

416th Bombardment Group (L)



Group History

1944



Transcription from USAF Archives
(Declassified IAW EO 12958)

January, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

APO 638 US ARMY
19 February 1944,

SUBJECT: Group History (January Installment)

TO : Commanding General, IX Bomber Command
Attention: Historical Officer.

1. Organization: Negative

2. Strength:	668th Squadron	260 EM	36 Officers
	669th Squadron	261 EM	36 Officers
	670th Squadron	262 EM	36 Officers
	671st Squadron	261 EM	36 Officers
	Hdqs. Squadron	52 EM	29 Officers

	TOTAL	1096 EM	173 Officers

3. Movement: Left Laurel, Miss. 1 January 1944
Arrived Camp Shanks, New York, 3 January 1944
Left Camp Shanks, New York, 17 January 1944
Arrived ETO Port of Debarkation 31 January 1944

4. Casualties: Negative.

5. Decorations: Negative

The long train ride from Laurel, Miss. (80 360) brought many men to New York, a land of new experiences. As it debarked, the Group was greeted with a snow storm. To many of the men it was their first taste of snow; to others it was the first taste since they began their army career.

The usual routine schedule for a staging area was followed at Camp Shanks.

Mail from the Group was censored for the first time. To test the physical stamina of the men, eight mile hikes were made every other day. However, all was not work, for the twelve hour passes enabled everyone to visit New York City.

With suddenness the Group was alerted 13 January 1944. An advance echelon (SO.#15) left for the Port of Embarkation on Sunday 16 January 1944. the remainder (SO. # 16) left Camp Shanks on the following day and proceeded to the Port of Embarkation where it embarked on a troopship.

The trip was conducted under ideal weather conditions. There were no alerts and a minimum of sea-sickness prevailed. Movies in the officer's dining room, the shows "This is it", and "A Crock of Ship" in the officer's lounge, books, games, etc. furnished by special services, and card games kept the minds of the men off the journey itself. Chaplain Penticoff and the Ship's Chaplain conducted religious services daily.

Despite all these activities, the first sight of land was a thrilling event to all. Debarking and entraining was carried out with dispatch and efficiency. The night of January 31 was spent on a train traveling through the United Kingdom toward the new station at Wethersfield.

For the Commanding Officer:
FRANK M. HOPPE,
2nd Lt., Air Corps,
Historical Officer.

February, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

APO 638, US ARMY, 18 March 1944,

SUBJECT: Group History -- February Installment.

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Force

The morning of 1 February 1944 was spent on a train cutting across the heart of England to a small town in East Anglia, Sybil and Castle Hedingham. At 1515 the men detrained and boarded trucks that were waiting to take them to an RAF station one mile north of Wethersfield, Station 170.

The station, in the process of being constructed, was commanded by Squadron Leader Newnham of the RAF. In addition to the small RAF staff, four American units were already there. They were, the Fourth Service Group, 79th Station Complement, 1297th Military Police Company, and 2205th Engineer Fire Fighting Platoon Aviation.

The advance echelon that had arrived on 17 January supervised the quartering of the men and the sections. Having been planned as a B-17 base, the field was found to provide ample space for a Light Bombardment Group. At the time of our

arrival, the strength of the Group consisted of one hundred and seventy-two (172) Officers and one thousand ninety-six (1096) Enlisted men.

The Group, now a component of the IX Bomber Command of the Ninth Air Force, was placed under the supervision of the 99th Combat Bombardment Wing. Ours was the first A-20 Group in the Bomber Command.

On 3 February, Lieutenant Colonel Thatcher, Commanding Officer of the 99th Wing, spoke to all the officers, acquainting them with the task that was before them, their duties and responsibilities. Ground school training was begun and conducted for the first two weeks by members of the Wing.

With the sections established and a training program set up, the Base prepared for a visit from Brigadier General Anderson, Commanding Officer of the IX Bomber Command. He arrived the morning of the 7th. The Group assembled in the hanger and the General was introduced by Colonel Mace. After a few words of welcome General Anderson told us what we could expect and what would be expected of us.

Administratively there had to be a mass rearranging of personnel. Under the administrative system in effect throughout the IX Bomber Command, the Squadron loses most of its identity. Sections such as Intelligence, Communications, Personnel and Transportation pool their personnel, both officer and enlisted, to form a Group organization. Operating as a combined unit tends to broaden the scope of activity and offers opportunity for more direct control; all of which leads to greater efficiency. Colonel Mace became Commanding Officer of the Station. Many other Group Officers assumed Station Officer duties. (see exhibit 1 dated 4 February 1944). Engineering and Operations Sections of the Squadrons did not lose their separate identities. There was one question uppermost in the minds of all. That was, "When are we going to get some planes?" The A-20-G-25 planes that were expected were slow in arriving. The first plane was assigned to the Group on 4 February. On the 10th Lieutenant Charles Stewart, Engineering Officer of the 669th Squadron became the first Squadron Engineering Officer to accept and sign for a plane. By 29 February the Group had received only 27 planes and of these some were A-20-Bs. Due to shortage of aircraft it became necessary for the Squadrons to arrange their flying schedules to obtain the maximum advantage from the planes available. On a local flight made on 14 February 2nd Lt. William D. Minnicks of Franklin, Kentucky was killed when his plane, an A-20-G stalled and dove into the ground. This was the first loss by the Group on foreign soil. (see exhibit 5, February 1944).

The failure of the planes to arrive afforded the Group added opportunity to establish and train its personnel more thoroughly for the combat missions that lay ahead. Intelligence personnel, particularly, attended Ninth Air Force, IX Bomber Command, and R.A.F. schools.

Twenty officers were transferred to the Group during the month. Of these thirteen were replacement pilots. (see exhibit 6, February 1944). One, 1st Lt. William L. Smith, was transferred to the Group and was appointed Group Bombardier. Four officers were added to the Group Cryptographic Security Section. Caption McClellan was named Group Gunnery Officer.

One of the major changes in personnel was the assignment of Major Robert F. Price to the command of the 668th Squadron. Major Clarence S. Towles who was relieved became the Assistant Group Operations Officer. (see exhibit 7, February 1944).

Throughout the month there were many changes made in ranks and grades. Major Townsend, who had been with the Group since its activation, when he was a Captain, was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Captains Price, Willetts, Napier, Radetsky, and Roney became Majors. (see exhibits 8 and 9, February 1944) These exhibits show other changes in both Officer ranks and enlisted grades.

As a reminder of Thursday afternoon in the "States", the Group and the 4th Service Group passes in a formal review before Colonel Mace and Squadron Leader Newnham.

The strength of the Group on the last day of the month was 192 officers and 1,109 enlisted men.

March, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Group History (March Installment)

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

Whoever once said that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb was not referring to a March in England. Inclement weather was generally spread throughout the entire month. The month of February had been devoted entirely to training flights, but with the coming of March, we expected to start operational flying.

At the beginning of the month two diversionary missions were flown to the middle of the English Channel. The first combat mission was to be on 3 March. An attack on the Poix Airdrome in France was scheduled, but the flight of eighteen planes, led by Major Radetsky, was recalled at the French coast because of lack of fighter escort. One plane piloted by 2nd Lt. William S. Ostrander had to be ditched in the channel. Colonel Thatcher, Commanding Officer on the 99th Combat Wing, flew with the mission (Exhibit #1).

The second target, on 4 March, was the airdrome at Bernay St. Martins. Major Farmer led the formation of twenty-one planes but were recalled. On the 6th of March, Colonel Ford led twenty-one planes to the French coast in what was to be an attack on the Airfield at Conches, France. The formation turned back at the French coast and returned to the base because fighter rendezvous was not made.

The first successful mission was led by Major Towles, with Captain Dunn as Deputy Leader, on the 7th, against the same Airfield at Conches. Several of the twenty planes failed to drop their bombs, but 22,500 pounds of demolition bombs were dropped on the runways. The results were considered good.

After this, the fourth mission for the Group, bad weather again hampered operations. It was not until eleven days later, on the 18th of March, that the

planes were able to take off to attack the enemy in France. The target, a military installation known as a Noball, was near the town of Vacquerres. Major Price led the formation. After they had passed the initial point, Major Price opened his bomb bay doors for the run and several bombs dropped out. The other planes thinking this was a signal, dropped their bombs. Flak was encountered, but Lt. Poindexter's ship was the only one to return with any damage.

Thirty-three planes were sent out the next day with Major Towles as leader to attack a Noball target at Wisques in the Pas de Calais area. The mission had been run at a time when B-17's and B-26's were operating in the same area. In the course of the three passes made at the target by our planes, we suffered 100% battle damage. Lt. Vernon H. Powell, Bombardier-Navigator of the lead plane piloted by Major Meng, was hit in the side of the head by a piece of flak. His helmet absorbed the force of the blow (see Exhibit #2) but Lt. Powell was knocked unconscious. Lt. Horace F. Pair had his plane well shot up and had to make a forced landing. He landed his plane with his two gunners, S/Sgt. Herbert A. Marion and Sgt. Victor P. Adams, on the slope of a hill just inside the English coastline near Hastings. The gunners escaped unscathed, but Lt. Pair broke an ankle in the landing. His plane burst into flames, but his gunners with the help of onlookers pulled him from the plane.

For the third straight day, on the 20th of March, our planes went out. Colonel Ford led twenty-eight planes against another Noball target in the Pas de Calais area. The bombing run was good. All ships returned safely. No flak was seen and no fighters were encountered.

On the 23rd, the first complete 36-ship formation was flown. Riding "piggy back" in the nose of a new A-20-J flown by Major Towles, the Group Navigator and Bombardier, Lt. Max A. Pepe and Lt. William L. Smith, led a formation in what was to be an attack on an Airfield at Montdidier. Major Radetsky, who had previous combat experience in England and North Africa, was Deputy Leader. The formation missed the target and flew to the outskirts of Paris. Excellent evasive action got them through the flak with a minimum of damage to the planes.

On the 26th, Colonel Ford led a formation of thirty-six planes on the most successful mission of the month. His bombardier and navigator were Lt. Peter G. Royalty and Lt. Henry T. Arrington. Major Campbell was Deputy Leader. The target was a Noball near the town of Vacqueriette. The results of the bombing can be seen from the accompanying photograph (Exhibit #3). All planes returned safely with no damage. This was the last mission of the month. Bad weather kept the planes non-operational except those for local flying. A mission was scheduled for the last day of the month, but snow fell and covered the ground causing the mission to be scrubbed.

After the first month of combat operations, our planes had flown 229 sorties and had dropped 287 tons of bombs. There were no losses of planes or men over enemy territory. Eight men had received the Purple Heart (exhibits #4, #5, #6); Colonel Mace and Captain Richard B. Prentiss had received the Air Medal.

Although the first hostilities against the enemy by the 416th was the main topic of the month, other events took place. On the 17th, the IX Bomber Command held an inspection of the Base. The results were most gratifying. At his Staff meeting on the 29th, Colonel Mace congratulated everyone who had tried so hard and succeeded so well in making it the best inspection that we had ever had.

Colonel Mace spoke to all personnel on the Base on the 25th in Hanger #1. There were many points that he wanted to clarify and he chose that opportunity to

do it. The most important thing was that every single person should realize that he is vitally important in accomplishing the objective of our work, and our job was "to go out and drop bombs where we are told to." (Exhibit #7)

The work of the Special Services became increasingly more important the moment that we arrived in the E.T.O. No longer would we have the recreational facilities found in most American towns available to us. All-Soldier shows helped to entertain the men. "This is It", the show that had entertained us all on our trip was given on the 8th of February, for the Base Service Group, and on the 11th of February and 24th of March at Station 165. Lt. Gureasko, Special Services Officer, brought a Special Services variety show to our Base on 18 February. The show was entitled "Sky Blazers". Two other local "GI" talent shows were presented in February, the "Bombers Coon Gaitlies" and "Mat O'Jive". On 9 March, the first U.S.O. show, "Words and Music" played here. On the 19th, a second show, "Loop the Loop" entertained the personnel. Our local talent again got together and produced a show called "Like it or Lump It". Although it lasted only one night, it provided good entertainment. On the night of the 27th, Cpl. M.F. Clark, of Unit M and Cpl. James S. Priest, of Unit B, proved that they were tops on the Base in Ping-Pong and Checkers respectively.

During the month, Capt. Aaron McClallan was appointed Group Gunnery Officer. Lt. Thomas L. Van Over became Group Personal Equipment Officer, Lt. Colonel Theodore Aylesworth, who received his Senior Pilot's rating on 18 March, was appointed Group Training Officer. A permanent board was established on 29 March, to flight check the instrument flying proficiency of all rated pilots in the Group. (Exhibits 8,9, 10,and 11).

The strength as of the last day of the month was as follows:

668th Bomb Sq.	35 Officers	264 Enlisted Men
669th Bomb Sq.	37 "	266 " "
670th Bomb Sq.	41 "	267 " "
671st Bomb Sq.	38 "	264 " "
Hq. 416th Gp.	36 "	59 " "
	----	-----
Total	191	1120

April, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Historical Record (Month of April).

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

1. The month of April began with the same bad weather that March had given us. Everyone was eagerly awaiting some good flying weather so that out planes could get back into the sky to prove our ability. One of our Pilots would not be with us on the first April mission, however. He was 2nd Lt. Horace F. Pair. Lt. Pair had broken an ankle when he crashed and his plane, returning from a mission

in March. On the 4th he was transferred to the 48th General Hospital.

2. Some other changes in personnel occurred during the month. 1st Lt. Edmond V. Bond, Jr., was transferred into the Armament Section of the 669th Bombardment Squadron. 2nd Lt. Lloyd H. Perkins became Assistant Photo Interpreter. 1st Lt. Edward P. Arnold was transferred to MIS detachment, HQ. ETOUSA. On the 4th, Major Clarence S. Towles, Jr., left the Group to become the Operations Officer for the 97th Combat Wing. At the end of the month the strength of the Group was :

668th Bomron	39 Officers	264 Enlisted Men
669th "	37 "	262 " "
670th "	41 "	268 " "
671st "	35 "	261 " "
Hq. 416th Bomgr	35 "	59 " "
-----	-----	-----
Total	185 "	1114 " "

3. Distinguished guest visited the Base. During the month, General Brereton, Commanding Officer of the Ninth Air Force and his Deputy Commander, General Royce, visited this Group, the latter on a two day general visit. Colonel Backus, Commanding Officer of the 97th Combat Wing, arrived on the 3rd. (see Exhibit 1-Apr 44).

4. An event that we all awaited materialized on the 15th. It was on that day that the American Flag replaced the R.A.F. Flag on the pole in front of the Headquarters Building. The Base was turned over to the U.S.A.A.F. by the R.A.F. Commander, Squadron Leader Newnham. (see Exhibits 2-7-Apr 44). At the same time Captain William Battersby was awarded the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross. S/Sgt. Arnold A. Stockham received the Distinguished Flying Cross. The awards were made by Colonel Mace. During the month, Lt. Hilary P. Cole received the Air Medal. Lt. McGlohn, S/Sgt. Prindle, S/Sgt. Bresnak, S/Sgt. Donahue, S/Sgt. Orr, S/Sgt. Griffin, S/Sgt. Worden, S/Sgt. Rzepka, and Sgt. Zeikus, received the Purple Heart.

5. In the Intelligence Section Major Thomas was appointed Top Secret Control Officer, Captain Robert G. Bailey was appointed to be his assistant.

6. In the field of entertainment and recreation, much was done. An Officers' Party was held on the 14th, at the Officers' Club. Young ladies from the nearby communities and nearby Army Bases added their charm to the occasion. A good orchestra and an almost ample supply of "Scotch" added to the festivities. A few days earlier "the finest Aero Club in the U.K." was opened. The occasion was a gala one with a Scottish Bagpipe Band in their traditional dress adding color. The new club was under the direction of Mr. Sigvard Rugland, Red Cross Field Director, Miss Margaret Cebrian, Club Director, and Mrs. Florence Jekyll, Managress, both Red Cross workers. (see exhibits 8 & 9, Apr 44). The first EM dance was held at the Aero Club on the 15th. Since that time a weekly Saturday night dance is held at the club. Two All-Soldier Shows, "Like it or Lump it", and "Dog Show" were the contributions from our local talent. A U.S.O. Camp Show, "On With the Show", struck a new high. Most of the acts were far over the average.

7. In keeping with General Brereton's theme, "Keep Mobile", the Group engaged in a practice move on the 17th. (see exhibit 10-Apr 44). The move ran a bit off schedule, and generally brought out weaknesses. One of the most notable failures was the inability of many of the leaders to keep on the right roads. As a result a few days later, a map reading course was given to all Ground Officers by 1st Lt. Harold W. Anderson, of the Intelligence Department. As part of the program of

training a course was mapped out. A team of two officers was assigned a jeep and a driver. They were given a map and the check points and were thus able to put their learning into practice.

8. The first operational mission to be completed in April was flown on the morning of the 10th. The mission was a costly one for us. Of the 38 planes that took off, three never returned. Two crews were lost due to Enemy Action. The third plane crash-landed at Bradwell Bay. It was flown by 1st Lt. Marion Street. His two gunners bailed out before he landed. The plane, badly shot up, was brought down in an excellent belly-landing so that Lt. Street was able to walk away from the wreckage uninjured. Second Lt. Arthur A. Raines and his two gunners, S/Sgt. Jack O. Nielsen and S/Sgt. Glenn J. Bender, were last seen shortly after leaving the target area losing altitude. 1st Lt. William E. Cramsie and his two gunners, S/Sgt. Charles R. Henshaw and S/Sgt. Jack (NMI) Steward, were last heard from calling for a bearing while out over the English Channel. Lt. Raines, Lt. Cramsie, and their crews have been listed as "Missing in Action".

9. At the same time that this mission was being flown, twelve more of our planes led four waves of B-26 Marauders in an attack on LeHavre. Our planes preceded each wave dropping window. The mission was successfully completed.

10. In the afternoon 38 planes made an attack on a NOBALL target at Bonnières and Beauvoir. Three planes dropped window between the two targets to protect the 37 planes that made the attack. The boxes led by Major Meng with, Lt. Powell, B/N, and Major Willetts with Lt. Peter C. Royalty, B/N, hit the targets squarely with 130 x 500 G.P. bombs. Bomber Command rated the results "good".

11. Flying a mission for the third straight day, on the 12th we attacked another military installation at Vacqueriette with 37 aircraft. Even with two Bomb Runs only 20 of the aircraft were able to bomb because of a heavy cloud cover. Colonel Farmer and Captain Huff led the two boxes. The results were unobserved. At the same time 6 of our A-20's dropped window in support of B-26's in an attack on Dunkerque. None of our planes received any battle damage.

12. On the following day two more NOBALL targets in the Pas de Calais area were attacked simultaneously. Although the results were unobserved, at the time, reconnaissance showed a fair to good result. The 37 aircraft flying in two boxes were led by Major Willetts, with Lt. Royalty, B/N, and Major Meng, with Lt. Powell, B/N. Again nine of our Aircraft supported three Marauder Groups in LeHavre attacks, dropping window.

13. After a four day lapse in operations due to bad flying weather, 38 planes left to bomb the Marshalling yards at Charleroi/St. Martin, Belgium, on the 18th. The first box led by Major Meng with Lt. Powell, B/N, bombed the target with fair results. The second box led by Major Price with Lt. Hand, B/N, could not identify the target in time for a bomb run. Despite the long trip over enemy-occupied country, not a plane received battle damage.

