenses. That is an opportunity not to miss. Do you know what Tad + Grover plan to do after the war? As yet, we've recieved no definite information on what will happen when we report back to the Army after furloughs. Some fellows are bound to be discharged because of poor health, but I don't believe I'll be discharged unless they get rid of all ex-P.O.W.'s. Who knows? There's not much use writing, as they say we might beat our letters home. When I get in the vicinity of Tacoma, the 1st thing I'll do is go to the Ordinance plant. where Pop works, wait + come home with him or grab the car + high tail it home. See you then. Say hello to everybody!

Love

Harley (over)

[To the Glossary!](#)

May 13, Sunday 10 A.M.

There is still not much activity around here. For breakfast I had stewed prunes + peaches, cream of wheat, scrambled dried eggs, bread + apricot marmalade. What a meal.

Dear Mom: As today is Mother's Day I wish you all the happiness in the world. I hope everything is fine at home and everybody is as well as I am or better. Maybe next year on Mother's Day, all of us boys can be home with you and Pop,- how many are home now? More than a year ago, back at England, I ordered some flowers to be sent for Mother's Day, and a good month ahead of time. Did you get them?

My letter is jumping from one train of thought to another, but I can't help it. It has taken me an hour to write the above. Have my personal belonging been shipped home from England?, along with some money I had too. Some of the men from the 447th in Stalag XVII B recieved letters from the outfit informing them that their stuff + money had been sent home. But what's worrying me more than anything else, is, my diary that I kept from the time leaving staging area U.S.A. until shot down. I had all my missions, daily life ETC. Has it turned up? I'll chase it to the end of time if necessary, to get it. Mom, do you remember when I came home on furlough, asking me to keep a diary? I started it because you asked me to, but afterwards I got interested + used it for reference a lot, finally it contained so

much interesting + useful information on all of my activities, etc. that I couldn't think of stopping it, altho several times I was 2- 5 days behind. One of the men in my hut said he'd take care of it + send it home for me, but he went down 2 days after we went down, so he might not have had time to. It is probably in Wash-D.C. someplace now.

I recieved that parcel you sent me. Everything in it was very useful. I took all the candy underwear + sox on the little hike.

Here it is, now, almost lunch time (1:00), nothing to write about, + plenty of paper left. I'll write every chance I get + will probably be home soon

Love

Harley

Then we were placed on the very first Liberty troop ship going back to the US after the war ended (which was while we were waiting in the woods for trucks to take us to the planes.) [contents in parentheses not clear -ed] With our small partial payment of back salary due us, the troop ship was a nice change. I ate about 4 candy bars every day on the trip. I got all teary eyed when the Statue of Liberty came into sight. In Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, we got another partial pay and went through the necessary administrative procedures to process our return. Then I got on a train that took my group to Fort Lewis, Washington. We arrived very early in the morning, and by 3 pm we were ready to go home, with our orders being "Temporary Duty at Home". This was because we had all the leave time we accrued while we were POW's still coming to us. Dad was there waiting for me when it came time to leave.

As this is written May 21 and 22, 1987, I'm sure I've forgotten much, and perhaps not remembered correctly some experiences. These experiences were helpful in making me more mature, and it was during this time that my interest in a university education got a start, as well as an interest in the Protestant Church, an interest in sociology, including group dynamics etc. All in all, these experiences in World War 2 were important in helping me develop to the extent that I have. It wasn't a very painful experience, but is one that I'd like to share with my family and friends.

End of Diary

HT's Photos

The Army Air Corps had a practice of allowing air crew access to cameras and high quality film to take pictures around the base and on missions. The Army photo labs developed the film and gave the pictures to the photographer, keeping copies for Intelligence.

Jack (Walt?) Fleming was one such airman-photographer. "On a training flight in the US before we went overseas, he did pass out from lack of oxygen. He was using a little portable bottle and it was empty, he passed out, but was closest to me, so I let him use my [oxygen mask] system alternatively, until he came to; while flying at high altitude you can die in a few minutes with no O2! He felt as if I'd saved his life. Another crew member did the same for me at another time, no big deal. " The pictures below were mostly taken by Walt Fleming and given to Harley Tuck.

