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March of 1945 was the second great climactic month of the war, rivalled in historic importance only by June, 1944, and surpassing, in some respects, the earlier month. It produced great events- events directly foreshadowing the end of the war- and they proceeded in an almost arithmetical progression, building up as the month went on: Cologne was taken; the 10 famous days of the Remagen bridgehead began on March 7, and American troops were across the Rhine; the Saar Basin was cleared; Frankfurt fell. On March 23 and 24, under a 66 mile-long smoke screen and aided by the greatest air armadas since D-Day, Field Marshal Montgomery's 21st Army Group swarmed over the Rhine in the north, and at the same time, General Patton's 3rd Army crossed in the south.

In the long history of war, the battles for rivers have

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often been written in blood - the Somme, the Marne- and the part played by air power in the successful forcing of the Rhine could not be over-praised. By the interdiction of all rail routes leading into the Ruhr valley and the effective neutralization of all the Luftwaffe's bases in the Ruhr-Westphalia area, 8th Air Force units notably aided one of World War II's most successful operations. Both literally and figuratively, victory was in the air; at month's end, the Ruhr valley was sealed off and Allied armor was deep into the Reich on a broad front.

The great dream of the air-war planners was now realized. All aircraft were tactical now- every bomb dropped hastened the day of victory. It was a record-breaking month in practically every category. The 8th Air Force dropped its greatest bombloads of the war- 73,000 tons- surpassing by 15,000 tons the the record previously set in June. Heavy bomb groups flew 28,500 sorties, 2600 more than in D-Day month.

Statistics of the 92nd Group showed parallel increases. The Group flew 25 missions- after being briefed for 27- to shatter its previous high record of 23, established in June. 848 aircraft were dispatched and 840 attacked- each a new high mark. Abortives were held to 4, for the fabulous percentage of less than ½ of 1%

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of planes dispatched, lowest in history. Crews lost to enemy action numbered 3 (of which 1 was known to be safe in Sweden) for the gratifyingly low percentage of 3/10ths of 1% of aircraft dispatched.

The operational month began auspiciously on March 1, with Col James W. Wilson, Group CO, leading the Wing in a visual attack on the marshalling yards at Reutlingen. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Strike photos revealed excellent results, with a very tight pattern covering the MPI. Reconnaissance pictures a few days later showed that the yard had been heavily damaged, all sidings and through lines cut, and the passenger and freight stations almost totally destroyed. A large hutted camp south of the yards was 70% destroyed. Capt Alva L. Pillicd, 325th Squadron pilot with whom Col Wilson flew, completed his tour on this mission. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.)

Another visual attack followed on March 2, with the target -a high priority- the synthetic oil refinery at Bohlen. Major John R. McKee, Group Operations Officer, flying with Capt Ralph E. Hoffman of the 326th Squadron, led the Group with good results. The coal drying plant, storage plants and roofs of the hydrogen compressor and low temperature cooling plant were severely damaged; the transformer station at the Sachsiche power plant was

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more than half destroyed.

A Disney practice mission to France on the same day ended fatally for Sgt John W. Large, 407th Squadron tail gunner, flying in an aircraft piloted by Capt Oscar D. Whitten. Before the practice target had been reached, the #4 engine caught fire, and encouraged by an oil leak, could not be extinguished. Capt Whitten ordered a bail-out; 30 seconds later the aircraft exploded. Sgt Large's parachute failed to open and he plummeted to his death; the remainder of the crew landed in the vicinity of Hardinghen and received immediate medical care by the Canadian hospital there.

Oil refineries were again attacked on the following day, with the Lead Squadron visually bombing the plant at Ruhland. The Low and High Squadrons, unable to pick up the primary target, proceeded to make PFF runs on the secondary, the industrial area of Chemnitz. While results were unobserved, reconnaissance photos a few days later disclosed that the entire center of the area was burned out, while in the Fasseberg section to the west, a majority of buildings were gutted.

