

2017

Transcription of War Log
by
David Eppesine



Al Eppesine

Survivors In Attendance at the Sixteenth and Final Reunion of
The 451st Bomb Group, WWII
Held in Chicago, Illinois on October 22 and 23, 2010



Row 1 (L to R):	1. Gus Margaritis	2. Alex Kuras	3. Achi Kozakis	4. Vic Klopfenstein	5. Louie Lopez	6. Winson Jones	7. Jack Jones	8. Paul V. Anderson	9. Herb Guinness	10. Bob Anderson	11. Henry Wurthmann	
Row 2 (L to R):	1. Larry Berns	2. Peter Polmen	3. Rex Ridenour	4. Milo Sanchez	5. Don Schaffner	6. A. Mike Stauth	7. C.E. Thompson	8. Roy Ferguson	9. Wayne Vorpahl	10. Bill Wagner	11. Jake Wiest	
Row 3 (L to R):	1. Ralph Helmericks	2. Sedge Hill	3. Bill Hipple	4. Fred Kuhn	5. Bill Macomber	6. Verne Mason	7. Vic Melnick	8. Jack Miller	9. Richard Minor	10. Seabert Nelson	11. Alex Garcia	12. Linn Newman
Row 4(L to R):	1. George Atkinson	2. Leslie Brue	3. Ed Longenecker	4. Jake Early	5. Dean Eckersley	6. Al Eppesine	7. Nathan Firestone	8. Earl Van Benschoten	9. James Martin	10. Louis Head (not pictured)		



Back Row L to R: Stutsman, Reniger, Jefferies, Collins, Reeder, Eppesine

Front Row L to R: Andrews, Cheney, Hoffbauer

AL EPPESTINE'S DAILY WAR LOG

Transcriptions of personal war log from 1-1-45 to 6-4-45. Total of 155 days. This covers troop ship travel from Newport News to Naples, by truck to Rep C 292, by train to Bari 22nd Rep Bn, truck to 724 Squadron, 451st Bomb Group, flew 16 missions, war ended and flew back to USA through Brazil on B-24

Foreword: I'm David, oldest son of Corporal Epepestine. I recently re-discovered Dad's war journal and I thought it would be nice to transcribe his WWII war log and put it out there for anyone that might be interested. You must note that this is NOT a story, or even a diary... but a journal of daily activity. It's mostly just a collection of incomplete and run-on sentences and includes even mundane stuff like how he slept, what the weather was like, when he got to take a shower, etc. His narrative includes names and places, but much of the time the first name interchanges with the "nickname" and sometimes names show up that he knew, but were not explained. Many acronyms abound (that's the Army way) and not explained. I was able to find some answers on the internet, and some from a scrapbook that his sister put together for him after the war.

A little background: Alfred H Epepestine Jr joined the AAF during WWII when he became old enough and graduated High School in 1943. He was trained and served as a ROM [**radio operator mechanic**] and gunner [**right waist position**] as a crew member on a B-24 Liberator bomber. He was in crew 104, squadron 724, 451st bomb group Heavy, 15th Air Force. The 451st served in the Mediterranean theatre and was based in Italy, Castellucia (sp), 451st Bombardment Group, (B-24 Liberators). After about a year of training, Dad served in Italy from Jan 1945 to wars end. He flew 16 missions, the last of which resulted in a crash landing on April 24th 1945. Everyone survived and made it back to base, but never flew in combat again. The war in Europe was over. They got to fly a B-24 home going through Brazil.

Note: I found a little info in the internet. The correct spelling of their Italian airfield [***Castelluccio Airfield, was located approximately 15 km south of Foggia, 41°19'11.69"N 015°32'40.71"E It was a semi-permanent heavy bomber airfield used by Fifteenth Air Force. Built by corps of engineers in early 1944 with one Perforated/Pierced Steel Planking runway with extensive taxiway and hardstand parking areas. Steel control tower. Opened 15 March 1944. Last combat operations flown in late April 1945. Closed August 1945. Today, this is an agricultural area with no structures or any facilities in existence, faint scarring of land shows remains of main runway, taxiways and hardstands visible in aerial photography.***]

Crew 104 consisted of the following heroes: Pilot: Lt. **Joseph C. Cheney**, "Old Man/ Joe"; Co-Pilot: F/O **Everett L. Stutsman**, "Stuts"; Navigator: 2nd Lt **Nathan C. Jefferies**, "Jeff"; Waist gun: Cpl **Herbert K. Andrews** also engineer; ROM: Cpl **Alfred H. Epestine** "Woody", Radio Op/ waist gunner, Top Turret: Cpl **David J. Reniger** "Bud" also "Bear", Nose Gunner: Cpl **John R. Vogel**, lower Ball: Cpl **John C. Reeder**; Tail Gunner: Cpl **John J. Hoffbauer** "Hof" also "Mole".

Although the B-24 was the most produced heavy bomber of WW2, Dad always said the B-17 got all the glory. The following link gives a lot of information on the Liberator. It also includes, near the bottom, the positions and usual duties of each crew member. You might note, that some crews included a bombardier but many did not, especially near wars end. The cover picture of Crew 104 puts names to faces (thanks to Jack Vogel). Crew 104 consisted of nine members, and there were occasional substitutes mission to mission. The following link tells you a lot about the B-24 Liberator and the crew and duties of each one. This is NOT a given as I have learned clearly from Dad's description here.

<http://freepages.family.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~webermd1/Liberator-Info.html>

The notebook I'm transcribing is a plain brown notebook with blank lined paper, about 5 inches by 8. No label or anything. "PROPERTY AIR FORCE, U. S. ARMY" stamped on the inside cover, and a number, E-8126, everything else is hand written. Dad labelled the first page "**LoG**". These words are what Dad wrote as best I can determine. I've added some editorial comments in brackets [] just to clarify some things that might be confusing. Our intrepid Corporal was just 19 years old. He would not turn 20 until August 31st. The handwriting was in ink, but the last several pages were in pencil. This narrative runs from **1-1-45 to 6-4-45**. There are many misspellings and it was written hurriedly and he had no spell check or dictionary and some of the time used an oil lamp. What I'm saying is, you can excuse him due to conditions and the fact that this was his personal log or journal and not intended for an audience. We start as they were about to board the troop ship *West Point*. Interesting stuff about that ship here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_America_\(1939\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_America_(1939))

Here we go.

1-1-45

Started old '45 out right. Went to confession, mass and communion. Went to mid-night mass. Met Ben Egan today [**Reuben White Egan, another radio operator dad trained with**], and Harry Mathis the day before. Hope they ship with us. [**Mathis is another buddy from training I can only assume**]

1-2-45

Got a heine [**no idea what that is**] today to wear on the high seas. Had what they call an overseas physical today. Consisting of inspection of rectum, mouth and penis. Saw a corny double feature tonight. [**one of the few times he didn't say what the movie was**]

1-3-45 [We are not on a ship yet. He didn't say where we are in this passage]

Put us on KP today. On from 1330 to 1830. The infantry got a big kick out of seeing the air corps on KP. Hof [**John Hoffbauer**] and I worked together. We didn't do much – carried out rolls and then made ourselves scarce. When we got off we had to step to get ready to ship. Boarded train and took 15 mile run from CPH [**probably near Norfolk**] to N News. Walked up the gang plank of the *West Point* – one time luxury liner of the U.S. –now a loaded down troop transport. They handed me a ticket which read U-14 mess line #2. Flopped down on the so called bunk and went to sleep. Please forgive me for forgetting you this time. [**not sure what he meant, probably writing family**]

1-4-45

Hampton Rhodes

Remember waking up in the early morning and hearing Andrews [**Herbert Andrews**] yelling, TURN ON THE LIGHTS! Still in N.N. [**Newport News**] Pulled out of N.N. at 1130. Out on the open sea – pretty calm. Blimp and B-24 escort. Met Art today. Didn't find Egan yet. [**Egan fellow ROM, Art unknown. Trained with Dad**] walked around the boat once today with George [**another training friend**]. Windy at the bow. Turned the lights off at 18:30 tonight. Boys next to us having door trouble. I don't think Andrews yelled tonight – woke up at 0300 hard time

getting back to sleep. My wallet and the bed springs had made a deep impression on me. Ocean seems quite a bit more rough.

1-5-45

Saw ship off starboard signaling. Had deck guns pointed in ships direction. Couldn't make out code – just a challenge – friendly ship. Cheney [**Joe Cheney, Pilot**] gave me my pay today, \$56. Went to ships store, but couldn't buy anything. Couldn't get to sleep, so Bud [**David Reniger**] and I went for a walk – watched the ocean sparkle. Ship pretty rough tonight.

1-6-45

Walked around the deck a couple times today. Took another of those night walks. Looked around for Egan again, but no luck. Turned out lights at 1700 tonight. Ocean quite rough and windy. Hard to walk in the ship. Tried sleeping in underwear tonight – much better. Woke up at 0300 EWT again. Set watch ahead an hour.

