

Record of combat missions from Sept. 1944 to Mar. 1945

NO.	DATE	TARGET	PILOT	SHLF
1.	Sept. 26, 1944	Bremen	Gibbs	952
2.	Oct. 14, 1944	Cologne	Keppler	775
3.	Oct. 15, 1944	Cologne	Keppler	683
4.	Oct. 17, 1944	Cologne	Keppler	841
5.	Oct. 19, 1944	Mannheim	Keppler	208
6.	Oct. 30, 1944	Merseburg	Keppler	798
7.	Nov. 2, 1944	Merseburg	Keppler	798
8.	Nov. 4, 1944	Neunkirchen	Keppler	643
9.	Nov. 9, 1944	Saarbrücken	Ganyu	643
10.	Nov. 10, 1944	Weisbaden	Sandusky	513
11.	Nov. 21, 1944	Osnabrück	Ganyu	841
12.	Nov. 25, 1944	Merseburg	McCord	732
13.	Nov. 27, 1944	Bingen	McCord	732
14.	Dec. 4, 1944	Mainz	McCord	732
15.	Dec. 5, 1944	Berlin	McCord	732
16.	Dec. 11, 1944	Geissen	McCord	732
17.	Dec. 12, 1944	Darmstadt	McCord	732
18.	Dec. 24, 1944	Darmstadt	McCord	140
19.	Dec. 28, 1944	Coblenz	McCord	732
20.	Dec. 31, 1944	Hamburg	McCord	732
21.	Jan. 2, 1945	Ehrang	McCord	871
22.	Jan. 3, 1945	Fulda	McCord	732
23.	Jan. 7, 1945	Cologne	McCord	938
24.	Jan. 8, 1945	Waxweiler	McCord	732
25.	Jan. 13, 1945	Bischopsheim	McCord	732
26.	Jan. 17, 1945	Hamburg	McCord	871
27.	Jan. 29, 1945	Bielefeld	McCord	767
28.	Feb. 15, 1945	Cottbus	McCord	732
29.	Feb. 16, 1945	Hamm	McCord	732
30.	Feb. 20, 1945	Nuremberg	Underwood	767
31.	Feb. 23, 1945	Kitzsingen	Allen	643
32.	Feb. 24, 1945	Bremen	Muntz	798
33.	Feb. 28, 1945	Kassel	McCord	683
34.	Mar. 1, 1945	Ulm	McCord	160
35.	Mar. 3, 1945	Dollbergen	Muntz	938

Sept.	1
Oct.	5
Nov.	7
Dec.	7
Jan.	7
Feb.	6
Mar.	2

Lt. Gibbs

Alt. 27,000
Tem. 40

September 26, 1944

Story of First Mission to Germany

At 7 A.M. crew was called for mission. I got up and ate and went back, handed in laundry, swept the floor, and was helping the new guy make a fire when the C O opens the door and says "Greenberg, up to the orderly room, there's a jeep waiting for you, you're flying" -- I grabbed my long johns and my parachute scarf that Pop had given me, and dashed up to the orderly room where the jeep was just pulling up. He took me down to the 413th Sq. where a Sgt. told me I was flying as toggeler. The bombardier on the ship #952 was flying lead, and they needed a bombardier, so I was he. I cleaned the chin guns the best I could with the help of the engineer on the crew, and put them in the turret. I introduced myself to the co-pilot and he told me the navigator would help me in case I had trouble. The crew bombardier showed up and took the trouble to explain all the switches and settings, which I understood. The navigator came in and we talked about home and cadets. We finally took off at about 11:50 and we were off. At 10,000 ft. I checked bomb bay doors. Navigator put on Mae West and parachute, so I did same, only to have leg straps much too short. After about 15 minutes of violent pulling it was on. I plugged in heated suit and waited. After awhile the gunners called for a test fire. I tried to hand charge chin turret but the damn thing was screwed up, and the navigator seemed P.O'd. He called the armorer and after awhile he too gave up, and the navigator was really P. O'd. About this time the navigator noticed the light was on, and the bomb doors open. I immediately closed but the crew noticed it and bitched. The navigator helped me on with flak suit/ The I. P. approaching, I switched on the intervelometer, and the navigator put the flak hat on my head. I opened the doors as soon as I saw lead ship open theirs, and immediately everyone started yelling that I

September 26, 1944

was losing some bombs. I still don't know what was wrong. I don't think I pushed the toggle switch, but its possible. At any rate, this P.O'd everybody. I lost 5 bombs and dropped rest over Bremen. I didn't shut salvo switch for awhile and crew started shouting "clost the f-----g doors." I finally learned the secret and closed them immediately. Flak was bursting way in front of us, but it didn't seem close at all. I was much too interested in watching lead ship. There was an oxygen leak in ship and oxygen was very low - lead was in extra outlet in nose. Coming in navigator amazed me by saying I was completely out at I.P.- oxygen got loose. I don't remember a thing about it, buy my emergency valve was on, so he must have used it. On landing, everyone wabbed to know what the trouble was, and I didn't know either. They all Hidded me about it, but said as long as we got back, its Ok. I had to fall out bombardier's report, and got briefed by S-2 and group bombardier.

All in all, it wasn't too bad except for my mistakes. I hope I can stay on as toggler. The nose is warm and I can drop bombs. I hear we knocked hell out of Bremen, and I must have hit some farm houses with my first incendiaries.

Alt. 27,000
Tmp. 33

October 14, 1944

2nd Mission - Cologne, Germany - Ship 775

At 3:55 A.M., the C Q awakened the barracks by yelling Capt. Shaws crew, Tychiski, Flying with Jones, and just as I was about to turn over and go to sleep again, as was the usual case, he says - Greenberg, flying bombardier with Keppler. Briefing was to be at 4:30, which didn't give us much time. I crawled out of bed, put on my winter underwear and limey socks and started towards the mess hall. I met the ball gunner on Kepperl's crew and we went together. I left my silverware in the barracks, so he lent me a spoon. We had a lousy breakfast of french toast made out of limey bread. We caught a truck down to the briefing room. I checked my wallet and pen at the PW office. Briefing was a half hour late do to the fact that no one was woken up in time. The target was to be the same as yesterday's scrubbed mission, the maistalling yards at Cologne. I went to the gunners briefing as the Capt. there told me it wasn't necessary to go to the bombardier briefing. I got my stuff out of the locker, having to take another oxygen mask because I couldn't find my own. I went down to the gun room and proceeded to put some oil on the chin guns. While I was there I had some words with Ebert about the mask I had taken. I had some trouble getting the guns in, so the ground amorer put them in for me. The switches were all electrical instead of manual like the last mission, so the amorer explained it to me. The load was 18 bombs, some incendiary, mostly 275 lb. general duty. The navigator, a Jewish fellow who had gone to CTD at Pitt was a good Joe. We took off at 8 o'clock and flew around the clouds, looking for the formation, finally caught it on way over. Had trouble with parachute harness again, and navigator helped me. Heading over Germany no. 2 engine started smoking and we lagged behind formation. We were about three miles behind when the formation opened bomb bay and I did likewise. They bombed through the clouds and I pushed the toggle switch but only

October 14, 1944

12 bombs dropped. Flak was coming up and nothing would get the bombs out, not even the salvo. The aimorer, Roberts, and engineer went into the open bomb bay to kick them out but couldn't. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, I set the switches again, and dropped the remaining six. I closed the doors and we headed back. About halfway back we met some terrific flak that was very accurate, but low. We came back with another formation and landed with one engine feathered. We had a big hole in the wing from flak and the co-pilot had a piece hit right over his head. Capt. Shaw crew had to land at Brussels for some reason or other and Tshi had a broken arm and leg from a defective ball turret. Rough day. I don't think I made any mistakes, but for the 2nd time in a row, something went Snafu. Kepplers crew is a damn nice bunch, and I like to fly with them again.

Alt. 24,600
Temp. 30

3rd Mission - Cologne, Germany - Ship No. 683

October 15, 1944

Awakened at 1 A.M. by CQ - briefing at 2A.M. I was to fly as bombardier with Keplers crew again. I went to their barracks and went to breakfast with the ball gunner. We had fried eggs - the first time since I've been here. We caught the truck to the briefing room, where I checked out my chute and got my stuff together. Put my wallet in the PW room. Briefing began a little after 2 and to everyone's surprise they announced the target to be the same as yesterday, the marshalling yards at Cologne. We had taken our stuff to the plane before briefing so we went straight to the gun room to get the guns. I had trouble putting mine in, as usual, and both Roberts and the engineer helped me. I spent a few minutes in the ground crew shack before take off time.

