

April 9
Easter in E.T.O.

I was visiting with McKenna the other day at Charles Colne. He is a checked out pilot now. That is something he has been waiting and working for for some time now. I remember when we were in Florida how he wished so much to be a first pilot and how he turned down a chance to be one just before we left the states because he wanted to remain with the crew. I remember too how he could have checked out and at least proved to himself that he could fly a Sparaduc. Partridge never gave him that chance. Now he is at last a first pilot. I flew with him on a cross country over England. We flew up to Kings Lynn then over to Cambridge and around East Anglia. He did a good job of leading a three ship formation. I am sure he may not ever be as good a pilot as Partridge but he has something that Peter lacks and that is devotion to duty. I like Partridge I like him very much in fact and I would fly to Hell with him, but McKenna is a man Peter is still a boy.

On this Easter morning I attended chapel services here on the base. I had wanted to go to London and

100

attend services in Hyde Park or St Pauls
but after I heard Chaplain Comforts
message I was so glad that I remained
on the Post.

"the things which are not seen are
eternal."
this was the text to an inspiring
message.

I believe things are looking up for
us (the allies) all over the world. I
feel with all my heart that the Germans
will be forced to give up the fight by
mid July. I pray that not too much
blood be spilled by them.

In my next entry I intend
to finish my story of my first
Atlantic Crossing. Wickes Field to
Preswick, Scotland.

April 23:

Still putting off writing about my
last leg of the trans-atlantic flight.
Today I was on my thirty-ninth mission.
It was my first in over a month and also
my first with the 39TH Group. I rode
as second navigator leading the second
leg. Major Berkenkamp of the 59TH (C.O.)
The target was a no ball in the Hedin
Forest area. Light flak was encountered but
trip was without incident. It was a rare
and beautiful day in the E.T.O.

White Sterngold, Capt. and crew, who
I flew one mission with in the 39TH, will
leave for the states in the morning on

good will tour. It is to be for sixty days.

May 11 44 England:

On April 28, I was on #40. I rode as bombardier with Lt. Kretschmer of the 599TH Sqdn. We were to bomb the railroad yards at Mantes, France a town of good size on the Seine River. We flew in over ten tenths and we staid on top the whole time. It was a long and extremely tiring ride with no incidents and of course we did not drop our bombs. Poix Airrome was our secondary target and that too was covered over with a thin blanket of cloud..

On May 2, I passed on the ~~road~~^{road} to fifty (not that it means a whole lot) by running #41. I was acting as bombardier for my old crew (Capt. Enderston). We hit the yards at a small town near Le Chateau, France about fifteen miles southeast of Cambrai. The trip was what one would call an ideal trip. It was a deep penetration and it was a beautiful day in France that day. I amused myself by finding interesting spots along course and pointing them out to the Beast (Co-pilot John King, Wis.) who was about to pass out for lack of oxygen. We were cruising at an altitude of 12,500' most of the way. San Quentin, Brussels, and Ghent were some of the high points along the route.

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On May 10, I was scheduled with Capt. Hughes (Assistant Operations officer 397th Group) We were on a wing and I was bomb-ardier again. We hit the yards at Creil, near Paris. It was my second trip to the target. The weather was bad over the ~~long~~ channel and I thought for awhile that we would be forced to turn around but it cleared as we went deep into France. As we reached the I.P. and turned on to the target I saw the city of Paris for the second time. This time I saw a little more of it. It is spread far and wide with the Seine running through the center of town. We bomb-ard target in flights of six and our six missed. We were following thirty-six ships of the 387th Group and they did hit the target and started fires in the yards. So go back a moment, on the way in I saw an enemy fighter go down near Amiens Blisy airbase. He was brought down by our spit escort and he went down in flames. On the way out we ran into a small barrage of very accurate flak near Grandvilliers. None was hit seriously, however.

This brings me up to date and today's raid marked #43 for me and it was an old target Beaumont Le Roger airbase. The trip was carried out successfully even though navigation was a bit difficult due to a thick haze. We hit the target! Our escort was a single squadron of P-38's the prettiest airplanes ever built. Payne of Atlanta, Ga. was my pilot today.

May 15,
England:

On May 15 I made #44. I was Bombardier on the Mc Carthy-Louden Lt. Mc Carthy and Louden were or I should say are two Lt's of the 599th Sqdn. Our Target was an airfield at Valenciennes, France. We followed the 323RD. in to the target and the whole formation of seventy-two ships were escorted by P-38's. The trip was without incident as we were on top nearly all the way and we couldn't even see the target. We were off course somewhat on the way out. I got to see Ghent which was the target of my first raid on Sept. 5th. of last year. It was a long tiring ride that brought us no closer to the end of the war.