Several years ago Harley was asked about the photographs that had been with his other war stuff ("maybe it'll jog your memory...").

He responded:

"It sure is good news about those pictures, I thought they had been lost for good..."



Niece and Nephew of Fred Hawley; HT and Fred visited Fred's relatives on a pass.



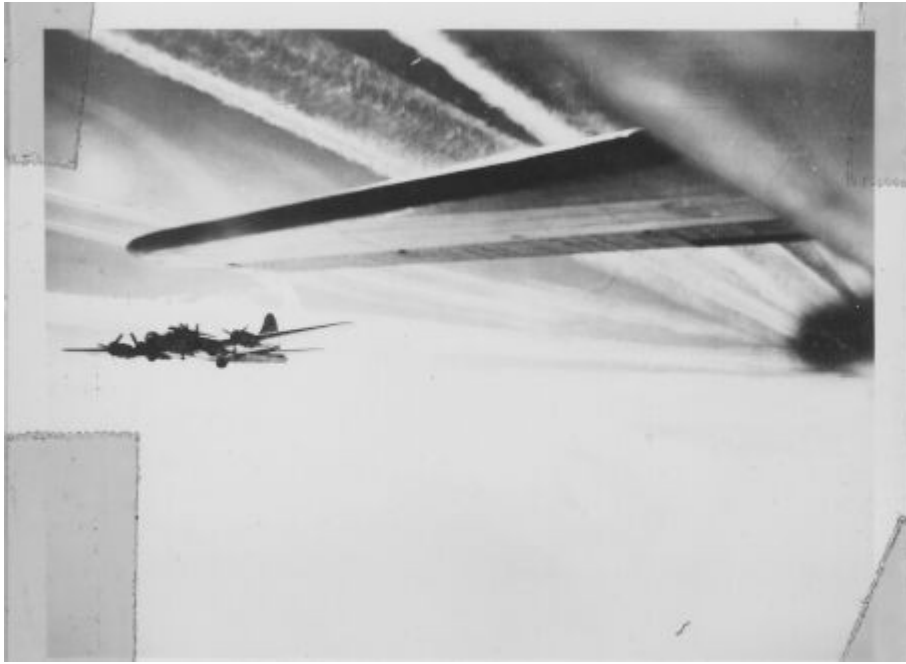
"Left side of a B-17 fuselage from behind the wing, with the skin erupted with bullet holes above the wing's trailing edge, and a flap of skin folded up right about where the radio room is- that was a plane that came back from a mission after a direct hit by an 88mm flak gun. Fred T. Hawley was toggelier on that ship. Radio operator was killed, no floor from the ball turret to the front of the bomb bay. The two waist gunners and ball gunner and tail gunner had to stand in the waist for the landing. At the time the shell hit, the ball turret was pointing straight down, so the gunner could get out ok, but the strong parts of the fuselage was the lower part, all blown away by the direct hit. The machine gun barrels were ground off as the ship landed, keeping the ship from buckling down and caving in at the middle. Everybody but Fred Hawley had shrapnel injuries, Fred was sitting in the nose.



Wing of B-17's over the English Channel.



View of the upper echelon of a formation of B-17's, most likely going home after a mission-- note the lone B-24, probably a tagalong who lost his own formation.



Contrails forming in high altitude flight.



"Square blocks of buildings, with snow covered fields around- probably the base in [Rattlesden,]England, main operations buildings (we lived in nissen huts, round topped)..." [From other sources I hear this must be a different set of buildings than Rattlesden HQ. -HTJr]



"B-17, with a chin turret would be B17G, probably our ship. We made several hairy landings, shot up badly. Several times we'd land, and then scatter running in all directions as gasoline would be dripping from punctured tanks- the self sealing tanks can only completely seal up small holes. After a while, if no fire started, we'd come back and look. No smoking of course.



"[Picture of below the ship taken from the ball turret]...probably taken by a photographer friend of ours, and he is the one who sent the pictures to my parents while I was in POW camp.



