




The Ragged Irregular

91st Bombardment Group (H) Newsletter

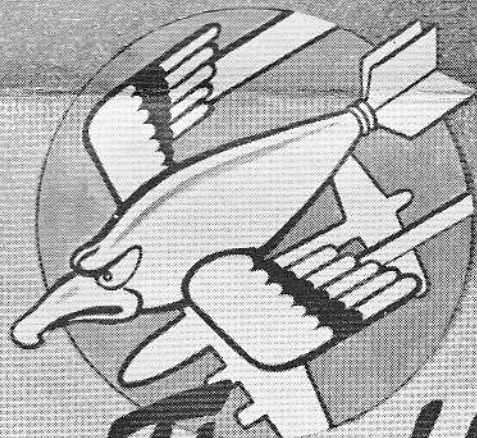
Vol. 3 No. 1

October, 1969

91ST BOMB. GP.



420
ENEMY A/C
DESTROYED



The Hard Way!

Our Missions Log reaches 300 in this issue. When the group, the first in the 8th AF to fly 100, 200, and 300 missions, reached this total the above plaque was prepared.

Dutch Villagers Still Honor 91st-ers

During "Operation Return" in June representatives of the 91st made a special trip to the village of Opijnen, Holland, to visit the gravesites of 8 former members of the group who were killed in a raid to Kassel July 30, 1943.

The 91st delegation, which placed floral decorations on the graves of the eight, included Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Gerstemeier, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Giambrone, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Fiigen, and Joe Camelleri. Also taking part in the ceremony was the Burgemeister of Opijnen, the Hendrick de Kock family, on whose farm two of the crew members landed, and Ab Jansen and Gerry Zijlstra, Dutch aviation historians.

The following story, from Stars and Stripes relates the story of the eight, and how the beautiful little village became their final resting place.

Peace and serenity reigned over the community of Opijnen, The Netherlands, on a bright, sunny July 30th, 1943. The

ravages of World War II had not yet reached this small farming village. The local farmers were in the fields harvesting their crops and preparing to take a short lunch break when a totally unexpected noise broke the stillness.

Overhead, a limping American B-17 bomber was being attacked by fighter aircraft of the German Luftwaffe. The lumbering giant didn't stand a chance against the swifter, more maneuverable fighters.

The farmers stopped their work and stared in awe as the crew members bailed out of their burning craft, hopefully to safety.

Their hope was short lived, however, because as the crew descended, the German aircraft banked sharply and strafed the crew as they dangled helpless in their parachutes.

Hendrick de Kock, one of the Opijnen farmers in the field that day recalled.

(continued on page 3)



Here Bob Gerstemeier, Eastern Division secretary, places a floral memorial on the gravesites of former 91st-ers at

the cemetery at Opijnen. The eight fliers are honored each year by the villagers.

"Eight of the crew members got out of the airplane, but when they were hanging on those big umbrellas the German fighter started shooting those poor boys. Oh, man, I got so mad I could have killed that fellow in the fighter."

From a crew of ten, two died in the aircraft, six died as a result of the strafing, and the other two were captured by German ground forces.

One of the men fell through the roof of a farm house adjacent to the field and lived long enough for de Kock to get him a drink of water — an extraordinarily brave act as the German ground forces were shooting at the local Dutchmen as well as at the Americans.

De Kock recalled, "He fell through the thatched roof and struck his head on one of the main beams of the house. I got him a drink of water, he gave me a few cigarettes to thank me, and then he died."

Two members of the crew survived, but they were captured almost immediately by the Nazis.

The few facts that are known about the bomber indicates that it was from the 91st Bomb Group (now the 91st Bomb Wing, SAC), Eighth Army-Air Force, flying from an air base in England on a mission to Kassel, Germany.

The townspeople of the village carried the bodies of the dead airmen to their local cemetery and kept the bodies in a small building until the Germans granted them burial permission. After permission

came from Berlin the graves were marked with simple wooden crosses inscribed only with the men's names.