July 20,
England:

I awoke this Thursday morning in my new quarters at Beauvoir airfield in the south of England. Summer has indeed arrived in this part of the country. Things have happened as things will do since my last entry on May 17. Chuck and Mac are gone. Miss Bischoff has also returned to the zone of the interior. I have assumed the duties of Squadron navigator of the 455th Sqdn 323RD. Bombardment Group. In the past two months I have advance in combat experiences from 44 to 60.

04

5
on May 24 I, along with Chuck and Mac, and the rest of the crew of the old "Bird Dog Special," was still with the 39TH Group of Colonel Corner. On this day I rode as GUN operator with Captain (now Major) "Sam" Hamilton, operations officer of 59TH Sqdn. We attacked military objective in the harbour of Suffer. The name Suffer always strikes terror in the hearts of airmen as it must in the hearts of those Rangers and Commandos who made the night raid on the city some ^{few} years ago. We attacked from the sea without loss however.

The following day May 25 I made my 46TH raid with a new replacement crew whose skipper was a boy named Schulze. Our target was a railroad bridge at Lige. We were in a wing slot and the mission though opposed by flak was carried out without loss. I had a good look at Belgium that day thru the nose of a maverick.

On May 26TH I was with Sam again leading six. We attacked an airfield near Chartres, France. I was on the GUN seat again. When operating we are seldom seen much of the fight.

Now on the 27TH of May we were on the move again. Transferring back to the white tailed mavericks of Wood's 323RD. Going back to the old group was like going home. The old faces were welcomed sights to our eyes.

Of course Mick was there and
Marty Bischoff and all the old F.G.
with the exception of Bob Felt who
went down over Siege along with one
of his wingmen. We moved in and
went to work, but quick.

06

As Mac and I suspected our
first target was a tube. We were to
lead the second box into the Pas De
Calais area and hit a no ball near
Frisant, France. Now Frisant is a target
that is always associated with intense
flak barrage and flammers. Mims &
Bryan went down there. Druhl, Kaiser
& Bischoff had their plane damaged so
badly at the target that they were forced
to bail over the channel. But as some-
times happens on an unexpected tough
target the Germans just didn't have us
and we escape with very little damage.
This was no. 48 for me.

July 21,
10:15 A.M.

Our planes are circling the field now
after their trip from Carls Colnet.

To continue with my account of the
raids: on May 31, I made my 49th
sweep over the channel. I was with
Chuck again, fly deputy to Sloane Box II.
We attacked a bridge on the Seine river.
(We were all under the impression at
this time that we were destroying bridges
along the Seine to keep Hitler from

moving troops into the north of France.) We flew through heavy cloud formations at low alt and proceeded to bomb our objective. Lt. Kuster of Fort Wayne was bombing for Sloane and did a beautiful job.

07
It was on June 2nd that I was called on to fly with Capt Sparks of the 453TH Sqn. I had known Sparky for some time since he had served on D.S. with our bunch in the 391st & 97TH. On this day I made no. 50. of I made the hump. We were leading the third box of twelve ships and we attacked a coastal gun in the Le Harve area no incidents.

June 4TH mission #51 with Chuck again. Target: coastal gun near Fecamp. Leading eighteen. We hit short of the target encountered no opposition all mission prior to my 52nd. raid on June 6, 1944 were made with the one to be run in mind. One year of fighting with one raid in mind and was the one that would be in direct support of the invasion of Europe:

The two days of June 5TH and 6TH will live in my memory forever. June 5TH started like any other day in the S.T.O. Our crew was not on the loading list and when a meeting was called for all lead teams to meet ^{with} the Colonel. Colonel Lewis Wing C.O. along with Wilson Wood our own C.O. Lewis made a small speech in the situation room in which

08

he praised our work in the months passed and said our work had been important but that our job from now on was to be of still greater importance. He said that the much talked about and expected D. Day was surely at hand and that he was sure that we carry out our particular job as well as we carried out the operations during the year prior to this all important Day.

