

# **MY 1<sup>st</sup> TOUR OF DUTY**

**Written by Thomas J. Hansbury**

This is just an outline of each mission I have completed over enemy territory. No matter what I write or say about each of these raids, unless you have been on them you will never know how hard and tough they are. But we our glad to go on them, glad to do our part to end this damn war. "In God We Trust."

## Wednesday, September 29, 1942

Today at 1600hrs we left Banger Maine USA and are now in route to Gander Lakes, Newfoundland. 1845 hrs. We landed in Gander Lakes.

## Thursday, September 30, 1942

Today at 2300 hrs we are going to leave Gander Lakes, Newfoundland, and fly to Prestwick, Scotland.

## Friday, October 1, 1942

0915 hrs. Our wheels landed on English soil. I am now at Prestwick, Scotland. I went into a small nearby town and has some American money changed over to English. Went to a dance, but was a little slow on picking up these new steps. Met Anna Murdoch, a doll if I ever met one.

## Saturday, October 2, 1942

0900hrs. We took off for Kimbolton, England. 1100hrs. Landed and meet all the boys we left at Walla Walla, Washington. A happier meeting I never saw.

## Sunday, October 3, 1942

Today with some of the armor men, I went to St. Neats a near by city. Not much to do here. We sure got jammed up in blackout. Bill Gray also was along.

## Monday, October 4, 1942

We flew on a practice mission today and had a good look at England from the air. I hope to see more of it both air and ground.

## Tuesday, October 5, 1942

Practice mission.

## Wednesday, October 6, 1942

School all day.

## Thursday, October 7, 1942

Practice mission.

## Friday, October 8, 1942

School all day.

## Saturday, October 9, 1942

Practice mission.

Sunday, October 10, 1942

Practice mission. Went to town.

Monday, October 11, 1942

Today I went to Bedford, another large cite and had more trouble with English money and blackouts.

Wednesday, October 13, 1942

Today we moved from Kimbolton to Bassingbourn. This means we are getting ready for action.

Thursday, October 14, 1942

Boy this Bassingbourn is all right. A real nice place, I hope we stay here until we finish our tour (30) thirty missions.

Friday, October 22, 1942

Today they loaded our ships with bombs. Weather bad, no mission. Boys are beginning to sweat.

Tuesday, October 26, 1942

Today we went to Cambridge for the first time. I think this town will be our second home. Sure is pretty.

Memos

The roughest thing about combat is trying to get an enemy plane confirmed. Even if you shoot one down, even if you see him blow up in mid air doesn't mean you get credit for him. First at least two other men on your crew or any other crew must also see you get him. Nine times out of ten they are shooting at one the same time that you are getting yours. Even so it is hard to get them to say that you got him. But after you come back and get to the interrogation officer you must be able to convince him, This is a very hard thing to do. All the claims are sent to wing headquarters and they are the ones who decide whether or not you shot down a German fighter. Many times two or three gunners shoot a fighter and do not claim it. All planes of this type are given to your ship.

So if you hear of so many planes being destroyed you know that it is the truth, because on some of the raids forty planes are claimed but only fifteen or twenty are confirmed.

My aim is thirty missions over enemy territory, also the DFC.

My outlines of these raids may be short and may sound easy. Why? Because I am not trying to tell people how tough these raids are or what dangers we go through in order to get to and from our target. I am just marking the day we went on a raid, where it was and whether or not we saw fighters and flack.

“The Heavyweight Annihilators”

Ship Number- 12-24482

My 1<sup>st</sup> Mission Completed

Sunday, November 7, 1942

Breast-6hrs. First mission for the 91<sup>st</sup> group and the 322<sup>nd</sup> bomb squadron. I shot down an FW-109. I was the first of our group to do so. Flack was very heavy and accurate. Lt. Bader pilot.

## MY 2<sup>ND</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1942

ST. NAZAIRE-5hrs 35min- we call this flak city, the toughest target in France. My second mission, no claims. Plenty of fighters and flak. All returned. Lt. Bader was the pilot.

## MY 3<sup>RD</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

### MONDAY, November 22, 1942

ST. NAZAIRE-6hrs.40min- Today we circled the target for fifty minutes trying to find an opening in the clouds to drop our bombs. We were all very nervous, thinking that all hell would break loose at any time. We did not drop any bombs. There was very little flak and I saw only one FW 109 Lt. Bader was our co-pilot, Maj. Victor S. Zenowisz was our pilot.

### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1942

ST NAZAIRE-6HRS.45MIN-I did not go today. The mission was a success. The 322<sup>nd</sup> bomb squad lost its best crew and first plane.

Maj. V S Zenowisz- Pilot

Cpt. McCommid- Co-pilot

Lt. Frazier- Bombardier

Lt. Clinton- Navigator

Cpt. Hampir- Navigator

T/Sgt. Hammrock- Engineer

S/Sgt. Joe Jannon- Waist gunner

S/Sgt. G. Ryder- Ball turret

T/Sgt. A Anderson- Radio

S/Sgt. Graddy- Tail gunner

Lt. Applebaum- Top turret

### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1942

Today I went to London on a 48hr pass. I went on a sight seeing tour, not bad. I saw the Royal palace, London Bridge, Westminster Abby and Timehouse District. At night we went dancing at the Covert Gardens. The next day (25<sup>th</sup>) we went to the movies, dancing again that night.

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1942

LILLIE-3HRS- Today we had to turn back and leave the rest of our Sq. & Group to do the bombing. It was because my two guns would not work when we test fired them over the channel. Lt. Bader was the pilot.

This is a black mark against me. They installed two new guns for me. I hope they work.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1942

ROMMILIE-1HR- Again we did not go all the way. (#1) No. one engine went out as we were going down the runway taking off.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1942

I'm glad we did not go yesterday, because we had a practice mission and my guns did not work. If this had happened yesterday, we would be forced to turn back and I would get another black mark against my name.

MEMO

In this diary you will notice the word "rough". By this I mean that while we are going through the fight with the Jerries and getting close misses by flak. We are waiting at any second to get hit by a shell from a fighter or flak, in which we would have to bail out of the ship.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1942

Today, my guns were tested. They worked fine. I hope we go over tomorrow; being on the ground is getting me down.

MY 4<sup>TH</sup>, MISSION COMPLETED

MONDAY DECEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 1942

ROMMILE-5HRS45MIN- Our first air battle. I got a FW 109. My waist gunner also got one so did our ball turret gunner. We fought the Jerries for three hours with great success. 44 Jerries destroyed 7 B-17's lost. I saw my first B-17's blow up in mid air, also saw four more go spinning down to the ground. T/Sgt. Ernest Perpho (waist gunner) was wounded in the leg by a 200mm cannon, which exploded about three feet from me in the tail. I was untouched. There was nothing to sing about during this raid. We also saw the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Hell has nothing on this raid.

On this raid, 44 Jerries were destroyed and another 50 destroyed by our bombs on the ground. 200 German Officers were killed when our bombs hit the target, an airdrome. All of the hangers were destroyed; also our bombs killed a good number of enlisted men. 30 to 40 airplanes, mostly FW 109's, were damaged and had to stop fighting us and return to their base for repairs. The above are confirmed facts. Believe me this was hell number one.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25 1942

We had a very good Christmas. We had a good dinner; Spam, cold potatoes and hot coffee. At night, our crew had a good party. Our officers paid for everything. It was Lt. Bader's idea.

MY 5<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1942

LORIENT-6HRS 40MIN- Again hell broke loose with flak and fighters. I helped bring down a FW 109. On all of the raids the temperature was 45<sup>0</sup> below.

MY 6<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 1943

Jack's birthday and almost my finish, death was really knocking on my door.

