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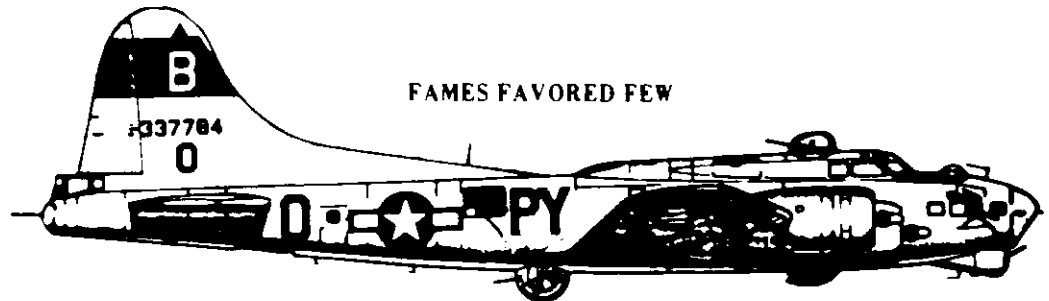
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92nd Bombardment Group NEWS



JUNE 1989

MISSION REPORT AUGUST 1944

On August 24 (1944) at Merseburg, August 25 (1944) at Peenemunde and August 26 (1944) at Gelsenkirchen the group flew its most difficult and hazardous missions of the month. The jet-propelled ME-163 was encountered in force at Mersburg; the flak was heavy and accurate at Peenemunde and Gilsenkirchen. Four aircraft were lost at Peenemunde, one at Merseburg, and battle damage was particularly heavy. Captain Frederick T. Prasse of the 325th squadron, Assistant Group Operations Officer, flew as co-pilot in the lead aircraft over Merseburg and was wounded in the hip when a burst of flak struck the ship on the bomb run.

Out of the Merseburg mission came one of the group's greatest stories of collective fortitude, skill and courage. The aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt. John Bosko of the 327th squadron was struck directly in the open bomb-bay by a flak burst while on the bomb run. Miraculously, the bombs did not explode. The burst tore out the right side of the bomb-bay, reduced the radio room to a shambles, punched a gaping hole in the fuselage and severed aileron and elevator controls. Sgt. Gordon V. Wescott, the ball turret gunner, was fatally wounded and died a few minutes later.

The aircraft fell out of control and in Lt. Bosko's words "wallowed through the air, losing about 2000 feet a minute". The hydraulic system caught fire about 45 seconds after the ship had been hit and the fluid spread over the floor of the fuselage and the catwalk in the bomb-bay. S/Sgt. Peter W. LaFluer, the engineer, used up the fire extinguisher in attempting to put out the blaze and when the extinguisher ran dry, tore out with his bare hands the flaming insulation from the walls of the bomb-bay.

Five bombs remained in the shattered bomb-bay and there was a high probability of imminent explosion;
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COLONEL WILSON WELCOMES OUR P.O.W.'S BACK HOME

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY SECOND BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
ARMY AIR FORCES APO 557

13 MAY, 1945

We believe that you'll want to know about some of the things that have happened to, and been accomplished by, your Group since you've been gone. Below, we've noted some of the highlights, the important operations, command changes, station changes, etc.

This material is for your personal file only and must not be sent through the mails. In the 33 months the 92nd Group has been in England, an enviable record has been made. Many times during the period since you went down, we have thought about you, needed you, wanted you to share our triumphs.

The victory in Europe is every organization's victory and it is every man's victory. You can well be proud of your Group; certainly your Group is proud of you.

James W. Wilson
Colonel, Army AC,
Commanding.

At the war's end, the 92nd Bombardment Group was the oldest Group continually in England. The 92nd arrived in August, 1942 (having been the first Group to successfully fly the Atlantic non-stop in formation) and flew it's first combat mission on Sept 6, 1942. It's 310th and last mission came on April 25, 1945, when Lt. Col. William H. Nelson, Group Executive, led the 1st Division in an attack on the Skoda plant at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

The 92nd Group has had 4 Commanding Officers; Col. James S. Sutton (from 1 April 1942 to 1 May 1943); Lt. Continued on page 3

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Col. Baskin R. Lawrence (from 1 May 1943 to 23 May 1943); Col. William M. Reid (from 23 May 1943 to 27 September 1944); Col. James W. Wilson (from 27 September 1944).

The Group has been stationed at three fields in England; at Bovingdon from August 1942 to January 1943; at Alcanbury from January to September 1943; at Podington from September 1943.