The success of this mission was marred by a serious accident on the return. Over the Brussels area, the aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt Arthur H. Huether of the 327th Squadron, flying #6 position in the Lead Squadron, hit prop wash and dropped down, striking

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the aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt Erwin F. Schmidt of the 327th Squadron, lead of the low element. Lt Schmidt's ship, struck at the radio room, broke into 3 pieces, and both aircraft spiralled down out of the formation. One parachute came from Lt Schmidt's aircraft; its sole survivor was S/Sgt Edward W. Bartley,Jr., the tail gunner. In addition to Lt Schmidt, fatalities included 2nd Lt William A. Dalton, the co-pilot; 2nd Lt Cletus R. Brown, the navigator; F/O Marcus H. McCrery, bombardier; S/Sgt Charles A. Ollman, radio; S/Sgt Robert R. Deignan, engineer; Sgt Ray E. Wold, ball turret; and Sgt Richard P. Fischer, waist gunner. Sgt Marshall P. Dellinger, ball turret gunner of Lt Huether's crew, was killed when his parachute failed to open; all other members of the crew survived.

Weather conditions kept the Group on the ground for the next few days, and the month's 4th mission was not flown until March 7. On that day, the 92nd Group led the 1st Air Division. Lt Col James A. Smyrl, 327th Squadron CO flew as Air Commander with Capt Roy J. Dunavant of the 407th Squadron, who finished his tour. A PFF attack was made on the city of Fulda, a target of opportunity selected after equipment failures precluded bombing the primary and secondary targets. Results were unobserved due to cloud conditions; all aircraft returned safely with only one

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minor personnel casualty- 2nd Lt George W. Bailey of the 407th Squadron, who suffered a flak wound in the leg.

The marshalling yards of much-bombed Essen were attacked by 36 aircraft of the Group on March 8. Bombing was accomplished by PFF and successfully: reconnaissance photographs showed approximately three-quarters of all the tracks to be cut.

The Group's first loss of the month came on the following day, on a mission to Kassel. Flak in the target area, although moderate, was accurate, and the aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt Fred K. Stewart of the 327th Squadron exploded after bombs away. One parachute was observed. For superior airmanship and high degree of teamwork displayed on this mission, the crew of Capt Donald I. Greene of the 327th Squadron, leading the High Squadron, was named "Crew of the Week." (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Bombing results were excellent, with a concentrated pattern on the target, the truck factory works of Henschel and Sohn. Flak accounted for 3 minor wounds suffered by personnel: 2nd Lt Joe Diamond, navigator of the 325th Squadron, was struck in the head; two members of 1st Lt Laurence Erpleding's crew received leg injuries- S/Sgts George A. Grabarek and Joseph T. Donovan, both of the 326th Squadron.

The Kassel mission, although the bombing was visual, marked the 100th mission briefed and flown by the Group's PFF navigators,

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since the installation of the system in August. Of more than coincidental interest was the following commendation from Lt General Doolittle later in the month:

> "The accuracy of instrument bombing in the 8th Air Force during the past two months has been of a very high order. It has been possible to remove from the priority lists many very important targets which otherwise would have gone untouched if we had been forced to wait for a visual day...
>
> "The air crews, technicians, training staffs and commanders of all three Divisions are to be highly commended for the splendid achievements in instrument bombing over the period of the past several months. The level of our bombing efficiency in using these techniques has made it possible for us to destroy targets under the most adverse weather conditions and overcome the weather hindrances that for so long have stood in the way of a complete strategic bombing program. It is requested that all personnel who contributed to the achievement of this high standard be given my personal commendation and congratulations."

Observers felt that credit for the success of the Group's PFF set-up might go equally to Capt Frank L. Fabec and 1st Lt Warren T. Doolittle, Group Radar Navigators, 1st Lt Ralph A. Nauman, Electronics Officer and 1st Lts James M. Adams,Jr and Robert N. Naifeh, Radar Intelligence Officers.

Major Ygnacio J. Bideganeta, 327th Operations Officer, flying with Capt George E. O'Halloran of the 327th Squadron, led the Group on March 10 in a raid on the Dortmund marshalling

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yards. Bombing was by PFF, flak meagre, results unobserved and all aircraft returned safely.

