

**464<sup>th</sup> Air Force Squadron. B24 Liberator**  
**55<sup>th</sup> Wing 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group 777<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron – Yellow Yoke**

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55<sup>th</sup> Wing 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group 777<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.  
Pantenella Air Base, Italy  
Yellow Yoke Airplane. B24 Liberator Bomber Crew 32

R E S T R I C T E D  
1ST LT DEAN F. LOVITT  
COMMANDER



CREW MEMBERS

Pilot  
Co-Pilot  
Navigator  
Bombardier  
Engineer  
Radio Operator  
Asst Engineer  
Gunner  
Gunner  
Gunner

1st Lt Dean F. Lovitt  
1st Lt Wallace R. Roberts  
1st Lt Howard Drollinger  
1st Lt Edward Horst  
T Sgt John Chmelir  
T Sgt Jerome Lory  
S Sgt Edmund A. Aubrey  
S Sgt John Holzapfel  
S Sgt Thomas Beyer  
S Sgt George Kroll

R E S T R I C T E D

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**Crew 32 Members**

Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> LT Dean F. Lovitt  
Co-Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> LT Wallace R. Roberts  
Navigator 1<sup>st</sup> LT Howard B. Drollinger  
Bombardier 1<sup>st</sup> LT Edward Horst  
Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.  
Radio Operator T/Sgt. Jerome Lory  
Tail Gunner/Asst. Engineer S/Sgt. Edmund A. Aubrey  
Ball Gunner S/Sgt. Jack Holzapfel  
Top Gunner S/Sgt. Thomas R. Beyer  
Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll

**Consolidated History of 464<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (H)**

The 464<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, consisting of 776<sup>th</sup>, 777<sup>th</sup>, 778<sup>th</sup>, 779<sup>th</sup> bombardment squadron (H) was activated at Wendover Field, Utah, on 1 July 1943.

The first temporary change of station was made on 22 August 1943 without personnel or equipment to Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

The first training was received at AFSAT, Orlando Florida during the month of September, 1943 where Lieut. Col. Marshall Bonner assumed command. Lieut. Col. Sylvan D. Hand joined the group at Gowen Field as Deputy Group Commander.

The group arrived at its permanent base, AB Pocatello, Idaho on 2 October 1943, where a second and third phase combat training was carried on during the months of October, November and December 1943, and January and February, 1944.

The Ground Echelon dispersed by troop train for overseas service on 9 February 1944. The Air Echelon departed by air on 21 February 1944 for the staging area at AB, Lincoln, Nebraska. From Lincoln, aircraft crews took off singly for their overseas destination. The first aircraft and crew arriving at temporary basin Africa on 9 March 1944.

After training at this temporary base, the group flew to temporary base in Italy on 21 April 1944 and flew their first combat mission on 30 April 1944 with Castel Maggiore, Italy as the Group's first combat target.

The group moved by air and truck to its permanent base in Italy on 1 June 1944. Lieut. Col. Sylvan D Hand, the Deputy Group Commander was lost on the second combat mission, Parma, Italy on 2 May 1944. Col. Marshall Donner, group commander was lost on combat mission over Vienna Austria on 26 June 1944.

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Lieut. Col. Charles F McKenna III, was appointed Deputy Group Commander on 30 May 1944. Col. A. L. Schroeder was appointed Group Commanding Officer on 30 June 1944.

**An Airman's Prayer**

God guard and guide us as we fly through the great spaces of the sky. Be with us as we take into the air, in morning light and sunshine fair. Eternal father, strong to save, give us courage and make us brave; protect us where so 'er we go, from shell and flak and fire and foe. Most loved member of our crew, ride with us up into the blue. Direct our bombs upon the foe, but shelter those whom thou don't know. Keep us together on our way, grant our work successful today. Deliver us from hate and sin, and bring us safely down again. O' God protect us as we fly through lonely ways across the sky.

[Boot Camp Training by T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

After a month of interim training, our tour of foreign duty was about to begin. On 7 July 1944 our training group was assembled in a hangar at Topeka Army air base. The intelligence officer spoke to us and outlined courses to be flown and finally assigned us to our particular zones of operation. What a very dramatic instance that was! Everyone in the room listened intently for their assignment. Not a whisper sounded in the entire building; each man in his own thoughts and prayers. My own mind flashed back to all the training flights, mock bombing missions, night flights, more bombing missions and the not so distant future of having our own plane to be crewed by 10 men, my crew and I. That is the way it would be from now on-my crew and I. 10 men facing whatever might come, each an integral part of the whole.

After waiting for what seemed to be an interminably long time but in reality a short minute, the intelligent officer spoke, the drone of his words carrying the fate of all men there. Eagerly the entire assembly waited for what he had to say, "the crew members from 4811 through 4850 will go to England." Not a sound greeted the announcement then suddenly pandemonium broke loose! After things quieted down a bit, the crews were given their temporary APO numbers and other pertinent data they needed.

Those of us that haven't been assigned looked on with bewilderment. The kinship we had found throughout our training seemed to dissolve with the intelligent officer's words.

When order was restored, he continued, "crews 4851 through 4865 be stationed in Italy." The instant he spoke the name of our station, everyone started to cheer and give all signs of sheer joy! I cheered too but I didn't know why. After our assignment, we were told our route and our time of departure. We were to depart at 0800 on the morning of 8 July.

The night of the seventh was one of the most exciting of all my life! Feverish last-minute preparations; 1001 small items that had to be taken care of; and finally the hardest last letter home. With all the details and duties taken care of all of the crew decided it was time for some much needed rest, the last possibly in our own native land.

The officer of the day with the assistance of five junior officers, awakened us at 2:30 AM. Then came the really hectic time of loading the planes with our luggage and equipment, was weighed and stowed into the plane. What a conglomeration of equipment it was! There were flying suits, baggage, cases of K rations, weapons, airplane parts, and various other necessary articles. It then became my duty to arrange everything in the ship so that it would be in perfect balance. After everything was arranged and secured, I checked the ship for mechanical defects. Finding none, I started the engines and began my preflight inspection.

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When I finished and was satisfied that the plane was in perfect mechanical condition, I shut the engines off and got out of the plane to wait for the officers of my crew. I smoked a cigarette and listened to the eager throb of all the other planes high powered engines, which were waiting to take us from our native land to glory, honor or death!

At 12 minutes past one in the morning on eight of July, we became airborne. Our fateful trip had begun; and what a beginning! For the first hour it was wonderful being up there in the summer sky, all aglow with a bright moon and the millions of stars that form the canopy of heaven! Then the typical Midwestern summer's unpredictable weather took a decided turn. The fiercest electrical storm that part of the country has had in many years, unleashed its tremendous fury. In spite of the determined efforts of the storm to hinder our journey, we as a crew elected to continue. After several hours of battling the elements the storm finally abated. As the sun came up through the billowing clouds, we were nearing our destination. We were to have landed in Bangor Maine, but due to the storm, we were instructed to go to Manchester, Hampshire. The New England countryside was beautiful in the early morning light.

We left Grenier Field for Gander Lake Newfoundland. This was to be our first overwater flight on our journey. At approximately 1300 we had our last look at our countries borders. The stone and rock bound coast of Maine was our last fond gaze at the country we were to fight for. Our flight to Newfoundland was uneventful. Everything was running perfectly, the weather was with us, and Howie our navigator, was doing a perfect job of navigating. We reached Gander Lake at about 1500. In this outpost of civilization, it was necessary to post a guard around the plane. It became my duty to assign the men in four hour shifts. The radio operator and I didn't draw any guard. However since I was around the plane, working, most of the day, the other four fellows had it fairly easy.

We were to have left at 0100 on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>, however because of turbulent weather over the Atlantic our stay at Gander Lake was protracted.

We couldn't leave, so we had a chance to become acquainted with the Canadian and British personnel stationed at Gander Lake. This we did in the overcrowded non-commissioned officers club. Here at Gander we became acquainted with long, long days. At 10 o'clock at night it was still light outside! Our stay was very pleasant, but all good things come to an end - so did this.

On the morning of 12 July at 0130 we took off again. This leg of our journey was to terminate at the Agoras Islands. This was our longest overwater flight, therefore before we took off, the Skipper checked our Mae Wests and our parachutes, just in case of an emergency. Finding everything in good order, we prepared to take off. We were exceptionally heavy on this leg of our trip approximately 72,000 pounds. The runways were too long, and with the additional weight, we all sweated this takeoff. Then as usual in a tense situation, came the comedy relief. The fellows in the waste were sweating out the takeoff when suddenly the waste window fell into the plane. They thought something horrifically bad happened until they realized what it was! Flying old planes which were pretty loose, not only on the controls but also everywhere else!

[NOTE missing pg. 8]

Do to our early morning takeoff, I was pretty tired. I had spent most of the day checking everything over to be sure that nothing would go wrong on our overwater flight. Shortly after I fixed the waste window, I came back to the flight deck, checked all the instrumentation for any indication of trouble finding none. I went to sleep on the cushion on the flight deck. I must have slept very soundly for the next thing I knew

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the bombardier was shaking me. ‘Skipper wants you,’ he said. I went forward to see what the Skipper wanted when I got his attention he said, “We’re going to land.” Still about half asleep I asked. “Where?” I wasn’t particularly worried about how or why you’re going to land, but I did want to know where for below us was deep blue water of the great Atlantic. Above us beaming the morning mist which seemed to disintegrate as our approach neared. Then suddenly out of nowhere the Agoras Islands appeared. The tower provided landing instructions. The landing strip was of steel mat type.

[Note missing page 13]

The next overwater flight was still to be the Atlantic Ocean to Africa, then over the Mediterranean Sea to Italy.

Our quarters at the Agoras were horrid. So much so, in fact we all slept in our plane. It had been raining for several days consequently everything except the runways in the taxi strip were a sea of red mud! The food they offered us was practically inedible. We were to learn we couldn’t expect more, because Lagans was a British base. That night we had our first introduction to K rations. Each one of us chose a different meal so that we could decide which was the best. We agreed unanimously that the lunch unit was the best.

Our stay at Agoras fortunately, was only overnight. Another day at Lagans would have been definitely unwanted.

The following morning we took off on the last leg of our Atlantic crossing. Our destination was Marakeck Africa. This field was and A. T. C. base in French Morocco.

Our flight from the Agoras to the African continent was merely routine. Everything was perfect including the weather. The interphone system was quite busy. All the fellows were either telling their favorite stories or singing both solo and choral. I think everyone on the crew enjoyed that part of our flight. There might be one exception, the navigator Howie had to stay right on the ball, taking fixes such make sure that we made our proper landing. Howie navigated and George flew the ship. George being the autopilot. On this particular leg of our trip, I tuned in the radio compass and got a New York. It certainly felt good to hear all the familiar songs they played. All in all it was a very nice flight.

On our arrival at Marakech we found it to be quite difficult from anything we had seen to date. In the states we had concrete runways. In the Agoras we had steel mat runways. And here we had nothing but the good earth to land on. The resultant cloud of dust obscured every several miles behind us. Here was a situation exactly the opposite of what it was at our last stop. At the Agoras it was mud, mud, mud everywhere. Here it looked as if though it hadn’t rained since the beginning of time! Everywhere you looked there was a coating of dust. When we had our supper that evening we found the dust in our food too!

At Marakech, the alert crew came out to make a 25-hour inspection on our plane. I stayed with the crew and helped out as best I could. It took about four hours to complete our inspection. After everything was completed, I went into the Garrison area to find the rest of the crew. I found them standing in line, a line formed into the P. X. for the weekly ration of beer. Beer, meant to be served cold, but it wasn’t! Quite the opposite was true. The beer was as warm as cold tepid water! There was a definite shortage of ice, and all of it had to be used for preservation of foodstuffs. That evening we went to a movie. It was the first

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movie under the stars for my crew and I. It was certainly a new experience, one which was to be repeated many, many times!

After the movie we went to our quarters which were at one time a fashionable hotel. Now however the wall surrounding it had broken and encrusted in the concrete top and no longer surrounded the formal garden. It was now a prisoner of war stockade. The roof of the hotel was partially blown away from bomb blasts. The rooms now furnished with one cot and mosquito bars only. Such was the fate of many former tourist hotels. It was quite comfortable and rather pleasant – often what we encountered at the Agoras. Consequently we had a very good night's rest.