1-7-45

Sea roughest it's ever been. Went to Mass at 1200 with Hof [**John Hoffbauer**]. Boat was really rocking. Spent the worst night yet on the boat. Thought it was going to tip over. Guy's mess kit next to me kept falling down all night. Gave Cheney slip to get articles at ships store. Came to \$3.85. thought we were going to have turkey for dinner, but PORK LOINS, they must have ran out of bird meat. I don't think I got an hours sleep last night – things seem to be getting pretty rough.

1-8-45

Sea still rough. Got things from ships store today – locks pretty nice. Talked with a guy from March field and found [out] Egan was in C-1, but couldn't locate him. Two bands were playing upstairs last night. Fairly good sleep last night. Dark out ship at 1700 and clear decks at 2100. **Son of a Buck.**

1-9-45

Quite a demonstration by the Navy today. Flack gun fired a parachute flare and all the deck guns shot at it and came mighty close. Got interested in *Phantom of the Opera* today. Spent a lot of the time out on deck reading that. Pretty smooth day – nice blue sky and very warm. Too warm in “the hole”. Stars were very beautiful, but the MP told us to clear the deck. Ran into DeSavalla [? Training] today in mess line. Pass by another ship early this morning. According to German broadcasts the ship is supposed to be sunk. Got a good shave today out of my piss pot.

1-10-45

Watched ships gun crew load and fire a mock-up 75mm. Navy put on another show this time firing the guns in the stern. Cat PBY flying above us today. finished *Phantom of the Opera* today. Talked out on the back deck ‘till 1200. Head guard sent us back in – very nice out there.

1-11-45 “Judy’s Birthday” [Dad’s sister]

Reached coast of Africa at 1100. Straits of Gal. [straits of Gibraltar]. Had Cat [PBY] & British Venturi as air escort. Several destroyers. Noticed many porpus [sp] also sea gulls. Had a fire on the upper deck last night. Not much. Cheney had us fill out our V-mail for change of address. Sea was a little rough last night. Weather was very changeable. Quite a bit of rain. Supposed to hit Naples Saturday. Feel pretty beat up. Springs sure dig into you at night. Sub was supposed to have been following us last night. Didn’t hear any more about it. John [Vogel? 3 John’s in crew] & I talked about *Phantom of the Opera* tonight.

1-12-45

Spent most of the time in the sack reading. Stayed out on deck until 2200 tonight. MP made us clear the deck.

1-13-45

Passed by Isle of Capri. Weather was warm. Swallows and gulls following ship. Snow capped mountains. Hit Naples harbor 1530. Had chile for dinner – pretty

good. Noticed Jap. Found out later he was in band. Ships of all countries around us. Large 3 stack ship next to us from England. Went to Mass twice Sunday.

[This is the end of my first segment. The trip from USA to Italy. I've tried to be careful transcribing including spelling (errors), grammar, etc. the only thing I've left out is page numbers and that Dad usually (not always) initialed each entry... X AHE , or AHE. That means Alfred Henry Epepestine] this is to bottom of page 8 in the little notebook. There's only about 90 to go.

1-14-45

Watched Italiens [sp] on barges. Spent most of their time trading with us instead of working. Got off W.P. at 1430. Had rough time, as usual with bags. Italien kid carried B-4 to truck gave him cigarettes in case. Got on G.I. truck with trailer. Naples quite a beat up place. Went to rep. C 292nd. 18 miles from Nap. Got tent 106 with Reeder [John] & part of crew "104". Went to show 16mm "None but the Lonely Heart".

P.P. – froze in bed.

1-15-45

Short arm today [medical check if you didn't know], lecture [from] Captian Wood. Put \$85.00 in to have it changed to "Lire". Went to USO show to see "light Fantastic". Took a wonderful shower today. Warm water. Had bull session in tent and ate K-rations.

1-16-45

Went to see Laurel & Hardy in "Nothing but Trouble".

1-17-45

Set up some tents today. Saw sex film. Rainy and wet today as usual. Pulling out Friday. Waited 2 hrs in line to get gin and Italien wine at non-coms club. Spent a very warm night in bed. Maybe it was the gin. **[Dad was 19 yrs old]**

1-18-45

I'll learn never to volunteer. Went to Naples on, supposedly, a PX supply detail, but ended up being a lumber detail. Saw Naples and surrounding towns again. Pretty well fixed in my mind now. Shaved in cold water outside. Beautiful day. Pretty good shave too.

1-19-45

Left Cocerta [**Caserta**] at 1000 in Box cars, cold damp. K-rations. Beautiful country-side. Long tunnels. Fellows tearing down box cars for kindling. Went north to Foggin [**Foggia**] then south to Bari on Adaritic [**Adratic**] Sea.[to] 22nd rep. Bn. Arrived early Sat.

1-20-45

Arrived at Bari 1230 or 0030. Cold, tired, crying [eyes watering] from wood smoke. Trucks picked us up. Loaded like cattle as usual. Drew one blanket & cot. Eight men to a tent. Slept until 1000. Waited 3 ½ hrs for shave and haircut 25 L [lire]. Met Ben went to day room to warm up. Had a warm sleep that night.

1-21-45

Went to mass at 0800 with Hof'. Had physical short arm and bug inspection. Visited Bari with Cusiter and Schultz. [**don't recognize names**] Went to Red Cross. And YMCA, talked with English soldier. Drank tea with cream and an Italian pastery. Town very beautiful along adratic. Went to movie at opera house saw "Man From Half Moon Street" Had pretty rough time finding our way back to 22nd rep. walked back 2 ½ kil [**Km**]

1-22-45

Snow covered the ground very wet and muddy underneath. Parked [**packed, maybe**] and left 22nd at 1335 got at 724 bom sqd. 451 bom. Group (H) APO 520 NY/NY. [**probably wrote this down so he wouldn't forget**] Roads muddy. Drew a cot & two blankets. Neighbors swell. No stove in tent. Half brick floor, holes in tent—cold. Hof' and Reeder slept with neighbors. Slept warm.

This is the end of the second segment. They have now crossed Italy and arrived at the 451st base. The story continues with them getting set up and includes training and orientation for the combat ahead

1-23-45

Went to flight line looking for stove material with Hof. Not much luck. Picked up 10 gal of fuel oil. After orientation lecture. Talked with neighbors. Good boys. Made stove and line. Let it drip all night—used ½ ring on O2 bottle. Mud still pretty rough. Bud **[Reniger]** and Hof' were at dump long while getting materials for stove with minimum of tools. Vogel kept us up writing letters. Had good sleep cool.

1-24-45

Got up with a bang this morning. Flat tap slipped up on the oil valve and we had quite a fire. Everyone was quite calm about it – except Andrews who got very excited – hope he calms down in combat. We've been riding him a lot, but he does get on your nerves. Went to intelligence, equip and communication lectures today. went in "1" **[looks like capital L in quotes with three dots after, I've seen him make 1's like this though]** today. New interphone amplifier – 4 tubes for altitude. Went to sex lecture – very good. Stole pipe and stove. Ate K rations. Heated over oil burner. Cans build up quit a pressure. Brought stove back – pipe good. Ex [excellent] facts in sex lecture.

1-25-45

Laid brick in floor. Put oil pipe underground. Wrote home. Saw "Rodger Taxey" **[could not find movie title on internet so probably read title wrong]** sound and screen very good. Winterized tent. Very bright moon tonight. Vogel made a deal with two Italian kids to move oil drum for water. Shaved today. ate more K's. Vogel [John] picked up fire extinguisher off of jeep. Things beginning to run smoother. Should get electric lights soon.

1-26-45

Clean up day today. Dug ditches, sent laundry to Italien ordered wine from boy. Fixed water container. Went through clothes. Went to armament lecture. Andrews wanted to know the 5 other stoppages of Cal 50. Went to lecture by S2 officer. Told us some interesting facts about Russia. Had some Italien whiskey & cake. Bud bought 5.00 book. Wrote a letter to Phyl & Hope. What [wrote] letters on whiskey jag. Had some K rations.

1-27-45

Later for T-aids lecture today. interesting lecture on turrets etc. officers came over to tent – had some sour wine. Pretty good. Trouble fixing lamps. Took shower today. really felt good. Beautiful day was swell sitting in sun looking at surroundings. There's beauty in Italy. Olive trees, trees that look like freshly cut hedges. Some that are all trunk but a little part on top. Bud got [light] socket tonight. While we were at orientation lecture. Had good sleep tonight. Slept under one blanket and bag.

1-28-45

Drew rations this morning. Made couple extra oil lamps. Wrote v-mail air mail home. Wrote Annella, Phyl, Carol, Irma. Went to 1630 mass. Stove went out water and plugged line. Got it fixed again and it's perking right along. Beer tasted good tonight also fig newtians. No lecture tonight.