Decorations held by members of the Group include 1 Congressional Medal of Honor (FO John C. Morgan); 4 Distinguished Service Crosses (Col. James W. Wilson, Lt. Col. William E. Buck, Capt. Charles E. Hodges, S/Sgt Winston E. Tooney). The Group received the Presidential Citation for its participation in the January 11, 1944 mission to Oschersleben/Halberstadt.

Many of the original members of the 92nd Group have new assignments. Among them: Col. William M. Reid is now Combat Wing Commander at Drew Field, Fla; Col. James S. Sutton, after commanding a Composite Command Base in Northern Ireland in 1943-44, became CO of the 306th Bomb Group, and is now in the US; Lt. Col. William E. Buck, former Air Executive, became Air Executive of the 384th Bomb Group, and then returned to the US; Lt. Col. Andre R. Brousseau, former Air Executive, is now Operations Officer at Bolling Field, Washington, DC; Lt. Col. Robert B. Keck, former Operations Officer is now Air Inspector at Drew Field; Lt. Col. James J. Griffiths, former CO of the 407th Sqd, is at Bolling Field; Major Francis B. Winget, former CO of the 325th Sqd. and Major Edward M. Jones, former Group Navigator, are at Drew Field; Major McGehee Word Jr., former CO of the 326th Sqd., Major Donald G. Parker, former CO of the 327th Sqd. Major Julian C. Thornton, former Group Bombardier and Major Blair Belongia, former Operation Officer of the 326th Sqd. are all in the US on different assignments.

Currently, the Squadron CO's are: 325th, Lt. Col. Albert L. Cox, 326th, Lt. Col. Ernest C. Hardin, Jr.; 327th, Lt. Col. James A. Smyrl; 407th, Lt. Col. Lloyd D. Chapman.

OUTSTANDING MISSIONS-43-44-45

17 July 1943 Hanover M/Y

Lt. Col. William E. Buck led this mission against intense flak and a continuous and devastating attack by enemy aircraft. For his successful and courageous leadership, Col. Buck was awarded the DSC.

24 July 1943 Heroya, Norway

This was a famous mission to the large aluminum plant at Heroya. The Group led the entire Air Force, with Col. William M. Reid as Air Commander, and the plant was virtually destroyed.

26 July 1943 Hannover

On this raid the Group accomplished a successful attack on a large tire factory, with bombing results excellent in spite of intense flak and enemy aircraft encounters. F/O John C. Morgan of the 325th Squadron was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the

nation's highest decoration. The full story has been told in TARGET-GERMANY, and again in AIR GUNNER.

9 Oct. 1943 Gydnia, Poland

This was the deepest penetration ever accomplished by the 8th Air Force. Lt. Col. Robert B. Keck led the 92nd Group.

14 Oct. 1943 Schweinfurt

On this mission, the 40th CBW consisted of only two Groups, the 92nd and the 305th. From 300 to 400 enemy aircraft continually attacked from the Zuider Zee to the IP. Bombing results were excellent and 30 enemy aircraft were claimed by the Group.

11 Jan. 1943 Oschersleben/Halberstadt

Against the toughest opposition the enemy could muster, the 8th Air Force penetrated deep into the heart of Germany to destroy some of the key GAF production centers. The 92nd Group, with others of the 1st Air Division, received the Presidential Citation for this mission.

6 March 1944 Berlin

This was the first raid on Berlin by the 92nd Group. Both intense flak and fighter aircraft opposition were encountered, but bombing results were excellent. (The 92nd went to Berlin 14 times.)

6 June 1944 "D" Day (3 missions)

1st Mission: 48 a/c were dispatched to attack gunsites at Longues and Arromanches in France, led by Major Robert F. Parkinson of the 327th Squadron.

2nd Mission: 12 a/c were dispatched to attack road junctions in the Caen area, but the mission was abandoned at the coast of France because of cloud conditions.

3rd Mission: 36 a/c were dispatched to attack communications at Thury Harcourt, France. The high and low Squadrons attacked by PFF, while the Lead Squadron bombed Flers visually with excellent results. Major Donald G. Parker of the 327 Squadron led the formation.

A total of 96 a/c were dispatched in a single day by the Group.

18 July 1944 Peenemunde

This target was, at the time, one of the most important, being the principal research and development center for the vaunted "V" weapons and rockets, flying bombs and jet-propelled aircraft. The Group was led by Major McGehee Word Jr., of the 326th Squadron and the target well hit. This was the first of several raids on Peenemunde by the Group and by the 8th Air Force.

