November 9
England:

On October 7 we had an easy one. I guess number seven is my lucky number. Our target was an enemy airdrome near Lille, France. We made a normal climb on course, made our rendevous with both bombers and fighters but as we started out over the channel we past over an overcast. We remained on course until our E.T.A. for enemy territory was up. The Col. turned around and we brought our bombs home. Something very interesting happened after the mission: Capt Frank Kapler (Group Nav) turned in the combat report stating that we had crossed enemy territory. According to 8th Bomber Command Memo any time we crossed enemy territory we received credit for a mission. The Colonel was put out and said that we did not cross the French coast. Every navigator that made the flight was positive that we did but the Colonel said no! We received credit for the mission the next day when we found out that the other group had received credit for that particular mission.

On the 8th of October we were still on the loading list because of the crossed opinions as to whether we were to receive credit for the mission the day before. Our target this day was Woensdrecht airdrome in Holland. It was my ~~eth~~ eighth mission although I did not know it at the time.

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It was a clear day over Holland but the weather was a bit dreary from our side of the channel. There was a haze over the target area also. We missed our landfall over enemy territory a few miles but the Colonel was back on course soon after crossing the coastline. We pick up the target made our run and dumped the eggs. The flak was heavy but slight. We were in the second box of eighteen led by Capt Drahl. As we pulled away from the target we were surprised when the Colonel did not take his box out into the channel he made a complete 360° and made a second run on the target. The flak was quite a bit more intense on the second run. The second box followed the Colonel around. We had a good look at Holland anyway and we did a pretty good job of bombing also. The flak on the second run was not at all accurate.

We were in the ~~the~~ "Utah Game Cock," a 'gas eater' on this trip and as we swept back across the channel our fuel supply was running low. We reached North Foreland and I got the time of the landfall. As we turned toward the base we ran over an overcast. At the ~~time~~ E.T.A. for base the lead box went thru the clouds. Capt Drahl took the second box around once and then we started thru. Just as we broke out underneath the red light on our fuel gage began to blink and my heart skipped a beat. The pilot look at me as if to say "if you fail me this time" and he did say,

"I want a heading back to the field and I want you to bring me right over it."

I gulped and said 180°. I knew 180° wouldn't bring us over the field but I thought that I would pick up a check point right away and then I could bring the ship right over.

We could see other ships still going north and he looked at me again and what a look. I knew what he was thinking. Will he fail me this time? Well we end up in the balloons this time for good? What have I got for a navigator? but he said,

'Are you sure?

I said with a nod, yeah. Could I be wrong? - - - : No I must be right.

The pilot dipped his left wing and thru the haze I saw a small town and he asked me the name of it, I merely shook my head and all the time that ~~red~~ red light was blinking in my eyes.

Enderton, the pilot, seem to give up then and asked the radio operator for a C.D.M. I knew that would be useless, and some how I knew I just knew my heading was right we were still north of the field.

We saw a landing field off to the left; we could set her down there, maybe I should tell the pilot to go over and set it down to give up my idea that

my heading was right, and that is when it happened. I saw just over the nose two things that struck joy in my heart. Through the haze and mist I saw two church spires, yes two church spires but they were two beautiful neon lights that pointed the way home. I said,

"Sudbury - - 200° now and we will be home in two minutes".

I could breathe again - - home and I was right. - - - - - -

November 12,

That's all war is - a consuming fever: a period of delirium and insanity, of misery, disappointment, discomfort, anxiety, despair, waste, weariness, boredom, brutality, death: and yet to every man in every war there comes a day worth living for - - -

Kenneth Roberts "Oliver Wiswell"

November 14
England:

On October 24 I was on number nine. Again I flew with Endicton. McAdams was bombardier. We (our group) went in with the 322nd, our thirty six ships followed their force of the same number. We had Spitfire cover and an uneventful trip. Our target was an airdrome at Montdidier, France.

On October the fifth we made a mystery raid on a secret target near Marquise, France. We were briefed on the target on the fourth, but weather held us on the ground all that day. We didn't know what Jerry had near Marquise that was so important to Bomber Command, but our orders were to get it and we did on the fifth. I was with Captain Wilcox on that sortie. We were leading a box of eighteen ships in behind Colonel Thatcher's lead box of eighteen. The haze was thick and it was with some difficulty that we made landfall at the French Coast. We swept to the north then past Boulogne to blast our target. McAdams the Bombardier did a beautiful job. As we pulled away from the target we ran into intense flak and our right wingman Charles Boyer (Long Beach) dropped out of formation with a large hole in his right wing. He made it back to base, however, and I was recommended for the D.F.C.