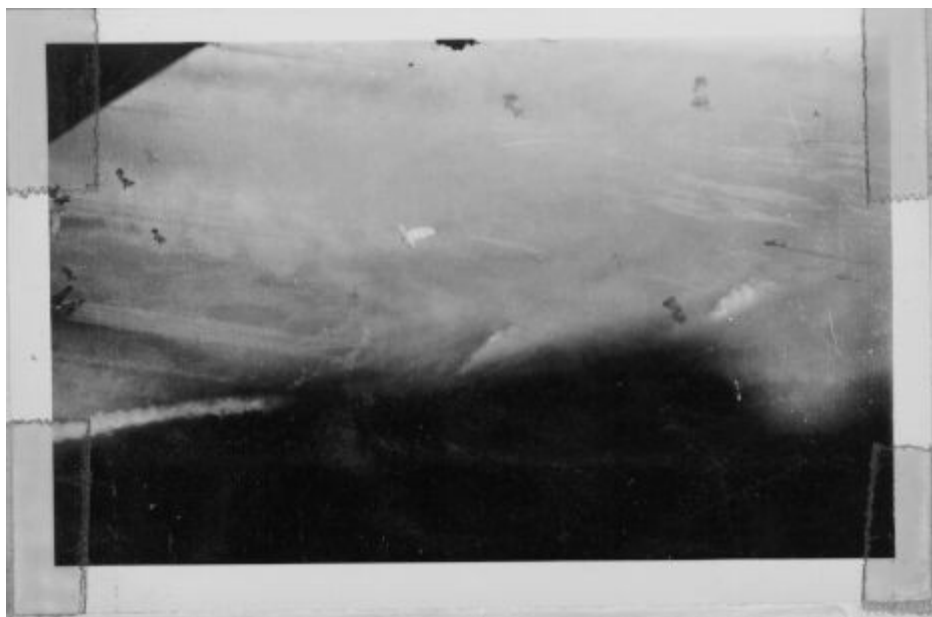
"Dark sky above, mostly cloud cover below, small white puffs on the end of vertical trails of smoke-
THAT WAS FLAK! AA GUNS.



"V-1 in a field. It was a dud. Pic sent to me by the photographer friend.



"Cloudy shot downward of flak bursts, and a ship in the distance in flames- THAT WAS DEAR MOM, OUR SHIP. Taken by the photographer friend who was taking shots from a waist gunner window of a ship near us when we were hit. He was the one who wrote my folks how he counted 10 chutes out safely, and that I would probably get home safely.



"Did that jog memories, hell, I'm almost crying... "

In late 2002 Gunner Tenneson sent HT Sr a picture of the POW's from Stalag XVIIb building their camp in the woods after their forced march from Stalag XVIIb.



Tenneson also sent a photo of him and some of his fellow POW's. HT says it was taken at the camp the POW's built but I (Harley Jr) can find no mention in my resources of an actual building, with windows and shutters, being constructed in that camp. It's possible the picture was taken in the camp near La Havre, France where the former POW's were rehabilitated before returning to the US after Liberation. But what do I know.



The rightmost man's name is unknown; the others are, left - right, Gunner Tenneson, McHugh, Harley Tuck.

Glossary

**** Note: this pdf excerpt has only the glossary text.**

The website or its facsimile contains illustrations for most of the glossary items. **

AA: anti- aircraft guns; flak

Aircraft Identification: practice distinguishing between friendly and enemy airplanes, usually using silhouette cards

Air Medal: awarded for every five missions; the number was raised to six in April 44

Allies: collective term for the countries fighting against the Axis, consisting primarily of the U.S.A., the British Commonwealth, Russia and France, although late in the war Italy joined. In the linked picture are shown President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, French General Charles de Gaulle and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill

A.T.C.: Air Transport Corps, a branch of the Army Air Corps which ferried ships from final assembly points to staging areas, or other non-combat destinations. The A.T.C had a lot of *female* pilots

Axis: collective term for the countries allied with Germany, primarily Italy and Japan though several Balkan countries also fought on that side

B-17: American heavy bomber, "Flying Fortress", most common US bomber in England. 'Hi Jinx' was a B-17E, 'Dear M.O.M.' was a B-17G. Pictured is the Fuddy Duddy, a ship from the same squadron (708th) as HT Sr was in and so has the same markings as his ships did.

