

The Raymond Butler Diary

S/SGT, 323rd BG Ball Turret Gunner

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To be mailed to my wife:

Mrs. Raymond Butler

Route 1

Augstell, Georgia

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Inducted - December 28, 1942, at Ft. McPherson, Ga. Reported to reception center January 4, 1943.

Basic Training - Keesler Field, Mississippi 310 T.S.S.

Armament School (Machine Guns & Cannon) Buckley Field, Co.

Hospital (one week) Lowry Field, Denver, Co.

Armament School (Turret) Lowry Field No. 2, Denver, Co. 362nd T.S.S.

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Gunner School, Laredo Army airfield, Laredo, TX 6th GS (can't read the last two initials).

Replacement Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, Prov. Sq. B.

Overseas Training Army Air Base, Moses Lake, Washington 594th Bomb Squadron.

Overseas training (Continued) Army Air Base, Kearney, Nebraska 583rd Bomb Squadron.

Furlough to Marietta, Georgia - October 14 - 23, 1943. Married sweetest girl in the world October 16, 1943.

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Port of Embarkation, Camp Kilmer, NJ Boarded "Queen Mary" November 14, 1943.

Arrived Scotland November 21, 1943.

Permanent Squadron, 91st Bomb Group, 323rd Bomb Squadron.

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MISSIONS OVER ENEMY TERRITORY

Mission #1 - Kiel, Germany, January 4, 1944

Temp. -50 degrees C.

Oxygen 4 hours

Flak Moderate

Fighters None

Altitude 26,000 feet

My first raid, scared stiff all the way

Lone P-38, the most beautiful airplane I've ever seen. Found Ball turret to be loneliest place in the world.

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Mission #2 - Tours, France January 5, 1944

Temp. -20 degrees C.

Oxygen 4 hours

Flak Very little

Fighters Few

Altitude 20,000 feet

Almost a milk run. First time I ever saw results of bombing direct hits.

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Mission #3 - Ludwigshafen, Germany January 7, 1944

Temp -35 degrees C

Oxygen 4 1/2 hours

Flak Moderate (5 holes in ship)

Fighters 5 Me109's in Germany- 15 in France

Altitude 24,000 feet

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Mission #4 - Oschersleben, Germany January 11, 1944

Temp. -35 degrees C

Oxygen 4 1/2 hours

Flak Heavy

Fighters Whole German Luftwaffe

Altitude 20,000 feet

Most bitter air battle in history.

210 enemy aircraft destroyed, 43 probably destroyed and 84 damaged. The 1st Division lost 42 heavy bombers, 430 officers and enlisted men failed to return.

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Mission #5 - Chezbouurg, France January 21, 1943

Temp -28 degrees C

Oxygen 2 hours

Flak Moderate

Fighters None

Altitude 21,000 feet

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Mission #6 - Brunswick, Germany January 30, 1944

Temp -30 degrees C

Oxygen 4 1/2 hours (no Oxygen Radio to Tail)

Flak Moderate

Fighters Few

Altitude 22,000

Ball turret cut oxygen line just before bomb run. The inter-phone system went out a few minutes later. Not a good way to spend Sunday. Was very tired when I returned (mental strain)

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Mission #7 - Frankfurt, Germany February 11, 1944

Temp -44 degrees C

Oxygen 5 hours

Flak Moderate

Fighters Few - Good escort - P47's

Altitude 21,000

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Mission #8 - Oschersleben, Germany February 20, 1944

Temp -17 degrees C

Oxygen 5 hours

Flak Moderate and accurate

Fighters About 15-P51's and P47's split escort

Altitude 14,000 feet

Very different from my 4th raid. Germany covered with snow. Flew with Capt. Thompson on his 25th mission. We really buzzed the field on our return. Saw fighter crash in the snow.

Another Sunday spent over Germany. Missed the Sunday chicken dinner.

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Mission #9 - Raymond had already put the number 9 on the page. This page was blank. He did not come back from this mission to write in his diary. It was February 22, 1944

Raymond Butler: Born January 25, 1924, Atlanta, Ga. Died February 22, 1944 in B-17G, "Eneigh" - crashed at Lugde, a village 10 km SSW of Hameln. Germany.

Target: Oschersleben aviation industry, Germany.

Note: This document typed from a Xerox copy of Raymond's very little diary book. It was sent to his

wife, Sarah, after his death. Some years ago (after she remarried) she gave this little book, along with other items, to Raymond's sister, Helen Butler Mitchell. In January 2000, Helen made a copy of the diary and gave to me. I can barely remember him - I was so small.

Joann Broadhead