I wish I could describe the sound of flak bursting around the plane but as yet I can think of nothing that makes that sound.

November 16.
England:

Great men tell the truth and are never believed. Lesser men are always believed, but seldom have the brains or the courage to tell the truth.

Kenneth Roberts
"Oliver Wiswell"

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November 17,

Since the September 11, raid on Beaumont and up until the raid at Marquis I had quite a time trusting myself. A feeling swept over me after our experience with the balloon barrage at London, a feeling of uneasiness. I'm sure that Everton lost quite a bit of confidence in me as a result of that mistake I made. But the mission near Marquis and the two that followed helped to restore in me the confidence that I had in myself when I climbed down out of 1863 in Brewick after navigating across the Atlantic. Every navigator no matter how good he is has been lost at one time or another I believe, but to get lost at a time when I did was bad. I was with a new pilot, new to me I mean, and it pays to "on the ball", if I might use that worn out army phrase, the first few times with a new pilot. There were many days after that day that I felt rotten and I dreaded going up again because of that lack of confidence. On the mission to Marquis, I was in lead ship of second box and that trip started me on the road back to normal.

I made my eleventh mission on Nov. 10th. Our target was an airdrome at Chievres, France. We made landfall at the enemy coast at Furnes and followed another group inland to the target. The lead group missed the target because of the

cloud cover, but our group ~~lead~~ led by Major Brier spotted the target thru the clouds and made our run through a cloud of flak. Bombing was good and we returned without incident.

On Nov 11, 1943 just twenty five years after the signing of the Armistice that ended the first half of the Great World War, I was on my twelfth raid. Our mission was to bomb target X near Martinvast, France. The target was excavations somewhat like the ones near Marquise. We carried two two thousand pound bombs per ship. It was my first experience at leading my group. Capt. Zeringer (Group Operations) took our crew and we led a group of eighteen ships of the 323rd. Down to Dilsey Bill: there we joined another group and they took the lead and we swept out over the channel toward the Cherbourg peninsula.

Dec 26 V.R.

We made landfall just due East of Valognes, which was our I.P. Clouds were very thick and there were but a very few holes. Our target was small and hard to see. We lined up our ship using the port of Cherbourg as a reference. Mac. thought he saw the target and got it in the sight. We were too far left and we missed it completely.

We made a right turn and passed out over the sea and then up between Alderney Island and the mainland. Flak

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was intense at this point being fired from the island but we were at extreme range and were not hit.

Our mission was covered with R.A.F. Dominion and allied Spitfires who always do a wonderful job.

December 26.

On November 19. Bob Felt from Nebraska was leading B-Flight and I was riding with him. Our target was an airdrome at St Andre, France. Maj Pratt was leading the group and we were to make landfall at Fecamp, France near Le Havre. We missed our fighters in the channel and we were radioed to return to base. We did cross the coast however and the mission was counted. Number 13 was out of the way.

On November 23. B Flight was off all but Mme and he was spare ship. I was standing by as his navigator and we were determined to get off and we were not disappointed in more than one. We saw quite a show. We thought that the sweep would be a milk run, but we were mistaken.

We made landfall at Dardelot, France and swept up to Damer and from that time until our bombs had hit their mark we were flying in a cloud of flak. Two marauders were shot down one in flames just to the left of our formations over the I.P. It was the second flamer I had seen and it isn't a pretty sight. I didn't see any chutes opening as the plane went down. The other 26 went down on our right.

It was one of our group, but I didn't see it go down and I was glad that I did not.

Major Wilcox was leading our group and he did a very good job. We went around all known flak areas on the way out and we were unhit.

Weather had closed in at our base and we had to divert to the B-17 base at Thurleigh near Cambredge and Bedford. We spent the night there and learned at first hand some shop talk about our big brothers, the forts.

On December 4 our target was again the airdrome at Chievre. I was riding with Enderton again and Major Pratt was leading. We made landfall at Nieuport and we saw clouds bank high in the direction of our I.P. so Major Pratt made a left turn and we flew up toward Ghent to make our run from the north. We turned toward the target over a small village just south of Ghent. At E.T.A. for target we were over a cloud deck so we held our bombs and turned around and went back to base. As we past out of Belgium we saw Ghent, Bruges and Ostend really a sight seeing tour. No losses were recorded as far as our bombers were concerned. We had a Spit escort as usual.