At the end of the war, the remains of American servicemen buried on foreign soil were removed to central military cemeteries. However, the citizens of Opijnen requested that the graves of the eight airmen be left to their care in their own village cemetery.

The thought behind this small plot of land where these airmen are buried is best described by the citizens of Opijnen: "Where would we be and how would we live if it had not been for our Allies who fought and died for our freedom? In these eight men resting here in Opijnen under these marble headstones, we honor all men, that on this day we can be here having memorial services and speak our mind in freedom."

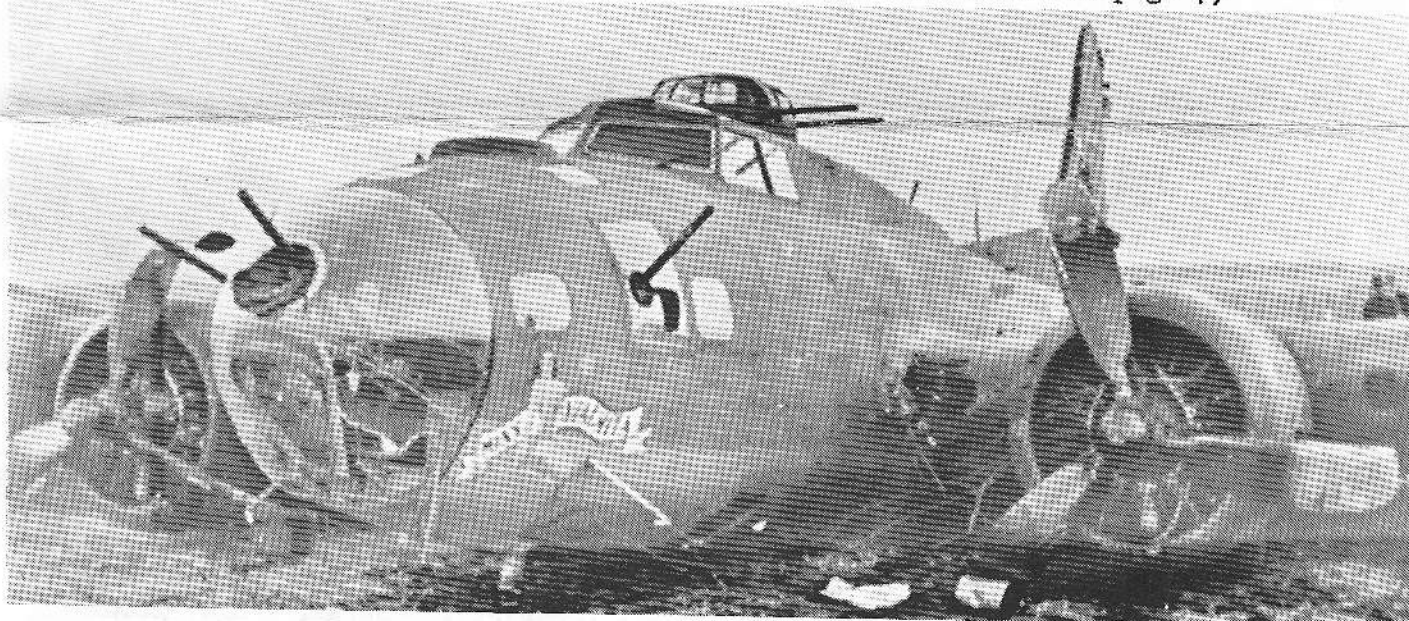
The eight graves are now marked with white marble headstones and are provided tender care by both the adults and children of the village.

The 91st is trying to locate relatives of the fliers. If any group members can help, please contact the Eastern Division secretary, Robert E. Gerstemeier, Kerr Road, R.D. #1, Lansdale, Pa. 19448.

The eight, with the last known (1945) addresses of their next of kin are:

1st Lt. Robert U. Duggan, son of Mrs.