B-24: American heavy bomber, "Liberator", see notes re: this ship in Mission Memories

B-25: American medium bomber; "Mitchell", units flying the B-25 were mostly based in Africa and Asia at the time of this diary

B4 and A3 bags: duffel bag and smaller personal possessions bag

Ball turret gunner: (NCO) fires the gun projecting from the belly of a bomber which protects its underside

Bombardier: (Officer) sits behind the Navigator; crew member responsible for the ship's bombs; he takes control of the plane and flies it during the bomb run as he sights where to drop them

C-47: the Douglas Skytrain, AKA "Gooney Bird"; one of the more famous Allied airplanes of the War. A very hardy plane with a good carrying capacity it was used extensively for transporting just about anything, anywhere. The civilian version of the plane is designated the DC-3.

Cadence or marching songs: Marching in step is easier when somebody calls out a rhythm or the marching troops sing together. In letters home (second part of the Introduction) Harley gives the lyrics to some of the marching songs they sang in training. Often a squad or company make up their own (usually quite ribald) words to a standard tune for a song to sing together in addition to the standard

publicly presentable songs. Mademoiselle from Armentiers ("Hinky Pinky Parleyvoo...") and Battle Hymn of the Republic were two favorite tunes in WWII; in more recent wars there was the infamous Yellow Bird with a Yellow Bill.

Canteen: both the American and British Red Cross provided snacks and leisure- time diversions for Military personnel. They operated out of mobile snack wagons and from a fixed location on the base.

Clap, the: gonorrhea, a venereal disease; see 'Short Arm Inspection'.

Control tower; elevated vantage point for the ground personnel supervising an airfield's activities. Pictured is the control tower at Rattlesden

Crew check: in- flight roll call to be sure crew is ok

Crew Chief: (NCO) carried overall responsibility for keeping the ship combat ready. Supervised the ship's ground crew of mechanics and other specialists who were usually EM's, and coordinated work performed by other parties.

Cockpit: Pilot and Copilot's station

Commander of the P.O.W.'s: an elected position among the POWs. He acts as U.S. military authority, coordinates resistance attempts, etc. As opposed to the POW camp commander, a German officer

Copilot: (Officer) assists the pilot; sits in the right hand seat in the cockpit; is trained to fly the plane if necessary but mostly performs duties supporting the pilot's flying of the plane

Corsair: the Chance Vought F-4U; an American fighter (note: the designation had changed from 'pursuit' ship to 'fighter') which had distinctive 'inverted gull wings'. Although mostly used by the US Navy in the Pacific Theater, some were seen in Europe

C.Q.: Charge of Quarters, the Enlisted person on duty in a squadron area during the off hours; wakes crews for missions

Dear M.O.M: Crew #5's second ship, a G model, serial # 231724. It was named after Marion O. McGurer, the original navigator of Crew #5 who was sent home after being wounded. It was in Dear M.O.M that Crew #5 was shot down

Demo's : demolition bombs; bombs which simply explode and demolish objects

DFC: Distinguished Flying Cross

Dill: Neal R. Dill, (#39554855), (3rd from right, front row) "our first tail gunner, who died March 3 on a mission to Berlin under unknown causes."

D.N.I.F: Duties Not to Include Flying; temporary stand down for medical/ stress related reasons. A crew member might 'put himself on D.N.I.F' after a particularly traumatic mission. More often an individual was put on it by a superior, eg. the flight surgeon, for medical reasons

Echelon: a unit of command in a formation, often a group per echelon; three echelons flew in layers staggered back from low to high altitude in a standard box formation

EM: Enlisted Man/ Men, as opposed to Commissioned Officers, included the ranks of private, private first class, corporal, and the sergeant grades. See non com

E.T.O.: European Theater of Operations; the war effort in Europe, as distinct from "P.T.O.", the war effort in the Pacific, or "C-B-I", China- Burma- India.

E.W.T.: Eastern War Time

Feathered: eg., feathering the engine or prop; propeller turned flat, parallel to line of flight so the prop doesn't 'windmill' and there is minimal drag from the wind

F-4U: American fighter; see 'Corsair'

Flak: acronym for the German expression 'FLieger Abwehr Kannonen', anti- aircraft guns.

Flight Crew: the ship's crew members who flew on missions; as distinct from the ground crew who did not perform in-flight duties.