On December 5 our target was an X target near Crecy Forrest (These X targets that I have mentioned and will be mentioning in future write ups are believed to be implacements for rockets

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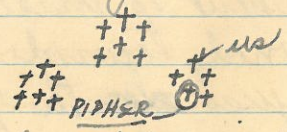
and pilotless aircraft. We don't no too much about them as yet but we are now making an all out effort to smash them.) We were unable to hold the target on Dec 6 and we had to return to our base without having striking a blow at what might well be Nazi Germany's secret weapon.

On December 13 there was a nervous combat group assembled in the crew room. Our target was an airdrome, Amsterdam Schiphol, Holland, noted for its number of flak guns and the accuracy with which the gunners ~~thrw~~ throw up the stuff. Our group had lost a ship over this target once before to say nothing of the damage inflicted ~~to~~ almost every ship.

We were to fly under Lt Kahley (Iowa) in the high box of the lead box



but Kahley had an engine cut out on him over the field and we took the lead of the high squadron and the two remaining ships of Kahley's flight fell into formation under us.

Around 400 marauders were hitting this airdrome that day in an all out effort to smash it for the winter. We attacked 36 ships at a time about ten minutes apart.

As we were sweeping along in mid-channel at 12,000 feet, we could see sunlight being reflected in the windows

of some of the buildings at The Hague. We made land fall just north of the Hague and as we did we saw a cloud of flak at twelve o'clock and about thirty miles ahead and we knew that Marauders were catching hell over Schiphol. It gave me a funny feeling in the pit of my stomach. The same feeling I got just before I sit in the dentist chair only worse.

As we reached the I.P. I could see our target to the left. The smoke from the flak that had been thrown up in a box barrage at the group ahead of us was still hanging in the air over the drome. As we turned on to the target and started our bomb ~~run~~ run I had to swallow hard. The bomb bay doors of the lead ship opened then I opened mine. Major Gould was in the lead ship and he leveled out to give his bombardier a good run. The flak began to burst around us and it seemed that the lead ship would never drop its load. Eternity passed on the run then finally the snow white bombs fell from the lead ship and mine went too. I gave Chuck the heading away from the target as I closed our doors. Major Gould was hit and had to drop out of formation. Our formation was scattered and we were left wide open for fighter attack, but our P47 escort kept them off of us. A piece of flak came through the nose and pulver-

ized the drift meter at my left elbow. I pulled my still helmet over my face to protect it from flying glass. A.G. received another hit in the nose but it didn't come through.

Lt. Piper who was flying under us in our original position was shot down over the target. Several ships made crash landings when they got back to England. All ships received damage of some kind.

Flight Officer Robinson (Illinois) bailed his crew over England as his last good engine cut out on him. He left the ship at 500 feet on his first parachute jump. All in all it was an exciting show, but I hope I never see flak like that again.

The next three targets that bring my total number of raids to twenty were all oil targets. As I said before we are making an all out effort to knock out the vital targets. So far our luck has been bad mostly because of weather. On the 20th of December our target was an installation near the village of Vacquerette in the Calais, Boulogne area, France. We made landfall over a cloud deck and had to return without dropping our bombs. On the return the weather that had been bad at take off had become worse and we had to divert. We landed south of London at the R.A.F. airdrome of West Malling near Maidstone. We landed on a steel mat and slipped and skidded to a stop. We dined here and returned to our base in the late afternoon.

On the 22nd. our target was another similar target near the village of Yvrench near Crecy Forrest in the area near Abbeville, France. Major Wilcox flew with our crew on that day and we led the low squadron lead box. The weather was terrible between our base and the south of England. We swept south over the Thames estuary at 500 ft. The weather cleared a bit over North Foreland and we climb up through the stuff at Gravesend to rendevous with our bombers. Our box was separated from the lead box and we never did get into formation but the lead box turned back at landfall on French Coast and so did we. We returned to base again with our bombs.

On the twenty fourth our target again was Yvrench & Vergt and we were lucky that day. We saw our target at the I.P. which was at railroad - river junction 8 miles south-east of Abbeville. We made a perfect run but we missed the target with the main pattern of bombs but a few five hundred pounders hit pay dirt. We were covered by Spits and we passed out over Berk-sut Mer without further incident.

