

8TH AIR FORCE
303RD BOMB GROUP-- HELL'S ANGELS
427TH SQUADRON
EUROPE

Mission #1 - July 8, 1944 - Ship #166 - Destination Etaples, France. Flack moderate. Flight time 6 hours.

Mission #2 - July 9 - #099 - Tours, France. Flack moderate. Flight time 6 hours.

Mission #3 - July 12 - #432 - Munich Germany. Flack intense and accurate. Could almost get out and walk on it. First plane I saw go down was a P-51. Afterwards several bombers. 29 bombers lost today. Flight time 10 hours.

Mission #4 - July 20 - #099 - Manheim Germany. Flack intense and accurate. We got a few holes in ship. No one aboard injured. Several bombers were lost. Flight time 9 hours 45 min.

Mission #5 - July 24 - #423 - Cherbourg France. Flack moderate, inaccurate. Today we gave the ground force support. Flight time 7 hours.

Mission #6 - July 25 - #099 - St Lo area, France. Flack light but accurate. Ground forces really started moving after we made this raid. Flight time 5 hours.

Mission #7 - July 29 - #885 - Merseburg Germany. Flack intense and accurate. Our ship hit by flack and we ran into plenty of trouble. Awarded air medal today. Flight time 9 hours.

Mission #8 - August 4 - #432 - BeeNeMunde Germany. Flack moderate, accurate. We got a few flack holes. ME-110 attacked our formation and was shot down. Flight time 9 hours.

Mission #9 - August 5 - #423 - PasDeCalais France. Flack light, inaccurate. Very bad weather. Flight time 4 hours.

Mission #10 - August 6 - #423 - Berlin Germany. Flack moderate, accurate. Our ship was hit again. Lost several planes. Flight time 9 hours.

Mission #11 - August 7 - #423 - Paris France. Flack moderate, accurate. We were hit over target. Knocked out of formation. One engine shot out and we couldn't feather it. Limped back over enemy territory alone. Flying at 120 MPH, stalling speed. Were given orders to stand by to bail out. Flack hit right by pilot and me. Somehow we got back across the channel to base and got on ground with about 10 minutes of gas supply left. Several flack holes in ship. Sure were lucky today. Flight time 7 hours.

Mission #12 - August 9 - #569 - Pirmasen Germany. Flack light, accurate. We almost bombed this town off the map today. It was a last resort target - a key factory. Awarded oak leaf cluster today. Flight time 8 hours.

Mission #13 - August 11 - #597 - Brest France. Flack light, accurate. Started out for Munich but weather got too bad and had to turn back. Enemy fighters hit a couple groups ahead of us. Flight time 7½ hours.

Mission #14 - August 12 - #595 - Metz Germany. Flack moderate. Squadron hit hard by enemy fighters. We lost 9 ships. Our ship #423 which we had been flying was lost also. Harburger, a buddy of mine, was lost. He was our flight leader in gunnery school. Flight time 9 hours.

Mission #15 - August 27 - #323 - Egbjerg Denmark. Flack moderate, accurate. Set out to go to Berlin but right before we got to target bad weather set in so we bombed an airfield in Denmark. Our field lost 3 ships again by flack. A good friend of mine, Ross was killed - shot out of the tail. Two more buddies missing in action. Several crews from Pyote are now missing. Flight time 9½ hours.

Mission #16 - August 30 - #248 - PasDeCalais France. Weather very bad today. Pilot did a really swell job of flying. Flew from ground to 10,000 feet before we got out of clouds. Only saw 7 fighters. Just received word that O'Brien is missing in action. He was a very special buddy. We were together for a long time in States. He was stationed only 10 miles from me over here. Will never forget him. Flight time 5 hours.

Mission #17 - September 9 - #597 - Ludswighaven Germany. Flack intense and very accurate. Our ship came back looking like a sieve. Sure thought for a while we wouldn't get back. Hit hard over the target. Tail gunner, Bruce, hurt slightly. Ship #323, Lt Fletcher and crew, went down. They were flying off our left wing. Could see them trying to get out of ship but no one escaped. Several other planes went down. Seems like a miracle we got back. Flight time 8½ hours.

Mission #18 - September 10 - #311 - Stuttgart Germany. Flack moderate, accurate. Got a few holes in our ship but wasn't nearly as rough as yesterday. Don't believe there are any more easy targets over there. Awarded cluster to air medal. Flight time 9 hours.