(continued on page 7)



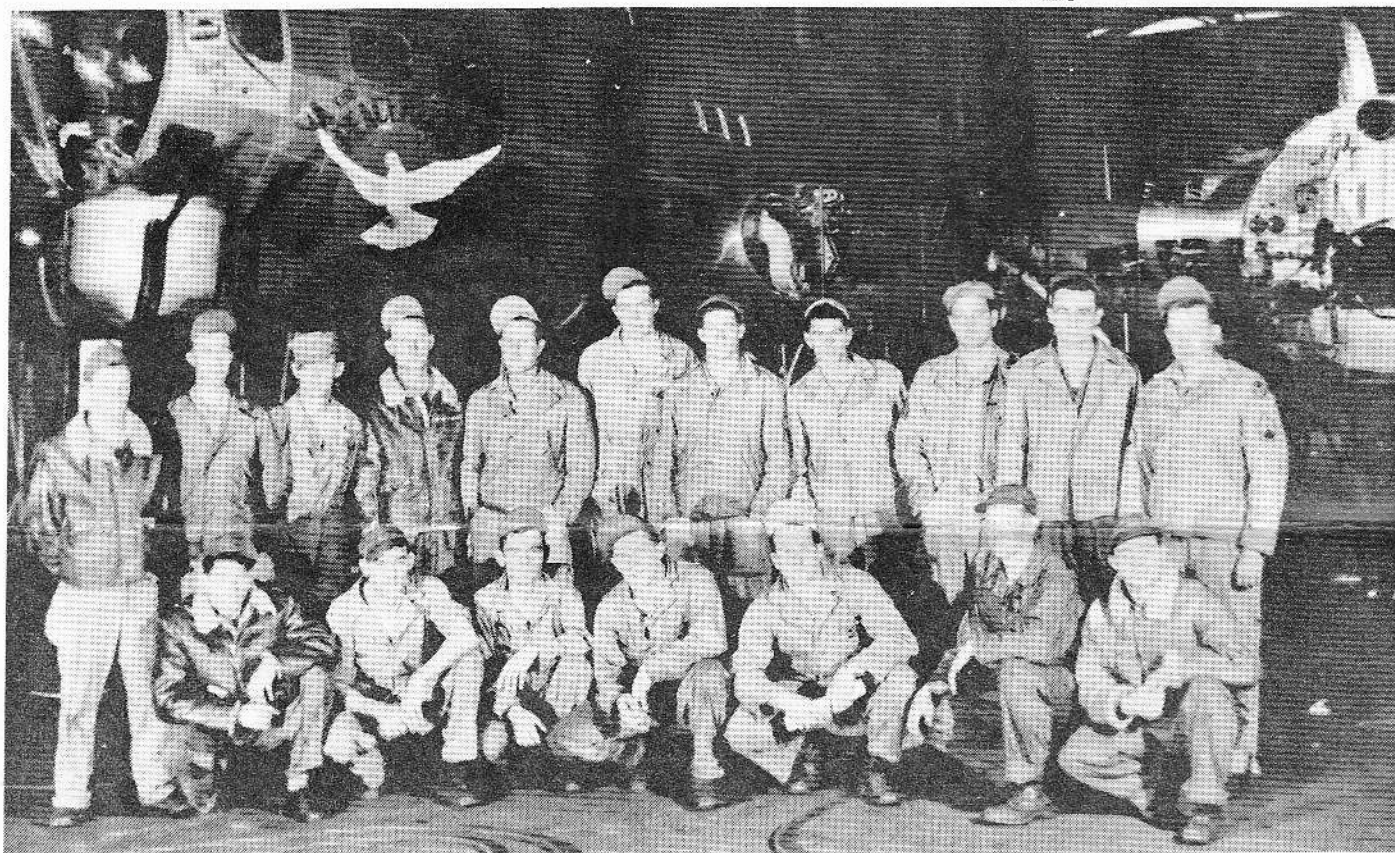
This 91st plane went down in Holland on Feb. 28, 1944. The photo is from the

collection of Gerry Zijlstra, who took part in the ceremony at Opijnen.

