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"The continued all out efforts by your heavies day after day is most gratifying. It shows to all of us that your combat and maintenance crews are true teams. Please convey my appreciation to all concerned for their untiring efforts and my congratulations for the splendid results obtained."

The commendation above came from General H. H. Arnold on July 27, and although addressed to the entire 8th Air Force, it well summed up the month's activity for the 92nd Bombardment Group. "The continued all-out effort...day after day..." was the Group's contribution to the war-- not so spectacular in terms of total sorties as June had been; not so phenomenal in low abortive percentage as in April; nor yet so low in loss rate as in June. But it was all-out, and day after day-- excepting when what the Weather Office termed "the flow of fronts" scrubbed the scheduled missions, 8 times after briefing, 8 times in all.

Statistically, July was the second largest operational month in Group history. 18 missions were flown, 571 planes were dispatched, and 532 successfully bombed. The Group was

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alerted 28 times, briefed 24. Abortives totalled 3, or about 1 1/2% of aircraft dispatched. 3 planes did not return, and for the third straight month the loss rate was 1% or less-- in the months of May, June and July only 13 aircraft were lost in almost 1700 sorties.

Strategic bombing of German industry took precedence over tactical missions-- 11 raids being made into the Reich, 4 of which, on July 11, 12, 13 and 16, battered the industrial sections of Munich. Over 100 aircraft from the 92nd Group participated in the 4 attacks, done by PFF technique, which elicited the following commendation from Lt. General Carl Spaatz:

"I have now received photographs of Munich which illustrate the damage caused by the attacks of the Eighth Air Force on 11, 12, 13, 16 and 19 July.
"These photographs clearly show that great damage has been contained in this target area and that included in this damage are direct hits on Bayerische Motoren Werke, the Agfa Dye Works, the main railroad station, a large oil depot and other important installations. These attacks have undoubtedly been severe blows to German war production. They have again shown the people of Munich and all Germany the effective striking power of our Air Forces.
"I wish to congratulate the crews that participated in these attacks and those responsible for their excellent training in PFF technique which has led to the highly successful operational application of this method in the recent attacks on the Munich area. These missions called for great endurance while flying under difficult conditions. They will result in directly affecting Germany's ability to continue the war."

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The Munich raids were costly: the aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt John R. Seilheimer of the 407th Squadron did not return from the July 11 mission; 3 planes, piloted by 2nd Lts Frank F. Herrington and Robert A. Huettel of the 325th Squadron, and Earl A. Johnson of the 327th Squadron were lost on the July 16 attack.

The furthest penetration into northwest Germany came on July 18 when 34 aircraft of the 92nd Group participated in perhaps the most important individual mission of the month, a highly successful attack on Peenemunde, the principal research and development center of the Nazi experimental weapons- jet propulsion aircraft, flying bombs and rockets. The MPI was well covered with bomb hits and smoke was reported rising to 12,000 feet. The bomb pattern called forth commendations from Lt. General Spaatz, Lt. General Doolittle and Major General Williams. General Spaatz termed it "one of the finest examples of precision bombing I have seen." Added General Williams: "On this vital operation the 1st Division again demonstrated its ability to destroy the assigned objective regardless of its location or enemy opposition."

Of the month's 7 tactical missions, the mass attacks of July 24 and 25 in the St. Lo area of France deserve

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special mention. The RAF had set the pattern several days before by blasting an eight mile square carpet southeast of Caen in the path of the British advance. Much the same tactics were employed in the St. Lo area. In the largest assembly of aircraft since D-Day (the 92nd Group furnished 54 and 51 on the two days) thousands of fragmentation and 100 lb. GP bombs were dropped on German positions just ahead of the U.S. First Army's advance. This aerial armada paved the way for the breakthrough at the western end of the Normandy front, which several days later became the battle of Brittany.

The month's loss total of 6 aircraft was divided among the squadrons as follows: 325th, 2; 326th, 1; 327th, 1; 407th, 2. (See Appendix B.)

