

Allen Brill, 1st LT., AAF

November 14, 1942-Saturday

Took off from Bassingborn at 11:00 with fourteen B-17's for a daylight raid on La Pallice. 1st Lt McClellan, Operations 1st pilot, & myself, Co-pilot Lt Hemingway, Navigator 2nd Lt Yoshin- Bombadier, Lt Gaitlya crew comprised the remainder of our crew. Target La Pallice. Took 2000lbs. bombs aboard. We were to have flown due south over the channel crossing France to our target at 19,000 feet. Almost an hour over France. Returning by sea at 500 feet to Lands End and home, or if in distress, wounded aboard, or low on gas, land at Exeter. Met six B-17's of 306th group on schedule at rendezvous. Test fired all guns over channel. Left waist gun jammed. Turned back halfway across channel because unable to repair gun. No enemy planes sighted on return. Hemmingway brought us home in spite of bad haze and ground fog. Tower advised against landing with bombs because of poor visibility. Dropped bombs in Wash. Encountered heavy haze attempting return to base. Close squeeze with two balloon barrages. Managed to get in at an English field near Bedford. No accommodations so took off again and D.Q'd to Thouraleigh base of the 306th visibility 1/8th mile. Landed at 17:04 about starved since none of us had eaten since 05:30 breakfast. Very good dinner. A few drinks and a full session with 306th pilots then to bed in quarters of some of their boys on leave.

November 15, 1942-Sunday

Field closed until late afternoon. Visibility ¾ mile when we took off at about 16:00. Flight home uneventful. Routine interrogation by S-2. Found my crew had been given 24 hour passes yesterday, and no mail. That's what I get for going on missions when I'm not required to. Its getting to be a hellava war. Four of our fourteen ships turned back yesterday. Three had gun failure and Major Meyer's tail-gunner froze his hands trying to repair a frozen oxygen mask. An electrically heated mask should be provided. The ships that finished the raid are weathered in at Exeter. Rumor has it they encountered no fighters and undamaged by flak, but were unable to hit primary target because of weather. Its too much to hope that Jerry has pulled all his fighters south because of the show in North Africa.

November 16, 1942-Monday

Eight months ago today we were married. Nothing to do today but remember the days we were together. Scheduled for a daylight raid tomorrow and should have gone to bed early. Instead, sat up and read Daphne DuMauriess "Jamaica Inn" through. Next door some of those who should also be asleep are playing poker. These nights before are always this way. It isn't because we are nervous and can't sleep. I've fought off drowsiness several times tonight. It must be an involuntary desire to be doing anything but wasting time sleeping before that trip across the channel. Oh well. No mail from Jo Ann.

November 17, 1942-Tuesday

Well it looks as though I shall die of old age after all. Major Smelza went in my place today. Ten 500lb bombs aboard. Buildings and installations around St.Najaire were the target. And I am off for 24 hrs in Cambridge.

November 18, 1942-Wednesday

Caught the 13:30 bus from Royston to Cambridge yesterday. Spent the afternoon looking around. It's a delightful old town and thoroughly steeped in the atmosphere and tradition that seems to mean so much to the English. Had tea at a surprisingly modern tea-room, "The Dorothy". There was music and a small dance floor. Went shopping, or I should say looking for something to send home for Christmas. Must not have the old Christmas spirit, at any rate couldn't find anything I felt like sending. Went to see the American film "The Man Who Came to Dinner". Excellent. Back through the blackout to the house where I had managed to find lodging. The room was miserably cold and hardly worth the ten shillings it cost me for bed and breakfast. Went to sleep thinking of JoAnn and wondering how the fellows made out of the raid. Slept late so by the time I'd had breakfast it was time to catch the bus back. The fellows were lucky yesterday. Tangled with FW-190's and a few ships, ours among them. Fairly well shot up but nobody hurt. The "Bad Penny" will need a new wing and oil tank for No. 1 engine. About five FW 190's shot down. Some of our ships on another raid this morning. No fighter opposition today and little flak. Major Senowich & Lt. Hardin collided in some bad weather on the way home. Nobody hurt although they both landed in south England because of the collision. No mail from JoAnn but a letter from Aunt Edith.

November 19, 1942-Thursday

Finally got the orders making me 1st Lt. as of November 8, 1942. Was beginning to think I'd still be wearing gold bars when the war is over. No mail.