441 Sub-Depot-They Kept 'em Flying

This issue of The Ragged Irregular honors the unit that labored night and day to keep 91st planes flying. Their skill at rebuilding returned many a battered old bird to the flight line, and in addition the unit made many valuable contributions to the mechanical needs of other areas of the base. Because of the many different units of the Sub Depot we have run only a portion of the outfit in this issue. Others from the Sub Depot will appear in the January issue.

Here is the official insignia of the 441st Sub Depot, a spider busy with all eight legs, a flying B-17 in the background. The Latin motto reads "We labor to keep them in the air."



SHEET METAL DEPARTMENT

(Standing from left to right): Cpl. Frank J. Carrierio, Sgt. Clarence Moon, S/Sgt. James W. H. Clapp, Pfc. Andrew S. Puszykowski, S/Sgt. Joseph J. Scandalisto, Sgt. John A. Welsh, T/Sgt. Walter L. Ray, S/Sgt. Whitmal W. Hill, Sgt.

Ralph J. Schnee, S/Sgt. Faber H. Cripps, S/Sgt. John E. Carlstrom.

(Kneeling): Sgt. Edwin G. Zellars, Sgt. Ben D. Ritchie, Cpl. Robert E. Burnette, Cpl. Francis W. Grabruk, S/Sgt. Norman E. Wittman, T/Sgt. Albert E. Hudson and Sgt. Leo B. Mazzei.



SUB DEPOT OFFICERS

Standing before the old A-20, Bucket of Bolts, are: Lt. John H. Hagerty III, assistant engineering officer; W/O Ed. L. Ableman, sub depot supply officer;

Major Frank S. Kamykowski, sub depot commander; Capt. John P. O'Brien, sub depot engineering officer; Lt. Rudolph R. Kupersmith, adjutant, and W/O Harry L. Feeley, shop superintendent.



AERO REPAIR SECTION

(Standing from left to right): S/Sgt. Reginald H. Hapgood, Sgt. John H. Morgan, T/Sgt. Urban L. Fox, Jr., Sgt. Al A.

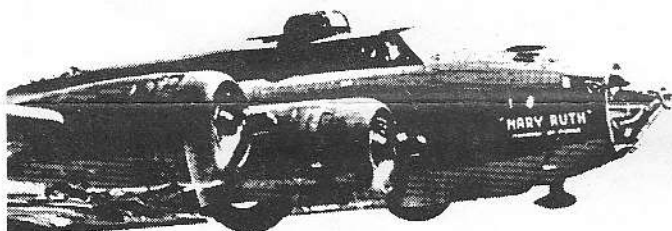
Brickman, S/Sgt. Benzion Frieden, T/Sgt. Fred W. Haby, M/Sgt. Truman C. Acker, T/Sgt. James K. Wachob, Pfc. Arthur E. Scaccia, and T/Sgt. James R. Wendling.

New Book Features 91st Planes

A Grenadier Book

\$4.95

HELL'S ANGELS



by Steve Birdsall

B-17 COMBAT MARKINGS THE FLYING FORTRESS

Former 91st planes play a prominent part in the recently published book "Hell's Angels" by Steve Birdsall, showing B-17s from all the combat areas of WW II.

A color shot of the 401st plane "Mary Ruth" is "cover girl" for the publication, and there is another center spread in color of that plane and "Stric Nine," another 401st plane during a mission to France.

Other 91st planes shown are: General Ike; Evenin' Folks, How Y'All; Eagles' Wrath; Yankee Doodle; Chenaults' Pappy; Royal Flush; Memphis Belle; Piccadilly Commando; Quitchurbitchin; The Sad Sack; Rebel's Revenge; Hikin' for Home; Bam Bam; Delta Rebel No. 2; Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby; Sweet Rose O'Grady; Shamrock Special; Qualified Quail; Bomb Boogie; Shamrock Special; Mount 'N' Ride; Just Nothing; Fightin' Pappy; Betty Jane; Hitler's Gremlins.