Early the next morning we started for Tunis, Tunisia. It was an ideal day for flying in our altitude. Made it double so for sightseeing. It was indeed a strange paradox, we and man's most wonderful invention, gazing down on the primitive method in tilling the soil. Single plows, portable watering, the ancient ass was the beast of burden, the Toga clad figure of the natives plowing in this primitive manner.

As we sped on toward our destination it became more and more apparent that we were getting into one of the war areas of the world - the evidence of war became a reality. Shell craters, bomb craters ruins of what had been homes and heaps of wrecked vehicles, were revealed to our eyes.

The countryside showed for devastation by the hand of man – such were our first impressions of the old world.

We flew across the mountains along rivers that seemed to wind their way to nowhere and finally we spied the blue waters of the Mediterranean. We flew out over the ocean for a little while, then changed our course to head due east to make a proper land fall. Howie made excellent calculations because we hit it right on the head.

Tunis itself, was a shamble of the city. Its harbor had been bombed by both Allies and the Axis with telling effect. The wreckage of several vessels still protruded from the harbor waters.

We circled the city once, fired over recognition lights, radioed the airport and received our landing instructions. Here the runway differed from Marekpech in that it was asphalt. We landed and parked our airplane. Looking around us we could see this airfield was a hotly contested prize of war. All the buildings were built scarred from small arms fire and everywhere were telltale red signs proclaiming, "Danger, Mined Area." An immobilized German vehicle and fighter tank were marked, "Booby Trapped." The entire field was marked off in lanes which were safe for traffic and those that were not.

Upon our departure from the airplane the building of the field proper it was apparent that this at our time had been a wonderful airport.

There was a large and apparently comfortable hotel located right opposite the main hangar. This hotel was flanked by two smaller ones. Apparently these were constructed to accommodate travelers. Our quarters for the night was one of the lesser hotels, which was directly behind the hotel Bob Hope stayed while in Tunis. Again the room was devoid of any luxuries merely bare necessities.

I had an opportunity of going into Tunis that evening, to see sideshows. We put our side arms underneath our shirts and we considered it the wisest policy to stay clear. That night, we had a second session of movies under the stars. The picture I will always remember. I was destined to see it four times! That night was most miserable I had spent since I left the states. Bob Hope wasn't kidding when he said they

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had mosquitoes big enough to be dive bombers. There were mosquitoes there that I had ever dreamed were alive. After an uncomfortable night we rose for breakfast and then proceeded on our last leg of our journey. This day our radio operator was the one who was going to do most of the work. It was Lory's job that keeps ATC head masters posted on our position every half hour. Since there were no voice facilities all contacts had to be made by carrier code. And work he did the flight was a 4 1/2 hour duration and we had to make ground contact nine times which isn't easy.

Our next stops was at Gioia Italy. Gioia was a reception station for air arrivals. Here, at this place, many crews and their planes parted company. The crews were sent to groups as replacements and the planes were sent to squadrons which needed them. After reporting into flight operations we were instructed to secure all our gear of the plane and wait for further orders.

Our crew was a sad lot that night. We had formed an attachment to that plane, stemming from confidence in it. Now on the very threshold of combat, it was to be taken away from us.

The next day we spent in visiting with the other crews, wandering around the planes, but mainly sweating out the airplane that was to come for us to take us to our operational base. Then just afternoon on the second day at Gioia, our Skipper was called into flight operations. When he came out, he was all smiles. The operation officer had told him where we were assigned and also that we were to take our plane with us! We were overjoyed at our exceedingly good fortune of being able to keep our plane! Things began looking up for us again!!

We packed our gear with haste, loaded it into the plane, and took off for too much time had elapsed.

Just as we taxied off our hard stand onto the taxi strip, Pappy Patzer made his landing. We hadn't seen Pappy since Newfoundland, since he was traveling about two days behind us. As I watched him taxi to the hard stand, I wondered when I would see him again.

Gioia, as I have said before, was the air reception center. Here the crews are distributed to wherever they are needed. The gang we came with were no exceptions. Briggs and his boys went to Leche. Dodd with MacDonald as navigator went to South Italy to Taranto, Thibodeau, and the rest of their crew came to the same base we did, only a different Squadron. Thus were the elements of our training group all split up I have often wished we could have formed a new group. They were a wonderful group of fellows and good flyers.

To prove this, during our training in the states, there was just one accident in all the hours flying! That was an accident on the ground, two airplanes were virtually destroyed. But no one was seriously injured! Just one other accident hard our record. It was a takeoff accident at Grenier Field, New Hampshire. There wasn't anyone seriously injured in that accident either.

Thus with all this in mind, we all went to our assignments. Most of us eager, and quite a bit apprehensive. What lay ahead - no one knew!

Our crew took off from Gioia Italy on the afternoon of 17 July, late in the afternoon. After 20 minutes of the roughest flying I have ever experience, we circled our base at Pantenella Italy. At last! After months of training, constant practice, continuous study, all with this and in view. And now, our greatest experience was in the offing!

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After landing at Pantenella, we were instructed to take to the hard stance of the 465<sup>th</sup> bomb group. We unloaded all our equipment on the hard stand and then waited for truck. When the truck came, we loaded all our gear onto it and then climbed aboard. The driver took us to headquarters of the group. The officers all got out to check in. At the headquarters, we were notified that they weren't expecting any crews. So several phone calls to the 464<sup>th</sup> group finally uncovered a squadron to which we were assigned.

While all this was going on, we were all exposed to questions about the states. How everything looked etc. And we in turn ask questions about combat flying, casualties and so forth! The consensus of opinion was that we were very fortunate and being assigned to the 465<sup>th</sup> bomb group. The reason being that it had about 1/10 of the losses of its companion group for 464<sup>th</sup>. It seems that the 464<sup>th</sup> had the reputation of being a hard luck group! When we found that out we were elated

### [50 Missions Begin](#)

**1944, Tuesday, July 25**

1 and 2 Missions, 2 sortie

To: Linz, Austria, Herman Goering Tank Works

Take off 0655, Bombs away 1138, Landed 1410

Total time in air 7 hours, 15 minutes. Operation altitude 23,000 feet. Bomb load, 5, 1,000 pounds

### [Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This was my first mission. It counted as a double. I and the rest of the crew was a little tense. The first thing that made me very uncomfortable was all the clothes I had on. Fatigues, heated flying suit, gloves and boots, over this came a Mae West and chute harness. When we hit the target area I had to put on my chest chute and a flak suit over all of it. I also hooked my shoes to my harness in case I had to bailout. With all this on, I felt and was quite clumsy and it put an awful strain on my back.

Our fighter escorts were damn good. They were P 38's and P 51's. Didn't encounter or even see any enemy aircraft.

The first time we saw flak was over the target area. It was the first time I saw flak and it looks just about how it does in the newsreel only more real and plenty dangerous. It is something that you can't avoid at least not all of it. It is the thing that does things to your nerves and I think is the worst part of a whole mission. From the time the bombardier says bomb bay open to the time you are out of the flak is when you really sweated out. The flak we encountered today was heavy (that is type of gun) intense (how much of it you see) and not too accurate.



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When we landed we found a flak hole through the nose and a couple in the tale. It wasn't too bad and I wasn't as scared as I thought I would be.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

My position on the crew is engineer. In the air I am just another gunner. However, if anything goes wrong with the ship, and it happens in such to be accessible from the interior then it is my duty to repair it.

My first mission was 25 July 1944 the target that day was Linz, Austria, where the German Goering Tank Works were located. That was our target! We were briefed as to the number of flak guns to expect; the number of enemy fighters to watch for, and other pertinent data pertaining to the mission. We took off at 0655 that morning. After a very cold and otherwise uneventful journey, we arrived over the target at exactly 1135 and dropped our bombs on the enemy. And began to our roll to the left. From before the target, over the target and for a short while after leaving the target, we were in heavy (flak). In time, but not too, accurate flak.

The target was a virgin target, and on that day the whole 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force attacked it. Our bomb load was 5 – 1000 lb. bombs.

The sky was filled with black puffs of smoke - nothing that looked too dangerous - but it was. Those puffs of smoke were enemy flak shells bursting and throwing fragments of flying steel all about us. Fortunately, just two pieces hit us and neither of them did any damage.

We returned to our base 7:15 after we left. We landed at 1410. Now we were really a part of the squadron, we had our first mission completed and over baptism of fire.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Today we bombed Linz Austria, the Herman Goering Tank Works. The target was knocked out, met up with moderate but accurate flak, no fighters were seen. This was my second and third mission, second sortie!

**1944 Wednesday, July 26**

3 and 4 missions, two sorties

To Z Wolfaxing Air Drome, 9 miles from Vienna Austria

Take off 0725, bombs away 1135, landed 1435

Total time in air 7 hours 15 minutes, operating altitude 22,800. Bomb load 36 fragmentation bombs

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[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was to one of the worst targets of the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force. Anything near Vienna is rough and it was. They had about 170 guns. We really were broken in on this raid. The flak was heavy, intense and plenty accurate. Boy did they set up a barrage. We had our main hydraulic line shot out which made our hydraulic line inoperative. This controls the landing gear, flap Bombay doors, brakes. It was lucky we had some extra hydraulic fluid on board and the engine was able to patch up the hole pretty good. We were sprayed from head to foot with hydraulic fluid and as was the whole ship we really sweated the landing. We were in the flak area 22 minutes. They were the longest 22 minutes I ever spent. There were four flak bursts that came so darn close I thought sure our number was up. I hope they all aren't this rough. Our escort was good as usual and no fighters were encountered.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

The next target we hit was the Z Wolfaxing Air Drome, about 9 miles from Vienna, Austria. This target was right and what is known as flak alley - and I am not kidding. This was 26 July, 1944.

Our primary objective was to knock out enemy installations and aircraft on the ground. This plant assembled M.E. 109's. Our bomb load was 100 pound fragmentation pounds. Briefing came at first as usual! The number of flak guns was astonishing. When the S-2 officer Sam Geavy said intense, accurate flak, he wasn't kidding. Our squadron was to get off at 0725 and we did just that. We rendezvoused with group and wing, and proceeded on our way. We headed out over the Adriatic Sea, over Yugoslavia. About 1010 we saw the first of our escort about 50, P 51's. They are a beautiful site to see over the enemy territory!!!

Just after that we saw a ship going down in flames! It wasn't a bomber but a fighter. However we were too far away to see who it was. That will never be known.

For quite a while before we arrived at our target, we were in enemy flak. This time, we were and as lucky as the first time! Flak came through the fuselage and cut a hydraulic line - the main one. We lost all our hydraulic fluid, while I endured to fix it. I finally managed to get lined crimped enough so that it would hold a little while. I did this with no tools except an ax, and a hydraulic grip. When I got the pipes crimped, I filled the reservoir with some fluid just enough to be able to lower the flaps with the emergency system. When we reached the field, we were the last to land, because we didn't know if you have brakes or not. I had to crank the landing gear down and kick the wheels out. The landing was a beaut!! The brakes held!! We were home.

We landed at 1435 – 7:10 minutes of rugged flying!!

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[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Today we really saw the action, we bombed Vienna Austria, the Wolfaxing Air Drome. We ran into heavy intense and extremely accurate flak, boy did I sweat! Our hydraulic system was shot out and pieces of flak hit my turret. Number three engine was feathered, made it through and we were happy! This was my fourth and fifth mission my third sortie

**1944 Friday, July 28**

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

Today, 28 July, our crew didn't have to fly on the mission. The rest of the group bombed Ploesti today. The pilot, copilot, navigator and I had to go to Rome. We took up a group of men going on pass.

We circled over the city which is quite beautiful from the air. The Tiber River winds its way through the center of town. We saw the ruins of the Colosseum. It is in a remarkable state of preservation. I guess the Italians have replaced much of the ruined stone.

We also flew over Vatican City. It is beautiful! The Cathedral and the Pope's palace are really works of art!

Unfortunately we weren't able to get into town. We merely landed, picked up a returning group of men, and came back to the base. On the way home we flew over the Angio beach head where so many American boys fought and died!

We flew over Naples. It has a wonderful harbor. It was filled with many allied wanabeys.

The last point of interest in our return journey was most blessing: the volcano. We flew quite close to it and could see into the center. All in all it was an interesting trip!

**1944 Sunday, July 30**

5 mission, three sorties, air medal

To Duna aircraft factory Budapest Hungary

Take off 755, bombs away 1116, landed 1405

Total time in air 6 hours, 10 minutes. Operating altitude 22,500 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pound demolition bombs.

