

385th Bomb Wing

B-17F FLIGHT LOG

(5 Sept 1943 - 21 Feb 1944)

8th Air Force, 385th Bomb Wing
Great Ashfield, England



Pilot - Robert "Tex" Taylor
Copilot - Lapinsky
Navigator - Joel Panches
Bombadier - Clarence Soucek





Dates
Approximate

DAILY LOG WRITTEN BY NAVIGATOR.-JOEL PUNCHES

(B-17 F)

- 9-4-43 TOOK OFF FROM GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA FOR MAINE. BUZZED SOUCEK'S HOUSE IN CHICAGO. FLEW OVER TORONTO, CANADA, LAKE SUPERIOR, LAKE MICHIGAN. LANDED AT 1745. REALLY COLD. SURE PRETTY COUNTRY. LOTS OF LAKES, PINE TREES, ETC. BANGOR, MAINE.
- 9-5-43 TOOK OFF EARLY ENROUTE TO GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR. COMPASS WAY OFF. FLEW BY ASTRO COMPASS. HOMED IN. DESOLATE COUNTRY. NO TOWNS AT ALL. COLDER THAN BANGOR, MAINE.
- 9-6-43 BAD WEATHER. HAVE TO GO NORTHERN ROUTE. SWUNG COMPASS BEFORE TAKEOFF. OVER OCEAN ALL THE WAY. PRETTY ICEBERGS APPROACHING GREENLAND. ETA TO THE MINUTE FROM 20 MI. LEFT OF COURSE.
- 9-7-43 TOOK OFF DOWNHILL AND WITH WIND FOR ICELAND. CLIMBED OVER ICE CAPS AT 16,000 FT. BAD WEATHER. SNOW, RAIN, HAIL. GOOD SUN SHOTS AND ETA OKAY. 5 MILES LEFT OF COURSE. NORTHERN LIGHTS REALLY BRIGHT. POLARIUS OVERHEAD.
- 9-8-43 WEATHERED IN. RAINING. WENT TO REYJAVIK (40,000 POP.) PEOPLE ALL PRO-NAZI, UNFRIENDLY, BACKWARD. SEEMS 30 YEARS BEHIND U.S. IN CIVILIZATION. GOT 13 HOURS SLEEP, BEARD BEGINNING TO GROW.
- 9-9-43 WEATHERED IN. STILL RAINING. CAME OUT TO PLANE AND ARRANGED MAPS AND THE COURSE TO IRELAND.
- 9-10-43 TOOK OFF FROM ICELAND AT NOON. GOT TO PRESTWICK, SCOTLAND O.K. BAD WEATHER. ETA 1 MI. OFF. ON COURSE ALL THE WAY. SAW BIG CONVOY OFF IRELAND. PRESTWICK LOOKS GOOD FROM THE AIR. HOPE TO GET TO GLASGOW SOON.
- 9-11-43 STAYED LAST NIGHT IN OLD SCOTTISH MANSION, CONVERTED TO OFFICERS' QUARTERS. PEOPLE FRIENDLY. THEIR BITTER BEER TASTES LOUSY. THEIR ALE IS GOOD. LEFT ON TRAIN FOR LONDON--400 MILES.
- 9-12-43 RODE ALL LAST NIGHT ON DAY COACH. REALLY TIRED. GOT OFF 20 MI. NORTH OF LONDON. TAKEN TO TEMPORARY QUARTERS. BARRACKS ETC. MIXED IN WITH CIVILIANS' HOUSES. WELL CAMOUFLAGED.
- 9-14-43 STAYING HERE TODAY. THE BLACKOUTS ARE REALLY EXCELLENT. CAN'T SEE A FOOT IN FRONT OF OUR NOSE. WENT TO "PUB" AND PLAYED DARTS TONIGHT.
- 9-15-43 MOVED TO DAY SCHOOL SITE. THE "HUTS" ARE REALLY COLD.
- 9-16-43 HAD 8 HRS. OF LECTURE TODAY. HOW TO ESCAPE FROM GERMANY & FRANCE, DITCHING PROCEDURES, ETC. HAD COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS FROM AMERICAN RED CROSS TRUCK. THEY SEEM TO BE DOING QUITE A LOT.
- 9-17-43 8 HRS. OF CLASS AGAIN. WENT TO DANCE LAST NIGHT. FOUR GIRLS TO EVERY SOLDIER.
- 9-18-43 ALL DONE WITH ALL THIS SCHOOL. LEAVING BOBINGTON THIS MORNING. ASSIGNED TO 385TH GROUP NORTH OF HERE. GOING UP IN G.I. TRUCKS. PACKING AGAIN. GLAD TO GET SETTLED PERMANENTLY FOR A FEW MONTHS. HAVE 25 MISSIONS TO FLY BEFORE WE GET A REST. WISH THEY WERE ALL OVER NOW.

A CHANCE. THE OTHER PLANE'S WING CAME OFF AND IT SPUN DOWN ALSO. JUST LIKE A MOVING PICTURE! 10 MI. EAST OF LONDON. JUST THEN OUR #2 ENGINE CAUGHT FIRE & WE CAME IN ON 3 ENGINES. GOOD LANDING, HOWEVER. 24 TO GO!
9-29-43 YESTERDAY WE TOOK A B-17 ON A TEST FLIGHT. LAST NIGHT WE PRACTICED BLACK OUT LANDINGS. GOT STUCK IN THE MUD BEFORE WE TOOK OFF. LANDED AT MIDNIGHT. AT 12:30 A B-17 CAME IN AND WAS ATTACKED BY A F.W.190 WHILE IN THE PATTERN: GETTING BOLD AGAIN!! TODAY IT RAINED AGAIN.

9-30-43 GROUND SCHOOL & SLEEP.

10-1-43 WENT ON PRACTICE FLIGHT TODAY. PRACTICED FORMATION LET-DOWNS THROUGH THE CLOUDS. SUPPOSED TO HOME ON RADIO STATION NEAR FIELD AND THEN PEEL OFF AND LET DOWN. FIVE OF US HOMED FOR 20 MIN. ONE BACK OF THE OTHER IN A LINE. 20 MIN. WAS TOO LONG BUT WE LET DOWN ANYWAY. CAME OUT OVER WATER 10 MI. FROM THE DUTCH COAST. GERMANS HAD JAMMED OUR RADIO STATION AND WE WERE HOMING ON A GERMAN STATION STRAIGHT INTO GERMANY. LOADED OUR GUNS IN A HURRY AND HEADED BACK FOR ENGLAND. 5 MIN. MORE AND WE WOULD HAVE BEEN WELL OVER HOLLAND WITH PROBABLY 50 GERMAN FIGHTERS WAITING FOR US TO HOME IN TO THEM. THESE GERMANS ARE PLENTY SMART!

