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8TH AIR FORCE
1ST AIR DIVISION
40TH BOMB WING

GP-92-HI
SEP 1945
V.1
RETURN TO:
Director
Research Division
Air University Library
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

92ND BOMB GP.

HISTORY

PERIOD COVERED
FROM
1 SEPT. TO 30 SEPT. 1945

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Rivaling last month's news of the war's end in its effect on 92nd G.I.'s was the announcement on September 24, 1945, that all enlisted men whose V.E. A.S.R. scores totaled seventy or higher were to return to the United States and don civilian clothes. Redeployment became more than just a word, it was a reality, this tangible evidence kindled a hope which had become a dying ember.

Since Air Force units in England scheduled for immediate movement to the Z.of I. were authorized to return home 25% over strength, Groups in Category I (Occupation) were alloted shipment quotas in order that these units should return carrying maxium strenth in personnel.

Carrying 160 men per day over a period of four days for a total of 600, the now transport-wise 92nd handled this mass movement without a hint of a mishap. Faultless maintenance coupled with exceptional airmanship continued to be the keynote of our passenger hauls.

The green project came to an end when 6 planes of the 92nd Bomb Group flew 180 U.S. soldiers to Casablanca on Sept. 9 and returned the following day with 113 repatriated French civilians. Originally scheduled to continue through the winter, the diversion of 30 ATC planes to the Pacific Theatre after V.J. Day brought the ferrying program to an early close. During its 3 months of operation, a total of 19,935 Servicman were flown the first leg of their air journey home and 5,672 French returned to their homeland. The project marked the first time heavy bombardment groups have been used for transport purposes, an experiment that was reputedly watch with interest by Air Force headquarters in Washington. Its success may be judged by the fact that no accident of any

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kind marred the flights, "not even a taxing accident", as Lt. Col. Ernest Hardin, Group Deputy Commander remarked with pardonable pride. The Green Project not only speeded redeployment, but was another example of the numerous "combined operations" that this war has produced. In this instance, elements of the 8th Air Force, the ATC, the Navy, and the French Government worked in close harmony to implement the program.

Before dawn on Sept. 9th, trucks from the Calas staging area outside Marseilles rumbled into Istres Airfield carrying the last load of passengers for the 92nd planes. Most of the men had had no breakfast and they welcomed the coffee and donuts provided by the Red Cross girls who were on hand to meet them. Fitting of the parachute harness was puzzling and the men received individual attention from the crew members. One G.I., momentarily ignored, called, "Hey Sgt, help me on with this thing, will you?" to a tall figure standing in the dark fringe of the group. The tall figure, Lt. Col. Albert Cox, Commanding Officer of the 92nd, obligingly helped him adjust the intricate device. Equipped with Mae Wests and harnesses, the home bound soldiers took their seats in the planes after the inevitable last minute rollcall, and at 7:15, as the first streaks of light brightened the eastern horizon, the lead plane, with Col. Cox at the controls, roared down the runway and took off. The passengers, none of whom were perturbed at the prospect of flying, relaxed: some watched the plane's initial progress with interest, some talked, some tried to doze. If they were a little cramped and uncomfortable, they didn't complain; all were, at long last, headed for the object of their dreams and fantasies, home.

The sudden end of the Green Project seemed to make for confusion at

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staging areas. Several of the passengers were in England, due shortly to leave for home with their units when they were ordered to Calas staging area to fly home. High pointers already at Calas were unable to fly and were forced to wait for boats. Some men missed out on boat their English sailing and the air trip. Men with railroad experience in civilian life were given priority but all passengers on this last flight were 85 pointers as will. Their sleeves were decorated with imposing rows of hershey bars, with a number wearing seven.

Col. Coxe's plane gained altitude, broke through a cloud layer and levelled off at 6500 feet. The Spanish coast came in sight, shrouded by a bluish mist. Before long, the sun rose high enough to brighten and warm the ship and dispel the shadow distiness. Keeping the coastline in view, the converted bomber headed in a diagonal line for Casablanca, Capt. William Davisson, a pilot with 15 combat missions, who came along for the ride, drifted among the passengers, exchanging experiences. Some insight into the feelings of men seperated for an excessive length of time from their basic ties may be gleaned from the remarks of two G.I.s, both overseas veterans of more than 40 months continuous service.