Flight Engineer: (NCO) maintains the function of the planes mechanisms while in flight; also mans the top turret gun

Flimsy: briefing information was printed on lightweight paper which was very... flimsy

Frag- fragmentation, AKA antipersonnel- bombs which scatter steel fragments; used against concentrations of personnel

Fred: Fred T. Hawley, (#39106778), Sgt, (3rd from left, front row) "left waist gunner, also toggelier on some missions. English parentage, small body, good heart, but slow as molasses to get ready to go anywhere."

FW 190: Focke Wulfe 190, German fighter, allegedly the best German plane against bomber formations

GCT: Greenwich Combat Time

G.F.U.: General F***-Up; a person who is a hell- raiser

G.I.: Government Issue or General Issue, when used for equipment (including soldiers themselves). Also, to clean, eg: a GI party, where everybody turns out to clean something. "Go GI the barracks", "Make it GI"

Ground echelon: the ground crew and other non- flight personnel

Group: 21 ships

Hi Jinx: Crew #5's first B 17, an F model, serial # 31145, Ship #231145. It was the ship the crew flew to England and flew missions in until 6 Feb 44 when Reed's crew took her on a mission and were shot down. Of note, the ship shown as the Hi Jinx in the crew picture shows a B-17G with its characteristic chin turret. The reason for the discrepancy is not known, though speculation abounds.

High echelon: the topmost of three layers in a standard box formation of aircraft

Horwell trainer: radio procedures simulator

Hudson: British or American light attack bomber, a Lockheed Electra fitted out for combat; often modified for Air/ Sea Rescue. Pictured is recon model; bombers had top gun turret behind wings

Hurricane: British fighter, "Hurri", created about the same time as the Spitfire. Their pilots spread the rumor that it was a 'killer plane', so tricky and vicious to fly that only the best, bravest pilots could handle it. In fact it was somewhat slower and less agile than the Spitfire but could take far more abuse

IFF: Identification Friend or Foe; a radio device which used signals emitted by other airplanes to identify them as Friend or Foe.

Ike Jacket: the "Wool Field Jacket, M-1944", a waist length Army semi-formal jacket of WWII popularized by General "Ike" Eisenhower

I.P.: Initial Point, where the bombers start flying straight and level for the bombing run

Incendiaries: bombs that scatter burning phosphorus; used to start fires

Ju 88: Junkers 88, German medium bomber

Kealer: Eugene A. Kealer, (#39250554) right waist gunner, (1st on left, front row) "fairly tall, from California, easy going."

Lancaster: British heavy bomber, nearly as popular with British civilians as the Spitfire

Laz: Richard L. Lazarus, (#O-668067) navigator, (2nd from right, back row) "well liked also."

Leading element: the front grouping of ships in any of the various shapes of formation

Liason radio: radio receiver for communication between the ship and its base; part of the bank of radio devices on B-17 shared between the navigator and R.O

Liberty, to go on: periodically crews were permitted enough time off in one period to be able to leave the base for Rest and Recuperation. Harley went on one liberty with Fred Hawley and visited Fred's family; on another the whole of Crew #5 went to London and stayed at the Imperial Hotel. See the outside and inside of Harley's registration card for that stay

Liberty Ship: a series of oceangoing cargo and troop carrying seagoing vessels that were mass produced during WWII for convoy duty. After the war many soldiers, including HT Sr, returned home from Europe aboard a Liberty ship.

Limey luey: American (or just HT's?) nickname for an English Lieutenant (Lieutenant)

Link trainers: early flight simulators for pilots; in limited use in ETO at time of diary

Luftwaffe: German Air Force. Besides fighting the air war, they were also tasked with maintaining the German P.O.W. camps which held Allied fliers

Mac: Charles H. McHugh, (#6682143) flight engineer, (2nd from right, front row) probably one of H.T.'s role models, definitely his closest companion in the time they were in the P.O.W. camp

Mae West: inflatable life vest; gave the wearer a distinctive figure

Mamlock "HEM": Henry E Mamlock, (#O-751171) Copilot, (2nd from left, back row) "who came to our crew with not much experience, but as the time went on, seemed to do a good job of flying, even landing the plane after several months of flying."

McGurer: Marian O McGurer, (#O-739484) (1st on right, back row) "the first bombardier we had, one of the officers who was a favorite of us enlisted men. He was injured, got shrapnel in the knee and was sent home." Crew 5's (HT's crew) second ship 'Dear MOM' was named for him

M.D.: M.D. Harris (initials only for his first name) (# unk), (2nd from left, front row) "ball turret gunner, from Texas, never brushed his teeth, but had perfect teeth, since the area he came from had water high in fluorides. Hill billy type. Competent, loved to be in the ball turret, which was very scary for me. With so much of nothing below you, I used to hope the ball turret wouldn't fall off."

Me 109: Messerschmidt 109, earliest and most common German fighter, faster than the Spitfire but less maneuverable

Me 110: German light bomber similar to British Mosquito but with metal skin

Me 262: German fighter, the first jet fighter in the world

Milk run: an easy mission, usually of short duration with little or no enemy opposition

M.O. settings: master oscillator, the primary frequency controller for the on-board radio equipment

Mosquito: twin engine British light bomber, skin usually made of plywood; very fast, often used for reconnaissance

"Naafi": canteen operated by the British Red Cross

Navigator: (Officer) calculates and plots the plane's course; also tended a machine gun and in B17-G's fired the electronically controlled chin turret

N.C.O.: Non-commissioned Officer; see Non com

Nissen hut: prefabricated building of different sizes, made of corrugated tin over a cement floor and shaped like a longitudinal half of a cylinder. Quick and easy to build, used for practically every function from barracks to motor pools. The size used for barracks housed four aircrews

Nobal raid: a relatively short, relatively easy mission, ie: "No balls required". Frequently the targets were merely numbered ("Nobal target #X") rather than using a location name. According to one source they were usually the V-1 launch pads on the coast of France. Also, from Feb '44 on, they were only counted as 1/2 mission. Nobal raids were usually "milk runs" though not all milk runs were Nobal raids

Non com: non commissioned officers, ranks from buck Sergeant through Sergeant Major. A senior subgroup of E.M.

Oak Leaf Cluster: a small pin to add to the ribbon of a medal indicating a repeat award of the medal

Occupation currency: In an effort to prevent black marketeering of the Army issued substitute American money which was the "official" currency for trade between military and civilians. This money was usually held in little confidence by both parties, and real US Dollars were the preferred medium of exchange

Orderly room: the CQ works out of the orderly room, usually in the same building with the C.O. and other administrative offices

P-38: American fighter, "Lightning", distinctive design of twin tail booms, first of the long range fighters; was better than most other US pursuits at high altitudes until the Mustang was introduced

P-47: American fighter, "Thunderbolt", also called "flying milk jug", looked like a huge engine with wings and cockpit stuck on. Was briefly the equal of the Me 109 until the Germans upgraded their armament

P-51: American fighter, "Mustang", widely considered the best of the American pursuit ships, capable of giving bombers long range, high altitude protection on extended missions

Pathfinder/ PFF ships: bombers (usually B-17's) equipped with early radar devices intended to increase accuracy of bombing through cloud cover. The H2X radar was an American version of British technology named H2S, a device which showed the topological contours of the ground beneath the ship so that, in theory, the target could be found even through total overcast. In fact, the electronics were experimental even while the devices were used on missions, so failures were frequent and bombing results were often poor or disastrous

PBY: Catalina PBY series, American Air/ Sea Rescue flying boat

P,CP,N + RO: H. T's abbreviation for 'pilot, co-pilot, navigator, and radio operator', the usual skeleton crew for ferrying flights

"Pedo tube": actually, 'pitot tube', an air intake tube for various instruments on an airplane

Permanent Party: the military personnel permanently assigned to a training post, who do not move on when the training is completed like the trainees do; e.g, the cooks, instructors, camp Command staff

Pilot: (Officer) flies the plane, sits in the left hand seat in the cockpit; commander of the crew in flight and on the ground

P.O.E.: point or port of embarkation ie. the place one leaves a country

Prefabricated steel runway: steel 'planks' which can be hooked together on ends and sides. They are transported to a site and hooked together to form a firm surface to land airplanes on when there wasn't time or equipment to build a regular runway. The linked picture shows part of a fence made of these strips. Note the long edges have both hooks and holes for adjacent planks to link to, the ends have only hooks on one end and holes on the other. There may be different sizes; these particular ones have a working surface (excluding the hooks) 10 ft long by 16 inches wide

"Pulled the props thro": in large airplane engines the fluids pool after it sits for a while and it won't

start unless the fluids are pumped back where they belong. This is accomplished by manually turning the propellers

P.W. or POW: Prisoner of War

Pursuit ship: early WWII designation for a fighter plane, hence the designation 'P', as in 'P-38', 'P-47', etc.