10-2-43 MISSION #2. EMDEN, GERMANY--TRANSPORTATION CENTER IN NORTHERN GERMANY. 2ND GROUP, HIGH SQD. 23,000 FT. BOMBED THROUGH CLOUDS USING PATHFINDER LEADER. 180 B-17'S IN THE RAID. P-47 PROTECTION AT TARGET--FLAK OVER TARGET--BIG RED BURSTS WITH BLACK SMOKE. REALLY ACCURATE. SAME ALT. ON BOTH SIDES, BEHIND, & AHEAD. NONE OF OUR GROUP WAS HIT. 15 M. AFTER LEAVING TARGET, ENEMY FIGHTERS PICKED US UP AFTER WE LEFT TARGET. NONE GOT IN OUR FORMATION, HOWEVER. THIS FLAK REALLY SCARES YOU TO DEATH. LOOKS SO PRETTY AND HARMLESS FLATING IN THE AIR. TUBBY GOT A BURST IN AT A 109 THAT BARREL-ROLLED UNDER US. TWO 17'S DROPPED OUT OF FORMATION WITH ENGINES FEATHERED. "OLD TEX" WAS REALLY SWEATING OVER THE TARGET.

10-3-43 PRACTICE MISSION TODAY. PRACTICED WITH THE "G" BOX.

10-4-43 MISSION #3. HANAU, GERMANY. FRANKFURT RUBBER WORKS. BIGGEST RUBBER PLANT IN GERMANY. 300 MILES INLAND. NINE GROUPS. WE WERE IN THE LEAD GROUP. 2½ HRS. OVER GERMANY & FRANCE. THE LEAD NAVIGATOR GOT LOST AND BOMBED ST. DIZIER, FRANCE. LOOKED JUST LIKE HANAU, GERMANY. FIGHTERS (ME 109'S) ATTACKED US AT THE TARGET. NINE 109'S ATTACKED US HEADON 30 MIN. LATER. WE HIT A CLOUD OF FLAK AT THE SAME TIME. WE WERE HIT BY FLAK IN THE WING-- A NICE HOLE. THE 109'S PEELED OFF ONE BY ONE AND CAME IN HEADON. I GOT SOME GOOD BURSTS IN AT 10:00. ONE 17 FEATHERED A COUPLE OF PROPS & DROPPED DOWN. THE 109'S LINED UP & TOOK TURNS ON HIM. THEY PROBABLY GOT HIM. 20 MIN. LATER WE RAN INTO MORE FLAK. NINE MORE 109'S ATTACKED FROM HEADON. THINK WE GOT A COUPLE OF THEM THIS TIME. WE THEN HIT THE DUTCH COAST & ACROSS. ONE '17 CRASHED IN ENGLAND. SHOT UP TOO BAD. ALL OF THE CREW

10-12-43 ALERTED THIS MORNING FOR A RAID ON EMDEN, GERMANY. TOOK OFF AT 1030 AND CLIMBED TO ALTITUDE AND THEN THEY SCRUBBED THE MISSION AND WE LANDED. FOG OVER ENGLAND & VISIBILITY ABOUT 800 YDS. COULDN'T EVEN SEE THE END OF THE RUNWAY WHEN WE TOOK OFF. ANOTHER "RED ALERT" TONIGHT. ALL LIGHTS OFF. A FEW GERMAN BOMBERS OVER. THEY SENT A FEW OVER EVERY NIGHT AS A NUISANCE JUST TO KEEP US AWAKE.

10-14-43 MISSION #5. SCHWEINFURT, GERMANY. BALL BEARING WORKS. HOW WE EVER GOT BACK FROM THIS ONE I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND! FOUR HRS. OVER GERMANY AND THREE HRS. UNDER FIGHTER ATTACK. FLAK OVER THE TARGET WAS LIKE A CLOUD AND VERY ACCURATE. EXACTLY AT OUR ALTITUDE. WE WERE HIT THREE TIMES. TAIL, WING, AND GLASS NOSE BROKEN. KICK OFF WAS AT 1030. LEFT ENGLAND AT 1330. P-47 ESCORT 20 MI. INSIDE GERMANY. WHEN THEY LEFT. THE 109'S STARTED ATTACKING AND CONTINUED FOR FOUR HRS. WE WERE "TAIL END CHARLIE" TODAY. IN PURPLE HEART CORNER. CARRIED INCENDIARIES. CLEAR OVER TARGET AND WHEN WE LEFT IT WAS A HUGE MASS OF FLAMES. THE WHOLE TOWN WAS BURNING. FLAMES 500' HIGH. TWO '17'S BURST INTO FLAMES IN THE GROUP AHEAD OF US ON THE BOMB RUN. 5 MIN. AFTER THE TARGET 3 BUNCHES OF CHUTES OPENED. ABOUT 7-8 IN EACH BUNCH. 10 MIN. LATER A '17 CRASHED AND BURNED IN A FOR^ST. JU 88'S WERE SITTING OUT AND FIRING ROCKETS AT US. THEY HAD EVERYTHING UP TODAY. JU 88'S, M.E. 109'S, 210'S 30 MIN. LATER A '17 DROPPED DOWN AND TWO FIGHTERS WENT DOWN AFTER HIM. 20 MIN. LATER HE CAME OUT OF A CLOUD WITH HIS ENGINES SMOKING. THEY ALL BAILED OUT. OUR NO. 1 ENGINE IGNITION SYSTEM WAS SHOT OUT & IT SOUNDED LIKE A WASHING MACHINE. I'M AFRAID THINGS ARE GOING TO BE TOUCH FROM NOW ON. NO "MILK" RUNS.

10-15-43 ALERTED BUT THE MISSION WAS SCRUBBED. GROUND SCHOOL IN THE AFTERNOON. REPORT FROM WING HDQ. ABOUT THE SCHWEINFURT RAID WAS THAT 60 B-17'S WERE LOST. HIGHEST LOSS ON RECORD SO FAR FOR A SINGLE RAID.

10-16-43 GROUND SCHOOL TODAY. TUBBY & I WENT TO STOW MARKET TO THE SHOW & OF COURSE WHILE WE WERE THERE, THE GERMANS RAIDED CLOSE BY.

10-17-43 WENT TO A DANCE AT THE OFFICERS' CLUB. GOT TO BED AT 0100 & THEY GOT US UP FOR A RAID ON DURBEN, GERMANY. CLIMBED UP TO 25,000 FT. AND CLOUDS STILL ABOVE US. SOLID ALL THE WAY. COULDN'T SEE A THING BEFORE DAWN. OUR PLANE WOULDN'T CLIMB ANY MORE AND STALLED SO WE HAD TO COME BACK. RAINING WHEN WE GOT BACK AND VISIBILITY ABOUT 500 FT. WHEN WE GOT ON THE GROUND FOUND OUT THEY HAD SCRUBBED THE MISSION ON ACCOUNT OF WEATHER SO THE REST ALSO HAD TO COME BACK.