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[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

Considering our last raid this one could be called a milk run. It was the first time we didn't get too close to the flak. We only got one hole in our vertical stabilizer.

Our group didn't lose any ships. This was the first raid we never saw any enemy fighters. They were pretty well taken care of by our escorts of P 38's and P 51's. One ME 109 (German fighter) came in out of the sun. When I saw him he wasn't more than 200 feet out. If it weren't for the P38's on his tail he would have surely got a damn good shot at us. You really have to keep your eyes open.

We had one pretty close call today. One of our B 24's came right above us at the target. This wasn't bad the only thing was he still had his bombs. We surely were sweating as we thought they were going to come down on us. They only came within 15 feet though. I could practically read the serial numbers on them. It was pretty close, but then again a miss is as good as a mile.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 30 July we went on our third sortie. We were \_\_\_\_\_ and we were told our target was the Duna aircraft factory located near Budapest Hungary. We took off at 07 30 and arrived at the target at 1110.

The flak was plenty rugged and it was heavy, moderate, and accurate. Today I saw my first enemy fighter. It was an ME 109. However the P 51's and P 38's were keeping them plenty busy. More of them attacked the formation.

On the way home, we saw the \_\_\_\_\_ way off nowhere near us.

We flew Yellow Yoke for Yoke. The ship we flew overseas. The only flak hole in it was a hole in the vertical stabilizer.

We landed at 1405. All in all it wasn't too bad of a mission!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

After a four-day rest we took off from Budapest Hungary this morning we bombed the Duna aircraft factory. Ran into a few ME 109's, they didn't bother us thanks to P 38's and P 51 escorts. They chased the louses all over the sky many of the enemy planes went down in flames some of ours did also. The Germans sent up moderate but inaccurate flak. This was my 6th mission and 4th sortie. Air metal is due.

**1944 Wednesday, August 2**

6 mission, 4 sorties

To Genoa Italy (northern Italy seaport)

**464<sup>th</sup> Air Force Squadron. B24 Liberator**  
**55<sup>th</sup> Wing 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group 777<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron – Yellow Yoke**

Take off 0855, bombs away 1107, landed 1545

Total time in air 6 hours 50 minutes. Operation altitude 19,500. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds.

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This was the first raid of this type that we ever pulled. It wasn't bad as we came in from the water, bombed the harbor and made a sharp rally to the left and came right back over the water. Just as here we came and there we go. It wasn't just enough however as we collected flak holes. One through number four engine cowling, which tore a big hole in the cowling but didn't do any harm. One was in the fuselage near the tail and the other two were in the tail. The flak was heavy, scant and accurate. We really plastered that target though. We really left plenty of fires and hell of a lot of smoke. As usual we had a good escort- P 38's. No enemy fighters we encountered. As the number of missions increase I find I am getting to respect that flak more and more.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 2 we went on another mission we were rather late in the morning. We found our mission was rather short, just up to northern Italy.

Our target was to be the dock installation in Genoa Italy. We took off with a load of 500 pound bombs 10 of them. We arrived at the target and bombs away at 1307. The flak at the target was heavy, moderate and fairly accurate. We got a large flak hole in the number four engine cowl no damage was done. I was taking pictures and we got a flak hole about 10 feet and back of the camera hatch. After an eventual trip we arrived home at 1545 by way of Naples.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Started off the new month with a nice little raid on Genoa Italy the raid was not too difficult. However the Germans had my boxes range, they sent up moderate but accurate flak, number four engine stopped a nice piece of flak in the cowling. Still no fighters troubled us. Escort is doing a swell job! This makes my seventh mission fifth sortie eligible for air medal.

**1944 Thursday, August 3**

7 and 8 mission, 5 sortie

To Friedrichshafen Aircraft Factory Germany

Take off 0706, bombs away 1112, landed 1420

Total time in error 7 hours 10 minutes. Operating altitude 23,600. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

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[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This raid counted double and was the earliest double mission I've pulled so far. We flew straight up the Adriatic Sea and then over the Italian Alps. We didn't pass far from Venus. I guess we were pretty near the 1<sup>st</sup> to hit the target. We had about 6 to 8/10 coverage of clouds which really helped a lot. The flak was heavy moderate and inaccurate. We managed to pick up a small flak hole in the tail. Coming back the group and back of us were attacked by fighters and we saw 4 planes go down (our planes, bombers) in the space of 4 minutes. You really have to keep your eyes open because if you don't see those fighters in time it is just tough luck. Since we have gotten into this group it hasn't lost many planes it did have a jinx on it up to the time we came.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the morning of 3 August we were briefed to raid the Mayell Aircraft factory at Friedrichshafen Germany. It is right on the shores of Lake Conataure (sp?) opposite Switzerland.

The takeoff was made at 0705, and we proceeded on course at about 1000 we saw the city of Canals, Vienna. Kaise (sp?) is an island in the backwaters of a harbor. After Venice came the bee Valley and then the mountains. The mountains were beautiful with a certain rugged kind of beauty. They were lovely green valley that looked very pleasant and peaceful. It would be wonderful if the inhabitants were as peaceful as the countryside.

At 1113 our bombs were away. We had a camera and I saw several hits and near misses in the water. The flak was moderate, and not too accurate. All the ships left the target unscathed. We rolled right sharply and headed for home. About 20 minutes from the target, our tail gunner shouted "B-24 going down in flames at 700" I looked and saw it. As quickly as can be imagined, I saw three more B 24's going down. It was until after I saw the ships go down, I saw 4 ME 109's. We found out later that the A 65<sup>th</sup> GP lost eight planes to enemy fighters.

We returned over the same route and landed at 1420. As far as we were concerned, it was a lousy mission.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Looks like vacation is over, took off at 7:00 am for Friedrichshafen Germany. Briefed us for a roughy but everything turned out okay, at least for my group, we got by with just moderate and very inaccurate flak. The groups behind us caught hell with flak and also fighters. Four B-24's were shot down one after another by ME 109's. However P 51 were hot on their tails. The target was the Monsell aircraft factory - the robot

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rockets were supposedly manufactured their! Hard luck summation point today was a doubleheader which brings the score of 9 missions and 6 sorties.

**1944 Sunday, August 6**

9 mission, 6 sortie

To Le Pontet Oil Storage Tank, Avignon France

Take off 0705, bombs away 1150, landed 1515

Total time in air 8 hours 10 minutes. Operating altitude 21,200 feet, bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

Today's raid was the easiest and one of the best raids we ever pulled. Believe it or not we didn't even get one black hole. If we could do 41 more missions like this one I would love it. We were flying tail end Charlie and had a little more space to maneuver in. We hit our target right on the nose but I guess they had most of the oil out of the tanks as we didn't start any big fires. Well they won't be able to use those tanks anymore and that was the main idea. No enemy planes were encountered and we didn't see much of our escort. We didn't expect to see any enemy fighters. Well now I know all of them aren't rough.

An announcement today disclosed that 29 enemy aircraft were destroyed by fighters and bomber gunners participating in yesterday's 15<sup>th</sup> AAF raid on to synthetic oil plants at Blechhammer, in Silesia. In all operations including medium and fighter bomber attacks in southern France, Italy and Yugoslavia, 22 Allied planes are missing.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

Today we flew again. August 6, 1944 - Sunday. We flew up to the Pontet France, hitting an oil dump and several other targets. The Air Force was out in maximum strength. We took off at 0705 for the longest mission yet! Our load was 500 pound bombs. We made quite a good showing. We had what we thought the worst possible position. G 22! When we got over the target, all the flak was on our left. The closest burst was about 100 feet away from us. All and all it was a comparatively lousy mission!

We returned to the base at 1550 after being in the air for 7:10

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

After two days rest we again took off for a little horse play. Visited a little city in southern France called Le Pantel, hubba, hubba, bombed the hell out of it too. Flak was moderate and inaccurate, thank God!

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**55<sup>th</sup> Wing 464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group 777<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron – Yellow Yoke**

Long mission. Was awakened at 3 AM, took off at 0705 and landed 1515. Eight hours and 10 minutes. Okay my aching back! This is my 10<sup>th</sup> mission and 7<sup>th</sup> sortie

**1944 Monday, August 7**

10 and 11 missions, 7 sortie

To Blechhammer, Synthetic Oil Refinery, Germany

Take off 0705, bombs away 1128, landed 1525

Total time in air 8 hours, 15 minutes. Operation altitude 21,500 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

As easy as yesterday's raid was this one was 10 times as rough. It sort of looked as if they had our number today but we fooled them again. We collected four flak holes one of which was in the waste not more than 3 feet from where I was standing. We hit flak soon as we hit the Yugoslavia Coast. This was pretty unusual. I guess the main reason was we were only at 14,000 feet. It was only one flaking but they were aiming directly at us that is where we picked up most of our flak holes. I guess you could blame the lead navigator but then again he might not have known about it. When we got to the target it was pretty well obscured by smoke from smoke pots. Well, we dropped our bombs and then we started to hit the flak. It was heavy, intense and accurate. I was looking out of the waste window when all at once Yellow Nan's number 1 engine burst into flames. The force of the explosion which was a direct hit by flak flipped her over and she started into a spin. I followed her down until she passed out of sight underneath us. I didn't see any shoots open but the groups in back of us said there were 10 shoots. I saw another B-24 go down in flames from the group in back of us; 3 chutes opened and then the plane blew up into 1 million pieces. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> time I ever saw any 24's go down and it really does something to you. Yellow Nan's was flying on our right wing and it could have just as easily been us that got hit.

Looking back we were annoyed by fighters. Our Mastin upper gunner and nose gunner and our left waist gunner got a shot at 2 ME 109's that seemed to be making a pass at us, but they didn't come in very close. I saw two P 51s get a 109. He hit the ground and burst into flames. It sure is swell to see those boys as your escort. We had to keep on our toes though out of the trip as we were in enemy territory a long time. All in all it was pretty tough.



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[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 7 we flew again! This time our target was way up in Germany. We flew over Czechoslovakia today. Our target was the Blechhammer, Synthetic Oil Refineries. Our load was 10, 500 pound bombs. This refinery is in the process of making synthetic oil. We took off at 0705. We got over the target and bombs were away at 1128! We made a good bomb pattern and there was plenty of damage done.

There was really a flak alley!! The Germans threw everything they had at us, including the kitchen sink!!! We got a few holes in the ship, nothing serious.

We saw Yellow Nan go down! Number one engine was shot completely off and number two was on fire. She did a complete role, and went into a spin, Capt. Tudor managed to recover long enough for all the men to get out!! About 10 minutes after we left the target, we were hit by fighters! Four of them came in at us from 12 sliding down to nine, I, the nose gunner and top turret managed to get in some shots at them. They were out of range and changed their minds about coming in. They hung around for a while then our escort came and they took off!! After this, the rest was just routine flying. We got back to the base at 1525, a total of 8:20 flying time.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

WOW, what a day. Never again it says here. Took off 7:10am for Blechhammer, Germany. Briefed 422 guns but there must have been 2,200! Flak was heavy, intense and accurate. Y-N on our right wing got a direct hit, went down in a spin. Didn't see anyone get out but I am certainly hoping. We bombed synthetic oil refineries. We were in black about 10 minutes. After leaving the flak area we were jumped by ME 109's about seven in all. I saw one going down in flames with two P 51's on its tail. Plenty of fighter escorts about fifty P 51's and P 38's. Two ME 109's came in on a pursuit curve attacked from 11 o'clock high. I let them come in for a while to be sure they were not P 50's then when they were about a 200 yards I let hot lead go their way. They turned and fled, later a few P 38's were hot on their tail. It was definitely a hot and exciting mission. This sortie brings my total missions to 12 because it was a double credit and an eighth sortie

**1944 Tuesday, August 8**

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 8 August we were all set to take off on another long mission. However the weather closed in and the mission was called off.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

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We were awakened at 2:30 this morning for what was to be our third mission in a row, we were briefed, prepared equipment and even taxied to the runway when the mission was called off due to weather, and this raid would have been a long one to Ostweim Poland. I returned to my tent and logged much needed sack time! Aahhh!

**1944 Wednesday, August 9**

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 9 August we were briefed to go to Budapest. This time however, we were to go to Spain. In other words we took off with the rest of the formation. We had to stay with them for half an hour after we left the Italian coast. We were within sight of the Yugoslavia Coast when we turned back. Total time in the air 2:45.