1-29-45

Officers came over today to get us for skeet range. Had 50 cent bet. My score was highest – 6 out of 10. Had stove troubles again. Grit and dirt in line. Got letters from Ma, Pa, Peck, Decker, and Clark. Went to La vines [??] house to see about electric. No results. Lamps were smoking a lot tonight. Neighbor brought in socket. 60 LIRE

1-30-45

Got wine from boy 50 LIRE. No mail. No results on electric. 3 tickets for U.S.O. show. Have guard [duty] 2nd Feb. No U.S.O. show. Reeder & Bud wired lights in. Bought light from neighbor for \$4.00 Went to show, saw, My Gal Loves Music. Lights and radio burned out in Sq.[uadron] Gen[erator] fan belt broke. Boys played 500 till 0230

1-31-45

Planes all over the sky today. beautiful clear cloudless day. Crew 11's went down. Carried water for water tank today. got new stove. Andrews' good deed. She puts out quite a bit of heat. Played 500 with Bud, Reeder & Hof'. Had bitching session tonight. Saw King of the Cowboys at 1000 show.

2-1-45

Another clear day today. Planes all over sky again. Had phase checks and gunnery today. Pretty rusty. Were to clean guns on ship 25 but ship went down behind Russian lines. Had good shower today. almost picked up nice mirror.

2-2-45

Started to fix washing table today. picked up nails. Flew practice mission from 1500 to 1630 local ship 23 – 4000 ft. stayed in waist **[his duties were at the radio station and right waist when needed there]**. Were to be on guard from 1700 to 2400 got down late from flying. Vogel & Bud took the post, Andrews and I would have had. Hof and Reeder went to guard house at 2400 read Dutch Shoe Mystery. Had coffee and peanut butter sandwiches at house. [assume Vogel & Bud didn't fly on this practice mission?]

2-3-45

Flew in ship 21 from 0945 to 1130 formation five ship coast. Flew 23 from 1330 to 1635 at 9,000 cold in waist over Adriatic coast. Bari, Foggia etc. listened to some German broadcasts over receiver. Went to see "Make Your Own Bed" hoping to lift light there but no soap.

2-4-45

Went to Mass and communion. Had throat blessed. Went all around looking for light bulb. Theater, guard house, etc. no luck

2-5-45

Decided to go to Foggia for bulb. Started at 1130. Got a truck to wing. Rough muddy ride. Got another truck on main road. Got rolls at red cross. Went around town trying to find light **[bulb]**. No luck. Went to PX coffee shop. Greasy doughnuts. Bought six flags. Went back to red cross but no luck on light. All out of reach **[guess he was trying to swipe one]**. Started back to 451st at 1730. Got fast 8 mile ride to bridge. Waited. Went to Cergianola no ride. Went back to bridge no ride. Freezing. Tired. Had 49th wing phone 451st. Were to stay at 49th day room. Got jeep ride at 2300. Really rough. Cold. Never so glad to be back to a place in my life. Hof cussing out Limies, daggo's etc all night. Had trouble with Andrews all day and night.

2-6-45

Went to fly calibration today, but field closed. Bud showed me how to get him out of ball. Got in ball for first time. Lawenthal gave us a light. Little 25 watter but it's OK. Raining like everything. Tent's leaking.

2-7-45

Were called out of "Winged Victory" to fly for 35 minutes in ship 24. Didn't like going through clouds. Wrote home, Mrs. Decker, Gil, Miss Shinnars. Had toast by our oil stove at Hoffbauer's Smack Bar. Went to war lecture tonight. 4 of our ships came in with feathered props today. were to clean guns on ship 73 today but no ship. Went down at some field in northern Italy.

2-8-45 wrote home

Went out on skeet range. Shot 9 out of 10 first round, 6 next. Cheney knocking out centers of birds. Shaved today. saw training films. Saw Winged Victory and Hi Beautiful 0100

2-9-45 "Mom's Birthday"

Saw some training films over again. "check" Vogel limping to theater. Ed makes deal with mole on scarf. Got us bulb in Foggia \$5.00. Vogel got package with German cookies from home - Christmas package. Letter from Mary D. Jan 10th.

2-10-45

Had gun inspection today. thought officers were coming around, but only armor men. O pirated on wood behind operations. Mud deep when you can't use your flash.

2-11-45

Drew rations usual stuff. Cheney called Andrews & I out of line but we stayed in it never the less. Flew local formation from 0940 to 1145 Went to mass & communion still like chaplain a lot. Went to GI short's movie. Soup tasted good before going to bed.

2-12-45

Quite a day of flying formation over Adratic and back. Ship 31. 0940 to 1500. Feet cold. Listened to Foggia AEF station all the time. Wore may west for first time. The boys operated and got lighting system fixed up. Also writing table, broom etc. had coffee at mess. Offered crew 11's tent, but figured ours was better.

2-13-45

~~Flew~~ Cleaned guns on ship 31. Beautiful, clear warm day. Sat outside and smoked pipes and Vogel draw ducks[?]. Went to a very poor movie. "Moonlight & Catus" had hot chocklate in mess hall.

This is the end of another segment. We now begin the Missions phase of the narrative. You will notice that they didn't fly a mission every day. A couple times they did. And, I've noticed that they rarely flew the same plane and a lot of times a member of the crew was grounded or flying with another crew.

2-14-45 [Mission I, he always drew a little bomb pointing down with a roman numeral for the mission number] this mission was: MooseBierBaum

Woke up with a banging on the door. "Crew 104 you've got a mission brief at 0600["]. Valentines day, folks anniversary. Took off at 0906 for Moosbierbaum oil refineries in Vienna. Ship 25 loaded with 8 500 lb bombs. Over IP [**initial point**] at 1305. Andrews and I didn't have flak suits on and before we knew it flak was coming up. A piece exploded [**I bet he means shrapnel entered the plane from a close flak explosion**] behind me in the center of the skin of the ship, right of the ball. I didn't know it til the bear told me [**Bear is Reniger**] things seemed to happen so quick. Top alt 25,005. Few gas overflows over sea. Landed at 1630. Tired and worn out.

2-15-45

Trying to recover from mission. Took shower. Went to see "Summer Storm". Crew 21 up for flying again. This makes three in a row. New ships came in today.

2-16-45

Flew [a] mickey practice mission 400 ft over Island target. Bombs fell short and long of target. Flew from 1006 to 1200. Pretty hungry got fish and rice. PO'd for awhile. [**at this point he wrote "continued" with down arrow. He wrote a 2-17 date and scratched it out**] Had guard duty from 2200 to 0200. Guarded revetment 51, 52, & 53. Really cold. Fell asleep in back hatch. Got coco at mess hall hit sack.

H2X, officially known as the AN/APS-15, was an American ground scanning radar system used for blind bombing during World War II. It was a development of the

British H2S radar, the first ground mapping radar to be used in combat.^[1] It was also known as the "Mickey set" and "BTO" for "Bomb Through Overcast" radar

*The H2X on later **B-24 Liberators** also replaced the ball turret, being made retractable as the ball turret was for landing on the Liberator. The operators panel was installed on the **flight deck** behind the co-pilot (where the radio operator's normal position was). In combat areas the Mickey operator directed the pilot on headings to be taken, and on the bomb run directed the airplane in coordination with the **bombardier**. The first use of Mickey was against **Ploiesti** on April 5, 1944.*

2-17-45

Cheney flew mission today in S-19 **[Ship]**. Cleaned guns on ship 57 & 58. Shaved and wrote home. Had coffee at mess hall. Fellows went to see "Mr. Winkle Goes to War".

2-18-45

Drew new rations. Got up late so got usual thing. Flew gunnery in new 1 **[looks like L]** – 29. Hof almost hit a flock of sheep along coast line Listened to radio compass. Mission came back today before hitting target. Ed [??] went to mess with us.

2-19-45

Went to trg [training?] aid for code check came back to tent[.] fellows were started on floor. Worked on floor for while [then] Jeff came down. Have to fly. Test hop. Mickey[...] flew till 1900. Cheney stalled out ship and I thought it was curtains. Couldn't find shut [chute] with "D" rings. Cheney chasing Wallace above overcast. Ship 71

2-20-45

Flew calibration of A.S. ship L-LOVE 31 1 HR. and flew ship 22 to Naples to pick up two Captains 2 hrs. colder than hell. Wrote letters to Yench, home, Harry, and Erickson. Took shower today – shave

2-21-45 [aborted mission to Vienna]

Started mission to bomb Vienna railway station. Took off at 0836, cold. Turbos went out as we were putting on flack suits. Came back and landed at 1250. On watch for fighters. Offered new home near operations – going to take it. Had coffee. Went to Novena **[Catholic thing]** – finally made one with Hof. We had been trying for four weeks.

2-22-45

First sargent came up ~~today~~ yesterday and told us we could have a new home if we wanted it. Crew 9's house (down in Russia). Cleaned up house and worked on relaying board floor. Worked straight through. Hauled stuff from old tent. Pretty cold first night. Fuel being rationed again.