November 20, 1942-Friday

Dull day. Studied photo interpretation and blinker code. Mail!! Two letters from JoAnn and one from Aunt Lena. Also two Christmas pkgs, one from Mother and one from Aunt Edith & Uncle Cole. Guess this is about the first Christmas I haven't waited till Dec 25th to open packages. Guess I was getting in a rut. A bit of Hollywood here at the base tonight in the way Martha Ray, Carol Landis, and Kay Francis. They put on a grand show. Kay Francis was M.C. and although I would never have imagined her in that role she carried on a good live of patter and good jokes. C. Landis got off some jokes and sang a sexy song or two that went over in a big way. M. Ray stopped the show however with her usual funny faces and good singing and some raw jokes. K. Francis sang a clever song, "That's a Wolf". They also had a clever dancer Mitzie Mayfair who with the help of a red headed Sergeant showed us some real jitterbugging. Gosh it was good to see someone from the states besides Army—well another raid cooking for tomorrow but

I'm going to sit up and write letters anyway. Dull day but from mail time on it was a great evening.

November 21, 1942-Saturday

Another slow day. Aircraft identification class. Read all afternoon. An air-mail letter from JoAnn tonight. Seems an eternity since we said goodbye at Walla Walla. Tomorrow is Sunday and my 26th birthday and to celebrate I'll give Adolph a few surprise packages. The 26th anniversary of my birth and I drop death on people who aren't even soldiers-but maybe the target will be an air-drome. Well someone has to fly the bombers. Hope the civilians have time to get away to shelter. As usual no one seemed ready to sleep even though we'll have to get up early. Baxter came up about midnight just as I was finishing some letters. He was dragging a fifth of gin & wanted to congratulate me for living to be 26 years old. Talked till after two o'clock and had a few. The straight gin kept reminding me of the days Charly Steeple and I used to drink the stuff straight at the dances seven or eight years ago. Must write to old Charly. Most of the time the conversation seemed to go toward our wives and home. Baxter was married only six weeks before we came over here. They are "expecting" about next March I believe. Each of us seemed to take turns at listening while the other talked about the one person, the one girl. That's the way things seem to go these evenings before a raid. You think of the one you love and picture the future as it will be if all goes well the next day. You never think of all the raids to come. Just the raid at hand. If you come back from that one the others can then become gauntlets to be run. I find myself wondering for a minute or two about whether or not there is actually some form of existence beyond death. And if so what is it like. Will I be able to observe the course of events on earth? And if so would I be concerned with them? Is there a heaven and a hell? If so isn't it logical to believe that they are experienced during the span of life? All those thoughts can come and go in a second. Probably they are silly thoughts such as a child of ten or twelve would have. And I think I did think such things at that age. Yet if any man, regardless how learned were to contemplate his end I believe he would have just such thoughts if only for a moment. Maybe I don't go to church often enough. In the morning you don't have time for such introspection. Not when there is the briefing, target, weather, flak battery locations, colors and letter of the period, last minute instructions. The guns must be inspected for oil. Oil, the thinnest film of which can and does freeze and jams the gun at sub zero temperatures. Water bottles filled rations, oxygen supply, first aid kits, escape kits, ammunition and so it goes. And so it will go in the morning yet here I sit. Enough of this chatter. It's sleep I want.

November 22, 1942-Thursday

Up at 04:15. Breakfast 04:45. Briefing 05:30. Our crew not scheduled after all. Cliburns co-pilot had been up all night as Alert officer so I told him I'd go in his place. Bomb loading 2-2000 pounders. Primary Target-Sub-base at Lorient. Secondary Sub base at St Naguire. Third: Brest. Stood by to take off at 10:20. Finally given the green light at 10:45. We were in number two position of last three ship element. Barton, flight leader of our element flew one hell of a formation. We were over France for twelve

minutes before he finally lead us up within range of protective fire of the rest of formation. All of our targets completely covered by a 10/10 overcast at about 8000 ft. Jerry threw very little flak at us and we were not attacked by fighters. Circled around between Lorient and Belle Island for almost an hour watching for a break in the clouds. Pursuit (FW 190's) looked us over but evidently decided that since we couldn't bomb them it would be useless to attach. It is my opinion that most of our bomber pilots underestimate the ability of the fighter to be effective with the 13-17. We were just asking for trouble by staying over France so long but our luck held. The formation got scattered on the way back during the let down from 19,000 feet. Our element leader with whom we were thoroughly disgusted by that time seemed to wander all over the sky. We left him finally after we got over England, and came on home alone. Kurtz did some beautiful navigating. Visibility very poor. Landed just before dark with bombs aboard and about 30 minutes gas left. Cliburn is, I believe, one of the best pilots of the 91st and it's a pleasure to fly with him. Seven hours in the air and I got some much needed brushing up on altitude formation. Haven't flown a mission with my own crew yet. "The Bad Penny" should be "Old Taylor" and read all of Joanns letters by way of having a birthday party for myself. Another mission tomorrow and our crew should be in it although we'll have to use somebodys ship. No mail. Cliburn said I was a jinx because we didn't get bombs away, but this is the first time they haven't come back full of holes.