**1944 Thursday, August 10**

12 mission, 8 sortie

To Ploesti Oil Filed and Refinery Rumania

Take off 0720, bombs away 1109, landed 1440

Total time in air 7 hours 20 minutes, operation altitude 23,600. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This was a pretty stiff single credit mission. 1<sup>st</sup> thing that went wrong was our interphone. It cut out on us. Of course me being the radioman it was my job to do something. Well I set up in emergency interphone with our command set. It is a very easy task. This was working swell until we got right over the target and then all of a sudden that went dead. It was a pretty ticklish situation as the bombardier has to know if the bomb bays are open and also has to tell someone when to close them then again if enemy fighters ever attacked us we wouldn't be able to tell the rest of the crew where they were. It worked very faintly after a while, but it was still kind of bad. Over the target we almost cracked into the ship next to us. We came within 5 feet. Then the flak started and boy did they throw it up. The flak of course was heavy, intense and accurate. They had about 128 guns firing at us. We gathered two flak holes which pretty damn good considering the stuff that they threw at us. One happened to hit number 3 engine and a rocker box which has something to do with the oil. In other words our engine started to throw oil. Our pilot and engineer decided to feather it. We were about 5 minutes away from the target when we feathered it. We stayed

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information for a pretty long time in 3 engines than the pilot decided to drop back and save fuel. You use more fuel to stay in formation with 3 engines than with 4. As it is used 2,300 gallons of fuel for 4 engines. Well we did sweat out our gas for a while but we made it all right. That flak is scaring me more each day. It really gets you especially when you hear it exploding aerial. You really can hear it and you sweat it out plenty till you are out of the flak area.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 10 August we were briefed to fly a mission to Ploesti!! It will be plenty rough they said, and they were not kidding. After our journey to the target we dropped our bombs in the worst flak we have ever seen yet!! It was heavy moderate and accurate. Our main objective was to bomb the installations there. This was the day everything seemed to not go right. Over the target our emergency Interpol failed over one of the worst targets in the gator and no Interphones! Rough! As we roll right our number three engine started throwing oil off the nose section. After clamped area I went on the flight deck to see what was wrong. I advised feathering the engine and did so. All the way back from the target we flew on three engines! All told our fuel consumption was 2,162 gallons. Not bad for three engine operation!! Yellow Yok in really good shape!! (That's' 0843). We took off at 0725 and landed at 1440 a trip of 7:15. All in all it was a pretty rugged mission.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Was awakened at 3:15 this morning (August 9th) and we were instructed to be at briefing at 4:10 at this time we learned we were to bomb Budapest again. However due to the fact that we were spares we went as far as Yugoslavia Coast and then came back to the base. It didn't bother me because we were not flying our own ship today had the nose Turner working very good condition on the ship. We did not get credit for this trip!

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, really got hit with a hot raid this morning. Went to Ploesti Rumania bombed the main oil refineries. Did a swell job too, black smoke was rising as high as 20,000 feet and a couple of big fires too! Flak was heavy, intense and accurate, however we only picked up one small hole in one of our side blisters! Hope we never have to go back there! This brings my number of missions to 13 and my sorties up to nine. Incidentally number three engine spring an oil leak over the target thought at first it was from flak, later forwarded account it wasn't. We feathered it and came home on three engines!

**15<sup>th</sup> Heavy Bombers Strike Ploesti Area**

MAAF HEADQUARTERS, Aug 10 - medium forces of 15<sup>th</sup> AAF liberators and fortresses, despite heavy smokescreens over the targets, today bombed military objectives in the Ploesti area of Rumania, the 13<sup>th</sup>

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attack at Ploesti by Italy-based bombers, an official announcement declared. The heavies were escorted by Mustangs and Lightning's. Included in the attacks was a raid by formation of liberators on an oil refinery and storage tanks 19 miles northwest of the city. 13 Allied aircraft were missing yesterday after widespread raids in Hungary by heavy bombers and low-level attacks over northern Italy by tactical aircraft.

**1944 Saturday, August 12**

13 mission, 9 sortie

To Sete military installations, southern France

Take off 0640, bombs away \_\_\_\_, landed 1520

Total time in air 8 hours 40 minutes. Operational altitude 16,000 feet, bomb load 10, 500 pounds.

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This as you can see was our 13<sup>th</sup> mission. Some people call 13 lucky, I think it is very lucky. The mission itself was a flop as we couldn't see our target and therefore didn't drop our bombs. I saw about 3 bursts of flak way out and that was all. We didn't hit any fighters either. It was about the easiest raid we pulled. Even easier than the Le Portet. We are pretty sure it had something to do with the invasion of southern France that we think is coming off pretty soon. On the way back we dropped our bombs over the water as something was wrong with the racks and we didn't want to take the chance of landing with them.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 12, we begin what we thought the softening up enemy beach in southern France! On this day, our target was Sete, France. Our particular objective was to bomb installations there. We took off at 0640 and proceeded. Mission was uneventful. There were absolutely no fighters or flak whatsoever!! For the first time we have been \_\_\_\_ couldn't fly in, that was no flak! That in of itself is amazing the one thing wrong with the whole mission was that we didn't drop our bombs!! We were in the air for 8:40. We landed at 1520.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

On August 11<sup>th</sup>, was briefed to bomb Sete France, but due to bad weather it was called off. On August 12 we took off where we left off yesterday, we bombed Sete France, that is we were over there, but we didn't drop our bombs because the target was not visible! Something big is cooking up that way got a

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feeling we will be back there many more times. Next few days will tell the story. Made my score to 14 missions and 10 sorties.

**1944 Monday, August 14**

14 mission, 10 sortie

To St. Tropez, Gun Installations, southern France

Take off 1225, bombs away 1638, landed 1945

Total time in air 7 hours 20 minutes, operation altitude 17,000 feet, bomb load 5, 1000 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was just about like yesterday. We dropped our bombs this time, but we didn't hit our target. It was sort of a bad break. Knew this mission was in direct support of our landing party or invasion forces. We saw a few large Comops that came from Corsica which were headed for the southern French coast. I hope those guns don't bother the boys much. It is a pretty hard job hitting gun installations from that high. No flak was encountered and neither were any fighters. I hope we can keep getting targets like that.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 14 August we hit the southern coast of France again! This time our target was gun installation at St. Tropez. Today it became a first that these missions were in direct support of our ground forces!! On the way to the target, he saw that convoy of troops from Corsica!! It sure was a wonderful sight to see and a wonderful feeling be helping those boys down there!!

We made our take off at 1225 and landed at 1945. The length of the mission was rewarded by site of our invading forces. I haven't written on this the past few days because we were warned that these operations were secret! We again had a target that had no fighters or flak! Two in a row that way is incredible!!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

August 13<sup>th</sup> was a day off and the first one in 7 days! On August 14 went to Sr. Troper, France yesterday prelude bombings for the invasion. Met with no flak or fighters, it was truly a milk run. This is my 15<sup>th</sup> mission and 11<sup>th</sup> sortie.

**1944 Tuesday, August 15**

15 mission, 11 sortie

To Donzere, Bridge across Rhine southern France

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Take off 08 25. Bombs away 1255. Landed 1720

Total time in air 8 hours 55 minutes. Operation altitude 13,200 feet. Bombs load 5, 10,000 pounds.

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

The invasion took place this morning as we thought it would. Funny thing as we know now was that they didn't encounter any opposition. It was lucky we missed our target again today as our own forces might be able to use that bridge to good advantage. We were supposed to knock it out so the Germans couldn't ship replacements down to southern France. At least it was supposed to hamper them anyway. Well we missed our target. Our bombs didn't drop when they were supposed to and landed way off. The others hit to the right of the bridge. Coming back we saw about 4 aircraft carriers that probably took place in the invasion. No flak or fighters were encountered in our mission. It was nice and easy.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 15, that invasion had taken place that morning!! The invasion coast was same coast we had been bombing!! Now at last it could be told! We had been softening and invasion coast. The 15<sup>th</sup> heavies helped make history!! Our target this day was at Donzere, France. Our primary target was a highway bridge over the Rhine River. The purpose in getting this bridge was to hinder the supplies along the invasion coast. We took off at 0845 after an uneventful flight we bombed our target. We didn't have any flak or fighting on the third day in succession!! That is amazing. On our way back saw a large convoy of supporting craft. There were several cruisers, destroyers and four aircraft carriers!!

When we were interrogated were told our forces had landed virtually unopposed!! Good deal!! We landed at 1750. The flight lasted 8 hrs. 30 mins.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Again we went to France, but why not today was D Day. Yep, the invasion. I've known it was coming for the last few days. Corsica was loaded with boats and troops and yesterday we spotted the invasion Armada on the way. Today it happened and wish great success. No opposition. We bombed the bridge at Donzere but missed completely. Lead ship goofed off went over the target at 145 MPH at 14,000 ft. That's N.G!! Again there was no flak or fighters. It is my 16<sup>th</sup> mission and 12 sortie.

**Powerful Assaults by MAAF**

**MAAF HEADQUARTERS**

August 15. As the almost unopposed air offensive continue throughout Tuesday and close support of Allied troops fighting in land from the beaches of southern France, fighter escorted liberators and

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fortresses of the 15<sup>th</sup> AAF loosed Tons of explosives on 6 highway bridges across the Rhine River between Avignon and Valence. The air task force commander of the operation reported to MAAF headquarters today that bombing of targets on the beaches and of coastal defenses had been most effective, and added, the air attacks in support of ground forces is on or ahead of schedule. Reports disclosed that bad weather hampered somewhat the early morning missions, but the skies cleared the afternoon giving the 15<sup>th</sup> heavies good visibility as they joined tactical aircraft and operations. Besides the 6 Rhine bridges at Valence, Bourge St. Andosol, Donzere, Le Tell and Pont St. Esprit - beach installations and the beach road leading to Frejus, near the mouth of the Argues River was heavily hit.

**1944 Friday, August 18**

16 mission, 12 sortie

To Ploesti oil refineries, Rumania

Take off 0640, n bombs away 1037, landed 1400

Total time in air 7 hours 20 minutes, operational altitude 25,600 feet. Bomb load 18, 500 lbs.

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was damn rough and that describes it. That flak was almost as thick as rain and of course we gathered our share of flak holes. Our bombardier had a pretty close shave today. A piece of flak came up through the nose and shattered glass all over him. It was close. There were a couple of NICs in the waste right near, some not to mention one in the right wing and one in the Bombay. Flak was classified heavy, intense and accurate. As you can see by the clipping we hit the target. That flak is really getting me scared and everyone else. We really sweat out that flak area. The bombardier got the "Purple Heart" as the glass was shattered in his eyes and he had to get them washed out.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 18 we went again awakened and in general prepared to go on another mission! This time we were told to go to Ploesti, flak alley itself!! This was really a messed up mission! There were seven possible targets to hit and we would not know which ones to hit until half hour before target time. We took off at 0640 and proceeded to climb to our operational altitude was the highest yet. 28,000 feet!!!

At 1000 we formed over our target - it was number five the Romanian oil refinery! We made our run then bombs away and rolled to the right. Flak over the target was heavy, intense and accurate!!

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After we left flak area we had pretty easy going. The trip was successful. Coming home and we landed at 1400.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

August 16<sup>th</sup>: the boys aren't to Germany today we had the day off. August 17<sup>th</sup>, stand down!!

August 18<sup>th</sup> Ploesti again. Won't we ever knock that place out? Guess not! We were awakened at 3:00 am. Ate breakfast and briefed. We took off at 6:40am and bombs away were at 10:37am. About 15 minutes into Yugoslavia we ran into moderate and accurate flak, was not briefed on that spot, a navigator in the ship ahead of us was killed took that ship's position when it went back to the field. As usual over the target flak was intense, heavy, and accurate. A piece of flak broke the bombardier's glass right below my turret and he was unharmed! We landed at 2 PM this was my 17<sup>th</sup> mission 13<sup>th</sup> sortie

**15 Heavies Return to Ploesti Targets**

MAAF HEADQUARTERS

Aug 18 - Strong forces of 15<sup>th</sup> AAF Liberators and Fortresses, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 24 hours, return to Ploesti, Rumania, today to pound oil installations there and at Campina, 19 miles to the northwest, according to an official announcement. A formation of Liberators also blasted the Alibuner Airdrome in Yugoslavia, near the Rumanian border. All of the heavies were escorted by fighters which carry out offensive sweeps in the target areas so no enemy aircraft appear to challenge the bombers. Though a smoke screen hung over the Ploesti objectives, most of the bombing was visual and good results were reported. Flak was intense. 20 heavy bombers and 4 fighters were listed as missing after yesterday's attacks on the Ploesti oil center and the Nis, Yugoslavia Airdrome.

