

#1 June 12 - Cambrai Airfield (France)

This was the first one. Realize now (a little later) it was strictly a milk run. Naturally, a little excited and tense. Seeing a little flak at the coast brought home the fact that there was a war on very vividly. First reaction - "Good Lord - somebody's shooting at us." We were carrying dangerous delayed action bombs and really sweated 'em out - especially when they wouldn't release on "train", and Max had to salvo. Watching Big Fortresses headed earthward for the first time was a dirty sight. "Pure luck he's going down and not us," you think. Saw the beaches of Dieppe on the way out - and the White Cliffs of Dover made a good sight coming home.

#2 June 14 - Le Bourget - Paris, France

Found the famous airfield where Lindberg landed very well defended - we all decided that the Nazis' best gunners were stationed there. Had no opposition to target. Saw Paris to the left on the bomb run. All was quiet as we neared the target - when they opened up! - wham - the first of the ugly black puffs was a few dozen yards directly in front of us - altitude right on the button. They kept tracking us as we continued with uncanny accuracy. I had had my flak suit on since the coast - hadn't bothered with the tin hat. But right then I was more scared than I had ever been in my life, and I grabbed that hat and tried like hell to pull it down to my waist. Just then we were sprayed with flying fragments of glass. I honestly waited for pain and looked down for blood - was none. Max said he was O.K. Then bombs were away, and we were clear of the target - sweated out that first inter-phone check - especially ball turret. Everybody was O.K. Landed with 7 holes in the ship - piece had gone through the nose and dented the turret handle - another headed for me had stopped in a spar in the fuselage - another had gone into the wing - Lloyd had just drained the wing tank. After interrogation, walking along to hand in my log, the sky seemed suddenly very blue and the air very fresh, and felt very glad to be alive.

#3 June 19 - Airfield near Bordeaux, France

No bombs dropped and no flak or fighters seen. But was plenty scared on this one too. We were flying an old "F" model - had no "Gee" box. Pinpointed myself through a hole in the clouds as we left the coast and worked like a madman keeping up a difficult air plot. Metro was off and our formation had to climb through a tremendous cloud formation up to 30,000. We were on instruments for a long time, of course, and when we finally broke out - luckily without a collision - the sky was clear and we were flying alone in an old ship at some unknown position a 100 miles inland. What duck soup we would have been - but no Luftwaffe! I gave Lloyd the best heading I had, and after some 20 minutes we did sight some Forts - caught up and turned around and came home. No fun at all!

#4 June 20 - Hamburg, Germany

Our first big target. Cut across the North Sea, the Danish peninsula and around. Felt a bit awed as the coast of our formidable enemy loomed up - suddenly appreciated the AAF's cocky nerve going to Germany. Hated the thought of bailing out into those unfriendly lands below. Flak at Hamburg was terrific - like Paris but in greater quantity and for greater time period. Plenty hell and our hearts were in our mouths as we watched the stuff bust around us - fascinated. Hits on the oil refinery were perfect - could see great fires and explosions. Was showered with glass again, and again checked my own person and called Max to check him as at Paris. Everybody O.K. again. My astral hatch had a 4-inch hole in it - I had just sat down (and I mean down) before we hit the target - another close call.