It was pitch dark when we took off, but daylight was threatening. We circled the field gaining altitude. I called the pilot and asked him if I could take the pins out of the bombs, first he said all right, and then decided I had better watch out for planes, and Roberts took the pins out. We finally headed out towards Belgium. We hit the coast at Ostend, hit Gient, Brussels, Andhoven, and had our LP near Aachen, where we encountered some flak. I opened the bomb bay doors, and sat there, with my flak suit and helmet on, watching the flak and lead ship. All the switches were set and I was hoping against hope that everything would work right. Soon the lead ship dropped his bombs, PFF as the clouds almost completely covered the target. I pushed the toggle switch and yelled over the interphone of the bombs had gone. All 20 of them, 16 250 lbs and 4 incendiaries had dropped. I closed the doors and proceeded to watch Keppler dodge the flak. We flew with the formation dodging flak here and there. We observed fires along the river front at Coblenz and had some rockets shot at us. OP 51's were

October 15, 1944

numerous and sure looked good up there. We gradually let down until we hit 10,000 over the channel, where I took off my mask much to the relief of my ears, which hurt like hell for awhile. We came over the field at five minutes to twelve, and I was eating chow at 1. I don't know if we caused much damage, but I suppose we hit something. I get along with the crew much better than I do with Shaw's bunch - they're a much nicer bunch of fellows.

Alt. 23,500
Temp. 34

4th Mission - Cologne, Germany - Ship 841

October 17, 1944

I knew I was going to fly today because Tex came in last night and said I was on the list. At five to 1 the CQ put on the lights, told me I was flying and that briefing was at 2. I got dressed and I got dressed and called for Keplers crew again. I went to breakfast with the ball gunner, had eggs, shredded wheat and milk and coffee. We caught the truck down to the briefing room again where I checked my stuff out, checked my wallet and pen. By this time it was ten to 2 and too late to carry the stuff out to the ship. Briefing started at 2 and the Lieutenant started by saying that all our efforts over Cologne were in vain as most of the bombs landed out in the fields somewhere. More surprising was the fact that we were to hit Cologne again, for the third day in a row - the course was approximately the same. We walked out to the ship rather than take a truck. then back to the gun shop to get the guns. I put them in all by myself today for the first time, Although I had a bit of trouble. I went back to inspect the bombs, found I had 34 100 lbs and 2 clusters of incendiaries. I put all my heated clothes on, and spent about half an hour in the shack with the crew. We took off again in pitch dark and gained altitude. Robby took the pins out as I watched for planes. We couldn't see the ground at any time over the channel, Belgium, or Germany. Our I.P. as yesterday, was a little below Aachen, where we hit some flak again. The interphone went out at this point and we could only speak over command. Finally it came on, but the ball gunner would only hear, but not speak. He answered questions in the affirmative by moving the turret in elevation and negative by azimuth. Bombing was done again by PFF. We opened the bomb bays, and I dropped the bombs as soon as the next ship did. Everything worked perfectly again. I closed the doors and watched the flak- some-
~~times seen~~

October 17, 1944

times seeing red bursts. Going home we saw little flak, many P 51's. A lot of planes had feathered props. One of the new crews opened their bomb bays right over us over the channel and had a full bomb load. They salvoed them in the channel. We hit England and rode home at 1,000 ft. In the truck going to the mess hall, Keppler told me he had talked to Cheney and it was almost sure that I'd be the bombardier for the rest of the missions. I had asked Les to talk to Keppler, but had had done it himself. We hit the base at noon, which is the right time to finish a mission.

Alt. 29,200

Temp. 40

5th Mission - Ludwigshaven, Germany - Ship 208

October 1944

The CQ woke us at 2:45 and said briefing was to be at 3. I asked him if it was a mistake, but he said no. I got dressed and called for Keppler's crew. We were nearly first at the mess hall, which had not been alerted, and weren't ready. After awhile they got some eggs cooking ~~xxx~~ and I had three. We caught a truck down to the briefing room and I got my stuff ready and checked my wallet and pen. Briefing didn't start until much later, and we were to hit some oil depot at Ludwigshaven. We were to fly a ship in the 338th, so we caught one of their trucks to the ship. It was raining and the weather looked bad when we went to the gun room. I cleaned the guns and carried them out in a drizzle. I got one gun in and was; putting the other in when they started the engines and I had to stop. I went into the waist and dressed. I had to have Robby and Paul help me with the gun and it took quite a time to get in - by forcing. It was raining pretty hard and I headed for the shack. The crew chief told me there was a two hour delay. We all stayed in the shack listening to dirty jokes to pass the time. At nine we took off and had to go through clouds to get to altitude. Robby took the pins out, as Hoy wanted me in the nose to watch for planes. I needed to go to the bath room bad, but it was too late to go then. I had an early Q bombing mechanism and I was hoping nothing would go wrong. I was very uncomfortable without a back to my chair and tried a lot of positions to make myself comfortable. I dozed off several times going over the channel and Belgium, as I was feeling bad. We reached the IP and Les helped me with my flak suit. I opened the bomb bays when the others did, and dropped the load of 16 250 pounds and 4 incendiaries. They went out perfectly. The flak was pretty accurate and moderate, but I was concentrating too much on the bombing to worry about it. It

5th mission

was strictly PFF, as we couldn't see the target. The trip back was uneventful except for a lot of trouble unloading the chin turret. I had to have Paul come up and although he too had trouble, he got them out. Everything went along all right for # 5 and the crew's #13. I'm still not assigned to Kep's crew, but I fly with them on every mission. We had flak holes in the ship, 7 to be exact. All my equipment worked pretty good.

Alt. 21,000
Temp. 25

6th Mission - Merseberg, Germany - Ship 798

We were called by CQ at 3:45 for briefing at 5. I went to the mess hall with Bratch, had powered eggs which were lousy and caught truck to briefing room. Got all my stuff together before briefing, and then went to the officers briefing room. Target was again to be oil plant at Merseberg, which was scrubbed a couple of days ago. Both regular and bombardiers briefing was repetitious. It was nearly dawn when I went to put my guns in. The chin turret was from "5 Grand". Robby was standing there and proceeded to put guns in with my help. The left gun wouldn't go into battery and after fooling around for awhile, we let the ground armorers work on it. The charging cable had been in the way. We were flying no. 3 to the lead crew and took off at 8:15. It was hazy over England, but the weather was expected to be decent. The RAF was going to Cologne and we saw their elements of 3 way below us. The fighter support was terrific. We had 51's along with us and supposed to have 38's at the target. Everything seemed to progress all right over the North Sea and into Holland, except that over the latter there was a 10 10 cloud coverage. All of a sudden, Kep calls up and says we're going to make a 180° turn and go back because we couldn't possibly fly over the clouds. We were only a half hour from the IP and we were all P.O'd about doing all that work for nothing. We had a load of 16 300 lb Q P bombs and Robby and I collaborated in putting the pins back in. Only the navigator had interrogation when we got back, and there was very little hope of getting credit. However it seems some big shots like Lt. Col. Schultz and Capt. CHency needed it back, and so therefore it was officially credited as a mission. There was supposedly fighters waiting for us at the target, so this really can be considered a lucky milk run. I should get the air medal for either this or the next mission.

Alt. 27,000
Temp. 39

7th Mission - Merseburg, Germany - Ship 798

They woke us at about 3 AM for briefing at 4. I went to breakfast with Bratsch and had 4 eggs, cereal, and coffee. Caught the truck to the briefing room and got my stuff ready. Carried some of it out to ship before briefing started. Target was again to be Merseburg - hydrogen plant of visual, main plant if PFF. The 96th was to lead the 8th A.F. with Col. Warren in the lead ship. We flew #6 in the lead, carrying 10 500 lb general purpose bombs. Took my guns out to the ship and had the usual trouble with the right one, but finally got it in with the ground armorer's help. We took off at 7:40 and assembled at 6,000 ft. - low altitude for a change. I pulled the nose pins and Robby the tail. Everything went along smoothly over the North Sea and there was a heavy cloud coverage. Over Holland the clouds broke and I was able to see the ground. Les helped me on with my flak suit and I watched for awhile. Kep called me and said bombing was to be PFF. I turned on the intervelometer and got everything set. We finally reached the I P and I opened the bomb bay doors on the lead ship. Then I saw the first flak - much more than I'd ever seen before or hope to see again. It made a complete carpet and the sky was black with it. Finally they dropped their bombs and I did likewise. Flak was still something awful, but the evasive action was good, and most of it went to either side of us. Just about then something popped in front of me and I had pieces of plexi glass all over my flak suit. Right in front of me was a hole about as big as a quarter and a cold draft rushed in. I don't think I was scared - it happened too quick. I called the boys and told them about it. Bratsch saw a 17 go down in flames, but otherwise the trip home was uneventful. I slept most of the way and had my escape kit covering the hole. Just before we landed I found the piece of flak that had come in, about an 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ long and $\frac{1}{2}$ wide, but very heavy. Everyone along today says they saw more flak today than

7th Mission

all the other missions put together. I don't ~~and~~ particularly care for any more of those kind.