14. A NOBALL target in the Bois de Huite Rues was the objective on the next day. 35 planes dropped 138 x 500 G.P. bombs in a heavy concentration in the target area. For the second straight day there was no battle damage. Colonel Ford with Lt. Royalty, B/N, and Major Price with Lt. Hand, B/N, led the two boxes.

15. The 20th was the first day that we ran two full-strength missions in one day. In the morning 38 planes took off to bomb a NOBALL target at Gorenflœ [Gorenflos]. A cloud cover of .8 to .9 hid the target so that no attack was made. Haze again obscured the target at Yvrench/Bois Carre from view from the 38 planes

that took off in the afternoon. No attack was made.

16. The target that had escaped bombing the afternoon before was suspended on the following day. Although the first box led by Major Willetts with Lt. Royalty, B/N, was far off the target, Major Price's box with Lt. Hand, B/N, dropped a good concentration of bombs in the target area with excellent results.

17. Again on the 22nd, in a morning and an afternoon mission two NOBALL Targets were attacked. In the morning the two boxes led by Major Campbell with Lt. William F. Palin, B/N, and Major Price with Lt. Hand, B/N, hit short of the target at Behen. In the afternoon, however, Major Willetts with Lt. Royalty, B/N, led his box on a good run and hit the target at Lingham with very good results. The second box led by Captain David Hulse with Lt. Conte, B/N, were too wide to make a bomb run.

18. Flying back for the sixth consecutive day, 37 aircraft dropped 143 x 500 G.P. bombs in an attack on a military installation at Bonnieres. For the first time the crews saw one of their own planes broken in half by flak over the target. The crew, 2nd Lt. Joseph T. Schouten, S/Sgt. Robert R. Williamson, and Sgt. Joseph E. Feistl, are all listed as "Missing in Action". Some of the other planes, seeing the bombs fall out of Lt. Schouten's stricken plane, mistook them for bombs from the lead plane and dropped on them. As a result the bombing was poor. Major Price with Lt. Hand, B/N, and Major Campbell with Lt. Palin, B/N, led the two boxes.

19. A day of cloudy weather broke the string of bombing days at six. A mission took off, but was recalled before it had gone to the coast. It was not recalled soon enough, though. While going through the overcast 2nd Lt. Arthur A. McDonald, lost control of his plane for some reason unknown. In the dive he lost a wing. He did manage to pull the plane out of the dive, and before he hit the ground, he maneuvered his plane in a last heroic effort to avoid crashing in the midst of a crowded city district. The plane struck in the only open area in the vicinity, exploding when the bombs hit the ground. The crew, Lt. MacDonald, S/Sgt. Leroy (NMI) Barnard, and S/Sgt. Joseph J. Shields, were killed. Their remains have been interred in the American Military Cemetery at Cambridge, England.

20. The following day, the 25th, our planes attacked with renewed vigor. The morning mission produced good results against a NOBALL installation in the Bois d'Enger. The 37 planes attacking in two boxes led by Major Willetts with Lt. Royalty, B/N, and Captain Hulse with Lt. Conte, B/N, dropped only 71 x 500 G.P. bombs. Low clouds and shadows prevented recognition of the target by the second box leader. The bombs that were dropped had good results. The afternoon attack was made by 37 planes against coastal batteries at St. Pierre du Mont. The two boxes led by Major Meng with Lt. Powell, B/N, and Captain Dunn with Lt. Arrington, B/N, returned after dropping a heavy concentration of bombs in the target area with no battle damage.

21. Major Willetts with Lt. Royalty, B/N, and Capt. Battersby with Lt. Lytle, B/N, led 38 planes against a Marshalling Yard at Louvain, Belgium, on the 26th. One hundred five-hundred-pound bombs were dropped with good results.

22. Ending our longest sustained drive against the foe, we flew two missions on the 27th. The Marshalling Yards at Monceau-Sur-Sambre was protected by .7 to .8 cloud cover in the morning which prevented any bombing. In the afternoon, however, our 36 aircraft completely battered the Marshalling Yards at Arras. A roundhouse, the aiming point, was demolished. Major Price with Lt. Hand, B/N, and

Captain Dunn with Lt. Arrington B/N, led the two boxes.

23. Missions no. 32 and 33 were flown on the last day of the month. In the morning three boxes led by Major Campbell, Captain Battersby, and Major Price scored good results against NOBALL Target at Bonnieres. The 39 aircraft dispatched dropped 1515 x 500 G.P. bombs. Finishing the month in a blaze of glory, excellent results were achieved in the late afternoon attack on the Busigny Marshalling Yards. Major Meng with Lt. Powell, B/N, and Captain Dunn with Lt. Arrington, B/N, led the two boxes which dropped 38 tons of bombs along 400 yards of the main target area. Lt. Renth was forced to land on an auxillary field along the coast after a hair-raising trip across France at low-level on one engine. Hitting an obstruction on the landing strip the Plane was damaged beyond repair. Lt. Renth and his gunners, S/Sgt. LaNave and S/Sgt. Epps escaped any personal injury. A congratulatory telegram was received from General Anderson on the Busigny mission (see exhibit 11 Apr 44).

24. Checking back on our operations during the month of April, the Group participated in 24 missions. Seven hundred and seventy-four sorties were flown in which 534 1/2 tons of bombs were dropped.

May, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT:

TO :

HISTORICAL DATA
May Installment

The battle continued in an ever-rising crescendo pointing toward the day when the Armies of Hitler would have to stand face-to-face with the United Nations on his very own soil. To break the link between Germany's industry and the fighting front would be the role of the Air Forces before D-Day. The 416th Bomb Group (L) can be justly proud of the job it did in breaking this link. We flew thirty missions during the month of May, hitting many types of targets. Among them were marshalling yards, airfields, coastal defences, noball targets, and even a Naval Headquarters.

A short summary of each mission, mentioning each high point, follows:

On the first day of the month, Major Willetts, with Lt Royalty, his Bombardier-Navigator, and Captain Clark, with Lt Jones his Bombardier-Navigator, led 37 aircraft against the Charleroi/Montignies Marshalling Yards in Belgium. No flak was encountered and the bombing results were good.

That same afternoon, Major Campbell, with Lt Palin, B-N, and Captain Battersby, with Lt Lytle, B-N, led 37 planes across Belgium again. This time they

attacked, with good results, the Marshalling Yards at Blanc Misseron. Four planes suffered battle damage.

On the next day the Blanc Misseron Marshalling Yards was again the target for the 38 planes that took off. The first box led by Major Meng, Lt Powell, B-N, smashed the target with excellent results. Poor visibility caused the second box, led by Captain Dunn, with Lt Arrington, B-N, to mistake the yards at Valenciennes for the correct target. Much damage was inflicted on the mistaken target, however.

Four days of bad weather intervened before we were able to get off again. On the seventh, Blanc Misseron was chosen to be our target for the third straight time. Weather interfered, though, and the mission was aborted. In the afternoon, another mission took off to bomb a Noball target at Behan. Weather again caused it to be aborted. Eleven planes received battle damage.

Bad weather caused the mission to the Aerschot Marshalling Yards on the next morning to abort. Striking back in the afternoon, Major Willetts with Lt Royalty, B-N, and Captain Clark with Lt Jones, B-N, led two boxes over the Noball installations at Ailly le Haut/Clocher. The 39 planes bombed in flights of sixes. The results were generally good. Four aircraft sustained battle damage.

The Aerschot Marshalling Yards, that had the day previous, the 8th, escaped because of bad weather, suffered vital damage when 41 planes dropped almost 40 tons of bombs on it. Split into three boxes, they were led by Major Campbell, with Lt Palin B-N, Captain Battersby, with Lt Lytle, B-N; Captain Hulse, with Lt Conte, B-N. The engine turn-table was severely damaged. A 3-bay workshop and an 8-bay building were partially destroyed. Forty-five cars were destroyed and all the tracks opposite the turn-table were blocked by a large crater. Two of our planes suffered battle damage.

That afternoon, 42 aircraft attacked in three boxes, the Noball target at Bois D'Enfer. The first two boxes had fair results. The third made no attack when the target became obscured by haze. The box leaders were Major Meng, Captain McNulty, and Captain Dunn.

Two missions were flown on the 11th. In the morning, 38 planes took off. The second box, led by Captain Dunn, with Lt Arrington, B-N, lost visual contact with box #1, and seeing no fighter escort, turned around and came home. The first box, led by Major Willetts, with Lt Royalty, B-N, hit the target with fair results. This box did find the fighter escort. Nine aircraft received battle damage. The target was the Cormeilles-en-Vexin Airdrome.

The afternoon, a formation of 38 planes bombed the Marshalling Yards at Aerschot. Smoke coming up from the bombbursts from the first box, led by Major Meng and Lt Powell, hindered the second box's Bombardier-Navigator, Lt Jones, flying with Captain Clark, from aiming accurately. Results were fair. The intensity of the enemy's flak fire seemed to be increasing. Fourteen planes were hit by flak.

On the morning of the 12th, an attack was made on the airfield at Monchy Breton. The results were poor. Major Price, with Lt Hand, and Captain Dunn, with Lt Arrington, B-N, led the two boxes.

Shortly after those planes landed, 39 fresh crews took off to bomb a Noball at Beauvoir. The course was to lead them through what had already gained the name "Flak Alley." The flak was there as it was expected, in all its intensity and

accurateness. One plane received a direct hit from flak while in the target area. It burst into flames and crashed a mile west of the target. Two chutes were seen to come out of the plane. Its crew was 1st Lt Robert E. Stockwell, pilot, 2d Lt Albert Jedinak, bombardier-navigator, S/Sgt Hollis A. Foster and S/Sgt Egon W. Rust, gunners. Lt Stockwell had been with the Group almost from the beginning of its existence. Bombing in flights of sixes, there were three "Excellents" and three "Poors". Major Willetts, with Lt Royalty, B-N, and Captain Conant, with Lt McBrien, B-N, led the two boxes. Twenty-Four planes suffered battle damage.

Going out again on the 13th, 42 aircraft in three boxes attacked the airdrome at Beauvais-Tille. The first box, led by Major Campbell, with Lt Palin, B-N, scored excellent results. The other two boxes, led by Captain McNulty and Lt Osborne, with Lts Bursiel and Forma as bombardier-navigators, were not quite as accurate. One large hanger was hit and several other installations severely damaged.

A day of cloudy weather postponed the next mission to the 15th. Although 37 aircraft took off to attack the Airdrome at Creil, only the first box dropped its bombs. Lt Powell, Major Meng's Bombardier-Navigator, found a hole in the cloud-patched sky and dropped his bombs squarely onto the aiming point. By the time that Lt Conte, Captain Hulse's Bombardier-Navigator, came onto the target area, a cloud obscured the field from his view. Only one pass was made on the target. No flak was encountered along the route.

Three days of bad weather again kept the planes on the ground. It was late in the afternoon on the 19th when the next mission took off. Thirty-eight planes were sent out to knock out the coastal defense battery at Benerville. Clouds prevented the first box from picking up the target. Captain Clark, with Lt Jones, B-N, in the second box, was able to get a glance at it. The bombs were released with fair results. Major Price, with Lt Hand, B-N, led the first box. On the return trip home, flying through a thick overcast, Lt Joseph Crispino's plane spun out of control. He ordered his two gunners, S/Sgt Thomas I. Walsh and S/Sgt Royden E. Conopask to bail out. Then he jumped himself. The two gunners never did get out and were killed when the plane crashed. Lt Crispino parachuted to earth with a leg fractured when his body was thrown against the plane's tail assembly. He was transferred to an Evacuation Hospital to convalesce. The remains of the two gunners have been interred at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Cambridge.

Mission number 50 was completed in the afternoon on the 20th. It was a costly one for us. Thirty-eight planes took off. Two planes were lost over enemy territory, one plane crash-landed in the U.K., destroyed, twenty-six planes returned with battle damage. Poor visibility caused the Monteidier Airfield to be mistaken for the correct target, the airfield at Beauvais-Tille. From the planes that were lost, three chutes came from one, and two chutes from the other. The crews of the planes were Lt Blair H. Bradford, S/Sgt Clarence M. Gray, S/Sgt Vern E. Molver, Lt Michael E. Kleopfel, S/Sgt Ray Bankston, and S/Sgt LeRoy R. Shaw. It was Lt Henderson who had to crash land in the U.K. Neither he nor his gunners were injured. The boxes were led by Major Willetts and Captain Dunn, with Lts Royalty and Arrington as Bombardier-Navigators.

Another mission was squeezed in the same day before the weather became too dark to bomb. This time the target was the airfield Corneilles-en-Vexin. It was attacked by 35 aircraft led by Major Campbell, with Lt Palin, B-N, and Captain Clark, with Lt Jones, B-N. There were no losses, casualties, or battle damage; and the results were excellent. Concentrations of bombs blanketed five blast shelters, destroying three. Two other shelters received direct hits and near

misses.

Two days later 38 planes took off to attack the same target. Thirteen of the aircraft became separated from the formation during the ascent through the overcast and returned early. The two boxes were originally led by Major Meng and Captain Jackson. The planes that were able to locate it caught onto Major Meng's box and went on to bomb the target. Again excellent results were achieved with hits on one large hanger, three blast shelters, and five unidentifiable buildings.

Two missions were sent out on the 24th to attack the airfields at Beaumont le Roger and Abbeville-Drucat. The first formation led by Major Willetts and Captain Conant had poor results. The second formation, however, caused much destruction to the hangers and blast shelters of what used to be the home of the "Abbeville Kids", the crack Me 109 fighter outfit. The boxes were led by Major Price, Captain Clark, and Lt Osborne.

The following day 37 aircraft made an attack on the Monchy/Breton airfield. Due to an error, the first box dropped prematurely. The second box dropped a good concentration of bombs, but oddly enough, they hit all around the hangar, the M.P.I. Concussion probably destroyed the hanger and adjacent buildings. The boxes were led by Major Meng and Captain McNulty.

The mission on the 26th against the Beauvais Tille airdrome was recalled by IX Bomber Command after we were 20 miles inside France. There was no fighter escort. No attack was made.

When we first began operations, Sunday became known as "Bloody Sunday." It seemed that every Sunday our planes were shot up more than on any other day. "Bloody Sunday" soon was changed to "Bloody Saturday." Saturday, 27 May, was no exception. In the morning, our planes followed the 409th Bomb Group (L) on an attack on the Amiens Marshalling Yards. When they lost a box leader and a deputy leader, they soon strayed far from the course. Major Campbell decided to abandon the mission. Lt Palin, his Bombardier-Navigator, rose to the occasion, and led the planes back to the base. Several of the planes from the 409th Bomb Group (L) joined onto the tail-end of our formation and returned with us. Captain Clark led the second box.

In the afternoon we were the ones to lose planes. The target was again the Marshalling Yards at Amiens. Some few bombs hit the target with fair results. The majority of box 1 dropped on the No. 4 plane, which, having received a direct hit by flak, salvoed its Bombs 10 seconds before the point for release. Six chutes were seen to come out of the planes flown by Lt Guillon and Lt Siracusa. Lt Simms was hit in the arm by flak, and gave the order to his two gunners to bail out over France. The two chutes were seen to open. Lt Simms managed to jockey the plane back across the Channel and crashed on the coast. Although badly injured, and the plane completely wrecked, he did an outstanding job getting the plane back to this side of the Channel. Lt Hewes was also hit over the target. He was last seen flying west from Amiens, slowly losing altitude. No chutes were seen and nothing further was reported on him. The four crews were: Lt Allen W. Gullion Jr., S/Sgt Grady F. Cope, and S/Sgt Gerald L. Coffey, Lt Lucien J. Siracusa, S/Sgt James M. Hume, and S/Sgt Floyd E. Brown Lt Harry E. Hewes, S/Sgt Joseph F. Kasper, and S/Sgt Harold E. Boyer Lt Tommie J. Simms, S/Sgt Julius C. Williamson, and S/Sgt Harry W. Larsen As the chutes from Lt Gullion's and Lt Siracusa's planes floated down, it was reported that light flak was fired at the parachutists from 8000 feet to the ground. The formation was led by Major Price, with Lt Hand, B-N, and Lt Osborne, with Lt Forma, B-N.

Shaken, yes, but no less determined; before the end of the next day, our crews were off on three missions. An important naval R.D.F. Headquarters at Bruges/St Michal was the target in the morning. Bombing in boxes of 14's, against a small target, the results were only fair. Major Meng, Captain Jackson, and Captain Dunn led the boxes.

Simultaneous attacks were made in the afternoon on Noball targets at Vacqueriette and Behen. The box led by Major Willetts, with Lt Royalty, B-N, hit the first target with a good concentration of bombs in the target area. The other box led by Major Campbell, with Lt Palin, B-N, suspended the Behen target with well-placed hits.

Continuing the excellent work, 36 planes dropped 35 tons of bombs on the Achiet airdrome with good to excellent results. The bombs hit a hanger and a fuel dump. Major Price and Lt Osborne led the two boxes.

The 30th mission of the month, and the 63rd since we had begun operating, took off on the 30th. The target was the airdrome at Denian-Prouvy. The first box scored excellent results; the second, poor. A large hangar was damaged and a small one was destroyed. Two other buildings were destroyed, and three blast shelters were damaged. Major Willetts, with Lt Royalty, B-N, and Lt Marzolf, with Lt Basnett, B-N, led the boxes.

The 416th had done a good job, and it was proud of itself. What was more, it was getting official recognition. A letter from Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, head of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, commended the Ninth Air Force for the best bombing against Europe. An endorsement by General Brereton passed the commendation on the Ninth Bomber Command. (Exhibit #1-May 1944) The telegram from General Anderson and the official charts of the bombing accuracy of Groups in the Command quickly led us to rationalize that ours was the best Group in the E.T.O. Certainly our record was able to stand against that of any other outfit. We had averaged a mission a day, and had hit every type of target assigned to us. The activities of the Bomber Command is covered in an end-of-the-month press release. (Exhibit #2-May 1944)

New faces were seen in the Briefing Room almost daily. Replacement crews were coming in almost continually to relieve the pressure that was on the original crews. The replacements were welcome sights for some, especially, who had visions of seven-day operational leaves at the end of 25 missions. Several crews were able to complete their missions and got their leaves in before the end of the month. Among the ground Officers, 1st Lt Charles F. Gunderson was appointed Group Radar Officer; Captain Schenksin, Soldiers' Voting Officer; Lt Harry G. Suttner, Educational Officer; and Lt Harold J. Nussbaum, Group Security Officer when Lt Arnold was transferred into higher headquarters. Lt Col Theodore R. Aylesworth replaced Major Radetsky as Group Tactical Inspector.

Unfortunately, not all men are lost on the fields of battle. Many are lost doing routine things far behind the lines. On the ninth, Captain William Battersby, a veteran of submarine warfare in the Anti-Submarine Command, and holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Air Medal, crashed to his death while test-hopping a plane in the vicinity of this Base. He had been one of the main-stays of our offensive, often being chosen to lead a box of planes. With him was Private First Class Charles W. Coleman, a parachute rigger. The accident happened so suddenly that neither man had a chance to bail out. Their bodies rest in the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Cambridge, England.