#5 June 21 - Berlin, Germany

This was IT - the "Big B" as the boys say. Biggest raid on one target ever made. Wouldn't have wanted to have been standing on the corner of the Wilhelmstrasse. Our MPI was the district near Goebbels' and the SS headquarters, and I don't think the big shot Aryans found their offices in the condition they left them the A.M. of the 22nd. Flak was very heavy, of course, and I never did think we were going to get out of it. Forty-three heavies went down - but no fighter jumped us - our escort was good. Again the glass of the nose was broken! Piece hit Max in the chest (on his flak suit). Scared? - just numb. Maybe I'll get used to it. After what seemed 2 hours under terrific fire, we were out of it and on our way home. Left formation and scooted for home - low on gas. Hamburg oil still billowing smoke up to 15,000 - Berlin smoke visible 100 miles away. Got home O.K. with enough gas to spare. Picked up my briefcase after we landed and jumped to see a 1 ½" hole in it. Looked at the fuselage where the case had been sitting and sure enough there was an inch and a half of daylight showing. Piece had cut through 8 of my maps and stopped on the 9th - no question that it saved me at least some broken skin. Dug the piece out of the briefcase and am saving the little chunk of ugly steel. Earl and I have had so many close calls now we're beginning to wonder - figure Maxwell and Cheswick are at the top of the Nazis' list.

#6 June 23 - Noball, France

Strictly a milk run - we had a good ship today - didn't have to abort as we did yesterday. Saw some flak - not near us. All cloud bombing - nothing visible. Target was some of those rampo used to launch the robot bombs. Very milky. Have been given credit for 1 mission extra now that limit is 35. That makes 28 more. Lloyd put in for 1st today. Rumor has us going back for 29 transition in a few months.

#7 June 24 - Noball, France

Another milk run - in and out of France in ½ an hour. Flak damned accurate at the target as usual. Heard the stuff go off today for the first time - hit very close and we brought back a dozen holes. Piece shattered the leg from ankle to near the hip of a pilot of one of the newer crews - didn't know him too well - his bombardier's first aid saved his life - pretty dramatic story of their trip back.

#8 June 25 - Toulouse, France

Got 2 hours sleep between this one and the above. Very deep raid on an airdrome 40 miles from Spanish border. Opposition was light, but the fact that we were in the air 10 hours and had practically no sleep made it very grueling. My radio compass and flux gate were out of order, making it pretty tough when we finally hit the English coast after coming around Brest for me to bring us in alone with the gas tanks almost dry without zig-zagging around looking for the field - visibility was no more than a mile. So terribly tired now after flying 16 hours of 23 consecutive.

#9 June 28 - Laon, France

Hit an airfield about 50 miles inland near Belgian border. AA fire from 3 other fields along the bomb run kept us in hot water for an unusually long time for this type of target. Lloyd was checked out as squadron lead - Korkey didn't fly with us. Coming back to the field at 10 A.M. we were ordered to get down quick and spent 5 unhappy hours waiting for the weather to clear at an A-20 base near Cambridge. More milk - just one big hole through the wing.

#10 July 4 - Saumur, France

Uneventful. Brought back our bombs - heavy undercast. Flak very light. Fighter escort tremendous. Rushed back low on gas again. So no fireworks today.

#11 July 6 - Noball, France

Nice quick in-again-out-again trip to a robot bomb installation. Over France but twenty minutes. Did catch a little flak at Dieppe and our wing man just did make it back to England. Rumours of our early departure for the USA and B-29's continue strong.

#12 July 11 - Munich, Germany

Got in a big one after an abortion and a scrub the last few days. For such a feared target deep in southern Germany, it was an easy mission - encountered no fighter opposition. Ten tenths undercast all the way and back and flak at Munich was very inaccurate. Devil of a long trip - 9 hours - working hard navigating 1,000 miles without ground reference and sweating out the expected Luftwaffe.

#12(B) July 13, 1944 - Munich, Germany

Thirteenth raid on the thirteenth of the month caused some anxiety. Third straight day the 8th has hit Munich. Another strictly PFF day - saw the ground but 3 times. Saw a Fort go down over Brussels - an awesome sight dropping in a tight flat spin for 10,000 feet and then exploding with a bright red flash with the wing falling off before the damn thing disappeared in the clouds. The wings in front and behind us were attacked by FW 190's on the way home before our fighters finally showed up to drive them off. One of our ships went to Switzerland - of course we passed close by - had a wonderful view of the purple and white Alps. Flak at Munich was very heavy and fairly accurate and we were hit several times - could almost stick your head in one in the wing. And upon landing we discovered (the hard way) that a tire had been shot out, but Lloyd was very skilled on the wet runway, and we finally limped lamely to the side and stopped after 9 ½ hours flying.

#14 July 16 - Stuttgart, Germany

Nothing went the way it was scheduled. First our crew wasn't to fly - they're giving us practice missions as a possible lead team. Then they needed us and warned us in time for 2 hours sleep. Flying as second spare, we had to fill in over the Channel. Target was to have been that damn jet-propelled engine plant at Munich, but overcast (10/10 all the way) rose well over 30,000 at Munich, and we dropped on Stuttgart. Flak heavy but inaccurate - just one small hole. Brand new tail gunner rode with us - has 10 hours flying time. Amusing - got airsick - and was constantly scared with our calling out flak and fighters.

#15 July 21 - Schweinfurt, Germany

Flew with another crew in another squadron whose navigator had been shot down a couple days ago. Hit Schweinfurt ball bearing plant visually and did a good job on it. Flak was pretty good - as always. Returning on the same route, as the way in the Nazis had moved in a flak train in Belgium, and they gave us a big surprise. They were very accurate and the stuff was rattling off us like hail. Hit the window over my desk and glass gave my hand a couple tiny cuts. Our oxygen system was shot out and we left formation at the coast and scooted for home.

#16 July 24 - St. Lo, France

Went down to Cherbourg and scattered a bunch of fragmentation bombs on the other side of our lines. Checking out as lead, led the low box with Floden, Badger, Lee, and Lloyd flying as copilot. Worked like hell considering it was a 4-hour 16,000-foot milk run with but a few bursts of flak.

#17 July 25 - St. Lo, France

Back to the battle line again today, and this time the weather was clear and I think we did a good job clearing the way for the infantry who started an offensive 15 minutes after we (about 1,000 of us) dropped 288 bombs per ship. Really another milky otherwise - flak negligible. Flew at a comfortable 13,000 feet. This one makes the half-way mark.

#18 July 29 - Merseburg, Germany

Flew in the lead again - Lloyd in the left seat this time. Boardman rode with me - though am officially checked out. Seventy-five percent of the Germans remaining oil production was at Merseburg, and it was completely leveled. Most miserable mission have yet flown - was quite sick with stomach disorders, almost frozen to death and so tired was barely awake. Flak was visual and damn good. Fighters hit us and Capt. Harmon, our tail gunner, claimed one. Ball turret operator on Dryer's crew - one of Nygren's best friends - was shot out of his ball by 20 mm steel. Was too sick to work and had Boardman take over a little after bombs away. Came back, puked, and stayed in bed for 18 hours.

#19 July 31 - Munich, Germany

We were all set to go on pass but were nailed for this one the night before. Another lead and this time Kinnucan flew with me - apparently still not trusted. Much nicer trip than the previous and was really very comfortable considering the nine-hour flight. Flak not bad at all. And for the fourth time the 8th failed to hit that jet-propelled plant down there - we're getting so we don't need briefing on the target. And splitting the work with Kinnucan made things cushy. With a captain in the tail and a major as copilot, we had considerable rank on board. Milk run?

#20 August 1 - Chateaudun, France

Lloyd and I were nailed again before we could go on pass. Led low box. Strictly a milky. No flak at the airdrome we hit, but they had some waiting for us at the coast. Mobile guns sent up some pink flak - very pretty.

#21 August 9 - Duren, Germany

Was needed as a fill-in and flew with Dryer's crew. Briefed for Munich, we ran into several bands of high cumulus formations. After losing the group several times, we finally got together, made several 360's, ran into a couple flak towns, and headed back for home. Dropped our 500 lb. incendiaries 30 miles southeast of Aachen on some sort of installations or railroad yards. Very unenjoyable - bandits playing hide and seek in the clouds could have had a merry time.

#22 August 16 - Leipzig, Germany

Finally got the model crew together today, and we led the low box on the long haul. After the wing lead screwed up and took us 45 miles south of course, we finally got back to the IP. We started on the run on the right heading with the correct interval with the lead box which had the same MPI. But since the run took us over the outskirts of the city, the colonel went off the heading, turning to the right and leaving Max and I very nonplussed and worried though we were sure we were right. Then the colonel turned back in - his dog leg killed the interval, and they dropped over us a few seconds after our release. One ship even had an incendiary cluster go through its wing! Flak was devastating during and after the run and between seeing it and hearing it, it was hell trying to work and guide us through it well - we didn't rejoin the wing for another 50 miles. Just hit twice - our #4 oil tank was blown up and smoked a great deal but never burned - and it wouldn't feather. And at the first flames, we would have bailed out. Another big hunk went through the radio room. Max did a damn good job and we blew up a JU-88 assembly plant. Rough, rough. Cartright went down.

SEPT 1 - EARL GOT DFC TODAY FOR THIS RAID.

#23 August 30, Kiel, Germany

We led high box. Byers flew with me to check out. Didn't take off 'til one. Things got messed up near the IP. We lost wing but following an unknown formation, we went ahead and bombed. Complete overcast to 20,000 feet. Had no mickey and dropped on marker bomb. Then discovered we were behind 351st and came on home. Went around most of the flak and unbelievably nobody was shooting at us. Long trip home with headwind. A lot of worry and sweat but no flak, no losses and mission accomplished.

#24 September 10 - Karlsruhe, Germany

The four of us led low box. Hit a truck motor factory about 10 miles south of Karlsruhe. More or less of tactical importance because of land operations about 100 miles away at the Siegfried Line. Cut straight across France avoiding Metz, being ignorant of who held it. Caught some unbriefed flak just before bombing and some more later north of Karlsruhe. We led the division and General Lacey flew. Was visual all the way and Max really put 'em on the target - and I think the other two boxes missed. Damn cold up there now and getting worse - 31^o below zero at 25,000. Things went smoothly without a hitch for a change - everybody did a damn good job. No losses.

#25 September 17 - Materburn, Germany (Reichswald Forest)

Bombed tactical targets in support of new landings and a British offensive in Holland. Bombing was done by 6 and 4 ship squadrons, each with its own MPI - 9 MPI's in all for our 42 ships. Our MPI was split by the Holland-German border. We hit tank concentrations in a forest with frags and did a good job. Caught a little effective flak from mobile artillery near the lines. Otherwise very easy - bombed from 17,000. Had a good look at once feared Brussels and Ostend coming back. Over the Channel saw hundreds of transports and gliders and typhoons which we learned tonight landed men in Holland.

#26 September 20 - Soest, Germany

Led low box to marshalling yards at Soest southeast of Hamm and east of Happy Valley. Purpose was to prevent moving up of supplies towards the front, of course. Everything fine and clear up to the IP, but from there on we were strictly on our own flying half in and half out of the clouds - Max and I did pick up a few obscured check points on the way, and finally the target and Soest did loom up occasionally and obscurely through the mist. Earl got his bombs away and kept his record 100% by laying 'em in there and again we were only box to hit target. The lead box never did see and bomb and finally dropped on target of opportunity and the rest brought their bombs back, sliding nicely between Hamm and Munster, and we never did see a burst of flak all day. As we neared the French coast, we were radioed that our field was closed and we went up and landed at Hardwick, south of Norwich. After a day there, finally got back home to find that a team's tour of duty had been lowered to 30, which means just 3 more missions! Putting in 6 missions is a pretty good day's work. Everybody pretty sure that Max can't miss now! - Oh, and we had Capt. Lowery as copilot instead of Kork - he was shot down at Paris (see Mission 2) and was awfully flak happy today - screaming wild shouts into the inter-phone during the bomb about getting out of the flak - though nobody was shooting at us. Quite a trip for a milky but that's enough.

#27 October 3 - Nurnberg, Germany

Wing lead. This I found to be the real McCoy for a navigator - flying group lead is like tailend Charlie compared to this. Worked like an opium fiend for hours, and the responsibility alone makes it a damn tough job. Leaving the buncher and hitting my first 2 control points was cut out by off-course groups. After much dog-legging, was cut out at the coast and had to dog-leg over the Channel to finally get in division formation. Was 9 to 10 tenths all the way, but mickey worked fine. We dropped incendiaries in the heart of Nurnberg and did a pretty good job. Colonel Glawe gave no trouble (was he scared!). Schoen (mickey operator) was on the ball and all went pretty good. Took a newer navigator, Goodman, as assistant and he was pretty sharp. Caught some rough flak (heard under bomb bays) east of Nancy at the battle line from mobile 88's coming back, but flak at target was surprisingly meager. But enough to throw a scare - haven't seen any rough stuff since Leipzig. Scared a lot of other cities with our route - which took us near Koblenz, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Strasbourg. Returned feeling like an old piece of wet lettuce. Maj. Menees didn't bawl me out (that turkey should live so long) for my log which wasn't too hot, but I did have to keep up with us and a 70-knot tailwind. A success I guess but no fun I'm sure.

#28 October 17 - Cologne, Germany

Another 94A lead. Same story of sweat and toil though not the long trip the last one was. Lloyd (now Capt.) finished up on this one with his usual good job. Leaves me with one left and Max 6. Stine left the field today. Hit every point within a minute, though once over the continent with the crowded division, it was impossible to stay on course. Complete cloud coverage the whole trip. Flak at Cologne not very good at all. Bombing (mickey) just fair - don't think we hit the marshalling yards, but after the last few heavy attacks, there couldn't be much of Cologne left. Got some accurate stuff from the Rhine and some from artillery around the front at Aachen. "Saw" one of the German jet fighters - a white streak climbing vertically upwards like a rocket. Escort good and no attacks. Found Col. Ball a fine leader to fly with. One more to go!

#29 October 26 - Bielefield, Germany

Last mission. Boardman and I led the wing (94B) and splitting the work made it very easy. Branaman finished also. Major Stewart and Schoen. Really finished with a milk run. No flak at the target and through Munster, Osnobruck, and Zwolle shot at us we were out of range. Another day of complete cloud coverage. Bombed by mickey and think we blew up an ordinance depot outside the city - though we were lucky. About all there was to it - nice safe short mission. Goodbye combat!

FINIS

SWEAT LIST

	Cambrai, FR	June 12	1
	Paris, FR	June 14	2
	Bordeaux, FR	June 19	3
	Hamburg, GER	June 20	4
	Berlin, GER	June 21	5
	Noball, FR	June 23	6
	Noball, FR	June 24	7
	Toulouse, FR	June 25	8
	Laon, FR	June 28	9
	Saumur, FR	July 4	10
	Noball, FR	July 6	11
	Munich, GER	July 11	12
	Munich, GER	July 13	13
	Stuttgart, GER	July 16	14
	Schweinfurt, GER	July 21	15
(low)	St. Lo, FR	July 24	16
	St. Lo, FR	July 25	17
(low)	Merseburg, GER	July 29	18
(high)	Munich, GER	July 31	19
(low)	Chateaudon, FR	August 1	20
	Duren, GER	August 9	21
(low)	Leipzig, GER	August 16	22
(high)	Kiel, GER	August 30	23
(low)	Karlsruhe, GER	Sept. 10	24
(low)	Materburn, GER	Sept. 17	25
(low)	Soest, GER	Sept. 20	26
94A	Nurnberg, GER	Oct. 3	27
94A	Cologne, GER	Oct. 17	28
94B	Bielefield, GER	Oct. 26	29

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