**1944 Sunday, August 20**

17 and 18 mission, 13 sortie

To: Czechowice, Oil Refinery, Poland

Takeoff 0630, bombs away 1108, landed 1425

Total time in air 7 hours, 55 minutes. Operation altitude 21,000 feet, bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

Compared to our single credit mission at Ploesti this double credit was duck soup. They should reverse the priority on these targets. It was a comparatively easy mission. The flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate. We didn't collect any flak holes at all which is a miracle in itself. We had a very good escort of



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P 51's and didn't even see any enemy aircraft. If we could get some more like this we would finish up in no time. The target was lit pretty well.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the morning of 20 August we were to fly again! This time our target was Czechoslovakia, Poland the oil refinery there. We took off at 0630 in proceeded on course. This is the second time over Czechoslovakia!! After an uneventful trip up there we dropped our bombs. We rolled left and got away from there. There was absolutely no flak over the target. There was some off to our right but none the target. \_\_\_\_\_ Over the same route we went out over and landed in the field at 1425 this mission took 7 hours 55 minutes. All and all it was a pretty easy mission!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

August 19<sup>th</sup> Stand Down! August 20<sup>th</sup>: What a way to spend our "day of rest." We were up 2:45am and took off for Czechowice, Poland at 6:25am. Incidentally it is only about 100 miles from the Russian front. We hit the oil refineries there. Did a good job too. Much to my surprise, the flak was light and an accurate. This was a double credit mission ringing my score up to 19 missions and 14 sorties.

**New Oil Installations Plastered by MAAF**

MAAF Headquarters Aug 30 Three large oil production plants in Polish Silesia and Slovakia never before bombed by MAAF aircraft were sought out today by medium forces of escorted 15<sup>th</sup> AAF heavy bombers which also attacked a fighter assembly plant in Hungary. Very few enemy interceptors were observed by the Liberators and Fortresses which blasted plants at Czechowice, 45 miles west, and Oswiecim, 30 miles west of Cracow, another at Dubova, in Slovakia. The three installations were said to be capable of producing an aggregate 227,500 barrels of oil per year.

**1944 Monday, August 21**

19 mission, 14 sortie

To Nis Air Drome, Yugoslavia

Takeoff 0705, bombs away 0958, landed 1200

Total time and air 4 hours 55 minutes, operational at altitude 19,000 feet. Bomb load 36, 20 lb. fragmented bombs

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[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This was one of the shortest missions we ever pulled and what I liked about it most was there was hardly any flak. We did run into a little before we got to the target but we were the 1<sup>st</sup> group over so we missed most of it. The target seemed to be well plastered but you can't tell until you see the pictures. The flak over the target was very scant and inaccurate. I hope these easy missions keep up but you have to pull some rough ones

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 21 again we were to fly! We were awakened, briefed and all that sort of thing. This was to be the shortest mission to date. Our target was the Airdrome at Nis, Yugoslavia. We took off at 0705 and after hitting one flak area we came over the target. There was no flak or enemy fighters. After our bombs away and we came back to the field we landed at 1200.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Milk run today. Bombed the Airdrome at Nis Hungary. Met up with light and an accurate flak. Took off at 7:10 AM at 12 PM just in time for dinner. I now have 20 missions and 15 sorties

**Liberators Hammer Airfield in Balkans**

MAAF HEADQUARTERS Aug 21 - Two airdromes in Hungary and Yugoslavia today through this attention of the 15<sup>th</sup> AAF who sent Mustang-escorted Liberators to Hajdu Bostomeny, 120 miles northeast of Budapest, and to Nis. After fragmentation bombs covered both fields, escorting fighters strafed the areas, at one place making 7 straight passes at ground objectives. Only one Liberator group reported citing a few enemy fighters, who refused to give battle. 3 heavies and 3 other aircraft were lost yesterday during operations which cost the enemy 5 locomotives, 36 vehicles, 20 railcars into barges among the damage done by tactical Air Force.

**1944 Wednesday, August 23**

20 and 21 mission, 15 sortie 1sdt Cluster Air Medal

To: Markersdorf Air Drome, Germany

Takeoff 0755, bombs away 1231, landed 1515

Total time in air 7 hours 20 minutes. Operation altitude 23,400, bomb load 10, 500 pound

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

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These last 5 missions including this one have really been easy. We haven't encountered any flak or any fighters. Today's raid was in a very dangerous area. It was only 35 miles from Vienna which is the toughest target on the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force. In fact our 1<sup>st</sup> alternate target was Vienna proper. It was really a swell mission. The target seemed to be lit pretty well. I just hope the missions keep up like they are. Our escort was very good. They were P 51s

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 23 August, we were scheduled to fly again. We were awakened and briefed as usual! Today our target was to be at Markersdorf, Germany. Our specific target was the Airdrome installation. This particular airdrome was 35 miles southwest of Vienna, Austria. Vienna - land of the venise waltz and flak! On this particular mission, we were extremely fortunate we didn't meet any enemy fighters and there was no flak! Happy day! We took off at 0755, our bombs were away at 1231 and we returned to our base at 1515. All in all it was an easy mission. Total time today 7:20. Total combat time to date 111:50!! All this in two days short of a month actual flying!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

August 22 was a day off. August 23<sup>rd</sup> had a double credit mission to Markersdorf Germany. 35 miles from Vienna. Ouch! To our surprise it turned out to be a milk run, no flak, no fighters! Good deal! Now have 22 missions, 16 sorties

**1944 Thursday, August 24**

22 and 23 mission, 16 sortie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cluster Air Medal

To Pardubice Oil Refinery Czechoslovakia

Takeoff 0805, bombs away 1219, landed 1525

Total time in the air 7 hours 20 minutes. Operation altitude 22,600. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This raid was pretty rough it started out to be just like the two previous ones but it wasn't. We hit the target and didn't encounter any flak whatsoever. It was just after we came off the target that things started to happen. We were keeping our eye pretty much open and all of a sudden we saw about 20 enemy fighters come in on the lot in back of us everyone started shooting at them. They got two B-24's and killed 2 waist gunners in another one. They peeled off to the right and under us and that is when I opened fire on the one that was closest to us. I poured about 200 rounds of ammunition at him and he

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started to smoke. The navigator saw the pilot bailout and then he saw the ship catch fire. The ball gunner also claimed he got a fighter. Altogether there were 53 claims made on fighters and of course not that many were shot down. It is very hard to tell who gets the plane as everyone in the formation is firing at them. They just put everything together and give the credit to the one they think most probably got it. The planes just made one year. The escort we had must have been fighting some other ships and while they were doing that these babies attacked us no sooner did they go away then we ran into some flak. That is when I really started to sweat. We were off course and that was what did it. We got a little bit too close to the town of Styre. A ship in the group and back of us got hit direct and it went down on fire. I didn't see anyone get out of it either. It was really someone's mistake and that means the lead navigator those boys really lost their lives for nothing. After all this happened the rest of the mission was peaceful. Incidentally fighters were Fold Wolfe 190's . I did get credit for the plane which adds another cluster to my air medal which we haven't gotten as yet.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

24 August, we flew to meet the enemy again. Everything this morning we had excellent news! Romania surrendered to Russia! That meant that we probably would never have to bomb Ploesti again. That, at best, is our hope! Today we were to bomb an oil refinery at Pradubice Czechoslovakia. Our bomb load was 10, 500 pound bombs. We took off at 0800 and after an uneventful trip out we took our bomb run and dropped our bombs there was no flak at the target in the oil refinery was well plastered. On our way home we were jumped by about 20 fighters! We were just a little north east of Styre, Austria when they hit! Just after they left, we were hit by flak from Styre! When the fighters made their pass, they shot up Black H quite a bit. The number three and four engines were out, and the right wing was in shreds! Just a little bit later, it went down. Dannebl was the pilot, and Thibodeau was the engineer. I saw eight shoots open and at interrogation, it was reported that all the shoots opened! I hope so! All those men are my friends!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

We took a long trip to Pradubice Czechoslovakia. Bombed the oil refineries there, did a bang up job too. No flak at the target and did we catch hell coming back. We were jumped by 20 ME 109's and FW 190's. I saw an ME 109 go down right next to my ship. They all came in from 6 o'clock high so I didn't get a chance to fire at any. Hard luck! We also ran into heavy, intense and accurate flak at Styre Austria. Lead navigator got us off course shouldn't have hit that place! It was a double credit sortie gives me 24 missions in 17 sorties.

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**1944 Friday, August 25**

24 and 25 Mission, 17 sortie

To Prostavov Air Drome, Czechoslovakia

Takeoff 0655, bombs away 1128, landed 1500

Total time and air 8 hours 5 minutes. Operational altitude 19,500 feet, bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was a darn sight better than yesterday's. It was about in the same area. In fact it was the place that they believed the fighters came from that attacked us. There was no flak at the target and it was pretty well lit. We had our eyes open for fighters but didn't see any. We heard later that they hit another group. Hati (sp?) What they do know as they haven't the great Air Force they used to. We didn't encounter any flak along the route which was a great relief to me. It also marked the halfway mark. From now on we start counting down. I hope the rest are as easy as today was. Our escort was darn good.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 25 August, we flew again! This time our target was and airdrome about 50 miles south of our target yesterday. The airdrome, was located south east of Prfosteyou, Czechoslovakia. We flew about exactly the same route on the day before, and nothing happened, just as yesterday. We took off at 0655 and landed at 1445. There was no flak or fighter engagements.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Went back to Czechoslovakia again today. Expected the same as yesterday and to our surprise it was an easy one no flak, no fighters. We went to the airdrome at Prfosteyou! Brings the total up to 26 missions in 18 sorties

**1944 Sunday, August 27**

26 and 27 Mission, 18 sortie

To Blechhammer, Oil Refinery, Germany

Takeoff 0730, bombs away 1215, landed 1550

Total time in air 8 hours 20 minutes. Operation altitude 22,600 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

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[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

When we hit this target it seemed as if we were back in the big ones and we were. It was as tough if not tougher than the last time we were at Blechhammer. That plaque was really rough. You could hear the concussions of almost every shell. I was by the camera hatch and was praying for all I was worth. The navigator got hit by a piece of flak it just scraped his jaw. It cut the strap of his oxygen mask and glanced off. Then one shell really hit close so close that our master (top) turret man was ready to bail out. It hit right under our right wing and made holes in our right rear Bombay and the command deck. That is where it caused the most damage. It severed an oxygen line and ripped a large hole in an oxygen cylinder one piece knocked the heck out of one of the turning units for the liaison let. Another knocked out the UHF dynamometer which made that set in operative. We collected somewhere near 15 flak holes of good size. If I ever complete 50 missions I will consider myself darned lucky. It is all a big game of chance. We were lucky today and didn't encounter any enemy fighters but we think we saw about three. That flak 1<sup>st</sup> was the worst occurrence of the day and it really was close as it filled the waist of the ship with smoke. The target thank goodness was well lit. Our escort was pretty good also. The navigator got the Purple Heart for being hit.

**MAAF Heavies Hit Silesian Oil Plants**

MAAF HEADQUARTERS, Aug 27 – Strong forces of 15<sup>th</sup> AAF heavy bombers today attacked to synthetic oil refineries at Blechhammer, Silesia, and real communications in northern Italy. 1<sup>st</sup> reports were that the Blechhammer raid was successful despite a smokescreen which covered the target.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 27 we flew again. This time our target was the Blechhammer South synthetic oil refinery! It was going to be a rough one, we knew! And it was! We took off at 0730 and proceeded to make up our formation. We formed, and flew up on course. We reached the target and saw virtually a wall of flak!! For approximately five minutes we were in the heaviest most accurate and intense flak we have ever seen!!! We were in flak for quite a while before bombs away! After bombs away we rolled to the right. When we were almost clear of flak, we received almost a direct hit! The burst was about 2 feet away from the trailing edge of the wing and 2 feet away from the left side of the fuselage! The flak came through the fuselage up by the command deck! It went through the fuselage and UHF transmitter and viewing a turning unit, and oxygen line in a large oxygen bottle! When the shell exploded, the whole waste became filled with smoke! I thought the ship was going to blow up!! Fortunately there was no real damage done.