24 and 25 July 1944 St. Lo Area

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In these two days, 48 and 52 aircraft participated in the "carpet" bombing of the St. Lo area, paving the way for the famous breakthrough at the western end of the Normandy front, which several days later became the Battle of Brittany.

3 Aug. 1944 Merkwiller, France

One of the most effective raids of the war was accomplished when the large oil refinery at Merkwiller was absolutely wiped out. Although enemy opposition was strong, this Group placed 42% of its bombs within 550' of the assigned aiming point, and 92% within 1000' of the same point.

26 Aug. 1944 Gelsenkirchen

Col. William M. Reid led the 1st Air Division in a very successful attack on the large synthetic oil plant here. Although Col. Reid was wounded by flack, and his a/c had its hydraulic system shot out so that it was necessary to rig parachutes from the waist windows in landing, he managed to lead all a/c safely back to base.

2 Nov. 1944 Merseberg

This mission, with the 1st Division led by Col. James W. Wilson, Group CO, was one of the most famous attacks on the Leuna Oil Refinery, #1 Priority Oil Target. Bombing was by PFF, but reconnaissance photos later showed the target to be well hit. Col. Wilson's aircraft was very badly damaged, and landed away from base after an arduous trip; for his brilliant leadership, Col. Wilson was awarded an OLC to the Silver Star.

10 Feb. 1945 Ijumiden, Holland

On this date, the 92nd Group, led by Col. Wilson, pioneered the first "Disney" operation of the war. The "Disney" bomb, carried on external racks, was developed by Capt. Terrell of the British Navy and the 92nd Group selected to make the raid.

7 April 1945 Wesendorf A/F

This mission, a most successful one, brought the Group total to 300 in typical 92nd fashion. Leading the Combat Wing, the Wesendorf A/F was effectively saturated. Lt. Col. James A. Smyrl, 327th Squadron CO, led this milestone mission.

25 April 1945 Pilsen, Czechoslovakia

In one of the furthest penetrations of the war, Lt. Col. William H. Nelson, Group Air Executive, led the entire 8th Air Force effort. The great Skoda plant was the target; results were excellent. This was the last combat mission of the European War and the 92nd Group's 310th.

Secretary's Column

The UK trip is in the final stages of becoming a reality. As of this writing forty five (45) members will be making the trip. Dick Damato of Tamarac just returned from meeting with the committee in the UK and reports all events have been finalized on that end and the villagers of Podington are anxiously awaiting our arrival.

Response to the survey regarding demand for additional copies of the "Route as Briefed" was moderate. I have asked Bob Elliott our archivist to forward the negatives to me and I will haul them to the printer and get an estimate of the cost based on increments of 250 copies. It took us over six years to dispose of the first printing of 1000 copies at \$5.00 per copy. These are now selling in used book stores at triple the price. I am hoping we can get a decent price on one increment, keep tuned as the next issue should have finalized details. The survey indicated a requirement for only 40 copies.

We have many unidentified crew photos in our files to publish. If any of you have a crew photo and you have not seen it in print, send in a xerox of it with the identification of personnel on the back and if we cannot match it with any we have, then we may ask you to lend it for publication. The original will be sent back to you. Only one snapshot has been lost since we began publishing and we are still looking for it as I am sure it is in the archives.

The cap patches which were given as a souvenir at the Reunion in San Antonio are going fast and proving a popular item, so if you are contemplating getting one -- better hurry. The Newsbook that contains the newsletters thru 1985 is still in stock with about 40 copies remaining. On Squadron Patches, the 325th seems to be in the most demand and are nearly wiped out. I have had numerous inquires on A-2 jackets and advise members to join the Air Force Museum Foundation, PO Box 1903, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio 45433. Members receive discounts on all purchases from the gift shop, (513) 258-1218. They carry the A-2 Jacket and many other Air Force items.

From time to time I receive letters from relatives of members, many of whom are associate members, and from collectors, looking for 8th Air Force artifacts and memorabilia. One associate wrote that he wears his uncle's uniform to WWII events and is interested in purchasing items for his own collection as they will be honored and preserved. The Secretary regrets that he has only been able to bring to the Reunions the Norden Bombsight from his collection. Members are always welcome to stop by when visiting the St. Louis area.

The Roster advertised in our last newsletter is not a 1988 but the 1987 with an updated supplemental page for 1988. The next reprint will be a 1990 edition and will be available in January of 1990. We still have some 500 Rosters on hand and will continue to update until the present stock is exhausted as the 1987 Roster is still more than 95% accurate.

Keep sending in the photos and snapshots you have gathering dust. We are in need of material from the 347th and 446th as well as the other support units.