Captain J.T.S. Morris, Courts and Boards Officer, was kept busy during the

month with the awards that were being earned by the Group. Among the awards was the DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS. It was awarded to Lt Horace F. Pair, who, returning from a flak filled mission over France brought his plane back to England where he crash-landed. His skill and courage saved the lives of himself and his men. One of the guners, S/Sgt Victor P. Adams, forsaking all thoughts of his personal safety, fought to pull Lt Pair, who leg had been broken, from the plane that was already on fire and was threatening to explode. S/Sgt Adams was awarded the Soldiers' Medal for his "heroism in the face of great danger and the devotion shown for his pilot in the peril of death." (Exhibits #3-13-May 1944)

The strength on the last day of the month was:

668th Bomb Sq	39 Officers	270 E.M.
669th Bomb Sq	41 Officers	270 E.M.
670th Bomb Sq	43 Officers	272 E.M.
671st Bomb Sq	40 Officers	274 E.M.
Hq, 416th	34 Officers	57 E.M.
	--	---
	197	1143

Other figures shown that our crews flew 1079 sorties during the month and dropped 786 tons of bombs.

June, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Historical Record (Month of June).

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

By the first day of June, the G.I's (Guessers on Invasion) were pretty much convinced that June was "the" month. They were even more certain on the 3rd, when we were all restricted to the Base indefinitely. The fourth passed quietly. The fifth, however was a day of feverish activity. Everyone suspected the reason. High ranking officers were seen visiting the Base. Some of our higher ranking officers were called into closed conferences, The general ado, the guarded conversations, and the lack of information about any operations made us all more certain that D-Day was at hand at last.

At about 0300 in the morning of the sixth, the crews were alerted and assembled in the crew briefing room for an early morning briefing. At the end of the regular briefing, Col. Mace addressed the crews. He announced that the invasion was on, and he described the events that were to take place on the beachheads.

The time for take-off had not yet been decided. When the crews glanced out of the windows, the bad weather dampened their spirits somewhat. They had all looked forward to a first sight of the crowded beachheads through cloudless skies. Instead, the clouds were low and rain fell intermittently. The rest of us crowded

around the radios to gather in all of the news--- the Germans claiming landings a Le Havre; we, landings in Normandy.

Finally the planes took-off--- the target was a road junction at Argentan. But more of D-Day when we review our operations for the month.

The ground personnel who had not tasted the thrills of aerial warfare and its dangers were thrown into things with suddenness on the 9th. Word came down from higher headquarters that there was imminent danger of an airborne attack by the Germans within the next 48 hours. All unit on the Base were alerted. Each man had to carry the weapon issued to him, with ammunition. He had to carry his gas mask, wear a sleeve detector, and wear his steel helmet. In the twinkling of an eye the whole Base was bristling with steel-helmeted fighting men armed with "Tommy-guns", Carbines, and Pistols. For two days the men ate, worked, and slept with their weapons within easy reach. But the attack never materialized. At noon on the 11th, the armed might was put back on the shelves.

Once again the inspection fever got us. With the invasion it was only natural to begin to think about another overseas movement. And with a movement, there would be an inspection. We all had become mighty proud of our 416th. None of us wanted to fail in the coming inspection. Capt. Marks, Group Administrative Inspector, and Capt. Kinney, Group Supply Officer, did outstanding work checking the Squadrons and making suggestions for improvements. When inspection day arrived on the 20th, we were ready. After a day of thoroughly inspecting the Group and the Squadrons, the P.O.M. team was able to say, "It was a pleasure to make an inspection like that." The discrepancies were very few in number.

A few days later the Squadrons were thrown almost into a turmoil. A new T/O (Exhibit #1-June 1944) was published which brought major changes in Operations, Intelligence, Communications, and Armament. It meant a rearranging of personnel between sections to meet the new set-up.

Once again the Officer's Club rang out with the strains of music and women walked gaily around when, on the 3rd, the Officers held a dance at the Club. It was dampened a bit when thirty-six crews had to take off on a late evening mission. On the night of D-Day, a U.S.O. Camp Show, "Sunny-Side Up", was presented. Saturday night dances continued to be held at the Aero Club. A small Group orchestra was formed, known as "Joe Bananas and his Bunch". They played and entertained both on this Base and at other nearby dances.

Awards and decorations continued to be won by the combat crews. The highest award went to Lt. Charles McGlohn. It was the award of the SILVER STAR DECORATION. On an operational mission on the 11th of April, Lt. McGlohn was piloting his plane toward the target when it was hit by flak. Some of it entered the cockpit and wounded him severely in the left leg. Despite the pain of the injury, he kept his badly damaged plane under control, dropped his bombs, and headed for home. Not being able to stay with the formation, he returned alone to set the plane and his crew down at an emergency field. Lt. McGlohn was taken to a hospital where his leg was treated. The citation speaks of "his gallant display of flying skill in the face of difficult hazards," but what is more to his credit is his courage to come back, to get into the air again adding his efforts in our victory struggle. Other awards received by the crews were the AIR MEDAL, the BRONZE OAK LEAF CLUSTER, the SILVER OAK LEAF CLUSTER, and the PURPLE HEART.

Among the changes in personnel that occurred, Lt. Col. Aylesworth became Commanding Officer of the 669th Bomb Sq (L) when Major Campbell was listed as Missing in Action. Lt. Col. Ford was appointed Air Inspector and Deputy Group

Commander. A day later, Col. Ford was given the additional duties of Group Tactical Inspector. Other changes were: Lt. Harold J. Nusebaum-Prisoner of War Officer; Lt. Raymond Hough-Group Personal Equipment Officer; and 1st Lt. Thomas W. Sampson came into the Intelligence Department and was assigned to the 671st Bomb Sq (L). Several changes in Group Operations were published in Special Order #96. (Exhibit # 2 -June 1944)

Almost daily men left for seven-day operational leaves, or, as stated on the orders, "for duty concerning IX Bomber Command activities." Their journeys took them to the far corners of England, Scotland, and Wales. These leaves were made possible partly by the almost continuous flow of new combat crews into the Group. These included Pilots, Bombardier-Navigators, and Gunners.

Now let us touch a bit on our operations for June. This being invasion month, we, as part of a tactical airforce, could expect to hit targets in close support of ground troops. Our targets for the month were varied. They are mentioned in a "Month-End Summary" published by IX Bomber Command. (Exhibit # 3- June 1944). A letter published by ETOUSA contained a message from His Majesty King George VI, paying tribute to the work all of us had done. (Exhibit # 4-June 1944).

Mission #64, the first mission in June, was flown on the 2nd. Major Campbell, with Lt. Palin, B-N, had been sharpening up their batting eyes in May. They led the first box of this 41-ship formation, with Lt. Sommers, with Lt. R.J. McQuade, B-N, leading the second box. When PRU planes circled the Noball target at Corenflos, they found that our bombs had suspended it temporarily. This was the second successive Noball target that the Campbell/Palin combination had suspended.

A day later, on the night of the Officer's party, a late mission took off to attack the Chartres Airdrome. When the last plane landed a few minutes before midnight, no one was certain of the results. The sun had already dropped below the horizon when the formation attacked. Photo reconnaissance later showed that the bombs had made craters on the landing area; five main hangars had been destroyed by fire; three hangars were demolished; two hangars received direct hits; and twenty-two hangars in the dispersal area were almost destroyed. We had led two other A-20 Groups over the target. The results were indeed gratifying to the two lead Bombardier-Navigators, Lt. Hand and Lt. McBrien, who flew with Maj. Price and Capt. Conant. One aircraft, piloted by Lt. A.P. Mikas, was hit in the target area. He lost altitude and was last seen to crash or crash land on the bank of the Seine River near Bourg-Achard. His two gunners were Sgt. G.W. Scott and S/Sgt. A.W. Newkirk. No chutes were seen to come from the plane.

On the 4th, forty-three aircraft took off to bomb a coastal defense battery at St. Pierre du Mont, on the invasion coast. Near misses were scored on a command post and on four gun positions. Dropping our greatest tonnage of bombs, 50 1/2 tons, the three boxes were led by Maj. Meng, Capt. Jackson, and Lt. Marzolf.

A day of rest intervened and then D-Day. Going out in full strength, 57 planes took off to attack road junctions in Argentan, behind the enemy lines. (Exhibit # 5-June 1944). Twenty-three tons of bombs from the third box lead by Lt. Osborne, Lt. Forma, B-N, blanketed crossroads and buildings in the target area, possibly blocking the roads. The other two boxes led by Maj. Willetts, Lt. Royalty, B-N, and Maj. Price, Lt. Hand, B-N, mistook the road and rail junction at Econde for the target. Their forty-five tons of bombs cut the railroad tracks, destroyed a railroad overpass, hit numerous goods wagons, and covered the highway with craters. For the first time since the beginning of our operations, we

dropped down to low level to work, 2,500 to 3,000 feet. This was due to the bad weather and low clouds. We encountered no anti-aircraft fire, nor any enemy fighters.

Going back again in the late afternoon mission, our crews (Exhibit # 6-June 1944) flew through some of the most terrifying flak fire ever thrown up by the Germans. The target was a marshalling yard at Serqueux. Even now the crews talk about the superior evasive action taken by the three box leaders, Maj. Meng, Maj. Campbell, and Maj. Clark. Forced down to three thousand feet by clouds, the formation had to fly through continuous fire from small arms, light AA guns, and heavy guns. Two box leader's planes, Maj. Meng's and Maj. Campbell's, were hit even before they reached the target. By displaying skill and courage far above the ordinary, they led their boxes over the target to lay a good concentration of bombs in the target area. Only then did they begin to appraise their own damage and drop out of formation. Maj. Meng nursed his badly damaged plane, with one engine ablaze, back to the Base, but Maj. Campbell was unable to make it. As the crews reported it, he kept his plane under control and appeared to make a normal landing in an open field in France. With him were Lt. William H. Palin, S/Sgt. Harold R. Hatch, and S/Sgt. James B. Thompson. Two other planes were lost at the same time. Lt. R.A. Wipperman's plane crashed, but three chutes were seen to come out of it and open. His two gunners were S/Sgt. H.S. Ahrens and Sgt. L.C. Mazza. The third plane, piloted by Lt. Charles Church, was last seen leaving the target area in trouble. Several crews reported seeing a big explosion in the woods nearby that might have been his plane. His gunners were S/Sgt. H.E. Shatzer and S/Sgt. P.P. Maciulewicz. D-Day was over---we had paid heavily for our successes. We could all hope but one thing---that those men who had been lost were lost to make ours a winning cause.

On D plus 1, the weather was again threatening. However, in the morning, 37 planes took off with instructions to bomb at not below 2,000 feet. The first box, lead by Maj. Willetts, Lt. Royalty, B-N, had to stay down at 2,000 feet in order to make their attack. Their target was a highway bridge at Lessay. Poor visibility made it difficult to find the target, and a highway approach to a bridge south of the target was hit. The other box led by Lt. Marzolf, Lt. Basnett, B-N, attacked the road junction in the heart of Tillysur-Seulles. Dropped from 2,000 feet, the bombs hit in a loose concentration around the M.P.I., possibly cutting several highways.

In the afternoon, splitting up into two boxes, two targets were attacked. The first box led by Major Price dropped an excellent concentration of bombs from an altitude of 2,500 feet on a road junction at Belleroy. Numerous hits were scored on the main highway and other roads causing severe damage, probably blocking the choke point. Lt. Osborne with Lt. Forma, B-N, were given the Divisional Headquarters at Littry for a target. There were no pictures or checkpoints for Lt. Forma to use, only the grid coordinates on a map. Bringing the formation on to the target at 2,000 feet, he dropped a heavy concentration into the northern part of the target area. It was an unique, but well-done job. (Exhibit # 7-June 1944).

Continuing to concentrate on roads and rail communications, a mission took off on the 8th to bomb a highway and rail junction at Vitre. The weather was unusually bad, making it impossible to bomb even at low-level so that no attack was made.

Two days of bad weather kept the planes on the ground until the 11th. Even then bad weather prevented the planes from attacking the target, a road junction at Falaise.

It was not until D plus 6 that the weather cleared enough to permit bombing from 12,000 feet. Unfortunately the bombsights in the lead planes of the first two boxes were not synchronized for deflection. As a result, the bombs missed the target, a railroad embankment at Epernon. The third box led by Capt. Dunn, Lt. Arrington, B-N, dropped squarely on the target, damaging the embankment and probably cutting the tracks. The first two boxes were led by Maj. Price and Lt. Osborne.

On the following day a three-box formation was forced down to 6,500 feet by clouds. The first and third boxes, led by Maj. Meng and Lt. Sommers, failed to identify the correct road junction at St. Sauveur le Vicomte. The second box, however, led by Capt. Jackson, had excellent results. Hits and near misses to the railroad overpass and highway probably destroyed the tracks and the overpass.

Some of our most destructive bombing was done on the 14th. Three boxes led by Major Clark, Lt. Osborne, and Capt. McNulty scored excellent results on the road junction at Annay-sur-Odon. The target was completely demolished. Bombing was from 12,000 feet. (Exhibit # 8-June 1944).

In the afternoon of that same day, 36 aircraft took off to bomb railroad and highway bridges at St. Hilaire. Bombing from 12,000 feet, neither box led by Maj. Willetts or Capt. Dunn, hit the M.P.I's. However, worthwhile results were received when a highway was blocked in the center of the town and a bridge and a highway were hit, probably destroying the bridge.

On the 15th, we put them "in there" again. Maj. Price and Lt. Osborne led the two boxes in an attack on the bridges in Lessay. Bombing in flights of sixes, hits on a road bridge and a railroad bridge completely severed the railroad. (Exhibit #9- June 1944).

That afternoon the target was the Domfrost fuel dump and marshalling yard. Again the two boxes, led by Maj. Meng and Capt. Hulse, bombed in flights of sixes. With excellent results, they knocked out the choke point of the marshalling yard and hit the fuel dump, plus a highway in the target area. (Exhibit # 10-June 1944).

Two days of bad weather again slowed up our offensive. When the planes did get into the air on the 18th, they were only able to get as far as the Seine River. The fuel and ammunition dump in the Foret de Conches was saved by bad weather. The bad weather lasted one more day.

The attack was carried out anew on the 20th. Hitler's secret weapon, the Pilot-less Plane, had begun to cause considerable anxiety among the inhabitants of the southern coastal towns as well as Londoners. As a result we were again being called on to knock out the sites from which they were being launched. In the morning Major Dunn and Lt. Marzolf led two boxes in an attack on the Noball installations at Ligescourt. Bombing in flights of sixes, fair results were achieved which probably caused damage to the installations from concussion.

Going back in the late afternoon, Major Price and Captain Conant led two boxes against the Noball target at Le Grand Rossegnol. The main buildings were destroyed or severely damaged, and hits or near misses were scored on the concrete platform. (Exhibit # 11-June 1944).

On the following day a new technique for our Group was employed. A B-26 Marauder led each of our two boxes in an attack on the Middel Straete Noball target. The Marauders, employing PFF, or Pathfinder, technique, pickup the target

and bombed. Our two boxes, led by Maj. Meng and Capt. Jackson, dropped on the B-26's. The bomb run lasted seven minutes and the bombing was done through clouds as "thick as a table-top". Results were unobserved.

Cherbourg had to be taken. In a plan devised by Lt. General Omar Bradley, a coordinated air and ground attack was the surest way to take the port. The ground troops were to attack. Then, at a certain time, they would withdraw to allow the air power to operate. When the air attack was consummated, the ground forces would resume the attack. Forty of our planes participated in the attacks on one strong point. Anticipating a large scale assault, all of the northern tip of the Peninsula was covered with a thick blanket of smoke by the Germans. The results were fair., hitting in the target area and on nearby roads and a railroad west of the target. Lt. Daniel F. Shea's plane was hit by flak at the target. He was forced to seek out an emergency landing strip and became the first member of our Group to land on French soil. Lt. Jack F. Smith's plane was also hit. He managed, however, to bring it across the Channel on a single engine and land at an emergency airfield in the United Kingdom. The two boxes were led by Captain Jackson, Lt. Maltby, B-N, and Capt. Huff, Lt. Kupits, B-N.

Going back again on the 24th after the same target we had attacked on the 21st, our planes were again led by B-26's which bombed by the use of PFF. The results were unobserved. Capt. Dunn and Capt. McNulty led the two A-20 boxes.

Later that same day a formation of 36 planes were dispatched to attack a fuel dump at Bagnoles De L'Orne. Although most of the bombs hit in the target area, the lack of any violent explosions may have indicated that the fuel had been removed. Lt. Osborne and Major Price led the two boxes.

The next day we tried area bombing for the first time. The target was a fuel dump in the Foret D'Andaine. Because of a malfunction in the bombsight gyro, the first box missed the target. The bombs of the second box hit the target area. Captain Dunn and Captain Hulse led the boxes.

Dropping down to 3,000 feet for the first time since the 15th, Major Willetts and Captain Hulse led two boxes in an attack on targets on the railroad from St. Hilaire to Vitre. Bombing in flights of sixes, there were six separate targets. The bridge at St. Hilaire received direct hits and near misses with probable destruction or severe damage resulting. Hits were scored on a highway and on a 9-span bridge, possibly breaching the bridge or causing severe damage to it. One aircraft was hit by enemy fire at St. Lo and was seen to crash northeast of that city. The pilot was Flight Officer Bruce E. Baxter. His two gunners were Sgt. R.L. Ernstrom and Sgt. H.A. Potter. One chute was seen to emerge from the falling plane. All are listed as "Missing in Action." It had been F/O Baxter's first operational mission.

The final mission of the month, NO. 88 for the Group, was flown on the 30th. The target---road centers in Thury-Harcourt. Anticipating bad weather over the target, PFF was to be employed if necessary. It was used in the first box with fair results near the intersection. PFF equipment in the second box failed so that that box did not drop its bombs. Captain Dunn and Major Clark led the two boxes.

Also on that last day of the month, in an unfortunate training accident, 1st Lt. Scott B. Ritchie, Jr., was killed. Killed with him were his two gunners, S/Sgt. Edwin A. Anderson and Sgt. Howard W. Smith. He was taking off at a nearby field, with chemical tanks on the wings, when one engine cut out. The plane pancaked in and cracked up. Their remains have been placed interred in the

American Military Cemetery in Cambridge, England.

A resume of our activities shows that of the 25 missions that the Group participated in during June, 925 tons of bombs were dropped and 939 sorties were flown.

Speaking with pride of the men whom he commanded, and of their achievements, Colonel Mace addressed a gathering of all personnel in Hangar # 1 on the 9th. With him was Colonel Backus, Commanding Officer of the 97th wing. He also praised the Group highly for the work it had done. Colonel Mace especially mentioned Major Campbell and Maj. Meng for their gallantry on D-Day, and Lt. Simms for his gallantry on 27 May.

Total strength for the Group on the last day of the month of June was 216 Officers and 1197 Enlisted Men. The Squadron strength was as follows.

Headquarters	33 Officers	59 Enlisted Men
668th Bomb Sq	45 "	283 " "
669th Bomb Sq	46 "	287 " "
670th Bomb Sq	47 "	284 " "
671st Bomb Sq	45 "	284 " "

The Orders on the awards for the Group are included in Exhibits # 12 to 23-June 1944.

July, 1944

HEADQUARTERS FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L) OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Since D-Day, the Allied troops had been progressing on the beach-head, but by the first of July, the gains had been small, although of great importance. Cherbourg had been taken and as work on the harbor facilities progressed, so our won advances began to be greater.

Throughout the month of July, our gains on the Cherbourg Peninsula brought us further south. On the last day of the month, it was announced that both Avranches and Granville in the southwestern corner had fallen to us. The going had been rough, and only the finest cooperation between the Air Forces and the Ground Forces had made the advances possible. Congratulatory messages were received from Sir Trafford LeighMallory, General Montgomery, and General Brereton concerning the work done by our Ninth Air Force. (Exhibit #1.)