2-23-45

Rearranged cots made clothes racks. Started on window for back. Visiting officers had shot. Had modification on O₂ mask. Had chicken soup before going to bed

2-24-45

200th mission day **[I assume for the group]**. Finished window for back of tent. Cheney flying a co-pilot with crew #6. B-24s buzzed field. Ship 28 burned. Saw "One Body Too Many" Jack Haley very good.

2-25-45

Drew rations. Tried to get there earlier. But no use guess we'll have to camp out in front of PX Finished window today. Went to mass. took Bud.

2-26-45

Started on sky light but had to stop. Couldn't get a saw. Tar stuck together on canvas. We had a time getting it out. Got a little hot at our neighbors taking our wood today.

2-27-45

Went to lecture on new radar jamming equipment [**this ends up being Panther, I think**]. At theater. Went to movie at 1400 . Glidersleeve's ghost

2-28-45 [Mission II: BOLZANO]

Mission to Bolzano northern Italy. 10 500 lb bombs. Briefed at 0445. Took off at 0800. Clear day. Flak was in step fashion. Volrath rode as engineer. Back to base at 1436. 22 & 21 down in Yugo [**Yugoslavia**] Ed came back in C-47. Hit sack at 2000.

3-1-45

Took life easy today. showers. Made out PTA [**don't know**] for \$50.⁰⁰ Wrote home. Went on guard duty at 1800 to 2200. Easier shift. Almost missed the truck.

3-2-45

Bear and Reeder flew with Joe on check flight PO'd when they came down. Vogel went to dump looking for aluminm but guarded to closely. Went to see "Take It or Leave It.

3-3-45

Briefed at 0700, but had stand down. Rain, hail, wind. Shot off flares at 0930. Vogel was sweating it out.

3-4-45 [Mission III: GRAZ]

Briefed at 0600. Took off at 0820 for Graz. 8 bombs. Two passes at target. Flak inaccurate. Bud had trouble with turret door. Vogel's guns froze up. Overcast at target. Back in time to make mass. Cheney fooling around with Bunch in formation. Thought he was out of oxygen.

3-5-45

Took shower. Jam handy class. Operated tail turret. Jeff over quite a few times. Talked about Cheney's brave flying on last mission. Had coffee with Eddy and

crew. Vogel writing famous letter to girl. About 11 pages now. I guess. Payed Ed \$7.⁰⁰ for bandana.

3-6-45

Flew calibration and practice bombing ship 27. 3 hrs. 50 minutes. Fired pistol from tail buck shot. Saw "abroad with Two Yanks" Laughed just as much as first time if not more. Reeder went out to line got wet coming back. Vogel took shower.

3-7-45

Went to early movie "Canterville Ghost". Played little football. Went to Novena. Talked about food we miss. Vogel broke bench in mess hall.

3-8-45

Vogel and the midget [**no clue who this is, probably guy in another crew**] clashed at the shower. He didn't have it fixed [**I guess the bench from above**]. Stutsman got a football and the mole and I kicked around a while. Stuts was kicking in his bare feet. I sweated out flying the mission. Intenza [**another crew guy?**] flew spot jammer in my place. Felt pretty bad. Stuts came in late and told me.

3-9-45 [did not bomb, mission to Linz or Bruck. Crashed in to ship 40?]

Forth for the boys. Woke up 0345 briefing was at 0500. Slept late. No breakfast. Mission to Linz or Bruck. Sanford leading formation. Ha. He toured Austria that day. Over ran IP undercast over target. 2 passes. Didn't drop bombs. Bad yellow weather at Italiene coast. Ship tossed. Bad weather at base. Bad approach. 50 ft to left of runway but good landing. Used brakes a lot. Raining. No 40 put brakes. Skid 180° off runway crashed into it, left tail hit. 40 broke into at rear of com deck. Sweat out credit. I spent a quiet day. Swept floor, got oil. Tried to take shower. Went to mail call. Watched for 27.

3-10-45

Took shower. Shaved. Eddie got called down by Sanford [think that's a Sgt] for hunting hat. Came over here and wore piss pot to operations. Got package from Mary censored by Jeff. Mole got Boop picture.

3-11-45

Got up early for rations. Bought pipe etc. really made a haul for once. We were in PX line for hour and half. Stuts came over and fellow went to church. Mole and I wrote letters. Went to mass. Father Caughlin gave good sermon. Went to GI movie.

3-12-45

Drew extra rations. Went to radar school at 1330 about two hours instruction. Not much accomplished. Vogel went to work on fixing door. Mole and bear were getting a big bang out of him putting on corner supports. 27 was shot down by another B24 result we went to training aids at 1930. Put a little time in tail turret. And Jam Handy. Given a few pointers on test for spot. Hit sack because we fly tomorrow.

3-13-45 [Mission IV: REGENSBURG] [note the 3-9-45 entry sounds like a mission. Maybe he didn't count it since they didn't drop bombs]

Briefed at 0600. Target Regensburg. Other small alternats. Took off at 0820 in ship 74. "Big Joe". Guns all worked good. Bud's outside O₂ regulator wasn't working right and he had anoxia before we hit IP at 1330. He was shaking like a leaf. Put O₂ bottle on him. Color came back to his face, but ~~didn't~~ he didn't get back in turret went to flight deck. NO! flak (first milk run). 10^{10TH} over cast. Smooth flying. Released bombs late. Took formations pictures and couple inside ship. Tossed out chafe today [**? About the 10^{10TH} and tossing chafe when no flak**]. Reeder took bombs away picture with K-20. Went to see "China". Had party at our hut. Whiskey and officers. Morkes [**name unk**] flew as Eng.[**engineer**] Andrews [word??].

3-14-45

Shaved, got new combat jacket. Piss poor. Had to give up nice blouse. Practice for Citation to be on Friday. Saw "Strange Affair" again at 1000 show. Went to gunnery training 1900 movies. Movie on Emerson turret and B-29. Eddie left for

Caprie with big wheels. Went to Novena and communion. Cheney flip [flew] 29 with crew 11. Had coffee.

3-15-45

Went to two hours radar school. Took shower. Mole and old man had big battle in hut. Knock over pictures, tables, broke buds cot. Played baseball. Vogel and I wrote letters. I wrote 6. Had champagne today ordered 3 more from Mario. **[I don't think 'old man' was Cheney, but don't know. Mario was probably the 'kid' that did stuff for them. I remember Dad talking about that]**

3-16-45

Had guard from 200 to 0600. Talked to Hof most of the time. Reeder had fire by his post. Vogel and Bud shacked up. Slept most of the morning. I got up to see "Conflict".

3-17-45

Played ball with officers. Sally brought donuts and Bear said get the musette bag. We didn't get a chance to fill on[e], but got a lot of donuts. Boys went to "Conflict" I wrote letters.

3-18-45

Drew rations. Found out I [in?] PX line that jerk wasn't on crew 105. Said their crew was bad enough. **[no explanation for this statement]**. Put in 2 hrs of Panther trainer. Rained pretty hard. Tent roof leaking a little. Went to GI movie. Not so hot. Army, Navy football game pictures. Good serman on sin at mass.

3-19-45

Took shower. Got back were going to play ball but I was wanted at radar. Played volley ball with radar boys. Cleaned guns on S – 19 – 18, Hof asked jerk what crew he was on told him 18 name Mulraney. Went to jam handy. Drunk came in tent. Never saw him before. Had long talk with mess chief. Hates Italiens.

3-20-45

Boys played ball again today. I went to radar [**probably radar jamming, Panther**] for 2 hrs again. Know it pretty well now. Vogel working on door today. helped Stuts move bricks in truck. Volrath told us what happened to crew 101 with T.T.C. good deal – no flak. Put Andrews cot in a line [?] tree. Shaved today. it was murder about 3 days growth. No gas man for gas chamber, [**not sure what this means, they used fuel oil for heat**] lent roster was there so Cheney came over today. Hand still bandaged. [**whose hand? No explanation**].

3-21-45

Played ball in morning. Went to movie "Animal Kingdom" Jack Carson. Went to skeet range windy only hit 4 out of 10. Had gun cleaning S-13 & S-19. Couple ground armors came back after 10 mile hike for "Woman" purpose. Took pro at Revatment 19. Vogel looking away in disgust. Andrews flew to Joyia [**google says that's in Pakistan**] with Sanford. Hof and Bud sent Andrews to mail call. Was wanting to bore sight top turret. Package multi light bulbs. Vogel broadcasted planes in with ram rod. [**confusing words "broadcasted" is probably boresighted**]

3-22-45

Went to get pictures taken at theater but no power. Watched ground crew play ball. Frank was at our hut from 600 to 1030 telling us of his experiences in his 9 mo over. Crew #2 boy. Swell fellow from Allentown Pa.