Colonel Wood took the floor when Lewis had gone and read to us the loading list that would be in effect that morning when our boys were to storm the beaches of ? - if yes where would they go in. I made a sucker bet with Chuck that it would be the Lowlands. It was a four pound bet (he owed me the four) and I lost it some five minutes later when we were actually given our targets for D. Day. I got getting ahead of my story, though to get back to Colonel Wood's first speech in the situation room. He said that this was to be the greatest operation in all of military history and that we were going to make history that day. (Of course that this was to be the greatest of all military events since the beginning of mankind was known by all of God but it gave you a strange feeling

deep inside to hear someone say it). The Colonel also tried to impress upon us the importance of our mission and said if we ever hit a target that that would be the time and place to do just that. He told us that the targets we were to be briefed on while we were still there in the building were to be secret and he cited would ~~would~~ surely happen to any one who divulged any information of what so ever about what we heard the afternoon of that day. He said that we would be briefed from that day until we saw the mission on D-Day. Now when he said that it was the clue we needed to decide when D-Day would be. In that room were all the lead teams of the group: it would have been impossible to have run a mission without using some of those teams. We knew that the mission that the 323RD Group ran would be on D-Day.

(One thing I forgot to say that was included in the address by Lewis He said that our C and G. General Eisenhower and his aides had studied this great undertaking and ruled out every single plan of operation that even smelt of failure. We planned it for complete victory. He said).

From the situation room we went into a room in the very back of Group Operations and there were our targets and maps of the proposed beachhead

on the walls and we knew that in a few days a word, a name of a small part in France would be a word shouted around the world "Cherbourg".

July 22, '44

We viewed our target pictures Mac and I studied ours very carefully. This was one target we must hit the first time. It would be easy to find and should be a milk-run we said - - - if the weather. The weather the one thing all the might of the allies could not win nor could their money buy - - - the one? weather hung over us. Gods way of showing us that no matter how great and powerful we were we must still depend on him for success. (We later learned through the papers that General Eisenhower asked the weather man for 60 hours of accurately predicted weather and also that the zero hour was postponed for twenty-four hours because of weather.)

To get back to the meeting we were told while studying our targets that paratroops would be dropped in certain areas the night before D-Day.

As we left the building a few minutes after our target study we could feel something in the air. All afternoon there was something in the air. men said nothing but you

110

could see it in their eyes. Those who were not at the meeting knew something of great importance was said behind those doors but they asked no questions.

Later on in the afternoon we we noticed the men working on the ships painting black & white stripes on the under surfaces of the wings and fuselage. The loading list went up on the bulletin board in the squadron
BOX II LEAD FLIGHT.

MAJ. SATTERWHITE

HIGH FLIGHT SECOND. BOX

CAPT. ENDERTON.

LOW FLIGHT SECOND BOX

CAPT. NEELY

Then we knew D-Day was to be the sixth of June.

The bay was closed that evening of the ~~fifth~~ and our operations officer then Capt. Sloane said at a sqdn. meeting that afternoon that there was to be a 12:30 briefing the next morning.

*June 28
Advice* - I didn't want to forget a thing that happened during that twenty four hours, from 1600 hours June 5th till 1600 hours June 6th, and everything that I did and that others said and did was engraved in my memory. I remember Chuck and Mac working for hours on the P.D.I. in 961 which we were to fly the following morning. I remember getting a chair cut and while I was sitting in the chair I heard the strains of ~~Swanee~~ ^{Swanee} River coming from the lounge in the club. I re-

member trying to sleep and hearing voices from both inside and outside the barracks. The Colonel had said get plenty of sleep but who could sleep. I remember how King and some of the boys played cards until briefing time and I remember seeing a little prayer in everyone's eyes "please may the weather be good". It was a prayer that I prayed inside more than once that night.

at last it was twelve thirty and we rose and went to chow. Some of the men were carrying guns and excitement ran high. We went into the briefing room and the first unnatural thing we all noticed was the presence of war correspondents ~~and~~

The Colonel (Wood) finally made things official when he stood before the group and in his usual Texas drawl said, "Gentlemen this morning we are attacking targets of military importance on the west coast of the Cherbourg peninsula and our operations will be in direct support of the invasion", "and you can make all the noise you want to now." of course there was a roar from all seats.

Colonel Wood spoke again when the noise died away. "We must hit our target in a three minute period from 0600 to 0603. and some 2 or 3 minutes after we smash our targets some 300 thousand good ole american boys just like all of us are going

4 "If you bombardiers ever hit a target in your career today is the day to do it and I know you will" (Col.) in on those beaches down there. "See later said that we were supporting Gen. Omar Bradley's First Army. —

The briefing was carried out as usual. We were to take off before dawn assemble in flights and proceed to a rally point near Dover. Colonel Wilcox was leading the show with Maj Helms & Capt Silk. Chuck had a flight and we had to get our flight to the join up on time. The weather was not to good but again it wasn't too bad either.