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All told, we picked up about 20 holes! After that we had an uneventful journey home we landed at 1550, just 8:20 after we had left home!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

August 26<sup>th</sup>: Stand down! August 27<sup>th</sup>. Oh my aching back. What a day. We went to Blechhammer, Germany!! We hit the South oil refineries! Flak was heavy, intense and accurate. For a while I thought we were goners, they had our altitude and range. The ship was peppered with black holes. Howie got hit in the chin by piece of flak no harm done. This brings the score up to 28 missions in 19 sorties

**1944 Tuesday, August 29**

28 and 19 Mission, 19 sortie

To Moravska Ostrava Marsh Yards, Czechoslovakia

Takeoff 0715, bombs away 1116, landed 1450

Total time in air 7 hours 35 minutes, operation altitude 23,500, bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This raid was considerably easy if you compare it to the last one. We didn't encounter any enemy aircraft even though our cover or escort wasn't so good. When we got to the target it was pretty well covered by clouds and therefore it was hard to see if we hit the target or not. Some damage was done we saw a couple of fires. The flak could almost be classified heavy, moderate and an accurate. It was an accurate as they couldn't see us too well in their radar was screwed up by the tinsel that was thrown out. That is paper (silver) which they used to wrap chewing gum in. They come in this strip and show up on the radar as planes. All in all it wasn't such a bad grade and it makes number 29.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On August 29 we were awakened early to fly again. This time we were to bomb the Moravska Ostrava Marsh Yards, Czechoslovakia. We took off at 0715 and after an uneventful journey up we dropped our bombs at 1112. At the target I was operating the large camera in the ship, consequently I didn't see any flak at all. There was flak however but it was beneath and to the right of us. After an uneventful trip home, we landed at 1450, 7 hrs. and 55 minutes flight.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

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August 28<sup>th</sup> Day off. August 29<sup>th</sup>. We went back to Czechoslovakia today. This time to Moravska Ostrava marshaling yards. Took off at 7:25 and bombs were away at 11:12am. We landed at 14:50. The raid was easy, flak was heavy, moderate and inaccurate! 30 missions in 20 sorties

**1944 Friday, September 1**

30 Mission, 20 Sortie

To Szony Marshaling Yards, Hungary

Takeoff 0725, bombs away 1103, landed 1355

Total time in air 6 hours 30 minutes. Operation altitude 19,500 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This one wasn't bad at all. We had one exciting moment in our tail gunner (Junior) really got scared. When we hit the target area there was a box of 24s above us with Bombay's open and bombs not dropped. We sweated it out for a while but everything turned out okay. Junior said he was so scared that the flak didn't bother him. Most of the flak was out of range so it was okay. It was classified heavy, moderate and inaccurate. The target was well lit so the bombardier says. No fighters were encountered and our cover was pretty good but not too good. They were striking some airfield somewhere. All in see it was a short and pretty easy mission compared to some of the others we've had.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 1 September we were briefed to fly again. This time our target was at Szajol, Hungary. The target we were to hit was a Marshaling Yard. After the usual briefing about our target, we took off at 0715. After an uneventful flight to the target, we dropped our bombs. At the target there was some flak. It could be classified as scant, moderate, and accurate. However this day we had something else to contend with. The group leader rallied us right over the target of the 460<sup>th</sup> group. They were about 1000 feet above us there we are, directly beneath the bombs of one of our ships. We were told later that the bombs were dropping all around our plane!! A most uncomfortable feeling! After an uneventful trip home, we landed at 1350. On this mission we didn't see any fighter planes and the flak was very moderate. All told, it was a completely easy mission!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

August 30<sup>th</sup>: mission to Ferra Italy called off on account of weather. August 31<sup>st</sup>. Stand Down.



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**1944 Tuesday, September 5**

31 Mission, 21 Sortie

To Spajol Railroad Bridge, Hungary

Takeoff 0705. Bombs away 1045. Landed 1335

Total time in air 6 hours, 30 minutes. Operation altitude 15,500 feet. Bomb load 5, 1000 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was considerably easy. We had excellent fighter cover which was probably the reason we didn't see or encounter any fighters. We encountered a little flak just before we hit the target, but it didn't come too close to us, which was dam good. It was a pretty low altitude to bomb from but since there wasn't much flak it was okay. You could feel the concussions of the hits though as the 1000 pounds pack an awful wallop. Couldn't tell if the target was actually hit as the smoke from the bombs secured the view.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 5th September, we were awakened and briefed again. This time our target was a railroad bridge at Szob, Hungary. The general aim of target seems to be lines of communication. On this day we took off at 0705 and after an uneventful journey to the target, we made our bomb's away at the target. We had moderate, and accurate, heavy flak! After the target we had an uneventful trip back to the base. Landed at 1335, after a flight of 6:30 it was a pretty easy mission.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

We went to Spajol Hungary, bombed marshaling yards. Did bang up job too! Milk run. Gives me 31 missions and 21 sorties.

**1944 Wednesday, September 6**

32 Mission, 22 Sortie

To Nyiregyhaza Marshaling Yards, Hungary

Takeoff 0705. Bombs away 1112. Landed 1425

Total time in air 7 hours 20 minutes, operation altitude 16,200 feet, bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

Nothing exceptional about this mission only I hope they keep up this way. No flak no fighters were seen. We were leading the box today and we were flying with a Captain instead of our regular copilot. This was

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to see how Lt. Lowit our pilot was flying lead ship. They want to see if he can be a box leader. If he is we will probably fly once every 4 missions. That isn't too good. We had a little trouble today. We couldn't get the hydraulic system. Must have frozen. We finally did get it up by using the bomb hoist.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 6th of September, we were briefed again. In keeping with our last few missions, we were hitting lines of communication once more. This day our target was Ntircymaza, Hungary. Marshaling Yards to be exact. We took off at 0705 and landed at 1425. Flight of 7:20. This might well have been practice mission, because no fighters or flak were encountered! This is what is called a milk run.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

September 2, 3, 4 were stand down and days off. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, bombed the Szob railroad yards today, south of Budapest. Met very little opposition, very moderate, heavy and inaccurate flak! That was on the bomb run! No flak over the target. This was my 32<sup>nd</sup> mission and 22<sup>nd</sup> sortie.

**MAAF Continuing Assault on Balkans**

MAAF HEADQUARTERS. Sept 6 - lines along which the Germans are moving northward from below the Danube River and important objectives in Hungary and Nazi held sections of Yugoslavia were bombed today one formation of Liberators bombed a concentration of enemy troops, tanks, and other vehicles jammed up in the small town of Leskovac, 140 miles southeast of Belgrade Yugoslavia. Early reports indicate that not a single enemy aircraft was encountered today. Near only 3 of the many targets attacked was there any flak. Flying Fortresses and Mustangs of an all Negro fighter group bombed the Ocales rail yards 125 miles southeast of Budapest, Hungary, near the Hungary Rumanian border. Good results were reported.

Liberators and Lightning's attacked the bridge just outside Belgrade over the Sava River and the rail yards at Novi Sad, 45 miles northwest of the same city another group bombed Nyirecymaza rail yards 120 miles north east of Budapest, on the main line from Rumania to Hungary and Central Europe.

**1944 Sunday, September 10**

33 and 34 Mission. 23 Sortie

To Vienna (South) Diesel Works, Austria

Takeoff 0700. Bombs away 1012. Landed 1355

Total time in air 6 hours 55 minutes. Operational altitude 20,500 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

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[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

I don't have to say anything as all you have to do is look at the heading and you know it was rough all the way over to the target. We had a pretty good cloud coverage and even when we hit the target the coverage wasn't bad (about 6/10) but it wasn't enough and I guess I died 1000 deaths as I was practically scared to death. We collected a total of 11 flak holes but, I thought we never would get out of that flak area. We were in flak a total of 12 minutes and of course it was heavy, intense and accurate. One piece of flak came within a foot of me and went out the right waste window. If Johnny our engineer wasn't at the camera hatch with a camera he probably would have got hit. One of the bombardier's was killed today. He was from a crew that we know. He got it right through the chest. A plane got a dead hit in front of us and came pretty close to hitting us on the way down our nose turret got a few hits in it but our nose gunner George wasn't hurt. It's kind of glad we are going to Capri for a rest after this mission. I need it. I hope we don't have to go over Vienna anymore. We couldn't see if we hit the target or not and probably didn't. Luckily no enemy fighters were encountered or seen in our escort was pretty damn good.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, we were briefed once more. This day we were to go on a rough one! And it was rough. I mean rough! Our target was the Diesel Works, located in South West Vienna Austria! Vienna, the word usually associated with waltzes and beauty, yet it struck fear into the heart of every man in the briefing room! It is without a doubt the roughest target in all of Europe! There is a perpetual coverage of 10/10 proportion even if there isn't a cloud in the whole sky! The coverage is flak! The heaviest, most intense and the most accurate of all flak! We took off at 0700, and after usual forming. We started climbing on the course. When the target was cited, it was within a vertical wall of flak. Our Bombay's were open, we were on our bomb run! For an incredibly long time, it seemed, we were flying straight and level for the run. It seemed an eternity before the word bombs away was sounded! For 7 ½ minutes we were in that flak! Those were the longest minutes of our lives! After we rolled off the target, we were in the clear. The return journey home was very uneventful! No more flak or fighters were encountered. We landed at 1355 after sweating out a mission of 6:55! Home again, thank God!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

We bombed Nyirecymaza Hungary, a marshaling yard, hit it solid, scant, heavy accurate flak. 33<sup>rd</sup> Mission and 23<sup>rd</sup> sortie

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**Vienna Oil Targets Blasted by MAAF**

MAAF HEADQUARTERS Sept 10 - resuming attacks on strategic targets, medium forces of escorted 15<sup>th</sup> AF heavy bombers today attacked Germany's oil supplies, striking successfully at oil refineries and other objectives in the Vienna area. Good bombing was reported by Flying Fortress crewmen in the raid on the LeBau and Nova Schwechat refineries about 7 miles southeast of Vienna, where intense flak was met. Mustangs and Lightning's supplied the escort. The Nova Schwechat refineries had been put out of action on June 26 but reconnaissance planes picked up signs of repairs. Today's raid was called a "policing" operation. Lobau was last attacked on August 22. Both refineries use oil from Vienna basin. Liberators arriving in the area shortly after the Fortresses found the targets overcast and continued their bombing by instrument. Anti-aircraft was intense, but no enemy aircraft was engaged. Other Liberators attacked the harbor at Trieste, Italy, with good results and slight flak reported. Mustang and Lightning's escorted the Liberator formations. Some Mustangs which gave route cover for the Fortresses were able to strafe an airfield in Hungary, destroying several aircraft on the ground.

**1944, September 11**

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On September 11, we left for a week at rest! And we sure needed it! A wonderful week on Capri. After we returned from Capri we had quite a long time of enforced idleness. The weather was pretty poor. Our next mission was flown on 4<sup>th</sup> of October.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

September 7, 8, 9, 10 were stand down days off. On September 10 we really got a tough one to start this week with. We went to Vienna. Right over the city itself. Bombed a diesel engine works. The flak was the heaviest I've ever encountered. Intense, accurate and heavy. They really threw that stuff up at us. Rugged! A ship from Abel Box got a direct hit and went down a few hundred feet in front of us. Flak hit my turret, a piece of metal deflected the flak but the glass flew all over including my right eye. Had it cleaned out by Doc O'Hara. A couple more planes went down but not from our group. We were damn lucky! No fighters. This is my 35<sup>th</sup> mission at 24<sup>th</sup> sortie

**1944 Wednesday, October 4**

35 Mission, 24 Sortie

To Munich Marshalling Yards, Germany

Takeoff 0740. Bombs away -. Landed 1350

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Total time in air 6 hours 10 minutes. Operation altitude 24,000 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was supposed to be a double credit, but since we didn't get to the target we only got single credit we were about 10 minutes away from the target and one supercharger went out on us then another one went out. We couldn't keep up as once we were flying lead we had to drop out and turned back. We didn't like this as we were pretty well in enemy territory and there was a good chance of getting jumped by fighters. AP 38 picked us up and escorted us for a while and when he left we got a P 51 for a while. We were lucky and didn't run into any fighters and we had a readership and didn't have any Sperry ball turret. The reason we got credit for a single was that we were so deep in enemy territory. It was the 1<sup>st</sup> mission we have flown since we came back from Capri. We almost flew about 3 times but weather held us back.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

This time we were scheduled to go to Munich Germany. The target was the main marshaling yards. This day we had an early return. We lost number one and three superchargers.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

It's been a long time since we completed a mission. September 10 to be exact. Due to bad weather and engine trouble we never got over the target! Today we got close to it, we were going to Munich Germany, got about 30 minutes from Munich when the supercharger on one and three engines conked out so we had an early return, however they gave us credit for one mission. I now have 25 sorties and 36 missions.