Bremen was the target for 36 aircraft of the Group on the day following, and again PFF technique was employed to blast the submarine yards. Reconnaissance pictures showed that at least 13 buildings of the "Deschimag" industrial complex in the port area to have been heavily damaged, including sheds, workshops, oxygen and gas extracting plants, pump house and assembly shops.

On March 12, the Group participated in a deep penetration attack on the dock area of Swinemunde on the Baltic Sea, in tactical support of Marshal Rokossovsky's White Russian armies. PFF technique was again in use, and the Group was led by Lt Col Albert L. Cox,Jr., 325th Squadron CO, flying with 1st Lt Peter O.E. Bekker of the same squadron. That results were highly successful was attested by a commendation received later in the month from Lt General Carl Spaatz:

> "Your well planned and magnificently executed operation of 12 March against Swinemunde is deserving of the Highest praise. The town of Swinemunde was heavily damaged by concentrations of high explosive bursts which also destroyed a factory, several warehouses and installations near a seaplane base. Additional photographic reconnaissance made by the Soviets has established that several hundred bomb craters are clearly visible in the port area and that three transport ships were definitely sunk during the attack.

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"This devastating instrument bombing attack, made with great accuracy only a short distance from the Russian front lines, truly demonstrates the skill and determination with which your crews fulfill their duties.

"I wish to commend you upon this outstanding job by your command, and I particularly wish to commend and congratulate the lead crews and air commanders who so carefully and efficiently conducted the attack."

The Group's second loss of the month came over the Swinemunde target area, when the Deputy Lead aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt Norwood D. Ringsred of the 325th Squadron, lost an engine and last reported in as being over Sweden. On March 14, word was received that he had landed at Malmo, with one slight injury to a crew member.

Lt Col Ernest C. Hardin,Jr., 326th Squadron CO, flying with Capt Ralph E. Hoffman, led the Wing in a successful visual attack on the Lohne marshalling yards on March 14. Reconnaissance photos showed a concentration of craters the entire length of the yard, a roundhouse in the center gutted, and several sheds in the area destroyed. Groups of craters had cut almost every track, completely destroyed the main passenger station and severely damaged the platforms. A large number of cars on sidings were damaged and derailed.

On the same day, the Group flew on its second Disney mission,

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with 9 aircraft in flights of 3, led by Col Cass H. Hough of Bovingdon, who had participated in the original raid of February 10. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) The target was the same- the E-boat pens at Ijmuiden, Holland- and good results were claimed on the northern end of the pens.

On March 15, Lt Col James A Smyrl, flying with Capt O'Halloran, led the Group in an attack on Zossen, said to be the German General Staff Headquarters. Bombing was visual, done through dense ground haze and fog. Results were not thoroughly known, but strike photos indicated that the Group's bombs hit in a built-up area 3 miles west of the target. All aircraft returned safely.

35 aircraft attacked a high-priority target, the Wolbis benzol and power plant, on March 17. PFF technique was employed and results were unobserved due to heavy cloud cover. Reconnaissance pictures showed the target moderately well hit; rail sidings in the refinery area were cut and a group of craters had damaged tanks at the southeast corner of the plant. A group of probable pressure-reaction vessels in the refinery section were hit as well.

The mission of March 18 to Berlin was probably the roughest of the month. Led by Lt Col Albert L. Cox,Jr., (see PHOTO SUPPLEMENT) flying again with Lt Bekker, the #2 H2X target, Schlesicher

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RR Station, was attacked with a visual assist at the last minute due to a break in the cloud cover over the target. Flak was intense and accurate, and battle damage was extensive, with one aircraft in Category E, 4 in Category B and 25 in Category A and AC. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) 5 crew members were slightly injured, and 2 aircraft did not return to base. One of these, piloted by 2nd Lt Robert F. Groen of the 407th Squadron, with the #2 engine out and the right wing on fire, was last heard from after bombs away, when Lt Groen took an easterly heading and announced he was making for Russia. He landed at Warsaw, and returned to base via a circuitous route several weeks later. The other MIA aircraft, piloted by 1st Lt Harry S. Culver of the 325th Squadron, was last observed trailing the formation after bombs away, with 1 engine feathered and another running away.