3-23-45

Wrote some letters. Boys played little ball. Had aircraft rec. [**recognition**] test at operations. Shaved today. played little catch with Reeder. Vogel riding around in jeep with Stuts. Frank came over today and took some pictures. Went to war news lecture at club. Eating almonds big boxes full in club. Went for coffee.

3-24-45

Got heine today. played little catch. Watched Cheney re-model his tent. Fellows went to see "Barbary Coast Gent".

3-25-45

Rations today. Vogel brought back some Valley Forge beer, and he couldn't understand why we hadn't heard of the dog wood trees in Valley Forge. Went to Mass. Beautiful Palm Sunday. Had two big palm branches at altar. Wrote letters. Played catch. Furry dog played catch with boys. My arm got sore too quick. Cambari came by. Asked him why he wasn't in Army. Jeff came back from Bari. Cheney's house almost completed, one side open.

3-26-45 [Mission V: Straszhof Vienna M/Y [marshalling yard]

Flew fifth as panther operator **[this is a radar jammer]** with crew 22 in ship #335. Briefed at 0530 took off at 0756. 20 one hundred lb bombs. Hit NNE marshalling yards **[yards]** in Vienna Area. Hit target at 1230. Light flack to left and behind. First mission as panther – works pretty good. Bombed at 20,000 ft. pretty cloudy on way back. Very sharp rally? Off target right. Landed at 1630. We fly again tomorrow. Sewed buttons on pants tonight. Cleaned pistol. Boys fired their pistols today. cleaned guns on ships #12 & #16. Got nice letter from Carol today.

3-27-45

No fly – stand down. Didn't even get out of bed. Fired pistol – ears blocked up. Bud and Mole on crew baseball team. Two men from each crew. Eddy over tonight. Had whistling and comb band exercises. Went to "Light Fantastic" same as Maples only no bike act. Floor too slippery. Had coffee and bread & Jam. Patton 70 miles from Check boarder. Shaved today. cleaned pistol again.

3-28-45

Went out to engineering with Reeder. Couldn't get any white paint. Andrews remodeled left window. Went to Novena today. had lecture on new escape kits. Sanford **[I think that's the Sergeant]** called me down on no tee and no cap with ODs. guard duty from 1000 to 0200 tonight. Went to 1000 show "My Pal Wolf".

3-29-45

Reeder flew. Bear & Mole played ball. Went to show (Boys, "My Pal Wolf"). On flight plan, but stand down. One mickey flew.

3-30-45

Built a table today for the one we lost. I found a box top (green) by supply. The mole went over too Joe's with me to get leg lumber. Bud helped construct it. Nice table. Gunners went out to armor – same old stuff. Were to fly this morning but oil pressure was down in #3 ship. Went to stations of cross, bud went along.

3-31-45 [Mission VI: Linz] [newspaper clip and note attached to page with a straight pin]

About time the crew flew another mission. Briefed at 0500. Target was Linz benzol plant. P-38 escort. 5 1000 lb bombs. Waited at revetment for double green flare. Took off at 0745. Bear had GIs. Stripped twice . tried to go out camera hole – went in flak helmet. He had anoxia again getting Hof's flak suit on. Flak was off to left with very black puffs. Flew ship 14. Bud didn't have trouble with ball – said it was the best one he had ever flown. Vogel was grounded, because of is fingers. He took Andrews radio to be fixed. Shin flew nose. Target overcast. -40^o at bombing alt. landed at 1515. Payed: 43.65

4-1-45 Easter Sunday

Showed us syphillus movie at group theater at 0930 after which was protestant church services. Had high mass with GI choir. Altar looked very nice. Played little catch. Went to GI movies showed invasion pictures.

4-2-45 [Mission VII: St. POLTEN M/Y]

Set our watches up an hour at midnight. Briefed at 0615. Target M/Y at St. Polten Austria. Ship #6. – 10 - 500 lb bombs. Take off 0854. Noticed German planes on ground. P-51 escort. No flak. Watched bombs hit from escape hatch. Good hits. Noticed green fire. To right of yards. Andrews was chewed again for being off

inter-com. Cheney and Stuts PO'd. landed at 1535. Shim flew at nose gunner again. Bear had trouble with interphone in ball at alt

4-3-45

Went to ground school at group theater it was a farce. Went to skeet range. Reeder firing at lizzards. Played ball went to see "Dragon Seed". Power went off but came back on. Didn't make Sgt again. Mole and Bear got drunk. Bear sick during night. Broke Reeder's bed. Got multi packages #2.

4-4-45 [Mission VIII: BRESCIA M/Y]

Briefed at 0700. Northern Italy. 10 – 500 lb one 100 lb practice bomb that Stutsman dropped. Milk run. Vogel is back flying with us again. Bomb hit right in. Hof noticed three strange fighters in the clouds. Flew ship 6. Pretty cloudy before take off. Took off at 0951. Landed at 1530. Bears head set went out again at alt.[altitude] Vreanna [**Vrenna, Italy**] reported in street fighting. I guess we won't go there again. Played little catch. Went to mail call. Took pictures of target and boys in revetment. Dried out mikes tonight.

4-6-45 [Mission IX: BRESCIA, small arms plant]

Hit small arms plant. 18 – 250 lb bombs. Briefed at 0845. Take off at 1130. Landed at 1730 NO FLAK. Feathered No 2 engine about twenty minutes off target. Ship shook when guns fired. Oil came out on #2 #3 engines. Reeder watched hits from camera hatch. Engines oscillating – weather very cloudy – but clear over target.

4-7-45

Took shower, shaved. Played little ball. Wrote letters in morning. Vogel, Hof & Reeder had ordance [**ordinance**] class. Bud, Andrews, & I and officers had skeet range took life easy cleaned guns and ship 19 – Vogel & I. Andrews went to mail. Bud, Hof, Reeder had ship 77.

4-8-45 [Mission X: GORIZIA M/Y]

Originally briefed to hit Bronzola M/Y but overcast and weather did not permit. Briefed at 0530. 18 – 250 lb bombs 1/10 nose 1/100 tail [**don't know what this**

means for sure]. Had ship 15 but #no. one engine was out so we hopped into a truck and drove over to ship 17 while the ships were taxing and taking off. Took off at 0830. Flew all over Italy looking for a target. Bombed third weather alternate. No flak. Hit M/YU right in center. -40! Watched bombs from camera hatch. Joe flew little close to ship 19 over Adratic. Landed at 1430. Went to mass, Italien preist said mass. Went to GI movie. Stuts brought picture. Didn't fly #10 with us.

4-9-45 [Mission XI: SENIO RIVER LUGO, ITALIAN FRONT (note: he spelled Italian correctly here)]

Briefed at 0930. Had movie photographer taking pictures at pilots briefing. Took off at 1230 back at 1715. Flew ship 15. Let Bear down fast in turret today. Camera man flew waist. Reeder flew upper. Took pictures with K-20. Hit enemy lines in North eastern Italy. 96 frags. Bear cut his hands pulling pins. Newbolt flew engineer. Mission kept pretty secret. Markers [**inverted cap T & _**] panels and smoke signals were all along front. Vogel saw gun fire from field guns. Frags fell like tooth pics. Every ship had bombardier, bear didn't get along with ours. Maxium effort. Stuts was in bomb bay over target taking pictures. Got quart of bellows whiskey \$2.00. One quart per six men. Took Vogel's shot of whiskey after mission. Shaved tonight. 2 shots buzzed me.

4-10-45 [Mission XII: ITALIEN FRONT LUGO, SENIO RIVER]

Briefed at 0645. Hit other side of river today. Flew ship 15 again. Reeder flew upper. Bear gave me hand with left waist gun. Over target at 1225. Ship blew up in 461 group ahead of us. I didn't see it. We encountered no flak but group ahead and behind us got some. Fighters dive bombing in target area. Photographer opened hatch to take check points and bomb hits. Our side shooting up flak to show lines. Hits good. Bombed at 19,500. Vogel had trouble getting by bombardier in bomb bay. The bombing yesterday killed some of our own troops, believed to be another group. Landed at 1410. Bear acted as copilot. Saw a lot of C47 as we departed on course at 1109. Carried frags again. Vogel gave me his double shot again. Took shower. Boys went to "Rapsody in Blue".

4-11-45 [Mission XIII^{12B}: BOLZANO (BRONZOLA M/Y)] don't know what the superscript 12B means

Briefed at 0630. 10 – 500 lb. flew ship 5. Take off at 0900 landed at 1450. Over target at 1225. Had open waist windows. Warm and comfortable till we opened them. Lot of p-38's in target area. Some gunner in lead ship was hit in hand and leg. Crew 23 flying. Another ship in another group blew up in mid air. Flak was moderate but accurate. 38 guns from Bolzano. Some of the bombs hit in yards and most fell long. Piece of flak hit in bomb bay cutting some wires. Heavy flak suit really tired me today. Mole and I went to Novena. Had Vogel's shot again.