For our part in the Air Offensive, Europe, our Group was authorized to wear a battle star on the European-African-Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon. (Exhibit #2.) On the 18th of July, we had been in the E.T.O. six months and became eligible to wear the new overseas service bar on our left sleeve (Exhibit #3.) The combat crews continued to earn Air Medals and Purple Hearts. (Exhibits 4-10.) Among other awards, the highest went to Major Murdoch W. Campbell, who has been listed as "Missing In Action" since D-Day, 6 June 1944, and Lt Charles McGlohn. They were awarded the Silver Star. Major Meng, Lt Pair, and Lt Mish received the

Distinguished Flying Cross. In a ceremony here on the Base on the 18th, Lieutenant General Lewis H. Brereton made the presentation of awards to Major Meng, Lt McGlohn, Lt Mish, and Lt Pair. At the same time, presentations were made to officers from nearby bases. (Exhibit #11-17).

Despite the fact that we flew many missions during the month, training of all types continued. The combat crews practiced bombing, night flying, and day and night navigation. The ground crews especially, put their camouflage training into actual practice by camouflaging all vehicles, gun positions, and open supply dumps. Twice during the month, the entire base was subjected to a mustard gas attack as part of the training program. (Exhibits 18-19).

Changes of personnel continued, as usual. On the 2nd, however, we lost one of the higher ranking members of our Group. He was Lt Col Thomas R. Ford, who had been, for some time, Deputy Group Commander. He left to take over the command of the 409th Bombardment Group (L). Although we hated to lose him, we were happy to see him get the advancement which he so rightly deserved. The Intelligence Section received two replacements during the month. First Lieutenant Lilburn S. Rogers was assigned to the 670th Bomb Sq (L). The other, First Lieutenant Edwin M. Stanton, became assistant Group Intelligence Officer to replace Lt Nussbaum, who received orders on the 25th of July to return to the states. He was the third member of our Group to return. The other two were Lt Tommie J. Simms, whose injuries caused him to be invalided home, and Staff Sergeant Holley Perkins Jr., who returned after having completed 102 operational missions in both the E.T.O. and in the Southwest Pacific. Captain James H. Gardner Jr. was appointed Group Medical Administrative officer. When Lt Col Ford was transferred, Lt Col Aylesworth was relieved as commanding officer of the 669th Bomb Sq (L), and was appointed Air Inspector, Deputy Group Commander, and Group Tactical Inspector. Major John G. Napier assumed command of the 669th Bomb Sq (L). This necessitated changes in Group Operations, which are mentioned in Group Special Orders #105, (Exhibit #20), dated 3 July 1944. On the 21st, Lt Everett T. Platter replaced Lt Shaefer as Group Training officer. Lt Thomas W. Sampson became Group Prisoner of Warfare and Security Officer. An aircraft accident committee was appointed on the 4th. (Exhibit #21.)

At a staff meeting on the 3rd, Colonel Mace announced that the new T/O, published in June, had been withdrawn temporarily. We would continue to operate under the old T/O; at the same time, he read a TWX on a new bombing policy. No bombing was to be done under 8,000 feet, or 10,000 feet if the flak was heavy.

One of the distinguished visitors to our Base during July was Brigadier General Samuel E. Anderson, who reviewed a parade of our troops on the 17th. (Exhibit #22.)

Special Service and the Aero Club did splendid work furnishing entertainment for the men on the Base. On the 3rd, a USO show, "Music on the March," was presented. To add a little back home touch to the Fourth of July activities, a dance was held at the Aero Club. The Special Service Weekly Bulletin presented news on the movies and other activities promoted by that department. (Exhibit #23.)

Word was received that seven men who had gone down in enemy territory and were listed as "Missing In Action" were now prisoners of war. They were Lt Allen W. Gullion Jr., Staff Sergeants Floyd E. Brown, Grady F. Cope, Gerald L. Coffey, Clarence M. Gray, Joseph F. Kasper, and Sergeant Julius C. Williamson Jr.

Group Inspections continued to make the rounds of all squadrons and their

sections. The diligence of the Group Inspectors brought the conditions of all sections to a high peak. When technical inspectors from the IX Bomber Command checked the Group on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th, the work that had been accomplished was readily recognized. Their report read:

"1. The maintenance of aircraft and all associated equipment installed in aircraft inspected is considered excellent. The improvement noted through all Group Technical sections is commendable. Supervisory and maintenance personnel are performing their inspection and respective duties in a very efficient manner."

"2. The condition of files, records, and reports in all sections has greatly improved since the last inspection by this Headquarters and is now considered excellent."

"3. A high state of moral was found to exist throughout the Group. Enlisted personnel expressed an unusual amount of interest in their duties and equipment. Pride in the organization was evident in conversations with officer and enlisted personnel."

"4. The efficiency rating of the Group, based on the maintenance and general condition of technical equipment and technical administration is superior."

At his staff meeting on the 5th, Colonel Mace congratulated Major Roney, Group Technical Inspector; Mr. Moffett, Group Engineering Officer, and others who had made the inspection so successful. In addition, a letter of commendation was received from General Anderson, complimenting us on the condition of our Group. (Exhibit #24.)

Here is a resume [missing] missions that were flown by our Group in July. While every gun on the ground fired a salvo at the enemy, every bomber available dropped a bomb on him from above. It was a fine Fourth of July celebration. It was on that day too, that we flew our first mission in July, No. 89. Thirty six of our planes took off to bomb a defended area at La Moriniere. Expecting 10/10 cloud cover over the target, PFF was used. The bombing results were unobserved. Lt Osborne, with Lt Forma, B-N, and Major Price, with Lt Hand, B-N, led the two boxes.

A day later, 37 aircraft were dispatched to destroy the Noball headquarters housed in a chateau at Merlemont. The flak encountered was extremely accurate and 23 aircraft suffered battle damage. Captain Jackson nursed his badly damaged plane back to Southern England where he crash landed. One of his gunners, Private First Class Byron K. Allen, bailed out of the stricken plane over the U.K; he was killed when his parachute failed to open from 1,000 feet. He was buried in the Cambridge American Military Cemetery in Cambridge, England. Although the weather over the target began to clear up, PFF, it was decided, would be used. The first box, led by Captain Jackson with Lt Maltby, B-N, scored excellent results. The bombs fell in a loose pattern 210 feet southwest of the M.P.I. One or two probable hits and near misses on the chateau may have caused its destruction or severe damage. Several hits were scored on unidentified buildings in the target area. At the last minute, a PFF failure forced Lt McQuade, B-N for Captain Sommers, leader of the second box, to bomb visually. His bombs fell southwest of the aiming point.

For the third day running, on the 6th, our planes went out again. They flew both a morning and an afternoon mission. In the morning the target was the railway embankment at Epernon. Thirty-six planes made the attack and caused

considerable damage to the tracks. Lt Marzolf, with Lt Basnett, B-N, and Major Willetts, Lt Royalty, B-N, led the two boxes. Bombing was by flights of six. In the afternoon, points on the railroad from Verneuil to La Loupe were attacked with good to excellent results. They breached the railroad at several points and damaged embankments. Major Price and Lt Osborne led the boxes, although the bombing was flights of sixes. (Exhibit #25.)

On the following day in a late evening mission, 39 aircraft took off to attack troops and equipment in a forest at Fontainele-pin. Finding it obscured by clouds, they made no attack. Sixteen aircraft chose as a target of opportunity a bridge southwest of St Pierre Sur Dives. There was no photo coverage because of the haze and darkness. The last plane landed at 2356 hours. Major Willetts, Lt Royalty, B-N, and Captain Rudisill, Lt Joost, B-N, led the two boxes.

Going out for the fifth consecutive day, 39 aircraft took off to destroy strong points in Caen as ground support targets. The results were excellent, and soon it was announced over the radio that General Montgomery's troops had moved in to take that same area. The boxes were led by Lt Osborne and Major Price, and bombing was by flights of sixes. That afternoon, the scene of our activities shifted to Rennes to hit a fuel dump. The target was again obscured by clouds so that a target of opportunity was chosen---it was a road and railroad intersection north of Combourg. The results ranged from good to excellent, cutting the road, railway, and highway overpass. Captain Jackson and Major Meng led the two boxes, although bombing was by flights of sixes. (Exhibit #26.)

After having flown seven missions in five days, we hit some bad weather.

We reverted to PFF bombing on the 11th, and bombed the Bourth railroad bridge through 10/10 clouds. The results were unobserved. Major Meng and Lt Osborne led both boxes.

On the following day, a fuel dump in the Foret D'Andaine was attacked by PFF bombing through 10/10 clouds. Although the results were unobserved, photo reconnaissance later revealed that the attack was concentrated in the western half of the target area. Bombs uprooted trees and caused severe damage to the area. Major Willetts and Lt Marzolf led the two boxes.

The next mission was flown on the 14th. Using PFF, 32 planes attacked a railroad embankment at Bourth. The bridge was cut by at least four hits. A telegram of congratulations was received from General Anderson. (Exhibit #27). Major Dunn, Lt Arrington, B-N, and Lt Osborne, Lt Forma B-N, led the boxes.

Two days later, 30 planes attacked the St Hilaire du Harcourt road bridge. Again clouds necessitated the use of PFF. The results were unobserved. Major Meng, Lt Powell, B-N, and Captain McNulty, Lt Bursiel B-N, led the boxes.

We tried on the 17th to get missions No. 100 and 101 off, but weather prevented it. On the 18th, however, we succeeded in reaching the century mark. General Montgomery called for air support to wipe out enemy resistance in the area just east of Caen. He planned an feinting movement to the southwest of the city. The air strength would hit to the east, and in a welltimed move, his armored units would sweep on southward. Our target was Giverville. One box dropped a good concentration in the target area. The bombsight in the lead plane of the second box was damaged by flak so that the bombs could not be dropped. The air plane was very effective, though, because General Montgomery was enabled to move his troops forward six miles without experiencing any enemy opposition.

That afternoon, Major Price, with Lt Hand, B-N, and Lt Marzolf, Lt Beck, B-N, led two boxes in an attack on the Mantes Gassicourt inland railroad bridge. As they approached the target, they met a solid wall of clouds that forced them to turn back. They chose the Glos-Sur-Risle railroad junction as a secondary target. The bombs fell in a beautiful pattern squarely on the junction. A letter of congratulations was received from General Brereton on the job done. (Exhibits #28-29.)

On the following day, the 19th, 39 aircraft were dispatched to attack the Bruz Fuel Dump south of Rennes. Good to excellent results were achieved with hits on the fuel dump, roads, and buildings. Major Meng and Captain Rudisill led the mission that encountered considerable flak. Fourteen aircraft received battle damage from flak. Flight Officer R.T. Byrne was forced down on the beach-head. One of his gunners, Sergeant Ralph L. Cochran was killed by flak. He was buried in the Monarch Cemetery at Bloisville, France.

Bad weather again hampered our operations. After a two-day rest, the planes took off on the 22nd to attack the railroad bridge at Bourth. PFF had to be used. Major Price and Lt Marzolf were the box leaders. Reconnaissance photographs showed that eight direct hits on the tracks made the line unserviceable.

PFF was used on the 23rd when Major Clark and Captain Jackson led the attack on the Evreux railroad bridge. The target was obscured by 10/10 clouds.

A ground support mission had been planned for four days, but bad weather had caused its postponement. Finally on the 25th, visibility improved enough so that it could be executed. The target was in the St Gilles area, west of St Lo. An excellent pattern of bombs was dropped in the target area, which for a radius of 2,000 yards devastated the area with innumerable craters. Major Meng and Captain Rudisill led the two boxes. It helped to clear the way for the break-through by the American forces intent on encircling the Germans.

Another attack on the following day in the Marigny area was planned for further ground support. Clouds over the target area prevented any attack, however.

The La Gouishiere Fuel Dump was bombed by PFF methods on the 28th. Through an occasional break in the clouds, crew members were able to observe excellent results. Captain McNulty and Captain Hulse led the two boxes.

Caumont still stood in the way of the American advance. On the 30th, our planes took off to attack a strong point at Caumont. A 10/10 cloud cover necessitated the use of PFF. For the first time, our planes dropped 500-pound fragmentation clusters. The results of the bombing could not be observed, but the advances in that area by the ground troops led us to believe that our work had been successful. The boxes were led by Major Price and Lt Osborne.

On the last day of the month, we were called upon to hit one of the most vitally important railroad bridges west of the Seine. It was at Mantes Gassicourt. A 10/10 cloud cover prevented an attack. The box leaders, Major Clark and Captain Huff, headed for the alternate target, a railroad junction at Lisieux. Box I bombed with a 15 second bomb run, the bombs falling across the tracks and into the factory area. The hole in the cloud was too small for the bombardier in the second box to pick out the target, so he did not bomb.

The bridge had to be knocked out so that in the afternoon 37 planes were again sent out to do the job. This time, the results ranged from good to

excellent. The bombs scored hits and near misses on the embankment and bridge and probably destroyed the latter. Major Willetts, Lt Royalty, B-N, and Lt Cole, Lt Basnett, B-N, led the boxes. Lt Merchant was forced down on the beach-head, but no one was injured. Lt Lesher crashed when one engine cut out on the take-off. He and one of his gunners escaped injury, but the other gunner, Staff Sergeant Adolfos J. Antaneitis, suffered a fractured leg. The plane was completely destroyed.

That was the final mission of the month, No. 110 for the Group. During the month of July, we had flown 762 sorties and had dropped 701 tons of bombs. We lost two combat crew members. One, Lt Walter L Pentilla, of the 669th Bomb Sq (L), was killed on the 11th, while flying on a routine formation training mission. At 1,000 feet, one engine cut out on him. The plane dove into the ground. He died while being taken to the hospital. He was buried at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Cambridge, England. The other fatality was Pfc Byron K. Allen, of the 4th Combat Camera Unit, who was killed on the 5th, when his parachute failed to open.

We have attempted to describe our own individual part in a big show. A Public Relations Month-End Summary more clearly describes what the Ninth Air Force has been doing in July and how our work ties in with the general shape of the war. (Exhibit #30.)

Orders for Special Awards are included in Exhibits 31-43.

August, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Historical Data (August 1944).

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

The strength of the Group at the end of July was 251 Officers and 1210 Enlisted Men. At the end of August the figures read 262 Officers and 1237 Enlisted Men. These figures tell but a small part of the story of changing personnel that occurred during these 31 August days. To start things, on the 3rd, Colonel Mace was transferred from the Group to assume command of the 98th Combat Wing of B-26 Marauders. Lieutenant Colonel Theodore R. Aylesworth, who had been Deputy Group Commander, was made Commanding Officer of the 416th. Exhibit #1. He was the third Commanding Officer that the Group had since its activation in February 1943. Exhibit #2.

This change necessitated other changes all down the line. Lieutenant Colonel Walter W. Farmer became Deputy Group Commander, Major Harold A Radetsky replaced him as Group Operations Officer. Major Dunn became Assistant Group Operations Officer. Captain Moore became the Operations Officer for the 671st Bomb Sq (L); Captain Conant, for the 670th Bomb Sq (L); and Captain McNulty, for the 668th Bomb Sq (L). Exhibits #3 and 3. A new Aircraft Accident Committee, headed by Lt. Col. Farmer, was formed. Exhibit #5.

When Lt. Col. Farmer was lost on 6 August in the attack on Oissel Bridge, Major William J. Meng was appointed Air Inspector and Deputy Group Commander on the 9th. Later in the month, Major Meng was also appointed Station Air Inspector. Major Dunn was relieved of his assignment in Group Operations and assumed command of the 670th Bomb Sq (L). Major Clark, who had been Operations Officer for the 669th Bomb Sq (L), was relieved and appointed Assistant Group Operations Officer. Captain Sommers took over Major Clark's job in the 669th Bomb Sq (L). Exhibits #6, 7, & 8.

A new detail for the court to try all cases coming before a Special Court was appointed on the 17th. Exhibit #9. On the 26th, Lt. Edwin M. Stanton replaced Lt. Thomas W. Sampson as Prisoner of Warfare and Security Officer.

With the movement of our Group imminent, a practice move was contemplated with the aim in mind of increasing the efficiency of the organization when we would actually move. On the 21st and 22nd, the Advance Echelon carried out its practice move. Exhibits #10 & 11. This tactical move was to consist of loading equipment, performing a road march with full field equipment, and overnight bivouac, and the march back to the living sites. Bad weather made the bivouac impractical. The rest of the conditions were carried out, however. The movement served a very practical purpose in that it brought out difficulties in loading and the need for rearranging some of the personnel. Unfortunately, bad weather kept the planes on the ground so that the Rear Echelon could not be tested for their ability to handle operations without the aid of the men in the Advance Echelon. On the 29th and 30th, the Rear Echelon made a similar practice move. Although all of its equipment was loaded, which included all personnel's equipment, and all field equipment packed, there was no movement of personnel. All personnel, with the exception of the drivers and assistant drivers for the movement, continued with their regular duties. The vehicles departed from their sites, with all equipment loaded in them and a driver and his assistant. They left the Base at the Main Gate, made a circuit through Wethersfield, and returned to the Base by way of the #2 Gate, near Penny Pst.

Two training accidents which marred our records for the month resulted in the death of two of our newer Pilots. On the 25th, a four-ship training flight took off, led by Lt. Ostrander. Flying #3 position was Second Lieutenant Norris B. Haney. Flying over Beatty Hall, a distance from this Base, the formation descended to low altitude and went into an echelon to the right. Lt. Haney seemed to break out of the formation and went down to minimum altitude. His plane struck a telephone pole which tore off the left horizontal stabilizer. The airplane slowly rolled into the ground killing Lt. Haney. Five days later, on the 30th, First Lieutenant Edward L. Miller was leading a two-ship routine training, navigational-formation flight. Second Lieutenant John D. Smith was on his right wing. Apparently trying to cross under Lt. Miller's plane, Lt. Smith hit Lt. Miller's plane, cutting the tail off at the rear turret. Lt. Miller immediately jettisoned his hatch and parachuted to safety. Lt. Smith's plane, however, went into a flat spin and crashed. Lt. Smith was killed. Both Lt. Haney and Lt. Smith were interred in the Cambridge American Military Cemetery, Cambridge, England.

Word was received from higher headquarters that five more of our men who had gone down over enemy territory were Prisoners of War in the hands of the Germans. They are:

1st Lt. Lucian J. Siracusa
2d Lt. Anton P. Nikas
S/Sgt. James N. Hume
S/Sgt. Leroy R. Shaw

Sgt. Harry W. Larsen

Special Services, aided by the Red Cross Aero Club and the Officer's Club, furnished fine entertainment for everyone during the month. On the 5th, the man who decided to slug it out with Joe Louis for the World's Heavyweight Championship and lost, stepped into a ring erected in Hangar #1 for an exhibition bout. He was Corporal Billy Conn. His two opponents for the night were Private Joseph Ciryak from our [?] Group, (Exhibits 12 and 12A) and Private "Tut" Taber, recognized as the E.T.O. middleweight champion. A station baseball team, composed mostly of Bomb Group athletes, had a succesful month in their 15 games against teams from nearby stations. A concert party, "Marlfly", was presented at the Aero Club by the Cambridge Construction Sites Co. Sergeant Del J. Kinney's Art Class gained impetus during the month as did the British/G.I. Bull Sessions which were a regular Friday night feature. The Officers held two dances at the Officer's Club during the month, and the Enlisted Men attended Saturday night dances at the Aero Club. Of course there were the regular evening movies, supplemented by a matinee performance, thrice weekly, for just combat personnel.

Captain J. T. S. Morris, the Group Awards and Recreations Officer, was kept busy writing citations for the deeds and achievements of the men in the Group, both flying personnel and gound personnel.