On March 19, 35 aircraft of the Group attacked the city of Plauen by PFF with unobserved results, and on March 20, Col Wilson, flying as Air Commander with Capt O'Halloran, led the 1st Air Division in an attack on the Hamburg dock and industrial area. The Squadrons attacked individually, with the Lead Squadron's bombs observed to be on the northern half of the Harburg

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oil refinery. Reconnaissance pictures showed severe damage distributed over the whole refinery area; a boiler house half destroyed, several buildings of the distillation plant damaged, and more than 20 storage tanks destroyed or collapsed. Capt O'Halloran completed his tour of duty with this mission.

Lt Col Ernest C. Hardin, Jr., and Lt Col Albert L. Cox,Jr., Squadron CO's respectively of the 326th and 325th, flew in an observation aircraft on March 20, found observing to be fully as dangerous as bombing, landed on the coast out of fuel and with considerable battle damage. Major John C. Prosch, Group Training Officer, accompanied them on the flight.

On March 21, the intensified tactical attacks on the Rhine area, in support of the impending crossings, began with the Group dispatching 36 aircraft to visually bomb the Rheine airdrome. The Field Order had stated the purpose succinctly enough: the idea was to neutralize the GAF jet fighters on the western front, the 8th Air Force attack was to be coordinated with fighters, and after the runways had been torn up and the flak points "fragged" fighters would strafe the aircraft on the field. Extreme importance was attached to the neutralization of the flak areas by fragmentation bombs.

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Returning crewmen claimed excellent results, and strike photos showed the airdrome and north dispersal area well-hit; reconnaissance pictures further confirmed the claims. All runways were seen to be severely pitted and the entire area cratered.

The target for March 22 was requested by SHAEF and held top priority: the Bottrop military barracks and hutted areas directly behind the German lines. The mission was led by Capt Victor A. Cherbak,Jr., 325th Operations Officer flying with Lt Bekker, and 37 aircraft attacked visually. Due to mechanical failure in a borrowed GH aircraft, the Lead Squadron's bombs hit over the target, but the Low and High Squadrons laid a good concentration. Reconnaissance pictures showed 7 of the huts destroyed or damaged, at least 15 craters on the nearby autobahn, and most of the surrounding rail lines cut.

Marshalling yards at Recklinghausen and Hochfeldt were struck on March 23 as a part of the rail interdiction program to isolate the Ruhr and cut off coal shipping. Since the loss of the Saar Basin, the Ruhr was the sole source of supply for Reich industry. The Lead Squadron bombed Hochfeldt; the Low and High Squadrons bombed Recklinghausen; good results were reported in each case.

On March 24, two missions were flown, and the Group put up

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more than 60 aircraft for the first time since the Normandy invasion. Jet fighter bases were the targets for both missions: in the morning, Lt Col James A. Smyrl, flying with 1st Lt Lloyd R. McGrew of the 327th Squadron, led the 40th "C" Force and bombed Achmer. 12 additional aircraft from the Group flew as High Squadron of the 40th "D" Composite Force, and bombed Hesepe. At each target, the attack was highly successful and they were effectively removed from the operational list. At Achmer the entire landing area was blanketed with craters, at least six shelters were hit and it seemed probable that a considerable number of enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground.

In the afternoon mission of March 24, the Twente airdrome in Holland, one of the German Air Force key bases, was attacked. Capt William A. Stroud, Ass't Group Operations Officer, flying with Capt James A. Whiting of the 407th Squadron, led the Wing and excellent results were reported, with the bomb pattern extending across the MPI and across the center of the airfield. Capt Whiting and his crew, flying their final mission, were chosen "Crew of the Week" in recognition of a fine job. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Trouble developed on the way to the target when all compasses on the lead aircraft went out; Capt W.E. Goode and 1st Lt Donald H. Chew, the navigators, were forced

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to get their winds from average reading of the pilot's magnetic compass. The IP was passed directly over, and 1st Lt Warren T. Doolittle, Group Radar Navigator, picked up the airfield about 15 miles out. 1st Lt Francis V. Gelbke, the bombardier, killed all drift about five minutes from the target and a perfect run resulted.