Flying as a spare on the July 11 mission, 2nd Lt Edwin W. Martens of the 407th Squadron safely landed his smoking B-17 alone at Boreham, near the mouth of the Thames, after a serious fire on the flight deck had prompted him to order his crew to bail out. His aircraft was on the way to Munich, laden with 18 250 lb. GP bombs, when the fire broke out, and grease fed by oxygen filled the cockpit with acrid and blinding smoke. Armor plate three-quarters of an inch thick had melted and ammunition was exploding when Lt Martens

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ordered the bail-out.

"The smoke was choking us," Martens said later. "We couldn't stand it and so I told the crew to jump. I was ready to jump myself, when I saw the fire dying down."

Lt Martens fought his way through the smoke, and with an empty equipment bag began beating at the flames, while the ship, set on the automatic pilot, circled over the London area. Gradually the fire was brought under control. Although the ball turret guns, pointed downward when the ball turret gunner had jumped, snapped off when the aircraft touched the runway, Lt Martens managed to land without further damage. All of the crew members landed safely, although Sgt. Martin G. Brassill, the tail gunner, was narrowly missed by a Spitfire, and 2nd Lt John Becht, the bombardier, parachuted into a tree, where he dangled Tarzan-style for a few minutes before cutting himself free.

1st Lt Ross Davidson of the 325th Squadron, who had been awarded the DFC for safely bringing back a seriously damaged aircraft from Berlin in April, further distinguished himself as - in the words of his Operations Officer - "the 32nd's Clay Pigeon." On 3 successive missions, to Romilly-sur-Seine on June 25, Leipzig on July 7 and Munich on July 13, Lt Davidson brought back his aircraft, each time with the control cables shot out.

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Damage was most serious on the Romilly-Sur-Seine mission, when a direct flak burst ripped into the bomb bay a fraction of a second after bombs away. Miraculously, the shell split in half instead of exploding, tearing out control cables and blasting holes in the top of the fuselage. The superchargers were knocked out and the radio and oxygen system chattered. Unable to keep in formation, Lt Davidson coolly and skillfully maneuvered his crippled ship home.

Awards for the month were numerous, including 138 DFC's, of which 131 were for completion of tours, 10 Purple Hearts and 231 Air Medals. Oak Leaf Clusters awarded were 4 to the DFC, 1 to the Purple Heart and 534 to the Air Medal. (See Appendix C).

2nd Lt Jack B. Gross of the 326th Bombardment Squadron was awarded the DFC for courage, coolness and skill displayed as Lead Bombardier on the June 15th mission, a railroad bridge at Nantes, France. A minute before bombs away, an explosion of anti-aircraft fire sent flak flying through the nose of the plane, wounding the navigator and bruising Lt. Gross. Unperturbed, he coolly made his last minute corrections and dropped his bombs directly on the target, with excellent results.

Officer promotions during the month were: 11 to Captain, 74 to 1st Lieutenant. (See Appendix B.) During the period,

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40 officers and 43 enlisted men completed tours of duty. (See Appendix E.)

At about 1615 hours on July 7, the 82nd Group's medical personnel were called to the scene of a glider accident about seven miles west of Northampton. Two flight officers, members of the 74th Troop Carrier Squadron, had crashed on a practice flight. Both were killed instantly, and their bodies were brought to the mortuary at Station Sick Quarters, to be claimed the following day by members of their organization.

An afternoon practice mission on July 15 turned out fatally for 3 members of the crew of 1st Lt John A. Alford of the 328th Squadron. Upon attempting to land after the mission the wheels bounced on the runway and the aircraft was airborne again, with one wing bursting into flames. Lt Alford climbed to about 900 feet, leveled off and ordered the crew to bail out; the plane crashed and burned about six miles south of the base. 2nd Lt Stanley Nadel, the navigator, and T/Sgt Paul R. Horton, the radio operator, went down with the plane and were killed. Sgt Bruce C. Baker, Jr., the ball turret gunner, parachuted out but his chute streamed down and failed to canopy, and he was killed immediately upon impact with the ground. Lt Alford and his co-pilot, 2nd Lt Robert E. Williams parachuted safely without injury; T/Sgt Thomas J. Madien, the engineer, parachuted safely with only slight

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skin lacerations.

