

GENERAL PREPARATION and MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(1) Today we got up bright and early (3am) ate a good breakfast and went to a four o'clock briefing. It was well organized after which we left and got dressed. Funny how the equipment room was sort of like the locker room of a bunch of high school football players. As you walk in to the place you pick up a Mae West get in a line to pick up your heated clothes. To look at the fellows you would not think that they were facing the possibility of being dead before sunset. Just a bunch of swell fellows laughing and kidding about various subjects. Well you put on your heated suit, flying suit, sheep skin boots, helmet, Mae West and parachute, grab your bag, wish the fellows good luck and (2) take a truck out to your ship. The ground crew has already hooked up the put-put supplying current to the ship looks like a beautiful powerful bird as it stands there in the cold dark morning. I put on my equipment under my seat. The gunners come out and put their guns in the containers and check them. Brownny helps me pre-flight the entire ship to make sure that everything is in working order. Then check with every man to make sure that both he and his equipment are ready for the mission.

Now every man is aboard the ship waiting to go. Chuck and I sit in the cockpit listening to the tower for the code word for engines to start. Then it comes --(3) they shoot red/yellow flares. Starting engines, check booster pumps switches generators, batteries start one-prime mess the high blade turns over three or four times, mixture control high. Mags on then flames pour out of the exhaust stack the R.P.Ms and manifold pressure jumps the engines roar like a lion but it is a beautiful sound. After the four are started we warm them up and check them properly. The code word for taxi comes over the radio a red/green flare and thirty-two ships start in an orderly fashion for the take off runway. As the ships wait for the signal for take off it is a beautiful sight. Rows of beautiful ships loaded to the gills with (4) bombs for Adolph. Those kidding fellows of the locker room are now pilots, co pilots, navigators, bombardiers, catch with a man size job to do. As you sit in your ship you realize you are on one of the biggest and finest teams in the world. You also realize no sacrifice is too great not even that of giving your life. The signal is given, the first ship goes down the runway leaving four streaks of flames behind, 2 3 4 etc then it is your turn to line up with the runway. The tail wheel is locked, cowl flaps closed, controls unlocked gyros set, high boost. A green light from the caravan the previous ship has left the runway and it is clear for you to start. I jam my feet against the brakes and push the (5) throttles to wide open. The bomb load and gasoline are at a maximum; every inch of the runway is needed. Ten seconds and off with the brakes the power is so great it holds you fast to your seat. Controlling such power gives a man a feeling he cannot express. The ground starts passing by. Faster and faster. Brownny calls the air speed to me - eighty, ninety I can feel the ship begin to get light with my feet on the rudders the ship goes straight down the runway. One hundred, one ten, one twenty, one thirty we have practically reached the end of the runway. With my left arm I haul back on the elevator control. Pulling like a fort off the ground requires a **lelth** force with a bomb load. Off the ground, I call for (6) wheels, Chuck throws the switch, and up they come without hesitation. Two hundred feet we reduce power strike out on a heading to gain altitude. Now you are a man who has wings. No man can tell of this feeling, he must have this experience to feel it. Seven thousand feet we hit the top of clouds. This is

another world. A man's complex leave him because there is no place for them up there. The sun is bright and cheerful shining down upon a carpet of snowy white clouds. On the way back to the assembly every now and then a silvery streak appears in the east that seems to reach the heavens. Who would even guess that the cause was that of a terror weapon the V-2 from Germany. Getting to the buncher we scan the sky for the flares that identify the box in which we are to fly. In the (7) instance we can see it knowing the formation circles to left we start out on a course that will cut them off we find our correct position and fly about until every ship is in its place and then we fly to the coast where we take our place in a long line of groups. The great air strength is seen as far as the eye can see, hundreds and hundreds of ships behind and ahead of us going to war. Across the channel then France. Ten minutes from the German border the navigator tells the crew to put on their flak suits. By this time we have our oxygen masks on, electric suits connected and now a heavy iron vest and hat. We realize that to these things depends our life. The gunners are now alert watching every object in the sky. P-51 (8) fly past protecting us from enemy fighters. Thirty minutes from the target twenty ten the flak and smoke makers are now visible, what a mess to go through. The fighter pilots respect the bomber pilots for going over a target. Now you say to yourself if I'm alive in five minutes it's one more mission closer to being home. Finally you are in range and you realize only God can bring you through. Before you know it you are in the clear, heading for home.

(9)Politz

Flew First Pilot for another man's crew who is sick with a cold. We got up at 3:30 and went to a 4:30 briefing. They briefed us for between four and five hundred guns at the target but at the time they had no meaning. Everything went pretty much S.O.P. getting to the ships and taking off. We assembled over Glatton and started off to war flying tail end charlie of the black box. The low-low element lead was a terribly rough man to follow and to make things worse the damn Co-pilot would let the ships lag behind about a mile every time I let him take over. I got so mad, I thought at times
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was full of blood red explosions coming so close they could be heard above the roar of the engines. The crew became frightened, calling me on the interphone to clear-out of the firey hell. There was nothing I could do but continue to fly down the bomb run. All of a sudden, a burst went off directly beneath our ship. The concusion was so great it threw the whole ship up with a hell of a bang. To this day, I do not know how everyone aboard missed injury. There was a hole between the co-pilot and myself, an oxygen bottle was hit under my seat. The engineer was taking flax out of his boots, the ball turret gunner had a hugh piece come into his turret. Flax was like rain out there. I could only pull down my flax helmet, grit my teeth and fly on. I remember one burst exploding so close to my window, I pulled the ship up and ducked without thinking. Finally, the element leader had his number one engine hit so badly, he dropped out of formation. Bombs away and I streaked for clear sky as I looked over my left shoulder for tracking flak, I saw a horrible sight. About eight thousand feet below me I saw the remains of the Colonel's (Colonel Luper) ship plunging toward the earth, a flaming mass, then an explosion that reduced his ship to confetti. A Fortress is a beautiful thing when it flies, but so ugly when it falls to earth helplessly. Finally, we came into the clear.

Forts flying all over the sky, a fighter attack would have wiped out every ship in the sky. After about twenty minutes, they got together and headed for home. Crossing Denmark, they shot

at us again but no one was shot down. Seven ships were knocked down at the target. Many more fellows wounded and killed aboard the ships flying home. As though that was not enough, we chucked our gasoline supply and found it below a safety margin, so as soon as we got near England, we left formation and headed directly home. We had already leaned the mixture out as much as possible but the gage continued to approach the zero mark. Finally England, what a beautiful sight. The thoughts of ditching into the icy North Sea left our minds. I asked the navigator for a direct course to the field. Flying his course, our field came into sight in about fifteen minutes. I called for wheels, the co-pilot did the landing check, I called the tower for landing instructions stating it was an emergency. They cleared us immediately for landing. On the downwind leg, we ran out of gas in No. 1 engine with the other three with approximately the same quantity of fuel. On three, I made a very good landing (unbelievable) and taxied to the hardstand. God was kind today. Tonight I have a date with my little English passion flower.

#3 COLOGNE

We got up at 3:00, ate a good breakfast and went to a 4:00 briefing. Briefing was not bad. It was well organized. We left there, got dressed, and went to the plane. It's really a busy time between stations and engines. The men put the guns in, get their gear stowed. Chuck layed out the flak suits,

put my mask, gloves, glasses, shoes, chute and flax suit by my seat. Chuck put out the rations, and escape kits for each fellow. We check the ship and pulled the props through. Engines were started, checked and we taxied out.

Today our assembly was as briefed at 13,000' - so we headed out for Cologne. Everything went swell - it wasn't too cold. We dropped 6-500 G.P.s and 6-500 I.B.s on Cologne. Don't know if we hit the yards, it was P.F.F. Light flak - not accurate.

#4 COLOGNE

Golly - another early call. I don't like this getting ready before dawn. They gave us K ration chocolate instead of carbohydrates as our escape kit rations.

Evidently, we missed it yesterday. They were hoping for a visual run on the target but again it was about 8/10th cloud coverage so we had to make it P.F.F. Hope we did better today.

Take off and assembly was O.K. formed at 10,000 - off oxygen. That was really a good break. We climbed on course - went in over friendly coast, spent only about half an hour over Germany on the way back. Peter showed us the Rock of Lurelia, the Mouse Tower on an island Dragon Rock all on the Rhine. These could be seen in the breaks of the clouds. The Germans had flak boats in the Rhine so we cleared out of there but fast.

Trip back was O.K. and below 10,000 feet so that meant no oxygen. We came over England at 1,500 feet under the clouds.

Bombs were dropped on an airport at Limbourg south of Cologne - missed it - hard luck.

#5 COLOGNE

Chuck flew this mission as tail gunner for Barrier in lead plane of the high box. Major Maquire flew as co-pilot for me. Chuck complained of the tail gunners position. It gets very cold back there and is very uncomfortable.

For some reason this was an awfully long mission. Take off and assemble were O.K., then off to Cologne - rail yards there. Due to the proximity of the front this was classed as a ground support-tacticto mission. No fighters and the flax was not too bad. We dropped our bombs and headed for home. Circled Peterborough until the high box got in. What a character "Just call me stinky" is. A very humble fellow to fly with and a very good flyer. Funny how in cadets he was known throughout the training command for being such a strict man. My roommate in Basic was in his squadron and was scared to death of him. Besides that, he made me walk tours for a little incident in the mess hall. He is really fond of me, says I am a fine pilot and have a good crew. That night he took us to the club and

we did a little drinking. I don't like to drink after a mission because being so tired, it makes you very paniky.

Back to "Mac", his wife is related to the Duponts and expects to be Governor of Maryland someday.-----James McQuire-----

#6 MANNEIM

"Rough" Mac flew with me again today. Chuck flew tail gunner in the Col.'s ship.

We got off and formed on schedule, got in the division line O.K. and headed for the yards of Manneim. We were getting bad contrails and clouds, so we climbed 2,000 feet on the bomb run to 29,000. That sort of strung out the formation. They decided the run should be P.F.F., then the P.F.F. went out. There was an awful mixing over the target. Our box dropped off of the high leader who took over. But Wilson figured the high leader was off because there wasn't any flak there so he headed to the left and did a 360° turn and dropped on a smoke marker in dense flak. We got shot up and the whole formation was messed up.

We got out O.K. and headed for home. Brownny was unable to get the hydraulic pressure up so I climbed out of my seat and fixed it. He was so surprised he just about fell over. Mac landed the ship, turned off the runway and started to taxi and his

brakes went out. What a boy, he just threw up his hands and we went off the taxi strip.

Ho-Hum!

#7 HAMBURGH - OCT. 25

We expected to catch hell on this one. We went in by an all water route. Ordnance plant just outside of town - (because it was P.F.F.) - we bombed railyards, oil refineries and waterfront. Bombload 6-500 G.P. and 6-500 I.B.s. Those I.B. hold a lot of incendiary clusters they should do a lot of damage.

The flak was intense - amazingly so. They briefed us for 200 guns in range and they can throw up a cloud that blots out what's behind it. It was terrific. Luckily, it was in patches and we dropped our bombs. We were lucky to get off with no hits. Some groups we saw were not so lucky.

The Micky men say their screen pictures were clear as a bell and they think they hit the secondary O.K. The trip home was mostly over the North Sea. Flak was very bad today but not as bad as Politz.

The return was normal. Came down through breaks in the clouds. The haze around the field was terrific. Finally managed to get lined up with the flares. Hit the inner flare at two hundred and fifty and the runway finally came into sight. Wham Bang

- throttle off, flaps straighten the ship out, bang, the ship is on the ground.

The inner flare is only five hundred feet from the end of the runway and we are traveling at 125 m.p.h.

#8 BIELEFIELD

After a late briefing, we took off for the Ordinance (tanks) plant at Bielefield. We had to go in over the enemy held coast at the Zyder Zee - got some flax - only occasionally. At the target, we dropped our 6-500 #G.P.s and 6-500 #I.B.s through the overcast by P.F.F.

Reconnaissance says it was the best results ever gotten by Micky bombing on record. Glad to hear we hit the target - that helps you know.

Thru patches in the clouds I could see the dykes to the Zyder Zee. The canals crossing everywhere in orderly fashion. Holland must be quite a swell little country. Peter was all excited about seeing his home again. We got home without any trouble, an easy mission.

#9 MUNSTER

A 6:00 a.m. briefing today, it was a blessing to have it so

late. We got out to the ship and after a two hour delay before engine time, we finally took off.

Chuck took off today, first time with a full bombload. Told me he found it hard to pull the plane with the heavy load. We carried 4-250 # G.P.s and 4-500 # I.B.s. Target was the R.R. yards at Munster, just past the strategic bomb line. We flew tail-end Charlie No. 6 in the low low element of the low box. We had a lot of trouble with the lead of the Element and a plane what would not stay in formation above us.

Trip over was as O.K. - $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours on O2. Chuck flew the bomb run. We were surprised by an unusual target. There was supposed to have been a front over the target. Hedrick was lead of the low box. Benson put his bombs out well. Carroll was toggler today while Peter did D.R. The ball and tail reported swell results, said the whole city was wrecked from end to end. Hope we got the R.R. yards. Flak was pretty bad. Got holes in each wing, the bomb bays and the right elevator. The right wing had a hole over a foot long in it right beside the ball turret. Boudreau came very close to getting his a__ shot off.

Coming home we took over the low lead - had trouble with clouds, contrails and haze when Hedrick left formation with #3 and #4 feathered, (Hedricks) flew over the field, fired flares and came in for a good landing. Visibility was very bad - made a low visibility let down and landing - not bad.