Making peace is always more difficult than making war.

Lloyd Douglas "The Robe"

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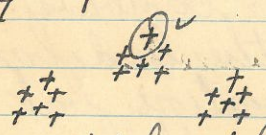
December 30.

With one day left in 1943 I made #21. We were to again attack no ball targets in the Crecy Forrest area. Our target was small as all the no balls are. It was located in a small wood about two and one half miles north-northeast of the village of Yvrench.

Chuck Ewerton was my pilot and we were leading the second box of eighteen ships in a seventy-two ship formation.

Box II

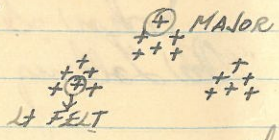


We made land fall at Ault and swept on into the I.P. which was a rail road junction ten miles south-east of Abbeville France. We pick up our I.P. O.K. and we split our boxes each was to proceed to its own target. As we turned onto our bomb run we saw the first box crossing our path and we had to do a 360 and try to pick up our target on a second run. We missed it completely on this run and it was under us before we saw it. We then decided to pick up our secondary target. My judgment was way off as we turned left just south of Vesdin Forrest and we missed this one also. We were all sick and it was my fault. As we were losing our escort now due to their lack of range we were forced to return to our base with our bombs. It was our first chance at leading a box as a team Chuck, Mac & myself and we did and we feel rotten about missing it.

January 1, 1943
England:

Yesterday on the last day of the year I completed my twenty-second raid. It was a milk run.

Box I



I was riding with Lt Felt of Nebraska. Our target was another no ball constructional near the village of Ardres, France. We were carrying six fifty-hundred pound bombs.

The trip was without incident. The weather was bad here over the island but it cleared over the target area. We made a long bomb run unloaded and missed the target, the bombs landing in an open field. Three of my bombs stuck in the racks and I was forced to salvo half of my load. We were dropping on the leader so as to get a good pattern and we did get a beautiful coverage on the open field.

We returned through a thick haze. On seeing flak bursts in the air above the English coast at Dover we fired the colors of the day, and swept across the coast.

We had a party last night to ring the old year out and the new one in. Thus 1943 ended and the new year was greeted with a hope and a prayer that it would mark the end of the war.

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January 2,

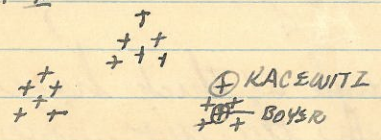
. . . any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankinde. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls: it tolls for thee.

~ John Donne
"The Tolling Bell"

January 4,

After a pre-dawn take off this morning I was on my twenty-third mission. It was another no ball near the small village of Treges, France. We missed our landfall at the French Coast coming in at Berkel-sur-mere instead of Le Touquet. The lead ship altered course and we flew up the coast to our landfall and swept on in and made three passes at the target before we finally dropped.

I was with Chuck Boyer who was leading B. Flight today. Box II



I received a letter from Lard today written on the 28th of December. He is at last in England. I answered him and I hope to see him soon.

February: 1,

"A man never dies until his work is done."
- Homer Lea.

February 16:

Yesterday, on a rare a beautiful English day I ran my first mission with the 391st Bombardment Group and if the mission counted, it will make twenty-nine for me. How I came to be with the 391st will take some telling.

The 391st is a new Group, just arrived fresh from O.T.U. in the States. It is a well trained outfit but lacking in men of combat experience. It was the idea of higher headquarters to insert into this new group that that it needed most. It was also the desire of higher-ups to have this new outfit on operations in ten days. (We made it in fourteen). In order to do this Wing lifted up to the four old marauder Groups to choose eight complete crews and send them to the new outfit to help get things started. Now Chuck Enderton, my pilot, was sucked in I'll never know but anyway we were packed and transferred on a twelve hour notice and now we are here and operating.

Our first briefing was a dry run and a horrible mess of confusion. Our second was none the less horrible and to top it off the bombs weren't loaded when we arrived at ships. After two delays we took off. We were flying number four under our new Colonel (Williams) and we were deputy box leaders. We were briefed for Beaumont Le Roger

airdrome in France near Rouen. We turned back before we made landfall but flak was reported near the enemy coast so we believe it counted as a mission.