The hightest award went to Second Lieutenant Tommie J. Sims. It was the DISTINGUISHED SERVICES CROSS. On 27 May 1944, after having had his plane shot up by flak on the bomb run, and having been seriously wounded himself, Lt. Sims ordered his gunners to bail out when he thought that he was about to lose conscioiusness. He continued on alone, however, forsaking all thoughts of his own safety in a vain effort to get his plane back to England, where he eventually did crash land. Exhibit #13.

Coming back from a mission on 18 July 1944, Lt. Rozell Hill saw his air speed indicator and altimeter suddenly stop functioning. He got on the interphone and told his gunners, Sergeant Blackford and Sergeant Burger, the situation. They found the altimeter and air speed indicator control line had been severed by flak. Using ingenuity and the few materials at hand, they brought the operation of the instruments back to normal. Working together, they took the tubing off a "Mae West", split it with scissors from a first aid pouch, and [? text unreadable ?] that had been shattered. Tape torn from a headset was used to hold the tube in place and prevent it from leaking. Their initiative and quick thinking enabled Lt. Hall to fly the plane back to the base making full use of his instruments. They received a letter of commendation from General Anderson for their work. Exhibits # 14 & 15.

Six enlisted men, working on the line, from the 668th Bomb Sq (L) were awarded the SOLDIER'S MEDAL for their presence of mind and courage on 19 July 1944. Exhibit # 16. Radio equipment on a fully-loaded plane which was being prepared for a mission suddenly burst into flames. Realizing that the fire would eventually detonate the fuzed bombs, they combined their efforts both to extinguish the blaze before it could seriously burn the plane and to defuse the bombs before they were detonated. The six men were:

T/Sgt. Harold Arnes
T/Sgt Charles S. Curtis
Sgt. Clyde Danestone
Sgt. Ernest M. Partaledis
Pfc. Frank J. Robertson
Pvt. William J. Riggins

Two other 668th gunners, Staff Sergeants William H. Coe and Earnest E. Kelly, were awarded the SOLDIER'S MEDAL. Sgt. Coe had died of injuries received in a jeep accident in the meantime, and the award was made posthumously to his father, Mr. Thomas E. Coe. On a mission on 4 June 1944, their plane was badly damaged by flak which hit the gasoline tank and hydraulic lines. Leaking hydraulic fluid and gasoline poured into the gunner's compartment when the bomb-bay doors refused to close. Suddenly the radio equipment caught on fire, endangering the complete plane and crew. The two gunners, using fire extinguishers, managed to put out the blaze. Later, just before landing, the fire broke out again. Their efforts a second time managed to get the blaze out before the plane touched the ground. Exhibit #16.

Twenty-six crew chiefs were awarded the BRONZE STAR MEDAL for having kept their planes in such fine condition that they were able to participate in 50 missions without an abortion, the result of mechanical failure. Exhibits #17 & 18.

Air Medals, Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters, Silver Oak Leaf Clusters, and Purple Hearts were won as many of the crews began to pass the half-century mark in missions completed. Exhibits #19 to 28.

The war continued to look brighter as the days progressed. With the fall of Rennes on the 3rd, our troops began their march toward Paris. On the 5th, the Loire river was under our control. On the 15th, it was announced to the World that a new Allied landing had been made on the Southern coast of France between Cannes and Toulon. Finally after four years of Nazi oppression, Paris was liberated on the 23rd by the Free French Forces of the Interior.

General Brereton who relinquished his command to Major General Vandenburg-- Exhibit # 29-- to take over the command of a new Army task force commended all of the aircrews under his command who had helped to make these advances possible. Exhibit # 30. A message of congratulations was also received from His Majesty King George VI. Exhibit #31.

The "Air Offensive, Europe", was completed on 5 June 1944, and the campaign, "Western Europe", began. Battle participation awards for this phase were made on the 24th of August. All personnel assigned or attached to this Group between 6 June 1944 and 24 August 1944 were authorized to wear a battle star on their European-African-Middle Eastern Theatre Ribbon. Exhibit # 32.

The month of August featured some of the finest bombing done by this, or any other Group. The "excellents" that were scored, were not the work of one or two Bombardier-Navigators, but were scored by every one of them at one time or another throughout the month --- proof of the ability of these key men on an bombing team. Bombing was done generally by flights of sixes.

Here is a resume of our mission:

[Mission 111] flown by the Group ????????????????????????????????? [Major Meng, Lt.] Powell, B-N, and Capt. Jackson, Lt Maltby, B-N, led the two boxes, bombing by flights of sixes, in an attack on an ammunition dump at Caudebec. Photo reconnaissance showed 30 craters in and east of the target area. One corner of the large rectangular building was destroyed by hits and another long narrow one was damaged. Lt Murray's plane was hit by flak, and he was forced to crash land in Southern England. No one was injured.

On the 4th, our planes took off again to hit a marshalling yard in Beauvais -

---at one time a dreaded flak area. Major Price, Lt Hand, B-N, and Captain McNulty, Lt Bursiel, B-N, led the two boxes. The results ranged from good to excellent. All thru lines and choke points between the up siding and down siding were severed by several direct hits.

A day later we flew two missions. The target in the morning was the Compiègne-Marigny marshalling yards. Pictures taken by a PRU plane show at least 20 direct hits on the junction of the thru lines and a line towards Soissons. About 30 hits in the center of the sidings damaged or destroyed about 35 goods wagons. Three direct hits near the choke points at the west end of the yard were scored, and thru traffic was probably impossible. Major Willetts, Lt Royalty, B-N, and Captain Huff, Lt Kupits, B-N, led the boxes.

That afternoon, Major Meng, Lt Powell, B-N, and Major Dunn, Lt Arrington, B-N, led the two boxes in an attack on the Laigle railroad bridge. The western approach to the bridge was damaged by several near misses. Several hits along the embankment severed the eastern approach to the bridge, making the line unserviceable. Lt Perkins' plane was hit by flak southeast of Caen and had one [engine] shot out. When he tried to crash-land on the Normandy beach head, he couldn't get the wheels down. He made a perfect belly landing, however, and none of his crew were injured.

The sixth was another two-mission day. In the morning the target was the Oisell bridge across the Seine--the last bridge remaining across the river. When the two boxes, [led by Lt. Osborne,] Lt. Forma, B-N, and Major Napier, Lt. Madenfort, B-N approached [the] target, they had to turn back without attacking it because of bad weather.

The bridge had to be knocked out, however, so we were sent out after it again in the afternoon. Our Group had been especially chosen to do the job by Major General Anderson. It proved to be the most costly mission we had had since 18 July when two planes were lost. On that day, Lt. Raymond K. Cruse was forced to ditch in the Channel. Although it [was not] certain that he had drowned, his body was never recovered and he is listed as MIA. One gunner, Sergeant F.E. Cherry, was killed in action; the other gunner Sergeant S. W. Giesy, was seriously wounded in action --- he was recovered by rescue craft. The other plane, piloted by Lt. Robert J. Rooney, was also hit by flak but it managed to make it back to England where Lt. Rooney crash landed it. Lt. Rooney was badly injured by flak which came up through the seat in the cockpit. One gunner, Staff Sergeant Herbert M. McCleary, suffered a fractured [right arm, the other] gunner, Staff Sergeant Sebastian F. DiNaplei, suffered minor [injuries].

But even that damage and those losses were small compared to the number damaged and lost on this afternoon attack on the Oisell bridge. These were our losses:

Missing in Action:

Lt. Col. W.W. Farmer, Sgt. J.E. Hay, Sgt. J.A. Buskirk--Last seen heading away from the target toward our lines, plane smoking.

Lt. T.W. McManus, Sgt. G.A. Hart, Sgt. J.H. LaPionte--plane seen to crash in the target area.

Lt. A.J. Welch, Sgt. R.E. Wright, Sgt. S.G. Novak--last seen going down in the target area.

Killed in Action:

Killed when they were forced to crash land in Normandy with their plane badly damaged by flak were Lt. D.T. Sommers, Sgt. S.R.

Zakliskiewicz, and Sgt. J.L. Johnson.

Lt. Osborne's right engine was shot out so that he was forced to crash land in Normandy. The plane was washed out, but the crew was uninjured. Severe battle damage forced Lt. J.E. [Blomgren] to crash land at Tanguere -- none of the crew was injured. Lt. J.[P. Smith also] crash landed at Tanguere due to flak damage. His brakes were [shot out, and, when] his plane nosed in at the end of the runway with no brakes, it was washed out -- none of the crew was injured. On a second bomb run over the target, Major Napier's Bombardier-Navigator, Lt. J. Madenfort, was hit in the face by flak so that his flight was unable to bomb. Besides the damage already noted, 23 other planes suffered varying degrees of battle damage. The 416th had done the job, however, that it had set out to do. The main weight of the attack fell across the rail line on the island and on its approaches. Supports at the south end of a new span that had been erected were also damaged. The line was now unserviceable. The pictures taken during the attack reveal the accuracy of the bombing. Captain Osborne and Major Napier led the two boxes. Exhibit #33. A word of commendation on the job done was received from General Anderson, and from General Backus. Exhibit # 33-A.

A day of rest followed that costly mission which gave the ground crews a chance to repair the badly damaged planes.

On the eighth our planes struck twice again. In the morning 36 planes attacked the Frevant railroad junction. Not a bomb fell outside the triangularshaped target area. The concentration of bombs in the center of the gathering of roads destroyed half of a large repair shop and several smaller installations. At least 17 goods wagons were destroyed. One direct hit landed on the line east of the bridge at the west end of the target and one on the line west of it. All thru lines in the gathering of roads were out. Major Clark, Lt. Jones, B-N, and Captain Rudisill, Lt. Joost, B-N, led the two boxes. Again we were hit by flak. Lt. Norman V. Shainberg's plane was hit by flak and was last seen heading toward our lines, losing altitude. One or two crews reported seeing it crash. No chutes were seen to emerge. Lt. Shainberg and his two gunners, Sgt. J.D. Dugan and Sgt. L.B. Curtis, are listed as MIA. Another plane out of that first flight also went down. The plane caught on fire when it was hit by flak after leaving the target; it was seen to lose a wing and then explode. Lt. Peter Dontas was the pilot. Staff Sergeants A.L. Nielsen and W.E. Fields were the gunners. One chute was seen to come out of the plane. The crew is listed as MIA.

That afternoon the radar installations in the Bois du Pierre were the targets. Again the results ranged from good to excellent, the bombs hitting around the chateau probably destroying or damaging it. Just one of those things happened though, and, although it had looked like our bombs had hit their mark, photo reconnaissance showed no evidence of damage to the installations.

As a result our target on the morning of the 9th was the same radar installation. The results ranged from fair to excellent with some bombs believed to have fallen directly on the desired MPI. Major Willetts, Lt. Royalty, B-N, and Captain Marzolf, Lt. Beck, B-N, led the boxes. Lt. Hiram Clark was forced to land at Ridgewell when one engine, hit by flak, failed on the return trip.

That afternoon Major Meng and Captain Rudisill took off leading two boxes of planes to attack the Chauny railroad bridge. Major Meng was forced to return early because of mechanical difficulties. Lt. Meagher, Lt. Burg, B-N, took over the lead of the first box. Due to mistaken identity, the first box hit a bridge at Appily, southwest of the target. The second box, however, destroyed half of the Chauny bridge making it unserviceable.

For the third day running, our planes took advantage of the good weather and

flew two missions. This was on the 10th. In the morning, Major Price and Capt. McNulty led the two boxes in an attack on the Foret du Romare ammunition dump. The weather over the target was bad, however, so that no bombs were dropped. That afternoon bad weather again caused our planes to bring their [bombs back from] an attack on the Lu Londe de Louge ammunition dump. Capt. [Huff, Lt. Kupits,] B-N, and Capt. Morton, Lt. Moore, B-N, led the two boxes. [Shortly after he had] taken off, the left engine of Lt. J.P. Kenny's plane [failed and Lt. Kenny] crash landed the plane which was washed out. Although [Lt. Kenny suffered no] injuries, his two gunners, Sergeants J.K. Spadoni and F. [Noteriani were] seriously injured and were confined to the hospital.

On the eleventh, also, we flew two missions. The first attack was made on the Foret de Roumare ammunition dump. Expecting clouds over the target. PFF technique was employed. The bombs fell in a loose concentration around the MPI, but no violent explosions occurred. When his landing gear wiring light shorted out on him, Lt. F.W. Harris was forced to land in Normandy. No one was injured. The boxes were led by Capt. McNulty and Capt. Marzolf.

That afternoon, Capt. Jackson and Capt. Rudisill led two boxes in an attack on the St. Malo gun defenses, which had continued to hold out against our infantry attacks. At least 50 hits were scored in the target area of which 10 were in the fort area. Minor damage was inflicted in the north side of the fort. The Infantry sent congratulations on the splendid aid we had given them.

On the following day we went out to bomb points along the highway from La Farte Mace to Ecouche -- being used by the fleeing Germans. The bombs of three flights completely blanketed their targets thus making the highway unserviceable. Six to twelve hour delay fuzes were used in the bombs along with some that were fuzed with instantaneous fuzes. Lt. P.F.P. MacManus was forced down in Normandy when he had trouble with his right engine -- he later flew the plane back to this base. As Lt. J.R. Sparling approached the field, he called in for an emergency landing because of a shortage of gas. He crash landed, however before he could make the field, washing out the plane and cutting communications lines off the base. One of his gunners, St. L.C. Shaw, was severely injured when he was thrown from the plane. The other gunner, Staff Sergeant M.E. Brayn, although painfully injured, crawled out of the burning plane and carried St. Shaw clear of the wreckage and administered first aid. Lt. Sparling was also injured slightly. Capt. McNulty and Capt. Osborne led the boxes.

Flying their tenth mission in 6 days, our crews took off on the 13th to bomb choke points in the Lisieux area and cut off the German escape routes from the Falaise gap. The targets were difficult to pick up through the smoke and haze so that the Bombardier-Navigators, in all but one case were forced to pick out different MPI's in the target area. Their results ranged from good to excellent.

General Eisenhower issued a message to all Allied soldiers, sailors, and airmen on the 14th. It was read over the Tannoy system to all personnel on the morning of the 15th. Exhibit #34.

A day of rest followed the long siege, and, on the 15th, we attacked the fuel dump in the Foret de Chantilly. Bombing by boxes of 12's, our planes carried 500-lb. fragmentation clusters. Employing area bombing, we dropped a heavy concentration in the target area. Capt. Hules, Lt. Conte, B-N, and Major Napier, Lt. Jones, B-N, and Capt. Jackson, Lt. Maltby, B-N, led the three boxes.

The weather began to turn against us again just when our troops seemed to have the German Seventh Army well bottled-up. On the 17th, we flew our next

mission. It was necessary to bomb by PFF. There was no photo coverage and no visual observations of the results because of the cloud cover. Capt. Rudisill and Capt. McNulty led the boxes. The target was the Montfort Sur Risle bridge.

A full week passed before our planes again became airborne on a mission. On the 25th, the siege of Brest began, and our planes dropped their bombs on gun positions in the Brest area. A direct hit was scored on the #4 gun and near misses on the # 2 and # 3 guns and the command post on the Pointe des Espagnols. The # 3 and # 4 gun positions were severely damaged by a near hit on the Pointe Kerrvilon gun positions. Major Price and Capt. Marzolf led this successful mission.

An improvement in the weather allowed us to fly two missions again on the 26th. The first, against the Compiegne/Clairoix fuel tanks. It was a superb job of bombing. The 139 x 500 pounds of bombs that were dropped produced violent explosions and large fires which caused a large amount of damage to the fuel dump, possibly its destruction. Major Dunn, Lt. Powell, B-N, and Capt. Rudisill, Lt. Joost, B-N, were the box leaders.

That afternoon the Rouen ferrying area was the target where tons of German equipment was lined up waiting to scurry across the Seine before our troops completely cut them off. Weather again saved the Germans when poor visibility, haze, and cloud cover prevented all but one flight from bombing. Crew members reported the results as fair to good. Five hundred pound fragmentation clusters were again carried. Major Willetts, Lt. Royalty, B-N, and Capt. Cole, Lt. Basnett, B-N, were box leaders. Some flak was encountered and Lt. A.J. Vleghels was forced to land in Normandy because of flak damage. Lt. Vleghels received minor injuries; the gunners were uninjured.

Again the 416th proved that it could do the job and do it well when they went back after the same target on the following day, the 27th. This time clouds, haze, and smoke again obscured the target so that two flights could not bomb. The other four, however, managed to pick up the target and dropped their frag clusters squarely on the target for four excellents.

The final mission of the month, mission No. 133, was flown on the 28th. The target was the Douzens fuel dump. Capt. Huff and Capt. Morton led the two boxes which dropped a total of 208 x 500 pounds of bombs. The results ranged from good to excellent. Photo reconnaissance showed a concentration of craters across the target severely damaging the installations. All the railroad lines were cut in several places at the junction point just south of the target.

To complete the story of our operations, let me add that on the 23 missions flown by the Group, we flew 847 individual sorties and dropped 735 1/2 tons of bombs. The Month-End Summary ties up our operations into the larger picture of the War of Western Europe. Exhibit # 35.

September, 1944

Toward the end of August a movement of the Group became more imminent. By the first of September, everything was in a state of readiness. The war was progressing so rapidly, however, that it was necessary for us to get a Base east

of Paris if we were to gain much by a move. Engineers, working at top speed, and bomb disposal units finally prepared a former German-occupied airfield at Melun, southeast of Paris and about 115 miles from the Front. A reconnaissance echelon made up of Lieutenant Colonel Aylesworth, Major Meng, Captain Baily, Captain Kinney, and Captain Cooney examined the new base both from the air and from the ground. Sites were selected for the four squadrons and allied units. (Exhibit 1).

On the 15th of September at 0800, the advance echelon, which included Headquarters, 668th, and the 669th Squadrons left Station 170 at Wethersfield. (Exhibit #2.) Travelling by truck and train, it arrived at Eastleigh that afternoon, a suburb of Southampton. Proceeding by truck to an encampment, we lived in tents for two days before we put on our packs for the first of our hikes. The march to the docks of Southampton where we boarded the "Lady of Mann" was two and one-half miles. All will agree that it was much over the scheduled distance.

The "Lady of Mann," formerly a coast-wise steamer, provided very comfortable quarters for all. After anchoring in the harbor until 0230 on the 18th, the ship set sail for Far Shore across the Channel. Later in the morning, we walked up on deck to see what were once the bloody Omaha and Utah beaches. Now they were overwhelmed with landing craft and cargo ships of every description. Exh #2-A A landing barge pulled alongside our ship after we dropped anchor, and slowly the men began to disembark.

Unfortunately, the 669th was the last unit off the boat. The tide went out, and they were forced to stay on the landing craft for almost six hours until the tide came in.

The long march to the Transit area near St Mere Eglise will never be forgotten. The heavy packs, the cobblestone roads, the dust, the heat, and the uncertainty about where we were to go made the trip a difficult one. Finally, we pitched our tents in the rain for the night.

The next afternoon found us resuming our travels. This step in our journey took us by truck to an R.C.D. at Catz, near bombed out Carentan. Hidden back off the main roads, it was a pleasant spot. Tents were pitched and the men cleaned up and shaved. A baseball game was soon started on the athletic field. When on the next afternoon the 669th left, it was almost with a feeling of regret. They proceeded to landing strip A-13, near Isigny.

