

Daily Reports

from



401st Bomb Squadron

91st Bombardement Group



Daily Reports from the 401st Bomb Squadron

From our viewpoint today, the Second World War was a black-and-white pageant of men and machines battling across or above a grainy, forgotten landscape. War is a narrative voiced by calm, analytical announcers who examine the past from an academic distance. Often forgotten is the work of tens of thousands of non-combatant clerks and record keepers whose jobs were to capture on paper the administrative minutia of the process of war. Their efforts, while doubtless tedious at the time, provide an outstanding backdrop against which the war plays out in practical terms. It is the "how" behind the "when" and "where".

The Daily Reports from the 401st Bomb Squadron is part of that vast store of administrative detail. They are the actual day-to-day records of the squadrons missions and movements from the inception of the group through the end of the war.

This record is a valuable resource in many ways. For veterans, they can augment memories with hard facts. For researchers they provide solid dates around which to base further investigation. Children and grandchildren of the 401st veterans will be able to pinpoint where their family members were at any given time.

Many thanks to :

Merle Choffel who transcribed this information for the 91st Bomb Group Website.



401st DAILY REPORTS 1942 Prepared by Capt. F. G. Davison

16 May 1942

401st Bomb Squadron (H) AAF Activated at MacDill Field, Tampa, Florida under Special Order # 1 91st Bombardment Group (H). Capt. Edward P. Myers was named Commanding Officer.

31 May 1942

Usual excitement of getting acquainted and finding out their special duties with some flying by the pilots - most of them being checked out on B-17's. Nice base - good food - nice surroundings, war at its best, here's hoping the rest of it will be half as nice. By this date 278 personnel have been assigned to the 401st Bomb Squadron.

21 June 1942

During June at MacDill Field the Squadron was under a strict OTC for Combat Crews and Maintenance Crews. Making for a general shakedown assignment to crews, Maintenance started on a 24 hour basis, the crews working on an airplane until it was completely finished and ready to fly. The pilots were checked out on the airplane participated in local transition flights made practice take-offs and landing and went on frequent cross-country flights. Some submarine patrols were made out into the gulf.

22 June 1942

Squadron transferred to Walla Walla Army Air Base, Walla Walla, Washington. Life starts at Walla Walla, Washington. It's a nice little town with many beautiful residential sections. As quarters were not finished all officers secured their own billets off the post, and were extremely fortunate to find rooms with the better families of the town. The Enlisted Men were housed in new barracks - were moved around quite a bit but finally settled down to a regular round of activity. Squadron's maintained their own mess halls and how those boys were fed. We officers ate most of our meals with them and raised quite a howl when we were forced to eat at the Officer's Mess when it was completed the latter part of our stay there. A few Beer Busts were had and appreciated by all those present and missed by those who stayed away. The outstanding thing about any bust of course is the customary soft ball game between the officers and the enlisted men. Both games ended in the officers coming out on top the victors. Inter-department volleyball -softball - basketball games and a few softball games with other nearby fields helped to round

the men into fine condition - this in addition to regular morning drill and calisthenics. Ground school continued for Combat Crews on aircraft recognition - gunnery - radio procedure and maintenance, oxygen, its use etc. and such allied subjects which were found to be of service to them in their chosen work. Pilots continued in their work of becoming acquainted with their airplanes flying them both day and night. No cross-countries were flown early in the training schedule as only one navigator was then assigned to the squadron. The Bombardiers too came late in the training period and not many practice bombs were dropped due to lack of airplanes. The classes were opened up to include these late arrivals and Navigation classes were held regularly and the Bombardiers were in the Bomb Trainer quite a bit. The gunners received only low altitude practice of ground targets with no high altitude air-to-air gunnery. Squadron continued to receive and get rid of personnel with specialists reporting for duty from all the schools.

30 June 1942

By the end of June another 71 personnel had been assigned.

6 July 1942

Eight Bombardiers are assigned to the Squadron.

20 July 1942

Four Navigators are assigned to the Squadron.

31 July 1942

By the end of July 98 additional personnel have been assigned to the Squadron.