Mission #19 - September 12 - #311 - Brux, Czechoslovakia. Flack intense and accurate. Hit hard by enemy fighters, ME 109s & FW 190s. Sure was rough. Tail gunner, Bruce, killed during fighter attack. Think I got an ME 109. Flack rugged over target. We got several holes. Bombardier and pilot got close ones. Lost several planes. Flight time 10 hours.

Mission #20 - September 17 - #597 - Einhoven Holland. Flack meager, inaccurate. Went over in support of ground troops today. They landed paratroopers behind us. Flight time 6 hours.

Mission #21 - September 19 - #597 - Hamm Germany. Flack intense and accurate. Sweated out very bad weather. Landed on English coast on our return. Stayed there 1 day then returned to our base. Only got a few holes in ship today. Flight time 7 hours.

Mission #22 - September 21 - #597 - Frankfurt Germany. Flack intense and accurate. Bad weather again today. Saw a few enemy fighters. Got a few holes in our plane again. Our field lost 11 planes on last raid. We sent up only 29 so lost plenty. Fighters were coming in from everywhere. 8th Air Force lost 100 planes the last 2 days. Flight time 7 hours.

Mission 23 - October 2 - #248 - Cologne Germany. Flack meager, inaccurate. Went into the Ruhr Valley today. That's really a rough place. It's better known as "Flack Valley", Flight time 7 hours.

Were originally told we could return Stateside after 25 missions. Now suffering heavy losses. Missions extended to 35.

Mission #24 - October 3 - #248 - Cologne Germany. Flack intense, accurate. Really caught the flack today. It was terrific over target. Lt Rohner, our bombardier, wounded. We were shot up quite a bit. Flight time 7½ hours.

Mission #25 - October 5 - #597 - Cologne Germany. Flack intense, accurate. We were really hit hard again today. Flack was terrific. Bombardier wounded. I had very close call. Flack came through my turret. Don't see how it ever missed me. Glass flew everywhere. Scared to move for a minute. Another lucky day for me. Flight time 8½ hours.

Mission #26 - October 14 - #569 - Saarbrucken Germany. Flack moderate, accurate. This mission wasn't too bad but we almost collided in mid-air with another plane over the target. If our pilot hadn't been one of the best we sure wouldn't be here today. All shaken up but no one hurt seriously. Lost 14 planes today. Flight time 7 hours.

Missions 27 & 28 - October 17 & 18 - #484 & 569 - Cologne Germany. Flack intense and accurate. Got a few holes but missions weren't too rough. Saw a couple of the German's new secret weapons. Rockets believed to be the U-2. Saw a couple planes blow up over target. Flight time 6½ & 7 hours.

Mission #29 - October 19 - #569 - Mannheim Germany. Flack intense, accurate. Got shot up pretty bad again. Several big holes in the ship. It went to the hanger for repairs. Flight time 8 hours.

Mission #30 - October 25 - #569 - Hamm Germany. Flack moderate, accurate. The mission wasn't so bad today. Got a few small holes. Enemy fighters were up again. Rolf, another friend, now also missing. Flight time 8 hours.

Mission #31 - November 5 - #311 - Frankfurt Germany. Flack intense, accurate. Got shot up a little again. Anyway, we came back with several holes in our ship. I saw only one B-17 go down. Right behind us. Caught fire and blew up. We lost 30 bombers. Flight time 8 hours.

Mission #32 - November 6 - #569 - Bautrot Germany (Ruhr Valley). Flack moderate, accurate. They sure had our altitude with the flack today. Got several holes in our ship. Pilot hit in leg. Tail gunner also had a very close one. Flight time 6 hours.

Mission #33 - November 9 - #311 - Metz France. Flack light, inaccurate. This turned out to be a fairly easy mission. Had a lot of trouble with our plane though. Lt Davis & Purcel collided in mid-air on the way to target. They were flying right behind us. Both planes blew up and everyone lost except one tail gunner. Flight time 8 hours.

Mission #34 - November 10 - #311 - Cologne Germany. Flack intense, accurate. Very rough mission. Flack was terrific. One plane blew up right in front of us. We got several holes in plane, Pilot hit in leg. Flight time 8 hours.

Mission #35 - November 16 - #569 - Aachen Germany. Flack moderate, accurate. Really sweated this one out. Plenty rough. Our ball turret man had a very close call. Bombardier on Lt Davis crew was killed. Lt Custon's crew got a direct hit by flack and went down over target. Capt Healey had nose blown off his ship. 3 killed, 2 bailed out, and rest crash landed right over enemy lines. Due to bad weather we had to land at another base. Was 3 days before we landed at our own base again. Pilot, bombardier, radio man, ball turret gunner, and I finished today. Flight time 8 hours.