After staying overnight alongside the landing strip, the 669th boarded C-47 Dakotas and flew to the new Base, Station A-55 at Villa Roche, four miles north of Melun. The next day, the rest of the 668th and Headquarters Advance Echelon arrived in C-47s. Everyone had a chance to view the bombed cities, the scenes of tank battles, the main transportation arteries called the "Red Ball Highways," and beautiful Paris. The 670th and 671st Squadrons which left Wethersfield on the 16th arrived on the 23rd after a similar trip over. The Air and Rear Echelon flew over to the new base on the 23rd in A-20s and C-47s. Ex. #3.

The motor convoy which carried the R.T.O. equipment encountered difficulty getting down the Red Ball Highway. It finally arrived on the 1st of October. Exh #3-A

The new Base was a shambles. The runways, however, were repaired and most of the taxi strips usable. Our own bombing along with thorough demolition by the rapidly departed Germans completely destroyed hangars, revetments, and buildings. But even with this destruction, a certain amount of material and equipment was

usable. A coordinated effort was made to use everything available. A Group Pool of usable material was set up. Exhs. #3-B,C,&D.

Parts of destroyed Ju-88s, He-177s, engines, bombs of all descriptions, ammunition, an old French tank, a Diesel train, and some tracks are a few of the things that were found in the destroyed hangars and wrecked buildings.

The job was a huge one, but each section set out to establish itself as comfortably as possible. Problems would be ironed out as time went on. Proof of the efficiency of the organization is the fact that in the morning of the 24th, the day after the Air Echelon arrived, we were ready to operate. A mission was scheduled, but bad weather caused it to be scrubbed.

Squad tents were provided for personnel. Some worked harder than others and put floors into their tents to make their living quarters more pleasant. Improvising, mess halls and theatres were built.

Each squadron was to be responsible for its own recreation. Special Service would provide the movies, athletic equipment, and books. "Joe Banana and his Bunch" began to travel from squadron to squadron presenting their variety shows.

This change of stations was the big news for the month. Although the usual garrison duties continued throughout the month. New replacement crews continued to pour in so that one almost had to look around to find the old familiar faces. Captain Robert A. Fontaine Jr. was assigned to the Group and became Group Bombing and Gunnery Officer. Lt Joseph C. Crispino and Lt Robert J. Rooney, who had been confined to hospitals as a result of injuries received on missions, returned to join their old squadrons after months of absence.

Some of our crew members who had been lost in action returned during the month. It was a thrilling experience seeing them again. Among them were: 1st Lt William H. Palin, S/Sgt Harold E. Boyer, S/Sgt Arlington W. Newkirk, S/Sgt John D. Dugan, S/Sgt Vern E. Molver, Sgt Joseph A. Buskirk, Sgt Jamie E. Hay.

These men, after returning to the Group, were reassigned to a replacement depot prior to their return to the United States. Official word was received on other men that they were now Prisoners of War in the hands of the Germans. They were: Major Murdoch W. Campbell, 2nd Lt Ronald A. Wipperman, 2nd Lt Albert Jedinak, S/Sgt Peter P. Maciulewicz, S/Sgt Herbert E. Shatzer, S/Sgt James B. Thompson.

On the 2nd, First Lieutenants Anthony Durante and Luther E. Hill and Second Lieutenant Donald W. Elliott were transferred from the Group to a Liaison Squadron operating from France.

While piling up their missions, combat crews continued to receive more Air Medals, Oak Leaf Clusters, and Purple Hearts. A few more of the crew chiefs were awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The orders covering these awards are incorporated in Exhibits #4-8.

Bad weather greatly hampered our operations against the enemy in September. Although we managed to fly 16 missions during the month, on several occasions the bombs were brought back when the target was obscured by haze or clouds. In these 16 missions, the Bombardier-Navigators continued the fine work they had put forth in August.

Mission No. 134, the first mission flown in September, was an attack on the

Brest, St Marc, Recouvrance gun positions on the first. The planes reached the target area, but clouds prevent any attack.

Two days later the planes took off to attack a strongpoint in Brest again. The following information was received by Intelligence on the target: "Target requested by ground forces. General Eisenhower has not been too well pleased with progress made in capturing the port of Brest. He has taken personal charge of operations until it falls. We can expect targets there for the next few days or until the port is taken. Today, there will be 300 heavies from the 8th A.F. operating on that area from 0930 to 1130, three groups from the 98th Wing from 1140 until 1200, 15 Groups from 9th T.A.C. and 19th T.A.C. all during the day. Our troops will be from 2,000 to 2,500 yards from the target area--which has been shelled by artillery for the last five days." Despite this urgent request, weather had again to be reckoned with. The planes got over the target, but were forced to return their bombs without an attack.

That afternoon, as we had been forewarned, Brest was again the target, but weather still hung over the objective. Yet 12 planes managed to pick up the strongpoint and although the bomb runs were short, fair results were achieved. Major Price and Captain McNulty led the two boxes.

After a day of more bad weather, our planes made another attempt to wipe out Brest on the 5th. The weather at the target did clear up. With this break, the planes flew in and scored hits which ranged from fair to excellent. Captain Huff and Captain Hulse led this first successful mission of the month. Severe damage was inflicted on the strongpoint and several buildings were destroyed.

Hitting our top form in bombing on the morning of the 6th, Major Dunn and Captain Jackson led two boxes in another smashing attack on Brest. The bombs hit their mark and five of the six flights were credited with excellents. Although there was no photo coverage on the other flight, crewmen reported the results as excellent. The damage to the target was inestimable, known only to the ground troops who were fighting bitterly down there. Exhibit #9.

In order to make all possible use of the good weather, another 36 ship formation took off for Brest that afternoon. The planes climbed to 12,000 feet. Clouds formed over the Channel and forced the formation down. When it reached the target area, it was down to 6,000 feet. Breaking off into flights, the attack started in a blinding rain. Some of the flights made as many as six bomb runs. Only three flights dropped, however, with fair to good results on the edge of the fortifications, roads, and buildings. On the return trip, when he was nearing the Cherbourg Peninsula, the right engine of Lt Wm. A. Merchant's airplane burst into flames. His two gunners, Staff Sergeants C.J. Harp and K.P. Brown, bailed out into the water and were later rescued. Lt Merchant crash-landed his plane on the Peninsula. Two tires blew on landing. Neither he nor his crew were injured.

Then followed three more days of bad weather, so that the next mission was not flown until the 10th. On that day, in answer to a request by the ground forces, a strongpoint in Nancy in the path of General Patton's advance was to be attacked. Two aiming points were chosen, one a star-shaped fort in a small clearing, the other, only coordinates on a map--actually a concealed spot in the woods. The results were excellent, apparently destroying both targets. Exhibit #10. The thorough training and aggressiveness of our crews was brought out on the mission. While the planes were still circling the Base, a gas cap came off the lead plane of one flight, causing it to abort. The rest of the planes in that flight reformed on the number 4 plane which became the flight leader. They flew on to the I.P. and when the flights broke off for the run, they fell in behind

Captain Osborne's flight. When he released his bombs, they dropped with him. Lt Forma, Captain Osborne's bombardier-navigator, with five extra planes tagging on to his bombing, scored an excellent for all of them. Major Price and Captain Osborne served as box leaders on this particular, and highly successful mission.

The following day, weather permitted another mission. The target was a communications headquarters at Metz. It was thought to be the center of communications and control for the entire sector of that front. The bombs were well aimed and landed on the M.P.I., causing severe damage to the fortifications and installations. Captain Hulse and Major Napier led the two boxes. Exhibit #11.

Finally the big day arrived. When the Field Order was received on the 12th, it had the 416th scheduled to bomb the marshalling yards at St Wendel in Germany itself. It was not only the first time that we had attacked Germany, but it was the first time that any Ninth Air Force bombers attacked Germany. Bad weather marred the debut and only two flights bombed. One flight's bombing was unobserved. The other flight, through the haze and clouds, misidentified the target and bombed the marshalling yard at Ottweiler, four miles south of the target. Captain Jackson, Lt Maltby, B-N, led the first box of Ninth Air Force bombers across the German border. Captain Rudisill, Lt Joost, B-N, led the second box.

The mission that afternoon featured the best bombing ever done by this Group--bombing that would be the pride of any Group. Major Willetts, Lt Royalty, B-N, and Captain Wheeler, Lt Arrington, B-N, were the two successful box leaders. Hidden in the Foret De Haye at Chaligny were German artillery positions. Each of the six flights laid their bombs squarely on the M.P.I's for six excellents. Exhibit #12. Extremely high columns of smoke and numerous small flashing explosions indicated that considerable damage was inflicted. Within a couple of days, this statement appeared in the G.L.O. news summary: "Ground units report the bombing of the 9th Bombardment Division on the Foret de Haye on 12 September was so effective the Germans in the area marched out with their hands in the air and surrendered. American ground troops had to fire practically no shots to affect the surrender." Our six excellents helped to do the trick.

Just six days before the city fell into our hands, we attacked the defended position on the Point Lanveoc on the south edge of the harbor of Brest on the 14th. Bad weather hung over the target areas so that no bombs were dropped. On the return trip, one flight got too close to the Guernsey Island, and the guns which had been silent for so long opened up on our planes. Three ships suffered minor flak damage.

On the 17th of September, the greatest airborne assault in history was made by the Americans and British near the mouth of the Rhine or Wall in Holland. As part of the vast preparations for the attack, and to strengthen Allied positions northwest of Antwerp and eliminate a German avenue, our planes went out on the 16th to attack the long viaduct, railroad, and road over Bergen op Zoom in Holland. Four of the five flights that bombed scored excellents. Exhibit #13. Their patterns extended across the viaduct, the east-west highway, and road. Moderate to intense flak was encountered at the target. The plane piloted by Lt Andre J. Vlegghels was hit on the bomb run. One engine was burning badly. The plane is thought to have gone down in the southeast corner of Oosterschelde Bay. Two parachutes were seen drifting toward land. His two gunners were Staff Sergeants Roger W. Rice and Clay E. Young. The plane piloted by Lt Hiram B. Clark was hit in the propeller dome, causing oil to leak out. The pilot left the formation, feathered the prop, and later, as a precaution, instructed his gunners, Staff Sergeants John W. Sabadosh and Claredon F. Floyd, to bail out.

When an attempt to land at an emergency airdrome was made, the hydraulic system was discovered to have been shot out. After flying single engine for one and one half hours, through flak concentrated on his single plane, he crashlanded near Caen. The ship was washed out, but the pilot was uninjured. His two gunners who bailed out near Antwerp were back with their squadron on the following evening. Captain Huff and Captain Morton led the two boxes.

That mission, No. 145 for the Group, was the last mission flown from the Base at Wethersfield, England. Bad weather interfered with operations until it was time to move to the new Base.

The next mission, flown on the 27th, took off from the new Base, A-55 in France. The target in the Foret de Parroy was covered by 10/10 clouds so that there was no attack.

A day later the same defended positions in the Foret de Parroy were attacked. Even though they made three bomb runs, only one of the six flights managed to pick up the target through the 8/10 clouds. Crews reported good results by that one flight. Major Willetts and Captain Marzolf were the box leaders.

Early in the morning on the 29th, 36 planes took off to begin the most costly day in our history. The target was the high priority warehouses and marshalling yards at Bitburg, behind the Siegfried Line. The weather was poor, but three flights picked up the target and bombed with excellent results. Exhibit 13A. The target was attacked by both the 409th and 416th Bomb Groups (L). First phase photo reports on the bombing read: "Track facilities completely severed in marshalling yard by approximately 25 direct hits. Twenty goods wagons destroyed or damaged. Railroad facilities adjacent to marshalling yards are heavily damaged by direct hits. Warehouse type of buildings east of marshalling yard are heavily damaged, with only seven buildings in this area undamaged. The marshalling yard and railroad facilities are unserviceable." Moderate to intense flak at the target cost us two planes, both flown by our original crews from the States. A direct hit in the tunnel gunner's hatch of Lt Arthur W. Nordsrom's plane broke it in the middle. As the plane fell in the target area, one parachute was seen. Lt Tonnis Boukamp's plane was also hit, but in both engines. With both engines on fire, the plane was last seen falling away in a gentle glide, still under control on a southwesterly heading, 8 miles southwest of the target. No chutes were seen. Lt Nordstrom's gunners were Staff Sergeants Joseph D. Gossett and Robert L. Miller. Lt Boukamp's gunners were Staff Sergeants Russell J. Colosimo and Jeong S. Wing. Major Price and Captain McNulty led the formation.

The planes took off again in the afternoon to attack the Julich marshalling yards east of beseiged Aachen. There was 9/10 cloud cover and almost that much flak too on the bomb run and target. Three flights and part of a fourth dropped their bombs with apprently excellent results. Captain Huff and Major Napier led the two boxes. Three planes, all from the 671st Bomb Sq (L), were knocked down, and almost simultaneously, at the target. All three were in the same flight. Lt F.W. DeMand was leading the flights with Lt A.C. Burns, B-N, in the nose and Staff Sergeants R.J. Troyer and C.W. Middleton in the tail. The plane received a direct hit and exploded in mid-air in the area over the target. Two chutes were observed to emerge from the falling wreck. The plane piloted by Lt R.W. York with Staff Sergeants L.A. Ashton and H.J. Wilds as gunners was seen at the target, diving and losing altitude. The third plane, piloted by Lt R.C. Morehouse with Staff Sergeants L.A. Ziegel and A.J. Burgess as gunners, did the same maneuver, diving and loosing altitude over the target. No chutes were seen to come from the last two planes.

It was the last mission of the month, No. 149, and the end of a day in which 5 crews were lost. We had participated in 16 missions during the month.

On the 30th, we received more concrete evidence of what was in store for us in the future. Sixteen A-26s, the Air Forces' newest and fastest medium bombers, landed at the Base. They were to be assigned to the Squadrons where training in them was to begin immediately. Ours was to be the pioneer A-26 Group just as we had been the pioneer A-20 Group in the E.T.O.

The strength of the Group at the end of September was:

Hdgrs, 416th	33 Officers	59 EM
668th Sq	54	310
669th Sq	55	307
670th Sq	55	295
671st Sq	53	300
	---	---
	250	1271

The concluding highlight of the month was a summary of the activities of the Ninth Bombardment Division--as the IX Bomber Command is now known. Exhibit #14.

October, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Historical Record (Month of October).

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

Although we had occupied our new base only a week, most of the squadrons and their sections were well established by the first of October. We had also in one week become aware of the change in seasons. The nights got increasingly colder; the sun shone only a few minutes at a time; and the skies were forever filled with rain clouds. As a matter of fact, weather soon became the chief topic for conversation.

With the sections settled, we began to look about us to improve the condition of the base itself. Electricity was a major problem. Civilian power from Melun would be available eventually. In the meantime, it was necessary to use small power plants in the squadrons. An old German Diesel generator was secured. After much repairing and regulating, it was put into operation. The water supply was sufficient, but all wells were polluted so that all water had to be purified before it could be used for drinking purposes. Squadrons vied with each other in the matter of showers. The results weren't luxurious Roman baths, but, to say the least, they were practical and efficient.

With the almost continuous rain, mud became an enormous problem. It was solved mostly by "mud discipline." Never-relaxing care was observed to stay on

the walks provided. Vehicles had to stay on the hard pavements. A tractor sweeper swept the heavily-traveled roadways. Although mud continued to be a nuisance, it was controlled and would be kept to a minimum.

The weather not only cut down on our scale of operations, but it [slowed us] down on our training in the new A-26 Invaders. The planes were to be rotated through the four squadrons for this training. Each squadron, during its training period, was to be taken off operations. Ground training, augmenting the flying training, was carried on with the assistance of a 9th Air Force Mobile Training Unit. With good flying weather it was estimated that it would take about a month to convert to the new aircraft. The weather was very unfavorable, yet, with an intensified ground program and with dawn-to-dusk flying when the weather permitted, the four squadrons completed checking out on the plane by the end of the first week in November. Exhibit #1-Oct, 1944.

An unfortunate accident marred the training program. Early in the morning on the 15th, six A-26s took off in fair flying weather. The planes had just taken off, however, when the weather closed in. One plane was able to return to make a safe landing. The others in the formation flew on, hoping to find a break in the clouds and land elsewhere if necessary. Three of them were diverted to A-61 where they landed safely. The ceiling was estimated to be 400 feet by 200 yards visibility. The remaining two planes could not be contacted by radio to be averted. Both of them crashed. Second Lieutenant Samuel P. Leischman's plane was last seen near Sezanne, flying very low. He had evidently been trying to let down through the overcast. The plane was in a 30-degree dive when it struck a large tree on a hill-side in very hilly country. The pilot and his two gunners, Sergeants Joseph F. Siracusa and Eugene H. Shempren, were killed in the crash. The second plane crashed near Rouen. The pilot was 2nd Lt Stanley H. Sheley. When he became lost from the formation, he decided to pick out an open field for a forced landing. The ceiling was from 100 to 300 feet at this time. He finally located a field and brought the plane in. The plane touched the ground safely when it hit a bump, causing the nosewheel to turn sideways. After skidding along in that position, the strut collapsed. The plane was badly damaged, but none of the crew at all was injured.

The gunners were Sergeants D. V. Paladine and F. M. Thorp.

Two days prior to this accident, on the 13th, a seven-ship A-20 formation on a practice navigational flight flew over Dunkirk, which was still in enemy hands. The flight received moderate accurate flak which damaged six of the planes. On the return trip, the right engine of one plane caught fire. The plane crashed and exploded near Bruay. Altho Cpl Michael J. Doran, a gunner, received a flak wound, he and the other members of his crew, 2nd Lt Gentry L. Milhorn, the pilot, and Sgt Daniel Chest, a gunner, parachuted to safety. The other planes returned safely.

Many crew members had already completed 65 missions or were nearing that figure. No policy had been established as to what constituted a tour of operations. It had been the policy of the Group, however, to take a person off operations temporarily after he had completed 65 missions. An official policy had been hinted at in this respect and the 6th found it a reality. Orders were received sending 22 men to the Zone of the Interior. They left the Group on the 8th for Paris and transportation to England and the "States." The list included 1st Lt Loring G. Peede, and Staff Sergeants Edward L. Griffin, Howard E. While, Albert J. Bonamo, Jean R.L. Tanner, Raymond Addleman, Joseph L. Czech, Robert L. Ballinger, Carl F. Love, E.R. Judd, John R. Orr, Edward S. Dickenson, Harold R. Hedrick, Fred L. Adair, Charles L. Hibbs, Leo G. Robbins, Pervy L. Clearman, John

A. Fejes, Orlando D. LeHave, William G. Ferguson, Nathan Radlich, and Foster M. Citty. Again on the 27th, thirty one more crewmen departed. They were First Lieutenants Robert D. Leeher, Max A. Pape, James D. Adams, Willard H. Land, Joseph S. Connor, Wilfred C. Siggs, and Staff Sergeants R.O. Sieg, Sterling F. Alden, Amos E. Bergeron, Herman O. Carney, William J. Kelley, John L. Rogers Jr. William C. Russell, Ernest R. Werley, Allen J. Zeikus, Robert E. Lee, John W. Moran, J.O. Swafford, Paul B. Driskill, Lewis Daugherty, Elpidio A. Damico, Charles A. Prindle, Harvey K. Kelton, Morton Rosenstein, Harry T. Best, Jack S. Brower, Vincent N. Sherry, Louis G. Kutzer, Robert H. Linneman, Roger W. Nicks, and Joe C. Burkhalter.