Overall commendations came thick and fast, following these operations of 8th Air Force units. Said Field Marshal Montgomery, now across the Rhine in strength, in a message to General Spaatz:

> "To you personally and to all ranks in the US Strategic Air Forces I should like to convey my grateful appreciation for the quite magnificent cooperation you have given us in the battle of the Rhine. The crossing of the river was made possible for the land armies by the action you have taken. To all your crews and ground staffs please extend my thanks."

Said General Spaatz in another message:

> "Congratulations to all units of the 8th AF for the most effective contribution they made yesterday.(March 24.) Their operations effectively sealed the battle area from enemy air opposition."

Berlin was attacked by PFF technique on March 28, with the target the industrial area on the west side of the city. Due to adverse weather conditions, 9 aircraft attacked targets of opportunity. Flak was moderate to intense in the target area and 10

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aircraft suffered minor battle damage. On the return from the mission, an aircraft piloted by 2nd Lt Walter A. Wesley of the 326th Squadron, with F/O Joe B. Perry as co-pilot, nosed over on the runway. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Crash crews responded, but luckily there was no fire.

For their part in the Berlin mission, the crew of 2nd Lt Reginald L. Hammond of the 326th Squadron were named "Crew of the Week." Leading the high flight of the Lead Squadron, the formation was subjected to flak over the Kassel area, and Lt Hammond's plane had several hits that caused severe damage and wounded F/O William E. Roach, bombardier-navigator. Despite the damage to the aircraft and F/O Roach's wound, the entire crew voted to proceed with the assigned mission. Under most adverse circumstances, a target of opportunity was bombed, and Lt Hammond brought the battered aircraft safely home. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.)

The most active operational month in Group history closed with 2 missions on March 30 followed by a final one on March 31. On the 30th, 36 aircraft attacked the main highway bridge over the Weser river at Bremen, with the bombing visual, results good to excellent and several direct hits claimed. On the same day, 12 aircraft of the Group flew the Low Squadron of the largest

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Disney mission yet mounted; the target the Farge submarine construction yards near Vegesack. Bombing was by sections of six aircraft and results were unobserved.

40 aircraft - in 4 squadrons of 10 aircraft each, eliminating the inside aircraft of the High and Low flights- were dispatched on the month's 25th and last mission, to bomb the marshalling yards at Halle. 3 squadrons made up the 40th "A" Group, and the additional squadron flew as High Squadron of the 40th "B" Composite Group. Capt Martin R. Hertz of the 327th Squadron, Ass't Group Operations Officer, led the Wing, flying with Capt Alvin B. Skare of the 325th Squadron. Cloud undercast prevented observation and bombing was PFF. Pilots expressed satisfaction with the new and more compact formation. Beginning a second tour on the March 31 mission, was Capt Sterling A. Basler of the 325th Squadron, one of the Group's old-timers, whose first mission had been flown from Alconbury almost two years before. Capt Basler had participated in some of the most famous raids of 1943, including the first Schweinfurt attack on August 17. He completed his first tour on October 10, 1943.

Of the 3 aircraft listed as missing in action during the month, 2 were from the 325th Squadron, 1 from the 327th Squadron. (See APPENDIX B.)

Awards made during the month included 2 Silver Stars, 18

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DFC's, 3 Bronze Stars, 7 Purple Hearts, 1 Soldier's Medal, and 164 Air Medals. Oak Leaf Clusters presented were: 5 to the DFC, 1 to the Purple Heart, 564 to the Air Medal.

The Silver Stars were won by Capt Erro A. Michelson, famed bombardier since returned to the US, and T/Sgt Stanley W. Bellman of the 325th Squadron. Capt Michelson's award was earned by his skill and courage as lead bombardier on many occasions: once on an 8th Air Force lead, 3 times Division lead, 6 times Wing lead and 19 times Group lead. Sgt Bellman, engineer of Capt Yanitelli's crew, was presented his Silver Star in connection with the December 24 mission to Giessen, when his courage and airmanship were both an inspiration to fellow crew members and a material aid to the safe landing of a badly crippled aircraft. The Soldier's Medal, awarded to Major Joseph R. Henry, Group Flight Surgeon, was given in recognition of Major Henry's bravery on the same day in connection with the runway explosion of Lt Seeber's aircraft.