4-12-45

Took life easy today. Took shower – played little catch. Went to 3 lectures in morning. Oxygen, medical & army org. all P.P. cleaned guns on ship 5 & 1. Drew cards again as usual Mole stayed for mail call. Andy & Vogel cleaned #5. Vogel unusually spry today. Went to see "Bride by Mistake". Didn't get to see it. One show at group at 1900. careers went to take test 612 MOS. [AIRPLANE ARMORER—GUNNER]

4-13-45

Received the news of the president's death this morning. Much of a blow to us. Seemed restless all day. Were to fly but stand down.

4-14-45

Had guard duty from 6 to 10. Had post 12. Was chewed out by OD for not saluting. Hof was also. Eddie stood mail call for us. When we got off a guard the hut looked like Christmas. I got two packages. Reeder, Hof & Andrews got one. Had sardine sandwiches and beer. Vogel also got coffee at mess hall.

4-15-45

Had memorial services for president at group. Very brief, taps, prayer and few words. Dress in those lovely battle jackets. Took pictures in them in front of the

hut. Went to GI movie. Bobbie and Hof went to USO show at 725th mess hall. Went to mass with Hof.

4-16-45

Went to see "Conspirators" with Hedy Lamar. Had gun cleaning ships 6 and 11. Mole and I took 11. Andy, Dave & Bobbie took 6 **[just when I think I've got it figured out, he changes some nicknames. Andy is Andrews? Dave is Reniger "Bud"?]** Old Man stayed for mail call. Had trouble with nose turret cover. Wind was strong. Stuts had his 2nd Lieutenant bars on today. Went to Trg.**[training]** Aids class. What a crock they had inter-phone in the practice turrets. Had coffee.

4-17-45

Bear went to ground school for us today. Wrote multi letters. Played little catch. A lot of rumors floating around about Pacific. Shaved and aired blankets.

4-18-45

All set to go on mission but stand down. Briefed at 0600. Watched ball game. Vogel went to ground school. Saw "Bodies on Swing Street" and a "Three Stoges" short. Vogel really got a charge. not on flight plan – very PO'd. went to Novena. Had lecture on cal. 50 by Lt. Armstrong and another general one by him at the EM club. Had coffee.

4-19-45

Flew test hop with Joe. PO'd sitting around. Flew ship 7. Nice radio room on command deck, 1515 to 1800. Watched ball game. Went to see "Three Stooges" with Vogel again. Watch wheels play ball at group.

4-20-45 [Mission XIV: RRoad BRIDGE]

Briefed at 0545. Little argument on weather the Mole heard the CQ or not. Took off at 0845 landed at 1445. Carried 5 – 1000 LB bombs and one peculiar looking bomb. Went around target three times before hitting it. Nerman flew as engineer. At about 1120 a P-51 flew a persuit curve on us and Nerman like to S____. He flew past the left side. Hof was ready in the tail, no one fired – the fighter didn't

either. That road bridge was really plastered. We hit little short and to right. Sis' birthday today.

4-21-45

Went out to river and fired pistols. Firing at lizzards on way out. Watched Italian farmers take swim. Pulled guard from 1000 to 0200 and had us on flight plan also. Had argument about weather we would fly or not. When we got off of guard we found it was a stand down. Old room mate of Buds a college came to visit him. Windy on guard duty.

4-22-45

Drew rations. Spent a lot of time talking to Buet [**don't know, that's what the name looked like**], Bud's friend. Dusty as hell today and windy. Got a 35Z5 tube [**component vacuum tube for 40's era radio**] from Earl today. Took Andrews radio out to be fixed but there must be something else that's wrong. Went to mass with mole. Went to GI movie. Fellows got a big sarcastic charge out of *Lawrence Tibbitt*.

4-23-45 [Mission XV: Badia ROAD BRIDGE] interestingly, he printed 'cluster' above mission number

Another air medal mission as panther. Briefed at 0445 took off at 0721. In ship 6. Very nice handling ship the wheels say. Flew #3 position. Hit a road bridge below Ferraia blocking off retreating Germans. Cheney got cocky and thought he'd watch the bombs, but low and behold multi flak. Made three passes. Got a lot of flak first time. Nerman the engineer was s___ing. It was his 33 mission and his knees were shaking. Took a lot of pictures. Didn't get much radar on this mission, I guess they were using visual. Got 100% on bridge. Should on three passes. Landed at 1330. Multi dive bombing of P-47s and strafing by P-51. Really raising hell. Got a small flak hit in left wing fuel cell. Flew good formation. B_nch led. Took shower after we came down. Rest of the boys slept.

Were given the good conduct medal at a formation at the ball diamond. Drabec, Sanford, Mogle and another Capt. Gave them out. Bud, Reeder and I got it – big deal.

4-24-45 [Mission XVI: Rovereto NE TIP LAKE GARDE]

Took off in ship 14 at 0715. Beautiful day. I was laying back at the camera hatch taking pictures and listening to radio compass. Bear was up by ball listening too. Went to our first briefed target, but didn't bomb was overcast. It was a martialing yards with 18 heavy guns. 3 ships were supposed to drop frags on the guns before we bombed. Flew around for a hell of a long time. Noticed ships feathering engines and aborting or falling back. **[Dad always said that the reason was flak and loss of fuel, but he never mentions the cause here]** Just before we got to the alternate, ship 19 feathered No. 4 and fell way back. Before ship 79 feathered No. 2 & 4 and aborted. Ship 18 lost 2 & 3 and fell back (they went over the alternate. Then we started losing engines. First No. 2 went out. Then No. 1 went out and Cheney was fighting the controls. Losing alt [altitude] fast then No 3 went out. Stuts gave order to get ready to bail. Hof came out of his turret. Filling walk around bottles and fastening shoes (parachutes) to D-rings. Stuts said don't bail No. 1 came back in. I think Ranta (engineer crew 23) was blowing in the gas tank. We had back hatch open. No. 3 started again and No 1 went out. In the meantime Jeff was hunting for a map and Joe was calling him on inter-phone asking for a course to nearest landing place. Jeff got back on inter-phone and said take a 90⁰ turn. Joe had a hard time turning with no power. We saw a town ahead of us and Jeff said don't steer for that – that's Bologna! Bear said isn't Bologna taken. I guess we agreed that Bologna was taken. We hoped so any way. Saw an open field. Reeder and Bear were standing at waist windows. Bear was beating on left waist gun. I was up on the command deck and I thought he was sweating out buildings etc. when I saw a bunch of steel girders go by. Before I forget it, Vogel had come thru the bomb bay with his chute on. The bear was pounding on the waist gun sweating the gear coming down **[I think this had something to do with the gun mount. They needed to move it out of the way to get out through the hatch]**. We hit. Dirt and dust flew. It was a good dead stick landing until we hit a couple of bomb craters. We were indicating about 150 when we hit. As we slid

down the field Bear pulled off the left waist window and when the ship stopped we piled out of that. From there on things are pretty well remembered by all the crew. Sweating out friendly or enemy coming to meet us. No one was hurt. **[Dad told me later that he cut his hand or something getting out and they offered the Purple Heart but he refused it]** Ate with engineers AAF 845 Co A. slept with ship. Stood one hr. guard each all night. Sweating out strafing by FW 189's that had come over the night before **[I've heard of FW-190 fighters, but there is a 189 that's a light bomber]**. The English told us they would be over sure as heck. Slept on cots the engineers gave us. Under left wing. Pictures it took will tell damage to airplane 14 "Destinys TOT" Was it cold that night. We could hear shooting in Bologna. Still a few pockets left. Also hear artillery to the north of us.

4-25-45

Woke up cold as hell and went to farm house to eat breakfast with Engineers. Got APU going and hoisted all the antenna we could find by filling the hydrogen ballons **[balloons]**. Tired **[tried]** flying kite first, but no luck. Ballons worked swell. Used two. Called up 49 wing wing 64F on 6695 KC's__was blocked out several times, but got message through. They told us to stay with ship until a mobile engineering unit came. Reeder and Joe shot down the antenna. Jeff and Stuts got a C-47 and headed for Florence. The others stayed with the ship. Spitfires were operating on the new runway. Also P-40's. slept with APU **[that means Auxiliary Power Unit]** going for heated suits but cut out and we froze. Broke open K rations all full of water

4-26-45

P-47 crashed landed at field with big hole in right wing. We disarmed the guns on the ship and bear got gun camera for Jim Berry. Went in toward town, looking for Vino. Ended up at partisan dance. Had good time multi Vino. Slept in ship – raining like all hell. Joe and I slept in waist. Bear slept in nose with Vogel. Hof and Bobbie slept under left wing. Ranta and Bobbie slept in parachute. Vogel had deal with guard at nose of ship. Old colored boy was really scared. Cheney and I were awake most of the night.