ST NAZAIRE-6HRS 15MIN- I don't think I could stand another raid like this one. Flack, flack, and more flack (it was also very accurate). Fifteen minutes over the target, our #4 engine got a direct hit on it and caught fire. Also #3 got hit and we started losing altitude fast. When the Jerries saw this they came straight for us. For one hour we were by ourselves, no one to help us. Twelve of them diving at us from all sides at once. First Lt. Bader was hit and cut, #4 engine was still burning and #3 engine was not running at all. Then Lt. Hensley, our bombardier was hit in the knee and Lt. Ackins, our navigator was hit in the head but not bad. Lt. Hensley, T/Sgt. Hall, S/Sgt. Budgisz and S/Sgt. Hansbury all shot down a FW 109 each. We all thought the gas tank would catch fire and explode or the wing would melt and fall off. Still the Jerries would come and come; our plane was surely shot up. After an hour of damn hard and very good work, we pulled away from the Jerries. If it was not for Lt. Bader flying the way he did, even after he was hit, we would have never made it. The boys in our outfit and I said they have never seen such good flying. We all think Lt. Bader should get the DFC. My thanks to God and Lt. Bader, for if it were not for these two I would not be alive today. Our ship 4482 never flew again. I did not fly anymore this month. Lt. Bader and Lt. Hensley were in the hospital and did not have a plane even if they were ok. After two months of rest, Lt. Bader started flying a new plane. Lt. Hensley would never fly in combat again; he could no longer bend his knee. Also our Co-pilot, Lt. Bert Humphries was assigned to operations officer of our squad and was relieved from combat flying.

#### THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1943

On this day I was awarded the Air Medal for shooting down a German airplane, a Fock Wolf 109, on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1942 while on my first mission over enemy territory.

#### MY 7<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

#### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1943

WILHELMSHAVEN 6HRS- Today I started to get eager, by that I mean I had no plane and my pilot was not able to fly. Staying on the ground is getting on my nerves.

Today we went to Germany, my first trip there and I was flying with Capt. Barton and crew, still as a tail gunner. Believe me those Germans get mad when we bomb their homeland and do all in their power to down us. They sent ME 110's (two engine fighters), ME109E's, ME109F's, JU88's (two engine fighters) and also the FW190.

About 150 planes in all, 25 we shot down in flames, many more destroyed. Flack was very heavy. Bombing was perfect. Seven bombers lost.

#### MY 8<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

#### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1943

HAMM 3HRS 45MIN- Today we started for Germany but when we got about 50 miles inland it was so cloudy we could not see to drop the bombs. They shot flack at us all the way in and out but did not send many fighters up. We turned around and came home.

I flew with Lt. Beassly and crew. The mission was not complete although we encountered the enemy and was credited with a mission. I was freezing, 45<sup>0</sup> below.

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1943

We started to go to Hamm, but as we reached the German coast we were called back due to bad weather.

I wanted to get on for Dad's birthday.

MY 9<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1943

ST NAZAIRE 5HRS- "Dad's" birthday. As usual we were very nervous when we heard we were going here and being m first trip there since Jan 3, '43. I was very, very nervous, although when I saw the Jerries coming at us I calmed down. Again the flack was heavy and accurate. Seven bombers were lost. Twenty-three fighters (Jerries) destroyed.

I came back ok and willing to go on every raid that was to come. Again I flew with another crew, Lt. Beassly.

MY 10<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1943

WILHELMHAVEN 6HRS- Off to Germany and again with Lt. Beassly and crew.

I think today was the coldest day of all, about ten boys from our squadron ended up with frostbitten hands, feet and faces. Flack and fighters were heavy today. I got a Jerry but could not claim him because I was too busy with others to see whether or not he exploded or crashed to the ground. I know he hit the ground but we must see him do so before we can claim him.

MY 11<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1943

BREST, FRANCE 6HRS- Lt. Beassly was the pilot again. This is a short raid with Spitfire escort, so no fighters came after us. Flack was heavy and our ship was hit twice. There was not much damage and we made it home without a loss.

MY 12<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1943

HAMM 5HRS 45MIN- "Death knocks again on this one"

This is the raid of all raids because the 91<sup>st</sup> bomb group was to go all the way to the target, drop its bombs and return. The other groups returned to their bases because they thought it was too cloudy, although when we reached the target area it was very clear and we knocked the hell out of our target. Our bombardier hit a railroad bridge while a freight train was crossing it. On return from Hamm, about 150 Jerries of all types came at us.

Only 16 bombers to 150 Jerries. We lost 4 bombers, one from our Sq., Lt. Felton and crew.

Boy what a fight from the English coast, 23 Jerries were lost.

The 91<sup>st</sup> bomb group was known to England and America as the best overseas. But this raid really gave is the honor of being tops. I was with Captain Barton and crew.

## MY 13<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

### SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 1943

LORIENT 8HRS- This raid was not bad, only about fifteen fighters and heavy flak. It was warm only 25<sup>0</sup> below. One bomber went down over the target. One of the boys, who parachuted to safety, landed in the target area and two more groups yet to drop their bombs. Capt. Barton and crew. I you look at the newspaper clippings about me, you will see Capt. Wallick's name there, also S/Sgt. Gerreth's. Sgt. Gerreth went down with Lt. Felton on the Hamm raid.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 1943

I guess you are wondering what I did with all my spare time this month. Well I slept a good while and when we got our new ship we had to do a lot of work on it in order to get it ready for Lt. Bader when he came out of the hospital and have it ready for Lt. Bader when he came out of the hospital and have it ready for combat.

I was briefed to go in four missions this month but was called off because of the weather.

As a matter of fact, there was very little action over here this month. When we our not flying we must work on our ships, load ammunition, clean guns, go to aircraft and naval recognition school. Then we have a good many practice missions to keep us in shape. A practice mission is no fun. In fact, high altitude flying is a serious business. First it is very cold. Secondly, we must use oxygen and this is never any fun especially when our oxygen masks freeze up. The boys are always passing out because it is hard to tell when one mask is freezing. When it does, you cannot get any oxygen and before you know what happened you pass out. This is very dangerous because if someone does not help you, then you just lie there and die.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 1943

Again, I went to London. I can't see anything there that would make me go back again. So from now on I will stick to Cambridge. We can go to onto Cambridge every night and come back via GI truck, transportation to Cambridge this way is free and it is not possible to be late this way.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 1943

If only the sun would shine. But no, just rain, clouds, and more rain. Not to forget the fog. London fog "Phooie".

### MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 1943

On most of these days, I clean guns; go to class, and at night we go to the past movies. I have seen every one of the shows over here, but we still like to see them again just to kill time.

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 1943

First US raid on Germany. I did not have the honor of going on this one. My radioman T/Sgt., G. L. Kessler flew with another squad (324<sup>th</sup>) and was hit in the arm. (Purple Heart)

## MY 14<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

### FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 1943

ROGAN 4HRS 45 MIN- A short mission with plenty of spitfire escort. No flack or fighters. The target, a railroad junction and freight yard, were demolished. The spits encountered a few Jerries, shooting down two and losing six spits. This is what we call an easy raid. I never fired a shot. If all would be like

this one, life would be merry. I flew with Capt. Wallick as tail gunner.

#### MY 15<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 1943

ARMENIE 5HRS- Another easy one, except we ran into a lot of flack today. No Jerries encountered. Again spitfire cover and again we knocked the hell out of our target, a railroad yard. Again I flew with Capt. Wallick and crew.

#### MY 16<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 1943

This is the beginning of our new ship; "Heavyweight Annihilators" Number two. At present we have no bombardier and no matter whom we get he will never be able to fill the place of Lt. Jim Hensley. Lt. James Hensley, a good bombardier and a better man, a friend and pal.

VEGASACCK 6HRS- Today was a very happy one for my crew and me, because it was the first time we all flew together since Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> 43. Yes it was the first raid for Lt. Bader since he was hit in the legs and boy were we on the ball. After we got to the target area all hell broke loose and Lt. Bader was really on the ball. Flying like the best pilot in the world, just like you see in the movies. We are all very proud of him and we will always be proud of him and thankful for saving our lives on Jan 3, 1943. S/Sgt. Budzisz, ball turret, shot down a FW 109, while minute's later S/Sgt. Burton, waist gunner, shot down a ME 110.

This was the largest raid the US bombers ever made. 101 B-17's and B-24's went over the target. Even Churchill commended us on the mission and very successful raid.

53 Jerries shot down, 23 Jerries damaged 20 Jerries probable, 95 Jerries destroyed.

Yes, 95 Jerries shot up that never will shoot at us again and only two bombers were lost.

#### MEMOS

Up to date the 91<sup>st</sup> bomb group. Lost sixteen B-17's and crews over the target or over enemy territory. Although other planes were shot up so bad as never to fly again, landed on English soil or at home base.

Up to date I have been on sixteen missions. There are only seven men in our Squad who have been on as many or more. Three men to date have been on seventeen, three on sixteen and one on nineteen. To date I have three Jerries confirmed, as many as any other man in our squad. I can't complain. Can you? If so tell it to the chaplain.

Up to date our Group (91<sup>st</sup>) made 29 daylight raids over enemy territory. Our squad has completed 28 daylight raids. We missed a short mission on Nov. 9, 1942, Abbeville.

FRIDAY MARCH 26, 1943

Today the 322<sup>nd</sup> squad received a telegram saying that S/Sgt. Geffen, who went down over Germany with Lt. Felton & crew, was now prisoner of war. He went down, March 4, 1943.



My 17th MISSION COMPLETED

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 1943

ROWEN 4HRS- We knocked hell out of the target today shot up a few Jerries and our Group lost one B-17. We had a spitfire escort for while (about 15 minutes). When the Jerries came up to fight us the spitfires ran like scared cats for home. Although they did get into a little scrap themselves they lost more spits than Jerries lost FW190 with whom they were fighting. Three of our planes were shot up pretty bad.

MONDAY MARCH 29, 1943

Today and for the next five days we are going to have a catholic mission.

TUESDAY MARCH 30, 1943

Say, we are having a swell mission. All the catholic boys are going every night. Payday tomorrow I guess this will take some boys from this mission. I hope there is no raid tomorrow; it wouldn't be right to work all month, then get shot down on payday.

MY 18<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31 1943

RORRERDAM, HOLLAND 5HRS- Today we circled the target but because of very heavy flack and a good many Jerries up to greet us. A group of B-24's caught most of the attack, although the Forts shot down seven. Again our crew flew together. Boy this guy Lt. Bader is great. Better luck next time.

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 1943

Well here we go again. It's raining now and the rain over here usually lasts about a week and then you might have two fairly nice days followed again by more rain and clouds.

Fourth day of our mission and still a big success.

I received notice today that I was going to receive Oak Leaf Cluster (For completing 5 bombing raids over Europe) and here I am sweating out my nineteenth raid.

MY 19<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1943

PARIS 6HRS- Boy we flew right over Paris and we could see the Eiffel Tower very clear.

This is the second time I saw it. Four Forts were lost, 25 Jerries destroyed. Flack heavy inaccurate

Boy we sure bombed the target. Plenty of Jerries. I damaged two, not enough to knock him down but he did not come back for any more. Lt. Bader pilot.

MONDAY, APRIL 5, 1943

Today we started out again but just after we got half way across the channel our number four engine went out and we had to turn back. It will be fixed by tomorrow and we will be all set to go again.

Arch Bishop Spellmen was at our field today. He blessed each plane as it took off.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 1943

Today I am going on a 60-hr pass. I am going to Cambridge. I sure can use this pass.

After going nineteen missions, I am beginning to get nervous before take off time. Just as I did when I first started to go on missions.

#### Friday, April 9, 1943

Today, I received three Oak Leaf Clusters to my Air Metal. One for enemy aircraft destroyed, (Dec. 28 '43) One for completing five missions, (Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>, Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>, 1942) One completing ten missions, (Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>, Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, Feb 26<sup>th</sup>, 1943) One more mission to complete and I get another cluster. Every one gets harder and harder.

#### MONDAY, APRIL 12, 1943

Today I was notified that I was to receive " D. F. C." This award was my dream ever since I started flying one year ago. But they are so hard to get I never thought I would be good enough to earn it. Now that I got it, I must keep it and keep worthy of it. My thanks to God for answering my prayers.

#### MY 20<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1943

LORIENT- Today we turned back because of engine. But on the way back, we were attacked by two-190's when we were all by ourselves. So we get credit with a mission because we engaged our enemy.

#### MY 21<sup>ST</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

#### SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1943

BREMEN 7HRS 30MIN- Today our Group lost six B-17's (401sqd.). About 175 Jerries of all types fought us. Our number two engine caught fire, also our tail plane was hit very bad. A Jerrie killed T/Sgt. Hale, so you can see we were in the very thick of it. Flack was the heaviest that we ever saw. All in all it was the hardest and most difficult mission that we have experienced. I shot down a ME-109E and damaged two others. We blew hell out of our target.

Again death knocked, no answer. Boy what a mission, before this I thought I saw a lot of flack and fighters but this Bremen raid was the tops. Again as on Jan 3, 1943 one of our engines caught fire. Just after seeing five B-17's go down or blow up because of having an engine on fire, ours caught fire. But the funny thing was that after it happened no one on our crew got excited and everyone stayed at his guns. In fact T/Sgt. Peiplo shot down an FW-190 during this time. But one thing for sure was that we aboard thought our time was up. Lt. D. C. Bader was very calm and did not let the fire get out of hand and finally put it out. We continued our flight with only three engines. While we were over the target and surrounded by flack, the ball turret door came open and S/Sgt. Budzisz almost fell out. It was only the will of God that he did not. This caused another hazard for us because he had to get out and leave us without these most important guns. The tail plane, just outside my right window, was hit very badly. Where or when we go next I do not know, but I do know that Lt. Bader's crew will be there and on the ball. Flack please stay away from my door.

April 17, 1943 our crew shot down seven Jerries and damaged several others. This was really a hard and nerve-racking mission. With one engine on fire we just barely got out of Germany alive. Thanks to God and Lt. D.C. Bader & crew we did.

#### FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 1943

Today was the happiest days of my life because, I, Thomas J. Hansbury was awarded the "D.F.C." (Distinguished Flying Cross).

MY 22<sup>ND</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1943

MEAULTE- This was a pretty easy raid with spit escort, although we lost three B-17's, one from our Group, 323<sup>rd</sup> bomb squad. I was really sweating out these raids because I only had 25 missions to complete and I am relieved from combat duties. Just three more to go.

MY 23<sup>RD</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1943

KEIL- This was a rough one and very long. Not much Flack but plenty of fighters. Four Forts were knocked down. Man oh man did I sweat, only two more to go. I hope and pray that I can make it.

Lt. Brodly and crew went down today. It was a new crew and we did not know them very well.

MY 24<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1943

HELIGOLAND- Well three days in a row and this was one of the toughest I have been on. About 200 Jerries came up to meet us and did they raise hell. Thank God I made it. Just one more to go?

MY 25<sup>TH</sup> MISSION COMPLETED

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1943

KEIL- It's all over now as far as flying combat in the E.T.O. This mission was not so rough as far as flack is concerned. But being my last mission, I really was sweating. I thought for sure I was going to get it today, but I didn't. Why, I don't know. Today we lost one of our best crews, Lt. Baxely. He went down over the target.

PS. My crew seems to think this was a very tough one.

SATURDAY, JUNE 5, 1943

Today I broadcasted to America with Capt. Clark Gable, Sgt. Hulse and Mr. Hollenbeck. Also, the press interviewed me and had many pictures taken.

SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 1943

Today I was notified I was going to be transferred to another Group to go home. I hope and pray.

MONDAY, JUNE 7, 1943

Today it was made known to us that Lt. Baxely and his entire crew was prisoners of war. Today I am leaving the 322<sup>nd</sup> Bomb squad, 91<sup>st</sup> Group (H) AF. The best group in the world. My first step toward home, I hope.

TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 1943

I am now at Bovington, 20 miles west of London. It looks like I am going to be an instructor for at least two months. I might as well forget about going home.

Capt. Cliburn (D.F.C.) and Capt. Lindly (D.F.C.) are also here with me (D.F.C.) They too expect to go home.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 1943

Paramount movies are here taking pictures of the 324<sup>th</sup>, 91<sup>st</sup> Group. Ship "Memphis Belle".

This ship and its crew are going to take off for the USA any day now, as soon as the weather permits. I am eating my heart out.

THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1943

Last night I went to town with four fellows from this base. I met them in the chow house. Boy we sure have a swell time. I think I am going to like it here, a real nice bunch of fellows. About six miles from here is a swell dance hall. Just looking around, I saw A LOT of good-looking girls. I might go again, maybe tonight.

FRIDAY, JUNE 11, 1943

Today I started as an instructor and I don't like it one bit. I am going to find out for sure whether or not I am going to get a chance to go home. If not, I am going back on combat. I just can't stay on the ground as an instructor. I think I was born for action and I'm not getting it here.

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 1943

Today I left Bovington and went to The Wash as an instructor. We made a train change at Cambridge. So four of us, all 25-raid boys decided to stay there that night. We did. I met A LOT of 322<sup>nd</sup> boys. Also heard of the 322<sup>nd</sup> loosing two more crews and ships.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 1943

Today, I arrived at The Wash. Also met Clark Gable again only this time he recognized me, when I was eating dinner. He came over and talked with me. You should have seen the other GI's faces.

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