- 10-21-43 CALLED OUR BASE, GREAT ASHFIELD, AND THEY SAID THEY WOULD PICK US UP TODAY. ENGLISH REALLY TREATED US WELL. TEA IN BED IN THE MORNING, TEA AT 1000, LUNCH, TEA AT 1600, SUPPER, COFFEE AFTER DINNER. FIREPLACE IN EVERY ROOM. THEY THINK THE "FORTS" ARE REALLY O.K. SHOWED ABOUT 50 GUYS THROUGH OUR PLANE. ALL THE CLOTHES I HAD WERE MY ELECTRIC SUIT AND BOOTS.
- 10-22-43 TODAY THEY SENT A PLANE DOWN FOR US. TOOK OFF, BUZZED THE FIELD, AND CAME HOME.
- 10-23-43 RAINED ALL DAY. PRACTICE MISSION TODAY. GOT OUR RATIONS TODAY.
- 10-24-43 WENT TO DANCE AT CLUB LAST NIGHT. NO ALERT SO WE DANCED UNTIL 0200. BIG TIME WAS HAD BY ALL. SLEPT TO NOON TODAY. PRESENTATION OF AWARDS AT 1300. PRACTICE MISSION AT 1530. TOOK SOME ENGLISH AIR CADETS WITH US FOR THE RIDE. ALL PASSES CANCELLED STARTING TOMORROW. SOMETHING BIG IN THE AIR. BEEN HAVING IT TOO EASY LATELY.
- 10-25-43 SLEPT TILL 1000. PRACTICE MISSION THIS AFTERNOON. WE BOMBED IN THE NORTH SEA. GROUP OF 24'S WITH US. TUBBY WASN'T WITH US SO I WAS NAVIGATOR & BOMBARDIER BOTH. TOGGLED THEM OUT OK. TUBBY LEARNING SOME NAVIGATION ALSO. EVERYONE RESTRICTED TO BASE. NO LEAVES OR PASSES. SOMETHING IS GOING TO POP SOON. EVERYONE CAN FEEL IT IN THE AIR.
- 10-26-43 HAD A LECTURE TODAY ON SECURITY. TOLD US THAT THE GERMANS KNEW 4 HRS. BEFORE THE SCHWEINFURT RAID THAT WE WERE COMING. LEAK SOMEWHERE. ACCOUNTS FOR THE HIGH LOSS. WENT TO SHOW TONIGHT. NO ALERT.
- 10-27-43 ON ALERT BUT THEY CANCELLED IT. FOGS ARE REALLY HERE NOW. CAN'T SEE 50 FT. AHEAD.
- 10-28-43 HAD A GOOD BATH TODAY. DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT. TOO CLEAN! STAND-BY ALERT BUT SCRUBBED IT SO WE SLEPT UNTIL NOON. HEAVY FOG. WENT TO BURY ST. EDMONDS TO THE DANCE.
- 10-29-43 GROUND SCHOOL TODAY. INTELLIGENCE TELLS US GERMAN MORALE IS CRACKING. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SIGN OF CRACK YET. FOG AGAIN AND NO FLYING. FOG HANGS RIGHT ON THE GROUND.
- 10-30-43 GOT UP AT 0500. BRIEFED AT 0600. TOOK OFF AT 0800. TARGET WAS LUDWIGSHAFEN, GERMANY IN "HAPPY VALLEY" OUTSIDE OF BERLIN--THE MOST HEAVILY PROTECTED AREA IN GERMANY. A MASS OF FLAK GUNS. CLIMBED THROUGH THE FOG & CLOUDS. 1 HR. LATER THEY SCRUBBED THE RAID. OUR FIELD WAS CLOSED SO THEY DIRECTED US TO A FIELD 50 MI. NORTH--DOCKING, AN RAF FIELD. WE SPLIT UP AND WE WENT OUT IN THE NORTH SEA AND DROPPED OUR BOMBS. WE CAME BACK TO DOCKING AND LANDED. SOD FIELD AND SHORT. GOT DOWN O.K. WITH ABOUT 500 FT. CEILING. THREE FORTS CAME IN BEFORE US AND ALL 3 CRACKED UP. TWO WENT INTO THE DITCH AT THE END OF THE RUNWAY AND ONE COULDN'T GET HIS WHEELS DOWN & HAD TO MAKE A BELLY LANDING. PLOWED UP A GOOD ROW. NOBODY HURT. WE ALL GOT IN THE RADIO ROOM ON LANDING BUT IT WAS A GOOD LANDING &

11-4-43 ALERTED AND GOT UP AT 0530, TARGET WAS AN OIL REFINERY IN THE RUHR VALLEY IN GERMANY. HAPPY VALLEY MISSION WAS SCRUBBED THROUGH ON ACCOUNT OF WEATHER. P/W LECTURE THIS AFTERNOON. ON ALERT TONIGHT.

11-5-43 BRIEFED AT 0600 FOR GILSHENKIRCHEN, GERMANY, IN THE RUHR VALLEY, OIL REFINERIES. TOOK OFF AT 0830. LEFT ENGLAND AT 1130 IN THE COMPOSITE GROUP. POOR FORMATION & COULDN'T FIND A SPOT. #2 ENGINE WAS ACTING UP AT 29,000 FEET. GOT TO THE DUTCH COAST AND WE LOST ALL OUR OIL IN #3 ENGINE. HAD TO TURN IT OFF & ABORT. CAME BACK ON 3 ENGINES ALONE & LANDED AT 1400. WE HAD A HOLE IN OUR WING. DON'T KNOW WHERE IT CAME FROM AS WE HAD NOT HIT FLAK OR FIGHTERS WHEN WE ABORTED.

11-6-43 CLASS IN MORNING. GOT OUR 48 HR. PASS AT NOON. WENT TO LONDON WITH CREW. GOT A SWELL ROOM IN THE RUSSELL HOTEL. WENT TO ESQUIRE CLUB WITH TUBBY, LAP, & TEX.

11-7-43 WENT TO WATFORD AT NOON. BACK TO LONDON AND TO DANCE AT THE PARAMOUNT. TEX HAD A DATE WITH A GIRL NAMED ANNE. SAW THE CHANGE OF GUARDS AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE IN MORNING. LAST NIGHT THE GERMANS DROPPED A BOMB ON A LARGE DANCE HALL HERE IN LONDON AND ALMOST 100 PEOPLE WERE KILLED. MIGHT HAVE BEEN THEIR NEW RADIO-CONTROLLED DIVE GLIDER AS NO ONE HEARD THE PLANE.