All lead ships were carrying J-8 bombs - sites along in case weather forced us to bomb at low altitudes.

As for fighter cover, "well" said the Colonel in the target area this morning there will be some 1500 Forts and Liberators 800 Marauders and Ravens and Mitchells and 4,000 fighters covering the area from the surface to 35,000 ft. I remember & Chris later when I heard what Eisenhower promised the landing parties. "If you see a plane its ours."

We went to ships and things looked dark. Col. Brier told us we were to drop down as low as 2,000 ft if necessary: we must hit the target at all costs.

As Chuck gave us the needle and we started down the runway you couldn't see for the rain that beat against the wind shield. We get our six ships together and to the rally point, some 10,000 feet above the white cliffs of Dover, on time.

We left the coast at Selsey Bill and we ~~made~~ could see that we were going to make a bit down in order to get below the cloud cover. Half way across we were at 5000 feet and no Myrauder had struck against the enemy below 8,000' since the first and second disastrous raid of the 322nd a year before.

114

Also at the half way mark in the channel we could see gun flashes from the French shore and from Battle wagons on the surface.

We were about to cross the I.P. at Pt. de Barfleur when the Germans threw up a barrage of light flak and Chuck pulled out left in a violent evasive move. A P-51 fighter at our altitude rolled over and dove on the flak out fit giving them hell with his guns. At this time as if enough wasn't happening a Liberator blew up over the target and went down in a ball of flame. We made our bomb run without flak and dropped our load on the beach. As we pulled off the target we could see parachutes and gliders spread over some areas of the peninsula. We encountered some more light flak as we crossed the center of the peninsula but our evasive action was good. We came through without a scratch but I know I lost ten years of my life in those few minutes.

That afternoon we lost Stacks and Seagraves. We believe all escaped from the ship except the pilot, Paul Stacks of Richmond, Texas.

August: 29
France:

In the days just following D-day there was quite a bit down feeling. During this time we had expected to fly more than we ever had before but actually we flew far less. It was also during this period that the Japs started using his flying bombs on London and Southern England. The X Targets that we had pounded since last November ceased to be targets of military nature and became flying bomb installations. The R.A.F. Bomber Command heretofore a night ops. outfit became a day light striking force and went into Pas De Calais to destroy the bomb sites that were bombing their homeland.

I had anxious moments on leave in London when these bombs fell close to my hotel.

To get back to operations: on June 7th. I was with Chuck (flying deputy) II Box under Sloane. We went to attack rail yards at Avanches. We were unable to bomb because of low clouds. This was 53 missions for me.

I was June 11 before I flew again again with Chuck (High Flight) to attack Torigny Railyards: did not drop - weather.
#54.

On June 12 I made my 55th raid. I was with Chuck leading 18 ships. We attacked a bridge near Dreu. Mac sent home a bomb load and got a few direct hits in the target area.

On June 13 we were honored and thrilled too when General Arnold and Marshall visited our field and talked to a group of the lead teams for a while. General Anderson spoke to our boss about the work we had been doing and about how he would like to send us home for rest and, I believe it was through these talks that the new system for sending men home came about.

On June 15th I was on #56. An easy one. We were dropping windows for our bombers near Valognes.

June 19th. With Chuck again leading 18 to a forest fuel dump just west of Paris. Encountered heavy flak on the way out near Le Harve.

On June 23rd #58 with Chuck leading 18 to a no-ball (Bomb site) near Tervant. We aborted at Furnes, Belgium when our little friends failed to show up a situation that I seldom had to deal with.

On July 18th I was with Major Sloane leading second 18 to troop concentration near Cain. We encountered heavy flak on the turn away from the target and lost our right engine. I thought we had had it, but Sloane did a beautiful

17
job in bringing us home on our own good engine and we landed at Ford. One of the boys stayed on our wing all the way back just in case we had to go into the drink. It gave everyone in our ship a sense of security to see the white tailed maverick flying with us ready to give our sea escape our position if anything should have happened over the channel. The English were prepared to give us all aid they were headed Ford Airbase on the South Coast of the island.

On July 30 I made sortie 60 with Sloane again leading the group on a P.F.F. (Pathfinder) mission to St. Lo. France. No incidents. (First mission from Beauharnois)

On July 31 I was with Major Satterwhite leading the group to a bridge near Rouen. It was my 61st sortie and it presented the most difficult navigation problem I ever encountered (no incidents except flak at target).

On August 6th I made #62 and it was a night mission to an island near St. Malo. Considerable light flak at the target and a very black night but we came through with success. Capt Essex Bombing Major Satterwhite doing the flying.