November 23, 1942 Monday

Up at 06:15. Briefing at 07:30. Our crew going in Garrett ship but Major Swelya going in my place since we are to lead the group. Target St Nazaire. Went back to bed this morning and read "The Days of Ofelia" by Diamant this afternoon. Very interesting book concerning the writers impression of Mexico. Cliburn landed about 18:30 with most controls shot away. His radio operator Sgt badly wounded. DeBaun wounded. 20mm and piece of armor plate in his hip. Cliburn had slight leg wound. Lt. Gorman crashed somewhere south of here. "Tex" Davis, bombardier, Lt Ball, navigator; and engineer killed. Crash probably a result of damage by FW 190. Rest of crew seriously injured. My crew with Major Swelya in my place at Ft Hemingway as 2nd navigator last seen going down SW of St Nazaire. Major Zenowich's ship seen going down at that time also. Major Swelya evidently lead only four ships in as six of the ten that took off had to come back. Makes me a "Monday morning coach", but can't help thinking it was foolish. Underestimating effectiveness of fighters again. Will have to wait until tomorrow for details. Cliburn says they had flak all the way across France. Made a bombing run, but target obscured by overcast. No bombs dropped. Attacked by fighters over target. Cliburns rudder controls and oxygen knocked out. He drove away from remaining three ships headed for clouds out to sea. Came in at 1000 ft without radio. Remaining three ships being pretty well shot up by continuous fighter attacks when they left. My crew and Major Zenowich's crew still unaccounted for. Sgt Montaleone (our tail gunner) wasn't along, thank Heaven. There's still a chance they might be picked up by Air Sea Rescue if they got away from French Coast.

November 24, 1942 Tuesday

Lt Jones & Major Smelzer and their crew and Major Zenowich and crew did not return. Our house seems empty with Baxter, Wahl and Hemminway gone. Some of us inventoried and packed away their personal effects. There is a possibility that some of the missing crews survived and were picked up by the Germans. Sgt Hernandez is probably dead, however as blood was seen running from ball turret. Got a good long letter from JoAnn today!

November 25, 1942 Wednesday

Lt. McLellan & I test hopped the "Bad Penny". Flew formation with Lt Crum & Gilman for a while and buzzed a few near by fields. An American Spitfire run simulated attacks for a while and he did a darn nice job of flying-two more men of Gormans crew died as a result of the crash. Results of last Mondays raid: 5 known dead, 22 missing and probably some or all of them dead. 7 seriously wounded. 1-(Cliburn) slightly wounded. 4 airplanes lost (Cliburns to be salvaged for parts). And they were unable to drop their bombs on target. Overcast. V-mail from JoAnn.

December 9, 1942 Wednesday

Haven't been in the mood to write in this for quite a while. In fact, nothing much to write about. A few test hops and that's about all. Capt McClellan and I did vary the routine one day by taking up the Bad Penny with no crew except the two of us. We've only had one raid carried out since November 23rd. Target, Lille France. No ships lost. Had a bombardier and a navigator get pretty well shot up however. The navigator was just a kid. Brown, I think his name is. Very handsome fellow. Ironically enough his wound was in the face & pretty bad. Bombardier got it on the backside and in the thigh very bad. The F.W. 190's came in from the front that day. Hope they don't perfect a nose on attack. If they ever start coming in elements of two in rapid succession which is what I would do if I were flying fighters I'm afraid they could pretty well saturate our defenses. Especially if they could coordinate an attack of about six two ship elements attacking from almost level at 11:30 in trail elements about 100 yards between elements and simultaneously a similar attack from above and at about 19:00. I'd find out if my ideas of a pursuit on bomber attacks are any good. Well if they do start, I hope I'm a wash out as a tactician. Cliburn & his crew taking over Bad Penny. I'm attached to his crew until DeBaun gets back from hospital & on flying status. I shot a few landing in the Bad Penny this afternoon. Gave a talk on Delayed Paiack jumps yesterday at Squadron meeting. Flanagan had to make a forced landing with a spanking new B-17 yesterday. No. 4 prop ran away at 17,000 feet. Wouldn't feather. Caught fire. Almost tore loose. Made wheel down landing in the mud on an under construction drone. Pretty rough ground and from what I heard of it the ship probably took a hell of a beating structurally, although he made a good landing under the circumstances. Major Putman, our new C.O., is eager and very much on the ball. This should be the best heavy bomber squadron in the Force now. First letter from JoAnn since Nov 25th came today. Got a cable from her about a week ago as a birthday greeting. Raid scheduled for tomorrow. We're going.