Alt. 25,000
Temp. 35

8th Mission - Saarbrucken, Germany - Ship 643

We were awakened at 2:35 for briefing at 4:15. I went to breakfast with Bratsch once again and we were among the first in the mess hall. I ate two eggs, fried the way I like them, cereal and coffee. It was early when we caught the truck to the briefing room. I took all my stuff to the ship except my heated suit, which I was going to wear. Some general, one star, was at the briefing and the target was to be a benzol plant in a small town east of Saarbrucken. A new type bombing, called Micro H was to be tested. My guns went in easily and I had a little trouble putting the bound in, Robby and I fixed it. At 8 all the ships were on the taxi strip when they called for an indefinite delay. A truck came around picking up the navigator and a gas truck came around putting more gas in. All they told the navigators was that in case Pff was used, Saabrucken would be the target. We finally took off and had a little trouble finding the formation. The bomb load was 12 500 lb G & P's. The course was through Belgium, France, Luxembourg and into Germany. Clouds completely obscured everything from the Belgium coast inland. As we got near the I P Les helped me with the Flak suit and I set the intervelometer at minimum. We headed for Saarbrucken as the new technique wasn't right, I guess. There were no friendly fighters around and no flak as we opened the bomb doors. I dropped the bombs as the leader dropped his - no trouble, thank God and we headed back. I saw only a tiny bit of flak way out at 9 o'clock, but it didn't come anywhere near us. I had a little trouble opening the cover on my left gun and Robby came up and fixed it. Our VHF was out most of the time. The mission was extremely easy, nothing like Meserburg. We finally got some P - 47's on the way back. I didn't work hard today, but I'm tired as hell. The general was supposed to have flours along. This is what is commonly knows as a "milk run."

Alt. 22,000

Temp. 40

9th Mission - Saarbrucken, Germany - Ship 643

The CQ woke us at 1:45 and said "Kepplers Crew and Greenberg with Ganuy." The rumor the boys told me about last night concerning the new bombardier was no longer a rumor, but a reality. At any rate I was flying as bombardier. I went to breakfast with Bratsch and had two eggs, cereal and coffee. The eggs were raw and I didn't eat one. I caught the truck for the briefing room, and got my stuff out and took it to the ship. They were still loading when I walked out there, 6 1,000 lb GP in the bomb bay and 2 on external racks under the wing. We were flying no. 5 in the low and I noticed that the target was right on the bomb line. We were going after a fort just six miles ahead of Patton's lines and 3 miles from the Moselle River. The whole 8th Air Force was bombing forts in the vicinity. It was to be strictly a visual target and there were special plans so there wouldn't be any bombs dropped on our boys. The secondary was to be the marshalling yards at Saarbrucken. It was bitterly cold when I took the guns to the ship. It was the coldest day since we arrived here. My hands went numb trying to put the guns in, and I had to call on armorer to finally put them in. It was dark when we took off and for the first time I took off in the radio room. After awhile I took the pins out of the bombs and went up to the nose. It was dark and I couldn't find the cords, but I finally managed. Everything went along all right although the cold was terrific. At the last second they decided to bomb the secondary as there was a bad cloud coverage. For the primary we were to salvo the bomb bay and use the toggle switch for the external bombs. We headed for Saarbrucken and the flak started coming up close but low. The bomb doors open, we started the run. It was a long run and I didn't care for the flak with 1,000 lbs in the bomb bay. Finally it was bombs away and someone said one bomb was still inside so I pressed the salvo switch and got rid of it. The bomb doors would not close electrically and the pilot was having a fit, as he couldn't keep

9th Mission

airspeed with the open doors. After about 15 ~~xxxxx~~ minutes the engineer cranked them up. Flak wasn't too bad after we left the target. We had the radio compass on most of the way back and got some good music and news. It was pouring, snowing and fiercely cold when we landed. A couple of 17's had been knocked down presumably by flak. It wasn't too bad a mission except for the cold. Its about time they decided to give me the air medal.

Alt. 29,000
Temp. 43

10th Mission - Wiesbaden, Germany - Ship 513

They woke us at 4 for briefing at 5 - Keppler's crew and I was to fly with Sandusky, on his first mission in ship 513. I went to breakfast with Bratsch once more. I had 2 eggs and coffee and caught the truck to the briefing room. I didn't have time to take my stuff out to the ship, so I just checked my wallet and pen and went to briefing. We were supposed to fly no. 5 in the high and bomb an airfield near Wiesbaden, either micro H or visual and the town if PFF. The whole crew was in the gun room when I walked in, ambitiously cleaning their guns. I was through with mine before they were, and had an easy time putting them in the turret for a change. I talked to the pilot and co-pilot for awhile and then went up in the nose. The navigator's guns weren't in and presently he arrived and we put them in together. He was originally the bombardier on Ganyer's crew and taken off to be a navigator. He didn't care for it a bit. We had 38 100 lb bombs where we took off. At 3,000 ft. I went back and the tail gunner helped me take out the pins. We couldn't find the formation for awhile but finally located it. Crossing the channel we hit some clouds and when we came out there was no more formation. We tacked on to a group with the Letter "L" on their tail (452). We kept juggling for position and half the time we were out of formation and the other half getting out of prop wash. The navigator was all mixed up and we had to guess at the time. Finally they opened their bomb bay doors and I did likewise. Light flak made the run interesting. After what seemed like a half hour. I was amazed to see them close the doors without dropping any bombs at all and turn for home. We had to do the same. It was mighty disappointing going all that way and not drop any bombs. Nothing happened on the way back except the hard job of putting 38 pins back in the bombs. I had to use some old pins I had in my pocket and some the navigator gave me. We left the 432 group and headed for the

10th Mission

field, but it took us an hour to find it, after going over it once. What a waste of machinery, gas and man hours. We were the only crew in our group to come back with bombs. Sandusky is a poor pilot but a nice guy. Can't fly formation nohow. Anyway it counts, so why complain.

Alt. 27,000
Temp. 45

11th Mission - Osnabruk, Germany - Ship 841

After about ten days, the weather broke and we were alerted for a mission. The CQ woke us at 3:15 for briefing at 4:30. Bratsch wasn't supposed to fly, but not to break the luck, he went to breakfast with me. I had 3 eggs and coffee and took off for the briefing room. I got all my stuff together and carried it out to the ship which I had a lot of trouble in finding. I wore my OD's today, instead of a flying suit. I cleaned my guns and carried them to the ship, had a little trouble, but I put them in without help. At briefing, the target was announced as a synthetic oil refinery at Lutzkendorf, 6 miles s. of Merseburg, with PFF as the same oil refinery at Leuna (Merseburg). Last resort was to be either the marshalling yards at Osnabruk or Coblenz. I was flying with Ganyu and we took off as dawn broke. At 3,000 ft. I went back and took the pins out of the 10 500 lb QB's. My cold was bothering me and leaking in my oxygen mask. Everything went as usual over the Channel, the Zinder Zie and Holland and into Germany, except that the chin turret wouldn't work. There was light flak most of the way and Brownie pointed to the flak map and indicated we were going to Osnabruk - there was a front at Merseburg that we couldn't get through. I dropped on the leader and everything went all right. I closed the doors quickly and we headed home. The flak was light and ineffective at the target and out. One 17 went into a spin and hurtled through space with 3 chutes coming out. One ship blew up at take off and one crashed into the embankment at the railroad tracks near the field after being cut out of the traffic pattern. The plane was smashed to bits but no one was killed. Coming back the radio compass had music and my no. 11 was completed. Kep's crew and Ricke's crew flew chaff ships. Radio says we hit Merseburg so the 1st Div. must have gotten through.

Alt. 27,000
Temp. 43

12th Mission - Merseburg, Germany - Ship 732

My first mission with McCord turned out to be quite a trip. I was awakened by the CQ at 2:20 for briefing at 3:45. I had 3 eggs and shredded wheat for breakfast and went to the briefing room. I took my stuff out to the ship and proceeded to briefing. Once again our target was to be the synthetic oil plant at Leuna near Merseburg, the scene of my worst mission. The weather was terrible, raining like hell when I put my guns in and we thought it would be scrubbed until the last minute. We had to form at 25,000 because of clouds. Everything went OK along the way. We passed over Dover and I saw the white cliffs they rave about. I had a horrible headache and my stomach felt like coming up. The flak over the target wasn't anything like it was on Nov. 2, but I was too sick to have it bother me anyway. I opened the bomb bay doors and watched the pluto box for the green light to come on, but the sun shining in kept me knowing when it was on. Finally I thought it was on and put the rack switches on. Bombs went away in another ship and I called to find out if it was that way in our ship, but we still had all our bombs, apparently the pluto didn't work. The co-pilot salvoed the bombs and we left the target. Coming back I felt sicker than a dog. I sat on the seat and rested my head on the stabilizer. I thought I would puke, but I got the dry heaves instead. What a lousy feeling. I felt a little better afterwards ~~xxxx~~though. Near the battle line we had to leave the formation because of a gas shortage. We were headed for Luge, but the navigator became flustered and didn't know where we were. At 4,000 ft. we went over the German lines and they started shooting flak at us. We got out of there quickly. After flying around Belgium for awhile, the navigator thought he knew where we were and gave the pilot a mag heading for Brussels - the co-pilot had words with the navigator. Finally we saw a runway ahead, it wasn't Brussels, but we landed anyway. It was a 9th Air Force P-47 field. At first we

12th Mission

were going to get gas and take off, but the weather was bad and they wouldn't let us go. There were three crews at the field and they took us to chow and then took us in a QI truck to the town of Mons.