**Weather Lifts, 15<sup>th</sup> Heavies Hit Munich**

MAAP HEADQUARTERS Oct 4. The 15<sup>th</sup> AF pulled out of a bad weather forced vacation of 8 days' duration today to strike with strong forces of heavy bombers to rail yards in Munich Germany, and at rail points of the Brenner line and other lines leading into Italy. Crewmen reported good coverage at Munich.

**1944 Saturday, October 8**

36 and 37 Mission, 25 Sortie 3<sup>rd</sup> Cluster Air Medal

To Ersekuvar Marshalling Yards, Hungary

Take off 1015. Bombs Away 1407. Landed 1328

Total time in air 7 hours 13 minutes. Operation altitude 16,600 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

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This mission was a nice easy double and I only hope the rest are is easy. We didn't have our ball gunner (Jack) as he didn't get back from pranking around in town. He might get into trouble over it. We had to fly a 9 man crew as there was no one else available. I flew the tail, our nose gunner (George) flew the waste, our tail gunner (Junior) flew the ball and the navigator (Howie) flew the nose turret. The target was really plastered. We were pretty lucky pulling this milk run as a few groups had to go to Vienna and that is rough. Our escort was pretty rotten and it is lucky we didn't get attacked by fighters. This mission also gave us another cluster to the Air Medal

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On this day we were briefed again for a new mission. Today we were to hit the Ersekuejvar Marshalling Yards, Hungary. We had a late takeoff at 1000 in the morning. After the uneventful trip up we hit the target at 1407. Our ball gunner flunked off today. He went to town, and didn't show up for the mission. As a crew we were all sardued (sp?) up. Our navigator flew nose gunner, the new man flew right waste, the right waste flew tail, and the tail gunner flew the ball. If we'd have been hit by fighters, we'd have been SOL! However, it was a milk run. No flak and no fighters! We could see Vienna, and the plane attacking that place were in flak, but solid. I was glad we didn't have to go there! We landed at 1730.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Bombed the marshaling yards at Ersekuejvar, Hungary. We did not have any flak or fighters, but could see enough of it over Vienna were some other groups prompt. We flew nine man crew I took over the waste position. This my 38<sup>th</sup> mission at 26 sortie.

**1944 Tuesday, October 10**

38 Mission 26 Sortie

To San Dona Di Piave R R Bridge Italy

Takeoff 0800. Bombs away - . Landed 1430

Total time in air 6 hours 30 minutes. Operation altitude 13,000 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This raid was primarily to cut the supply lines to northern Italy. When we got to the target it was completely covered by clouds and we couldn't drop our bombs. It was too small of a target to hit with Pathfinder so we just didn't hit it. We had to bring our bombs back. We saw some flak but it was way out

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and no harm was done. We didn't think we were going to credit for the mission, but we did. I was glad of it as submissions are coming hard now and slow.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 10 October we were briefed to hit the San Dona Di Piave Italy railroad bridge. We took off at 0800 and landed at 1430 a flight of 6:30. Which might well have been a practice mission. We didn't drop our bombs because of the 10/10 overcast over the target and we couldn't find it. There was no flak, no fighters!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

We had a real picnic today. We were supposed to bomb a bridge at San Dona Di Piave Italy. When we arrived over the target it was entirely secured by heavy clouds! So we returned without dropping our bombs! We got credit for the mission anyhow I now have 39 missions and 27 sorties

**1944 Tuesday, October 12**

39 Mission, 27 Sortie

To Bologna Supply Depot, N Italy

Takeoff 0705. Bombs away 1130. Landed 1320

Total time in air 6 hours 15 minutes. Operation altitude 20,500. Bomb load 20, 100 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was another to northern Italy, but in direct support of the ground forces. That is one mission I like to fly. If we can make it easier for the boys on the ground that makes me feel better. We were just in back of the German lines. We ran into some flak, but it wasn't too bad. It scared the heck out of me as it is the 1<sup>st</sup> time that we ran into flak since Vienna and that is a long time ago. I don't think we hit the target as well as we could have, but we did a little good. We didn't have any escort and I guess we didn't need them as we didn't encounter any enemy aircraft. I wouldn't mind finishing the rest of my missions with some of these easy targets.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 12 October, we were briefed to hit a supply depot at Bologna Italy. This day, we were helping the boys on the ground. We were briefed on 52 heavy guns, but there were 73 guns there! However, flak was only moderate heavy, accurate. It was a relatively easy mission!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

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On October 11 we were scheduled to fly but the schedule was changed and as a result stand out! On October 12<sup>th</sup> the gang and myself to the little job on the fighting front in northern Italy. Our target was the city of Yanks 10 miles from Bologna. We bomb some storehouses outside of town. Went in at 20,000 feet caught moderate heavy and accurate flak. Got one hole in our horizontal stabilizer! Well I'm on the last stretch now. I have 40 patients and 28 sorties. I pray the next 10 easy once. I'm anxious to get through now guess I'm getting soft! Yeah man.

**1944 Friday, October 13**

40 and 41 Mission, 28 Sortie

To Blechhammer South Oil Refinery, Germany

Takeoff 0700. Bombs away 1119. Landed 1525

Total time in air 8 hours 25 minutes. Operation altitude 23,100 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

In spite of the date we were darned lucky. Blechhammer is of course a rough target but we didn't do too badly this time. We were flying the lead of Dog Box, but so many of Baker Box had to turn back that they broke up that box and we took its place. It was a better position to go over the target in. Our squadron wasn't so lucky though as we lost 2 planes one with all its crew. It crash landed on Vis killing all 10 men. The other went down over the target and some chutes were seen. These are the 1<sup>st</sup> ships we lost since August 7. We found the target obscured by smoke when we got there, but I think we done some damage. The flak of course was heavy intense and accurate, but we didn't have them popping around us like it usually does. We got away with about 2 flak holes. This target was a damn high priority rating as it produces a lot of oil. And since Ploesti has been taken, the Germans our counting on it a lot. I just hope that we don't have to go back there too often. I would like to hit about 9 easy milk runs and finish up.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, we were briefed to fly again. Our target was one of the hardest of all Europe! Blechhammer South Oil Refinery, Germany - one of the last large oil production areas in the Reich. We took off at 0700 and proceeded to the target. The trip up was uneventful that is until target time. At the target the flak was intense, accurate and heavy! After the target all was peaceful again - until the lead navigator had is head up and looked! He steered us into two flak areas. Luckily, these weren't any planes lost because of this nation point over the target we lost one ship, Yellow V. That's the first crew we have



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lost since August 7 and that crew was also lost over Blechhammer. After those unexpected flak areas, the mission was completed with comparative ease and we reached our base at 1525 a mission of 8:25.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, we were briefed to fly again. This time our target was a return engagement of the day before – Blechhammer. That's really rough especially the position flew in Easy 11. However the weather closed in and we couldn't form up so the mission was canceled. Good deal!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

October 13<sup>th</sup>, Friday: today we on one of the toughest targets in Europe. Blechhammer Germany. Rough!! We were lucky however and the flak didn't bother us too much. However "Poker" force caught hell, lost two ships. We were in Able force. This gave me 42 missions at 29 sorties.

October 14<sup>th</sup>: what a surprise we got when we went to briefing this morning. We were going back to Blechhammer again the identical target! Ouch! I prayed for something to come up so that the mission would be canceled. We took off and flew around for three hours and 15 minutes. We are trying to form up but whether moved in on us. Cumulus clouds etc. So the mission was canceled! Was I ever happy!

October 15<sup>th</sup> stand down

**1944 Monday, October 16**

42 and 43 Mission, 29 Sortie

To St. Valentine, Tank Works, Austria

Takeoff 0700. Bombs Away 1126. Landed 1435

Total time in air 7 hours 35 minutes. Operation altitude 22,500 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was pretty rough. It seems there aren't any easy targets left. This mission was around the Munich area. The weather wasn't too good as we liked as there was a lot of cloud coverage. We didn't love much of the escort so we were on our toes ready for fighters but we were lucky and didn't see any. When we hit the target it was pretty well covered but they threw up plenty of flak. One piece came right through the pilot's windshield and hit him right in the shoulder, but the flak suit stopped it luckily and he didn't get hurt. I guess we were just lucky. We gathered a few flak holes, but nothing happened to do any damage to the ship only 7 to go now.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

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On the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> October, we were to fly again. We were briefed, etc. target was a tank factory at St. Valentine Austria. We took off at 0700 and proceeded on our way. The whole trip was blown with a 10/10 under cast. In the target area we hit flak. I.A.H. but good! A piece of flak came through the pilot's windshield and hit him in the shoulder. Fortunately, force of the flak was expended and no arm came to the Skipper! Thank the Lord! Lead navigator must have had his head up and locked, because he took us over the flak at Styrz. We had an easy trip home and landed at 1500. A trip of eight hours.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Today was a PIP, went up to St. Valentin Austria. We are briefed for 26 guns, but we caught about 100 at the target. Weather was bad, ran into heavy clouds and fog after the rally also flak from Styrz. It was rough!! I now have 44 missions and 30 sorties.

**1944 Tuesday, October 17**

44 and 45 Mission, 30 Sortie

To Vienna, South Ordinance Plant Austria

Takeoff 0817 bombs away 1151. Landed 1538

Total time in air 7 hours 21 minutes. Operation altitude 22,200 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

All I can say for this mission is that it was like a nightmare. Today Wally are copilot flew regular pilot for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. The Skipper has 48 and if he can he'll try and wait till we catch up so we can finish together. We had one of the new pilots fly as copilot to break him in and boy you must love to get broken in. 1<sup>st</sup> thing that happened was number 4 engine going out on us. That was pretty rough because it was hard as hell to climb on 3 engines. We had to drop out of the box to do it. Then we couldn't keep up so we had to drop our bombs. The reason we didn't turn back was we would be duck soup for a couple of fighters. We decided we would stick with the formation. It seems kind of stupid to go over all that flak without any bombs but that was the best thing to do as it would be taking quite a chance we went back by ourselves. Just before we dropped all our bombs our interphone went out and that was really bad. No one could understand anybody and back in the waste we didn't know what was going on. All this time we were flying by ourselves with the formation in front of us a little and off to one side. The Navigator didn't know where we were as his compass went out and the vision was completely obscured by clouds. We set the emergency interphone up but it wasn't very good either just about this time we hit the target area and it seems like all hell broke loose. I was taking chaff out of the camera latch and they are below us was Vienna

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and here we are right in the middle of town. The clouds just broke where we hit the target and boy were they throwing flak up. It was terrific. We weren't supposed to go right over the middle of town but the navigators were off a little on account of the cloud coverage. All this time we weren't in our right position but I guess we are lucky as the box we were in lost 2 ships. One of the ships took over our position. 2 of the boxes that went down over the target had 48 and 49 mission and that's would have been there last mission. I guess you can't rest until you get 50 in. Coming back we sweat out our gas but we came home okay. Wally really did a swell job of piloting. We were in flak 18 minutes.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On 17 October, we were to fly again! This time our target was Vienna Austria! The South Ordinance Depot! We knew it was going to be rough and it was. We took off at 0800 and proceeded on our way. At 1102 hour number four supercharger gave out and we had to drop out of the formation. Before this our interphone became inoperative, and the emergency interphone was poor! After attempting to determine the trouble, I had to give up whatever it was it wasn't inside the ship! Our target time was at 1200. So for 58 minutes Wally, our old copilot, tried staying in formation on three engines. He did a swell job of it until it speeded up, and lost us! There we were over the hottest target in Europe-no interphone and just three engines! That flak tracked us and tracked us for 15 solid minutes! Wally maneuvered beautifully! The nicest action I've ever seen! The trip home was one of critical sweating! The fuel was getting low! Mental strain. We did manage to get home all right! We landed at 1585 a trip of 7:55. The roughest yet! Thank God for the end of this day!