As had been mentioned in the September history, the matter of entertainment and relaxation for the men while on the base was almost completely delegated to the squadrons. Group Special Service under Lt Gureasko coordinated these functions, and, cooperating with the Aero Club, managed to present a very complete program. The Aero Club was opened on the 9th. The club consisted of two squad tents used together to form a long doughnut dugout; another tent was used as a combination lounge and library; one tent was used as a kitchen. "Joe Banana and his Bunch" presented their variety shows at the unit areas. Movies were presented at the unit theatres. French classes were conducted at the Aero Club as were the French-G.I. bull sessions. Current events lectures were given in the individual squadrons and at the Aero Club by the Intelligence Officers. Supplementing this were two shows. The first, on the 16th, was a U.S.O. show, "Full Speed Ahead;" the second, on the 18th, was an all-soldier talent show called "The Yankee Revelers."

The first A-20 Havoc to complete 100 missions in the E.T.O. was 224-"Miss Laid"-assigned to the 670th Bomb Sq (L). It completed its 100th mission on the 6th, flown by Lt Charles L. McGlohn. Never once during those 100 missions was the plane forced to return because of a mechanical failure. The engines that powered "Miss Laid" on the first mission were still in there on the 100th mission, never having been changed. At a ceremony at Le Bourget airfield in Paris on the 27th, the plane was honored. It was rededicated "La France Libre" to represent the unity and good will between ours and the new French nation. The crew that flew it on its first mission on 3 March took part in the ceremonies. They were Captain Hugh A. Monroe, and Staff Sergeants Wilmar L. Kidd and Steve Risko. The crew chief, T/Sgt Royal S. Everts, who cared for the plane through its 100 missions and was primarily responsible for its remarkable record, also participated. French and American dignitaries were in attendance. Mme. Monique Rolland, a leading French actress, rededicated the plane. After a short speech by Brigadier General Strahm, M. Charles Tillon, the French Minister of Air, addressed the world, speaking of the ceremony as a "symbol of the fraternity of our two nations." Others in attendance were General Valin, head of the French Air Force, General Duncan, General Backus, and Colonel Aylesworth. Exh #2-5-Oct., 1944.

Although the base at Wethersfield, England, was a thing of the past, I find it necessary to speak of it once more. A letter was received from the Commanding General of the 9th Bombardment Division on the 14th, commending the Group on the condition of the Base at Wethersfield when we made our departure. Exh #6-Oct., 1944.

Only one inspection was made of the Group in October, but it was a very satisfactory one. A technical inspection was held on the 18th and 19th by an inspecting team from the 9th Bombardment Division. The last paragraph of their report read, "The efficiency rating of the Group, based on the general condition of the technical equipment and the technical administration in all sections, is Superior."

Although only nine missions were flown during October, many Air Medals were received, and Purple Hearts. Orders were also received awarding Distinguished Flying Crosses to nine of our crewmen. They were Major Conant, Captain Jackson, Captain Osborne, Lieutenants Forma, Hand, Hill, Hillerman, Powell, and Rooney. Exh #7-12, Oct., 1944.

The first of the nine missions in October, mission #150, was flown on the 2nd. The war had progressed up to the gates of Germany itself. The Siegfried Line was all that stood between the Allies and the Reich. Our role during the month, therefore, would be to concentrate our air effort on the breakthrough and also on the cutting of supply lines to the Line. The target on the 2nd was in direct support of General Rodges' attack on the Line in the Aachen area. It was the town of Ubach. The town which contained nests of enemy strongpoints hidden among its homes was to be demolished. After three runs over the target, it became necessary to turn back. A cloud cover obscured the target. Major Dunn and Captain Rudisill were the box leaders. Bombing during the month was again done by flights.

The following day, the 3rd, our planes took off again, this time led by Major Willetts and Captain Cole. The target, the Duren marshalling yards, was covered by 10/10 clouds. Major Willetts, hoping to find some bombing weather, sent Lt Pair to break away from the formation and drop down to check the weather at a lower altitude. It was to no avail, though, because a second lower layer covered the target completely.

Weather kept the planes on the ground until the 6th when they returned to attack the Duren marshalling yards. This time with a little break in the weather they hit the target with good to excellent results and destroyed buildings, cars, and damaged tracks. Major Price and Captain Osborne led the two boxes. The crews received their first taste of flak for the month. It was moderate but fairly inaccurate although ten planes received battle damage.

Captain Huff and Captain Morton led the two boxes in to destroy the warehouses in Trier on the 7th. Four excellents were scored. Six of the warehouse buildings were destroyed; out of the remaining seven buildings, four were heavily damaged. Exh #13-Oct., 1944. There was also a concentration of craters on the edge of the marshalling yard close by. Moderate accurate flak was encountered on the bomb run. The plane piloted by 2nd Lt John B. Saidla was hit behind the pilot's canopy and dropped away from the formation. Crewmen reported seeing three parachutes emerge from the plane and land on the west side of the town of Trier. His gunners were Sergeants A. F. Cavanaugh and J. M. Harris.

The following day the town of Linnich was attacked. The airming point was the center of the town. Instructions in the Field Order permitted the Bombardiers to release their bombs if the target was obscured one minute after the E.T.A. over the target. The Bombardier had to be certain, however, that he had crossed the bomb line. The target area was blanketed with a dense haze. Lt Powell, Major Dunn's B-N in the lead plane of the first box, managed to pick out the target to score an excellent. Exh #14-Oct., 1944. All the other flights were forced to drop according to instructions. One of those "one-chance-in-a-million" incidents occurred when the bombs from one ship fell out across the river east of Linnich. They hit in some warehouse-type buildings causing violent explosions and probable heavy damage. Flak hit the oil line in the right engine of Lt E.B. Kreh's plane. The left engine also began to miss when the ignition system was hit. He feathered the prop, and, with his left engine missing, he made it back to our lines. He crash-landed near airstrip A-68 without any injury to the crew and with the plane in a repairable condition.

Weather postponed the next mission until the 12th. Flying into dense, accurate flak and smoke and haze, the planes made a run on the target, the edge of a railroad yard in the center of the town of Langerwehe. The attack was aimed at wiping out the town. Flak was so intense that only one bomb run was made and only two flights dropped. The pattern was centered just north of the M.P.I. and extended across the main highway and buildings in the town. Fifteen aircraft received battle damage. Major Willetts and Captain Cole were the box leaders.

Going back again on the following day, the 13th, the town of Langerwehe was again attacked. Three of the five flights that bombed scored "excellents." Two scored "goods." Again moderate to intense accurate flak raked the formation at the target. Major Price led the first box; Captain Osborne, the second. Exh #15-Oct., 1944.

On the 14th, Captain Huff and Captain Morton led two boxes in an attack on the railroad bridge at Mayen, just west of Koblenz. A solid bank of 10/10 clouds covered the target so that no attack could be made.

P.F.F. was employed for the first time in almost two months on the 17th. The formation reached the target area at Trier where a railroad bridge was to be attacked. A mechanical failure in the P.F.F. equipment caused the planes to return without an attack. A complete cloud cover prevented any attempt at visual bombing. Major Willetts and Captain Cole led the two boxes behind the two B-26s, which were each equipped with P.F.F. equipment.

It turned out that this mission, number 158, was the last mission flown during the month. On these nine missions, 337 sorties were flown and 205 tons of bombs were dropped.

The strength of the Group on the last day of October was:

668th Bomb Sq	Officers	62	Enlisted Men	308
669th " "	"	64	" "	304
670th " "	"	64	" "	300
671st " "	"	64	" "	307
Hq, 416th	"	34	" "	61
		----		---
TOTAL STRENGTH		288		1280

November, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Historical Data (November 1944 Installment).

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

The A-20 Havocs with which we had operated for 158 missions were now almost a thing of the past for the 416th. (Exhibit #1-Nov 1944). Conversion to the A-26

Invaders was completed on 5 November. The A-20s that we had been using were flown back to England. On the 7th, the pilots flew the first A-26 Invaders that were assigned to our Group onto the field. Acceptance checks began immediately to be completed by noon of the 9th. At that time the Group would be considered ready to operate with the Invader. In all of our 158 missions in the Havoc, we had flown 5567 sorties and had dropped 4659 1/2 tons of bombs.

Two days later, on the 11th, the training planes and the Mobile Training Unit left the Base for another Group.

Although the Invader was not a child of this War, having been in the designing stage since 1941, it was new as far as production was concerned. Production in the solid-nosed plane was progressing satisfactorily, but as yet, no glassed-nosed planes were available. As a result it was necessary to continue using the A-20-Js for lead planes on our formations. (Exhibit #1A-November 1944).

With continued bad weather, and operations almost impossible, the Group carried on its training program. Many new pilots, with experience only in Havocs, were assigned to the Group. This bad weather afforded a wonderful opportunity for them to be checked out. Those already checked out improved their formation flying. The one noticeable disadvantage to the Invader was its poor visibility. This made close formation flying was more difficult than in the Havocs. Only practice could improve this--and practice formations were flown every possible minute of the day.

As if the weather wasn't enough of a handicap, the runways became a most urgent problem. They had been repaired by the Engineers before our arrival on the Base in the remarkably short span of 10 days. They had been repaired, however, during the dry season. With the almost never-ending rain, the filled-in areas began to settle. The concrete surfaces sagged and then cracked. With repair crews working day and night, the bad spots were dug out. New filling was used and new surfaces were laid. Only one runway could be used at a time during the repair operations--and that one was usually in no condition to be used. Taxi-strips, too, began to settle. They were repaired with the utmost haste.

There was one training accident during the month. While on a practice bombing mission on the 10th November, an A-20, piloted by 2d Lt Richard C. Miles of the 668th Bomb Sq (L), crashed about three miles south of Fontainebleau. The plane was seen to break through a low overcast in an unconventional spin--possibly an inverted spin. It struck the ground and was almost completely demolished. No one was seen getting out of the plane although the body of Corporal Samuel A. Pepe was found 500 yards from the crash, evidently thrown clear of the plane during the spin. There was no evidence of engine failure. Lt Miles, his bombardier-navigator, 2d Lt William G. Kelly, and the two gunners, Corporal Pepe and Corporal Terrance F. Morrissey, were all killed. The four men were interred at the American Military Cemetery at Solers, France. These were our only losses during the month of November.

Special Services presented a widely varied program of entertainment during the month. The usual program of movies and lectures were supplemented by French and American camp shows. One of these presented on the 12th and 13th was given by the 9th Air Force Service Command. It included a 12 piece dance orchestra, the "Continental," and a cast of G.I.'s who made the rafters ring with their exceptionally fine work. A USO show, "Meet the Gang," was presented on the 10th; current events were held each Wednesday evening and Major William P. Thomas conducted French classes on Monday and Thursday nights at the Red Cross Aero Club.

An old German hospital located about a mile from the Base was taken over for use as an Officer's Club. Captain Horace W. Breece was appointed Club Officer. Under his supervision, the club was furnished, liquor secured, and needed repairs made. The Club, without a doubt, surpassed all expectations and soon became a popular spot for a pleasant evening. On 25 November, an enlisted mens' club was opened in the Group Headquarters Area. Champagne and beer were served in the Club, furnished much better than the Club in Wethersfield had been.

An informal inspection was made of the Group on the 2nd of November by the office of the Inspector General of the Ninth Air Force. In the verbal report made to Colonel Aylesworth, they said that they had found the Group and Station in very good condition. That was the only inspection during the month by higher headquarters.

The month of November found us flying the fewest number of missions since we had begun operations. We flew only five missions in the month. Bad weather was entirely to blame for this. It was felt at first that the A-26 would not be able to fly behind a B-26 Marauder on a Pathfinder mission because of the differences in speed. As a result, the weather had to be clear enough for visual bombing in order for us to fly.

The first mission for the month, No. 159, took off on the 17th, exactly one month since our last mission in October. It was the first mission flown by a Group completely equipped with the Invaders in any combat theatre. The 416th introduced the plane famously by scoring four excellents on the supply dump at Haguenau, Germany. Extensive damage was inflicted when the bombs struck the buildings, warehouses, the railroad, and bridges in the target area. (Exhibit #2-Nov, 1944). For the first time, also, 250 pound demolition bombs were carried. The A-26s were equipped to carry eight; the A-20s, four. The Havocs were used as lead planes in each of the flights. Major Dunn, Lt Powell, B-N, and Captain Huff, Lt Kupits, B-N, were the box leaders.

A day later, on the 18th, the railroad bridge at Breisach, Germany, was attacked. Major Willett's Bombardier, Lt Royalty, leading the first box, dropped his bombs squarely on the bridge. (Exhibit #3-Nov 1944). Photo reconnaissance showed, however, that we were cheated again as the bombs had straddled the bridge, which was still standing. The formation encountered moderate flak at the target. Despite this, one flight, led by Captain Peck, Lt Madenfort, B-N, made three runs on the target. The bombsight mechanism would not release the bombs on any of the three runs. They returned to the I.P. and decided to make a run on it. This time the sight released the bombs which scored excellent results. It was through this very town of Gebweiler that the Sixth Army Group moved when it began its attack two days later. Although the bridge was not destroyed, the approaches at the northeast end were so badly damaged that the line was probably made unserviceable. Captain Wheeler, Lt Arrington, B-N, led the second box of the formation. One thousand-pound bombs were carried by the Invaders.

Our planes took off for the third day running when they attacked a troop concentration at Merzig on the morning of the 19th. It was an all-out effort in support of General Patton's Third Army troops, with 48 planes participating. The formation was forced down to 6,000 feet by the clouds, but the bombing was excellent. (Exhibit #4-Nov 1944). A TWX of commendation was received from General Vandenberg and General Anderson. (Exhibit #5-Nov 1944). The three boxes that made the attack were led by Major Price, Lt Hand, B-N, Captain Osborne, Lt Forma, B-N, and Captain Hulse, Lt Conte, B-N.

The planes took off again that afternoon to fly the first two-mission day in

two months. This time the target was an ammunition dump at Landau, Germany. Just east of Nancy, the formation ran into a solid bank of clouds that extended up from 5,500 feet. The formation got split up at this point and no attack was made on the primary. One flight did go in deeper and dropped through a small hole on a group of buildings, which crew members said were hit with excellent results. The planes landed in total darkness. Seven were diverted to other fields. Captain Huff, who completed his 65th mission that afternoon, Lt Kupits, B-N, and Captain Peck, Lt Madenfort, B-N, led the two boxes.

It was ten days later before the next mission was able to take off, on the 29th. It was mission No. 163. The target was the defended village at Mariaweiler. The target was obscured by an 8/10th cloud cover so that no attack was made. Moderate to intense flak was encountered along the route and moderate flak at the target. The plane piloted by Lt Lenard R. McBride was hit and broke away from the formation at the target, smoking. He kept the plane under control although he could not extinguish the fire. After he reached friendly territory, he ordered his gunner, Staff Sergeant Ralph Eutsler, to bail out. A short while later, the pilot bailed out. Before the plane had dropped more than 2,000 feet, the flames reached the fuel tanks and the plane exploded. The pilot and gunner landed safely. It was the first Invader lost by the Group on a combat mission. The two crewmen were able to give much good information to the other crews on emergency procedure, gained from first-hand knowledge.

On these five missions, 193 sorties were flown and 130 tons of bombs dropped.

Eighteen of our Officers had decorations pinned on them by General Anderson on the 27th for deeds of valor during their missions. (Exhibits #6-19, Nov, 1944). The highest presentation went to Lt Peter G. Royalty, the SILVER STAR. The other officers all were presented the Distinguished Flying Cross. They were Major Hiram F. Conant, Captain Frank J. Harrold, Captain Robert S. Rudisill, Captain Paul G. Atkinson, Captain Arthur E. Osborne Jr., and First Lieutenants Luther E. Hill, Thomas J. Leonard, Joseph F. Meagher, Alfred H. Maltby, Edward J. Renth, Marion S. Street, Warren Forma, Arvid R. Hand, Charles L. McGlohn, William B. Ostrander, Vernon H. Powell, and Robert J. Rooney. Two others were also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, although they were not present for the ceremony. They were First Lieutenants John P. Hillerman and Ronald D. Perkins. More Air Medals, Oak Leaf Clusters, and Purple Hearts were awarded to our airmen during the month. One crew chief, Technical Sergeant Charles G. Thompson Jr., was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. (Exhibits #20-25, Nov, 1944).

The strength of the Group on the last day of the month of November was:

668th Bomb Sq	59 Officers	306 Enlisted Men
669th " "	64 Officers	303 " "
670th " "	59 Officers	294 " "
671st " "	62 Officers	296 " "
Hq, 416th	33 Officers	60 " "
	--	---
Total	277	1259

Again a group of combat crews were returned to the Zone of Interior after having completed their tours of duty. They included Captain Galen F. Bartmus, Captain Meredith J. Huff, First Lieutenant John P. Hillerman, and Staff Sergeants William Donahue, O.D. Evans, S.P. Newell, Joseph J. Rzepka, Irving Binney, Everett T. Epps, Francis L. Flacks, Robert K. Riley, and Howard C. Worden. There were some changes in the status of men listed as MIA. First Lieutenants Norman V. Shainberg and Harry E. Hewes, and Staff Sergeants Egon W. Rust and Layford B.

Curtis are now listed as POW. Although Lt Hewes is still listed as POW officially, some members of his squadron have heard that his is now in England. He lost one leg, amputated by the Germans when he was seriously wounded. Second Lieutenant Arthur J. Welsh, reported MIA was also returned to England to a hospital. Flight Officer Bruce E. Baxter, it was learned, was Killed In Action.

December, 1944

HEADQUARTERS
FOUR HUNDRED SIXTEENTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (L)
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER

SUBJECT: Historical Data--December 1944.

TO : Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

With December upon us, all our thoughts were of those more pleasant days that we all associated with the holiday season. One could hear strains of "White Christmas", "Silent Night", and other Christmas songs as the men warmed up to the Christmas season. The mail clerks became even more popular as the packages and cards started to flood their offices. Fruit cakes were the most popular edible; socks, hankerchiefs, and stationery, among the useful gifts. It all reached its climax in the usual Christmas Turkey dinner. Christmas Eve services were held in both the Protestant and Catholic Faiths. True, no one was at home, but the Christmas spirit did prevail even though we were several thousand miles from those we thought of most.

On the 11th of December we were visited by the already famous House Military Affairs sub-committee. The committee, made up of about 25 Congressmen and women, among them Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, was touring the E.T.O. with an end to understanding more closely the conditions under which our men were fighting. Weather made the day unpleasant and the trip an hurried one. Their first stop on the Base was the Enlisted Men's Club where General Anderson and Colonel Aylesworth acquainted them with the work of our bombers. Moving across the courtyard, they looked in at [the] Bomb Trainer and the Briefing Room. A short visit to the Situation Room to acquaint them with the Air-Ground situation concluded their visit in the Headquarters area. The cavalcade of cars then drove through the rain around each of the Squadron areas. They concluded their visit by having dinner at the 97th Combat Wing. Exhibits #14, Dec, '44.

The following two days were devoted to an inspection by the office of the Inspector General of the 9th Bombardment Division. It was our first complete administrative inspection since last Spring. The results were indeed gratifying to everyone in the Group who had helped to make it a success. Ours was the only Group in the Division to receive a superior rating. Exh # 5, Dec '44. The 416th again proved that it had not only been the best Group in the Division, but that it continued to be just that. The report read, "This Group and allied units were last inspected during the month of March 1944 and the rating given at that time was "Excellent". The continued improvement in the administration of the Group is noted with approval."