December 10, 1942 Thursday

Raid cancelled shortly before take off time. It would have been one that would do credit to Hollywood. Won't put down details because will probably have it again for our next operational mission. V-mail letter from JoAnn tonight.

December 11, 1942 Friday

Almost made arrangements to fly one of the P-39's that have been landing over here lately. Ferry pilots who are bringing them in land here where the belly tanks are removed before the Fighter Group stationed near here fly them over to their own field which has no hard surface runways. Sat in the cockpit for a few minutes and the old procedure came back readily enough. Check up on my operation notes just to make sure however, couldn't get permission from the Capt in charge but may be able to arrange it at their own field. Loaded 500 pounders this afternoon. Got the same raid scheduled which must have been planned by some ex-scenario writer. Was to have had a 48 hour pass starting tomorrow at noon but I'm sure some of our crew will want to miss this one. Two V-mail letters from JoAnn tonight. Capt. McClellan came by & asked me to go into Cambridge with him and although I wanted to write a regular letter to JoAnn, decided to make it a short note & go see a movie. Will answer her letters tomorrow when we get back. I always like to have some particular thing planned for after when a mission is scheduled.

December 12, 1942 Saturday

Took off on the mission this morning but after reaching the coast, our ball turret went out. Frozen solenoid, I think. Anyway, we turned back. Don't think I would have turned back then had I been in the command of this ship. Jerry is beginning to wise up and send flights of FW190's & ME 109's out over the channel to wait for those that fall out & go back. The mission was not a success because of clouds obscuring target. No ships lost out of our group or even shot up but one or two ships from another group were lost. Two thirds of the ships that took off for the mission had to abort. Well, we'll hear about this day—and we should. Gunners top-turret knocked down-FW190.

December 14, 1942 Monday

Went to London yesterday. Ran into Capt. Rickles at the train and we made the trip together. Stopped at the Park Lane. Spent the afternoon just walking around the town. Walked down Fleet Street. Visited St. Pauls Cathedral. Had tea at Picadilly Hotel. Dinner at the Park Lane. Got hilariously tight at the bar on rum & cider. Col. Maughan who was with some American women pilots who were over here flying (ferrying) for the British.

December 20, 1942 Sunday

We had seventeen ships take off this morning for Romilly-Sun-Siene. None of our ships had to turn back. I went with Cliburns crew. Under attack almost all the way in and all

the way out. My first views of Paris. The FW190's concentrated on frontal attacks. Mostly 12, 1 or 2 o'clock. Some from attacks and a few from the tail. We lost two ships out of the 401st. English & Corson were the 1st pilots. Others shot up and lucky to get back. I saw two ships of the 306th Group ahead of us go down. One dived straight down. The other went down under control and several of the crew bailed out. But I'm afraid they opened their chutes to quickly to avoid being shot up. All groups lost ships today. Our left elevator and vertical stabilizer were shot up.