Mentioned in the text are Nine O Nine; Victory Queen; Anxious Angel; Blue Dreams; Zootie Cutie; Bad Egg;

The Bearded Beauty; The Village Flirt; Jack The Ripper; Lady Luck, and My Prayer.

"Hell's Angels" can be ordered from Grenadier Books, 7805 Deering Avenue, Canoga Park, Calif. 91304 for \$4.95.

Far Western States Rally Round Set

A Far Western States Rally Round for 91st-ers of California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona is on tap for Saturday, February 7 at Anaheim, Calif. The affair will be held at the Jolly Roger Inn, event will be held at the Jolly Roger Inn, just across the street from Disneyland.

Originally planned as an area get-together, the Southern California Rally Round Committee, under the leadership of Doug Gibson, decided to include the far western area, since there will be no national reunion in '70 where division members might meet.

The 91st hospitality room will open at 2 p.m. A roast beef dinner is set for 8 o'clock.

Persons who plan to stay at the Jolly Roger must make reservations not later than January 7. Reservations for dinner should be made not later than January 31. Contact Doug Gibson, 2740 Knoxville Ave., Long Beach, Calif. 90815 for reservations. Bring the kids and enjoy Disneyland too!

Lansdale Rally Round Held

An informal Rally Round of 91st-ers in the Lansdale, Pa., area met August 3 at the farm home of Eastern Division secretary Robert E. Gerstemeier. Twenty-six members and wives and 14 children were present.

Personal photo albums and scrapbooks were examined during the afternoon of "hangar flying," and following a steak dinner the group viewed color slides taken during Operation Return.

Present were Maj. Gen. and Mrs. Stanley T. Wray; Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Manzano; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bara; Mr. and Mrs. Gary "Al" Ramulus; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ialli; Mr. and Mrs. Russell Wilson; Mr. and Mrs. Ken Fiigen; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gerstemeier; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph M. Giambrone; Mr. Joseph Camelleri; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Chryst, and associate members Alton Renninger, Mr. and Mrs. William Gerstemeier, and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Horrocks.

From The Editor's Desk...

One of the greatest ideas yet for the continued existence of the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association has come from Col. I J. "Manny" Klette, who flew more combat missions than any other 91st-er, (more than 100) and was the last C. O. of the outfit before it returned to the states. A letter to Eastern Division treasurer Joe Giambrone has this to say:

Dear Joe:

It was a real pleasure to visit in Pennsylvania yesterday with Paul Chryst, Joe Camelleri, Bob Gerstemeier, and you. I was most impressed by the details which all of you have worked out to make "Operation Return" the exciting adventure for all participants that I know it will be. Your efforts on this project are just another example of the enthusiastic appreciation demonstrated by the four of you, with the support of your wonderful wives, which has made the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association the success which it has achieved in so short a time.

It would please me to become a member for life of this fine organization. I am inclosing a check for \$100 to cover my lifetime dues, which fact will in no sense negate my continuing financial donations to the organization.

My best wishes to all those making "Operation Return."

Sincerely,
Manny Klette

Col. Klette, who is now a research scientist for Battelle Memorial Institute, has received the first gold lifetime membership card.

In the Western Division stalwart John Dowrick, of Colorado Springs, has also made a \$100 donation for a lifetime membership.

Several persons have requested photographs of the plaque displayed on the cover of the July Irregular. Copies suitable for framing may be obtained from Eastern Division co-chairman Paul Chryst for \$1.75. His address is 1494 N. Adams St., Pottstown, Pa. 19464.

A note from Col. Robert W. Harris, who has just moved from Alconbury to London, had this to say about the 1969 reunion: "Operation Return" was too good to believe possible—but so was the 91st!"

One of our "newly found" members of the Western Division sent along this fine letter with his dues to George Parks.

Dear George:

Please find \$5 enclosed for dues and memorial, and accept our thanks for a fine job. I often think of those past days and the boys who gaily and gladly gave their lives, so that the rest of us could have a chance to live in peace, and it was only fitting that someone make the effort to provide a memorial.