A glance at the situation map on the 17th revealed a mass of German Infantry

and Armored Divisions in the area between Duren and Trier. Led by a well-planned, although poorly executed, paratrooper attack in the early morning of the 17th, they pushed forward with lightning thrusts toward St. Vith, Malmedy, and Bastogne. The attack was unbelievably successful, and within a few days they had retaken ground deep into our lines that had been won by us only after months of hard and costly fighting. The drive almost reached the Meuse river, where the Germans hoped to head northward to retake Liege and eventually Antwerp. They had struck at our weakest [point]. The advance had been well-planned, and might have not only neutralized our offensive but cut our Armies in two, except for one thing-- the weather. The German Air Force which had been so little in evidence in the past months suddenly began to scour the skies. But when they could put one plane in the air, with the good weather we could put five in the air. The good weather soon enabled our planes to gain complete superiority, costing the enemy planes, vehicles, equipment, and, most costly of all, supply routes. Our own part in this struggle will be brought out more clearly in the resume of our operations.

Previous to the German breakthrough, our fox holes had been of little importance in our lives. The drons of enemy airplanes overhead was no dream, however, and our fox holes became used more and more. On the 20th, a parachute attack supposedly in the neighborhood caused the base to be alerted. Guns, helmets, and gas masks were donned. But no parachutists were found. Enemy agents, dressed as American or British soldiers, infiltrated behind our lines so that additional guards were placed on the planes at night. A lone plane circled the field in the dead of the night of the 27th and sprayed a few 20 mm. shells in the north end of the field, but no damage was done. A couple of nights later another bomber circled the field and after strafing a lonely road near Lissy dropped three bombs on railroad tracks at Caubert, 3 miles north of the Base. Intermittent alarms were sounded but no further attacks were made.

A few days before Christmas the mud on the roads began to harden and soon winter weather was here. The cold spell began on the 22nd. Engineering personnel began to check the planes more carefully for frozen oil lines, ice on the wings and in the carburetors, and for other cold weather hazards. Snow plows were rigged up in anticipation of the first taste of snow-covered roads and runways. The living conditions were perhaps the hardest of all to get accustomed to. The abundant wood supply from the torn-down buildings soon dwindled. Coal became even more rationed, first priority going to hospitals and mess halls. The German counter-offensive meant restricting everyone to the Base in the event of an attack or a forced move from this base. As a result, the men had to spend most of their spare time in their tents. Some worked on a share-the-tent basis, keeping one tent warm one night with the occupants of another tent invited in. The next night, the second tent would have the fire and the guests.

Under these conditions the work of the Special Services section and the Aero Club became doubly important. There were 78 showings of movies. Two French civilian shows were held in the tent theatre and one 9th Engineering Command Soldier-talent show, "Off Limits". Current events lectures continued on Wednesday nights. At Christmas time the Squadrons collected candy for the French children. On the 24th, at the Groups Ecole Solaire Pasteur, Melun, a Mayor's party for 500 children of French Prisoners of War, orphans, and school children was made brighter by this candy. Exhs # 6, Dec 44. Two hundred children at the Melun convent also enjoyed the candy. Also on the 24th, 52 children from the nearby town of Moissy were entertained at a Christmas party at the Aero Club. Sergeant Henry E. Reski donned the red outfit of Santa Claus and thrilled the children as he taxied up to them in an L-4 airplane. As he stepped out of the plane with a bag full of gifts over his shoulder, the children shouted for joy. He led them to

the Aero Club, which was gaily decorated for the season, where they further enjoyed the refreshments, entertainment, and games. Exhs # 7-9, Dec '44. Candy donations were made to patients of the Melun civilian hospital and of the Brie Comte Robert hospital.

As usually happens when the Group is well-established at a Base, everyone began to think about having a party. Facilities were quite limited, however, for the Squadrons even to have parties in their areas. As a result, the Officer's Club was reserved so that the Squadrons could hold an Enlisted Men's and an Officer's party. These parties were all held around Christmas time. Women from nearby towns were invited to attend. The headquarters enlisted men held a party of their own at the Enlisted Men's club on Christmas night.

With men being transferred to the Zone of the Interior after completing their tours of duty, it was seldom that one saw more than a couple of the men who came overseas with the Group at a Briefing. As quickly as possible, the new crews were checked out on the A-26 Invader. Those who went back to the States in December included:

Capt. R.S. Rudisill	1st Lt. T.R. Leonard
1st Lt. H.D. Andrews, Jr.	1st Lt. R.H. Smith
1st Lt. R.H. Joost	Capt H.P. Cole
1st Lt. C.L. McGlohn	S/Sgt. J.E. McCreery
S/Sgt. R.W. Burch	" C.H. Yost, Jr.
" R.W. MacDonald	" A.A. Hill
" K.E. Hornbeck	" D.E. Raines
" E. Shelton	" W.F. Colbert
" G.I. Fleischman	" R.C. Hoffman
" H.C. Rodgers	" F.D. Allred
" J.A. Ochaba	" C. Vafiadis
" J.E. Van Duyne	" C.L. Webb
" J. McKee	" E.F. Paules
" J.E. Wilson	" R. Eustler
" F.C. Falk	" F.P. Glynn
" C.W. Maziasz	" T.A. Palmer
" R.M. Griswold	" B.G. Fandre
" G.M. Caek	" H.E. Wellin
" H.A. Lempke	" F.R. Chvatal
S/Sgt. I.R. DeGiusta	S/Sgt. V.P. Adams
" L. Martinez	" S. Riske
" D.A. Sampson	" E.E. Kelly
Cpl. H.W. Perkins	Sgt. P.F. Glynn

Lt. Vernon H. Powell, who had been one of the Group's most outstanding Bombardiers since we had begun operating, was transferred into Group to become Group Bombardier. First Lieutenant James D. Hanway replaced Lt. Walter E. Fiedler, who became Communications Officer in the 671st Bomb Sq. as Group Cryptographic Officer. Word was received that Lt. York had been killed in action. Staff Sergeant W.E. Fields is now a P.O.W. Lt. A.J. Welsh was evacuated to the United States.

Major J.T.S. Morris kept the Squadron Awards and Decorations Officers busy writing awards for the crew members. They bore many results. Among the awards were eight DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSSES to Capt. R.J. Morton, Capt. R.V. Wheeler, First Lieutenants J.D. Adams, H.T. Arrington, G. Ebenstein, W.H. Land, L.R. McBride, and Capt. D.F. Shea. In addition there were many Air Medals, Oak Leaf Clusters, and Purple Hearts. Exhs # 10-12, Dec '44.

The month of November had seen us at a low ebb as far as the number of operational mission was concerned. December had favored us with some better flying weather, however, and we were able to play our role in tactical air coordination to the fullest. Many times when other aircraft were forced to stay on the ground, our planes were flying. This was a direct tribute to the courage of our airmen and the ability of the ground crewmen. With the increasing cold weather, only a constant vigil by the engineering personnel could keep the planes in the best possible condition so that they could be flown at almost a moment's notice. Their work, which under more ideal conditions had passed by unnoticed, now meant the difference between a plane in the air and one occupying space on a hardstand.

The altitude for bombing was generally 12,000 feet when bombing visually. The PPF missions ranged as high as 14,500 feet. The lack of oxygen at the higher altitude had a great deal of effect on the flying efficiency of the crewmen.

Here is a resume of our operations for the month of December:

The first mission in December, mission No. 164 for the Group, was flown on the 2nd. The aiming point was a small bridge in the town of Saarlautern, Germany. The target was bombed by PPF. One aircraft in Box I had a malfunction and dropped prematurely. Box II dropped on his bombs and hit enemy territory south of Merzig. The remainder of the planes dropped on the briefed target and scored a Superior. The center of the burst fell on the railroad, on buildings, and near the overpass. Hits were scored on roadways and factory buildings as well. Lt. Col. Willetts, Lt. Royalty, B-N, and Capt. Marzolf, Lt. Beck, B-N, led the two boxes. The flak was moderate and accurate on the bomb run onto the target. Captain Meagher's plane was hit by flak. He was painfully wounded in the feet. He had no radio contact with the other men in his plane to warn them about his condition or to check with them for injuries. He made what some called "the most perfect peel-off" they had ever seen when he left the formation after the target, even with his damaged plane. He made an emergency crash-landing near Reims. It was not until the other members of his crew crawled uninjured from the washed-out plane that they knew that their pilot was injured. Capt. Meagher was taken to the hospital and from there evacuated to the States.

On the 5th, PPF technique was again employed in the bombing of the defended village of Kall. There was no flak as the planes dropped their bombs with good results on buildings in the northern part of the town. The planes carried 250-pound bombs, as they had done on the previous mission. Capt. Osborne, Lt. Forma, B-N, and Capt. Prentiss, Lt. Bursiel, B-N, led the two boxes.

The following day, the 6th, the defended village of Erkelenz was attacked with 500-pound bombs. A 9/10th cloud cover forced the formation to bomb on a PPF plane. The results were unobserved. The formation encountered some meager flak at the bomblines and at the target. The box leaders were Lt. Col. Meng, Lt. Powell, B-N, and Capt. Hulse, Lt. Conte, B-N.

The Sinzig railroad bridge was attacked on the 8th. The first box led by Major Dunn, Lt. Maltby, B-N, dropped on the PPF plane. The second box, led by Capt. Atkinson, Lt. Ackerson, B-N, used their Gee equipment to bomb. Complete cloud cover prevented any observation of the results. Photo reconnaissance showed that the bombs had fallen beyond the bridge. Losing altitude as they crossed the bomblines, the planes received moderate accurate light flak from the ground defenses. Lt. Grunig's plane was hit but he made it home safely on a single engine. This was the first occasion that Gee equipment, which heretofore had been used for navigation only, was used for bombing. It seemed to operate successfully

although it was thought to be too inaccurate for truly precision bombing.

Two missions were flown on the 9th. In the morning, using PPF, the town of Saarwellin was attacked. Lt. Col Willetts and Capt. Marzolf led the boxes. Results were unobserved, however, because of the solid cloud cover.

That afternoon, the defended village of Dilsburg was the target. The PPF equipment failed so that no attack was made. Cloud cover prevented any visual bombing.

The planes took off again on the 12th, led by Capt. Morton, Lt. Moore, B-N, and Capt. Peck, Lt. Madenfort, B-N, to attack the defended village of Schleiden. Equipment in the PPF plane failed while going to the I.P. The PPF plane did not notify the box leaders of the equipment failure so that they did not attempt visual bombing. Instead the PPF plane circled the I.P. and led the formation back to the Base.

Again on the 13th the planes took off. This time the target was the defended village of Gemund. Again the equipment in the PPF plane failed over the target. The first box, led by Major Dunn, followed the PPF plane to the Tendorf area where they bombed on Gee equipment in the PPF plane. The second box, led by Capt. Harrold, Lt. Brewer, B-N, bombed the Schutz area using the Gee equipment in Capt. Harrold's plane. Results were unobserved because of the 10/10th cloud cover over both areas.

Two days later, on the 15th, the defended village of Heimbach was attacked using PPF equipment. Results were again unobserved due to the 10/10th cloud cover. Lt. Col Willetts and Capt Marzolf led the two boxes which dropped 236 x 250-pound bombs.

Eight days passed before we were able to fly another mission. During the eight days the Germans had begun their counter-offensive and had made vast gains. The one thing that they had counted on to keep their drive going was supplies and fuel captured from us as they pushed us backwards. The front line troops did a good job of destruction, far more complete than the enemy had expected. It became necessary for him, therefore, to call on his own supplies. If we could cut his vital supply channels, his drive would have to bog down.

On the 23rd we set out to do just that, to cut a vital supply channel. That supply channel was the highway bridge across the river at Saarburg. Thirty-eight planes made the attack on this the largest bridge across the Saar river between Merzig and Trier, and scored excellent to superior results. Exh # 13, Dec '44. The bridge was completely destroyed by the 1,000-pounders. The three boxes that made the attack were led by Major Price, Lt. Hand, B-N, Capt. Prentiss, Lt. Bursiel, B-N, and Capt. Monroe, Lt. Kirk, B-N. Lt. Buskirk, flying an A-20 Havoc, had to drop out of the formation on the return trip with one propeller feathered when the engine failed. He made a crash-landing at A-69 near Reims, and the plane was washed out. He and his two gunners were uninjured. His Bombardier-Navigator, Lt. R.C. Hanna, suffered a sprained back.

That afternoon a mission that seemed doomed for failure from the first took off to attack the defended village of Waxweiler. The morning mission was just returning when word of the afternoon mission was received. Some of the crews were unable to eat dinner because the briefing for the second mission had started before the interrogation of the first mission was completed. There were no pictures of the target available so that 1:100,000 maps had to be used. Briefing was still going on when, according to the time schedule, the engines should have

been started. It was also the first time that Capt. Morton and Lt. Moore had led a formation on a visual bombing mission. Their inexperience as formation leaders plus the lack of time for sufficient preparation and study caused a grave error to be committed. When Lt. Moore's Gee equipment failed, he fell back on D/R. He mistook the town of Arlon, inside our own lines, for the target. His bombs fell on a marshalling yard on the edge of town. The other five flights realized the error and located themselves for an attack on the proper target. Snow that covered the ground further handicapped the navigation. The second flight bombed the town of Seffer near the target area. Lt Conte, Captain Hulse's bombardier in the lead plane of the second box, located the primary target and scored excellent results on it. The two flights in Captain Hulse's box followed him in and bombed targets in the vicinity of the primary.

The next afternoon, a communications center at Zulpich was attacked, again in direct support of our defensive stand. This time 379 x 250 pound bombs were dropped with excellent results. Exh 14, Dec '44. Moderate, accurate flak at the target knocked down one plane and caused category "A" damage to 7 plane and category "AC" damage to four planes. Lt Reece B. Robertson's plane was hit in the right engine on the bomb run. He stayed with the formation and dropped his bombs even though his right engine was on fire. He peeled off from the formation after the target and started downward in a glide. One chute came out of the plane, which later crashed in a small town just on the German side of the bomblines. Lt Robertson's gunner was Staff Sergeant Marine W. Cheney. Both are listed as MIA. The crews reported seeing Me 109s, FW 190s, and jet fighters in the distance, but they reported no attacks on the formation.

Christmas Day arrived, and, although the holiday feeling prevailed, the 416th vowed that there would be no "Peace on Earth" for the enemy on this Christmas Day. We flew two missions on the 25th.

Taking off early Christmas morning, we continued to tie up the German supply routes to their Ardennes' salient by striking at the road junction and the town of Munstereifel itself. Only one flight of the formation was able to pick up the target, but they achieved superior results, hitting buildings and cutting the roads in the center of the town. Exh 15, Dec '44. Gee equipment failed in one flight, but it went on to bomb the town of Krimm, severely damaging and cutting the marshalling yard and highway. Another flight severely damaged the town of Kronenburgerhutte. Two other flights were unable to identify the target because of the haze and snow. The sixth flight lost its leader to flak going in on the target and did not bomb. Although the primary target was bombed by one flight only, its results and the results achieved on the two casual targets considerably impeded the progress of the counter-offensive. The flight leader's plane was hit by moderate to intense, heavy accurate flak that followed the formation from the bomblines to the target. The plane, an A-20 Havoc, exploded in mid-air. One chute was seen to emerge and open. The crew consisted of Captain R.V. Miracle, Lt J.J. Burg, Staff Sergeants A.F. Galloway and J.R. Simmonds. An A-26 Invader was also hit going in to the target. Although the plane was burning, he continued on over the target and dropped his bombs with his flight. It broke away from the formation and went down burning, crashing just across the bomblines. No chutes were seen. Lt K.W. Kehoe was the pilot; Corporal R.F. Graham, the gunner. Both crews are listed as MIA. The formation was badly hit by flak, with 14 planes suffering category "A" damage, 8 category "AC" damage, and one category "B" damage. This last mentioned plane, piloted by Lt William J. Greene, on his 65th mission, was hit in the right engine on the bomb run. He stayed with the formation, dropping his bombs on the target. Exh 15 Dec '44. By superior flying, despite injuries to his face caused by shattered glass from a broken windshield, he brought the plane back to one of our bases for a successful crash-landing. The plane was washed

out. His observer, Lt J.L. Britt, was also wounded in the face by glass. Lt Col Willetts, Lt Royalty, B-N, and Lt Pair, Lt Corum, B-N, led the boxes.

The afternoon mission was again a costly one. The target was a railroad junction at Hillesheim. None of the flights were able to identify the target through the haze that covered it. Instead, a casual target was selected by three of the five flights. One flight scored excellent results on the town of Pelm, south of the primary. A second flight scored good results on the town of Fousdork; the third, excellent results on Gereisten where a group of buildings adjoining the railroad tracks were destroyed. A malfunction in the release mechanism prevented one of the flights from bombing. The other flight, the lead flight in the formation, did not bomb when the formation leader was shot down. The formation was subjected to intense accurate heavy flak from a point just over the bomblines to the target and back to that first point. The formation leader's plane was hit by flak between the I.P. and the target. It lost the left wing and went spinning to the earth, crashing near the town of Resheim. One chute was seen. The crew consisted of Captain R.B. Prentiss, Lt F.H. Bursiel, Staff Sergeant D.M. Brown, and Sergeant A.O. Wylie. The number two plane in Captain Prentiss' flight was shot down shortly after. One engine was smoking as the plane fell earthward and exploded near Losheim. No chutes were seen. The pilot of this plane, an A-26 Invader, was Lt R.R. Svenson; his gunner, Staff Sergeant P.G. Fild. Both crews are listed as MIA. Fourteen other planes received category "A" damage and three, category "AC" damage. Captain Prentiss, Lt Bursiel, B-N, led the first box; Captain Harrold, Lt Brewer, B-N, led the second box.

Weather prevented a mission on the 26th. On the 27th, however, five flights took off to bomb the Eller railroad bridge over the Moselle River. The crews reported that the bridge was swallowed up in the smoke from the 1000-pounders. Exh 16, Dec '44. Out of the five flights, three scored superior ratings and two, excellents. However, even with such superior bombing, photo reconnaissance showed the bridge still standing. The approaches had been hit heavily and a 34-car train was caught at the entrance to a tunnel just off the bridge. The bombing could not have been more accurate; it was just one of those cases where the bombs fell through the framework of the high span and exploded in the water without causing any visible damage to the structure. Captain Hulse, Lt Conte, B-N, and Captain Stebbins, Lt Calloway, B-N, (who scored his second successive superior) led the two boxes. There was no flak.

Another day of bad weather and the planes got off on the following day, the 29th. When the planes got over the target, a railroad bridge at Keuchinger, they found it buried under a 10/10 cloud cover. No attack could be made. Lt Col Meng, Lt Powell, B-N, and Captain Atkinson, Lt Ackerson, B-N, led the two boxes. As had been noticed on every mission since the German break-through, there were more contrails in the target area, probably from jet fighters. There were no attacks, however. One crew reported a single-engine fighter, resembling an Me 109, that followed the formation to within three minutes of the base. It never closed in enough for combat or further identification. This mission No. 179, was the last mission for the month of December.

Most of our operations during the month had been confined to the task of interdiction to reduce the effectiveness of the German counterattack. In the 16 missions in the month, we had flown individual sorties and dropped [no value shown] tons of bombs.

Thus ended the year 1944, having been operational just a couple of days short of ten full months. Much had been accomplished in these ten months. The skies over England were no longer menaced by enemy planes. The flying bombs, although

still used, had been effectively counter-acted by the destruction or capture of most of their launching sites. A well-planned schedule of bombing had opened the way for the landing on Normandy beaches in June. As our troops pushed in toward Paris, Antwerp, Metz, and finally Germany's westward wall, the Siegfried Line, our planes furnished air coordination that made every phase of these advances successful. Exh 17 Dec '44.

(Declassified IAW EO 12958)

Documents available from the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell Air Force Base, AL.