1 August 1942

The Squadron is transferred from Walla Walla Army Airfield, Walla Walla, Washington to Baker Field, Redmond, Oregon for training per VOCO 91st Bomb Group (H) Temporary. This started fourteen days of new experiences. The Squadron furnished all personnel for an air base and all personnel were quartered in a CCC camp. Pretty setting with buildings all around two nice parade grounds. Camp complete in all details even with laundry which was run by some of the men who grew tired of waiting on the overtaxed facilities of the local laundry at Redmond. The first night was taken up by establishing guard details and posts, not much sleep for the C.O. and the Intelligence Officer. Every one around seemed war conscious and wanted us to furnish a guard detail for the town's water supply piped in from a mountain stream - this would have been a fine detail for some of the men for there was good fishing there - however no personnel could be spared. We did however supply guards for the Gasoline Tanks in the town from which we

drew our supply for the planes. The townspeople greeted us with open arms and Capt's. Myers and Davison attended two meetings of the Town Fathers- the ladies Auxiliary put on a dance for the men and brought girls from all around. We, of course supplying the transportation and incidentally the music for we were able to borrow instruments for our talented crew from the High School Band. This band of ours also participated in a bond rally at Bend, Oregon and succeeded in selling quite a few bonds and were quite the attraction at a special dance held thereafter for the bond buyers. The Mayor and his council were constant visitors at the base and the quadron played host to them at a grand and glorious Beer Bust at which they were the honored guests and all concerned learned many new and glowing ditties before the evening was over. It can honestly be said that the 401st was one of the best goodwill offerings ever made by the Army to the Civilian Population for the Squadron worked hard, played hard and at all times had the respect of the entire community. Ground School schedules were strenuous covering all subjects in Intelligence - Navigation - Bombing - Gunnery - Radio - code both blinker and radio together with a lot of day and night flying with practice missions planned in cooperation with Operations and Intelligence. Few planes were available - two were cracked up on landing - no one seriously hurt but the field was condemned and our trip was cut short. Communications put in the teletype to keep us in constant touch with Group Headquarters and field phones connected all guard posts with the Guard room. Much time was given over to drilling and exercise with formal guard mounts staged each day. The Squadron profited by this trip away from the Group for it proved it could operate as a separate unit and the morale was very high. Mutual respect was the key word.

2 August 1942 through 6 August

Usual AB activities.

14 August 1942

Squadron moved back to Walla Walla, Washington - movement made with incident.

23 August 1942

The best of friends must part for a while - Air echelon departs for its staging duties and to get those new air-planes we've been promised; See you later boys!!!

24 August 1942

Off we go to an unknown destination - Squadron entrained for unknown destination.

24 August 1942 through 18 August 1942

Enroute to unknown destination by train - good time was had by all good food lots of fun Morale wonderful. Air

Echelon goes by Air Ferry to Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho from Walla Walla. Washington.

26 August 1942

2nd Lts. Brown, Green, Freihofer and Franf assigned and joined Squadron. 2nd Lts. Benny, Traeger, Moeller and Vanderslice transferred out of Squadron.

27 October 1942

Most of Air Echelon left by train to report to unknown destination leaving behind the following: Capt's. Myers and Lasselle, 1st Lts. Bernhart, Bloodgood, Carroll, Eanes, English, Harris, Hosman, Larsen, McLean, Swais, and O'Neill, 2nd Lts. Allen, Adams, Bamber, Brunn, Buck, Cain, Carmichael, Conner, Schwendiman, Brown, Freihofer, and Frank, T/S Quarles, S/S Bacon, Burti, Goldstein, Haynes, Thompson, Sgt's. Gilroy, Cottrell, Lee, Taylor, Zeeck, Cpl's. Buchanan, Steel and Tyler.

29 August 1942

Ground echelon arrives at Fort Dix Staging Area at 4:00 AM. Little do we know what confronts us. We are introduced to our quarters - look as if all dirt for the past century was picked up and dumped into the barracks for the EM and the Officers were quartered in a former guard house - dirt everywhere - Everyone busy all day cleaning up the mess checking up on what was expected of us getting equipment making up endless rosters answering roll call after roll call. The poor cooks and KPs worked all through the night to get the cook house clean enough to cook in - and the mess hall respectable enough to feed American troops in.