Perhaps each generation has to learn the hard way, freedom isn't free; that it was bought and paid for. I for one will never forget.

Mary and Trafford Dahle

Relatives of Fliers Sought...

F. R. Dick, 135 E. 79th St., NYC.

2nd Lt. Daniel V. Ohman, family unknown.

T/Sgt. Douglas V. Blackwood, brother of Mrs. G. Palmer-Blackwood, 18 Hazelwood Ave., East Providence, R. I.

T/Sgt. Americo Cianfichi, husband of Mrs. A. Cianfichi, 2627 West Wells St., Milwaukee, Wisc.

S/Sgt. George R. Krueger, brother of Paul Krueger, Rt. #2, Hankinson, N. D.
S/Sgt. Mike A. Perrotta, brother of Mrs. Frank Ciampoli, 219 E. Home St., New Castle, Pa.

S/Sgt. Herman D. Poling, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Poling, Box 92, Vinton, Ohio.

S/Sgt. H. Royce Sparks, son of Mrs. D. R. Bartholomew, Rt. 3, Box 382, Anacortis, Wash.

Dutch writer Gerry Zijlstra is eager to contact 91st-ers whose planes went down in Holland. His address is:

Roelenengweg 124
Voorthuizen
Holland

The Ragged Irregular

Published quarterly to help keep alive the spirit of the 91st Bomb Group (H) and supporting units, and to maintain the fellowship of those who fought together in WWII from AF Station 121, Bassingbourn, England, 1942-45.

EDITOR, Paul C. Burnett, Box 909,
Auburn, Ala. 36830

PRESIDENT,

M/Gen. Stanley T. Wray (Ret.)

Log of Missions - The Fifth Installment

Here is the continuation of the mission log begun in the July, 1968 issue. The left-hand numbers represent completed missions; the next row represents the alerts, and then the date is shown, by day and month.