In the Colonel's plane was Lt. Erickson (Navigator) who was one of my underclassmen at Ellington pre-flight.

It was a loss to leave Mick and Partridge and the other boys that I had learned to like.

This new outfit is new very new and it lacks that smooth running that comes from time over enemy territory and time in briefing room. I hope it settles down soon and I think it will.

I was to have met Lard on the ninth in London and I was in the act of moving and couldn't get off. I received a letter from him yesterday say that he would be in London on the 14th and 15th. We'll have to arrange another meeting. I intend to go to his base on my next day off.

I also received a sweet Valentine from June. What a gal. Sometimes I could kick myself for leaving the states without telling her how I felt. But then other times like the ~~time~~ when I saw White, Crook and Ecker go down in flames I think maybe I was right in not telling her anything. I won't tell her on paper

what I didn't have nerve enough to tell her in person. If anything should happen to me it would be better if she didn't know - - - .

In my list of missions I have jumped from 23 to 29. I will take up the missing raids in another entry. I must journey to Earls Colne and visit my old outfit and get some information concerning these particular raids from "Chuck" Boyer. Boyer took over Chuck Enderton's flight when we left. Ole "B" flight of the 455th.

Laird is operational now and I believe his first mission was Frankfurt.

February 17,
Friday

That's probably the worst part of war, its boredom and frustration
Lt. Col. Frank Kurtz
"Queens Die Proudly"

February 29.

To take up the missions 23-29 and those following:

To start with number 24 which I was on January 7, '44. I was with Enderton and McAdam. We were leading the high squadron of Col. Woods (C.O. 323RD.) lead box of eighteen. It was an easy mission and we didn't get to drop our bombs because of clouds in the Cherbourg area. Our target was Rouvall in that region.

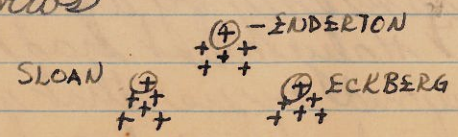
flak had split our box of eighteen up and we had only our right wing man with us. We tacked on to number one box and the whole group bombed a secondary target on the coast near Le Touquet. The twenty third lost three planes that day over France in the space of 60 seconds.

Mums and Bryan's crew were the closest to us of course being in the four fifty fifth squadron. Mums and his co-pilot Jackson were barrack mates of mine and I had spent many passes with both of them in London.

With Bryan were Capt "Chuck" Whyte (Squadron Navigator) 1st. Lt. Willie

[illegible] tired and were wishing that the mission would be scrubbed. All of this above took place on Feb. 5TH. '44.

On the 6TH. of Feb. we made what may have been our last raid for the 323RD. and we were leading eighteen this time rendez vous with the three twenty-second and but a no-ball in the Dieppe forest area. The box with the exception of one flight of three was made up of four fifty fifth crews



we made rendezvous with the other group and proceeded to our target. At the I.P. we found that clouds had covered our target and our GEE was out. The other group was flying a heading that appeared to be a GEE line. We made a quick decision to follow them and we bombed on them. The target was smashed. On the return home we were forced, [illegible]

[redacted]

[illegible] history of raids

[illegible]t Molesworth a B-17
[illegible]mbridge. It is where
[illegible] I'm just paying
[illegible] on seven day leave.
[illegible] business.
[illegible]th my ~~w~~ write up

[illegible] flew an abortive
[illegible]rdrome France.
[illegible]ng with Colonel
[illegible] as I know now the
[illegible]t but because of the
[illegible] I feel it is worth

[illegible]b through an overcast
[illegible] we were separated
[illegible] led by Capt Rutledge
[illegible]t. Perkins (Former
[illegible]me) navigator.

This completes
through twenty nine
I'm writing a
base north west of Ca
Lard is stationed and
him a visit while I'm
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Mac and I were lead
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There were no breaks in the undercast once we turned on course for fighter rendezvous and we had no GEE box. I did plain dead reckoning to Beachy Head (Fighter Rendezvous point) There we met Rutledge and his eighteen and picked up our fighters, but we still couldn't see the ground to find just exactly where we were. So I did D.R. across the channel and when my E.T.A. for the point of sea from which we were to turn into enemy territory, ~~from~~ was up I advised the Colonel to turn around. We had been over a solid overcast for nearly an hour and I didn't want to take a chance and take thirty six ships into France when I wasn't sure of landfall position. Chuck was with us and he backed me up and we turned around.