11-8-43 GOT UP AT 1030. WENT TO STAGE SHOW "FOOLISH BUT IT'S FUN. CAUGHT 1800 TRAIN TO IPSWICH & GOT BACK TO BASE AT 2230.

11-9-43 WENT ON PRACTICE BOMBING RANGE TODAY, WEST OF LONDON. SHOT SKEET & PLAYED TOUCH F.B. THIS AFTERNOON. "OLD 662" IS BACK IN SHAPE. TWO NEW ENGINES AND TWO NEW SUPERCHARGERS. \$60,000 WAS THE COST. HAVE TO SELL A FEW MORE BONDS IN OLD U.S.A. ALERTED TONIGHT.

11-10-43 DITCHING PROCEDURES THIS MORNING. PRACTICE FORMATION MISSION THIS AFTERNOON AT 20,000 FEET. ALERTED TONIGHT. GOOD RADIO PROGRAM TONIGHT FROM CALAIS. GERMAN WAR NEWS, ETC.

11-11-43 MISSION #9. MUNSTER, GERMANY. TOWN OF 40,000. RAILROAD CENTER AND CIVILIANS. TOOK OFF AT 0930. LEFT ENGLAND AT 1205. WE WERE #2 POSITION IN THE LEAD GROUP. CARRIED 38 100 LB. INCENDIARY BOMBS. OUR LEAD SHIP CALLED US UP AND TOLD US TO TAKE OVER AS THEIR INSTRUMENTS WERE OUT. WE TOOK OVER THE LEAD THEN. MUNSTER HAD A LARGE CLOUD WHICH COMPLETELY COVERED THE TOWN. HOWEVER, WE IDENTIFIED THE TOWN BY TRACKS AND ROADS COMING OUT FROM THE NORTH. FINALLY WITH 3 MINUTES TO GO WE LEVELLED OUT ON OUR BOMB RUN AND TUBBY TOGGLED THEM OUT WHEN HE THOUGHT HE WOULD BE OVER THE TOWN. THE ENTIRE WING BEHIND US DROPPED THEIR BOMBS ON OUR LEAD. WE COULDN'T SEE THE TOWN, BUT COULD SEE A FEW HOUSES TO NORTH OF TOWN. FLAK WAS FAIRLY HEAVY AND VERY ACCURATE. OUR SHIP WAS HIT 10 TIMES BY FLAK. FLAK HIT BEHIND ME ABOUT 2 FEET AND TORE UP MY JACK BOX AND INTERPHONE. ONE BOMB WENT DOWN FROM OUR GROUP OVER THE TARGET. P-47 ESCORT LEFT US

AT ROTTERDAM, HOLLAND AND 9 GERMAN FIGHTERS ATTACKED THE GROUP BEHIND US. IN ONE PASS THEY GOT TWO FORTS. THEY CAUGHT FIRE AND EXPLODED. TWO CHUTES CAME OUT FROM ONE. A FEW MINUTES LATER THEY GOT TWO MORE FORTS FROM THE SAME GROUP, ONE BLEW UP AND THE OTHER DOVE DOWN. GOT TO ENGLISH COAST O.K. AND LANDED AT 1630. REALLY SWEATING IT OUT. AS TO WHETHER IT WAS MUNSTER THAT WE BOMBED. HOWEVER, PICTURES TONIGHT SHOWED IT WAS MUNSTER. HOPE WE HIT THE M.P.I. WILL FIND OUT TOMORROW AT WING CRITIQUE. WILL BE A GOOD BREAK FOR TUBBY IF WE DID.

11-12-43 THIS MORNING TUBBY AND I GOT TO GO TO WING CRITIQUE. THE COLONELS, MAJORS, ETC. WERE VERY WELL PLEASED. THEY SAID OUR CREW WAS EVIDENTLY VERY MUCH ON THE BALL TO BE ABLE TO TAKE OVER ON SUCH A SHORT NOTICE, WITH THE TARGET ONLY 5 MINUTES AWAY AND STILL HIT THE TARGET, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS 10/10 COVERED BY CLOUDS. TOMORROW WE GO TO DIVISION CRITIQUE AND TELL THE GENERAL HOW WE DID IT. TUBBY MAY GET THE DFC!

11-13-43 SLEPT TILL NOON. WENT TO DANCE LAST NIGHT AT CLUB. EARLY THIS MORNING THE GROUP WENT ON RAID TO BREMEN, GERMANY. ONLY TWO CREWS OUT OF SQUADRON HAD TO GO. FIRST RAID SINCE WE HAVE BEEN HERE THAT WE DID NOT HAVE TO GO. WEATHER WAS BAD AND NINE OUT OF OUR GROUP ABORTED. ONLY ABOUT 40 FORTS FINALLY LEFT AND WHEN THEY GOT NEAR BREMEN ABOUT 200 GERMAN FIGHTERS RAN THEM OFF. THEY DIDN'T HIT THE TARGET. JENNINGS FLEW OUR SHIP "662" AND ABORTED OVER GERMANY SO GOT SHOT UP PRETTY BAD. 52 BELOW ZERO TODAY AT ALTITUDE. THEY SEEM BOUND AND DETERMINED TO SEND US ON RAIDS NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER. GENERAL ARNOLD SAID OVER RADIO THAT THERE WERE PLENTY OF REPLACEMENTS IN U.S. IN CASE OF HEAVY LOSS OF CREWS HERE. NICE! THIS AFTERNOON WE TEST HOPPED A PLANE. LAP & I FLEW AND TEX DID THE NAVIGATION IN THE NOSE. HAD A LOT OF FUN. GOING TO START DROPPING TIME BOMBS ON GERMANY. GO OFF FROM 15 MIN. TO 36 HOURS AFTER DROPPED.

11-14-43 GROUND SCHOOL AND WENT TO DIVISION CRITIQUE. REVIEWED THE DUREN, MUNSTER, AND BREMEN RAIDS. MUNSTER RAID WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT HIT THE TARGET. THE 385TH LED IT!

11-15-43 GROUND SCHOOL AND WE WENT ON PRACTICE FLIGHT.

11-16-43 WOKE US AT 0200. BRIEFED AT 0300 AND TOOK OFF AT 0600. FOR A HYDROGEN PLANT IN NORWAY. ASSEMBLED OVER SPLASHER! 7 BEFORE IT WAS LIGHT. JUST AS WE GOT TO ASSEMBLY POINT OUR #3 ENGINE WENT OUT AND IT RAN AWAY. A FEW MINUTES LATER IT CAUGHT ON FIRE. NOT TOO LARGE A FIRE SO WE STAYED WITH IT HEADED FOR HOME AND STARTED LETTING DOWN. ABOUT 6000 FT. WE HIT A THUNDERHEAD. THE PLANE WENT OUT OF CONTROL. DIVING AT 2000 FT/MIN. & STILL STALLING AT 110 P/HR. ALMOST WENT OVER ON ITS BACK AT 1000 FT, TEX & LAP GOT IT LEVEL FOR A MINUTE AND RANG THE BELL TO ABANDON THE SHIP. TUBBY AND FIVE OF THE G NERS BAILED OUT OF THE WAIST. I GOT TO THE ESCAPE HATCH IN THE NOSE, GOT ON MY HANDS & KNEES, AND TRIED TO DIVE OUT.