February 4, 1943 Thursday

A letter from JoAnn today in which she said she hope I was keeping a diary. So here goes, I'll try again. Up at 04:30. Briefing at 05:30. Station at 08:05. Taxis out at 08:35 and took off at 08:30. Capt. Morgan and Col. Wray lead the Group and our Group lead the entire Wing. Jackson was my co-pilot. Lt. Ball navigator. Sgt. Cornwell nose gunner and bombardier. We carried no bomb sight having twin 50-cal mounted in the nose instead. Cornwell toggled out our ten 500lb bombs on the lead ships. Sgt. Dickson Engineer & top turret. Good man. Sgt. Simons radio. Sgt. Nettles ball turret. Sgt. Cheff and Simon waist gunners. Sgt. Clay tail gunner. We flew on Capt. Morgans right wing. On the way over the North Sea, our ball turret operator said he couldn't stand the cold in the ball turret and had to come out. He rode the entire trip in the nose. Our heater wasn't working so it was cold everywhere. 40c below zero. Hamm, Germany, our primary target was obscured by overcast. Went back and bombed Cruden. Flak wasn't too bad. Heavy fighter attack for about an hour & fifteen minutes. FW 190's, ME 109's. Also a few turn engine fighters. ME 110's and JV 88's. We had a 20mm explosive hit right behind the top turret. The explosion knocked Dickson off his feet but he wasn't injured. The bulk head saved him, I guess. Another 20mm blew up in our No. 3 nacelle. No. 1 engine super charger was hit & we lost all the oil out of the superch tank. No. 2 was hit tearing a big hole in the induction system resulting in considerable loss of power. A little over half way back we had to go down to less than 3000 ft to maintain air speed. Tried to feather No. 2 but it would not feather. So we started it again and did get some help from it. We lost the formation of course when we had to lose altitude. By that time we weren't getting full power from any of our engines but No. 1 was our best. Had to go on instruments for about an hour through cloud and snowstorm. The wings started to ice up and the controls and instruments in the cockpit and the nose iced up. Then the inter-phone went out. We finally broke through the soup over England at about 3000 feet. Lt. Ball had given us a good heading of 240 degrees and when Sgt. Simons got his first QDM we only had to alter course about 15 degrees right. When we got back to our base the right landing gear wouldn't come down and we had to circle the field twice while it was cranked down manually. When we landed No. 1 engine was the only one left to taxi with so our ship had to be towed in from the end of the runway. It was good to be on the ground again. Once when we were on instruments I caught a glimpse of a friendly convoy of ships through a slight break in the clouds. Was tempted to ditch them while I knew we could be picked up. Am glad I gave it a second thought. My second mission as 1st pilot, but my first as 1st pilot when we got over the target. We had a few other scattered hits in the tail wings and fuselage. The wing spars in both wings were hit. Capt. Stogner, our engineering officer said we'd have to give the ship to Service

Command for salvage. Well-we got our 4-engine pursuit over the target once anyway. It was a jinx ship I guess. The 401st had it for months and got it over the target once. We had it about a week and got it over once. Lt. Bobrow and Lt. Ellis and their crews were shot down out of our group. Heard on the radio that five Fortresses in all were lost on that raid. We are loading up again for tomorrow. None of our crew was injured so we may go although Capt. Morgan said he thought we needed a rest. Capt. Willie Crumm & his crew are going home tomorrow. Boy are they happy!

February 5, 1943 Friday

Was given '490, Capt. Crumms ship today. "Jack the Ripper" he called it. Crumm set a darn good record with that ship. It has one of the best ground crews in the Group. Saw Crumm, Gilman, Liesure & Kleyla off this afternoon. Gave them JoAnn's address hoping they might get through Des Moines sometime. Got the nucleus of a good crew today. Dickson-engineer, a good man on any crew. Cluff and Simon on the waist guns are eager enough but have a good bit to learn. Both have a good deal of trouble with their oxygen masks. Simon doesn't look old enough to be out of high school. He had a frozen face and a frozen toe from yesterdays mission and I didn't find out about it until today when I gave them their 24hr passes. Will have to keep an eye on him. Clay is going to be a good boy for the tail guns. Sgt. Middleton isn't the man I want on radio-lazy, smart alecky and doesn't know one half what he should know about procedure. Sgt. Nettles-I don't like to write what I think about him. I definitely do not want him even on my airplane. Should have put him in that ball turret again yesterday even if I'd have to use my 45 to do it. But decided he wouldn't be any good there anyway so I might as well let him stay out in case his hands & feet really were freezing. Must be bad weather over Germany because they just announced combat crews could sleep late tomorrow morning. And no 08:30 Officers call.