30 August 1942 through 31 August 1942

Staging area duties.

1 September 1942

More staging area duties at Fort Dix. First trainload of Air Echelon arrives Bangor, Maine at 2015 Hours.

2 September 1942

Air Echelon left behind at Walla Walla, Washington on August 27 arrives at Bangor, Maine.

3 September 1942 through 9 September 1942

Air Echelon performs usual activities in connection with becoming acquainted with the new planes and getting proper equipment.

4 September 1942

Entrained from Fort Dix for New York point of embarkation arrived at 1930 hours. Put on the

Queen Mary. The EM went half into state rooms on "B" deck and half on the Sun Deck and we were quite surprised to find that they were to sleep on deck turn about. Everyone issued "Chow Passes." Every thing was secret about our arrival on board the ship and once on board you could not get off.

5 September 1942

Embarked for unknown destination from New York Point of Embarcation 1500 hours on HMS Queen Mary destination unknown but the bets were down on landing in England. Our first lesson in security - left port in broad day light with all hands on deck waving goodbye and every whistle blowing to call attention to the fact that a slightly overcrowded transport was leaving the safety of the port to put to sea.

6 September 1942 through 10 September 1942

At sea on HMS Queen Mary. Our first introduction to British wartime food - - Rifles issued to EM each nicely covered with cosmoline and a very acute shortage of wiping cloths. Nice smooth crossing no alerts and only two days of poor weather.

9 September 1942

1st Lt. Joseph (NMI) Bernhart, died in Morristown, New Jersey Hospital as result of airplane accident at Morristown, New Jersey.

11 September 1942

Arrived at Gourick, Scotland at 1300 hours, stayed on board until next morning. My Scotland looks pretty the little town looks like a cardboard town under a Christmas tree.

12 September 1942

Disembarked at Gourick, Scotland 0930 hours. Entrained 1130 hours enroute to unknown destination. Heading South and East fed about four times enroute by the canteen workers tea and English meat pies. 1st Lt. Earl F. Riley assigned and joined air echelon.

13 September 1942

Arrived at Airbase at Kimbolton, England at 0200 hours. First taste of powdered eggs very good then. Advance party had made everything ready for us our quarters were comfortable - what a long walk from the mess hall to our huts.

13 September through 6 October 1942

With Air Echelon at Bangor, Maine -Usual activities in getting other new planes, equipment and instructions for trip across to join Ground Echelon - this of course

includes the job of flying the Atlantic Ocean with some of the Navigators using it as their first real cross-country hop. All but Capt Lasselle made it OK. The men lost in his accident will be found in regular log.

14 September 1942

Slept late - had a look at the camp - our introduction to a dispersed airdrome. Easy day to allow everyone to rest up from the long stretch of traveling.

15 September 1942 through 30 September 1942

Usual Airbase activities - plus ground school for all personnel - gas courses - radio courses - lots of foot soldiering, manual of arms and general duties area guarded at night - usual growing pains when four organizations are called upon to act a single group unit - most of it straightened out without and harm except a few hurt egos by those who did not get that particular job. It was learned on September 14 1942 that Captain Joseph Bernhart died as the result of a plane crash near Morristown, New Jersey.

1 October 1942 through 2 October 1942

Usual Airbase activities.

3 October 1942

It was learned that Capt. Dale Lasselle's plane crashed enroute from Gander to Prestwick, Scotland killing all but two of those aboard. Capt. George C. Wassell, Medical Officer, 1st Lt. R. N. Allen, Navigator, 1st Lt. Lenord I. Koebel, Bombardier, Sgt R. J. Vaughn, Cpl John n. Gibson, and Pvt Justin C. Hamblin were killed. Injured were Cpl. Leon R. Harrison and PFC Korman E. Wickes. This A/C crashed about noon October 3, 1942 while flying through fog near Cusherdall, North Ireland.

4 October 1942 through 5 October 1942

Usual Airbase activities.