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Today was the toughest and cruelest mission I've ever gone on!! It was right up flak alley - Vienna Austria. Everything seemed to go wrong. Interphone was out, and then number four engine. We had to drop our bombs before target to keep up with the formation. We returned on with three engines rather than go back alone. At the target we ran into fierce flak. We got separated from the group and went on alone. I noticed we were right over the center of the city. Just then flak came up. Heavier and more accurate than before. I told Wally the best way to go around flak it was awful. Yellow Easy and Yellow Jig went down. Some friends of mine were in "Jig." God, I almost gave up hope they were tracking us!! After about 15 minutes we cleared the flak and finally join the group we dropped behind after a while to conserve gas. It was like a nightmare!! This is my 46 mission in 31<sup>st</sup> sortie

**1944 Friday, October 20**

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46 and 47 Mission, 31 Sortie

To Rosenheim Marshalling Yard, Germany

Takeoff 0817. Bombs away 1233. Landed 1542

Total time in air 7 hours 25 minutes. Operation altitude 23,000 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This mission was supposed to be to Munich Erding Air Drome but the weather was too bad so we hit our 1<sup>st</sup> alternate which is the above. The group ahead of us was the ship before we got to the target. We were over the Adriatic Sea and 2 ships in our box collided. One ship broke into at the waist window and started to fall then it just broke all to pieces and went down. We didn't see any chutes. The other plane went into a dive. The pilot pulled it out after about 1000 or more feet in the 3 chutes came out of it. The plane then flew a little bit unsteady and started to head toward northern Italy. It really wasn't a very pretty sight to see that plane go down. We were all a little jittery after that. We continued on our way and hit the target without encountering any flak. We didn't have an escort and we were pretty scared we would run into some enemy fighters. We didn't though which was lucky. Nothing happened on the way home thank God. Wally flew 1<sup>st</sup> pilot again today. He only has one more to go to finish and we have 3 more to go.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On October 20 we were briefed on another mission. This time our target was in the Munich area, a marshaling yard. However due to weather, we couldn't hit our primary target. Instead, we hit our alternate, Rosenheim Germany. We took off at 0815 and proceeded on our way. Trip up was very common place. We observed several flak towns, but none of the flak was very close. There was one thing that happened was out of the ordinary. In a group ahead of us, two ships had a formation crank! One of the ships split in two and no chutes were seen out of it! The other ship maintained level flight and three chutes came out of it. The last time I saw the plane it was headed for Northern Italy, apparently under control. We reached our target, and missed on the first pass and went back and hit it. There was no flak or fighter encountered. We reached our base at 1545 after 7:25 in the air.

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Today was the kind of mission we so often dream about. A double credit milk run to Rosenheim, Germany. No flak, no fighters, no nothing, I'm hoping and praying for one like this to finish upon. I now have 48 missions and 32 sorties.

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**1944 Sunday, November 5**

48 and 49 Mission, 32 Sortie

To Floris Dorf Oil refinery, Vienna Austria

Takeoff 0735. Bombs away 1220. Landed 1420

Total time in air 6 hours 45 minutes. Operation altitude 22,300 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

Considering the target we got off very easy today. Of course flak was supposed to be heavy, accurate and intense but due to the beautiful cloud coverage over the target we got away with murder. Today was the 1<sup>st</sup> time I ever rode as radio operator instead of gunner. We were flying bombs away and we were deputy lead. Lead and deputy lead sends bombs away. Well of course everything didn't go right just because I thought I would be able to take it easy. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing that went wrong was the command and VHF transmitter going out. Of course that put us out of communication with the rest of the formation. I had to set my liaison transmitter up on the interplay in frequency as we could tell what was wrong. This meant charging the tuning units and tuning the set all over. Once we near the target we sprung an oxygen leak it ran our oxygen down and we had to drop out of the formation up in enemy territory. I had to change tuning units again to contact the lead ship and tell them to get us some escort. All in all I was kept pretty busy changing tuning units. We were lucky we didn't run into fighters as some of the other guys did. I would say we came out of that mission pretty darn lucky. It only leaves one to go. Incidentally we flew in a brand-new ship with the new form of tail turret. The Skipper finished up today so that leaves 9 of us to go.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, we were scheduled to fly again. This time we were to fly up with the wheels in group lead! Our position was Able 12, our ship was Y/J a brand new "L." The pilot was Capt. Robertson. With Dean Lovett as co-pilot. Our target for today was the Floris Dorf Oil refinery, Vienna Austria. What a place for the Skipper to finish his finish on! Yipe! We took off at 0715 and proceeded with our form up. As soon as we reached altitude it became apparent that we had a leak in the oxygen system. We did and it was the main turret regulator. Our oxygen was disappearing pretty rapidly and we all hoped we'd turn back but we didn't. We went over the target on Pathfinder and for the first time the flak was inaccurate! We had a 10/10 under cast which probably is the reason for it! The flak was intense moderate/accurate, heavy. Right after the target we had to leave the formation and go down lower to conserve oxygen. We

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were pretty cautious because we were pretty deep in fighter territory however we encountered nothing and made the base in good time. We landed at 1345, after a trip of 7:30. Skipper finished!

**1944 Tuesday, November 7**

50 Mission, 33 Sortie

To Isarco Albes RR Bridge, Northern Italy

Takeoff 0843. Bombs away 1307. Landed 1543

Total time in air 7 hours. Operation altitude 14,000 feet. Bomb load 10, 500 pounds

[Radio Operator Sgt. Jerome Lory](#)

This of course is my last mission and it was a swell one to finish up on no flak and no fighters. It was right up in northern Italy near the Austrian border. It was up in the mountains. The target elevation was about 2000 feet off the ground. We didn't have any escort and we were pretty far up in enemy territory but luckily we didn't encounter any fighters. Coming back we had a pretty close call. The Skipper who is done was test hopping another ship. He decided he would fly formation with us when we came back over the base. This he did but Wally (Our Co Pilot flying pilot) didn't see him. Our box started to turn and we of course started to turn and then write in towards the Skipper's plane! He finally saw us and started to peel off. His wing came within 2 feet of ours. We were all so scared we just froze in our tracks. I lost about 10 years of my life. Besides this brief episode everything went okay except I don't think we hit the target. Well this mission brings to a close my mission book.

[Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

On the morning of November 7 we were awakened again, this time however we were not scheduled the night before. I hit the roof, especially when I found we were to fly Dog 31. [Note: there were four plane formations called boxes: Able, Charlie, Baker and Dog with seven planes each, Dog 31 was the last plane at the end of the formation and very vulnerable to enemy attacks from the rear]. However there was nothing we could do about it we had to go. We were briefed on our target was to be railroad bridge in northern Italy. We took off and after an uneventful flight we made our target. That main of the target was Isarco Albes Italy. Over the target two of our bombs failed to release. The shackles were tripped in the bombs merely hanging! I walked from the waist through our open Bombay attempting to dislodge the bombs. After trying all known methods of dropping the bombs we finally hit the right one. We had to hit the trips with a hammer. The rest of the flight was uneventful. Except right near the base. Dean was up

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test flying “Yellow Sugar” and he decided to give us a buzz job in formation. Long about the time he got his wing in our waste window the formation turned towards him. He came mighty darn close to hitting us! We could hear his engines revved up in our cockpit. We landed at the base 730 after takeoff. A wonderful way to finish 50!!!! THANK GOD

[Nose Gunner S/Sgt. George Kroll](#)

Today is the day I’ll always remember and not because it was Election Day, I finished my missions! And what could be better than a milk run to Italy? That’s what it was. We bombed the Isarco railroad bridge at Albes Italy. No flak. No fighters. Perfect! I’m through! No more. DONE!!! Bye.

***Finis.***

[Going Home. Engineer T/Sgt. John S. Chmelir Jr.](#)

We completed our 50 missions on November 7, 1944 and then waited returning to the states. The next trip was a flight from our base to Naples Italy to the “racetrack” which was a “Reply Depot.” Here we waited for surface transportation back to the states. We were here a couple weeks and after Thanksgiving we were trucked to the “Caserta” and Italian Garrison right in Naples. Here we stayed only a few days. We were then taken bag and baggage to the harbor and boarded the Army transport the USS General Meets. On the evening of December 10, 1944 we sailed out of Naples found first to Onan Africa and subsequently back to the states. As an aside, I had mentioned that we were at the “racetrack” over Thanksgiving in addition to Air Force personnel there were the members of the 35<sup>th</sup> red bull infantry division waiting return to the US. This division was at that time the division that has the longest time in contact with the enemy. Also there were the remainder of the 501<sup>st</sup> parachute Battalion awaiting return. Thanksgiving dinner was a traditional meal. There was to be turkey and all the traditional trimmings. Since the returning aircrews were mostly non-comms, it would be up to these other units to supply the K P’s to serve the meal and clean up afterward. I took it upon myself to get all the noncoms together and propose that we the noncoms to do all the work at Thanksgiving. The plan went forward and we did all the work. In order that none would think badly of me I chose the worst detail for myself pot and pan clean up. The facilities were pretty primitive. My water was heated over open fires in cut lengthwise 55 gallon drums there were three of these drums in a row. The first was to wash the pots, the second was a hot rinse, and the third was a final rinse. Besides washing the implements I had to keep the fires going. No matter how hard our task was I saw something I had never forgotten the local civilian population was gathered outside

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our men's facility begging for food, and actually going through the garbage cans for edible scraps. I think more than anything else in my experience this brought the horror of war home to me. To see small children, foraging for food out of garbage cans is unforgettable. What to me was the most tragic of this experience was to see the children going through the garbage for food. It also sparked in me the curiosity of what happens to civilians in the area in which the wars are fought. They just seem to disappear and after the battles are over they reappear. To continue on my track we arrived at one in the morning of the next day. We boarded many female members of the Wac's Waves and nurses these troops were given most of the state rooms above deck. These ladies were all pregnant and being relieved of their duties and being returned to the states since we had all the state rooms above deck occupied there were high ranking officers in the troop compartments. There were up to full Colonels occupying regular troop spaces the ship had its normal complement of Marine guards, but to supplement them the captain appointed three shifts of ships police. These were soldiers with S.P. Brassards on their arm, and represented the captain's orders. I was appointed a shift sheaf of one of the ships. As such I had run of the whole vessel except the state room area which was the Marine guards post. During my travels, I discovered the ships brig. There was no one in it, it was above deck, and I had fresh water showers and was not crowded. I moved my gear from the hold to the brig and came home very comfortably. During my last few weeks in Italy, I had started growing a mustache. Last night at sea, we were in a terrific storm. I was trying to trim my mustache when the ship rose on a large wave, then slammed down causing my razor to cut my face.

My next train ride was a North Shoreline to Chicago, then on the Douglas Park elevated to Oak Park then to Berwyn Illinois. Here I was picked up by an Emil Svella, my father-in-law and I returned home about 9:30 PM. Christmas night 1944. I had an authorized delay in route for 30 days. The next train trip was from Chicago to Miami Beach Florida. This is where I was sent for my next assignment. Both my wife and I had a wonderful two weeks stay in the Pen Dale Hotel on Collins Ave., Miami Beach. We enjoyed all the activities there. Our room was lovely, overlooking the Indian River a part of the inland waterway of Florida. My next assignment was to the instrument mechanics school at Chanute Field Illinois. The mode of transportation is the Rock Island railroad back to Illinois. We arrived at Rantoul Illinois on 19 February 1945 in the midst of a sleet storm. All the roads were a sheet of ice. My wife's parents had driven down to meet us. We didn't have a place to live, so this was the first order of business. I think we stayed on the base, and the guesthouse a couple of days.

I attended 11 weeks of training on aircraft instrumentation after graduating I was assigned as a doctor the first week of school. I instructed pressure gauges and oxygen regulators. This was the end of night train travel service, with the exception of going back and forth to Chicago to visit her parents. The war in Europe



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ended May 18, 1945 and at that time anyone with 85 points was eligible for discharge out of the service. I had 120 points so I thought I would qualify, but my military occupation specialty was declared essential. Therefore I stayed in service until Japan capitulated. The surrender treaty was signed aboard the USS Missouri in September 2, 1945. September 2, 1945 I left Chanute Field to go to Fort Sheridan. At Fort Sheridan I processed for discharge. I was separated from the Army September 5, 1945. I entered the Army on November 4, 1941 and was discharged on September 5, 1945 total active duty three years 10 months two days. 50 combat missions.

Transcribed from three original hand written diaries by Ron Aubrey, son of tail gunner Edmund Aubrey  
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