February 6, 1943 Saturday

My crew on pass and no 08:30 officers meeting so indulged in the luxury of sleeping in till 11:00. Spent the afternoon doing odd & ends. Checked my Form 5's and log book with Form 1's. Looked over '490 again. In good shape although the outboard engines are the originals having about 240 hours, which isn't so bad except that a good many of those hours are combat time. Not alerted at 17:30 so decided to go to Cambridge for the evening. Met Lt. Carnes at the men's bar in the Lion Hotel. He was a classmate of mine back in San Diego. First man to solo in our class although he washed out later and is now the new Armament Officer for the 322nd. We had a few drinks then went to crowded little "LaPetite" for dinner. Had a pitcher of beer from the pub next door to go with our kabob chips and rice and talk of old friends and old times. Carnes & Jim Butler had been roommates at Primary. Off to the Rex to hear a little music. Caught the convoy back at 24:00. My luck! Found we were alerted when I got home. My luck! I should have gone to bed early.

February 7, 1943 Sunday

Up at 05:30. It would have been a comparatively easy mission probably, although I was to have been tail-end Charlie. Mission cancelled just as I started to leave Operations to start up. Would have had two new waist gunners as my regulars Cluff & Simon are getting over a touch of frost bite from the last mission. Lt. Lowery co-pilot and a new navigator, Lt. Chrenburg. It would have been his first combat mission. Capt. Morgan told me I was in line to be the next Flight Leader. Hope I get it but not counting on it yet. If I do, it should mean a captaincy. Best session with the crew for a while. Have a good ball turret operator now. Sgt. McNally just out of the hospital. Fried chicken for dinner tonight. First time have talked fried chicken since last summer. Much talk of going home but I think we have much work to do before that will come about. Spent an hour sitting before the fire tonight fixing up a frame for JoAnn's snapshot before it gets too worn from being carried about. Mission tomorrow morning. To bed at 23:00.

February 8, 1943 Monday

Up at 05:30. Briefed for the same mission as yesterday morning. Spent most of the morning sitting in the airplane ready to go but they kept setting the take-off back. Finally we taxied out to take-off at 11:00 and just as the last 17 sung into live, control called saying "no flying, return to dispersed areas". Had a crew meeting at 13:00. I tried to stress the importance of delayed parachute jumps. We got in a incomplete replacement crew this afternoon, short a bombardier and a waist gunner. They left the states Jan 7. According to them 13-17 losses have been greatly minimized in the states. I read in a British paper the other day where some jerk politician was raising hell because we weren't doing more bombing over here. He also said that it took 20 pursuit to escort one bomber on a mission. I have seen friendly pursuit only twice while on missions and then they were several thousand feet above us just taking it easy while we were getting hell frailed out of us by the FW 190's. If that same politician had bothered to find out about weather over here he might be less ignorant concerning the matters he chose to sound off about. I must try to find that article so I can remember that fellow's name. It's blowing a gale out now and very cold. Definitely no mission for tomorrow.

February 13, 1943 Saturday

Not much doing last few days. Went to London for a couple of days. Saw a couple of movies. "Orchestra Wives" & "Random Harvest". Dance on the field here tonight. Mission tomorrow so to bed fairly early.

February 14, 1943 Sunday

Up at 04:30 and briefed for a mission on Hamm Germany. I took my regular crew with exception of co-pilot and tail gunner. Lt. Henderson was my co-pilot and Sgt. Nastal took the tail guns. Had a little trouble getting off. Just as we were getting ready to get in the ship, a turret maintenance man accidentally fired the 50 cal. Guns in the ball turret. The slugs hit the pavement & ricochet up through the tail and the right stabilizer & rudder.

About the same time the ground crew discovered there was no pressure in one of the accumulators. The others had started to take off when we finally started taxiing out. We were the last off but managed to catch up all right. The weather was very bad for high alt. bombing and formation flying. About ten miles inside Holland all the groups turned back because of heavy cloud formation in front & above us. It was evident that target would be obscured even if we could have gotten through the clouds in formation. The flak was light. We saw some fighters but they did not attack since we were going back. So we had to bring some bombs home again. '490 is a good ship. Handles like a dream compared to 527. We hit some poor viz coming down through the clouds over the North Sea. The formations got pretty well scattered but we weren't jumped. Passed over a four ship convoy about 10 min from England. Had to convince Lt. Brabaker my bombardier that they couldn't be German and that we shouldn't bomb them. Approached England at about 1000 ft. We must have been coming in over a hot spot because they threw a little flak up in front of us, so we paralleled the coast up to the Wask, came in and back to base. The easiest mission we'll ever have probably, yet that is more excitement than our bombers ever get on lots of missions in other theaters of operations.

February 15, 1943 Monday

Little to do today. Flew for an hour fifteen minutes today but it was pretty rough. Had an Officers meeting this afternoon. Seems the brass hate are worried about the attitude of some Americans toward English women. Got a letter from JoAnn written while she was home on a visit. Mission scheduled for tomorrow.