6 October 1942

The first planes of the Air Echelon arrived at Kimbolton bringing with them Major E. P. Myers, 1st Lts. Eanes, Hosman, O'Neill, Larsen, Bloodgood, English, Carroll, 2nd Lts. Adams, Anderson, Arnkil, Barr, Brown, M. E., Brown, R. R., Buck, Bush, Cain, Carper, Connor, Corson, Frank, Freihofer, Mendel, Smith and Tabor, T/S Quarles, Simmons, S/S Thompson, NL, Goldstein, Haynes, Bacon, Sgts. Cottrell, Zeeck, Otto, Byrdic, Dalterio, Damron, Taylor, Cpls. Kinf, Steele, Tyler, Sumpter, Howard, Lancaster, Ade, PFC. Zeglen, Bagwell, Borostowski, Hennessey, Tomek, Ferris, Pvts. Smith, Youell, Gearhart, Slominski, Stefula and Davis. They sure looked good to us and were welcomed by the ground crews. Such lov-

ing care no new planes ever received as was lavished on them by their respective crews - new life in the squadron Also arriving by air 2nd Lt R. S. Brunn.

7 October 1942 through 10 October 1942

Usual Airbase activities. Lots of fun breaking the air echelon in on British customs and expressions. They went thru a series of indoctrination lectures. Ground school went on full blast for every branch of the squadron.

11 October 1942

1st Lt. Swais brought in his plane with 2nd Lt Bamber, Carmichael, Green, S/S Burti, Sgts. Gilroy Velasquez, Cpl Buchanan, PFC. Gauze, Pvt. Fisher aboard.

13 October 1942

Our first replacement crew: 2nd Lts. Beasley, Deidering, Dreisbach, Chubb, S/S Schaeffer, Rupert, Sgts. Franklin, Sams, Cadle, Schippang assigned and joined Squadron.

14 October 1942

The organization moved from Kimbolton to Bassingbourn with the 91st Bomb Group. The move was made by truck convoy over a distance of 30 miles and time of arrival was 1830 hours. The Air Echelon brought over the planes.

15 October 1942

Major Myers relieved of command and made Operations Officer of the 91st Bomb Group and Capt. Aycock assigned and joined as C.O. per VOCCO 91st Bomb Group. 1st Lts. Riley, Harris and 2nd Lts. Schwendiman and Ashinhurst, T/S Kirk, S/S Dobson, Sgt Lee, Cpls. Snyder and Ward arrived with the last of the new planes.

17 October 1942

Capt. Felton transferred from Squadron.

21 October 1942

1st Lt. Brecht transferred from Squadron

24 October 1942

Seven planes took off led by Capt. Aycock with 1st Lts. Bloodgood, Eanes, Corson, Carroll, English and Swais. Thirty bombs were dropped in this high altitude practice mission.

31 October 1942

Five planes piloted by Capt. Aycock, 1st Lts. Eanes, Corson, English, and Riley took off and fired 8,500 rounds on a practice gunnery mission. Capt Walker transferred

in from 324th Bomb Squadron.

1 November 1942

PERSONAL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: One hour on blinker for combat Officers. FLYING: One aircraft on local flight for 1.15 hours to check off radio operators.

2 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES; None. GROUND SCHOOL: Navigators one hour on communications code. FLYING: 3 Aircraft flown on local transition. Total logged 4.3 hours.

3 November 1942

Pvt Williford sick in hospital dropped from organization, transferred to 2nd General Hospital. GROUND SCHOOL: Combat Officers - one hour on photo Interpretation. All combat personnel - One hour on Security. FLYING: None.

4 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: None. FLYING: None.

5 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: All combat Officers one hour in Photo Interpretation.

6 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: None. FLYING: 3 aircraft flew local formation logging total time of six hours.

7 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: All personnel one hour Chemical Warfare. FLYING: One aircraft flew local transition logging 2.3 hours. One aircraft flew night transition. What running around and excitement - The Group's first mission target Brest was on for today - 401st not required to supply any aircraft.

8 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: None. TOO MUCH EXCITEMENT AROUND FOR THE SQUADRON GOES ON ITS FIRST MISSION. TARGET ABBEVILLE, FRANCE. SQUADRON SUPPLIED FIVE AIRCRAFT.