During the month, 94 officers and 125 enlisted men completed tours of duty, the largest number to finish in any one month. (See APPENDIX C.) Officer promotions for the month included 2 to Lt Colonel, 1 to Major, 11 to Captain, 44 to 1st Lieutenant. (See APPENDIX D.) Promoted to Lt Colonel were Majors Ernest C. Hardin, Jr., 326th Squadron CO and James A. Smyrl, 327th Squadron CO. (See

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PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Attaining the majority was Capt Mellor W. Stevenson, Group Ground Executive. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.)

A certain stabilization was noted in duty assignments, after several months of changes: only major change of the month was the appointment of Capt Milton A. Armstrong as Group Ordnance Officer, succeeding Capt Kenneth Thompson, transferred. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Major John A. Doughtie, 326th Squadron Ground Executive, returned to the US to attend school; his post was temporarily filled by 1st Lt John T. Rodrigues, Squadron Adjutant. 1st Lt James L. Weber of the 407th Squadron was assigned to S-2. 1st Lt Samuel A. Williams joined Special Services as Athletics Officer.

Training programs, despite the largest operational month in history, continued well-attended, with much interest focussed on the statistical analysis of training presented on the Training Board in Group Operations. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) The 327th Squadron led in most categories.

The active operational month was reflected in figures released by the 961 Chemical Co: 1248 M17 incendiary clusters for a total of 137,280 individual 4 pound incendiaries plus 64 M47 gel filled incendiaries were dropped on targets during the month. Again, Smoke Trail bombs aided bombardiers in putting bombs on the target, a total of 148 FM filled M47's marking the dropping

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areas. For the first time in almost a year, M47 incendiaries were used, mostly in conjunction with GP bombs. 50% of the missions flown in March carried incendiaries.

The Group's medical officers continued to travel: on March 20, Captain John T. Owens visited the Central Dental Laboratory for four days; on March 27, Major Joseph R. Henry spent a week's tour of duty at Furzedown House; on March 28, Capt William E. Furniss, 327th Medical Officer, left for the Continent for an indefinite period. S/Sgt George D. Jenkins was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant on March 9. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.)

The ETO Blood Team No. 2, composed of one Medical officer, 8 enlisted men, visited the base March 24-28. A total of 803 pints of blood was collected from Type "O" non-combat personnel- by far the largest contribution made by the Group. The blood, after being sent to Blood Team Headquarters in England for checking and retyping, was immediately flown to the Western front for battle casualty cases.

The initial meeting of the new Enlisted Men's Council was held on March 6, and the meeting addressed by Col Wilson and Major Stevenson, both of whom promised complete cooperation. 1st Sgt Richard D. Smith of the 327th Squadron was elected President of the Council, T/Sgt Clyde W. Reeves of the 326th Squadron became Vice-President, and S/Sgt Curtis Seawright of

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the 1140th MP Co., Recorder.

In keeping with the changing season, the base continued to improve in appearance: street signs were installed (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT); the 325th Squadron erected a distinguishing sign (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT); signs appeared on the Senior and Junior Officer's messes. The Air Ministry undertook a building water-proofing program, spraying roofs with a bituminous black paint which glistened attractively in the spring sunlight. Fencing continued to be erected all over the base; the wits murmured that the Cole Porter hit "Don't Fence Me In" might well be the 92nd Group theme song. None could deny that the base had never looked more attractive.

72 hour passes were authorized during March, and - good news to all- RTO travel warrants were made available for passes and furloughs. Scotland- traditional target for those furlough-bound-gained a rival in March in the Isle of Man. During the last week of the month, 8 of the total of 15 Americans on the Isle were from the 92nd Group.