Cpl. Bill Cullen joined the army in Sept., 1940, shipped for Iceland in Feb. of 42, with the 5th Division. Openly bitter, he could scarcely keep his feelings checked once launched in speech. For almost 2 years, he endured the harsh Icelandic climate with the "Forgotten Bastards" and when he found himself again on a transport, it was England and not the U.S. that was his destination. Transferred to a Quartermaster outfit in the U.K., he eventually saw service in France and Belgium. Resentment, eating constantly at his innards, seemed not to blind him to thoughts of his future.

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He didn't know what he was going to do when released; he wanted only to get out of the army. No longer young, he was 37 now and unmarried. He was returning to a home town, Manchester, N.H., in which he would feel himself a stranger after almost four years absence. Discharge and civilian life would soothe his raw nerves, he hoped.

Cpl. Arthur Eaton's travels read like a pithy history of America's part in the War: North Ireland, England, Africa, Italy, Corsica, France, and Germany. As a machine gunner with an antiaircraft battalion attached to the 1st Armored Division, he saw action during most of his 42 months overseas service. Neither angry nor bitter, he seemed beyond these ordinary passions. He was bemused, Ironic and tolerant; there was undertones of quiet laughter to his remarks. "When you first get into action, it's fun, an exciting adventure; after a while after you've survived a lot of your pals , you get a little scared sitting in your foxhole and listening to shells whistling around you. You think one of them is bound to get you, you've been lucky so long. And then after that, "He smiled", you just don't care. It isn't fun, you're not scared, you just don't care." He was married before he came overseas but he's going to get a divorce as soon as he returns. He hasn't heard from his wife since Cassino. "I don't blame her; I've been away a long time." His battle stations are his memory milestones of the past three years. He's going back to his old job as brakeman with the New Haven Railroad. He thinks he'll stay put after he dons civilian clothes.

The plane ran into clouds and ducked below them. In clear weather again, the suns ray's streamed into the ship. Col. Cox circled low over Gibraltar to give the men a better look at "The Rock", then flew over Atlantic on the last leg of the journey. The men slept, read, talked. One of them 1st Sgt. Ed Kessel, who landed in Normandy on D Day plus 2, was at

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St Vith during the Ardennes breakthrough, "One Christmas I'll never forget". Was speaking with a happier memory. He was one of the first Americans to enter Paris, rolling into the capital on Aug 25. "The seventeen days I spent there are the best days I've ever had in the Army. The Parisians went wild over us. I was really proud to be an American soldier, proud to be fighting in this war."

Casablanca hove into view, five and a half hours after takeoff. The men adjusted their safety belts as the plane approached the airfield. Coming in for the landing, the ship was less than 100 feet off the ground when it was caught in the prop wash of another plane. The left wing dipped low but Col. Cox straightened her and made a smooth landing. The men said goodbye to the crew and piled into the trucks waiting for them. ATC planes would carry them the rest of the way home. The job completed, the ship flew to Port Lyautey, 35 minutes distant, with 1st Lt. Lester Bayne, at the controls. A Navy station, ATC uses the field with the 327th Bomb Sqdn. of the 92nd Bomb Group which is stationed there to service the Green Project ships for the return trip.

The boys of the 327th, who originally believed that by being assigned to North Africa they were getting the butt end of the plan, now freely admit "We've never had it so good". They work, of course, but they also manage to lead a country club existence. Tennis courts are on the field, a nine hole golf course is adjoining and the beach is a few minutes ride away. Cool breezes blow off the Atlantic, the food is excellent and the Navy PX is stocked with goods. The thought of returning to Istres with the end of the Green Project fills them with dismay.

Navy Officers, ATC Officers, three Lt. Cols. of the 92nd, and a French

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Official were on the field the following morning to witness the last northward flight of the ferrying program. Francis LeVasseur, Chief of the Civil Cabinet, ruling administrative body for French Morocco, was lavish in his praise for the American. He expressed his gratitude, and that the many repatriated French, to all the men and women who helped speed the return of his countrymen.

As was usually the case, the difference in ages between the youngest and oldest of the passengers spanned generations. A year-old baby was going to be seeing France for the first time and a 76 year old man was returning with his 70 year old wife to spend his last days in his own country. Most of the refugees had been four to five years in Morocco. They had left France for various reasons: some were hunted by the Gestapo, some did not choose to live under German domination, some had friends who asked them to come. None were quite sure what they would find upon their return. Mrs. Jeanne Vaquette was returning to Arras with her two children; her home destroyed, her husband dead, she would make her way some how. All knew these were difficult days for their country, but they were all eager to get back.

At 9:30 the first ship of the six plane flight, with Col. Cox again pilot, took off for Istres. The crew members passed among the passengers, playing with the children, trying to converse with the adults, calling attention to points of interest to all. The kids were nonchalant and viewed the trip as something of an adventure. Their elders wanted to be reassured that nothing was wrong when air currents rocked the ship. Only when the plane lost altitude preparatory to landing did any of the passengers get airsick. Col Cox landed the plane on the long airstrip which was being swept by another mistral wind and the Green Project was ended.

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The "Blue Project" got under way September 20th when seven of our "Forts" took of for Munich where they picked up the first of 3, 500 displaced persons who were to be flown from Munich to Athens.

This new project was scheduled to last for two weeks, with our group sending seven ships daily. The planes took off from Munich and flew one of two routes, the choice depending on the weather.

The first route going by way Dijon, France, then on the Rhone Valley past Avignon to the vicinity of Istres, then on South to Foggia, Italy, and on to Athens. The reason for this indirect route is due to predominant inclement weather over the Alps.

The second and more direct route, which was taken with the advent of favorable weather, is across the Alps by way of the Brenner Pass, continuing on down the east coast Italy to Foggia and from there turning east over the Ionian Sea and on to Athens.

Since the program was originally scheduled to begin on Monday the 16th, seven of our ships flew to Munich that day only to find that through an administrative mix-up no Greeks were ready to enplane, thus the three day postponment.

Lt. Col. Cox, station commander, flew to Athens personally to make any necessary arrangements and iron out any difficulties.

Maj. Donald Smith and a complement of enlisted from the group were sent to Athens to insure successful completion of the project.

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Four prefabs form the 92nd's luxurious new EM Club which features a circular bar serving Coco Cola, beer and whiskey, a library with an excellent selection of reading material, and attractive furniture consisting of comfortable easy chairs and writing tables. The club opened Saturday, September 8 (see photo supplement).

The club, under the management of S/Sgt Grady of the 407th, is open seven days a week, and is not a non-com's club. There is absolutely no policy of rank descrimination.

Other recreational facilities offered by the club include a dice table, card tables, and a ping-pong table.

In another big month the station Red Cross Club dispensed over 6,000 donuts and 180 gallons of coffee daily to hungry 92nd and 384th G.I.'s. Bingo became a regular weekly feature with cigarettes offered as prizes. The snack bar, which had been opening at one P.M., was opened at ten A.M., and continued to open at this thime, thus furnishing breakfast for those men who see fit to miss theirs at the mess halls.

The P.X. continued its record sales this month selling 896,438 francs worth of merchandise. 92nd personnel bought all the perfume, ladies' handkerchiefs, and Swiss toys as fast as they appeared in the show cases.

Robert Hutchinson, P.X. manager, left the station in the middle of the month to be discharged, and was replaced by Sgt. Peter J. MacFarland, one time M.P.

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PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID PAYMENT OF POSTAGE, $300

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COL. CHAPMAN AWARDING GOOD CONDUCT
TO 407TH PERSONNEL

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THE ONLY REMAINING OFFICERS WHO CAME
OVER SEAS WITH THE GROUP. (GROUND)

Capt. Posch (Engineering)
Capt. Fadenrecnt (Group Adjutant)
Capt. Brooks (I & E)
Capt. Gerdts (Communications)
C.W.O. Stapelton (Chelf Air Inspector)

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Water Tower of Sausett by Sgt. Lee
(Group Operations)

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