A/C #	TOT	Alt. At Target	Bombs On Target
452	1201	21,000 ft.	10 x 500
431	1200	21,000 ft.	10 x 500
459	1201	21,000 ft.	10 x 500
449	1159	21,000 ft.	10 x 500
484	--	--	--

The Squadron supplied 5 of the 12 aircraft furnished by the Group. A/C #484 piloted by Lt J. W. Carroll did not go over enemy territory as it was forced to return early due to failure of #2 engine. Due to the failure of Lt. Col. Lawrence's aircraft to get to the target Capt. Aycock led the raid which was fairly successful. Heavy flak in a moderate amount was encountered in the target area. About 20 enemy aircraft hit the formation which by then had been reduced to seven aircraft. The opposition was rugged and counted for the first casualty for the Squadron as Capt Aycock was struck in the left leg by a 30 Cal. Bullet

CLAIMS: A/C #459 Youell FW 190 Probable
A/C #459 Bagwell ME 109 Probable

FOLLOWING CREWS CREDITED WITH SORTIES:

A/C #452	A/C #431
Lt. English Lt. Mendell Lt. T. Brown Lt. Barr	Capt. Aycock Capt. Eanes Lt. Brunn Lt. Buck
E/M Haynes E/M Slominski E/M Tyler E/M Tomek E/M Stefula E/M Carter	E/M Quarles E/M Smith E/M Thompson E/M Zeglin E/M Bagwell E/M Stewart
A/C #459	A/C #449
Capt. O. D. O'Neill Lt. Freihofer Lt. Adams Lt. Bush E/M Goldstein E/M Cottrell E/M Borostowski E/M Yuell E/M Snyder	Lt. Bloodgood Beasley Lt. Dreisbach Lt. Anderson Lt. Chubb E/M Shaefer E/M Steele E/M Schipping E/M Cadel

9 November 1942

PERSONNEL CHANGES: None. GROUND SCHOOL: None. FLYING: Mission to St. Nazaire, France The Squadron supplied 2 of 14 (13 over target) aircraft furnished by the Group. Both aircraft went over the target and successfully bombed the pin point objective. Aircraft #447 piloted by Lt Swais with Col. Wray led the Group and was the first over the target the flak at the target was the heaviest experienced by the Group to date but in spite of this no aircraft were lost although several crewmembers were seriously injured, and one Bombardier was killed. S/S Herbert E. Fisher of A/C #447 was unfortunate enough to have the lower part of his right ear shot off. This raid was commonly called the suicide raid as it was at low altitude instead of high altitude and subjected the Group to both light and heavy flak. The aircraft just pushed through one barrage after another and everyone feels that the Group was fortunate to come through with its aircraft. The reports of returning crews were glowing with reference to bombing results as the locks were reported blown up. The PRU photos, however disproved these reports proving that 1,000 pound bombs were not quite heavy enough to put the lock gates out of commission. Heavy flak on the bombing run was also a good deterrent and sighting may have been a bit erratic. No enemy aircraft were encountered on this trip.

A/C #	TOT	Alt. At Target	Bombs On Target
447	1407	9,800 ft.	5 x 1000
432	1407	9,800 ft.	5 x 1000

CREWS CREDITED WITH SORTIES:

A/C #452	A/C #431
Col. S. T. Wray Capt. R. W. Heaman	Lt. D. W. Corson Lt. B. W. Brown Lt. M. B. Connor Lt. B. W. Cain Lt. E. R. Bush (extra Bombardier)
Lt. J. F. Swais Lt. W. E. Hubbard Lt. J. W. Mc Partlin (spare CP)	T/S M. G. Bacon
T/S E. B. Buchanan S/Sgt. W. E. Gilroy S/Sgt. D. Velasquez S/Sgt. E. Gauze S/Sgt. H. E. Fisher	S/Sgt. T. F. Grimes S/Sgt. J. M. Franklin S/Sgt. R. L. Ferris S/Sgt. S. S. Palterio Cpl J. M. Barbour.
Cpl. R. A. Debarbrie.	