All of this created quite an uproar when we landed. Col. Lewis wing C.O. was there and he had a talk with me and Col. Williams. I never dreamed when I told the colonel to turn around that it would create such an argument. The wing navigator (Capt Ohmstead who I knew at Avon Park) said the next day that I should have gone in.

Someone once said that there are times when a man must use his own judgement be it right or wrong and that is what I did that day. If the same circumstances were ever to occur again and I was not ordered by higher

authority to do otherwise I would do just as I did before.

Two days later I had a chance to lead the 391st again with Colonel Williams as pilot and Mac as Bombardier. Chuck went a co-pilot. This was Feb 24, and our target was Gilze Rijen airdrome in Holland. It was the first time this ~~new~~ new group ever crossed enemy territory.

We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day. I pick up my landfall point twenty-five miles out at sea. We swept in over Holland with R.A.F. eleven Group providing excellent fighter cover.

Mac hit his aiming point and the mission was a success. It was number thirty for me.

The next day Feb 25 marked another exciting episode in combat for me. I was riding with Kahley, Capt. 574th Sqdn. We were leading high squadron lead box in a thirty-six ship formation that was supposed to bomb Cambrai airdrome France.

We had to climb through an overcast in southern England but managed to make fighter rendezvous O.K. at a point in Channel just off Cayeaux France which was to be our landfall in.

Colonel Brandon 575th C.O. was leading with his Squadron navigator

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doing the navigation. After we picked up our fighters he turned southward entered the coast at Le Treport some ten miles south of proposed landfall. Instead of turning to the northeast after landfall in order to pick up the I.P. he continued on the same course.

From that point on he and his navigator were lost and we began a tour of France I'll never forget.

We tried to call the Col. and tell him the Spits tried to turn him around. We were just a few miles north of the Seine River when Kahley decided to leave the formation and take his six ships home. The Spits stayed with us and we returned to base safely.

That same day Feb. 25. I ran number 32. It was a no ball near Fruges France. I was leading eighteen with the colonel. We missed bomber rendezvous after climbing through an overcast and followed the 322ND instead of the 387TH. We went in over about nine tenths cloud cover and didn't find the target. No incidents.

Number 33 was on Feb 28. It was led by Capt Le Frambosie at our target was Rosieres airdrome France. Except for a barrage of flak at Montdidier (I.P.) which spotted our boxes and through the lead box off

course a little, we had no incidents take place. I remember being very tense on this mission. I blamed it on not enough time off and I think I was right.

On Feb 29 Major Miller, 572nd C.O. led us on a no ball raid in Pas de Calais area. It was no. 33 for me. So many clouds we didn't drop.

On March 4. ~~we were to attack~~ I ran number thirty five. We were to attack ~~manufacturing~~ railroad yards at Malines Belgium. The weather was very bad and all of bomber command who had this target were recalled. Our recall came just after we crossed enemy territory. We did a 180° turn and came out. We were of over ten tenths but jerry threw up plenty of flak from Dunkirk. As we passed out over the channel I saw more B-26's at one time than I've ever seen before. Group after group with their Spit escort were coming and going all amid jet black burst of heavy flak. It was a sight to remember even though it was terrifying in way.

The next day we were supposed to hit a no ball near Lambre, France. We made three passes but visibility was so bad we had to give up and come home. I rode that day with Capt. Stringfield on a wing. Number 36.

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On March the 6TH. Chuck's ship went out and I sand bag along with Lt. Morris. We rode lying and I was glad when we got started that I had gone along. Our target were the yards at Dieson France. It was a deep penetration and it was a beautiful day in France. We followed the 322ND in and it was good to see their white tails again. We hit our target and returned without loss.

This brings me to a sad incident that happened that night, March 6TH. Col. Samuels air executive of 391ST. read us a directive from ninth Bomber Command stating that there was no limited tour for marauder crews effective immediately. All of which meant we were in England till victory was won. It still stands that way as I'm writing now.

Anyway on the 7TH. of March I was on #38. I rode with Chuck and we led second box. We followed the 322ND. into Creil Railroad Yards near Paris and failed to bomb because of cloud cover.

I saw the Eifel tower before we passed over the clouds and the famous city of Paris seem to sleep beneath a blanket of clouds. - - - -