I teamed up with McCord's engineer and we had a great time getting good Belgian beer with the pocket of English change I had. The town major got us all rooms in the hotel "L'Esperance". My high school French came in very handy. The beer was damn good. I had about four, in beer gardens and at the hotel. We hitched on to a trolley car to get to the hotel. Had a beautiful bed. The white bread was good too. In my French I told the hotel keeper's wife what happened to Cologne and found out what they were having for "le petit dejeuner" I had a great time drinking the beer and using my French. I sure am glad I had a chance to visit this friendly little country. No. 12 was quite a mission.

Alt. 26,000
Temp. 43

13th Mission - Bingen, Germany - Ship 732

After a hectic night in which Ricke's crew, celebrating the completion of their missions, practically wrecked the barracks and through which I had to sleep, I was awakened at 3:15 for briefing at 5. I went to breakfast alone, had 3 eggs and coffee and found out that briefing was to be at 5:30. I took my stuff out to the ship and returned to briefing. The target was to be a marshalling yard in the small town of Bingen, on the Rhine, right over the liner, a target requested by Patton. The guns on 732 go in pretty easy, so I didn't have any trouble. We took off at 8:31 and assembled at 19,000 ft. Our bomb load was 34 100 lb GP's and 2 500 lb incendiaries. Everything proceeded OK and I took the pins out with the help of the ball turret operator. I opened the bomb doors a couple of inches and waited for the action to start. At the IP the lead ship lowered his bomb doors, but ours wouldn't open electrically. The engineer went to crank them down and I wondered whether to use pluto or not. When the doors weren't opened and I thought the run was nearly over I told the navigator to disconnect the pluto. After what seemed like hours, the doors finally came open and I hurriedly connected the pluto. The green light wouldn't go on, so I didn't know whether it was working or not. When I saw the bombs go way I toggled the bombs, and the co-pilot salvoed, so I don't know whether pluto worked or not. Naturally the doors wouldn't come up either, so they remained down until we hit the channel. There was no flak to be seen anywhere. It was just like a practice mission at high altitude I had a headache most of the way, but I couldn't get sick. We had to feather No. 4 coming in. So No. 13 goes into the books, only 22 more like that and things will be OK. We flew off at Capt. Shaw's right wing. The ship is very warm, just like the one we brought over. I have a back rest for my seat and the chin turret works like a charm.

Alt. 24,500
Temp. 32

14th Mission - Mainz, Germany - Ship 732

They woke us at 4:15 for briefing at 5:30. I ate breakfast with Bratsch again - french toast and powdered eggs. I took my stuff out to the ship and came back for briefing. We were going after the marshalling yards at Mainz, with 10 500 lb GP's and 2 incendiaries. It was pouring pretty hard when briefing was over and my stuff was getting wet at the plane. The rain let up for awhile and I took the guns out to the plane. The tail gunner helped me put them in and we didn't have any trouble. There was plenty of time left, so I went into the ground crew shack and lied down on the bed. At take off time, it was delayed an hour, so I rested some more. We finally took off at 9:50 and assembled at 12,000 ft. I had to go pretty bad, so I went back to the radio room and got a shaff box and the ball gunner had some paper. After I had relieved myself I felt better, and I waited for the action to start. We had a terrific tail wind. ~~We~~ going in and we got to the IP in a terrific hurry. I had neglected to test the bomb doors and I was hoping they would open. When the other ships opened their bomb doors, I tried to open mine, but the damn things wouldn't budge. I called the engineer, told him to crank them, and he didn't like the idea at all. The red light of the pluto release went on, and the white one tested OK, so I presumed it was working. Much to my surprise the ships ahead dropped bombs without the light working, so I opened the racks and used the toggle switch. I pushed the salvator, but the radio man called up and said there was an incendiary and a GP still hanging in the right rack. I decided to go back myself and kick them out, but the engineer was standing in the open bomb bay trying to do it. After a minute or so he turns around and shakes his head, as if to say he can't do it, so I changed places with him in the cold bomb bay, with nothing separating me from the 24,000 ft. of cold air except the cat walk. With my portable oxygen bottle hampering

14th Mission

me, I still managed to kick the two bombs out. My fingers were nearly frozen, so I made a hurried retreat to the nose and hooked in the muff. The engineer cranked the doors closed. Our #4 engine was feathered for some reason or other. The flak wasn't too bad, moderate but inaccurate. I was certainly glad to get on the ground and Runner and Lang were sweating me in and took my guns out for me. I don't think I was ever as tired as I am tonight. I really earned my money today, although we didn't hit a darn thing.

Alt. 26,300
Temp. 45

15th Mission - Berling, Germany - Ship 732

I felt pretty sick last night when I got back from the mission, so I hit the sack at 8 and didn't get up until the CQ woke Kepp's kids at 2 to fly the weather ship. He woke me 20 minutes later and I went to eat with Boatwright who was giving out bolt studs today. I had an egg and a couple of pancakes and went to the drying room and took my stuff to the ship. It was full of chaff and had 15 250 lb demos in the bomb bay. At briefing there were two targets up, one to Politz and one to Berlin. By the time briefing took place the Politz mission was off and we were to hit an armament works in the N.W. corner of Berlin. We took off in the dark--the tail gunner helped me put in the guns, no trouble. He helped me take out the pins at 3,000 ft. and we assembled at altitude. The course was over Holland and straight through Germany. I kept opening and closing the bomb doors all the way and when we ^{hit} the IP, they opened without any trouble. The flak was accurate as hell and kept bursting right around us. David, in 644 caught on fire, but it went out and the last we saw of them was when they were lagging at the target. Someone dropped their bombs and I pushed the toggle switch. The radio man called up and said only 3 had gone. The co-pilot through the salvo, but they still remained. I was already to go back and kick them out, when I decided to use the salvo with the bomb door switch and it worked. Someone said they dropped in the heart of Berlin. The bomb doors wouldn't close all the way, but they closed far enough to fly with. The trip back was uneventful but lengthy. Robby, Bratsch and Sammy were waiting for me when I got down and helped me with the stuff. We probably didn't hit anything, per usual, but as long as they dropped in Berlin, it was worth it. It seems everyone had trouble dropping bombs today, as ships kept dropping all the way back. Well, anyway, no. 15 is behind me -- only 20 more to go. I didn't feel too well up there today. We're stand down, crew tomorrow, so we won't fly.

Alt. 24,800
Temp. 33

16th Mission - Giessen, Germany - Ship 732

Today's mission was one of those I used to dream about. I started out as usual eating breakfast with Bratsch and we had pancakes, bread and coffee. I took my stuff out to the ship and came back to briefing. There was a sheet covering the target for the day, so I sat around and smoked a pipe until briefing began at 5:30. We were to hit the marshalling yards at Giessen. Our bomb load was 34 100 lb GP's and 2 500 lb incendiaries. My guns went in easy without any help, but the rounds were screwed up in the left gun, so I didn't bother loading it. I loaded the right gun, and never hand charged it. We took off at 8:08 and at 3,000 ft. I went back and the ball gunner helped me take the pins out. They didn't want me to test the bomb doors, so they remained closed until IP. Most of the trip I snoozed on and off, with the sun shining in my face. It was to be a Micro -H mission. ~~Drpping~~ by Pluto, but I wasn't going to trust it this time. We passed right over Coblenz, but all they shot up were a couple of rockets. The lead ship opened their bomb doors and mine opened without any trouble. The bomb run was 15 minutes long, so if Pluto worked, it would work anyway. The high squadron dropped their bombs halfway down the run. I wondered what the hell they were doing. I found out later the mickey man screwed up. When I saw the leader drop, I pushed the toggle switch and lo and behold the radio operator yells, "All the bombs are gone" Happily, I closed the doors. It was the first time I flew with McCord that the bomb doors worked and the bombs went out without any trouble. Our route back was supposed to go over Paris at low altitude and give the Parisians a show, but the weather was bad and we headed for the base instead. We circled six times before we landed and we were one of the last crews in. Lang was waiting for me, took my guns out, and helped me with the stuff to the briefing room. I was no flak at all at the target. Just a few rockets, which never seem to do any damage. All in all, it was a darn easy "milk run" All I need is 19 more like that. Kep and Shaw flew right next to us.