ALMOST GOT OUT BUT MY WINTER HELMET CAUGHT ON THE SIDE OF THE HATCH. I CLIMBED BACK IN, SCREWED MY NERVES UP AGAIN, TOOK OFF MY HELMET, AND DOVE AGAIN. THIS TIME MY HEAD AND ARMS AND SHOULDERS GOT OUT BUT MY BACKPACK CAUGHT ON THE SIDE OF THE HATCH AND I STUCK. I CLIMBED BACK IN LOOKING AT THE ALTIMETER AND SINCE WE WERE STILL AT 900 FT. I TRIED ONCE MORE. THIS TIME I HIT MY HEAD ON SIDE OF HATCH & CUT IT, SO I CLIMBED BACK IN & GAVE UP. LAP & TEX SEEMED TO HAVE THE SHIP FAIRLY WELL UNDER CONTROL BY THEN SO FOSTER & I STAYED. THE BURNING ENGINE COULD HAVE EXPLODED ANY MINUTE BUT IT DIDN'T. WE FLEW 10 MILES OUT IN THE CHANNEL & DROPPED OUR SIX 1000 LB DEMOLITION BOMBS THEN COULDN'T CLOSE OUR BOMBAY DOORS AFTERWARDS. HUNTED FOR 30 MIN. FOR AN OPEN FIELD AND FINALLY FOUND A P-47 FIELD NEAR IPSWICH. LANDED AND JUMPED OUT AND PUT OUT THE FIRE IN THE ENGINE. RECEIVED WORD LATER THAT ALL THAT BAILED OUT WERE SAFE. THEIR CHUTES HAD HARDLY OPENED BEFORE THEY HIT THE GROUND. TUBBY & RIGGS SPRAINED THEIR ANKLES. LAP & TEX DID A GOOD JOB IN KEEPING THE SHIP IN THAT THUNDERSTORM.

- 11-17-43 CURTIS & I WENT TO CLUB LAST NIGHT & THEN TO STOWMARKET. CLASSES THIS MORNING. JENNINGS & CREW WENT TO REST HOME TODAY.
- 11-18-43 GROUND SCHOOL & PRACTICE MISSION. ALERT TONIGHT.
- 11-19-43 MISSION #10. GILSHENCHERK, GERMANY, IN THE RUHR VALLEY. RAIL JUNCTION & BUSINESS DISTRICT OF TOWN, 1000 FLAK GUNS THERE. TOOK OFF AT 0830. LEFT ENGLISH COAST AT 1200. THREE DIVISIONS. 36 1000 LB. INCENDIARY BOMBS. FOLLOWED PATHFINDER PLANE. 10/10 UNDERCAST OVER GERMANY. FLEW FOR AN HOUR OVER GERMANY AND PATHFINDER SHIP COULDN'T FIND THE TARGET SO WE DUMPED OUR BOMBS ON A SMALL TOWN & CAME HOME. THE TOWN WE DROPPED ON TURNED OUT TO BE A TOWN IN HOLLAND. NOT SO GOOD! P-47 ESCORT. NO FIGHTERS AND LITTLE FLAK. TUBBY & LAP DID NOT GO WITH US. ARTHUR WAS ON HIS FIRST MISSION IN NOSE WITH ME AND PRETTY NERVOUS.
- 11-20-43 SWUNG COMPASS THIS MORNING. 2 HR. PRACTICE MISSION THIS AFTERNOON.
- 11-21-43 SLEPT TILL 1030. SWUNG D.R. COMPASS THIS AFTERNOON AND AT 1800 THEY TOLD US WE HAD A 48 HR. PASS STARTING AT MIDNIGHT. WE GOT READY & WENT TO STOWMARKET AND STAYED ALL NIGHT TO GET OFF THE BASE.
- 11-22-43 WENT IN TO LONDON FROM STOWMARKET AND GOT ROOMS AT THE BONNINGTON HOTEL. WENT TO STAGE SHOW THIS AFTERNOON, "STRIKE A NEW NOTE", DANCED TONIGHT AT A DINNER DANCE AT THE PICADILLY HOTEL.
- 11-23-43 WENT TO THE ZOO THIS MORNING AND TO SHOW THIS AFTERNOON, "FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS". CAUGHT TRAIN AT 1800 AND TAXI FROM STOWMARKET.
- 11-24-43 CLASSES THIS MORNING. LAST NIGHT THE BOYS SAID THEY WERE BRIEFED YESTERDAY MORNING FOR BERLIN, GERMANY, BUT THE MISSION WAS SCRUBBED. M.P.I. WAS THE AIR MINISTRY BLDG. IN THE CENTER OF BERLIN. THAT'S THE RAID WE HAVE BEEN EXPECTING FOR A LONG TIME, BUT NOT EXACTLY LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

11-25-43 THANKSGIVING! I'M THANKFUL WE DIDN'T GO TO BERLIN AS WE ALL EXPECTED TO DO. HAD WINE, TURKEY, DRESSING, PUMPKIN PIE, ETC. FOR DINNER. AFTER OUR TWO HOUR PRACTICE MISSION THIS MORNING. RAINING TONIGHT. THE BRITISH DO NOT CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING. SEEMS STRANGE. THESE GERMANS ARE REALLY CLEVER TO ATTRACT BRITISH LISTENERS. BEST SWING MUSIC I'VE HEARD SINCE LEAVING THE USA.