February 16, 1943 Tuesday

We went to St. Nagaire. Started up at 07:50. There were twenty of us took off. Five had to turn back. Went in over land & came back over land. Were over the target about 11:00. Flak not too bad. We had a few flak hits however. Jumped by fighters a few minutes after bombs away. Was hit early in the flight by a FW 190 attacking head on. Just as we were being attacked the inside half of my windshield fell down on both my armes. No 2 engine was knocked out and No. 1 manifold pressure dropped off to about 5 inches, probably from a hit in the induction system. Feathered No. 2 & jockeyed No. 1 until found throttle position that gave maximum power of 25 inches. Ball turret Sgt. McNally showed great presence of mind in not firing his guns when the ball turret became saturated with gas escaping from No. 2 engine. He called in and asked about it & I told him to stay in & track the fighters but not to fire. Had crew check in. Sgt. Middleton didn't answer. Waist gunner Sgt Simon reported that he thought Middleton was hit. Sent co-pilot Lt. Lowery back to give first aid. Middleton was dead. 20mm fragment in back of his head. He couldn't have suffered. I was flying on Capt. Droyers right wing in second element of B flight. In the shuffle after leaving target we lost our lead element (324th ships) and Lt. Clansey our new no. 3 man. We were flying on the left of a five ship element and we had quite a few attacks since the fighters evidently decided we couldn't take much more having one engine out. My oxygen system was hit some place at the beginning of the fight. But we were descending from our 24,000 ft. bombing level and I made out o.k. We were under attack from St. Nazaire until about mid-channal

well over an hour. We were supposed to have seven squadron of Spits cover us as we left France. I saw one Spit and that was after we were well within sight of England and he was 2000 ft below us. The newspapers will say "the bombers were supported by allied fighters". Back at the field at 14:05. Had to crank the flaps down. None of the rest of our boys were hurt. The navigator we had to borrow from another squadron should be shot. Lt. Miller by name tried to get out of going. Don't think he ever fired his guns except to test them. His ETA's were all wrong. Lt. Palmer said he just sat there in the nose like he expected to be shot any minute. As soon as we were on the ground he talked more than the other eight of us. There were six bombers lost today. None was from the 91st group. "Jack the Ripper" shot up so that it will have to be transferred to a Service Squadron for repairs. Bet Crumm would have a fit if he could see his old ship now. Was lucky today and eleven months ago today.

February 17, 1943 Wednesday

Up at 07:30. Officers meeting at 08:30. Made arrangements for Sgt. Middletons funeral tomorrow. Capt. Aycods had me drill the officers for experience this morning. Had a class or two this afternoon. Sgt. McNally grounded for six months today. He's about as good as they come in that ball turret. Sgt. Cluff grounded for two weeks because of ear trouble. Wrote a letter to Sgt. Middleton's parents.

February 18, 1943 Thursday

My crew with exception of Sgt McNally, went to Woking Surrey to attend Sgt. Middleton's funeral. The service was in the American part of the Brookwood Cemetery. Saw Windsor Castle from our "Reconn" as we drove by. Sent JoAnn a birthday cable. Tried to get to sleep early but couldn't seem to get to bed. Alerted for tomorrow.

February 19, 1943 Friday

Didn't have to get up until 0700 this morning. Briefing at 0800. Latest we've ever had a briefing. I was to fly 515 "Jersey Bounce". As we were taxiing out, Tower called the T.O. had been set back one hour. As I started the engines to taxi out at 12:30 we got word that the mission had been scrubbed. This would have been a comparatively short raid but we would have flown around England at 22,000 feet long enough for Jerry to spot us on his screen and get all his fighters into the air. Bombing would have been secondary today. Two air mail letters from JoAnn today with a clipping showing JoAnn & Mrs. Koss as "typical volunteers" nurses aids. Scheduled for a raid again tomorrow.

February 20, 1943 Saturday

Briefed for same mission as yesterday. But it was scrubbed just before Stations! Was to have flown '970. Lt. Verinis's ship today. Got a 24 hr pass for the crew. I went to Cambridge. Spent the afternoon at a movie, "In This Our Life" with Bette Davis, Geo Brent & Olivia DeHaviland. Had supper with McClellan, Badger & two new men Lts. Scoville & Zuberi. To the Dorothy for a glass of ale. Had a pretty bad head cold so went

home to bed. What a treat to go to sleep knowing no one will wake you up for a briefing. Slept till about 8:30. Loafed around all morning. Had breakfast by a big fireplace in the dining room of the hotel "Lion" where I was staying. Went for a walk after lunch. Then wrote a letter to JoAnn and went to sleep from 1500 till about 1900. Saw a no good movie. Had supper & went back to the field.