Bicycle accidents among personnel continued to be numerous, and the month produced one casualty. On July 6, S/Sgt Sherman M. Silver of the 327th Squadron was struck by a jeep while riding his bicycle on a highway near the base. Injuries received resulted in his death at the 49th Station Hospital on July 7. Ironically underlining the tragedy was the fact that Sgt Silver had just completed his tour of missions, and some of them-- 6 raids on Berlin, 2 on Ludwigshaven-- had been among the 92nd Group's most hazardous ones.

S/Sgt Leonard W. Clark of the 325th Squadron died of gunshot wounds on July 17, when the pistol he was carrying in a shoulder holster was accidentally discharged. Sgt Clark, in the village of Bozeat at the time, was violating a Station regulation by having a weapon in his possession while off the base, but this violation was held not the proximate cause of his death, but only contributory; the investigating officer found his death to be "in line of duty."

An expansion of the ward at Station Sick Quarters, construction of which was begun in June, was completed during the early part of July; an extra six beds were available. The VD rate showed a marked increase during the month; probable cause was the influx into neighboring towns of evacuees from bomb-conscious London. A sharp rise in throat infections

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occurred around the middle of the month. All eating and drinking establishments on the base were closely checked as well as outside sources, but no cause could be assigned. Personnel were cautioned, prompt treatment was afforded those affected, and the increase lasted only a few days.

Training programs were satisfactorily maintained during the month, and in some categories, increased. July set a record for the Group Gunnery section with over 6000 hours, mostly synthetic-trainer time made possible by the Turret Trainer. That unit continued to be the outstanding feature of the program and through July accommodated an average of 60 gunners per day.

Bombsight training amounted to 119 hours in July as compared with 95 hours the previous month. Late in the month an additional Bombsight Trainer was put into use. The new addition was an American type, identical with those in operation in the United States, modified by AFCE control. All training hitherto had been on the Air Ministry Bomb Trainer, which links British equipment with the Norden bombsight. With two different systems of synthetic training in effect, it was felt that the scope of bombardier training had been markedly increased.

CWS activities for the month included the securing of

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an impregnated clothing testing-kit, used for determining the percentage of impregnate in stored impregnated clothing. All unit supply rooms were spot tested. Results were satisfactory. Another decontaminating apparatus, M-4, was procured, making a total of 5 decontaminating trucks in use on the base. These vehicles, originally designed for decontaminating large areas of vesicant gases, have been found of value in any number of routine duties-- fire fighting, water hauling, washing down equipment.

The new delayed-fuse, 842 ML, first used in July on the Skymarker smoke trail bomb, proved to be far superior to the previous fuse in at least one respect; aircraft following did not have to fly through the smoke and thus risk contamination by chlorosulfonic acid. Previously, from one to three aircraft on every mission would be slightly damaged by the acid, and on occasion it had been necessary to remove the entire plexi-glass nose.

There were numerous changes of personnel during the month: Major Jack S. Griffin, formerly Operations Officer of the 326th Squadron became CO of the 327th Squadron, succeeding Major Donald G. Parker, who returned to the US. Major Frank B. Ward, Jr., formerly Operations Officer of the 407th Squadron, transferred to the 325th, succeeding Major Griffin; Major William H.

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Nelson, assigned to the Group on July 2, succeeded Major Ward as Operations Officer of the 407th Squadron. On July 20, Captain John D. Eichhorn became Station Utilities Officer, succeeding 1st Lt Kenneth Werner. There were several changes in Group 3-2: 1st Lt Max Hochberg of the 325th Squadron left for the US; 1st Lts John T. Rodrigues and John A. Noel of the 325th and 327th Squadrons respectively, were assigned. Captain Herb J. Baumsten was appointed Special Services Officer, vice 1st Lt Walter Fieg. Lt Fieg and 2nd Lt James E. McElroy were appointed Assistant Special Services Officers.