11-26-43 MISSION #11. PARIS, FRANCE. ANOTHER BALL BEARING WORKS IN THE CENTER OF PARIS. CARRIED SIX 1000 LB. DEMOLITION BOMBS. ONLY ONE WING GOING. OUR GROUP LED. WE FLEW IN #2 POSITION IN LEAD SQUADRON. REST OF THE WINGS WENT TO BREMEN, GERMANY. BRIEFED AT 0300. TOOK OFF AT 0630 AND LEFT ENGLAND AT 1030 AT 23,000 FT. 35 DEGREES BELOW ZERO AND AN 85 MI/HR. TAIL WIND. SUPPOSED TO HAVE ESCORT P-47'S AND SPITS. GOT TO I.P. AT 1115 AND PARIS WAS COMPLETELY COVERED BY CLOUDS. ONLY THING VISIBLE WAS THE EIFFEL TOWER STICKING UP THROUGH THE CLOUDS. DID NOT DROP OUR BOMBS AND HEADED HOME. 150 GERMAN FIGHTERS PICKED US UP. WE HAD 80 P-47'S AT THE TIME WHICH HELPED A LOT BUT THE GERMANS WERE EAGER, DETERMINED, AND PLENTY SMART TODAY SO GOT IN PLENTY. FLAK HIT ONE FORT AT PARIS WHICH THEN DOVE DOWN & CRASHED INTO ANOTHER. 2 MIN. LATER FIGHTERS KNOCKED A FORT OUT AND FOLLOWED IT DOWN. 2 MIN. LATER A FORT WENT DOWN BURNING WITH NO CHUTES OUT. ABOUT 5 MIN. LATER ANOTHER FORT WENT DOWN BURNING AND EXPLODED IN A FOREST. SAW 3 CHUTES OUT. ABOUT 5 MIN. LATER ANOTHER WENT DOWN. 10 MIN. LATER SAW 3 CHUTES FLOAT PAST AND FARTHER ON ANOTHER '17 BURNING ON THE GROUND. I GOT 3 GOOD SHOTS FROM RIGHT NOSE GUN. HUTCH DROPPED OUT AT THE FRENCH COAST WITH TWO FEATHERED ENGINES BUT GOT BACK TO ENGLAND OK. WE GOT TO ENGLAND AT 1200 AND HOME AT 1245. GERMANS SEEM TO HAVE AS MUCH OR MORE THAN THEY HAD THREE MONTHS AGO. PLANES LOOKED NEW AND PILOTS WERE PLENTY SMART COMING OUT OF THE SUN, ETC. SAW SOME GOOD DOG FIGHTS BETWEEN P-47'S AND M.E. 109'S.

11-27-43 GROUND SCHOOL. HAD A BAD COLD. FEELS LIKE THE FLU.

11-28-43 SLEPT UNTIL NOON. GROUND SCHOOL THIS AFTERNOON. CLUB TONIGHT. RAINING AND MUD IS KNEE DEEP EVERYWHERE.

11-29-43 SLEPT TILL NOON. TESTED A SHIP THIS AFTERNOON AT ALTITUDE WITH ROBBY. BIG ALERT TONIGHT. HAD A RAID TODAY ON BREMEN. OUR SQUADRON DID NOT FLY. THEY LOST TWO CREWS FROM OUR GROUP TODAY. FIGHTERS DOWNED THEM.

11-30-43 MISSION #12. BRIEFED AT 0300 FOR SOLENGER, GERMANY. TOWN OF 150,000. M.P.I. WAS BUSINESS DISTRICT. TOOK OFF AT 0800 IN THE RAIN AND CLIMBED FOR 12,000 FT. BEFORE WE BROKE OUT OF CLOUDS. ASSEMBLED OVER #7 AT 19,000. CAPT. SMITH'S SHIP CAUGHT ON FIRE. THEIR FLARES STARTED IT AND 6 GUNNERS BAILED OUT. ONE JUMPED WITHOUT HIS CHUTE AND WAS KILLED. TWO OFFICERS COULDN'T GET OUT AND CRASHED. SMITH JUMPED BUT WAS BURNED BADLY. 10 SHIPS FROM OUR GROUP ABORTED. WE FINALLY FLEW TO THE DUTCH COAST AND ONLY HAD FOUR SHIPS SO CAME HOME. 44 DEGREES BELOW. BOMBAY DOORS FROZEN, GUNS FROZEN.

CLOUDS CLEAR UP TO 30,000 FT. OVER GERMANY. TWO OF OUR SHIPS WENT DOWN IN YESTERDAY'S RAID. ONE RAN OUT OF GAS AND THE OTHER SHOT DOWN. EVERYONE PRETTY MUCH BEATEN TONIGHT. LOSING SOME GOOD CREWS AND NOT HITTING ANYTHING.

12-1-43 SLEPT TILL NOON. BOUGHT CLOTHES FROM TRAVELLING PX THIS AFTERNOON. SAT AROUND STOVE TONIGHT.

12-2-43 CLASSES.

12-3-43 CLASSES THEN GOT 48 HR. PASS. GOT TO LONDON AT 2100. WENT TO ORCHARD CLUB. STAYED AT STRAND PALACE.

12-4-43 STAGE SHOW AND RAN ACROSS TOMMY MAJORS.

12-5-43 WENT DOWN TO JEW STREET. WENT TO STOWMARKET AT 1430 AND BACK TO BASE.

12-6-43 NO CLASSES OR FLYING. RAIN & FOG.

12-7-43 NO CLASSES OR FLYING. RAIN & FOG & MUD.

12-8-43 GOT AIR MEDAL TODAY. RAIN & FOG. WENT TO STOWMARKET LAST NIGHT.

MARYONOVICH & CREW FROM OUR SQUADRON WENT DOWN IN LAST RAID. CLASSES THIS MORNING. RAIN & FOG.

12-9-43 CLASSES THIS MORNING. CLEAR TONIGHT WITH A FULL MOON. GERMANS CAME OVER ABOUT 2000 & BOMBED ALL AROUND US. THEY DROPPED FLARES WHICH LIGHTED UP THE COUNTRYSIDE. ONE PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN IN FLAMES ABOUT 6 MILES FROM HERE. EXPLODED WHEN IT HIT THE GROUND. EVERYONE CHEERED, BUT AN HOUR LATER WE FOUND OUT IT WAS A BRITISH BEAUFIGHTER THAT WAS SHOT DOWN. ONE MAN GOT OUT. ALERT TONIGHT.

12-10-43 THE GROUP WENT TO EMDEN, GERMANY, TODAY. JENNINGS & CREW WAS THE ONLY ONE IN OUR SQUADRON TO FLY. HE WENT DOWN OVER THE TARGET. NOBODY SAW ANY CHUTES. HOWEVER, THEY MIGHT HAVE GOT OUT. FIRST CREW IN OUR BARRACKS TO GO DOWN. WE THOUGHT WE MIGHT ALL GET THROUGH TOGETHER. JENNINGS-PILOT

STRAGGLON-NAVIGATOR

BARGER-CO-PILOT

KEMP- BOMBARDIER

12-11-43 FULL MOON & CLEAR. ON ALERT TONIGHT. TEST HOPPED A SHIP TODAY. ROBBY'S SHIP.