4-27-45

Moved in with engineers today. they were to move out next morning. Slept in hall on cot. Remember A&B bags. Berry left in the morning. Talked with cooks. Took shower in engineers portable shower. Froze again this night. Doors open all night.

4-28-45

Woke us up for breakfast. Rained little. Had lunch and decided to go to town. Got in jeep. Vogel Reeder Joe, Lt. Bell & Hof. Hof and I went back because it was raining too hard. Came back and socked up. Steaks for supper. Slept in dining room with fire. Slept warm. Took walk over by railroad tracks.

4-29-45

Went out to ship to dry out clothes, but too wet. C-47 buzzed field but decided it was too wet. P-47 landed with leaves in its engine from strafing 100 trucks. Went to hospital unit to have Bobbies finger fixed. Vogel had a warm sleep for a change had about 4 shelter halves. Had steak again for supper.

4-30-45

Rest of engineer outfit pulled out. We layed out in the field sweating out the C-47 411 [**not sure 411 as we know it was a thing then**]. Got a slight sunburn. One C47 landed with wheels [**as in "Big Wheels"**] in it. We thought it was the one. It came at about 1600. We ate lunch with the colored reclamation outfit. Took off in C-47 with all our A3 bags and junk. Landed at Falconara. Had 6 blankets each and a oil stove. Never had it so good. Really had a good rest.

5-1-45

Colored boy called us for breakfast and was PO'd when we didn't get up. After breakfast, watched B-25s take off and went thru PBY. Hof came in a said load the stuff on the truck outside we're going back on a B-17. Cheney is test hopping it now. Well it turned out that we got in another truck a went to a British field and flew back to the base in a ship (24) from another group. Really sweated out ride home. Base looked good. Had a lot of big old combat stories for the boys. Found

out crew 17 went down the next day after us. Sent hom radio gram. Shaved that night.

5-2-45 [my future Mom turned sweet 16]

Took much needed shower today. really felt good. Food at Falcanara (eggs) didn't agree with snake. He had GIs. Ranta still has bad cold. Bear won 250 at craps in club. "Flies spread disease. S/Sgt". **[he never explains who Ranta & Snake & Bobbie are]**

5-3-45

Went to school today. saw first aid movie in morning and Vogel went to afternoon class for us. Went to show, saw "Devation" [**Deviation**] with Paul Heinred [**Henreid**]. Froze half to death. Heat the old oil stove and got warm. Joe was over tell about his experiences in North woods.

5-4-45

Listened to radio. Orders up for promotion. No luck yet for 104. Never had it so good. Bear PO'd as all hell. Have guard from 6 to 10. Bobbie still sick in cot. Vogel still has slight GIs.

5-5-45

Had meeting at ball diamond at 1830. Seems we may go home soon. We have [to] wait for official notice that the war is over. Went to movie saw "Nothing but Trouble" Laurel and Hardy. Didn't freeze this time brought blankets. Put on mosquito repellent. Stinks like hell.

5-6-45

Drew rations. Had physical at 1410. Bobbie and Bear were helping on physicals. Bear had [**worked**] eye test and Bobbie final checker. Went to GI movie saw 3rd fleet in battle of Lyte. Went to mass with Hof.

5-7-45

Bear went to school for us but no deal, they took standing roll call. Mole got caught by Drabeck [?] with his pants out. Took sun bath today. Got nice letter from Carol. Germans say war is over at 1400. Hope so!

5-8-45

Celebrated end on night of 7th. Bobbie and I fired our pistols. Flores flares fired. Officers collected weapons. Next day officially VE day. Holiday. Put put [**hard to read word**] on all day. Took sun bath. No passes to town. Went to church. Went to movie at night.

5-9-45

Another holiday today. No passes to town. Took sunbaths again. Were sitting around water tank [when] someone leaned up against it. Hit Moles ankle. Went over to dispensary got ambulance. Took him over to dress wound. Took him to group hospital. Were going to take him to Foggia, but no need for X-ray, he's alright.

5-10-45

Rumors really flying. They seem to have us changed in crews. The only ones left are Vogel and Bud. Went to photography class at S2. Had clothing check in morning also flying equip check at line. Flew from 1415 to 1645. Flew in nose with Dave [**assume "Bud"**] in ship #4.

5-11-45

Put up misquito netting to keep wheels happy. John [**aka "Mole" or "Hof"**] still in hospital at group.

5-12-45

John came back from hospital. No bones broken. They were cleaning out hospital. Didn't take him to Foggia. Had POM [**google says it means "Preparation for**

Overseas Movement”] inspection at group. Waited in line for about three hours. Saw “Can’t Help Singing”. Not so good.

5-13-45

Mother’s Day. Went on guard as super’s at 1630. Pulled about 15 minutes guard at ship #30 at post 4. Sergeant of guard came out and got me and we went for a ride all over hell looking for Italiens taking stuff out of the group. Spent some time in guard house writing letters. Picked up drunk took him to hospital. Vogel guarded him. Got off at 2400.

5-14-45

Went up to group to make movie with Col. Telling us that we are homeward bound. Rumors still flying.

5-15-45

Had flying equipment checked at operations. Sold few articals to Pap [?]. went to hear band at group. Played lot of good songs. Taking it easy getting packed and cleaning out excess junk.

5-16-45

The true poop is that all the flying personal [**personnel**] are flying home. Did the usual thing, sat out in shade. Drank a few warm beers. Made some deals with few daggos. Getting on to this language. Bobbie made deal on certain article across field in B-10 jacket. Went over to farm house to pick up scarfs. Turkeys in front room.

5-17-45

Crew 17 came back today. Didn’t seem to think much of the Russians. Went to movie “Flame of Barbary Coast”. Took sun bath. Had meeting at ball diamond. Major told us of inspections to follow. Played with crew 10s pup. Got package from Grandpa. No letters from home.

5-18-45

Had inspection. Lay out on cots in front of hut. Took away overcoat blankets etc. Worked in supply in shifts sorting clothes. I worked in shorts. All came back with loot. Finished up about 1800. Mole and I took cold shower.

4-19-45

Bear and Jim went to town to pick up some things for OD's. Sold some of Bears extras to Daggos. Also sold a few of my things. Went to see "Night of Adventure". Bear played cards at EM club. Rained [a] little today.

5-20-45

Went to get rations. Not much just usual beer and cigarettes. Beer in tin cans this time. Went to mass. Father Junk from wing said it. Nice priest. Went to GI movie.

5-21-45

Usual rumors. Getting packed cleaning out stuff we don't want. Sat around.

5-22-45

Did a little sewing. Stayed outside. Went to see "Between Two Women" with Van Johnson. Planes shooting night landings.

5-23-45

Went to mass at 1630. No novena. Father Junk maid **[made]** it. Took sun bath got [a] little burned. 33 minutes each side. Ground personal **[personnel]** have to be out of here by 27th. Cleaned out hut – got package from home. Cake moldy. Had chicken sandwiches at mess hall.

5-24-45

Saw last movie at Castlucucia **[Castelluccio]**. Double feature. "Circumstantial Evidence" and "Two Girls and a Sailor". Beer bottles were thrown [?]. really PO'd about ratings today. **[don't know for sure what was meant. I don't think movie ratings]**

5-25-45

Leaving for Gioia Sunday. Tore tent down and finished packing. Supper was last meal in mess hall. Malt activity all around. Received Certificat of Valor today. Set up sleeping quarters in operations. Stole cot from supply. Didn't sleep so good. Drabek came in S2 and we were sweating him out on the cots.

5-26-45

Woke up at 0430 by whistles. The ground crew is pulling out. We ate breakfast at [0]725 [in the] mess. Started loading ship 16 and 11. Windy and dusty as heck today. Living with Cheney in Mocles [?] old house. A lot of fires in squadron area today [**suspect they were burning trash**]. Took shower at group just as dirty when we came back from dust storm. Guys next door had an Italien _____. Some were taking pictures.

5-27-45

Had good sleep on cot and comforter. Took bags out to ship 16. In guard truck. Gave house final check and took off at 1156 with 16 passengers rough as hell. Ship 9 and 11 were in the element. Landed at Gioia de Calle [**Gioia del Colle**] at 1248. Truck came out and got baggage took us to tent 155 & 154 drew cots. Turned in Italien currency to Joe, L123.⁰⁰. Supposed to have ship 1199 new M [**assume he meant 'new model'**]. went to GI movie. Had to stand. Food pretty good, but main features is you eat on plates and don't have to wash them. Cold at night.

5-28-45

Seems we don't have ship 1199 now. Shackelton pulled his rail road tracks [**assume that means a Captain pulled rank**]. We now have ship 740. Flew it from 0905 til 1157. Dirty as hell and eats gas also tail heavy. Took ice cold shower. Joe up testing ⁴⁴9740 again. Failed to gain alt. rejected it then took it again when found it would be four days before could get another. Got two am [**armament**] men to take to Trinidad. Went to see "Thunder Head" at outdoor theater. Slept good.