A contest held to determine a name for the 92nd Group dance band resulted in the choice of "Skyliners," the prize-winning name submitted by Capt Herb J. Baumsten, 407th Squadron Ground Executive. Capt Baumsten graciously declined the prize- a $25

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War Bond- and insisted that it be given to the runner-up. The "Skyliners" practised assiduously in the Red Cross Aeroclub day after day, played at all the dances, delighted GIs by appearing at the noonday meals in the messes. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Discovery-of-the-month was 2nd Lt Roy H. Jackson, 407th Squadron pilot, who wrote and chanted a mournful blues:

"You put the hose in in the evening
And leave it there all night
You take it out in the morning
And the tanks are full up tight
...Got the 2780 blues."

The "2780 Blues" bid fair to become the "Skyliners" most popular song.

The Special Services program for the month was undistinguished; highlighted by 3 stage shows during the period from March 17 to March 22. "Cagney's Cellar" continued to be well-patronized, and thirsty GIs consumed a steady 5 to 6 barrels of beer nightly. Of particular interest was the opening of the baseball season on March 21. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Games were played every evening on the two diamonds available in the 325th Site.

The Red Cross Aeroclub program was interupted on March 25, when the Aeroclub was closed for redecoration. Prior to that time, two dances had been held, one on March 10, the other on March 17. On March 23, the Aeroclub, aided by GI volunteers, played host to 46 crippled children from Hinwick Hall and 15 nurses. The "Sky-

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liners"played from 2 until 5 (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT) miscellaneous entertainment was offered, all of which the children enjoyed, and dinner was served. In the middle of the month, Mrs. Fay Wallis, popular accountant, was transferred. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.)

The PX had one of its best months, with the cash register ringing up a total of 3302 pounds, of which the Coca-Cola fountain accounted for 249 pounds, and the new film-developing department 47 pounds. There was an increased variety of American magazines offered for sale.

The Suggestion Box continued to be a popular feature. (See PHOTO SUPPLEMENT.) Out of the flood ofcomplaints and advice, some worth-while suggestions were offered and accepted. (See APPENDIX E.) One suggestion put into effect and which proved informative and popular was a Tannoy announcement after each mission, describing it, evaluating results, naming lead pilots.

On March 27, Col James W. Wilson completed his first half-year as the 92nd Group's Commanding Officer; GIs who thought about that fact reflected upon the considerable number of changes which had taken place. There were new faces in high places; the old adage about the new broom sweeping clean seemed to be true. The base itself was cleaner and neater than ever before; interiors

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and exteriors had been painted, signs had been erected, rocks and ditches lined the roads, hundreds of yards of fencing enclosed the sites.

The Group's operational record for the six month period had never been better. There were, of course, a number of reasons for this- but most of them started on the command level. And- of highest importance- was the state of individual morale. The Commanding Officer had dramatized a personality - at once dynamic, youthful, candid- as good commanders have always done. The Group's average GI was thoroughly and respectfully impressed by the personality projected, and the policies pursued. Surveying the results at the end of the first six months, the Group's average GI was well content; he had quite an interest in the CO and he felt that the CO had quite an interest in him.

At month's end, morale was never higher. It had been a rough month from the standpoint of the work that had been done, but it had been a month that had paid off. The results could be seen on the bombline on the S-2 wall map. During the last week of March, as the Third Army overran larger and larger areas of German soil, the standard pleasantry around Headquarters was that General Patton's tanks were running off the map and into Major Tauscher's office, in the room adjoining.

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Actually, a new map had to be installed to record the swift advance.

The spring was here and the war was almost over. But in the meantime there were still some missions to be flown:

"Went out early in the morning
And flew and flew and flew
Came back late in the evening
One of Fame's Favored Few
...Got the 2780 Blues."

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CREW OF THE WEEK

Top Row: 1st Lt D. H. Chew, Capt J. H. Whiting, Capt W. A. Stroud, 1st Lt F. V. Gelbke.
Bottom: Capt W.E. Goode, 2nd Lt A.J. Greco, T/Sgt W.D. Ralston, T/Sgt T.E. Nivison, 1st Lt W.T. Doolittle

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CREW OF THE WEEK

TOP ROW: S/Sgt L. J. Nitti, S/Sgt R.H. Lippert, S/Sgt H.D. Baugh, T/Sgt J. C. DePena, S/Sgt D. Minkon.
BOTTOM: 2nd Lt R. L. Sprout, 2nd Lt R. L. Hammond. (F/O Roach hospitalized and not available for picture.)

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Training Board

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325th Squadron Sign

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CAPT KENNETH THOMPSON
...transferred..

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CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S PARTY,
RED CROSS AEROCLUB

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SECOND DISNEY MISSION
..Col Cass H. Hough tells
Col Nelson about it..

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LT COL JAMES A. SMYRL
..promoted..

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SUGGESTION BOX
.. T/Sgt Leo J. Ryder and
Cpl Albert A. Strich..

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Street Sign

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92nd SKYLINERS
..in the General Mess..

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CAPT MILTON A. ARMSTRONG
..new Group Ordnance
Officer..

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RETURN FROM REUTLINGEN
..Col Wilson describes the mission to Col. Nelson and Major Cappeveille.

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RETURN FROM REUTLINGEN
..Col Wilson, Capt Pilliod
and crew

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BACK FROM BERLIN, MARCH 18
..Col Cox talks it over
with Capt Cherbak..

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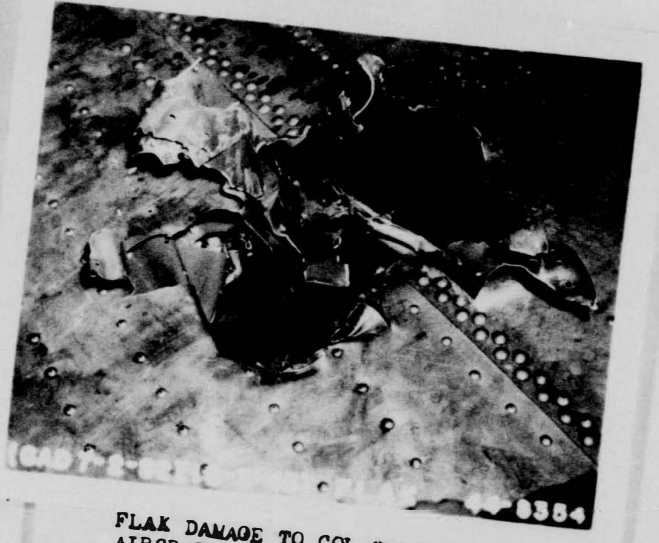


MAJOR MELLOR W. STEVENSON
..promoted..

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FLAK DAMAGE TO COL COX'S AIRCRAFT, BERLIN, MARCH 18

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CRIPPLED CHILDREN'S PARTY,
RED CROSS AEROCLUB

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FLAK DAMAGE, BERLIN, MARCH 18
..Col Cox looks it over..

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COMMISSIONED FROM RANKS

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MRS. FAY WALLIS, MISS BETTY BOYD
..in the Aeroclub..

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LT COL ERNEST C. HARDIN, JR.
..Promoted..

1300

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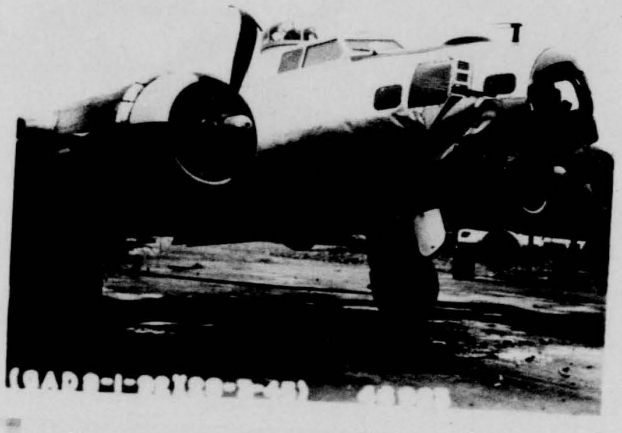
Softball Game

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RUNWAY ACCIDENT, MARCH 28

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CREW OF THE WEEK

STANDING: T/Sgt Mellinger, Sgt Uderitz, Lt O'Connor, Lt Raschke, T/Sgt Moses, Sgt Francis.
CROUCHING: Capt Greene, Lt Cressotti, Lt Chesterfield.

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