Alert	1944								
215.	337	12-8	Buc	Completed	258.	395	25-11	Merseburg	Completed
216.	338	13-8	Le Manor	Completed	259.	396	26-11	Altenbeken	Completed
217.	339	14-8	Met/Frechaty	Completed	260.	397	27-11	Offenburg	Completed
218.	340	15-8	Ostheim	Completed	261.	398	29-11	Misburg	Completed
219.	341	16-8	Halle	Completed	262.	399	30-11	Zeitz	Completed
	342	23-8	Russelheim	Cancelled	263.	400	4-12	Kassel	Completed
220.	343	24-8	Id. Kolleda		264.	401	5-12	Berlin	Completed
			Hi & Lo Goslar	Completed		402	7-12	Munster	Scrubbed
221.	344	25-8	Neubrandenburg	Completed	265.	403	9-12	Stuttgart	Completed
222.	345	26-8	Gelsenkirchen	Completed	266.	404	11-12	Frankfurt	Completed
223.	346	27-8	Heligoland	Completed	267.	405	12-12	Merseburg	Completed
224.	347	30-8	Kiel	Completed	268.	406	15-12	Kassel	Completed
225.	348	3-9	Nickels-TU-Tar	Completed	269.	407	18-12	Luxembourg Area	Completed
226.	349	5-9	Ludwigshafen	Completed		408	19-12	Schwerte	Scrubbed
	350	6-9	Berlin	Cancelled		409	20-12	Cologne	Scrubbed
	351	6-9	Bremen	Cancelled	270.	410	24-12	"D" Merzausen	
227.	352	8-9	Ludwigshafen	Completed				"C" Kirch-Gons	Completed
228.	353	9-9	Ludwigshafen	Completed	271.	411	28-12	Indendorf	Completed
229.	354	10-9	Gaggenau	Completed	272.	412	29-12	Wittlich	Completed
230.	355	11-9	Lutzkendorf	Completed		413	30-12	Boschofsheim	Scrubbed
231.	356	13-9	Lutzkendorf	Completed	273.	414	31-12	(Bitburg)	Completed
			Eisenach	Completed				1945	
	357	14-9	Berlin	Scrubbed	274.	415	1-1	Kassel	Completed
	358	16-9	Eindhoven	Scrubbed	275.	416	2-1	Prum	Completed
232.	359	19-9	Hamm	Completed	276.	417	3-1	Koln	Completed
	360	20-9	Kassel	Scrubbed	277.	418	5-1	Koblenz	Completed
233.	361	21-9	Mainz	Completed	278.	419	6-1	Koln	Completed
234.	362	25-9	Frankfurt	Completed	279.	420	10-1	Ostheim	Completed
235.	363	26-9	Osnabruck	Completed	280.	421	14-1	Koln	Completed
236.	364	27-9	Koln	Completed	281.	422	15-1	Ingolstadt	Completed
237.	365	28-9	Madgeburg	Completed		423	16-1	Berlin	Scrubbed
238.	366	30-9	Munster	Completed	282.	424	17-1	Paderborn	Completed
239.	367	2-10	Kassel (Fritzlar)	Completed	283.	425	20-1	Ludwigshafen	Completed
240.	368	3-10	Neurnburg	Completed	284.	426	21-1	Aschaffenburg	Completed
	369	4-10	Koln	Scrubbed	285.	427	22-1	Sterkrade	Completed
241.	370	6-10	Neubrandenburg	Completed		428	27-1	Bremen	Scrubbed
242.	371	7-10	Freiberg-T.O.		286.	429	28-1	Koln	Completed
			Wurzen		287.	430	29-1	Niederlahmstein	Completed
			Ruhland-401st	Completed		431	31-1	"A" Berlin	
	372	8-10	Brux, Czech.	Scrubbed				"B" Misburg	Scrubbed
243.	373	9-10	Schweinfurt	Completed	288.	432	1-2	Mannheim	Completed
	374	12-10	Koln	Scrubbed		433	2-2	"A" Berlin	
	375	13-10	Koln	Scrubbed				"B" Dresden	Scrubbed
244.	376	14-10	Koln	Completed	289.	434	3-2	Berlin	Completed
245.	377	15-10	Koln	Completed	290.	435	6-2	Gotha	Completed
246.	378	17-10	Koln	Completed		436	7-2	Osterfeld	Recalled
	379	18-10	Kassel	Scrubbed		437	8-2	Wesel	Recalled
247.	380	19-10	(Ludwigshafen)		291.	438	9-2	Altenbeken	Completed
			Karlsruhe Kreunach	Completed		439	10-2	Kassel	Scrubbed
248.	381	22-10	Brunswick	Completed		440	11-2	Munster	Scrubbed
249.	382	25-10	Hamburg	Completed		441	13-2	"A" Kassel	
250.	383	26-10	Munster	Completed				"B" Dresden	Scrubbed
251.	384	30-10	Hamm	Completed	292.	442	14-2	Lead U/I T/O	
	385	31-10	Politz	Scrubbed				Hi & Lo Prague	Completed
252.	386	2-11	Merseburg	Completed	293.	443	15-2	Dresden	Completed
	387	3-11	Hamburg	Scrubbed	294.	444	16-2	Gelsenkirchen	Completed
253.	388	5-11	Offenbach	Completed		445	17-2	Bohlen	Recalled
254.	389	6-11	Hamburg	Completed		446	18-2	Altenbeken	Scrubbed
255.	390	9-11	Gd. Supp. Metz	Completed	295.	447	19-2	Dortmund	Completed
	391	12-11	Hamm	Scrubbed	296.	448	20-2	Nurnberg	Completed
	392	14-11	Bielfeld	Scrubbed	297.	449	21-2	Nurnberg	Completed
256.	393	16-11	Gd. Supp. Aachen	Completed	298.	450	22-2	Stendal	Completed
257.	394	21-11	(Lutzkendorf)		299.	451	23-2	Meiningen	
			Merseburg	Completed				Hildburghausen	Completed
					300.	452	24-2	Hamburg	Completed

THE FIRST IN THE EIGHTH TO REACH 300!