On June 29, 1st Lt John L. Condit and 45 enlisted men comprising the 3rd Platoon, Company C, 831st Eng. Avn. Battalion, came in to make certain repairs on the airfield. On July 27, they were relieved by Company A of the same organization, composed of 5 officers and 164 enlisted men under the command of Captain Frederick W. Gordon. Their work consisted mainly of putting an overlay on the taxiways.

On the first of the month, the emergency having been considered as passed, the number of guards assigned nightly to protect the airfield was reduced. As a precautionary measure, a Medical Reserve unit was established, with personnel drawn from each squadron, and several meetings were held at which litter-bearing procedure was outlined by Captain

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Joseph W. Messey of the 32nd Station Complement Squadron. Members of the unit, while somewhat skeptical of the possibilities of ever being called into action, were nevertheless interested in Capt. Messey's remarks, which he illustrated from time to time with actual incidents drawn from his own experiences on the Normandy beaches. Capt. Messey, Capt Charles E. Brookschmidt and Pfc Howard F. Sinks, all Medical Department personnel assigned to the 32nd Station Complement, had been sent out on DS as a surgical team during the period from May 15 to June 30; assigned to LST #50 during the invasion of the Continent, they helped evacuate four LST loads of casualties from Normandy to England.

The Jewish personnel of the base had an opportunity to meet Chaplain Lewis Milgrom, who was assigned to the 1st Division and who held his first services on the base July 11. Chaplain Ware, at another service during the month, dedicated an altar set of cross and candlesticks, built for him by the 446th Sub Depot Machine Shop.

On July 5, the long-awaited soda fountain was opened in the PX, and although Coca-Cola was its only drink, queues of thirsty GIs were immediately in evidence. Decoratively, the fountain featured a South Seas motif, complete with thatched and simulated bamboo. Receipts from the fountain alone were

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834 pounds in 18 days-- roughly over 21,000 glasses of real Coca-Cola sold. Total PX receipts for the month were 3689 pounds, highest of the year, due partly to the fact that the balance of the "Christmas" allotment of Whitman's and Gilbert's chocolates was received and sold. The first installment of the "Christmas" candy had been a highlight of the month of March.

The Red Cross Aeroclub program for the month was well-rounded and extensive, including a visit July 3 from a group of Cambridge professors who answered GI questions at an informal meeting in the Snack Bar, a 4th of July party, and a dance on the 28th. The Station Quiz Team, after an inactive month in June, twice maintained its undefeated status by knowing more miscellaneous answers to questions than a team from Station 110. The first match was held on the base July 12, the second at Polebrook on July 26.

Miss Patricia Neal, Aeroclub program director, was transferred on July 13. On July 23, her position was filled by Miss Betty Boyd of Middletown, Chic.

Captain Baumsten's advent as Special Services Officer initiated an expansion of Special Service activities. Events, both social and athletic, were more widely publicized than ever before; the enlisted men's bar was revamped, slot machines installed and a lounge opened in connection with the bar. The Special Services building was revised and enlarged. On July 16, work was begun on the installation of permanent,

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individual seats in the Post theatre.

The Eighth Air Force Victory Squadron War Bond Drive, scheduled to conclude on Sept. 2, began on July 23. With the goal announced as \$28,000, subscriptions by July 31 totalled \$11,000, somewhat behind the anticipated figure. Capt. Baumbsten led individual purchasers with a \$1000 bond.

At month's end, with 3 commendations to mull over and 2 bronze stars to wear on his ETC ribbon, with greater confidence that the war would someday end and with the vague rumor of a Presidential Citation on the way, the 82nd Group's average GI felt that the wry cliché "never had it so good" more nearly approached the truth. Hitler had almost been assassinated and the Red Army was almost in Warsaw. On the base, unbelievably, he was drinking real Coca-Cola (2½ glasses per capita per week) and beer (3½ pints per capita per week.) Meanwhile, he did his work. Like General Arnold said, it was all-out, day after day.

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