Alt. 25,000
Temp. 36

17th Mission - Darmstadt, Germany - Ship 732

We were supposed to be on pass this morning, but due to the lack of crews we were scheduled once more. They woke us at 4:15 for briefing at 5:30. I called for Bratsch and we ate breakfast together - pancakes, powdered eggs, and coffee. I was in a hurry to take my stuff out to the ship and in the dark I cracked into the cement blocks and banged my right shin to hell. Gangemi was mikkey operator and when he walked into the briefing room, he hold me we were going after the marshalling yards at Darmstadt, just south of Frankfort. The weather was supposed to be lousy, for a PFF mission or Micro H. The tail gunner helped me with the guns and they went in easy. Our bomb load was 6 500 GP's and 6 500 lb incendiaries. We took off at 8:31 and at 3,000 ft. I went back and the ball gunner helped me with the pins. We were flying no. 6 in the lead, left wing off Keppler I kept waving to Roby and he waved back. We assembled pretty high and after helping the pilot set the CI I took it easy, set the intervelometer, put on my flak suit and waited for the IP. At the IP the lead ship opened his bomb doors. The clouds disappeared and it was to be a beautiful visual target. I opened my doors, and after a minute put on the rack switches. I was amazed a second later when the radio man called and said all the bombs were gone. I knew I hadn't pushed the toggle switch and I couldn't figure out how they released. I guess it was some Pluto malfunction. Our bombs hit in a pasture between two small towns. As we approached the flak less target I could see the incendiaries from the group before us burning in the city. Most of the bombs hit in the city, on the marshalling yards. and all over. It was a city ablaze. I doubt it we'll go there again for a long time. There was no flak anywhere that I could see. It was a good mission though useless in doing the Germans any harm. I could have cried when I found out the bombs had released prematurely. The ceiling was very low and the visibility terrible and we landed after a lousy approach.

Alt. 24,400
Temp. 38

18th Mission - Airfield, Darmstad, Germany - Ship 140

In supposedly the biggest operation of the 8th Air Force, we were awakened at 4:15 for briefing at 5:30. There were about 60 crews from here who briefed including some 1st Division crews, who had landed here. I went to breakfast with Bratsch and had two eggs, shredded wheat and coffee. Everything was packed. I took my stuff out to the ship and returned to briefing which was packed to the gills. Gen. Olds was there and a couple of civilians, probably correspondents. The whole 8th A.F. was going after airfields right back of the lines to help the boys. We were going for an airfield just west of Darmstadt. The weather was supposed to be perfect, not a cloud in the sky from England to Russia. Our bomb load was 38 100 lb GP's. We were flying 140, the oldest ship in the sqdn. as our 732 was still in repair. 140 had hydraulic guns chargers, and Kramer helped me with them. We didn't take off until 9:30 so we had plenty of time. We were flying no. 3 in the low of the low sqdn. off Isolde's wing. We assembled at 7,000 ft and Kramer and Nehls helped me take out the 76 pins. We wrote Merry Christmas on one with a piece of fudge and then I went to the nose. Our course was again over Ghent and a round about course to the target to evade the Frankfurt and Mainz flak. Over the lines the flak started coming up and I felt the bottom of our ship peppered with it. Ships kept aborting left and right. Rockets kept coming up all the way. It took an awful long time to reach the IP but we finally did. The leader opened his bomb doors and so did I. I called Nehls in the ball to ask him if they were open, but he didn't answer. Red had passed out from lack of oxygen in the waist and both Nehls and Roy were helping him. The bomb run was long, but finally they dropped the bombs. I pushed the toggle but only the inside racks dropped. I had to wait awhile before I found out about it, and when I salvod the bombs all dropped in the river. I closed the doors and headed for home. Two patches in the nose ^{we} blew out and I had to stuff my clothes in them to keep from freezing. It

seems that our group missed the field, but someone hit it. One of these days I'll have a mission without a malfunction. It was dark when we landed and I sweated McCord in. On the way back the ship under us came horribly close. I thought we'd had it and I still can't figure out how the hell we missed colliding. It was a long drawn out affair, but I'm now past the halfway mark. The weather was as predicted, very few clouds but a slight haze. We had to drop out of the formation as two of our engines went on the bum.

Alt. 24,700
Temp. 36

19th Mission - Coblenz, Germany - Ship 732

We were awakened at 3:20 for briefing at 4:30, which was then changed to 5. Bratsch called for me and we went to the mess hall - I had two eggs and coffee. Our ship was still down at the 388, so instead of taking my stuff out I put all my flying clothes on and went to briefing. Our primary target was to be a very small town 40 miles east of Liege, and only 8 miles from our own lines. The object was to hamper the operations of the German armored divisions who had to pass through to get to the front. The target was only to be bombed visually - Coblenz was to be the secondary Pff target. After briefing we loaded all our stuff and guns in a truck and drove to the 388. They were still loading bombs when we arrived and I put my guns in without a flash light. It was dammed cold, and my hands were numb. We were flying #6 in the low squadron, off Keppler's left wing. The plane was full of ice and we had to take off with alcohol. We took off at 9 and assembled at 17,000 ft. Our route was again over Ghent and Brussels, but we never saw the latter as a 10/10 cloud coverage came up. Nehls helped me with the pins and then I sat and sunned myself until nearly the IP. At that point McCord called me and said we were going to Coblenz - the leader opened his doors and mine opened without any trouble. Nearly all the way down the run a group of 17's passed under us, so we shut the doors, did a 360 turn and started all over again. It was a short run and when the leader dropped his I pushed the salvo, yelled "Bombs Away" - and the load of 20 250 EP's left the ship. It sure felt good to have everything work for a change. I closed the doors and we headed for home. The flak was very light, low, and ineffective. The usual Coblenz rockets came up, but haven't bothered anything yet. The clouds broke at the Dretch border and we could see the busy port of Antwerp below us. We carried a crew of ten today. The extra man being a radar jammer. We'll probably carry a jammer on every mission. It was a mission which could easily be called a "milk

run". I wouldn't mind flying one like that for 16 days in a row. I've now flown 8 with McCord, more than with anyone else. Six missions this month out of the 7 the group has flown.

Alt. 25,800
Temp. 41

20th Mission - Hamburg, Germany - Ship 732

The last day of 1944 brought with it a mission that will always remain fixed in my memory. It started out as usual, the C Q calling us at 3:15 for briefing at 4:30. Bratsch, Red and I went to chow and had powdered eggs, french toast and coffee. I went to the drying room, collected my stuff and took it out to the ship. I went to briefing where I found out Hamburg was the target. We were flying #3 of the lead sqdu. of the lead element. Our target was the submarine pens at Hamburg where 17 new subs were being outfitted, supposedly the largest collection of subs in one place in the world. Our course led us across the North Atlantic to the Danish peninsula, down to Hamburg and back the same way. Our bomb load was 20 250 lb GP's-- Group bombardier Wanamaker at the bombardier's briefing expected a Pff run and no fighters -- he was wrong on counts. Kramer helped me with my guns and at 07:26 we took off and proceeded to form in the moonlight with dawn just breaking. Everything went along fine all the way over the water except that someone urinated on the ball turrett and Nehls had to get out because he couldn't see a darn thing. We approached the coast and it was clear as a bell. We could see some rockets at Hamburg, 40 mi. away. The lead ship opened his bomb doors and two minutes later, as briefed I opened mine. As we approached the target, the flak started coming up a La Merseberg. I could feel the ship vibrate whenever some flak burst near us. All of a sudden Harvey in the lead ship seemed to slide backwards and Keppler in the #2 took over, but was a mile ahead of anyone else before we knew it. The flak was horrible, but I watched Kpe and salvoed when I saw his come out. At that second the nose splintered and there was a hole straight ahead. We took a right turn to the rally point and the formation was loose as hell. Kramer yelled fighters and I could hear the rat-tat-tat of the machine guns in the rear of the ship. I couldn't understand anyone over the interphone at all. Our bombs had dropped, but the doors wouldn't close. I saw a B-17

at 11 O'clock falling end over end. without a chance. Kramer screamed of a 17 and an ME-109 going down at 6:30. Flak was coming up in an endless stream all the way to the coast, and every sandune in the bay seemed to have Flak installation. One 17, seemingly too badly hurt to make it home, turned back to Germany and we saw a couple of chutes come out before the plane hurtled to earth. Our fighter support, usually so efficient, were absent, much to our horror. It was the first time the 96th has been hit with fighters in months, but although shooting down four jeffies, all our ships returned. McCord said that we had hit the target which was enveloped in black smoke when I last saw it. I had my heart in my mouth over the target and back to the ocean, and I can't understand how we got back alive. Our ship had quite a bit of flak holes including the one in the nose. Definitely no "milk run".

21st Mission - Ehrang, near Trier, Germany

The C Q woke us at 3:15 for briefing at 4:30. Keppel wasn't flying, so I went to chow with Red and Hobby. Red didn't want his eggs, so I had four of them with coffee. It was too late to take my stuff out to the ship, so I went straight to briefing. We were flying ship 871, as 732 was still under repair because of the damage from the Hamburg raid. We were flying no. 2 in the low element of the high squadron, off Isolde's right wing. We were going after a marshalling yard in the small town of Ehrang, which takes care of the rail traffic for the city of Trier. It was an important tactical target because of its proximity to the Luxembourg salient of the German counter attack. It was to be strictly a visual target, with a Pff secondary right near and a last resort of Newkuchan. Our bomb load was 18 250 lb GP's and 2 M-17's. I caught a truck to the ship and then went back to clean my guns. I didn't have any trouble putting them in myself. The ship was flying its second mission as it was shot to hell on its first mission to Merseburg. Until the last minute we thought it would be scrubbed, but at 7:30, in the darkness and a bad haze, we took off. I almost thought we had it on the takeoff, but we made it OK. At 2,000 ft. I went back and Nehls helped me with the pins. We assembled again in the dark and our course took us through France for a change, with our IP south of the city of Luxembourg. There was a 10/10 cloud coverage over the channel and over France. As we approached Luxembourg the clouds disappeared and I knew it would be a visual run. The bomb run was to be SW to NE in order to have the sun at our backs. The leader opened his bomb doors at the IP and I did likewise. The ground speed was very slow do to the course of the bomb run and it took 12 minutes. I had the high altitude photograph of the target in front of me, and I could see we were right on course. I opened the racks and watched the lead ship. Plak started coming up about half way down, but it was low, though of the tracking variety. The lead dropped his, I toggled mine * McClure called me and said all the bombs had

gone. I closed the doors and huddled up as far front as I could to see the bombs hit. They hit all right, smack in the center and in the near vicinity making a beautiful pattern. It was a marvelous job of pin point bombing. It was the first time in 21 missions that everything worked perfectly and I actually saw the bombs hit the target. The route out was exactly as the one in, and uneventful except for a terrific haze at the field when we landed. Mac made a pretty landing without even an approach. Miller's crew, on their 3rd mission crashed soon after takeoff, killing them all. Assembling in the dark was the main cause.

Alt. 23,000
Temp. 27

22nd Mission - Fulda, Germany - Ship 732

The CQ woke us about 3 for briefing at 4. Bratsch called for me and we went to chow. It was windy but clear out. I had two eggs and coffee and went straight to briefing. The target wasn't up on the board yet, but our position in the formation was no. 3 in the lead element of the high squadron. Just before briefing was to start they put up the little red button on the target, a small place called Fulda, about 50 miles east of Geissen. We were after another marshalling yard, to be hit either visually or Pff. They showed us stuke photos of yesterdays raid on Ehrang and it looked exactly as I was it from the nose. Results were said to have been excellent. Our bomb load today was 16 250 lb GP's and 2 M-17's. We were back flying old 732. I carried my stuff out to the ship and then went back to clean my guns. I didn't have any trouble putting them in and I spent a few minutes in the ground crew hut. They hadn't plugged up the hole in the nose, so I stuffed one of Jerry's rayon gloves in, but it didn't help very much. We took off at 7:20, once more in the dark, and I went back at 2,000 to remove the pins. Our course was as yesterday, leaving England at Dover, over France, and through all the flak fields of Frankfort and Mannheim. There was a 10/10 cloud coverage all the way over. I never knew when we crossed the channel or when we were over France. There was nothing but sun to bother me all the way to the IP. The target was supposed to be flak free so I didn't bother to put on my flak suit. Our bomb run was south to north, but it didn't matter as it was Pff anyway. The lead ship opened his doors two minutes before the IP, and I opened mine when we hit it. The run was long due to the small ground speed, but finally the lead let his bombs go and I toggled mine in train. McClure called and said bomb bays clear, so I closed the doors. Everything worked perfectly. There were three rockets shot up for the only opposition - we didn't see any flak at all. The route back was the same as it was in and took an awful long time. I tried to sleep,

22nd Mission

but wasn't very successfu. We had to go through about 4,000 ft of solid cloud coming in, but we landed OK, one of the first crews in. It was a perfect milk run and everything went just as the tech orders say. If they keep flying us the way they have, we'll have 25 in before we go to the flak home. Somehow I don't mind the mission if things work. It's only when everything is SNAFU that a mission is hard, except of course a target like Merseburg, Berlin or the last one to Hamburg, McCord is a good pilot and I feel safe up there with him.

Alt. 26,000
Temp. 44

23rd Mission - Cologne, Germany - Ship 938

The CQ woke us at 3 AM for briefing at 4:15. Keppler was on pass, so I went to breakfast with Red. I had some powdered eggs and French toast and went straight to briefing. We were flying Kep's ship 938, as someone left 732 in France the other day. Our position was again #3 in the lead, flying off Capt. Harvey. We were going after one of the largest bridges over the Rhine in the center of Cologne. Our PFF target was the marshalling yards. Our bomb load was 6 1000 lb GP's. I caught a truck to the plane and then went to clean my guns! It was real cold when I put them in, but I didn't have any trouble. There was plenty of time before take off, so I went into the ground crew shack and listened to the boys talk of their experiences on the train back from London. McCord said that he was getting a bombardier, which probably means I won't fly with the crew much longer. We took off about 8 and assembled in the very early morning. I went back and Nehls helped me with the pins - I helped set up the C-1 and then dozed intermittently until we were over the channel. Our course was through Belgium, south of the Coblenz flak and then nw into Cologne. The weather wasn't too hot. There was a solid layer of 10/10 clouds under us and we were flying through another layer. The contrails were real dense and persistent. We hit the IP for a PFF run and I opened the doors a little after the leader. Shortly afterwards Nehls called and said two ships of our group had collided and were going down in flames. There was flak and rockets at the target, but although it wasn't too close, I was scared stiff. Finally the leader salvod his, and I threw the salvo switch - two of the six hung up, but I pushed the toggle and the bomb bays cleared. I closed the doors and we headed home. I had a horrible headache and felt sick - 100% oxygen seemed to help me a lot. We flew all the way home at altitude and it was awful cold in the ship. In clearing my guns my wrist touched one of the gun heaters and burned a small triangle. If it wasn't for the fact that I felt so lousy,

it would have been an easy mission. We were the first to land and Mac brought her in very prettily. I had a lot of trouble getting the oxygen blinkers to work when breathing through my nose, but everything came out all right.

Alt. 28,000
Temp. 50

25th Mission - Waxwieler, Germany - Ship 732

The CQ woke us at about 2:45 for briefing at 4. I went to eat along and had Pancakes and powdered eggs and coffee. Had sometime so I took my stuff out to 732 and came back to the briefing room. We were flying a chaff ship #7 in the high element of the high sqdn. The target was the very small town of Waxwieler a communications center just back of the German salient - either a visual or PFF run. The weather was said to be awful, with heavy clouds all the way over and back. Kramer halppadme clean my guns and put them in. We had some trouble because it was awful cold, but we got them in all right. We took off at 6:50 and flew at 500 ft. under the overcast down to a splasher station south of London, where we assembled. Our course, took us over FRance, through Luxembourg and into the target. It was horribly cold, half the guns on the ship were frozen and my chin guns didn't work at all. There didn't seem to be any heat in my pants and the shoes didn't work either. We hit the IP and pulled out ahead of the squadron and the boys started throwing the chaff out. There wasn't any flak at all, what they needed chaff ships for, I don't know. I saw five rockets, although they might have been smoke bombs. McCord did evasive action all the way and I never did see anyone drop their bombs. We caught up with the formation and headed home. I heated my feet by taking my books off and sticking my feet in my muff. My knees seemed to be freezing too, and I felt like a human icicle. It was strictly a mickey run, with solid layers of clouds all over the target. There was a music on command coming home and I listened to it until we passed over the white cliffs of Dover upon hitting the English coast I suppose one might consider it a milk run, considering the absence of any flak, but the - 50 sure made ice cream out of the milk - we had real dense persistent contrads again and would have been easy picking for the flak gunners if it would have been visual. We flew element lead today, but as we didn't have bombs they didn't require a commissioned bombardier. One more mission and I'll be able to count them on my hand.

Alt. 24,000
Temp. 41

25th Mission - Bischopsheim, Germany - Ship 732

The CQ woke us at 3:45 for briefing at 5. Bratsch called for me and we had breakfast together - four eggs, bread and coffee. I went to the drying room, got my stuff ready, but didn't take it out to the ship. We were going after a little marshalling yard just east of Mainz and Wiesbaden, called Bischopsheim. It was to be bombed visually or Micro-H. Our bomb load was 10 500 lb GP's. Take off wasn't until 8:30, so I had plenty of time to catch a truck to the ship with my stuff, give my guns a good cleaning, and still have time to loaf in the ground crew shack. Our position was 2 in the low element of the low squadron, flying off Vryland. I was dozing as we took off and then I went back and Nehls helped me take the pins out. Our course was over Metz, south of Ludwegshaven and Mannheim, then n.e. to Bischopsheim. The weather man predicted extreme cold, but as usual he was wrong. There were clouds over England and the channel, but it began to scatter over the continent. My stomach was troubling me, but not too badly. We reached the IP without any trouble and I opened the doors shortly after the leader. As we neared the target, partly obscured by clouds, flak started coming up, moderate and accurate, and the black puffs scared me - about a minute before bombs away, I saw a B-17 plunging nose first towards the ground. I found out later it was the lead ship - it was said to have exploded after a few thousand ft. The leader dropped his bombs, I yanked the salvo, pushed the toggle and didn't know whether the bombs went until someone called bombay clear. I closed the doors and we headed straight into the Mainz flak on the way out. One piece shipped the plexiglass in front of me. After we passed the battle lines we started descending very fast. I couldn't clear my right ear, and everytime it popped I thought my head would come off. Jerry seeing I was in pain called McCord, who left the formation and stayed at altitude for awhile, but eventually we got in again. We had to make an instrument letdown and land at Knetishow. Trucks took us back to the base.

Nehls said all our bombs hit short of the target.* I went to sick call when we got back, the sgt saying I had specitis - a retraction of the ear drum - well it was #25 anyway - 10 more to go.

Alt. 26,500
Temp. 43

26th Mission - Hamburg, Germany - Ship 871

The CQ woke us at 4 for briefing at 5:15. I went to breakfast with Red and Kramer, had two eggs and coffee. We still had 20 minutes before briefing, so I cleaned my guns and then headed for briefing. The target was again the submarine pens at Hamburg, if visual, the dock area if PFF. We flew element lead for the first time, leading the high element of the high squadron. Our bomb load was 12 500 lb GP's and we were flying 871 as 732 was having an engine change. I had plenty of time, caught the truck to the ship, then brought my guns out and put them in without any trouble. We took off at 8:30 and I went back and Nehls helped me with my pins. Our course was over the North Sea to the Danish peninsula, where the IP was, down to Hamburg, left turn and out over the North Sea again. About 10 minutes before we hit the IP I tried the doors and they didn't work. George started cranking and we went over the bomb run. It was a visual target, with only smoke pots and a slight haze obscuring the target. Then the flak started coming up, and those guys sure could shoot. They must have some lessons from the instructors at Merseburg and Berlin. After an eternity the lead dropped his bombs, I pushed the toggle switch, pushed the salvo, and Mac called and said they're all there. I told John to push his salvo, but no soap. I yanked off my flak suit, got a walk around bottle and proceeded to the bomb bay. All the bombs were in their stations. It was impossible to kick any out as I couldn't get to the bottom bomb. After a minute or so I was frozen, ships were underneath us so I went back to the nose. After warming up awhile, I put on my headset and found that George had salvod the bombs with the salvo in the bomb bay. I had forgotten all about it. Our squadron hit its target, we hit a cornfield. The flak on the way out kept us on our toes as it followed us all the way to the coast. Our oxygen was out on the left side from the radio room to the tail. The radio room had 11 flak holes, the bomb bay had a hole in the oxygen system, severed the left hand

26th Mission

aileron control cable, cut all the electric wiring from the nose, which prevented everything from working. My heated muff started smoking, filled the nose with it, so Jerry threw it out the hatch. All that work, and all we hit was a corn field, although the squadron did all right. We really took a beating. My ears didn't bother me too much.

Alt. 26,000
Temp. 48

27th Mission - Bielefeld, Germany - Ship 767

We were called at a quarter of four for a briefing at 5. I went to chow myself, having pancakes and powdered eggs. I caught a truck to the drying room and cleaned my guns. We were flying Shaw's "Lil Nancy" - 767 because 732 was shot up yesterday. We were flying no. 4 in the lead. Our primary and visual target was to be the Henschel tank and locomotive plant in Kassel, with a secondary PFF of the passenger station in the same town. The last resort was the passenger station at Bielefeld. The bomb load was 12 500 lb Navy bombs. I had plenty of time, and after putting my guns in, I spent some time in the ground crew shack. It wasn't too cold on the ground. We took off at 8:17 and assembly was to be at 11,000 ft. Just as we got into formation, Kramer called and said two 17's of our group had collided, one bursting into flame, the other going down in a spin. Latest reports said they had found 17 bodies so far - the ships weren't from our squadron. Our course took us over the North Sea, the Zuider Zee and into the target. There was a solid overcast beneath us nearly, all the way in, with very few breaks. The only thing we saw on the way in was two rockets shot way ahead of us. McCord called up and said we were going to the last resort - why, I still don't know. At any rate, Kramer called and said there was a lot of flak at Kassel no ~~flak at~~ anything at the target - the bomb doors worked, and all the bombs dropped when I pulled the salvo switch - the ship lurched so I knew they had all gone - I closed the doors and we headed for home. Nothing unusual happened except that the ship below us, Stamatis, kept flying all over the sky and I really sweated every time their tail came close. The field was clear for a change when we came in. It was another milk run, 8 more like this and I'll be through. Even though it was - 48, I was very warm - my stomach felt awful--feeling like it was upside down - the Zuider Zee was frozen over and the continent as well as England was covered with snow.

Alt. 22,500
Temp. 28

28th Mission - Cottbus, Germany - Ship 732

Returning from the flak home on the 10 O'clock train from London, we arrived at 2:30 A.M. and had to lug our B-4 bags all the way to the squadron. From the engines running and the fellows walking down the path to chow, we knew there was a mission, but had no idea, we'd be on it. Just for the fun of it, we dropped in to the orderly room to see who was flying and right in the middle of the list was "McCord 732" - the CO had already awakened everyone - I walked into the barracks, got some winter underwear and socks and went to chow - had a couple of eggs and coffee. I had a pack of letters, which I stuffed in my pocket. I caught a truck to the briefing boom and sat down in back reading my mail. After about half an hour, briefing started - the primary target was to be the synthetic oil plant at Ruhrland - ne of Dresden, with the secondary Pff of the center of Cottbus, a very important communications center right near the Russian salient towards Dresden. Our bomb load was 10 500 lb GP's. We assembled very low - at 4,000 ft. and we were flying no. 4 in the low sq. of the low group. Our course led us over the Zuider Zee, east, then south to the Dresden area. and going back near the Coblenz flak alley. I spent most of the time on the way over reading my mail, until we start hitting some flak. There was a solid overcast and I knew before Mac called that we'd hit the secondary. The bomb run was pretty long and everything worked smoothly - ddors and pluto equipment. The flak wasn't too bad, but I was really scared - they had lots of rockets too. The only flak going out was over the front lines. The clouds broke over allied held Germany and Belgium and Jerry gave a scenic tour over the interphone. I continued reading my mails stopping once to don my flak helmet over the lines and to switch the interphone to command to get some music. We were pretty low on gas so we left the formation over Belgium and came in ahead of everyone. It was a real long haul, the longest I've been on, but I didn't mind it too much because I had something to occupy my mind.

28th Mission

I don't know if we hit anything - we probably didn't. Only seven more to go. That'll sure be the day when I finish up. I didn't have any trouble with my stomach or head - good deal.

ALT. 25,000
Temp. 32

29th Mission - Hamm, Germany - Ship 732

For the second day in a row since we returned from the flak home, we were up in the blue again. The CQ woke us at 5:15 for briefing at 6:45. I went to breakfast alone and had a couple of eggs and coffee. I caught the truck to the briefing room and proceeded to clean my guns before going to briefing. It was fogging up and I thought it would be scrubbed. We were going after the largest marshalling yards in Europe at Hamm - visual or Pff - the last resort was at Osnabruk. Our bomb load was 12 500 lb GP's. We were flying the same position as yesterday, only in the high squadron - no. 7 low. It was foggy when we took off and we had to go through a solid overcast to assemble. Our course, as yesterday led us over the Zinder Zee and then straight down to Hamm. We didn't know whether it would be a visual or Pff run, because clouds were broken all over the continent. At the IP it was announced as Pff, and the doors opened without any trouble. We got some flak on the run from Munster, which we by passed. The flak at the target was pretty thick and I was scared plenty. We were supposed to use Pluto, but we didn't have a control for the high sq., so I salvod on the leader, and they all went. Kramer said they hit square in the center of the yard. We closed the doors and headed home. A little flak at Osnabuik on our left was all we saw going out. We returned home the same way we went in. We listened to music over command coming in, and also heard the news. There was a 600 ft. ceiling on return to the base and it was a rough time landing. No. 29 can't be considered a milk run, but I'm sure glad its on the books. Only 6 more and I'll be through. It was a nice short mission in comparison with that one yesterday.

Alt. 24,600

Temp. 34

30th Mission - Nurnberg, Germany - Ship 767

The CQ came in at 3:40, called Underwood's crew and me to the
toggelier. Briefing was supposedly at 4:45. I went to chow with J. Howard
and had a couple of eggs and coffee. I caught the truck down to the
and went to clean my guns. I had to stop in time to go to briefing
when it was delayed till 5:15, I went back and finished. There were
plans - the first to Rhuland oil plant, with Leipsig as a secondary
second the marshalling yards at Nurnberg - before briefing was over
we were going to Nurnberg. We were flying 767, no. 2 in the low element
of the high squadron. I had plenty of time to put my guns in and talk
in the shack. The weather was supposed to be pretty good. We took
8:45 and assembled low between two layers of cloud. Our course was
Belgium, southern France, below Strasbourg and up to Nurnberg. We
through soup all the way at times hardly being able to see our lead
airplane in the sky seemed to be heading the same way. We got some
the front lines, but not much. After an eternity we reached the
doors opened without any trouble - Our VHF was out, so I didn't know
to use Pluto or not, but I switched in on. Halfway down the run
light went on and I put the switcher on - I looked down and saw the
meter had run off. I called Daley, but he said the bombs were still
the pilot called and said we weren't using Pluto, so I reached up
it off. Again the intervelometer had run off and we lost all our
10 500 lb GP's - the squadron dropped on the town and I saw fires and
plosions through the clouds - I still don't know why we lost the bombs.
Flak was at the target moderate, but inaccurate. I saw one burst
flak. We had the same lousy clouds coming back, but we got back
trouble - the longest haul I've been on. Nine hours and 5 minutes
report the malfunction as I didn't want to do any explaining. Did
any trouble with my stomach or head.

Alt. 15,000
Temp. 22

31st Mission - Kitzzingen, Germany - Ship 643

The C.Q. came in this morning and yelled "McCord" - I asked him about me and he said I was flying with Allen, I went to chow by myself and had a couple of eggs, cereal, and coffee and caught a truck to the briefing room and cleaned my guns. Apparently all the big marshalling yards have been hit, so the 8th was going after small ones - we had one called Kitzzingen near Wursberg. The only thing novel about it was that we were supposed to bomb at 9,000 ft, if visual. The target was supposedly free of flak. I took my guns out to the ship, had a little trouble but finally got them in. We were flying no. 3 in low element of the lead squadron, off McCord. Our bomb load was 12 500 lb GP's. The course was over the Zuider Zee at 18,000 ft. and then drop down to bombing altitude and out the southern route below Strasbourg. Our interphone was out, so we used command. There was music playing all the way in. I wore my flak suit from the Dutch coast until we left enemy territory. There wasn't any flak up to the IP, and we leveled off at 15,000 ft. It has been cloudy all the way to the target, but it was clear on the run. I set the Pluto up, and watched the lead ship till we neared the target, which stood out like a sore thumb. All the bombs released at once and shacked the target. All our squadron's bombs hit squarely on the MPI, which was a small marshalling yard. As predicted, there wasn't any flak to be seen. The 51's were as thick as flies though. There was no flak to be seen on the route home, and it was clear all the way. Everything went OK on the bomb run. When we got back to England I had already got undressed when I was surprised to see us climb to 17,000 ft. and I was awful cold. After a long time we peeled off and went through 16,400 ft. of solid cloud and Allen made a good landing to get in. It was over a 9 hour run but I'd sure take four more like this one. My helmet nearly drove me crazy, with the pressure on my ears. My stomach didn't give me any trouble, but I'm afraid my ear isn't too hot.

ALT. 25,500
Temp. 31

32nd Mission - Bremen, Germany - Ship 798

The CQ woke us at 3 for briefing at 4:10 - I was flying with Muntz - whey I wasn't with Allen I don't know. I went to chow myself- had cereal and coffee. Red, Muntz radio operator was there and he asid they had also woken his own toggelier to fly. I caught a truck to operations, but the CQ there couldn't tell me anything. I wasted all my time there and met Pratt going out and it was understood that I'd fly. The target was an oil plant in Bremen, with the PFF target some submarine pens. Our bomb load was again 12 500 lb GP's. It was fogging up when I went to put my guns in, and the engineer told me take off was delayed 2 hours. I convinced a couple of guys to go back to the mess hall and have another bite. While we were eating, Chris, the chief cook said take off was at 7:30 and it was 7 at the time. We thought he was kidding, but we went anyway and it was right. We were flying no. 3 in the low squadron. We assembled at 7,000 ft and I had to waid until we were in formation before I could pull the pins. We flew around the field a long time before we started. Our course led us over the Zuider Zee. We didn't get any flak all the way to the IP, but the leader kept us in prop wash all the way and it was a rough ride. We turned on the IP and it was a mickey run. It was a 13 minute run and about half way down the flak appeared - it was rough stuff and I was plenty scared. It was a terrible run, all through prop wash with the bombardier making tremendous turns. It looked like a whole squadron doing there own evasive action. The photo light went out halfway down the run so I toggled on the leader. I couldn't see where the bombs hit. Our bomb doors wouldn't close electrically and we had a small fire in the bomb bay caused by a short circuit. We had some nasty holes in the ship - I helped the engineer crank up the doors over the channel. My ear didn't give me trouble in the air, but it sure as hell is bad now. If I fly fomorrow, I'll probably break my ear drum. Only three more to go at any rate.

Alt. 24,500
Temp. 32

33rd Mission - Kassel, Germany - Ship 683

When the CQ woke us at 6:30, I was surprised to find that I was flying with McCord again. Briefing was to be at 7:45 - a late briefing. I went to chow myself and had some pancakes, powdered eggs and coffee. I caught the truck down to the gun shack and cleaned my guns. We were going after the tank factory visually or the marshalling yards Pff. Our position was no. 4 in the high element of the high squadron. The bomb load was 7 500 lb GP's and 7 incendiaries (500 lb). It was a heavy load and we didn't take the maximum gas load. I had plenty of time to put my guns in and fool around outside of the plane before take off, which was at 10:30. One unique thing about the mission was that as we were to pass over the battle lines, our artillery would open up on their flak batteries. Whether it was due to their effectiveness or not, we didn't have any flak over the lines, in or out, We had music on command all the time we were assembling, and all the way to the target. Assembling was at 10,000 so we didn't use our oxygen. Our course was over Belgium, through the Koblenz corridor, then north and due west to Kassel on the bomb run. The weather wasn't too good, there was an undercast from England, over the channel and the continent. Everything went OK up to the run. We turned for our 11 min. run and the doors opened without any trouble. Flak didn't start coming up until about five minutes before bombs away and it was thick although not accurate. The bombs went away OK, although Pluto didn't work. We couldn't see any results. The way back was uneventful, except for the music, which was on constantly. My ear seems very tender and I know there's something wrong with it when I come down from a mission - only two more times to tempt the fates.

Alt. 21,400
Temp. 26

34th Mission - Ulm, Germany - Ship 160

The Cq woke us at 5 for briefing at 6:30. We were flying a 413th ship. I went to chow myself and had a couple of eggs, oatmeal and coffee. I caught a truck to the briefing room and after awhile found the 413th gun shack and cleaned my guns. We were going to the town of Ulm in southeastern Germany. The primary target was the ordnance depot and the secondary the marshalling yard in the center of town. Our bomb load was 2 500 lb GP. Navy bombs and 4 M-17 incendiaries. Our position was element lead of the low element of the low squadron. Again I had plenty of time to put my guns in and lie around in the ground crew shack. The ship we flew was all patched up - a souvenir of the first Russian shuttle raid when the Germans attacked soon after the planes landed. Our course was over Belgium and France and into the target. Take off was at 7:45 and we assembled at 5,000 ft. The radio was on all the time and we had all the good programs on. McCord was a bit displeased near the target when he called up and no one was on interphone. The weather wasn't too good an overcast all the way, with only little openings. The bomb run was 11 minutes long, and there was no flak to be seen anywhere - in fact the whole mission was flakless. The doors opened without any trouble and even Pluto worked, the bombs going out in train. It was a Pff run, and we couldn't see any results. The route out was uneventful - more music on the radio. I nearly went mad from the pressure on my ears from the helmet and the continual swallowing to keep my ears clear. Only one more to go - I wish it was over with - one like today would be fine.

Alt. 20,300
Temp. 37

35th and last Mission - Dollgergen, Germany - Ship 938

The CQ woke us at 3:15 for briefing an hour later. I was flying with Muntz - his last one too. I went to chow myself and settled for a couple of pancakes and coffee. We were flying 938, so I went to the gun shack and cleaned the guns for the last time. Our target was a small synthetic oil plant between Brunswick and Hanover. It was to be visual only. The bomb load was 15 500 lb GP's. Our position was no. 4 in the low element of the high squadron. McCord was flying, but needed a bombardier. We took off pretty early, about 6:50 in the dark. Assembling at 5,000 ft. was a pretty hectic affair - the buncher at our field was out and no one was in formation for a long time and I really sweated it out. We weren't completely formed until we headed out to the channel. I didn't remove the pins until we were well on our way. Our route was over the North Sea and into Germany this side of Hamburg. A little flak greeted us as we hit the mainland. We could see the smoke screen at Hamburg on our left. We hit the IP and turned onto the 8 minute bomb run. It was a visual run - the doors opened without any trouble and we approached the flak free target. I pushed the hoggle switch, then the salvo and all the bombs left, but apparently the target wasn't hit, according to the funners - black smoke came up later, which probably meant that it was hit. On the way back there was no flak, but one ship was on fire and we watched it all the way until it turned around and blew up. We came out over the Zuider Zee and buzzed the field and shot flares. It was an easy mission and my tour of operation is complete. 35 Missions as an enlisted bombardier without a scratch. I had my share of rough ones and also some milk runs. New York, Here I come!