5-29-45

Had physical – teeth, penis, rectum and processed. Loaded ship tagged bags. Ground crew men cleaned oil screens [**screens, probably fixed problem with that plane**]. Hung A3 bags on shackles. Had clothing check in morning. Exchanged B-4 bag and turned in some equipment. Loaded ship and checked radio equipment and set up frequency. Went to R/O [**Radio Operator**] briefing at hanger no 1.

5-30-45

Ate breakfast at 0500. Took rest of baggage out to ship. Coffee was burnt, cooked and s_____ on. Went to pilots briefing. Character of a captain [**was**] briefing. What a mustash. Took a few pictures around ship. Took off at 0623Z [**zulu time now, same as GMT for those that don't know**]. Reached Tunis at 0933Z. Bone [**can't find it on today's map**] at 1030Z --- Over Algiers at 1205Z --- Over Oran at 1325Z – at Oujida 1400Z—Meknes 1515Z – at Marrakech landed – 1627Z. Took some 35mm pictures on flight. Made voice contacts on 4220 KC's at all stations. Stations crowded, but didn't have much trouble. Had tea, K rations, air crew lunches. Flew at 8,000 most of way. Weather cloudy – air speed indicated 160. [**at this point, looks like he switched from writing in ink, to pencil**] Nice field at Marrakech French Morocco. Took some pictures as we landed. Stayed in tents. We had tent 52. Drew two blankets a mattress cover and mosquito. Had movie at out door theater. "Hotel Berlin" not so good. Out door show had wall of bamboo. Had rough time finding tent. Cold at night. Ate mess in a converted hanger. Had a very cold beer – only one and that was all we could get. Arabs did KP and various jobs also some French men. Red earth – palm trees.

5-31-45

Briefed at 0530. Short briefing. Took off at 0740Z. First contact was to notify Marrakech that we were clear of the Ijoukak [**can't find**] pass. Reached Tindauf [**can't find**] at 0926Z. weather was hazy. Long haul [**haul**] down to Atar over desert and mountains. Over Atar at 1325Z. longest route over mali desert. Vogel looking for Arabs on horses with long rifles. Reached St. Louis (a coast town) at 1530Z. Landed at Mallard Field, Dakar French West Africa, Senegal at 1611. Hot and

humid. Took some pictures as we landed. Dave [**assume "Bud" Reniger**] with camera in waist. Took truck to operations. Malti Africans around, jungle bunnies as Vogel calls them. Had nice quarters. 9-D. straw mattress two blankets misquiteo netting. They [**the mosquitos**] really came down in groups at night. Took shower in private too. Sit down at chow and jungle bunnies wait on you hand and foot. Really moved along fast. Kid with water all pooped out. Drew rations at PX. Four candy bars, package cigarets and ice cold bottle of beer, and I mean ice cold. Cost about 11 francs. Had good sleep.

6-1-45

Awakened at 0430 to brief at 0530. Took s___ in nice private flush toilet. Turned in blankets. Had breakfast. Pancakes served by 'Joe Louis', as Jerry [who's he?] says. Short briefing. Set up new frequencies. Cleaned antennas. Took off at 0732 for South Atlantic hop. We were unable to contact guard vessels in Atlantic so tuned up on 4220 and 8280 on CW but still no luck. Jeff getting pretty restless. Ask me to get bearing from Mallard. Called Mallard and they told me to contact WYRT at Natal on 6530 KCs. Took me over an hour to get bearing, finally got one at 1215Z QTE 038 class one. Natal very efficient on bearings. A lot of clouds on over water hop. Used trailing wire [**antenna**]. Run into few rain thunder heads. Landed at Natal, Brazil at 1704Z. when we cut engines, had to stay in ship 5 minutes while it was fumigated. Drew meal tickets. Barracks 305 bed 33. Brick and plaster barracks with beds with springs and mattresses. Beautiful post. Wonderful chow. Bought Natal hats at PX. Cigars really good. Café hamburgers and 24oz bottles of beer. Out door beer garden with colored lights. Bananas growing on post. Went to bed at 2000. Had good sleep in soft bed. Rained last night.

6-2-45

Rained quite a lot of the day. Bought some things at PX. Stockings, boots for sis etc. Prepared B-4 bag took it out to ship. Slim and Morris [**assume ground crew guys, oil screens again**] were pulling screens. Had bananas for lunch. Went to snack shop had some hamburgers, coke, etc. all went to beer garden together that evening. I was to brief at 1900 but they told me at operations that it wasn't

till morning, they were wrong. Ate supper or breakfast at 0030L [**local time I assume**] Had few hours rest. Stuts went into Natal and got caught coming back without a pass. He said there was some nice stuff in town. We sent cables home today \$4.16

6-3-45

Took off at 0516Z in darkness. Had some trouble contacting tower. We were over Fortaleza Brazil at 0642Z, alt 7700. Over Sao Luis at 0840Z alt 7900. Over Belem at 1017Z alt 7700. Over Amapa, Brazil at 1138Z alt 7900. Over Zanderij D. Gat 1325Z alt 8400 ft. Over Atkinson (air base) at 1430Z alt 6900. Landed Atkinson at 1443Z. Hit quite a few thunderheads on way and rain. Contacted AACS on 4595 all the way. 4200 command receiver was out. Took many pictures on way. Such places as Amazon – check points etc. Had electric fire on T/W [**pretty sure this is 'Trailing Wire'**] antenna. Used CO₂ on it. [**Was probably**] Discharge from thunderhead. Malti jungle all the way. Vogel was looking for Tarzan. Got weather reports twice an hour from all check points. Barracks at Atkinson built way off the ground because of flood water in spring. Ate at trans. Mess [**transportation?**]. table cloths, leave your trays etc. Matresses. Class A's after 1700L. went to PX to pick up on package of cigarettes. Took shower, shaved. Went to 1600 mess. Very nice chape. First place we hit kneelers since we were over seas. Had good sleep.

6-4-45

Up at dawn. Ate breakfast. Took off at 1113Z. Over water at 7900 ft at 1325Z. At Beane at 7900 ft at 1400Z [**don't quite understand**] over Benedict at 1615Z. Over Borinquen PR 1630Z at 6250 ft. Landed at Borinquen PR at 1653Z. That a base. Weather on route pretty good. Few rain clouds in which was rough air. We were in AC Barracks 1. Room 202 bed 36. Looked more like a hotel. Had first bed with real springs. Between the sheets. At dinner in a beautiful cafeteria called a mess hall had to believe. Briefed at 1615L. went to PX, bought few things went to soda fountain had a cherry Sunday and a coke. Pretty little Porta Rican bell at the cigar counter. Went out to ship and separated the things we wanted to turn in. Was going to show, but didn't have at tie [**said earlier, class A's after 1700**]. Took

shower in TILE bathroom not latrine. Had very good sleep. **AHE [as I said at the beginning, he always initialed each days' entry]**

This is the end of his log book entries, but the last leg of their journey home was from Borinquen, PR to Hunter field, GA (near Savana). I got the sense that some of crew 104 split off to another plane before they left Italy. People on board ship 740 that I can determine was Cheney, Jefferies, Stutsman, Dad, Vogel, and he mentioned "Dave" taking pictures at one point, that must mean Reniger. That's six out of the nine. I assume they said their goodbyes at Savana (Hunter) and from there each man made his way home. I do see that Dad got the mailing address for everyone in the crew in one of his books. I also know that as of the time of Dad's death, John Vogel was the only one of the nine that is still alive.

I really had fun doing this. I learned a lot about Dad's experiences during the war, but I still have a lot of questions. I plan to map out the route and places for his experience from landing on the troop ship in Naples to his trip to the base in Castellucio. Then the location (target) for each mission. Finally, the route they flew coming home. I've even been able to figure out who is who in some of his old pictures thanks to Jack Vogel.

One thing I never knew: they didn't have a single plane for their crew. It always varied. Sometimes they had members from other crews substituting certain positions. Dad even flew a few missions with other crews on an aircraft with Panther jamming equipment for example.

After reading this, if you have some comment or explanation for anything, I'd be happy to hear about that. You may contact me via the contact info I provide on the place you found this posted.

References:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_America_\(1939\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_America_(1939)) has a good history of the Troop Ship West Point. Very interesting read and pictures.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foggia_Airfield_Complex has description of airfields in the Foggia area.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheddi_Jagan_International_Airport airfield in Brazil which was called "Atkinson Army Airfield" during the war. Helped me find location.

<http://freepages.family.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~webermd1/Liberator-Info.html>
As I show at the Foreword, this is some really good info all about the B-24

"The 451st Bomb Group in World War II A Pictorial History" by Mike Hill. This is a physical book purchased through Amazon https://www.amazon.com/451st-Bomb-Group-World-War/dp/0764312871/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1507905854&sr=8-1&keywords=451st+pictorial+history