12-12-43 MISSION #13. KEIL, GERMANY. GERMANY'S NORTH SEA FLEET'S HARBOR. CITY OF 250,000. SUBMARINE PENS, ETC. TOOK OFF AT 0830. LEFT ENGLAND AT 1045. OUR GROUP LED OUR DIVISION. WE CARRIED TEN 500 LB. DEMOLITION BOMBS. THREE DIVISIONS WENT TO KEIL AND TWO WENT TO BREMEN. 20 MINS. AHEAD OF US. 350 MILES OVER THE NORTH SEA. GERMANY WAS CLOSED OVER SO THE PATHFINDER WAS USED. WENT BY HAMBURG WHICH HAD A CLOUD OF FLAK BUT WE WERE OUT OF RANGE. DROPPED OUR BOMBS ON PATHFINDER OVER KEIL. FLAK WAS LIGHTER THAN WE EXPECTED AND WE ONLY SAW 7-8 JU 88'S, WHO ATTACKED OUR LOW SQUADRON. GOT BACK TO BASE AT 1530. GOT OFF EASY CONSIDERING IT WAS TUBBY & MY 13TH RAID ON THE 13TH DAY OF THE MONTH.

1-13-44 GROUND SCHOOL. ON ALERT TONIGHT.

1-14-44 GROUND SCHOOL.. 48 HR. PASS AT NOON. WENT TO STOWMARKET & IPSWICH.

1-15-44 GOT US UP AT 0200. WE WERE BRIEFED FOR FRANKFURT, GERMANY, IN THE RUHR VALLEY. CARRYING 36 INCENDIARY BOMBS. MISSION WAS SCRUBBED ½ HOUR BEFORE TAKEOFF. WAS O.G. TONIGHT & HAD TO TAKE LIBERTY RUN TO STOWMARKET. WENT TO SHOW WHILE THERE.

1-16-44 GOT SOME LINK TRAINER TIME THIS MORNING. WORKED IN GYM THIS AFTERNOON. & PLAYED TOUCH FOOTBALL. AT 1230 A GAS TRUCK BLEW UP ON THE LINE. AT 1430 A B-24 CRASHED A FEW MILES FROM HERE. THEY FOUND 5 BODIES IN THE WRECKAGE. THINK FOUR JUMPED OUT. NEVER A DULL MOMENT.

1-17-44 GROUND SCHOOL. CLEAR AND WARM TODAY. ON BIG ALERT TONIGHT.

1-18-44 MISSION #18. FRANKFURT, GERMANY. M.P.I. BUSINESS SECTION OF TOWN. CITY OF 500,000 PEOPLE. CARRIED 38 INCENDIARY BOMBS. WERE #2 IN LEAD SQUADRON IN HIGH GROUP. PATHFINDER MISSION. BRIEFED AT 0230. TOOK OFF AT 0630 IN THE DARK AND HAD TO CLUMB THROUGH CLOUDS AND ASSEMBLE AT 18,000 FT. LEFT ENGLAND AT 0900. GOT TO I.P. AND WE THREW OUT THE CARPET (ALUMINUM FILINGS TO THROW OFF THE RADAR), DROPPED BOMBS USING THE PATHFINDER AND PRETTY SURE WE HIT THE CITY. GOT PAST BEFORE THEY COULD GET THE FLAK UP. WERE ATTACKED BY AT LEAST 100 GERMAN FIGHTERS FROM TARGET ON FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR. NO ESCORT SHOWED UP. A M.E.109 HIT HEAD ON WITH A FORT OVER TARGET. FIGHTER BLEW UP AND FORT WENT DOWN. 5 MIN. LATER BOSTWICK WENT DOWN. 5 CHUTES OPENED. 10 MIN. LATER A FORT BROKE APART. A FEW MIN. LATER A FORT WENT OVER ON HIS BACK AND WENT STRAIGHT DOWN. 15 MIN. LATER IN THE GROUP NEXT TO US, ONE FORT CAME UP UNDER ANOTHER ONE & CUT ITS TAIL COMPLETELY OFF. WE ^{SAW} TWO BODIES FLY OUT. IT SPUN DOWN AND ONE CHUTE FINALLY GOT OUT. THE OTHER PLANE TORE ITS WING OFF AND WENT DOWN. DIDN'T SEE ANY CHUTES. A WHILE LATER A FORT PULLED OUT A LITTLE AND ONE CHUTE CAME OUT. IT STRUGGLED ALONG AND FINALLY CAME BACK. COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT. P-47'S FINALLY ARRIVED. GOT BACK TO ENGLAND AT 1330. LET DOWN THROUGH THE CLOUDS ON OUR SPLASHER. WE LOST 3 PLANES FROM OUR SQUADRON. GERMAN FIGHTERS SURE LOOKED NEW AND ALL PAINTED UP RED AND BLACK. CAME STRAIGHT THROUGH THE GROUPS ALSO.

1-19-44 MISSION #19. BRAUNSWEIG, GERMANY. CITY OF 500,000 POPULATION. 100 MILES WEST OF BERLIN. CARRIED 12 500 LB. DEMOLITION BOMBS. PATHFINDER MISSION WITH COLONEL VAN LEADING. GOT UP AT 0200. TOOK OFF AT 0800. LEFT ENGLAND AT 1000 FROM CLACTON-ON-THE-SEA. GOT TO DUTCH COAST AND ENCOUNTERED A LARGE BANK OF CLOUDS, WHICH WE HAD TO DETOUR AROUND TO THE NORTH. PICKED UP P-47'S & P-38'S HALF WAY IN. RAN INTO CLOUD BANKS WHICH WE HAD TO FLY THROUGH. WENT OVER TARGET AT 1215 WHILE STILL IN CLOUDS. FLAK WAS LIGHT MIXED IN WITH THE CLOUDS. DURING THE BOMB RUN THE HIGH SQUADRON WAS DIRECTLY OVER US AND WE HAD TO MOVE AROUND TO PREVENT THEIR DROPPING ON US. SCARED US PLENTY.

WE BROKE OUT OF CLOUDS ABOUT 10 MIN. LATER. ONE FORT DROPPED DOWN ON THE DECK AND 5 GERMAN FIGHTERS JUMPED HIM, BUT P-38'S CAME TO THE RESCUE BEFORE THEY GOT HIM. 30 MILES OUT FROM THE DUTCH COAST WE SAW AN AIR SEA RESCUE BOAT HEADING EAST TO PICK UP SOME CREW. LANDED AT 1430. WE LOST ONE PLANE. HE DROPPED OUT OVER BRAUNSWIG AND DIDN'T COME BACK. ON ALERT TONIGHT.

1-21-44 ALERTED AND BRIEFED FOR FRANKFURT, GERMANY. GOT UP AT 0200. THEY SCRUBBED THE MISSION AFTER WE WERE OUT IN THE PLANE AND ONLY 30 MIN. BEFORE TAKEOFF. GOT PAID TODAY!. ON ALERT TONIGHT.

1-22-44 BRIEFED FOR FRANKFURT, GERMANY. GOT UP AT 0200. BRIEFED AT 0300. GOT OUT TO PLANE AND MISSION WAS SCRUBBED, ½ HR. BEFORE TAKE OFF. GLAD IT WAS AS THERE WERE THREE LAYERS OF CLOUDS WHICH WENT UP TO 16,000 FT.

1-23-44 SWUNG COMPASS ON OUR SHIP, OLE 966. WING REPORTED ON FRANKFURT RAID THAT WE LOST 32 PLANES. KILLED APPROX. 6000 GERMAN CIVILIANS. 30 CREW MEMBERS CAME BACK DEAD AND 300 INJURED.

1-24-44 MISSION #20. WILHEMHAVEN, GERMANY. GOT UP AT 0200 and briefed at 0330. TOOK OFF AT 0730 AND CLIMBED THROUGH CLOUDS IN THE DARK. JOINED WRONG GROUP. LEFT IT AND FINALLY FOUND OUR OWN GROUP. TARGET WAS CENTER OF TOWN. WE CARRIED 10 500 LB. DEMOLITION BOMBS. WERE IN #2 POSITION OF LEAD SQUADRON. ASSEMBLED AT 22,000 FT. OVER THE FIELD. LEFT ENGLAND AT 1005 AND WERE OVER TARGET AT 1120. FLAK WAS INACCURATE AND NO GERMAN FIGHTERS. HAD P-47, P-38, & P-51 ESCORT. FLEW AT 28,000 FT. & 45 DEGREES BELOW ZERO. DID NOT GO OVER NORTH SEA FAR ENOUGH AFTER LEAVING TARGET. TURNED WEST TOO SOON AND PICKED UP FLAK FROM THE FRESIAN ISLANDS. THERE WERE THREE LAYERS OF CLOUDS UP TO 30,000 FT. WE LET DOWN THROUGH CLOUDS ON WAY BACK IN FORMATION AND TWO PLANES IN OUR "B" GROUP COLLIDED. THINK ONE GOT BACK. CAME BACK LAST 100 MILES AT 1000 FT. OVER THE SEA. LANDED AT 1415. RATHER HAVE FIGHTERS AND FLAK THAN TO SWEAT OUT THIS WEATHER.

1-4-44 MISSION #21. FRANKFURT, GERMANY. GOT US UP AT 0300. BRIEFED AT 0400. TOOK OFF AT 0800 AND MADE A CLEAR ASSEMBLY. WE CARRIED 10 500 LB. DEMOLITION BOMBS. WERE IN #2 POSITION IN HIGH SQUADRON AND THE SECOND WING OVER THE TARGET. M.P.I. WAS THE OLD BUSINESS DISTRICT OF TOWN. LEFT ENGLAND FROM CLACTON-ON-THE-SEA AGAIN AT 1004. ON THE WAY IN WE GOT NORTH OF COURSE AND WENT OVER THE RUHR VALLEY. WE WERE IN HEAVY FLAK FOR 6 MINUTES. ONE FORT ON OUR LEFT GOT HIT AND WENT DOWN BURNING. IT EXPLODED JUST BEFORE IT HIT THE CLOUDS. A FEW MINUTES LATER ANOTHER FORT GOT HIT AND BURNED. IT FLEW STRAIGHT FOR A FEW MINUTES AND THEN SPUN DOWN. OVER THE TARGET THE FLAK WAS HEAVY AND ACCURATE. 10/10 UNDERCAST, SO WE DROPPED ON THE PATHFINDER PLANE. ON THE WAY BACK THE GROUP AHEAD AGAIN GOT TO RIGHT OF THE COURSE AND LED US DIRECTLY OVER THE RUHR VALLEY ONCE MORE. WE WERE IN IT FOR 5 MINUTES THIS TIME. IT WAS MORE ACCURATE THIS TIME AND AT EXACTLY OUR

ALTITUDE, CAME OUT 10 MILES SOUTH OF ROTTERDAM AND GOT BACK TO ENGLAND AN HOUR LATER. LANDED AT 1500. LET DOWN OVER OUR SPLASHER THROUGH 2000 FT. OF CLOUDS. WE LOST ONE PLANE. HE ABORTED ABOUT 50 MILES INLAND AND DIDN'T COME BACK. HAD p-38, p-47, & p-51 ESCORT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY ENEMY ATTACK.

2-5-44 OUR SQUADRON DID NOT FLY TODAY. THE GROUP WENT TO A FAUKWULF (SP.?) FACTORY IN SOUTHERN FRANCE. EASY RAID, SO, OF COURSE, WE DIDN'T GET TO GO! THEY HAD NO FIGHTERS AND NO FLAK. WE LOST TWO CREWS IN YESTERDAY'S RAID INSTEAD OF ONE AS WE HAD THOUGHT. SELBY FINISHED TODAY. SOUBART FINISHED HIS 25 MISSIONS YESTERDAY. GOOD FOR THEM!

Feb 21 1944

We were bombing Hamberg Germany, on my next to the last mission, at 25000 feet. Over the target we were hit by flak from the ground, which knocked two engines out. We had to leave the formation and drop down and back. 10 minutes later two German fighter planes spotted us and attacked us head on. They knocked one more engine out. We then were at 6000 feet and going down 1000 feet a minute with one engine on fire. The German fighter planes were circling and getting ready for the kill, so we decided that if we kept flying we would never make it back to England and would have to ditch in the channel, which in the winter was suicide. We all bailed out thru the bombay. I was fairly sure we were over Holland and not Germany.

I hit the ground and hid my parachute and opened my escape kit and got my compass and silk maps out and started walking southwest. I walked to the nearest farm house and the lady there showed me where I was on the map. I then walked for four hours and met a Dutchman on a bicycle who I stopped and when he finally realized who I was put me in a ditch to hide and came back for me at 10:00 p.m. He then took me in a town to a house where I stayed one week. While I was there they gave me civilian clothes and a false I.D. card. I was a druggist from Amsterdam.

I was told to go to Spain where I would be free. I traveled by train following a Dutchman. I stayed at nights with safe Dutch people. I had to walk across the Holland-Belgium border and stayed one week in a haystack. I got as far as Liege Belgium when the allied invasion started so they told me to stay put and wait for the U.S. army to arrive. I stayed in Liege for two months waiting for the U. S. 1st army to arrive. Then I was free.

I had many interesting experiences while traveling around. At one train station I ate dinner with two German soldiers and I never said a word. Crossing river bridges was always an experience. They had German guard houses on both sides and every 10-15 people were pulled in and interrogated. I finally figured it out so I timed it so I was always the 1st or 2nd to go by the guard house. I stayed in many towns in Holland. Roermond, Venlo, Eindhoven, Ermelo, In Roermond I stayed one month in a house without looking out of a window for the whole time.

From Liege I rode an army truck to Paris where I was flown back to London. In London I was promoted one rank, given \$1500 in back pay, a new uniform, and put on a boat to New York

Joels Pancher
Lapsusky, our Co-Pilot was shot down Feb 22 over the North sea. He is buried in Holland. Our Bomber of course lived in Halton, Saskatchewan.