February 22, 1943 Monday

Weather still bad. Got a new ship this afternoon. '464. Haven't named her yet. Letter from JoAnn tonight. She enclosed a clipping with a lot of stuff about Feb. 4th. Also a letter from Don & bev Sisson.

February 23, 1943 Tuesday

Class in Naval identifications this morning. Talked to new men about bailout procedure and delayed opening jumps. Drill this afternoon. Presentation of awards by General Armstrong later. Weather bad and looks like no flying tomorrow.

February 24, 1943 Wednesday

Flew my new ship on a high altitude test hop today. Test fired guns at 20,000 ft out over the wash. Well things aren't going so well within the Squadron right now. Some of the fellows seem to think Capt. Aycock, our C.O. now, and Capt. Morgan, are pushing us too much and too hard. Well I don't think we're being over-worked or treated too roughly but when I said so tonight don't think the fellows thought much of me for it. Seems to me that the traditional Air Corps' deviation from military is not without its faults. Can't imagine officers of a well trained infantry outfit feeling mistreated because their C.O. decided they should exercise and drill some. Probably it is some personal characteristics of Capt. Aycock that they dislike. Even if that is it, we should remember that in the Army the personality of a superior officer should not affective discipline in a negative sense. I do think however that if a superior officer has the knack of administering inspirational leadership, he will obtain greater amt of work, better discipline etc than the C.O. who commands with a steel glove. Capt. Aycock evidently thinks that ruling with an iron handle is the better method or maybe he hasn't yet learned the art of inspirational leadership. I think he has the qualities to do either, but right at the moment he hasn't succeeded in getting full cooperation for all his officers. It will be interesting to see how things shape up in the next few weeks. We are alerted for tomorrow. Weather has kept us on the ground for almost 9 days now, so we should be about due for a raid if we have any sort of weather.

February 25, 1943 Thursday

Was busy with a lot of little things today. Classes, skeet for the crew, got nose gun installed, painter started painting nose of "EXCALIBUR", Calisthenics, drill, baseball. Letter from JoAnn. Alerted for tomorrow.

February 26, 1943 Friday

Up at 04:00 this morning. Briefed at 04:45. Target to be F.W. factory at Bremen. Secondary Willewe Haven Last Resort Esuden. We were attacked by fighters about 30 minutes before we turned in to cross the coast. Shortly after we were attacked my oxygen system went out. We were at 27,600 feet so I went out pretty quickly. Sgt. Dickson did a good job of bringing me around although he almost went out himself. His system went out shortly after I came to. About that time the ball turret operators oxygen supply was cut off and he passed out. Sgt. Wells the radio operator got him out in time however. Sgt. Clay, tail gunner also passed out but came to of his own accord luckily because our inter-phone kept shorting out. Nav. Lt. Ehrenberg also got pretty groggy bringing a walk-around bottle back to Sgt. Dickson. The fight wasn't too bad as far as our flight was concerned. Captain Morgan maneuvered us into a pretty good spot. Flak wasn't too intense but it seemed to cover a large area & be fairly accurate. We were not hit. It would have been a good trip except for our oxygen freezing up. Sgt. Dickson did some good work. Will get him a citation if I can but doubt if I can. Seven of our bombers lost today. Went to bed without going to dinner. Had a splitting headache as a result of oxygen want. Alerted tomorrow.

February 27, 1943 Saturday

Flew a 323rd ship today on a raid on Brest. It was a good trip. No engineering difficulties. Just enough fighters and flak to make it interesting for the first time I saw a fighter escort do us some good. In fact this is the first time I've seen our escort show up! Lt. Leighton was our navigator today. It's a pleasure to have a man like Leighton on a raid like that. Always calm & cool and above all always tops as a navigator. He wants to go through flying school. Hope he gets the chance because he should make an excellent pilot.

February 28, 1943 Sunday

Due a pass today and our crew could have used it. Being in combat two days in a row and at 27,000 ft for about 12 or 13 hours makes you feel like relaxing a bit.....