QDM/QTF procedures: QDM stands for "Tell me direction to Steer"; QTF stands for "What is my position"

RAF: Royal Air Force (British)

RCAF: Royal Canadian Air Force

Ration card: Troops were issued ration cards which entitled them to get 'luxuries' like candy, cigarettes, liquor, etc. The pictured ration card was the one Harley was issued and used up to the time he was shot down

Radio operator/ Gunner: (NCO) maintains and operates the ship's radio equipment; responsible for obtaining navigational signals, maintaining communication with ground bases and other planes. Radio Operators were dually trained in gunnery to man a single .50 cal machine gun mounted in the ceiling of the radio room

R.O.'s: HT's abbreviation for radio operators

ROG: Radio Operator/ Gunner.

Rudy: (first name unk) Rudisil, the Crew Chief for Crew #5 (# unk), (1st on right, front row)

S-2: Squadron level Military Security

Short Arm Inspection: slang for the brief medical exam of a male soldiers' 'short arm', looking for signs of venereal disease. As distinct from a 'small arms' inspection, of one's pistol or rifle.

Showdown inspection: inspection held before a soldier or a crew left one post when reassigned to another, to ensure that all issued equipment was present

Spitfire: British fighter, "Spit", one of the first modern monoplane fighters. Fast, responsive, extremely maneuverable, it caught the imagination and attention of the Press and the British public at the expense of the Hurricane's reputation

Splashers: rotating radio beacons around which planes flew as they joined up in their formations prior to leaving friendly air space on a mission

Statement of Charges: deduction from one's paycheck for several different reasons, including damage to government or civilian property

Stringers: longitudinal supports in the fuselage of an airplane; in linked picture (the waistgunners) they can be seen above the gunners' heads running the length of the plane with control lines between them

Sweat in a ship, to: to wait by the control tower for the return of a ship. Usually a very tense activity

Tailgunner: (NCO) Gunner covering the rear of the plane

Toggelier: an NCO who acted in a limited capacity as bombardier, throwing the switch (toggle) to release bombs on cue from the bomber ahead

T.O, and R: H. T.'s abbreviation for take off, and return

Tokyo tanks: extra fuel tanks in the tips of B- 17 wings for added fuel capacity. Only used on longer flights because of the extra weight involved. So named because the extra fuel would 'let our Boys bomb Tokyo'

Tuck, Harley H. (#19192992): (4th from right, front row) radio operator/ gunner, diary author

T.W.G.: Thomas W Gillleran, (#O-746325) Pilot, (1st on left, back row) "good leader, happy go lucky, a little reckless, but very skilled pilot in emergencies."

V-1: Officially designated the FZG-76, nicknamed the "Doodlebug", AKA "Buzzbomb"; the first of a series of "Vengeance Weapons" developed by the Nazis in the last years of the War in an attempt to regain their earlier dominant position. These rocket launching sites, located on the coast of France and Holland, were the objects of most of the 447th's Nabal raids.

V-2: The first modern, vertically launched supersonic rocket with liquid fuel and an internal guidance system. They were developed for use against England but Nazi plans called for them later to be launched against the US across the Atlantic Ocean.

Waist gunners: (NCO) the two crewmen who manned the machine guns mounted on either side of the fuselage between the wings and tail.

Wellington: British medium bomber approximately equivalent in capabilities to the American B-26

Wiggi: Wigdowitz, (# unk; joined crew after crew photo) the second bombardier, "who was a good man too."

Wing: 3 groups

Worley: (first name, number unknown; also joined crew after crew photo) Crew#5's tail gunner after Dill, from mid Mar 44

W/T procedure: