

457th Bomb Group History
March 1944

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DOD DIR 5200.9

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EIGHTH AIR FORCE

EIGHTH BOMBER COMMAND
1ST BOMBARDMENT DIVISION

94th Combat Bombardment Wing (H)

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I. 457TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

- a. 748th Bombardment Squadron (H)
- b. 749th Bombardment Squadron (H)
- c. 750th Bombardment Squadron (H)
- d. 751st Bombardment Squadron (H)

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IT. COLONEL JAMES R. LUPER ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE
457TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV) DURING ITS TRANSITION PERIOD
IN THE 21ST WING AT GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA.

COL. LUPER HAS BEEN A STUDENT OF MILITARY SCIENCE
AND TACTICS SINCE BOYHOOD. HE GRADUATED FROM THE UNITED
STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT IN 1938 AND FROM
THAT TIME HAS BEEN IN THE ARMY AIR FORCES.

MRS. RENE HILLER LUPER, THE COLONEL'S WIFE, LIVES AT
701 N. 39TH ST., PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA. HIS PARENTS
MR. AND MRS. JAMES R. LUPER, SR. LIVE ON 94TH STREET IN
PORTLAND, OREGON.

FROM THE POTENTIAL SKILL AND EXPERIENCE OF THE
PERSONNEL, HE DOUBTLESS WILL MAKE THIS GROUP ONE OF THE
OUTSTANDING ONES IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS.

21ST WING
457TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (HV)
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA
MAY 1944

[REDACTED]

(AN EIGHTH AAF BOMBER STATION IN ENGLAND)

IT WAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BY THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE EIGHTH AAF THAT CAPTAIN LEROY H. WATSON WAS PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF MAJOR.

MAJOR WATSON GRADUATED FROM THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY AT WEST POINT IN 1941 AND FROM THAT TIME ON HAS BEEN IN THE AAF. HE IS A VETERAN OF MANY MISSIONS OVER ENEMY OCCUPIED EUROPE AND THE HOLDER OF THE AIR MEDAL. HIS PRESENT DUTIES ARE THAT OF THE GROUP OPERATIONS OFFICER WHICH IS ONE OF THE MOST TRYING AND DIFFICULT ASSIGNMENTS IN COMBAT THEATRES.

HIS FATHER MAJOR GENERAL WATSON IS ALSO SERVING OVERSEAS, AND THE MAJOR'S WIFE SHEILA L. WATSON IS LIVING AT 4525 GARRISON ST., N.W. WASHINGTON, D. C.

[REDACTED]

This Group flew its 5th mission on 2 March 1944 to Frankfurt, Germany, but the bombing results were unknown due to a heavy cloud formation over the target. The crews reported a few attacks by enemy aircraft, principally FW 190's and ME 109's, with no damage to our aircraft. Our fighter support was excellent which resulted in much favorable comment from the crew members. Enroute to the target and on the return trip, flak encountered was meager and inaccurate and very little damage was suffered by our aircraft.

As of the 1 March 1944 Lt. John R. Battle was appointed Squadron Historian VOCO of the 748th Bombardment Squadron (H); 1st Lt. Loyd A. Cox was appointed Squadron Historian (V.O.C.O.) of the 749th Bombardment Squadron (H); 2nd Lt. Hugh Dukes was appointed Squadron Historian (V.O.C.O.) of the 750th Bombardment Squadron (H); and 2nd Lt. Ralston B. Regan was appointed Squadron Historian of the 751st Bombardment Squadron (H). This information was turned in to Capt. Sheehan of the 1st Bomb Division.

Lt. Gelber who was wounded in the raid over Schweinfurt is getting along comparatively well in the hospital, however they are still picking glass out of his eyes and the doctors say he will be alright.

Arrangements have been completed by Capt. Horner so that all personnel of this station may purchase the stars and stripes, and the "Yank" magazine through the PX. The subscriptions may be paid for monthly in advance. This includes six issues of the "stars and stripes" and one issue of "Yank" at a cost two shillings and three pence for a week. The various squadron supply rooms have made arrangements to store and care for all the impregnated clothing that was issued prior to leaving the United States. The men sure hate to part with this sweet smelling equipment.

Group headquarters has completed arrangements for anyone desiring to send money home, to do so free of charge by filling out form number 38 and leaving the money at the personnel office.

Note news paper ←

The 457th Bomb Group carried out its 6th mission on 3 March 1944 against Erkner (Berlin) Germany, the home of the V.K.F. Ball Bearing Works, 16 miles from the center of Berlin, which produces over 7% of total enemy production. Due to heavy undercast only one plane from our group reached the target and dropped its bomb load, with fair results. No enemy fighter opposition was met on the entire trip, with only a few enemy aircraft reported seen by our crews, and they were at a safe distance. None of our aircraft suffered flak damage on this mission, and our crews reported the flak very meager and inaccurate all along the route.

Aircraft No. 073 piloted by Lt. Whelan, was the only ship of our Group who was able to drop its bombs on the target. This was due to the fact that he became lost from our Group in the clouds and filled in with another group which was fortunate enough to find a hole in the clouds which permitted the bombing of the Primary Target.

Promotions came through for the Enlisted Men in the various Squadrons today; 45 men being promoted in the 750th Squadron alone.

Capt. Dickinson was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds previously received on a mission. Lts. Dozier and Schuchman received letters of commendation from the Commanding Officer, Col. Luper for their 201 file, due to brilliant performances they have turned in.

The Group PX is now able to send gifts for every occasion for all members of the family, friends etc, in the United States. A good variety of items such as perfume, flowers, candy, jewelry, and some articles of clothing are available.

Chaplin Rogers with the aid of Lt. Musgrove and a couple other members of the group are making rapid steps in organizing a chorus from personnel in the group.

Date ?

The Group's 7th mission was a return trip to the important Ball Bearing Works at Erkner, Germany, a short distance from Berlin itself. The weather interfered again and prevented bombing of the target. However, six of our aircraft bombed a target of opportunity in Germany but were unable to observe the results due to clouds. Our crews reported no attacks from enemy fighters along the entire route; a few were seen at a distance. Heavy flak was reported over the enemy coast, but over the target and on the return trip, it was meager and inaccurate causing very little damage to our aircraft.

Most of the aircraft brought their bombs back from this raid, so we can't consider it a success.

An unusual experience was witnessed by several crews of our Group in the flight today, two B-17's collided at an altitude of approximately 25,000 feet. They exploded with such force the concussion bounced Lt. Wetherall's ship around considerably burning the fabric off the elevators and the left aileron. One tail gunner of one of our aircraft was fortunate enough to have a camera available and photographed the explosion. It was a marvelous piece of work however all that is shown is a big puff of smoke. It was a tough bit of luck, however we are thankful that neither of the aircraft belonged to our Group.

We suffered no casualties and no damage to the aircraft from either enemy aircraft or flak.

Sunday, 5 March 1944 we had a stand-down, a day of rest for the entire Group and greatly appreciated as there seems to be some evidence of tension among the combat crews.

On their 8th mission on 6 March 1944, the 457th Bomb Group returned to Erkner, Germany, the same target they had been prevented from reaching twice before. Obviously it is considered of vital importance that this target be reached and destroyed, because if Germany runs short of ball bearings she can no longer replace lost aircraft. Bad weather prevented bombing the primary target, however targets of opportunity were bombed with fair results.

Our crews reported vigorous enemy fighter opposition on this mission, principally by Me-210's, Me-109's and JU-88's. Moderate flak was encountered on practically the entire trip but damage to our aircraft was slight.

Two aircraft were lost from our Group on this mission. One of the aircraft No. 627 crew No. 116, is listed as missing. The crew of this aircraft is as follows:

P Graves, Roy E.
CP McLeod, Wayne C.
N Salay, James (NMI) Jr.
B White, Herbert W.
ETTG Gillespie, Horace J.
RWG Kent, Robert W.
RO Brown, Weldon F.
LWG Lillehaug, Donald L.
BTG Moberg, Harold M.
TG Williams, Eldon

This crew is from the 748th Bombardment Squadron (H).

Crew No. 303, Aircraft No. 595, of the 750th Bombardment Squadron is also reported missing in this action:

P Whalen, Eugene H.
CP Crawley, James R.
N McPeake, George S. Jr.
B Kuncl, Robert J.
ETTG Vaughn, Robert J.
RWG McVey, John
RO Hartings, Jerome J.
LWG Bartee, J. W.
BTG French, Virgil L.
TG Maddox, Alphas J.

Most aircraft dropped their bombs in the vicinity of a small town of Verdun. 26 packets of leaflets were also dropped in this area during this mission.

The 9th mission on 8 March 1944 of the 457th Bomb Group was carried out on the city of Erkner, Germany. This marked the fourth mission within the week of bombing the important Ball Bearing Works, primary target. All crews reported the bombing results excellent, hitting the target square on the nose, and dealing a serious blow to the German war machine.

The crews praised our excellent fighter support. Some enemy fighter opposition was had around the target with JU 88's, Me-109's and FW 190's.

According to P.R.U. reports from British Headquarters, the Erkner Ball Bearing Factory was blanketed with H.E. and Incendiary bombs which covered the target area with fires and smoke. The Railway Station received at least 10 direct hits, the barracks on the West received direct hits of 5 and were seen to be on fire. Heavy concentrations of incendiary bombs were noted in the residential area and a gas tank was seen to explode; also many small industrial buildings was blanketed by fires due to incendiary bomb explosions.

From all available results, this appears to be one of our most successful missions.

On 7 March we had no operational activity as far as the enemy was concerned. Capt. W. F. Smith was relieved from duties as Operations Officer of the 750th Squadron and assigned to Group Headquarters in the capacity of Group Operations Officer.

The 10th mission of this Group on 9 March 1944, was against the Bomber Aircraft Assembly Factory of Ernst Heinkel, at Oranienburg, 16 miles from Berlin. This target produces approximately 40 HE 177's per month, the majority of the heavy bomber output for Germany. x N-NE

Bombing was done on PFF, and the results were unobserved due to undercast. Our crews reported seeing only five enemy fighters - they attempted an attack but were broken up by P-47's.

Several of our ships suffered damage from flak, which was more accurate than usual, especially around the target. Our planes were flying at 25,000 feet.

Aircraft No. 629 carried 4 parcels of leaflets which were dropped over Berlin.

Our Group was led by Major Wilson, with Major Hoffman being the Group Deputy.

It has been ordered by the group Commander that all personnel this station will wear their gas masks from 1400 to 1430 hours each Saturday beginning 18 March 1944, and all personnel of the group are also cautioned to carefully guard their conversations when using the telephone. The telephone is not to be used for the discussion of secret or confidential matters.

It. Walker the physical training officer has announced that the officers have an indoor workout room which is available for use.

The 11th mission of the 457th Bomb Group on 11 March 1944 again took them to Germany, against the marshalling yards at Munster. Bombing was done by PFF due to heavy undercast, and the crews were unable to observe the results of their efforts.

No enemy fighter opposition was met on the entire mission, due to our own fighter escort which was excellent at all times. The fighter protection furnished on these missions have won the high admiration of all crew members.

Intense flak was encountered over the target, but was inaccurate and very little damage was suffered by our aircraft. All of our aircraft returned safely.

This mission was led by Major Wilson and Lt. Selywn.

We were honored with the arrival today of the first B-29 ever to land at Glatton Airfield; piloted by a full colonel and carrying a full crew. It remained here for inspection by personnel of the Group. It made a perfect landing and take-off and numerous people marveled at its splendid maneuverability.

The new building which will be used to house the finance office of this station will be completed this week so in order to complete the job of moving the finance office will be closed March 18, 19, and 20.

Announcement was made in the Daily Bulletin that members of this group may make arrangements at the PX to send Mother's Day Gifts to the United States up until March 31. Also received notice that the PX tailor shop is now open and ready for business, however to the extent of only minor alterations. We also bheer the fact that the barber shop is now doing business for this group.

On 13 March 1944 the 457th Bomb Group carried out its 12th mission, which was against a "No-Ball" target in France. While these targets are not definitely identified, they are known to be important military installations of the enemy.

Heavy clouds prevented the bombing of this target, and all of our aircraft returned safely with their bomb load. Our crews reported no enemy fighter opposition met on the entire trip, and our fighter support was excellent. Moderate flak was encountered over the occupied territory, and our aircraft suffered only slight damage.

This mission served purely as practice for our crews, since it didn't cause the Germans any destruction, and went only as far as Northern France.

The Group was led by Capt. Smith with Capt. Ensminger being in the Deputy Lead position.

We are now functioning with an entire fleet of silver B-17's. The camouflage version seems to be becoming a thing of the past. The "first silver Group" of the ETO. The silver ships have a speed of from 15 to 20 miles per hour faster than the painted aircraft. The pilots and entire crew like them better, and they make a beautiful picture in the air; and the personnel shows a pick-up in their morale due to this factor. Our first mission as an all-silver group was flown on the 11th. From that time on we will put a complete box of silver ships in 8th Air Forces formation, and our camouflaged ships in the future will be used only as spares or to fill in. If this works out successfully as we have every reason to believe, it looks like this will mean the passing of the "painted ship" as far as this war is concerned.

On 14 and 15 March the Traveling PX paid our Station a visit utilizing space in the Officers Club, they were a welcome sight and did a land office business, possibly due to the fact this is the first time they have visited the Glatton Air Base.

The Group's mission No. 13 on 16 March 1944 was against an aircraft assembly plant at Lechfeld, Germany. A heavy undercast prevented our aircraft from bombing the primary target, but the secondary target of Augsburg, Germany was bombed with unobserved results. Leaflets were also dropped over the target area.

Our crews reported stronger opposition by enemy fighters, all ME-109's, and we lost one of our aircraft but the entire crew was saved. Flak was encountered only over the target area and no damage to any of our aircraft resulted from it.

The use of ground rockets on this mission was reported by several crew members, but none hit any of our aircraft.

"Old Augsburg Francis" led the Group today, co-piloted by Lt. Belcher.

Our aircraft No. 063 piloted by Lt. Lennartson, ditched in the Channel at 50° 10' N, 01° 20' E at 1505 o'clock after being hit by enemy fighters. The crew was later rescued by the British Air-Sea Rescue Service, who did a marvelous job, bringing the entire crew back with only a minor injury being suffered by the Tail Gunner - this was due to flak. This feat caused a boost of morale because now everyone in the Group has great confidence in the Air-Sea Rescue members.

Members of the crew of this aircraft are as follows:

P	Lennartson, Lewis
CP	Keesee, Everett L.
N	Markowitz, Manford
B	Jordan, Ralph C.
E	Haag, Thomas B.
AE	Garnhart, Clyde E.
RO	Graham, William T.
ARO	Nunes, Anthony J.
TG	Blackwell, James E.
BT	Fazzio, Cosmo J.

The 457th Bomb Group carried out its 14th mission on 18 March 1944 against a high priority twin engine operational airfield at Landsberg am Lech, Germany. This target contributes materially to the reserve strength of the Luftwaffe.

The weather gave us better than an even break this time, and the bombing results was reported by crews as good. Our crews reported some enemy fighter opposition by FW 190's and ME 109's but we lost no ships to their attacks. The friendly fighter support was excellent on this mission.

Several of our aircraft suffered damage from flak during the mission, which was moderate and fairly accurate. All of our aircraft returned to the base.

Aircraft No. 535 piloted by Lt. Dozier was forced to land at Thorpe-Abbots Airfield due to a leak in the gas line and one engine out because of flak. This ship other wise OK and none of the crew was injured.

Our bombing altitude was approximately 24,000 feet and at this altitude the flak was quite heavy, since we had 13 aircraft suffering minor battle damage and one major damage.

Tail Gunner Barris, Aaron L. of the 748th Squadron in Aircraft 618 piloted by Lt. Soenke, suffered a flak wound in the target area. Radio Operator Trundy, Richard T. in Aircraft No. 558 also of the 748th Squadron suffered a scalp wound from flak in the area of Poix.

This was a rough mission in several respects.

On 17 March we received orders promoting Capt. Roderick L. Francis to the rank of Major, as of 11 March 1944, - a great fellow and the entire Group as well as the Squadron is happy over the event.

The 15th mission of the 457th Bomb Group on 19 March 1944 was again carried out on No-Ball targets in occupied France. The weather was clear over the target area, but through some confusion as to the correct target, the bombing results was poor.

The crews reported no enemy fighters seen on the entire mission, and nothing unusual was observed.

Some damage was suffered by our aircraft from flak which was very intense and accurate over the target area.

The target was the No-Ball or construction works at Watten, which is one of the oldest and best developed and possibly the most important structures of this type in the Palais de Calais area on the Cherbourg peninsula.

The Group was led by Major Hoffman and Capt. Bender.

Orders were published today promoting 39 Enlisted Men in the NCO ranks of the 750th Bombardment Squadron as of 15 March 1944.

On Friday March 19, 1944 the officers held their regular monthly party at the officers club in commemoration of the very old St. Patrick. It was quite a festive occasion and greatly appreciated by all in that it was quite a change from the many missions that we have had in the past few weeks.

The 457th Bomb Group had as its 16th mission on 20 March 1944 military installations at Frankfurt, Germany. However high clouds causing poor visibility and making formation flying difficult, caused the mission to be abandoned before any bombs were dropped.

Few enemy aircraft were seen by our crew members and no attacks were made on our formation. Despite the difficult flying conditions, friendly fighter support was good. Flak encountered enroute to target and back was moderate to meagre and caused very little damage to our aircraft. All planes returned safely.

Four of our Aircraft were considered to have minor battle damage.

Mission was led by Major Spencer, flying a 749th aircraft. Deputy Lead was Capt. Sytak with Lt. Parks as co-pilot.

Lt. Shuchman had the unique experience of forcing his aircraft into a 3,000 foot spin in a violent successful attempt to avoid collision with another B-17.

We received notification that the A.P.O. Number for all personnel of this station was being changed from 634 to 557. This is to take effect immediately and we are advised to notify all correspondents. Naturally this has given rise to immeasurable speculation and every one has his own idea as to what this change may mean. At least one unanimous hope is that it will aid in our mail reaching us a little more rapidly.

The Daily Bulletin carried comment to the effect that service caps were not authorized wearing apparel for enlisted men. The belief has been expressed that this was the ruling typical of the Second Air Force and a little surprise was felt that it should apply to members of this command in this theatre.

An Eighth Air Force message received here advises us that the War Department has discontinued accepting all applications for aviation cadet air crew training. Applications upon which final action has not been taken will be returned to the applicant marked disapproved.

This Group carried out its 17th mission on 22 March 1944 against a strategic target in the suburbs of Berlin - the Bomber Assembly Factory of Ernst Heinkel at Oranienburg. This target at present is responsible for most of the heavy bomber output for Germany. In spite of adverse weather conditions, good bombing results were reported by members of our crews, and fires were still burning from previous raids.

Our crews encountered no enemy fighters on the entire trip, and the flak enroute to target and back was very light and inaccurate.

We had no personnel casualties and all of our aircraft returned safely.

Since bombing was PFF, all aircraft with the exception of one dropped their bombs on the center of the City of Berlin.

The Anti-aircraft fire over Berlin was of the barrage type, however it was somewhat inaccurate.

Enroute to the target at approximately 54° N, 03° E, ten large explosions in the water were seen; at this time our aircraft was flying at approximately 17,000 feet, and a large black slick was noticed on the water after the explosion occurred.

There was a unique observation in the formation on this mission; a triangle J ship flying out of formation and at times appearing to join the tail of our formation was seen to have been hit by bombs dropped from one of our ships. A cluster of 6 to 8 bombs was seen to fall on or by the tail section and after part of the fuselage of the J ship, several of which bounced off without exploding. There was a flash of flame near the rudder and horizontal stabilizer and the J ship skidded to the left and downward and was never seen again. This incident is verified by several officers and enlisted men flying in different aircraft in our formation. Complete statements by all witnesses are contained in detail in our Mission Folder No. 17, 22 March 1944.

The 18th mission of the 457th Bomb Group on 23 March 1944 was the Lippstadt Airfield in Northern Germany, which was the target of our 1st Mission on 21 February 1944. This is an operational fighter field used by operational ME 109's and 110's, and storage of FW 190's and ME 109's.

Heavy clouds were encountered over the Primary Target area, forcing the Group to bomb other targets, particularly Munster, but the results were unobserved. Our crews reported only four enemy fighters, ME 109's, seen and they made no attack on our formation.

Light flak was encountered on the mission causing little damage to our aircraft. There were no personnel casualties and all planes returned to the base.

Col. Cobb, the Wing A-3 led the Group using Lt. Mays as pilot in aircraft No. 998 of the 751st Squadron. This aircraft carried smoke bombs and for reason they exploded prematurely inside the aircraft when the bomb bay doors were opened. Besides making the crew very uncomfortable they ruined a camera.

Some of our aircraft were unable to drop their bombs on the secondary target of Munster due to bad weather, and consequently dropped their bombs on targets of last resort.

Aircraft No. 460 of the 750th Squadron was loaded with 36 parcels of leaflets (G-30); these were dropped over the Secondary Target, the City of Munster.

It was reported by some of our crews that apparently the Germans are shooting up some sort of shell extracting white ribbons of smoke that somewhat resemble the markers dropped by our PFF or leader aircraft. This is thought to be done to confuse our bombardiers making them uncertain as to when to drop their bombs.

For its 19th mission on 24 March 1944, the 457th Bomb Group returned again to the Ball Bearing Works of Kugelfischer at Schweinfurt, Germany, the most important center of this industry in Germany and a vital cog in the German war machine.

Bombing was carried out in a heavy undercast and the results were not visible. Our crews reported no enemy fighters on the entire trip, and flak was very light at all points along the route.

All of our aircraft returned to the base, and there were no personnel casualties.

Three of our aircraft suffered minor battle damage from anti-aircraft fire on this mission.

This mission was led by our Commanding Officer, Col. Duper, flying with Lt. Selwyn. Capt. Dickinson was Deputy Leader, flying with Lt. Shuchman.

All members of the Ground Echelon servicing and maintaining aircraft received the commendation of the Commanding Officer. He has noted that there is a tendency to place the emphasis of combat success upon the performance of the combat crews; and he desires to point out that the efficiency of the ground maintenance and service echelon, from the lowliest airplane helper to the respected line chief and supervisory engineering personnel, are equally important, if not all important, in the success of any combat mission. The Commanding Officer, therefore, is anxiously awaiting the moment when he can recommend for the Legion of Merit the first crew chief of this group who successfully and efficiently maintains a combat airplane through 20 successive missions without failure. He also desires to commend all ground personnel for a job well done.

Our station sick quarters reports there are no more bottles available for dispensing medicines and requests that all members of the unit will lend a helping hand by turning in to the supply all empty bottles of any size or kind.

No-Ball Targets in occupied France was again the target of this Group on its 20th mission on 26 March 1944. The weather over the target was clear, and our crews report good bombing results, with the target area full of smoke from previous bombs.

No enemy fighters were sighted by our aircraft along the entire route, but intense flak was encountered over the target with several of our planes being damaged.

All planes returned safely, and there were no personnel casualties.

Our Group put 30 aircraft into this effort, ten of which came from the 750th Squadron. The Lead Box was commanded by Lt. Col. Wilson, flying with Lt. Smith. Capt. Smith and Lt. Lady were in the Deputy position; Major Watson flying with Lt. Belcher led the low Box, with Capt. Syptak and Lt. Brannan in the Deputy Lead position.

This was the No-Ball target at Watton and without a doubt this was the most successful mission yet flown against this formidable installation.

Lt. Blackwell and his crew from the 750th Squadron have completed 10 missions in the last 17 days. Lt. Blackwell was just checked out as a first pilot 17 days ago. This should be some sort of a record and apparently these boys have got what it takes.

Our Post Exchange announces the opening of the new beverage bar between the hours of 1800 and 2200 daily except Sunday and the enormous ration of one bottle of coca cola per man per week may be had by submitting the ration card and a nominal price of three pence.

AFRO

It has been announced that the Arrow Club is off limits for all officers except for church services and movies in the game room.

The 21st mission on 27 March 1944 carried the 457th Bomb Group to Tours, France to attack the Aircraft Repair Works of Usine Liotard, under German control since the fall of France. This plant accounts for the repair of a large percentages of German fighter planes, principally FW 190's.

The weather over the target was clear, but on the whole the bombing results of our Group was poor. A Squadron that flew with another Group reported their results good.

Only a few enemy fighters were reported by our crews, and no attacks were made on our formation. No flak was encountered during the entire trip. All of our aircraft returned safely, and there were no personnel casualties.

Our Group was led by Lt. Col. Luper, flying with Lt. Mays. Major Spencer flying with Lt. Godfrey was the Deputy Commander, in an aircraft of the 751st Squadron.

Since the scarcity of paper is so severe in this theatre the group is now conducting a salvage drive for all waste paper. This seems to be receiving cooperation from all members of the group and we hope it will be a success.

Members of this group were reminded that March 31 is the last day gift orders may be purchased at the Post Exchange to send presents home for Mother's Day.

The 457th Bomb Group carried out its 22nd mission on 29 March 1944 against the Fighter and Bomber Aircraft Assembly Factory of Mühlenbau Industrie at Waggum, 4 miles North of Brunswick. This factory produces ME 110's and possibly other twin-engine types.

Due to heavy clouds over target area, bombing was done on PFF on Secondary target and crews report some results were observed through holes in undercast. Several enemy fighters were encountered and repeated attacks were made on our formation; our Group losing one plane to their attacks. Moderate flak was encountered by our group along the entire route with damage to several of our aircraft.

Capt. Hozier and Capt. Bender led the mission, with Capt. Smith and Lt. Shuchman flying Deputy Lead.

14 parcels of U.S.G. 30, and 2 parcels of U.S.G. 26 were dropped over Brunswick.

An effective smoke screen was observed northeast of the target.

Aircraft No. 394, piloted by Lt. Lennartson was shot down by an ME 109 at Flittman, with No. 2 engine afire and No. 4 engine feathered when he was flying at approximately 19,000 feet. 8 to 10 chutes were seen to open from this aircraft as it glided toward the earth apparently under control. One aircraft in our group reported the plane was seen to explode at approximately 8,000 feet.

Nine aircraft are considered to have suffered minor battle damage, one major battle damage, and one was lost.

16 parcels of leaflets U.S.G. 30 and U.S.G. 26 were dropped over the target.

The crew of the aircraft listed as missing in action are as follows:

P	Lennartson, Lewis
CP	Keese, Everett L.
N	Markowitz, Manfred
B	Fernandez, Augustine
E	Hague, Thomas B.
AE	Garnhart, Clyde E.
RO	Graham, William T.
ARO	Goodes, Gilbert C.
TG	Blackwell, James E.
BT	Fontaine, Omer

All these men are members of the 749th Squadron.

[REDACTED]

ACTIVITIES OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

During the month of March, the Arrow Club carried on a program for the men which included nineteen entertainments consisting of quiz shows, bingo parties, dances, bridge parties, and ping-pong tournaments. The Arrow Club in conjunction with Special Services held seventeen movies and three U.S.O. Camp Shows. There was a total of 90,091 snacks served at the snack bar of the Arrow Club during the month.

The Red Cross with the aid of the girls from the Arrow Club and the Club Mobile met all the crews returning from missions and served them with coffee, cigarettes, candy, chewing gum, and a bit of lunch. This feature has a very great effect in raising the men's morale and giving them a chance to relax a little after several hours in the air over enemy territory.

During the month of March, the American Red Cross made fourteen loans to personnel of this Group. For the most part these were made in order to enable the men to take advantage of unexpected furloughs which had been granted them. The collection of loans previously made has been very gratifying since the total amount of money outstanding has been reduced in spite of the new loans made this month.

Submitted by William H. Nethery,
Field Director, American Red Cross.

[REDACTED]

SPECIAL SERVICE REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

As a function, Special Service work in the last World War was limited to possibly a troupe of singers, dancers, and miscellaneous performers who went to France and donated themselves "to the cause." In this war, the pattern has again been followed but something else has arisen with the Cagneys, Hopes, and others of fame on the stage, screen, gridiron, and diamond, those worth more as civilian entertainers in a theatre of operations, than as members of the armed forces. The United Service Organizations have made their mark in this too, with camp shows, touring a battlefield in one night stands, adding more and more the atmosphere of home to officers and enlisted men who have left it and had to improvise their own entertainment.

The brevity of performance in one way or another, by these travelling humor producers, had to be supplemented in some other way, a manner in which day to day usage could be made of recreational facilities aside from theatrical entertainment. A prominent comedian could not stay with a tactical outfit as a permanent fixture any more than his day to day presence would be tolerated. Useful miscellany in the form of baseball, football, basketball, and volleyball, to name a few major sports, were the answers to a listless program of war for the average soldier. His dilemma was solved with the entrance of special service into his parent organization.

Athletic equipment is coming into the E.T.O. and the influx of sports materials may well evidence itself as criteria on existing conditions. For the spring months, baseball is number one sport and a base team is forming. Prospects are turning out and will continue practice when weather warrants it.

Five basketball teams make up the group representation thus far but they will play a limited schedule until the coming of fall months when the hoop sport really enjoys prominence.

Two other popular sports available through special service endeavors are volley ball and badminton. Both net games must necessarily limit the amount of players because of a shortage in shuttlecocks and nets. Courts for both volleyball and badminton are situated in several squadron areas and on the athletic field along Wendover Blvd., taxiway No. 4.

An increasing number of men can play softball this year with the arrival of softball equipment and when new fields are added to the couple now ready for playing.

In regard to muscle building exercises, a Nissen hut equipped with weights, bags, and mats is in preparatory stages. Quarters are somewhat restricted but nonetheless will be available for anyone who wishes to work out. Boxing and wrestling are mentioned in this respect. Men especially interested in either of the two are invited to avail themselves of such facilities.

Among the more genteel and cultural offerings is the opportunity to meet English people in their homes through teas. Invitations to such functions are handled by the chaplain.

A phase of special service work which has met with heartiest approval are the U.S.O. shows and G.I. entertainments staged here in the past couple months. Character of such shows has been excellent and they will continue to play before men of this station. Movies for both enlisted men and officers are undergoing a trial and gradually working out to valuable forms of recreation.

It is further planned to have a band in the near future which will have an opportunity to display talents at dances and off-station functions.

The library at the Aero Club is provided with enough books to suit every requirement. Current magazines are arriving and other books are continually coming in. It is possible to acquire an education, or extension of civil pursuits, while waiting the end of hostilities. Courses in the Army Air Force Institute can be had for the asking. A few men have already availed themselves of the university extension courses now being offered at Oxford and it is pointed out that these courses can be had while enlisted men and officers are allotted their furlough and leave time.

Billeting, reservation of rooms for forty-eight hour passes in London, is offered through the Columbia Club, the Red Cross establishment this station has contact with for authorized accommodations.

In summary, all that can be done to present entertainment, sports, education and miscellaneous activity to this station, all that is allowed in view of regulatory procedure, will be accomplished in an effort to alleviate the war nerves brought about by continued attention to duty.

[REDACTED]

(AN EIGHTH AAF BOMBER STATION IN ENGLAND)

IT WAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BY THE COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE EIGHTH AAF THAT CAPTAIN CHARLES P. NELSON OF AUGUSTA, MAINE WAS PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF MAJOR.

PRIOR TO HIS ENTRY INTO THE SERVICE IN 1942 MAJOR NELSON WAS AN ATTORNEY. HIS PRESENT DUTIES ARE THAT OF THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER OF A FLYING FORTRESS GROUP. A POSITION OF EXTREMELY GREAT IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY; WHICH MAJOR NELSON HAS BEEN EXECUTING VERY SUCCESSFULLY FOR SOMETIME NOW. MRS. ELIZABETH G. NELSON THE MAJOR'S WIFE LIVES AT 99 LIBERTY ST. ATHOL, MASS. HIS PARENTS MR. AND MRS. JOHN E. NELSON LIVE ON WINTHROP ST. IN AUGUSTA, MAINE. CAPTAIN JOHN A. NELSON THE MAJOR'S BROTHER IS ALSO SERVING OVERSEAS AS A MEDICAL OFFICER.

[REDACTED]

HEADQUARTERS 457TH BOMB GROUP (HV)
Office of the Chaplain
A.P.O. 557 U. S. Army

March 1944

SUBJECT: Religious History of the Group.

TO : Group Historian, 457th Bomb. Group (H) A.P.O. 557, U. S. Army.

My history of religion in the Four Fifty Seventh must naturally begin on the eighth of December forty three when I became the Group Chaplain.

The Group was based at Wendover Field, Utah, when I finally overtook it. It was in its final phase of training and anxious to be on its way, as is true with every group that has the misfortune to be based at Wendover Field. The situation wasn't desperate enough to drive many of the men to seek divine aid. The Bomb Group services were rather poorly attended. This was possibly due to two factors; little interest, and the vast amount of work that was being done to prepare the group for movement to a combat theater.

The religious interest in the Group reached its peak aboard ship. As we moved through submarine infested waters and the men had time on their hands they began to show some concern about spiritual things. The crews' mess hall, in which services were held, could not begin to accommodate the crowd. Every service had an overflow and it seemed that religion might play a part in the life of the Group. With "terra Firma" under foot and the work that has to be done to keep the planes flying seven days a week, there returned that old lethargy regarding religion which is so characteristic of human beings.

There has been an increase in attendance at Protestant services and Mass in this our second month in the European Theater of Operation. There is also a manifest interest among the Jewish men regarding all services of their faith conducted on or near the Base.

For the Group Chaplain:

HARRY L. ROGERS,
1st Lt. Air Corps,
Group Chaplain.

C O P Y

HEADQUARTERS EIGHT AIR FORCE
Office of the Commanding General
APO 634

In reply refer to:
201.22

31 March 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: : Commanding General, 1st Bombardment Division, APO 634.

The performance of the units of the 1st Division on 29 March in landing safely under extremely bad weather conditions all the aircraft which returned from the day's mission, merits special commendation. At the time of their arrival over base, the weather unexpectedly became very bad and some of the landings were made in the face of conditions of extremely low ceiling and visibility. That your units were able to do this without the loss of a single aircraft speaks well for their competence and for their training and supervision. I wish you would convey to the crews and commanders concerned my congratulations for this exceptionally fine piece of work.

/s/ J. H. Doolittle,
/t/ J. H. DOOLITTLE,
Lieut. General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

201.22 1st Ind. B-A-1
HEADQUARTERS, 1st BOMBARDMENT DIVISION, APO 557, 4 April 1944.

TO: All Combat Wing and Group Commanding Officers, 1st Bom Division, APO 557.

The above commendation from the commanding General, Eighth Air Force is well deserved. Bring it to the attention of both air and ground personnel and add to it my own appreciation of a difficult job well done.

ROBERT B. WILLIAMS,
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding.